

ABSTRACT

I have a stubborn conviction that a person's life goes well for her to the extent that she enjoys good feelings, and poorly to the extent that she suffers bad feelings. Worse is that I am also convinced that the good and bad feelings that affect our well-being share a felt quality. These positions are both wildly unpopular in the well-being literature, and people tend to dismiss them without serious consideration. This dissertation aims to carve out some space for felt-quality hedonism about well-being (henceforth referred to as "hedonism"). I hope to show that it is a more viable position than it is given credit for.

Hedonism is the view that a person's life goes well for her to the extent that she experiences pleasure, and poorly for her to the extent that she experiences pain. The pleasure and pain central to hedonism can be understood in at least two different ways. The first analysis of prudential pleasure and pain is attitudinal. On attitudinal views of pleasure and pain, a person's attitude towards an experience or state of affairs (at least in part) determines whether it is a pleasure or pain. The other accounts, felt-quality views, hold that there are felt qualities that determine whether an experience is a pleasure or a pain. Attitudinal views are more popular than felt-quality ones. To my mind, people tend to favor attitudinal views over felt-quality ones for two main reasons. First, attitudinal views are in a better position to meet the resonance constraint, which is the requirement that for something to be good for someone, she must have a favoring attitude towards it. Second, felt-quality theorists have struggled to provide an adequate account of pleasures and pains. This project aims to carve out a space for felt-quality hedonism by addressing each of those concerns in turn.

Before I defend felt-quality hedonism from those concerns, I start by casting doubt on what I take to be the most threatening alternative to felt-quality hedonism, desire-satisfactionism. Desire-satisfactionists hold that a person's life goes well for her to the extent that she satisfies her (sufficiently specified) desires. One of the most pressing concerns that desire-satisfactionists must address is the question of which desires ought to count towards well-being. Chris Heathwood puts forth the most promising attempt of doing so. Because my aim is to call into question the viability of desire-satisfactionism, I am most concerned with the implications of Heathwood's account for that view. It should be noted, though, that his account is applicable to any view which takes desires to matter intrinsically for well-being.

He distinguishes between desires that count - genuine-attraction desires - and ones that do not - behavioral desires - by pointing out that there is a qualitative character distinctive of desires which, when satisfied, we think intuitively contribute to well-being. For Heathwood, the only desires that count are ones that involve genuine attraction; ones that are characterized by gusto, enthusiasm, excitement, and pleasure. The allure of the genuine-attraction account is not only that it parsimoniously delivers the right result in four kinds of problem cases for those who think desires matter, but also that there is an intuitive appeal to the idea that the prudentially salient aspect of desires is genuine attraction. Given the robust promise of the genuine-attraction approach, my argument that it is not tenable, if successful, would be all the more troublesome for those who take desires to be relevant to well-being.

I argue that the genuine attraction approach is not feasible because it is in dire need of a precise account of what genuine attraction amounts to, and any attempt to provide it raises fatal problems for the view. If, as Heathwood suggests, genuine-attraction desires are

at least in part characterized by a phenomenology, then we encounter two problems. First, the genuine-attraction account would not be able to accommodate the intuition that the satisfaction of calm, cool desires benefits. Second, it would face a heterogeneity objection according to which it is an implausible implication that each instance of desire-related welfare benefit shares some kind of feeling. If, on the other hand, genuine-attraction desires are not characterized by a shared phenomenology, then we desperately need an account of what it is that supposedly distinguishes genuine-attraction desires from the rest of them. I aim to show that the most viable strategies of drawing that distinction are unsuccessful. If I am right, then the genuine-attraction approach cannot provide the necessary account of prudentially relevant desires that is much-needed by anyone who holds that desires can benefit.

My arguments against the genuine-attraction account might give one pause about whether a view which takes desires to count for well-being is viable after all. In the proceeding paper, I consider what I take to be the most pressing objection against felt-quality hedonism. The resonance constraint holds that something can benefit a person only if it bears a connection to her positive attitudes. The objection to hedonism is that it must say that pleasure benefits someone who is entirely against experiencing it, thus violating the constraint. The resonance constraint is frequently cited in the literature as a decisive reason to reject hedonism. I argue that this is a big mistake because hedonism *can* meet the most plausible version of the constraint. My argument is rooted in the fact that there are several conflicting possibilities about what the resonance constraint requires, and that the literature fails to specify which account is in question. I aim to show that the interpretations that enjoy

widespread intuitive appeal are interpretations that are compatible with hedonism. I also present a new kind of resonance constraint that is motivated by some of the same considerations that support the traditional one and argue that hedonism has a *prima facie* advantage over other views of well-being when it comes to meeting the new kind of constraint. If I am right, then we are left with the surprising conclusion that objective hedonists are at least as well-placed as subjectivists to meet the spirit of resonance.

The final paper aims to provide a skeletal account of what I take to be the most promising way of accommodating the intuition that prudentially relevant pleasures share a felt quality, as do prudentially relevant pains. I start by proposing ten desiderata that ought to be central to our considerations in determining the best account of pleasure and pain. I then show how the two traditional views - attitudinal views and phenomenological views - fail to meet several of these desiderata and argue that this should motivate us to adopt a hybrid account. I consider the extant hybrid accounts and show that they are deficient in a number of ways. I finish by introducing a new hybrid account that can meet more desiderata than any other view. On my account, for a pleasurable experience to benefit, it must have a pleasant felt quality towards which the subject has a favoring attitude. The same is true *mutatis mutandis* for pain. While my view is far from complete, I hope to provide a skeletal account of what I take to be the most promising way of accommodating the intuition that pleasures and pains are characterized by a felt quality.

My hope for this project is that it makes room for a felt-quality, hedonistic account of well-being. It starts by casting doubt on what I take to be the most viable alternative view of well-being, proceeds to address the most pressing objection to well-being hedonism, and

ends by proposing an account of pleasures and pains. If my arguments are successful, then the upshot is that hedonism deserves more serious consideration than it has recently been given.

Bringing Hedonism Back: Toward a Felt-Quality Account of Well-Being

Nikki Fortier

B.A. University of Manitoba, 2012

M.A. University of Manitoba, 2014

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DEDICATION

For Lola

I hope to make you proud.

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The Trouble with Genuine-Attraction Desires

Abstract: Many views of well-being hold that desires are relevant to welfare but leave open the question of which desires should count. Chris Heathwood has recently proposed an account of prudentially relevant desires that he takes to be uniquely equipped to solve problem cases in the well-being literature. He mounts an argument for the claim that only “genuine-attraction desires” - ones that are characterized by enthusiasm, interest, and pleasure - count towards well-being. I argue that we lack conceptual grounds for differentiating genuine-attraction desires from other kinds of desire. I show that if we appeal to phenomenology to explain the difference, we face a homogeneity objection and we are unable to accommodate the intuition the satisfaction of calm desires can benefit. I conclude that without appealing to phenomenology, the distinction collapses.

0. Introduction

Many theories of welfare take a person’s desires to be, in some way, relevant to her well-being. Most obviously, there are desire-satisfaction views, according to which the satisfaction of a person’s desires makes her life go better for her, and the frustration of her desires makes her life go worse for her. One need not be a desire-satisfactionist, though, to think that desires matter. Let us call any view of well-being which, at least sometimes, takes desires to be prudentially relevant “desire theories.” While there is something compelling about the idea that what a person wants matters to her well-being, we quickly discover that things are not so simple. A myriad of problem cases for desire theories have been discussed in the literature, and while I do not have the space to review them here, for now, suffice it to say that it is not *always* good for a person to get what she wants. Desire theorists have attempted to account for this - to greater or lesser success - by distinguishing between actual and idealized desires, autonomous and non-autonomous desires, self-regarding and other-regarding desires, and altruistic and non-altruistic desires, to name a few. One of the most promising ways of drawing the line between desires that do and do not matter for well-being

was recently defended by Chris Heathwood (2019). He distinguishes “genuine-attraction desires” - roughly, desires that involve genuine appeal - from behavioral ones - those which do not.¹ He argues that there is a prudentially relevant difference between desires whose objects genuinely appeal to us and those whose objects do not, and that by employing this distinction, we can avoid four problem cases for desire theorists.

In what follows, I argue that this approach is fatally underspecified. Genuine-attraction desires are characterized by an uncalm, agitated phenomenology. If they are the only ones that matter for well-being, then this entails that people cannot benefit from the satisfaction of their calm, quiet desires. If, on the other hand, we try to accommodate the intuition that calm and quiet desires can benefit, we lose our grip on what genuine-attraction desires are supposed to be. I aim to show that there is no viable way to account for the notion that a person can be genuinely attracted to the object of her desire without the violence that is characteristic of genuine-attraction desires. Once we turn away from that phenomenology, so, too, do we turn away from the conceptual grounds on which to differentiate the two kinds of desire. What is more is that if one is inclined to bite the bullet and maintain that there is a violent phenomenology involved in genuine-attraction desires, then they are faced with a heterogeneity objection. If I am right, the upshot is that appealing to genuine attraction does not address the pressing need for an account of prudential desires that includes only those whose satisfaction intuitively benefits.

¹ He cites Stephen Campbell (2013), Ruth Chang (2004), T.F. Daveney (1961), Wayne Davis (1986), Philippa Foot (1972), J.C.B. Gosling (1969), David Hume (1739), David Lewis (1988), Thomas Nagel (1970), Derek Parfit (2011), Tamar Schapiro (2014), G.F. Schueler (1995), L.W. Sumner (1996), and Melinda Vadas (1984) as having made a similar kind of distinction.

1. The Promise of Genuine-Attraction Desires

As previously mentioned, the most comprehensive defense of the view that only genuine-attraction desires are relevant to well-being is given by Heathwood (2019) in “Which Desires are Relevant to Well-Being?” He does so by reviewing four problem cases that need to be addressed to make viable the claim that desires can contribute to well-being. He argues that the cases are problematic only if we fail to disambiguate between two senses of desire. On the one hand, there are behavioral desires, which do not contribute to well-being. Those, Heathwood tells us, are desires that have some connection with our “voluntary action, intention, choice, and will.”² Every time that a person acts voluntarily, they necessarily have a corresponding behavioral desire to have so acted. Do I *want* to pay my bills? In one sense, yes. It is an obligation that I have and there will be aversive consequences if I do not. So, it can be said that I have a desire to pay my bills. But does the satisfaction of that desire benefit me non-derivatively? Intuitively, it does not. Heathwood argues that this is because the desire to pay my bills is a behavioral desire and does not involve genuine appeal. There is a very real sense in which I do not want to pay my bills; there are other things that I *actually want* to spend my money on. He characterizes behavioral desires as follows:

- Behavioral desire may simply be a “functional state,” or a state defined by what it does; in this case: an intentional state that disposes the person in it to try to act in the ways that (according to that person’s beliefs) would make its content true;
- When it comes to the behavioral sense of ‘desire’, a person cannot voluntarily do an action that they had no desire to do; voluntarily doing an act entails having wanted to do it;

² Heathwood (2019), p. 673.

- For desire in the behavioral sense, *strength* of desire is determined by hypothetical choices.³

On the other hand, there are genuine-attraction desires, which do contribute to well-being. These are meant to be desires that track what we find genuinely appealing. We behaviorally desire to do all kinds of things that we do not *really* want to do. Genuine-attraction desires are meant to capture what we mean when we appeal to the notion of “*really* wanting.” Let us say that I take myself to have a moral obligation to go visit a sick friend, but what I *really* want to do is to go on a long walk.⁴ My friend has been thoroughly miserable during all my previous visits and is a drag to be around, but I know that she benefits from me being there. Though I want nothing more than to go on a solitary walk and to enjoy the sun on my face, I, with a sinking heart, decide to go and visit her.

There is a clear sense in which I had a desire - a behavioral one - to go visit my friend, as is evidenced by my having decided to do so. But there is also a clear way in which I did not want to go see her; what I *really* wanted was to go on a walk. Genuine-attraction desires aim to capture our desires that are not driven by obligation, altruism, or conscientiousness. They aim instead to get at the heart of what we *really* want. Heathwood writes that they are “... connected with notions like enthusiasm, appeal, interest, excitement, and attraction.”⁵ He further characterizes them as follows:

- If a person has a genuine-attraction desire for some event to occur (or to have occurred or to be occurring), the person finds the occurrence of the event attractive or appealing, is

³ Ibid., p. 675.

⁴ This example is inspired by a case given by Gosling (1969), p. 86, which is cited in Heathwood (2019), p. 672.

⁵ Heathwood (2019), p. 673.

enthusiastic about it (at least to some extent), and tends to view it with pleasure or gusto;

- When it comes to the genuine-attraction sense of ‘desire’, a person can voluntarily do an action that they had no desire to do, and they can refuse to do what they most desire to do;
- For desire in the genuine-attraction sense, *strength* of desire is the strength of the genuine attraction to the event’s occurring, or the degree to which the event’s occurrence genuinely appeals to the desirer, or the degree to which they are enthusiastic about it.⁶

To illustrate the prudential significance of this distinction, let us further consider the above example. Without distinguishing between the two senses of desire we would be forced to say that, because I got what I most wanted, the satisfaction of my desire to visit my friend benefited me (assuming a theory of well-being according to which desires benefit). But this seems wrong. A plausible account of well-being ought to be able to capture the sense in which I sacrificed my welfare in order to fulfill my moral obligation. Employing the Heathwoodian approach solves this worry. According to this strategy, genuine-attraction desires are the only ones that contribute to well-being; behavioral desires are prudentially irrelevant (at least intrinsically-speaking). I call the view that Heathwood defends “The Genuine-Attraction Theory of Prudentially Relevant Desires,” or “GAT” for short.

The Genuine-Attraction Theory of Prudentially Relevant Desires (GAT):

Genuine-attraction desires are the only desires that are intrinsically relevant to well-being.

There are many cases that have a similar structure to the one above: a person fulfills a moral obligation (or simply behaves altruistically), and, in doing so, sacrifices her well-

⁶ Ibid., pp. 674-5.

being. Following Heathwood, we will refer to the desires described in these cases as “moral desires.”⁷ We have already seen how GAT successfully addresses the problem of moral desires. In order to showcase the promise of GAT and its potential significance to desire theories, I briefly canvas the other three problem cases that Heathwood presents for which GAT provides a much-needed solution. These are significant problems for those who think that desires are relevant to well-being, and, as such, they help draw the parameters of such an account. If Heathwood is right that GAT is the only existing view that can adequately address these issues, and if I am right that GAT is fatally flawed, then the call for a tenable view of prudentially relevant desires is all the more pressing.

In what follows, for simplicity’s sake, I assume a view of well-being according to which at least some satisfied desires are intrinsically prudentially relevant.

Prudential Desires: In these kinds of cases, a person does something that she does not really want to do in order to be prudentially responsible. Imagine a person who wants to quit smoking, but who is seriously addicted to cigarettes. During her lunch break, all she can think about is how badly she wants to go smoke, but she ultimately decides against it. She keeps this up for a month, and eventually loses the desire for cigarettes. Desire theories seem to tell us that because she fulfilled her desires not to smoke for an entire month, she benefited intrinsically from their satisfaction. While it is true that it is beneficial not to smoke, it seems to be true because it is *instrumentally* beneficial not to smoke. The problem is that desire theories struggle to account for the fact that this was an arduous month for the

⁷ This is not to say that we can never be genuinely attracted to our moral obligations or benefitted by the satisfaction of desires to fulfill them. The term is merely meant to refer to a kind of problem case for desire theories - cases in which the satisfaction of our moral desires does not intuitively benefit us non-derivatively.

smoker. Were she to be killed in an accident at the end of the month, desire theories seem to be unable to account for the way in which she did not live to see the benefit from not smoking. If she were to die prematurely, then it is intuitively plausible that she was actually harmed by not smoking, given how painful of an experience it was for her.

GAT has no trouble accounting for this. It tells us that our smoker had genuine-attraction desires to smoke - smoking is what *really* appealed to her - that were frustrated when she decided not to, and that she was thereby harmed by the frustration of those desires. Without GAT, desire theories would tell us that our smoker had a great month because she got what she most wanted the whole time. With GAT, we are able to account for the fact that it was a horrible month for her. Were she to survive beyond the month, GAT would also be able to account for the instrumental benefit that quitting smoking would have had (assuming that the smoker would go on to satisfy more genuine-attraction desires than she otherwise would have).

Compulsive Desires: The next problem case concerns compulsive desires. Warren Quinn has a well-known example of such a case.⁸ We are to imagine that a person “is in a strange functional state that disposes him to turn on radios that he sees to be turned off.” The person isn’t passionate about having radios on, or turning knobs, or anything like that, nor does he feel any joy or satisfaction after the fact. He is simply compelled to turn on radios. Without GAT, this person would, counterintuitively, be made better-off every time he satisfied his desire to turn on a radio. Employing the distinction, we can see that his desires to turn on radios are merely behavioral. If we take only genuine-attraction desires to

⁸ Quinn (1993), p. 32.

be intrinsically prudentially relevant, we are not forced to say that turning on radios benefits him.⁹

Desires Concerning Unlikely Possibilities: This last kind of problematic desire is nicely illustrated by a case from Fred Feldman.¹⁰ Imagine a person at a museum who, upon seeing a dinosaur exhibit, coolly and without emotion reflects on how it would be terrible to be eaten by a dinosaur. Obviously, it is extremely unlikely that she will ever be on Earth at the same time as a dinosaur, never mind that she will be eaten by one. But, because she has never reflected on this before, she forms a new desire not to be eaten by a dinosaur which is, of course, constantly being satisfied. Without GAT, there is pressure to say that the person is benefitted by not being mauled by a dinosaur. With GAT, we can explain why the dinosaur-desire is not prudentially relevant. As the case is described, the person is emotionless and unenthusiastic, which means that she does not have a genuine-attraction desire, and thus does not benefit.¹¹

Like Heathwood, I think that problem cases involving moral desires, prudential desires, compulsive desires, and desires concerning unlikely possibilities are worrisome for desire theories, and that they need to be addressed for those who find the theories attractive. The allure of GAT is not only that it parsimoniously delivers the right result in four kinds of problem cases for desire theories, but also that there is an intuitive appeal to the idea that the prudentially salient aspect of desires is genuine appeal. In what follows, though, I hope to

⁹ Heathwood (2019), p. 667-8 also discusses the drug-addict case from Parfit (1984), p. 496 as one that illustrates the problem of compulsive desires.

¹⁰ Feldman (2010), p. 66.

¹¹ Heathwood (2019) discusses these kinds of cases on pp. 670-1, and p. 680.

show that GAT cannot do the work that we need a theory of prudentially relevant desires to do. The upshot is that desire theories are in need of a tenable account - one with intuitive appeal and that can handle the problem cases - that tells us which desires are relevant to well-being.

2. What About Stoicus?

Feldman asks us to consider the case of Stoicus, who

...just wants peace and quiet. He wants to live an unruffled life. ... In fact, he prefers not to experience any episodes of pleasure. He prefers not to have such pleasure in part because he fears that if he had some, they would ruffle his life. ... Suppose Stoicus gets exactly what he wants - peace, quiet, no episodes of sensory pleasure, and no episodes of sensory pain. ... Suppose that as he receives his daily dose of peace and quiet, Stoicus is content. He is satisfied with his life. ... Surely it would be odd to say that whole schools of apparently rational philosophers have advocated a life-style that is guaranteed to yield worthless lives!¹²

With this, Feldman shows us that one advantage of desire theories is that they are seemingly able to account for the intuition that Stoicus lives a good life. That they are able to do so is often considered to be a major advantage of those views. If we flesh out the case a bit more and add a few details (which I take to be in keeping with the original description of the case), we can see how GAT is incompatible with the thought that Stoicus is benefited by the satisfaction of his desires.

After deep reflection about what constitutes the good life, Stoicus has concluded that it is one characterized by equanimity. He wakes up every morning, resolved not to be violently thrust about by his own desires and emotions, and, with few exceptions, he succeeds. He has desires about the way his day will go, but those desires lack gusto; they are

¹² Feldman (2010), p. 50.

without pleasure or enthusiasm.¹³ Instead, they are calm, quiet, and considered desires, and that is exactly the way he wants them to be. Stoicus coolly desires to go on his morning walk, to spend the afternoon meditating, and to end his day by studying philosophy. Occasionally, in the evenings, as he philosophizes, he catches himself getting too worked up about this dilemma or that puzzle. But, his lifelong training is effective, and before he becomes overly enthusiastic or agitated by the question at hand, he is quickly able to bring himself back to a composed, neutral, gusto-less state with which he approaches his activities for the remainder of the night.

Is Stoicus benefited by his day-to-day desires? Many - particularly those inclined towards desire theories - think that the answer is quite plausibly “Yes.” Consider, though, what GAT must say about the case. GAT holds that in order to be benefited by their satisfaction, Stoicus’ desires must be genuine-attraction ones. But this doesn’t seem to be the case. Stoicus’ desires do not ruffle his feathers. They are not characterized by gusto, enthusiasm, or pleasure. Among other things, Heathwood characterizes genuine-attraction desires as “warm,” “appetitive,” and “violent.”¹⁴ He holds that the person views the object of their desire “with pleasure or gusto,” “enthusiasm,” and “excitement.”¹⁵ When he is contrasting genuine-attraction desires with behavioral desires, he describes the latter as

¹³ It should be noted here that Feldman describes Stoicus as “content,” which might indicate that it is not fair to describe his desires as lacking pleasure (and therefore as behavioral, which I go on to do). In what follows, I aim to show that if his desires lack enthusiasm and agitation, then they are not genuine-attraction desires, as they are characterized by Heathwood. If they are to count as genuine-attraction desires, then we need some explanation as to what differentiates them from calm and cool behavioral desires. I argue that there is no clear way to make that distinction.

¹⁴ Heathwood (2019), pp. 673-4.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 677-8.

“cold” and “calm.”¹⁶ He tells us that the person views the object of their behavioral desire “coolly,” “detachedly,” and “joylessly, with no enthusiasm.”¹⁷ Indeed, he cites David Hume’s distinction between calm and violent passions as roughly corresponding to the difference between behavioral and genuine-attraction desires.¹⁸ This explicitly pits calmness against genuine attraction. With this in mind, it seems safe to say that Stoicus’ desires are not genuine-attraction ones. As such, GAT tells us that Stoicus is not benefited by the satisfaction of his calm desires, even though those desires are rooted in his deepest interests about what amounts to a good life for him.

It’s even worse than that, for GAT. Because living an unruffled life is important to Stoicus, he thinks that he is doing poorly to the extent that he becomes, for lack of a better term, ruffled. But GAT delivers a verdict that flies in the face of Stoicus’ deepest commitments. It tells us that he is benefited by satisfying his desires *only when* he becomes ruffled. If we pair GAT with a desire theory, we get the counterintuitive result that Stoicus is never benefited, even when he is lucky enough to spend all of his days doing nothing other than satisfying his desires.

It is worth pausing here to explicitly disambiguate the different kinds of desire that Stoicus might have. As I have described the case, Stoicus’ first-order desires are not genuine-attraction ones, but perhaps I am neglecting the possibility that his second-order desire to not desire things in such a way as to ruffle his feathers is itself a genuine-attraction desire. On this picture, GAT could say that while Stoicus is not benefited by his daily activities

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 677.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 678, p. 681.

¹⁸ Hume (1739), III.IV; Heathwood (2019), p. 274, 275.

(which he only behaviorally desires), he *is* benefited every time he is able to prevent a genuine-attraction desire from occurring. The thought is that his genuine-attraction desire to experience only behavioral desires accounts for the ways in which he is benefited throughout his days.

But proponents of GAT are not off the hook. The problem with this picture is that a feather-ruffling genuine-attraction desire is still necessary for benefit. Every time Stoicus is benefited by preventing a first-order genuine-attraction desire, we discover that it was only at the expense of having a disquieting second-order genuine-attraction desire, which in turn harms him. This way of thinking about Stoicus morphs him into a tragic, Sisyphian figure, which, at the very least, is not what Feldman had in mind.

What of the possibility that this is precisely the right result? Perhaps Stoicus, given his convictions, can never live a good life. I leave open the question of whether this is the right diagnosis of the case, but it seems to me like this result would be particularly difficult for desire theorists to accept. A powerful reason to think that desires are prudentially relevant is the thought that a person's well-being should be suited to her.¹⁹ A person's well-being must "fit" her. The thought is that what a good life amounts to for someone is informed by their convictions and interests.²⁰ It is thus a cost to GAT that it tells us that for Stoicus to benefit from satisfying his desires, they must involve a kind of feather-ruffling that does not suit him at all.

¹⁹ See Peter Railton (1986) and Connie Rosati (1996).

²⁰ This thought serves as support for the resonance constraint on theories of well-being, which is the claim that if something is good for a person, then it must have a connection to her favoring attitudes. While the resonance constraint is not in question for our purposes, the animating thought behind it - that a person's welfare should be tailored to her interests - is.

Stoicus has the good fortune of being able to spend his days dedicated to doing everything that he takes to be constitutive of a good life, and to do so in a way that keeps feather-ruffling at bay. Moreover, we can stipulate that his desires - both first- and second-order - are basic, well-informed, rational, intrinsic, concurrent, stable, self-directed, and self-interested. And still, GAT tells us that insofar as his welfare is determined by his desires, Stoicus is not doing well.

There is one escape hatch for the proponent of GAT that we have yet to explore. Perhaps Stoicus' desires are in fact genuine-attraction ones.²¹ After all, even though his everyday desires are cool and composed, we should think of them as mattering to him. He certainly does not go about his routines grudgingly and he is described as content. Perhaps this should indicate to us that his desires are of the genuine-attraction variety. It does seem right to say that Stoicus is genuinely attracted to the life he leads, and to the various activities that make up his day.

The trouble with this approach is that we are desperately in need of an account of what it is that makes Stoicus' desires of the genuine-attraction variety; of what constitutes genuine attraction if it is not essentially feather-ruffling. What distinguishes Stoicus' cool and calm desires from behavioral ones (which are essentially cool and calm)? Given that the picture that Heathwood painted depicted genuine-attraction desires as violent, we need some other way of demarcating them if we want them to include Stoicus' desires. We need an analysis of what it means to be genuinely attracted to something. In the next section, I

²¹ Thank you to Ben Bradley, Chris Heathwood, Hille Paakkunainen, Robert Shaver, and David Sobel for helpful comments and discussions regarding this suggestion.

canvas different ways of drawing the distinction, and conclude that if genuine attraction desires are not characterized by a shared, feather-ruffling phenomenology, then the distinction between behavioral desires and genuine attraction desires collapses.

3. Either No Conceptual Unity or a Heterogeneity Objection

3.1 Phenomenological Conceptual Unity

Considering the case of Stoicus clarified the need for an account of what distinguishes genuine-attraction desires from other kinds of desire. Given the characterizations of genuine-attraction desires, a natural possibility to which we now turn is phenomenology. Maybe what distinguishes genuine-attraction desires from behavioral ones is that they are phenomenologically distinct. This is Heathwood's own view.²² He thinks that genuine-attraction desires are, at least in part, conceptually united by their phenomenology. On this picture, what it is like to have a genuine-attraction desire feels different from what it is like to have a behavioral one.

Demarcating the difference between genuine-attraction and behavioral desires by appealing to phenomenology has the advantage of cleanly differentiating them from all other kinds of desire. Another advantage of appealing to phenomenology is that, insofar as we have an intuitive grasp of the distinction that Heathwood is after, it does seem to be one that is characterized by the way it feels. GAT gains its initial intuitive plausibility with an (indirect) appeal to phenomenology. When we reflect on the difference between a desire to not be eaten by a dinosaur and the desire to spend time with one's children, a natural place

²² Heathwood (2019), p. 674.

to which to turn is the striking difference in phenomenology between those two ways of wanting.

Assuming for now that genuine-attraction desires differ phenomenologically from behavioral ones, there is a question of whether descriptors such as “gusto,” “enthusiasm,” “interest,” “pleasure,” and “excitement” are meant to indicate that there are different types of genuine-attraction desire or whether the descriptors are all meant to describe a singular kind of phenomenology. On the former picture, genuine-attraction desires characterized by interest, for example, would be phenomenologically different from ones characterized by excitement, but on the latter picture they would all share a phenomenology. Let us consider the latter option first.

The trouble with this option is that it opens GAT up to a heterogeneity objection. Many people find that it is counterintuitive to suggest that there is some common phenomenology shared by all instances of desire-benefit.²³ An analogous objection to felt-quality views of pleasure - according to which all pleasures share a felt-quality - is well-known, and is widely taken to be a reason to reject that kind of view. The idea is that there is no identifiable phenomenology that is shared between satisfied desires whose objects are things as disparate as falling in love, taking a bath, drinking a cup of coffee, doing philosophy, being proud of one’s child, etc. In a different paper, Heathwood writes, “There are well-known arguments against Felt-Quality Theories [of pleasure], and, sufficient to say,

²³ What is worse is that it would seem to suggest that there is a common phenomenology not only to all instances where desire benefits, but also that the same phenomenology is present in all instances in which desire detracts from well-being (given that genuine-attraction desires are the only ones that are prudentially relevant).

the phenomenology just doesn't bear it out - there doesn't seem to be any one feeling (or even 'hedonic tone') common to all occasions on which we experience pleasure or enjoyment."²⁴ Notice, though, that on the interpretation that we are currently considering, GAT faces a very similar problem. If genuine-attraction desires are united by a common phenomenology, then GAT seems committed to the claim that there is some feeling common to all occasions on which we experience welfare benefit by way of desire-satisfaction. Assume that both taking a bath and falling in love contribute to a person's well-being because she has a genuine-attraction desire for each. If genuine-attraction desires share a felt-quality, then that would mean that there is one feeling common to both falling in love and taking a bath. But, if one is skeptical that any such feeling exists in the case of all pleasures, it seems to me that she should be just as skeptical that it exists in the case of all instances in which desires contribute to well-being.

One might think that this isn't a particularly pressing problem for GAT because it would be true of any view that tells us that disparate experiences benefit because of the satisfaction of a desire. But that is mistaken. Analyzing desire by appealing to a shared felt-quality is not a common way of doing it. Some accounts of desire analyze it in terms of, for instance, being disposed to act in certain ways,²⁵ in terms of mental states that have the function of producing actions,²⁶ or in terms of judgements of what we have reason to do.²⁷ Even pleasure-based accounts of desire often avoid the claim that the desire itself has a

²⁴ Heathwood (2007a), p. 26.

²⁵ For a start, see Michael Smith (1987, 1994).

²⁶ Millikan (1984); Papineau (1987).

²⁷ Scanlon (1998).

particular felt-quality and appeal instead to an agent's being disposed to take pleasure in the object of their desire.²⁸ So, because other accounts of desire do not analyze it in terms of felt-quality, they are not committed to the view that there is one common feeling present in all instances of desire-benefit. Moreover, on the phenomenological interpretation, GAT does not simply claim that there is the feeling of *what it is like to desire* present in every instance of desire-benefit; it makes the further claim that there is an even more specific feeling - *what it is like to desire in the genuine-attraction sense*.

Even if a proponent of GAT were unbothered by this heterogeneity objection, it seems as though positing a shared phenomenology is a particularly bad way to go if we want to count Stoicus' desires as genuine-attraction ones. It is hard enough to try and locate a shared feeling between agitated desires. Finding one that agitated desires share with calm desires - but that are not shared by behavioral desires - is another task altogether.

Let's instead consider the possibility that we should consider characteristics like "gusto," "enthusiasm," and "interest" to describe a number of different phenomenologies. This would allow us to avoid a heterogeneity objection because it could account for there being several phenomenologies associated with desire-benefit. The problem with this approach is that we need an account of what unites these disparate phenomenologies; what is it that makes them belong to the genuine-attraction class rather than the behavioral one? We are without such an account. For the rest of this section, I consider several possible ways of conceptually unifying the different kinds of purported genuine-attraction desires. I conclude that none of the possibilities are viable, and that in the absence of a principled way

²⁸ Schueler (1995); Vadas (1984). I address something like this in section 3.4.

of setting genuine-attraction desires apart from behavioral ones, GAT is a house built on sand.

3.2 Adverbial Conceptual Unity

If GAT relies upon phenomenology to differentiate genuine-attraction desires from other desires, it runs into a heterogeneity objection and it cannot accommodate Stoicism. Even though to turn away from phenomenology is to turn away from the direction in which Heathwood pointed us, let us now consider the possibility that genuine-attraction desires are instead conceptually unified non-phenomenologically. One possible way that we might flesh out what the distinction amounts to draws inspiration from an account of the nature of pleasure, known as “the adverbial view of pleasure.”²⁹ Proponents of this view of pleasure hold that there is no phenomenology that all pleasures share. What unites them instead, on this view, is the way that the subject engages with the source of her pleasure. The thought is that we should not imagine pleasure as a particular kind of phenomenology that we affix to the experience in question, but rather as a modification of the way that we engage with the experience. We might say that it modifies the experience “adverbially.”³⁰ One major advantage of this kind of view is that because it takes as its starting point that pleasures do not share phenomenologies, it is not subject to the heterogeneity objection. In explaining adverbial views of pleasure, J.C.B. Gosling writes that a person who enjoys a round of golf, for example,

... differs from one who does not in the way in which he goes about it. A person who is not enjoying it shows signs of boredom, is readily distracted, easily discouraged, keeps looking at his watch, and in various typical ways shows that his

²⁹ Thank you to David Sobel for this suggestion.

³⁰ See Gosling (1969), ch. 4 and ch. 5 for a helpful overview of adverbial views of pleasure.

heart is not in it. By contrast, a man who is enjoying his game shows this by the spring in his step, by impatience with interruptions or delays, by the eagerness with which he proceeds to each new shot, and perhaps the disappointment with which he greets the eighteenth tee.³¹

A similar approach might be employed for our purposes. GAT could claim that genuine-attraction desires are united adverbially; that is, they are united by the way in which the subject relates to the object of her desire. This approach has the advantage of avoiding the heterogeneity objection. If we were to employ an adverbial view of desire, we might say that a person with a genuine-attraction desire to, say, study philosophy differs from a person with a merely behavioral desire to do so much as the two golfers differ from one another. The person with a genuine-attraction desire to study philosophy would not be readily distracted from her readings, she would not be easily discouraged, and she would approach each new topic eagerly. But were she to have a mere behavioral desire to study philosophy, she would be readily distracted, discouraged, and would grudgingly move from topic to topic.

There are several problems with this approach. First, it seems as though whether one is readily distracted or easily discouraged depends more on features of her personality and individual dispositions than on whether the object of her desire is genuinely appealing to her. We can imagine a person who is easily dissuaded from something that she finds genuinely appealing.³² Imagine that playing basketball genuinely appeals to someone, but that she is very shy and unsure of herself. She has dreamed about playing it for her entire life, but has lacked the confidence to actually play. Imagine further that one day she musters the courage to get out on the basketball court, but that once she does, she feels shy and exposed, and

³¹ Ibid., pp. 55-6. Citation taken from Sobel (2002), p. 252.

³² For a paper in favor of the idea that imagination can help produce justification for modal beliefs, see Derek Lam (2018). Thank you to Hille Paakkunainen for this recommendation.

hurries home. That she is easily dissuaded does not show that playing basketball lacks genuine appeal for her. This is especially true if we stipulate that she keeps dreaming about playing as much as she ever did, even after her failed attempt.

We can also imagine someone who is steadfastly committed to something that lacks genuine appeal. Take, for instance, someone with a behavioral desire to visit a sick friend in the hospital. She doesn't *really* want to do it, but she will nonetheless. The simple fact that she is not readily distracted or easily discouraged from doing so should not be evidence that the visit genuinely appeals to her. Perhaps she is steadfastly committed to being honorable, or maybe she is just particularly rigid about sticking to her schedule. Consider again Quinn's radio man, whose desire to turn on radios is paradigmatically behavioral. Though he is decidedly steadfast in his commitment to turn on radios, we do not think doing so genuinely appeals to him (nor do we think that it benefits him). Whether someone is easily distracted, dissuaded, or discouraged cannot determine whether they are genuinely attracted to the object of their desire.

The second problem with this approach is that there are intuitively a variety of different modes of engaging with the objects of desires that benefit. Though it might be appropriate to play golf with a skip in one's step, the same is not true of all experiences that intuitively contribute to well-being. That kind of eagerness does not seem appropriate for less active, more relaxing activities. Take a relaxing summertime snooze by the water, for instance.³³ It is entirely misguided to say that for it to genuinely appeal to a person, they

³³ This example is Gosling's (1969), p. 60.

must relax enthusiastically, or that they must be difficult to distract from the activity of relaxing.

A defender of the adverbial view of desire could respond to this objection by identifying some other way in which we might relate to the less active, more relaxing experiences. The thought would be that while our more active genuine-attraction desires are characterized by our being hard to distract and enthusiastically engaged, our more relaxed genuine-attraction desires are characterized by, for example, a joyful and calm abandon. The trouble with this response is, as Gosling points out in regards to the adverbialist view of pleasure, that

... we are being given too many options, and that for the simple reason that various options are needed to keep the view plausible. Then as we move from case to case we can slip into the most plausible option for the case in hand. This unfortunately will not do. For the options are plausible in so far as they are not extended, no one will fit all cases, and there is no reason to believe that all the options are really examples of the same point.³⁴

That we have no reason to believe that all the options are really examples of the same point is at the very heart of the problem at hand. It seems that with or without the adverbial view, we are left with the same question: what serves as the conceptual grounds for distinguishing desires that genuinely appeal to us from the rest?

3.3 Determinable Conceptual Unity

One might instead suggest that the various kinds of genuine-attraction desire are conceptually unified by appealing to the determinable-determinate distinction.³⁵ The thought would then be something like this: *genuine-attraction* or *appeal* is the determinable, and *gusto-*

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ See Prior (1949) for a helpful discussion of the distinction and its history.

desire, interest-desire, pleasure-desire, and enthusiasm-desire, for example, are all determinates. This approach would allow us a way to explain why, say, *gusto-desires* and *interest-desires* are of the same kind without appealing to a shared phenomenology. What is it that *gusto-desires* and *interest-desires* share in virtue of which they count as *genuine-attraction desires*? If we employ the distinction at hand, then it is that they are both determinates of the determinable *genuine-attraction desire*. *Gusto-desire* and *interest-desire* would be to *genuine-attraction desire* just as *blue* and *red* are to *color*.

The trouble here is a familiar one. Though the distinction between determinates and determinables appears to explain what different kinds of desire have in common (being determinates of a shared determinable), it does not gain any explanatory traction with regard to parsing out which desires count as *genuine-attraction* ones. Nothing in what we have been given prevents us from saying that the desires that Quinn's radio man has - ones that are intuitively behavioral and do not contribute to well-being - are also determinates of the determinable *genuine-attraction*. Moreover, as previously discussed, we want our account to be able to say that cool, calm desires (like the ones that Stoicus has) count as *genuine-attraction* ones. But the appeal to determinates and determinables makes no progress in this regard. Why would *calm-desire* and *excitable-desire* both be determinates of *genuine-attraction desire*, but *radio-man-desire* not be? If the distinction between *genuine-attraction* and behavioral desires is viable, we need a principled way to answer that question, and we quite simply do not have it.

3.4 Conceptual Unity by Appeal to Satisfaction

Instead of thinking that there is something about the desire itself that characterizes *genuine-attraction desires*, maybe we should instead turn to the way the subject is disposed

to react upon having her desire knowingly satisfied.³⁶ Perhaps the mark of a genuine-attraction desire is that one is disposed to feel pleasure when and because the desire is satisfied. Behavioral desires, then, would be desires for which that is not the case. Not only would this approach allow us to avoid saying that genuine-attraction desires are united by a shared phenomenology, it would also seemingly have the advantage of being able to count Stoicus' desires as genuine-attraction ones. It could account for the fact that he takes a calm, cool, contented pleasure in the satisfaction of his prudentially beneficial desires, while accommodating others who take a more violent pleasure in the satisfaction of theirs.

The trouble with this approach is that it simply pushes back the problems with which we are now familiar. If the taking of pleasure is going to play such a large role in determining whether something is a genuine-attraction desire, then we need to know more about the nature of the pleasure in question. This can be analyzed either phenomenologically or attitudinally.

Let us consider the former option first. On this approach, all pleasures share a felt quality. If genuine-attraction desires are ones for which the individual is disposed to take pleasure when and because the desire is satisfied, then we are still stuck with the conclusion that each instance of desire-benefit shares a felt quality.³⁷ This is the original version of the heterogeneity objection.

³⁶ Thank you to Hille Paakkunainen and Robert Shaver for this suggestion.

³⁷ Perhaps it is not accurate to say that each instance of desire-benefit would have this felt-quality, since our account only requires that the agent be disposed to take pleasure when and because the desire is satisfied. That leaves room for the possibility that she will sometimes not experience pleasure upon the satisfaction of the desire. I do not think that anything important hinges on this.

On the latter approach, the pleasure that the person is disposed to experience upon the satisfaction of her desire is analyzed attitudinally. Attitudinal theorists deny the claim that all pleasures are conceptually united by a felt quality. Instead they hold, roughly, that what all pleasures have in common is that the agent in question has an intrinsic and concurrent attitude of the right sort towards a sensation, experience, or state of affairs. So, on this picture, the agent is disposed to adopt a favoring attitude upon the satisfaction of her genuine-attraction desires.

We run into trouble on this approach once we notice that we should want to restrict which attitudes count in a way that parallels our attempts to restrict which desires count. It seems as though there must be some restrictions on this front, or else we will be faced with some of the problems (or analogous ones) that we set out to avoid. For instance, imagine that upon the satisfaction of their desires, a person is compulsively disposed to adopt a favoring attitude towards turning on radios. This would mean that, for this person, a genuine-attraction desire would be analyzed in terms of a compulsive desire. This is clearly unsatisfactory in part because it eschews the notion of genuine appeal altogether. It allows compulsive attitudes, for example, to determine whether a person experiences a genuine-attraction desire, which is the kind of result that we were aiming to avoid.

Perhaps we could restrict what the attitude in question can be directed towards so as to rule out the compulsive turning on of radios. For instance, we might say that the attitude needs to be directed at a sensation. It seems to me as though this is missing the mark. The problem with the possibility that the satisfaction of desires can cause a person to compulsively adopt favoring attitudes towards the turning on of radios is not due to the

nature of turning on radios; it is instead due to the nature of compulsive attitudes. Even if we were to say that the attitude that we are interested in needs to be one directed towards a sensation, for instance, we meet trouble. Maybe the person compulsively adopts a favoring attitude toward whichever sensation she experiences upon the satisfaction of her desire. The problem is that the attitude is compulsive, and thus not reflective of what the person finds genuinely appealing. It is a hopeless endeavor to attempt to analyze genuine-attraction desires by appealing to attitudes that are not themselves restricted by genuine appeal. But, of course, any attempt to restrict those attitudes by genuine appeal puts us back at square one.³⁸

3.5 Dimensional Conceptual Unity

I should note here that Heathwood briefly considers the thought that there is one type of thing - desire - that varies along two dimensions, influence on the will and violence.³⁹ On this reading, there is no fundamental difference in kind between genuine-attraction and behavioral desires, since they are, fundamentally, both desires. The thought would be that when desires increase in magnitude of violence, they count as genuine-attraction, and when they only influence our will, they count as behavioral. Unfortunately, this doesn't help matters. Stoicus' desires would only count as behavioral. Genuine-attraction desires would all involve violence either phenomenologically or otherwise. If phenomenologically, then

³⁸ There is also the possibility that genuine-attraction desires and the pleasure one is disposed to take upon their satisfaction stand in a metaphysically interdependent relationship such that each is analyzable only in terms of the other. My tentative doubt about the prospect of such an approach as it relates to genuine-attraction desires is that it leaves too much unexplained, but much would depend on the details of the account. Though that is beyond the scope of this paper, see Jan Swiderski (2022) for a helpful overview of different approaches to metaphysical coherentism. Thank you to Hille Paakkunainen for this suggestion.

³⁹ Heathwood (2019), p. 675.

heterogeneity. If non-phenomenologically, then we would be in need of an account of what this amounts to.

3.6 Conceptual Unity by Appeal to Genuine-Attraction

It might be tempting to think that what genuine-attraction desires have in common is simply that they involve genuine attraction while behavioral desires lack genuine attraction. But how can we tell that a desire to spend the afternoon meditating involves genuine attraction and that the desire to futz around with radio knobs does not? How do we know that Stoicus' unruffled desires are of the same kind as the more excitable desires (and of a different kind than the ones experienced by Quinn's radio man)? Without further explanation, this approach is unsatisfactory and gains almost no argumentative traction. It seems to amount to little more than a table-pounding insistence that genuine-attraction desires are the ones whose satisfaction intuitively contributes to well-being, and the ones that lack genuine attraction are the ones that do not. If what we are after is an analysis of what it means to be genuinely attracted to something with the aim of plugging that analysis into a theory of well-being, to say only that genuine-attraction desires are ones whose satisfaction benefits does not provide an adequate picture.

4. Conclusion

GAT aims to provide an account of which desires count towards well-being by distinguishing between genuine-attraction and behavioral desires. Our examination of the Stoicus case illuminated the pressing need for a fleshed out account of what genuine-attraction desires amount to. If they are characterized in the way that Heathwood seemed to suggest - by appeal to a feather-ruffling phenomenology - then we cannot account for the

way in which the satisfaction of quieter desires intuitively contributes to well-being. The idea that genuine-attraction desires can be calm, too, is appealing, but by allowing for that possibility, we lose track of what is supposed to distinguish calm genuine-attraction desires from behavioral ones.

If there is some kind of phenomenology that serves to distinguish genuine-attraction desires from behavioral ones, then we are left with the counterintuitive result that each instance of desire-benefit shares a phenomenology. If, on the other hand, we turn away from phenomenology, then so, too, do we turn away from a much-needed account of what sets genuine-attraction desires apart from behavioral ones. We have no tools with which to claim that Quinn's radio-man is not genuinely attracted to the objects of his desire, but that Stoicus is attracted to the objects of his. This is particularly problematic for GAT because its *raison-d'être* is to provide those very tools. If GAT is meant to provide a distinction between the desires that count towards well-being and those that do not, we cannot simply accept that genuine-attraction desires are ones that involve genuine attraction without some further analysis of what that amounts to.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Thank you to Rowan Bell, Ben Bradley, Chris Heathwood, Anthony Kelley, Teresa Bruno Niño, Hille Paakkunainen, David Pizarro, Robert Shaver, David Sobel, Joseph Van Weelden, and Preston Werner for their helpful comments and discussions, and to the attendants of the Syracuse University ABD works hop on this paper.

The Spirit of Resonance

Abstract: The Resonance Constraint holds that something can benefit someone only if it bears a connection to her favoring attitudes. It is widely taken as a decisive reason to reject non-attitudinal views of well-being since they do not guarantee such a connection. I aim to show that this is a mistake and that non-attitudinal hedonism about well-being can in fact meet The Constraint. First, I argue that the standard way of interpreting The Constraint - insofar as there is one - is misguided in its demandingness. I then introduce alternative interpretations and argue that the most plausible among them are compatible with non-attitudinal hedonism about well-being. The upshot is that, contrary to popular assumption, The Constraint does not provide us with a reason to favor subjective views of well-being.

0. Introduction

For many of us, the feeling of pleasure adds richness and enjoyment to our lives which would otherwise be intolerably monotonous. But what if a person likes that monotony? Is feeling pleasure good for her if she is utterly uninterested in it? Theories of well-being are often sorted into one of two camps, depending roughly on whether they require a person to have a favoring attitude towards that which is good for her. Call any theory that does not require such an attitude “objective,” and any theory that does, “subjective.”⁴¹ One seemingly persuasive reason to endorse a subjective account of well-being is the concern that objective accounts alienate a person from what is purported to be

⁴¹ A few (among many) theorists who employ this method of distinguishing between objective and subjective theories of well-being are Richard Arneson (1999), Dale Dorsey (2017), and L.W. Sumner (1996). This is admittedly a rough and imperfect distinction. Developing a more precise account is no doubt important, but this project merits (at least) its own paper. For more on this point, see Jason Raibley (2014) and David Sobel (1997).

good for her.⁴² The intuition that what is good for a person must resonate with her is widely seen as a reason to favor subjective views of well-being over objective ones.⁴³

Though the thought that one's welfare goods must resonate with her - The Resonance Constraint - is powerful in its appeal, it is exceedingly difficult to come up with a precise formulation of it upon which people can agree.⁴⁴ For now, suffice it to say that, of views of well-being, resonance requires a necessary connection between a person's welfare goods and her favoring attitudes.⁴⁵ In this paper, I advance three previously overlooked arguments to show that non-attitudinal hedonism about well-being meets The Resonance Constraint, and moreover, that it has a *prima facie* advantage over subjectivism in capturing a new kind of resonance. First, I argue that the standard way of interpreting resonance - insofar as there is one - is misguided in its demandingness, and that capturing the spirit of The Constraint requires something weaker. I then propose alternatives, and argue that non-attitudinal hedonism - or "objective hedonism" - about well-being can meet the most plausible candidates.⁴⁶ Lastly, I present a previously neglected additional resonance constraint on theories of well-being. I argue that if we are compelled by the original

⁴² For a number of theories which hold that a person must, in some sense, endorse what is intrinsically good for her, see, for example Richard Brandt (1979), Dale Dorsey (2012), James Griffin (1986), Richard Hare (1981), Shelly Kagan (1989), Peter Railton (1986), Connie Rosati (1996), Henry Sidgwick (1907), and Sumner (1996).

⁴³ For a compelling argument that resonance does not in fact tell in favor of subjective views, see Teresa Bruno Niño (2022). Additionally, Guy Fletcher (2013) argues that the goods included on his objective-list theory are ones that meet The Constraint.

⁴⁴ The thought that there must be a connection between a person and her welfare goods is often also referred to as "The Alienation Constraint." I think that there is somewhat of an important difference between the two. I explore this point in more detail in section 4.

⁴⁵ For a defense of the view that resonance need not involve a necessary connection, see Wall & Sobel (2021).

⁴⁶ It should be noted that I will not argue for the claim that non-attitudinal views of pleasure are the correct views. My argument is rather that if one is already attracted to non-attitudinal views of pleasure and hedonism about well-being, they should not be discouraged by The Resonance Constraint.

constraint, then we, too, have reason to be compelled by the new one because it is motivated by some of the same concerns that support the original. I end by noting that this kind of resonance is “built into” objective hedonistic accounts of well-being, but not into subjective ones. If I am right that objective hedonists can meet the original constraint, that they have a *prima facie* advantage over subjectivists in meeting the new kind of resonance constraint, and that the new constraint is animated by resonance concerns, then we are left with the surprising conclusion that objective hedonists are at least as well-placed as subjectivists to meet the spirit of resonance.

1. Pleasure

So, why is it widely believed that The Constraint threatens objective hedonism? Objective hedonism is the view that a person is doing well to the extent that she experiences non-attitudinal pleasure, and that she is doing poorly to the extent that she experiences non-attitudinal pain. Since the view holds that the sensation of pleasure is good for a person regardless of her attitudes towards experiencing it, it is easy to see how it might be dismissed by anyone compelled by The Constraint. It is thought that objective hedonism simply does not guarantee a connection between a person’s favoring attitudes and pleasure. There is, however, a type of view about the nature of pleasure that does. Before getting to the heart of what I aim to establish, allow me to briefly set the stage by outlining different kinds of hedonism about well-being to show that my view is unique in its ambition to establish that a truly objective hedonist account of well-being is not - contrary to widespread belief - subject to the objection that it cannot meet The Constraint.

Attitudinal theories of pleasure roughly hold that something is a pleasure for a person only if it is connected in the right way to her favoring attitudes.⁴⁷ What makes something a pleasure? Theories under this heading hold that pleasures are (at least in part) determined by a person's attitude (as an intrinsic response to a phenomenology, experience, object, or state of affairs). A pleasure is a pleasure because the agent likes, desires, enjoys, or values it. Because, on these accounts, favoring attitudes are necessarily involved in pleasure, theories of well-being that employ them are likely to be able to meet The Resonance Constraint.

By way of contrast, felt-quality theories of pleasure hold that what all pleasures have in common is the way they feel.⁴⁸ There are two different types of felt-quality theories of pleasure: the distinctive-feeling view and the hedonic tone view. On the distinctive-feeling view, what all pleasures have in common is a particular pleasant feeling.⁴⁹ According to these theories, a distinct feeling of pleasure is present in pleasant experiences as disparate as eating ice cream and falling in love. The hedonic tone view rejects the notion that there is one particular feeling common to all pleasures, but instead holds that there is a *kind* of feeling that permeates all pleasant experiences. On the hedonic tone view, what they all share is a

⁴⁷ Some proponents of the attitudinal view of pleasure (also sometimes referred to as “the motivational view of pleasure”) include William Alston (1967), Thomas Carson (2000), Fred Feldman (2004), Chris Heathwood (2006), Derek Parfit (1984). For an argument that there is more to pain (which is commonly taken as just the opposite of pleasure) than hedonic tone and motivational states, see Corns (2014).

⁴⁸ One might say that on attitudinal accounts, what all pleasures have in common is something about the way that they feel; namely, they feel “liked”. Importantly, though, many proponents of attitudinal accounts would reject this because one motivation for adopting an attitudinal account is the view that there is no common feeling that all pleasures share.

⁴⁹ To the best of my knowledge, the only person to have explicitly advocated for the distinctive-feeling theory is Bramble (2013). In footnote 2, p. 202, Bramble cites Moore (1903, §12) as a possible exception.

particular pleasant “tone.”⁵⁰ Both varieties of this approach accept the claim that you can feel pleasure without having a favoring attitude towards anything.

My project here is not to defend the claim that a hedonic view of well-being that employs an attitudinal view of pleasure can meet The Constraint.⁵¹ Instead, I argue for the previously undefended claim that the objective hedonist who employs a felt-quality view of pleasure - either the distinctive-feeling or the hedonic tone view - can meet it. In what follows, when I discuss pleasure or hedonism, I am referring to these two felt-quality, non-attitudinal accounts of pleasure.

2. Resonance and the Core Intuition

Some argue that we should not accept resonance as a constraint for theories of well-being.⁵² For the purposes of this paper, though, I am going to assume that any plausible theory of well-being must meet some version of it. Though The Constraint plays a central role in determining which theories of well-being get off the ground, pinning down *exactly* what it requires is notoriously difficult. Here is Railton’s seminal statement on the subject:

...it does seem to me to capture an important feature of the concept of intrinsic value to say that what is intrinsically valuable for a person must have a connection with what he would find in some degree compelling or attractive, at least if he were rational and aware. It would be an intolerably alienated conception of someone’s good to imagine that it might fail in any such way to engage him.⁵³

⁵⁰ For discussions of the hedonic tone view, see C.D. Broad (1930), Roger Crisp (2006), Karl Duncker (1941), Kagan (1992), and Aaron Smuts (2011).

⁵¹ For the sake of clarity, I should also note that I am not arguing that a phenomenological view of pleasure is the correct view of pleasure. Instead, my aim is to show that *if* the hedonist were to accept a phenomenological view of pleasure, she could meet The Resonance Constraint.

⁵² See Sarch (2011) for an argument against it.

⁵³ Railton (1986), p. 9.

Rosati is another spearhead of the thought that welfare goods must resonate. She adds that a person's goods must be "made for" or "suited to" her, and that a good can only satisfy those criteria if it "lies within her motivational capacity."⁵⁴

The trouble is that the claim that what is good for a person must have a connection with her favoring attitudes leaves open several important questions. To start, what should the connection look like? One way of understanding it is as a requirement that a person have an actual (rather than idealized) favoring attitude directed at that from which she benefits. But perhaps idealized attitudes should count. We also might want to leave open the possibility that something can benefit someone if it bears a less direct connection to her attitudes. And what is it exactly that should bear the connection to attitudes? To require that someone be moved by each token instance of benefit is quite a different thing from requiring that it be *the kind of thing* that lies within her motivational capacity. What does it mean for something to lie within a person's motivational capacity? Does she need to actually have favoring attitudes towards her goods, or is it enough that she *could* in some circumstances? Which circumstances matter? Which attitudes matter?

Some of these questions are explicitly addressed in the literature, but some of them have received surprisingly little consideration.⁵⁵ No one set of answers enjoys consensus or dominance. As such, it is somewhat misleading to refer to "the" resonance constraint when what we really have is more like a set of various constraints that are motivated by the vague

⁵⁴ Rosati (1996), pp. 298-9.

⁵⁵ See Bruno Niño (2022), Dorsey (2017), and Anthony Kelley (2020) for the most thorough existing examinations of resonance and alienation since the seminal texts by Railton and Rosati.

intuition that a person's attitudes must have something to do with what is good for her.⁵⁶ That they are all understood to be variations of The Resonance Constraint, however, indicates that there is some core, less precise intuition that animates them all. Call this the "core intuition".⁵⁷ What is important, then, is not whether a view of well-being can meet one of the existing variants of The Constraint, but whether it can meet the core intuition. (In what follows, when I use the terms "resonance" or "The Resonance Constraint", I mean to refer to the core intuition, since it is it that should be guiding us in our theorizing.) As such, we should try to figure out what the core intuition actually amounts to, insofar as doing so is possible. Our aim is to unearth the common idea that gives rise to the variants of The Constraint. The core intuition should thus be compatible with the more precise variants of the case. There is something that it means to be in the ballpark of resonance, and the core intuition should draw the boundaries of that park.

2.1 Desiderata

So what *is* the core intuition? To get it into view, it will be helpful to set forth desiderata. I expand on each of these in the next section, but for now, a quick sketch will do.

The most important thing that the core intuition must be able to do is to capture the heart of resonance. It should account for what people have been gesturing towards when they appeal to it. Thus emerges our first desideratum:

Desideratum 1: The core intuition must capture the spirit of resonance.

⁵⁶ See Kelley (2020) and Wall & Sobel (2021), p. 2846 for similar points.

⁵⁷ Rosati (1996) calls this thought, or something quite like it, "the principal intuition."

Next, because the widespread intuitive pull of the core intuition is an essential part of what makes it so powerful - and what allows it to unify the various iterations of 'The Constraint' - it should be compatible with a variety of theories of welfare. Consider, for instance, what the core intuition should say about which attitudes to count. Imagine that we were to specify that only relatively cognitively sophisticated valuing attitudes matter to resonance.⁵⁸ Fleshing out resonance in this way would mean that a (subjectivist) view like desire-satisfactionism would not be able to meet 'The Constraint'. Since a person's desires can come apart from what she values, desire-satisfactionism leaves room for the possibility that a person is benefited by something which she does not value, thus violating the version of 'The Constraint' currently under consideration. But that this version of 'The Constraint' is incompatible with desire-satisfactionism - a paradigmatic subjectivist view - should give us pause. 'The Constraint' is treated in the literature as a reason to favor subjective views of well-being over objective ones. Chris Heathwood, for example, writes, "The most important [motivation for desire-satisfactionism], in my view, is internalism about well-being, or 'The Resonance Constraint'."⁵⁹ Dorsey goes so far as to say, "Indeed, it is a little hard to see what might motivate subjectivism were one to jettison *The Constraint*."⁶⁰ Because 'The Constraint' is meant to provide support for subjectivism, it should at the very least be compatible with the most common subjectivist theories. This gives us the next two desiderata:

⁵⁸ Dorsey (2017, 2021) defends the view that, for valuers, resonance requires a connection to valuing attitudes.

⁵⁹ Heathwood (2019), p. 676.

⁶⁰ Dorsey (2017), p. 688.

Desideratum 2: The core intuition must have widespread intuitive appeal.

Desideratum 3: The core intuition must not rule out the most common forms of subjectivism.

Lastly, while the intuition behind The Constraint must be broad enough to support different kinds of subjectivism, it must be distinct from subjectivism itself in order to avoid begging the question against objectivists. One common way of *defining* subjective views of well-being - at least in part - is that they require the well-being subject to have some kind of positive attitude toward her welfare goods. Notice that this definition of subjectivism is incredibly similar to The Constraint itself.⁶¹ Since the intuition that a person must have a favoring attitude towards her welfare goods is meant to *provide support* for subjectivism, the intuition should not just be in essence a restatement of the theory if it is to gain dialectical traction. It would be analogous to a felt-quality hedonist proposing a constraint which held that nothing can benefit a person unless it had a pleasant felt-quality. There needs to be some distance between the view and the intuition that provides support for it. Relatedly, at the risk of being vacuous, the intuition cannot be so broad as to support all views of well-being. Our last two desiderata are thus as follows:

Desideratum 4: The core intuition must be distinct from subjectivism itself.

Desideratum 5: The core intuition must rule out some types of views about well-being.

2.2 The Standard Interpretation

⁶¹ Dorsey (2017), p. 688 makes this same point in footnote 8. See also Dorsey (2021), p. 84.

With these desiderata in mind, we can now move on to consider descriptions of what resonance aims to capture. As previously mentioned, Railton holds that a person must find her welfare goods to be “...in some degree compelling or attractive,” and that the welfare goods must “engage” the subject.⁶² Rosati (1996) argues that there must be the right kind of motivational link between a person and her welfare goods. She thinks that there must be a “fit” between the person and what benefits her. Sumner holds that your well-being must “depend on your own concerns: the things you care about, attach importance to, regard as mattering, and so on.”⁶³ Heathwood writes that “it is hard to believe that we can benefit someone by giving her things with which she is utterly unimpressed and in which she will remain forever uninterested.”⁶⁴ Dorsey (2017) argues that the best way to interpret The Constraint is as requiring a “kinship” relation (i.e., a positively valenced relation) between a subject and her welfare goods. He thinks that for valuers, that relation amounts to a valuing attitude. In describing a position held by Ronald Dworkin (1990), Wall & Sobel write that resonance has been taken to require that “no one’s life can be made better against the grain of his convictions.”⁶⁵ One thing to note about these descriptions is the pervasiveness of metaphors (welfare goods must resonate, fit, bear a kinship relationship to, and not go against the grain). While the use of these metaphors is illustrative and helpful (since it is difficult to describe exactly what The Constraint is trying to get at), it also leaves the waters quite murky. What *is* (relatively) clear is that resonance requires there to be some kind of

⁶² Railton (1986), p. 9.

⁶³ Sumner (1996), p. 42

⁶⁴ Heathwood (2016), p. 137.

⁶⁵ Wall & Sobel (2021), p. 2842.

necessary connection between a person's favoring attitudes and that person's basic, intrinsic welfare goods.⁶⁶ What we should take that requirement to necessitate, exactly, is still an open question - one to which we will return in the next section.⁶⁷ To proceed, allow me to put forth one way of fleshing out The Constraint which, to my mind, is often implicitly assumed in discussions about resonance and alienation. In what follows, I argue that this assumed version is mistaken, and that we must take resonance to require something different.

One might think that in order to capture the spirit of resonance, it must be that in every token instance of benefit, the person has a favoring attitude directed towards that particular instance. Imagine that Amelie desires to experience pleasures in her life. She has a favoring attitude towards pleasure *as a kind*. One day while in a foul mood, she experiences pleasure from the warmth of the sun on her cheek but does not adopt a favoring attitude towards that token experience. This approach tells us that Amelie cannot have benefitted from that experience of pleasure because it did not resonate with her. Call the following interpretation of the core intuition the "standard interpretation:"

The Standard Interpretation: A token instance x of the kind y is intrinsically good for S only if S has a pro-attitude towards x .

⁶⁶ There is a way of cashing out resonance that doesn't require a person to have a favoring attitude towards what benefits her, as long as a favoring attitude is involved in the welfare good. Fletcher (2013), for instance, thinks that pleasure is on the objective list of what benefits a person. Though items on the list benefit regardless of a person's attitudes towards them, he argues that because (in his view) a favoring attitude is a necessary component of pleasure, resonance is met. The same strategy can be applied to "combo" (rather than object) desire-satisfaction views (see Joseph Van Weelden, 2019 for a helpful discussion of the differences between these two variants). I am sympathetic to this approach, but for the purposes of this paper, I set aside this complication.

⁶⁷ Wall & Sobel (2021), p. 2846 argue that the "general idea of resonance" is one that does not in fact require a necessary connection.

I argue that we should reject the standard interpretation in favor of a view of resonance which leaves open the possibility that S can benefit from a token instance x of a kind y even when she does not have a favoring attitude towards x, provided that either x or y bears a (less demanding) connection to her favoring attitudes.

3. Against the Standard Interpretation

The standard interpretation is wrong if we think the core intuition is compatible with at least one of the following interpretations of resonance:

- (a) x is intrinsically good for S only if x is a token of the *kind of thing* y, and S has a favoring attitude towards y;
- (b) x is intrinsically good for S only if x is a token of the kind of thing y, and y bears a non-accidental connection to S's pro-attitudes, or
- (c) x is intrinsically good for S only if S *can be* motivated by x.⁶⁸

I contend that if, instead of the standard interpretation, we take the core intuition to require one of these less demanding versions, we are better able to meet desiderata 1-4, and that we are equally able to meet desideratum 5. I go on to argue that we should prefer (b) and (c) to (a).

One last technical note before we proceed. For the purposes of this paper, when I refer to a person's motivations or to her motivational profile, I am employing what Rosati refers to as "motivation in the broad sense." She writes,

In this sense, to motivate is to prompt or elicit a proattitude - such as desiring, liking, being glad of, caring about, and so on - an attitude which may or may not be a motive to action. To say that something must motivate, in the broad sense, to be part of a

⁶⁸ Though I do not think that this is an exhaustive list of the other ways that resonance might be fleshed out, I do take these to be the most plausible approaches.

person's good, is to say that it must be something that can, in a positive way, matter to her or be an object of her concern.⁶⁹

Obviously, because we are appealing to what a person *can* care about, or to what *can* matter to her, we need at least a vague understanding of what that amounts to. Again here, I follow Rosati's lead. She notes that one possible way of cashing this out is to hold the strict view that a person can care about something only if she can now care about it "without what we would intuitively regard as a marked alteration to her present condition."⁷⁰ But, as she points out, that interpretation is too strict to be supported by the intuition that drives The Resonance Constraint. She goes on to argue that we must view the relevant "capacity to care counterfactually, while constraining counterfactual conditions so that they permit as possible goods for a person only what can recognizably fit or suit her."⁷¹ While this still leaves important questions of what it means for something to *recognizably* fit or suit someone (questions to which Rosati provides her own answers), this sketch will have to suffice for our purposes. The counterfactual conditions that we invoke must be ones that allow room for the person to not care, in her present state, about the welfare good in question, while not being so permissive that they include conditions in which the person would only care about the good in question by undergoing changes which would render her unrecognizable.

3.1 Desideratum 1

The biggest hurdle in moving from the standard interpretation to something weaker is the concern that, in doing so, we lose an important facet of the spirit of resonance; in

⁶⁹ Rosati (1996), p. 301.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 303.

⁷¹ Ibid.

other words, that we fail to meet desideratum 1. The worry is that resonance really does necessitate a favoring attitude towards each token instance of benefit, and to give that up would be to betray the intuition that was so compelling in the first place. I aim to show that we need not worry. I think that the core intuition - the spirit of resonance - is weaker than the standard interpretation would have it, and that (b) or (c) of the above options is our best bet. Before I argue that we should employ (b) or (c), allow me to motivate the idea that any of the three interpretations would fare better than the standard one.

To do so, it will be helpful to revisit comments by Railton and Rosati, both of whom are respected in the literature as authorities on resonance. Railton writes, “what is intrinsically valuable for a person must have a connection with what he would find in some degree compelling or attractive, at least if he were rational and aware.”⁷² Rosati holds that one’s welfare goods must be “made for” or “suited to” her, and that a good can only satisfy those criteria if it “lies within her motivational capacity.”⁷³ It seems to me that interpretations (a)-(c) are all compatible with these comments on resonance. Railton’s seminal statement on the matter simply requires “a connection” between a person’s attitudes and her welfare goods. Interpretations (a)-(c) all require there to be a connection. They also all capture the thought that a person’s welfare goods must be “made for” or “suited to” them. Additionally, (a)-(c) all seem to appeal to the person’s motivational capacity. Consider the following from Rosati: “... as long as we *can* care about or like or be glad of something once we acquire or experience it, this seems enough to satisfy the intuition behind

⁷² Railton (1986), p. 9.

⁷³ Rosati (1996), p. 298-9.

[resonance].”⁷⁴ While (c) is obviously a restatement of Rosati’s thought here, what she says generally supports a more lenient constraint than the standard interpretation. As we saw before, she argues that we must understand what we “can care about” counterfactually, which is a deliberate attempt to avoid an overly demanding view of what is required by resonance.

But perhaps we should not put so much weight on these statements. Even so, I contend that we have good reason to think that the core intuition needs to be less demanding than the standard interpretation says it is. Here is a case that I take to motivate interpretation (a) of the core intuition behind resonance, which holds that *x* is intrinsically good for *S* only if *x* is a token of the *kind of thing* *y*, and *S* has a favoring attitude towards *y*. Imagine that David deeply values acquiring knowledge. After careful consideration, he concludes that knowledge acquisition is an essential part of a good life for him. He structures his life so as to increase the chances that he will gain knowledge: he buys encyclopedias and leaves them around the house with the hopes of encouraging his future self of picking them up, he makes a point to do an hour of research every night before sleeping, and he only maintains friendships with people who are particularly fond of imparting knowledge over coffee. He has been doing this for years, and he is unwaveringly pleased with himself for living his life the way that he has. In almost every case, when he learns something new, he is glad and enthusiastic about it. One day, though, he is sick and tired with the flu, and after having read an entry in one of his encyclopedias, he lacks a favoring attitude of any sort

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 301. The italics are mine.

towards what he learned. Perhaps he fails to adopt any kind of attitude at all, or perhaps he adopts one of equanimity.⁷⁵

It is one thing to hold that the acquisition of knowledge is good for a person who has never and will never have any semblance of a favoring attitude towards acquiring knowledge, and quite another to hold that some particular instance of acquiring knowledge is good for a person like David who cares deeply about acquiring knowledge, generally, even if he, in this token instance, lacks a favoring attitude toward it. A salient difference between these two views seems to be that the former does not concern itself with resonance and that the latter does. But if this is true, then the standard interpretation is wrong. The standard interpretation of the core intuition tells us that resonance is every-time-or-nothing. If each token instance of benefit were to require a concurrent favoring attitude, then the difference between the former and the latter above positions could not be found in resonance. To be clear, I am not arguing that David is benefitted by the anomalous acquisition of knowledge towards which he does not have a favoring attitude. I am simply pointing out that someone who holds that he *is* benefitted (in part because the acquisition of knowledge matters greatly to him, generally) is more justified in claiming that their view respects resonance than someone who thinks that we can be benefitted by things towards which we are always indifferent. A theory that claims that David is always benefitted by acquiring knowledge (in part) because of his attitudes towards the acquisition of knowledge, generally, can plausibly

⁷⁵ I am deeply indebted to Teresa Bruno Niño, Anthony Kelley, and Joseph Van Weelden for our many helpful discussions of cases like this.

claim that it respects resonance. Whether this kind of view is correct is besides the point. The point is that it should be able to stake a claim to resonance.

Similarly, consider motivation for interpretation (b), which, again, holds that x is intrinsically good for S only if x is a token of the kind of thing y, and y bears a non-accidental connection to S's pro-attitudes. Imagine a theory according to which making art benefits a person who is always happiest *while* making art (in part *because* she is happiest while making it), even if she decidedly lacks a pro-attitude towards making art itself (maybe she thinks it is a useless waste of time). Contrast this with a perfectionist view which holds that developing one's capacities benefits her, even if she is miserable every time she works on said development. Again, there is an intuitively striking difference in resonance between these two views. The former view is tailored to the welfare subject - it is suited to her - in a way that the latter view just is not.

Finally, we do not have to look far to consider motivation for (c), which states that x is intrinsically good for S only if S *can be* motivated by x. Idealizing subjectivists roughly hold that in order for an agent to benefit from something x, the actual agent herself need not have a favoring attitude towards x, but it needs to be true that she *would* have a favoring attitude towards x if some set of idealized conditions were realized (usually rationality and full-information are required).⁷⁶ (Note that this view is incompatible with the standard interpretation of resonance.⁷⁷ Because that which S has a favoring attitude towards can come

⁷⁶ See, for example, Sidgwick (1907), pp. 111–12; Richard Brandt (1979), pp. 10, 113, 329; John Harsanyi (1973), p. 55; John Rawls (1971), pp. 407–24; Hare (1981), pp. 101–5 and pp. 214–16; Douglas Senor, N. Fotion, and Hare (1990), pp. 217–18; Railton (1986), pp. 5–29; David Gauthier (1986), chap. 2; Griffin (1986), pp. 11–17; and Kagan (1989), pp. 283–91. I have taken these sources from David Sobel (2009), footnote 3, pp. 337–8. See also Rosati (1996).

⁷⁷ See Rosati (1996) and Sobel (1994).

apart from that which S^* has a pro-attitude towards (where S^* is the idealized agent), idealizing subjectivists will need to say that S is benefitted by instances towards which she does not have a pro-attitude.⁷⁸

There is at least one idealizing subjectivist view, however, that is compatible with (c). Rosati's two-tier internalism is an idealizing view which very roughly holds that things can benefit a person even when the actual person does not care about the good in question. As long as she *can care* about it under a restricted set of counterfactual conditions, then she can benefit from it. Because Rosati's view was built to respect resonance, it should be uncontroversial to say that it resonates more than a view which holds that, say, it benefits a person to wear green shirts on Thursdays, regardless of her attitudes.

One might object here that our intuitions that some views do better according to resonance are not evidence that those views in fact resonate, but rather that they come closer to resonating than the views with which I have contrasted them. But there is an important difference between the questions "Does it resonate?" and "Does it maximally resonate?" It seems to me that to demand that a view maximally resonate is to shift the goalpost. The aim should instead be to stave off views which purport that a person can be benefitted by things from which she is utterly disconnected. We want to capture the thought that what is good for a person should not leave her completely cold. The concept of resonance was never

⁷⁸ For a defense of the view that what S has a pro-attitude towards can be radically different from what S^* has a pro-attitude towards, see Rosati (1996) and Sobel (1994).

meant to - and should not aim to - ensure that theories of well-being deliver as much resonance as possible. At the very least, an argument for that claim is entirely lacking.⁷⁹

The above considerations give us good reason to think that the standard interpretation of the core intuition is wrong. The core intuition of resonance is not that we need to, in each token instance of benefit, have a favoring attitude. It is more forgiving than that. If I have succeeded at showing that it is more lenient than the standard interpretation says it is, then we have good reason to think that something less demanding than the standard interpretation is well-positioned to do a *better* job at capturing the spirit of resonance - which is what desideratum 1 aims to do.

3.2 Desideratum 2

The second desideratum holds that the core intuition must have widespread intuitive appeal. A surefire way that the core intuition could appeal to a wider variety of theorists is for it to be inclusive of more theories. Because my proposal is that the core intuition requires something less demanding than the standard interpretation, there is more room for it to accommodate a greater number of theories. In a short while, I will show how it is compatible with hedonism about well-being, but there is no reason to think that its expansion is limited to that. Much will depend on precisely how we flesh out the core constraint once we've done away with the standard interpretation, but, at least in principle, the less demanding the requirement, the easier it is to meet, and the easier it is to meet, the greater the number of theorists on board.

⁷⁹ To complicate matters, there is, of course, also the possibility that what resonance requires is somewhere between what I am suggesting and maximal resonance. My view is that this, too, requires argumentation. It strikes me as unlikely that we might find a non-arbitrary place at which to draw the line.

3.3 Desideratum 3

Desideratum 3 holds that the core intuition must not rule out the most common forms of subjectivism. Because (a)-(c) are weaker than the standard interpretation, they include all the views that it does, and then some. By dint of their being less demanding, they are compatible with all the forms of subjectivism that the standard interpretation is. In fact, at least two paradigmatic subjectivist views are arguably incompatible with the standard interpretation. Feldman (2004), for instance, has a well-known view of pleasure according to which pleasure is a composite of a favoring attitude and the object or state of affairs towards which that attitude is directed. For Feldman, the value of pleasure lies in the attitude. This attitude is valuable even without another attitude directed at it. As such, his view is incompatible with the standard interpretation, since it requires there to be a favoring attitude directed towards each instance of *that which benefits*.

Because a weaker interpretation of the core intuition could allow for the possibility that it would suffice for a favoring attitude to be in the vicinity of one's welfare goods, it might be able to accommodate a view like Feldman's. Much depends on the details, but were we to go with interpretation (b) or (c), there is at least *a case to be made* that Feldman's view meets resonance. Since (a) - which holds that a person must have a favoring attitude towards the *kind of thing* that benefits - still requires the person to have a favoring attitude towards that which benefits, it cannot accommodate Feldman's view. More promisingly, (b) holds that our welfare goods must bear a non-accidental connection to our favoring attitudes. Because Feldman's view guarantees that a favoring attitude is non-accidentally involved in each instance of benefit, it is compatible with (b). Whether his view can meet (c) is a bit

trickier to suss out, but there is a case to be made that it can. The thought is that it seems plausible to say that we *can be* motivated by or glad of our favoring attitudes (without undergoing a transformation so radical that it would render us unrecognizable). If what benefits is the attitude itself, and we can be motivated by or glad of our favoring attitudes, then (c) is satisfied.

There is also the complicated question of how idealizing subjectivist views do by resonance. While I do not have the space to adequately address the many nuances of this topic, I will briefly note here that if we want our conception of resonance to be compatible with idealizing subjectivist views, then our best bet is, again, either interpretation (b) or (c). As we saw before, a person's attitudes can look very different before and after idealization. Imagine Oliver, who, as he is, does not have a favoring attitude towards friendship, but who would after undergoing idealization. According to both the standard interpretation and interpretation (a), friendship does not resonate with Oliver. The standard interpretation requires one to have a favoring attitude towards each token benefit. Interpretation (a) requires one to have favoring attitudes towards the *kind of thing* that benefits them. By stipulation, Oliver does not have either kind of attitude. Interpretation (b), however, only requires a non-accidental connection between the subject's attitudes and the welfare good. Because there is a non-accidental connection between Oliver's actual attitudes and his idealized ones (indeed, his actual attitudes in part *shape* his idealized ones), idealizing views are compatible with (b).

Again here, whether idealizing views meet (c) is more complicated. Interpretation (c) requires that the agent *be capable* of having a pro-attitude towards that which benefits her.

Whether a person can care about what her idealized self cares about (without undergoing a change that would render her unrecognizable) is contested in the literature, but it is ultimately likely to depend on details that are beyond the scope of this paper. It is far less controversial, though, to think that Rosati's particular idealizing view - which roughly requires the agent to endorse the conditions of her idealization - can meet The Resonance Constraint. Rosati's view takes as its starting point that a welfare subject has to be capable of caring about her welfare goods (which is exactly what interpretation (c) requires). Interpretation (c) thus delivers the verdict that Rosati's idealizing view resonates.

We want our analysis of resonance to be compatible with paradigmatic subjectivist views. While it is not clear that Feldman's view is subjectivist, it is clear that his view has more to say by way of resonance than a view that is divorced from a person's attitudes completely. It seems to me that an adequate account of resonance requires that we account for this. In any case, Rosati's view is squarely subjectivist, yet incompatible with both the standard interpretation and interpretation (a). I take this to be a reason to reject both the standard interpretation and interpretation (a) in favor of either (b) or (c).

3. 4 Desideratum 4

Desideratum 4 holds that the core intuition must be distinct from subjectivism itself. The Resonance Constraint is used as a reason to reject objectivist views of well-being in favor of subjectivist ones. If we interpret the core intuition in a way that too closely parallels the way that we distinguish subjectivist theories from objectivist ones, then appealing to The Constraint in favor of subjectivism amounts to little more than a table-pounding insistence on the intuitiveness of the heart of subjectivism. Of course, the standard interpretation is not

a theory of well-being. It is a necessary condition, not a sufficient one. There is wiggle room to work out what is sufficient for benefit, to specify which attitudes are important to benefit, and to add other restrictions as one sees fit. But subjectivism is not by itself a fleshed-out theory of well-being either. It is a way of classifying views, especially by way of contrast with objectivist pictures.

Dale Dorsey (2021) classifies any view as subjectivist if it accepts what he calls the “Good-Value Link,” which roughly holds that if x is good for S only if and (at least in part) because S has a pro-attitude (under the right conditions) towards x .⁸⁰ But that is remarkably close to the standard interpretation, which holds that x is good for S only if S has a favoring attitude towards x . As Dorsey puts it,

... the nature of resonance of this sort requires some interpretation. And if we interpret it in a way that links resonance with valuing attitudes, it would seem that The Resonance Constraint is simply another way of stating the *Good-Value Link*. Now, this does not make it dialectically impotent, but we must admit that it does little more than simply asserting a bare intuition in favor of subjectivism. And this is unlikely, to say the least, to have a lot of argumentative traction.⁸¹

So, if our interpretation of The Resonance Constraint is too close to what the main tenet of subjectivism, then the support it can provide for the views that are compatible with it is limited. On the other hand, though, there really is something to the thought that an individual’s good should be suited to her; something that has dialectical heft in a way that is not captured by the standard interpretation.

⁸⁰ Dorsey (2021), p. 80. Dorsey does not mention pro-attitudes when he puts forth the Good-Value Link; he puts it in terms of valuing. For our purposes, that difference is unimportant. For rhetorical ease, I am employing pro-attitudes where Dorsey employs values.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 84.

By moving away from the standard interpretation to something more inclusive and less demanding, The Constraint gains argumentative traction. Interpretation (b) holds that there must be a non-accidental connection between the welfare subject and her goods. This is not just a restatement of the subjectivist picture because it is in principle compatible with other views of well-being. For instance, take a view which holds both that loving relationships are objectively good for a person and that they necessarily involve favoring attitudes.⁸² Interpretation (b) tells us that this view resonates because the welfare subject's attitudes are non-accidentally involved in each instance of benefit. Because (b) is compatible with views other than subjectivism, it is sufficiently distinct from subjectivism. Notice that (b) thus (somewhat counterintuitively) serves as stronger support for the subjectivist picture than the standard interpretation does because it provides more dialectical traction.

A similar story can be told about (c). In section 4, I argue that objective hedonism about well-being is compatible with both interpretations (b) and (c). For now, suffice it to note that those two interpretations are, at their core, more distinct from subjectivism than the standard interpretation. Subjectivism is not defined in terms of non-accidental connections and agents' capacities for caring. It is, however, in part defined in terms of agents' necessary favoring attitudes towards their welfare goods. My contention here is that interpretations (b) and (c) - in virtue of their separability from subjectivism itself - provide more dialectical traction for views with which they're compatible than the standard interpretation does.

3.5 Desideratum 5

⁸² Fletcher (2013) employs this kind of strategy in his defense of an objective-list theory.

The final desideratum holds that The Resonance Constraint must be able to rule out some theories of well-being. This desideratum is meant to ensure that The Constraint does not get watered down so much that it becomes powerless. It should not be so easy to meet that any view of well-being can do it. I think that it is fairly obvious that both (b) and (c) are not so permissive that they fail to rule out at least some views of well-being. Consider again an objective-list view which holds that knowledge benefits a person even if she is constitutionally incapable of caring about it. Both (b) and (c) deliver the verdict that this view does not resonate. By stipulation, there is no non-accidental connection between the welfare subject and her attitudes, and she is incapable of caring about the purported welfare good. Because (b) and (c) both rule out realistic theories of well-being, they meet the final desideratum.

4. Hedonism and Resonance

I hope to have established that there is good reason to think that the core intuition of resonance is less demanding than the standard interpretation would have it, and that adopting either interpretation (b) or (c) is our best way forward. I now aim to show that once we abandon the standard interpretation in favor of either, hedonism about well-being - one that employs either a distinctive-feeling or hedonic tone view of pleasure - is in fact well-positioned to meet The Resonance Constraint.

To see why, first consider the fairly obvious truth that there is a non-accidental link - as is required by (b) - between that from which a person derives pleasure and her likings,

interests, values, and desires.⁸³ If I am interested in listening to music, there is a good chance that something about hearing music causes me to feel pleasure. If I like the taste of chocolate, then it is exceedingly likely that eating it brings me pleasure. We like and desire things that cause us to experience pleasure. If resonance simply requires there to be a non-accidental link between a person's attitudes and her welfare goods, hedonism resonates because pleasure bears a non-accidental connection to that in which a person is interested, that by which she is motivated, and that which she likes. By way of contrast, there is no such link between, say, the acquisition of knowledge and a person's attitudes.

Consider Rhonda who is only interested in watching reality television. It is the only thing that she wants to do with her days, and she derives immense satisfaction from doing so. Imagine that someone interrupts her viewing to inform her that Caracas is the most populous city in Venezuela. A theory of welfare which holds that knowledge is an objective good tells us that the interruption benefits Rhonda, regardless of her attitudes towards this fact or the acquisition of facts generally. There is no connection, accidental or otherwise, between this purported welfare good and Rhonda's attitudes or motivational profile. Hedonism intuitively resonates more than this sort of theory, and a resonance constraint which requires a non-accidental connection captures that. If my reader is not convinced by this argument, then consider the following, which I take to be most important in establishing pleasure's non-accidental connection to welfare subjects (as well as in establishing that agents are capable of caring about pleasure, as required by interpretation (c)).

⁸³ This is obviously not to say that if a person likes something, she necessarily likes that thing in virtue of the pleasure that it brings her.

To see why pleasure bears a non-accidental connection to an agent's attitudes and why pleasure, by its nature, is something that agents are capable of caring about, we must only consider the following. There is simply no denying that pleasure plays an evolutionarily essential role with respect to our motivations. It is no coincidence that we experience pleasure from eating, sleeping, having sex, etc.⁸⁴ We simply *are* motivated by pleasure.⁸⁵ Our very survival as a species depends on it. It is the way that we are built. We are by no means the only organisms that have evolved the capacity to experience pleasure, and for that experience to serve the overt purpose of motivating, compelling, or attracting us to get more pleasure by pursuing whatever it is that is causing us to experience it. Our capacity for pleasure is a built-in reinforcement mechanism that only works if we are motivated or compelled by it. In this way, pleasure quite obviously bears a non-accidental connection to our attitudes. We are wired to be motivated by pleasure. The same considerations show us that we are all beings that *can be* motivated by pleasure. Even though some of us might develop second-order desires against it for this reason or that, a base-level favoring attitude towards pleasure lies within our motivational capacity. Humans - and relevantly similar beings - *can be* motivated by pleasure. Indeed, it is the way we are wired.

⁸⁴ Many people write about and research the role of pleasure as it's evolutionarily related to motivation. For one of the earliest examples, see Baldwin (1896). For some more recent discussions, see Berridge & Robinson (1998, 2003). While they discuss "liking" as being an essential component of reward, they define it as an objective affective reaction, not as an attitude.

⁸⁵ A potential objection: while it's undeniable that pleasure plays an essential evolutionary role, it's not at all clear that a phenomenological view of pleasure plays that role. It might be said that I am illicitly assuming that the right view of pleasure is a phenomenological view. If, for instance, an attitudinal view of pleasure is the correct view, then there is no connection between phenomenological pleasure and evolution. I do not wish to argue here that the phenomenological view of pleasure is the correct one. Instead, my aim is to show that *if* we were to accept a phenomenological view of pleasure, the objective hedonist about well-being could meet The Resonance Constraint. Thank you to David Sobel for this objection.

One might object that even if we can all have first-order favoring attitudes towards pleasure, we should not think that it in fact resonates with all people. Imagine someone who is explicitly against experiencing pleasure.⁸⁶ Let us say that she has a second-order desire to not experience pleasure because of religious beliefs. This brings us to the complicated question of whether resonance requires total non-alienation; that is, whether resonance precludes the welfare subject from having negative attitudes towards her welfare goods in cases where she also has a favoring attitude towards it.⁸⁷ People can have ambiguous attitudes. For instance, consider someone who likes cooking as a creative outlet, but who dislikes cooking because it is a chore. Does cooking resonate with them? It seems to me that, in one respect, it does, even though it alienates them in another. The objection at hand presupposes that being alienated from pleasure in one respect is enough to show that pleasure does not resonate. This is far from obvious, and it strikes me as way too demanding. Notice that if resonance were that demanding, then the most common subjectivist views would not reliably meet it since they require only a favoring attitude (and not also the absence of a negative one).

That Railton uses the words “intolerably alienated” might suggest the possibility that *some* degree of alienation is tolerable.⁸⁸ At the very least, the claim that resonance requires

⁸⁶ For a paper in favor of the idea that imagination can help produce justification for modal beliefs, see Derek Lam (2018). Thank you to Hille Paakkunainen for this point.

⁸⁷ This question has been completely ignored in the literature until very recently. Kelley (2020) argues that we can be alienated from things in three ways: desideratively, cognitively, and affectively. He holds that being alienated in these ways is neither necessary nor sufficient for overall prudential alienation. This is important for our purposes because it is support for the claim that some degree of alienation is tolerable. Similarly, Bruno Niño (2022) employs the concept of “all-things-considered” resonance and alienation, and she, too, holds that some amount of alienation is tolerable.

⁸⁸ For an argument that resonance might allow for a great deal of alienation, see Wall & Sobel (2021).

total non-alienation is a substantive one that requires argumentation. My project here is not to show that hedonism avoids total non-alienation, but that hedonism resonates. If I am right that being alienated from pleasure in one respect does not entail a failure to resonate, then the present objection is impotent.

5. The Spirit of The Constraint

In the previous section, I showed how an objective hedonism that employs one of the two felt-quality views of pleasure can meet a version of The Resonance Constraint which we have most reason to accept. I now turn to an argument that some of the same considerations that motivated the original constraint also give rise to a new kind of constraint - one that hedonists can meet, and that basic forms of subjectivism cannot.

One worry that The Constraint set out to avoid was the troubling picture of a person's welfare goods leaving her cold. The idea of someone being utterly unmoved by what is purported to be good for her is a compelling case in favor of the kind of resonance we have discussed thus far. But there are at least two distinct ways in which one can be unmoved. The first we are by now familiar with. One is unmoved by something when she is not and cannot be motivated by it; when it bears no connection to her favoring attitudes. The other way, though, has been previously neglected. One is also unmoved by something when it fails to elicit or involve a good feeling.⁸⁹ Imagine that, for years, Hannah has had a goal to own a house with a white picket fence. She not only wants it, but really values it. She

⁸⁹ There is, of course, plenty of debate over whether it makes sense to think of feelings themselves as being objectively good or bad. For the sake of argument, let us assume that the kind of felt-quality view of pleasure described by either the distinctive-feeling or the hedonic tone view exists (while remaining agnostic about whether it benefits).

thinks that a good life for her is one in which she meets this goal. She finally succeeds. Though she still wants it, still values owning it, and still endorses her favoring attitudes towards it, she feels empty. She gets no pleasure from having achieved one of her deepest desires. Are Hannah's goods tailored to her? Do they fit? It seems clear to me that there is one clear respect in which the answer is "No."⁹⁰ They leave her cold and unmoved because they fail to make her feel good. Regardless of whether Hannah benefits from meeting her goal, there is an undeniable sense in which it does not resonate - a sense that is not captured with the original kind of resonance, but one that is motivated by some of the same concerns.⁹¹

Considering cases like Hannah's does not give rise to a perfect analogue to the original constraint. The claim that a person can benefit from something only if it involves or gives rise to pleasure is far too strong for our purposes. But it does seem to support the claim that a person's life - on the whole - cannot go well for her without at least sometimes feeling good. I call this "Affective Whole-Life Resonance" (for rhetorical ease in what follows, I sometimes refer to it simply as "affective resonance").

Affective Whole-Life Resonance: S's life can only go well for her if it contains instances in which she feels good.

⁹⁰ My intuition about this is particularly strong in cases in which there is clear social or environmental pressure to have certain pro-attitudes. There are many "adaptive preference" cases, for instance, that have this structure.

⁹¹ See Kelley (2020) for an excellent discussion of the different ways in which things can alienate (for him, alienation and resonance are two sides of the same coin).

To be clear, I do not wish to claim that the considerations at hand tell in favor of affective resonance *rather than* the original constraint. I am simply pointing out that those very same reasons can be taken as support for affective resonance.

Because there are many varieties of subjectivism, adjudicating whether each can meet affective resonance is beyond the scope of this paper. I do wish, however, to put forth a consideration in favor of the claim that hedonism has a *prima facie* advantage over subjectivism. Obviously, because hedonism holds that the only thing that benefits is pleasure - feeling good - its verdicts are right in line with affective resonance. As we explored before, any view is subjectivist if it accepts that x is good for S only if and (at least in part) because S has a favoring attitude (under the right conditions) towards x. While there are many different ways to flesh out the details of this skeletal classification, the skeleton itself does not make reference to feelings at all. As such, there is no guarantee that our fleshed out theory will respect affective resonance. Affective resonance is not built into subjectivism in the way that it is built into objective hedonism.

There is, of course, nothing preventing subjectivist theories from stipulating that feeling good must be involved in a good life. For instance, imagine a view of desire-satisfactionism which holds that the satisfaction of desires always involves pleasure. Neil Sinhababu (2017), for instance, argues something along these lines. On one interpretation of Heathwood (2019), the desires that matter for well-being are characterized by a pleasant quality. These kinds of views allow the subjectivist to easily meet affective resonance. My claim is not that no subjectivist can meet the new constraint, but rather that objective hedonism has a *prima facie* advantage because of its guarantee of affective resonance. If this is

right, then not only does The Resonance Constraint not threaten objective hedonism, there is also a *prima facie* reason to prefer objective hedonism if we are compelled by resonance considerations.

5. Conclusion

Pinning down what resonance requires is a complicated matter. I hope to have shown that the standard interpretation of The Constraint is wrong, and that we need to opt for something more permissive in its place. I put forth three alternatives, and argued that because the first rules out prominent subjectivist views, we should opt for one of the other two. I remain agnostic about whether (b) or (c) is the better option.

Once we see that we should adopt either (b) or (c), the path forward for objective hedonism comes into view. I argued that pleasure - even when it is construed non-attitudinally - bears a non-accidental connection to our favoring attitudes and is something that lies within our motivational capacity. I contend that, as a result, objective hedonism can in fact meet The Resonance Constraint, and that the widely-held alienation objection to hedonism fails.

I then briefly put forth a whole-life affective resonance constraint, which I argue is motivated by some of the same concerns as is The Constraint with which we are familiar. If we are compelled by the concerns that animate the original resonance constraint, then we should take seriously The Constraint that I introduced. Though no doubt some subjectivist views will be able to meet the new constraint, many will not. Because there is nothing “built-into” subjectivist views that guarantees that they meet whole-life affective resonance,

surprisingly, objective hedonism has a *prima facie* advantage over subjectivist views in respecting the spirit of The Constraint.⁹²

⁹² Thank you to Rowan Bell, Ben Bradley, Donald Bruckner, Brad Cokelet, Dale Dorsey, Teresa Bruno Niño, Anthony Kelley, Robert Shaver, David Sobel, Joseph Van Weelden, Preston Werner, and the attendees of the Kansas Workshop on Well-Being for their comments on earlier versions of this paper.

The Endorsed-Feeling View of Pleasure and Pain

Abstract: There is widespread agreement that pleasure and pain can profoundly affect our well-being, but widespread disagreement about what pleasure and pain actually are, and why they benefit and harm us, respectively. I advance the debate about the nature of beneficial pleasure and harmful pain in four ways. First, I discuss ten desiderata that ought to be central to our considerations in determining the best account of the nature of prudential pleasure and pain. Second, I show how the two traditional views - attitudinal views and phenomenological views - fail to meet most of the desiderata, and argue that this should motivate us to adopt a hybrid account. Third, I consider the extant hybrid accounts, and show that they are deficient in a number of ways. Lastly, I introduce a new hybrid account that can meet more desiderata than any other view.

0. Introduction

There is widespread agreement that pleasure can be good for us, and that pain can be bad for us, but widespread disagreement about what pleasure and pain actually are, and why they benefit and harm us, respectively. We tend to like pleasure and dislike pain, but are those attitudes necessary? Is there a felt quality that all pleasures share, and another that all pains share? Do all pleasures benefit? Do all pains harm?

There are, broadly, two kinds of theories that are in part distinguished from each other by the way they answer the above questions.⁹³ One camp holds that all pleasures are pleasures (and that all pains are pains) in virtue of the way that they feel (henceforth referred to as “felt-quality theories”). These views hold that there is a felt quality that determines whether an experience is a pleasure (or a pain), and, moreover, that all experiences of pleasure (and pain) share this qualitative character. Felt-quality theorists typically either

⁹³ There are far more than two kinds of theories on pleasure and pain. Evaluative and imperative accounts of pleasures and pains, for instance, do not neatly fall into either of the two predominant types of theory that will be the focus of this paper. While these accounts make important contributions to the discussion, space considerations dictate setting them aside for the purposes of this paper. See, for example, David Bain (2013) for a defense of evaluativism about pain, and Colin Klein (2015a) for a defense of imperativism about pain.

endorse the “distinctive feeling” view of pleasure and pain (according to which the felt quality in question is a distinctive feeling)⁹⁴, or the “hedonic tone” view (according to which the felt quality in question is not a distinct feeling, but rather a higher-order felt quality)⁹⁵.

The other camp holds that pleasures are pleasures (and that pains are pains) in virtue of the subject’s attitudes (henceforth referred to as “attitudinal theories”). Attitudinal theories deny the claim that all pleasures (and all pains) are conceptually united by a felt quality. Instead, they hold that what they have in common is that the agent in question has an intrinsic and concurrent attitude of the right sort towards a sensation, experience, or state of affairs.⁹⁶ There are many varieties of attitudinal views, and while the theories differ in important respects, for the sake of my argument, I focus largely on the general features they share. I do, however, flag when the differences between attitudinal theories matter for our purposes.

In recent work, Eden Lin (2020) and Daniel Pallies (2021) consider objections against felt-quality and attitudinal accounts of pleasure, and conclude that a hybrid view would fare best. Lin defends a specific hybrid account, and Pallies surveys several possibilities without endorsing any particular one. Gwen Bradford (2020) and Guy Kahane (2009, 2016) pursue similar strategies (each defending their own hybrid account), but with a focus on pain rather than pleasure. This strikes me as the right way to proceed, but I think there are important

⁹⁴ For defenses of the distinctive-feeling view, see Ben Bramble (2013), and, possibly, G.E. Moore (1903), §12.

⁹⁵ Discussions of the hedonic tone view can be found in C.D. Broad (1930), Roger Crisp (2006), Karl Duncker (1941), Shelly Kagan (1992), Carolyn Morillo (1995), and Aaron Smuts (2011), amongst others.

⁹⁶ For a start, variations of the attitudinal view (or something very much like the attitudinal view as I have described it above) can be found in William Alston (1967), Thomas Carson (2000), Fred Feldman (1988, 2004), Chris Heathwood (2006, 2007a), Kagan (1992), Christine Korsgaard (1996), and Derek Parfit (1984).

desiderata that they left out that count against their hybrid views. In what follows, I canvass ten desiderata that help draw the parameters of an account of pleasure and pain. The desiderata I employ here are by no means an exhaustive list, but they are the ones that I think most deserving of our attention.⁹⁷ I discuss how well felt-quality views and attitudinal views do by each desideratum, and argue that both types of view are importantly deficient. I agree with Bradford, Kahane, Lin, and Pallies that a hybrid view is the most promising approach, but I disagree with them about which hybrid view is most promising. My ultimate aim is to show that my hybrid view does better than either kind of traditional theory, and, moreover, that it does better than the extant hybrid views. Admittedly, whether one is persuaded by my arguments here will largely depend on which desiderata one takes to be most important.

Before we continue, I must make a few preliminary notes. The first is that our focus is on the nature of pleasure and pain, which, to my mind, involves accounting for the *goodness* of pleasure and the *badness* of pain for the person experiencing them. It is my view that an inextricable part of the nature of pleasure and pain is that they are good and bad, respectively. This is somewhat of a contentious claim, but a direct argument for it is outside the scope of this paper.⁹⁸ Following others, I will assume that part of the nature of pleasure and pain is their goodness and badness.

⁹⁷ To be clear, I do not think of these desiderata as my own intuitions, but rather as central intuitions that people have relied upon in the literature. Space considerations make it impossible to prosecute the truth of each of these desiderata, but I plan on doing so in future projects.

⁹⁸ For an argument that there is nothing essentially bad about pain, see Fine (2002), p. 271 and Zangwill (2005), p. 127.

The next few notes are terminological. Sometimes in the literature, the terms “pleasure” and “pain” are used to refer to a particular kind of sensation, regardless of its impact on welfare. Accordingly, some of the cases that I discuss make use of the concept of the “sensation of pleasure or pain.” We can, for instance, make sense of the idea that one experiences a sensation of pain from stubbing her toe, even if we do not know anything about her attitudes, and without taking a stance on whether that experience detracts from her well-being. I have more to say about this later, but for now, suffice it to say that when I refer to the *sensation* of pleasure or pain, I refer to these sensations without making a claim about whether they affect well-being.

Pain is often taken to be, in some sense, the “opposite” of pleasure, but this is not, strictly speaking, correct. Pain seems to be but one member of the broader set of unpleasant experiences that detract from well-being. While all pains are displeasures, not all displeasures are pains. Following others, my focus, then, is not on pain, narrowly-construed, but about the *unpleasant* or *displeasure*. The account that I put forth is meant to include the experiences of dizziness, nausea, heartache, hunger, and frustration, even though these are perhaps not best characterized as pains. Some of the literature does not make this distinction, and some of our discussion will be about pain because of rhetorical considerations. Importantly, though, the topic of pain is relevant for our purposes only as a type of displeasure.

The terminological issue is further complicated by the fact that some theories I reference are theories of pleasure and pain, but some are about slightly different concepts (such as enjoyment or the unpleasant, more broadly construed). Some are theories of only pleasure (without reference to pain or displeasure), and vice versa. Of those that concern

pleasure, some focus only on sensory pleasure or on propositional pleasure, while others encompass all pleasures. Sometimes a distinction is made between the nature of pleasure and the conditions under which pleasure benefits. My aim is to set the parameters for a unified theory of pleasure and displeasure that accounts for their effect on well-being, and then to provide a view which fits the bill. Even though others in the literature have sometimes pursued different ends, I take it that much of what has been previously said should inform our present topic. While there are important differences between these approaches - ones which I highlight when something hinges on them - for rhetorical ease, I proceed using fairly broad strokes.

Finally, I assume, without argument, that the same theory that is true of the nature of pleasure is true *mutatis mutandis* of the nature of displeasure. This is not to say that each is a perfect mirror of the other, nor is it to say that there are always analogues of each matter under consideration. It is to say, however, that I do not take whatever differences there may be between the two to tell against the view that one theory applies to both.

1. Desiderata of an Account of the Nature of Pleasure and Displeasure

(1) Homogeneity

A basic question that an account of the nature of pleasure (and displeasure) should be able to address is “What do all pleasures (and displeasures) have in common?” As we saw earlier, felt-quality theorists hold that the pleasure one enjoys when she eats a chocolate bar and the pleasure of falling in love are of the same kind. They are both pleasures in virtue of either a distinctive, pleasurable feeling or in virtue of a shared hedonic tone. Many people,

however, have pointed out that it is far from clear that there is a single, identifiable pleasant (or unpleasant) feeling or tone shared by all instances of pleasure (and displeasure).⁹⁹

Felt-quality theorists typically respond to this concern by putting forth various metaphors and analogies meant to shed light on the kind of shared phenomenology for which we should be searching. Crisp, for example, argues that all token pleasures are phenomenologically linked because they are determinants of the determinable *enjoyableness*.¹⁰⁰ Smuts holds that the felt qualities in question share a “warm glow” or an “enticing hum.”¹⁰¹ Kagan suggests that pleasures are a dimension along which things can vary.¹⁰² He points out that volume is not a kind of sound, nor a single component of auditory experiences, but rather a dimension along which noises can vary. Perhaps pleasure is like volume in this respect. On this understanding, there is no one component feeling shared by all pleasures; it is rather that our experiences vary along the dimension of pleasure as noise does along the dimension of volume.

Another strategy is to instead point out that because we often make errors when reflecting upon our own phenomenologies, it should not be surprising that we cannot easily discern a common feeling between all pleasures (and displeasures). Ben Bramble (2013) and Smuts (2011) both argue that because our introspection and recall are fallible, we should not expect to be able to identify a common phenomenology between all pleasant experiences.

⁹⁹ For a start, see Feldman (1988), p. 60, and Korsgaard (1996), p. 148.

¹⁰⁰ Crisp (2006), p. 628.

¹⁰¹ Smuts (2011), p. 255.

¹⁰² Kagan (1992), p. 172-3.

Attitudinal accounts, on the other hand, have no problem unifying our disparate pleasant (and unpleasant) experiences as pleasures (and displeasures). These accounts avoid the implication that there is a felt quality shared between all pleasant (and unpleasant) experiences because they need not appeal to phenomenology at all. The thought behind attitudinal theories, broadly speaking, is that what unites all pleasures is the fact that the subject has a (certain kind of) favoring attitude towards her experience.

(2) Hurts-So-Good Cases

Bradford (2020) uses the term “hurts-so-good” (HSG) to refer to cases in which a person experiences the sensation of pain, but reports enjoying that sensation. These cases are important for our purposes because, crucially, we do not have the intuition that they detract from well-being. HSG experiences can include eating spicy food, getting a deep-tissue massage, jumping in a freezing lake, sitting in a very hot sauna, intense physical exertion, thrill-seeking, and the enjoyment of sorrowful art.¹⁰³ What these cases have in common is that (1) the person feels the sensation of pain or unpleasantness, (2) the person welcomes that sensation, and (3) we have the intuition that the unpleasant sensation is not intrinsically bad for the person.

These cases demonstrate the way in which felt-quality theories are not sensitive to a person’s own assessments, likings, desires, beliefs, or motivational profile.¹⁰⁴ Because felt-quality theories hold that unpleasant experiences harm a person because of the way that they

¹⁰³ These examples are Bradford’s (2020), 239.

¹⁰⁴ The thought that what contributes to a person’s welfare ought to be, in some way, tailored to her is a familiar one in the well-being literature. See, for instance, Dale Dorsey (2017, 2021), Peter Railton (1986), and Connie Rosati (1996).

feel (without regard for the person's attitude), they deliver the counterintuitive result that HSG experiences harm the people who have them (and that unenjoyed pleasures benefit those who have them).

Attitudinal theories, on the other hand, deliver a more intuitive result. Because they hold that a person's attitude determines whether an experience counts as unpleasant, they are able to avoid the claim that welcomed experiences harm.

(3) Pain Asymbolia Cases

Even if felt-quality theorists can successfully explain away HSG experiences (by, say, claiming that HSG cases actually produce pleasure), they need to account for pain asymbolia cases.¹⁰⁵ Pain asymbolia is a condition in which people feel the sensation of pain, but report being unbothered by it.¹⁰⁶ They have no deficit in pain perception, but, perplexingly, do not dislike experiencing pain. Pain asymbolia is philosophically informative because in these cases, unlike in HSG cases, people do not necessarily seek out painful experiences. Instead, when pain is induced, they simply do not have the expected motivational, attitudinal, or behavioral responses. It is plausible that this kind of pain is simply not intrinsically bad for those with the condition.

According to felt-quality views, pain is bad for us because of the way that it feels. But, since pain asymbolics feel the sensation of pain in the same way as everyone else, then,

¹⁰⁵ Thorough discussion of the implication of these cases for theories of pain can be found in Bain (2013) and Klein (2015b). Klein denies that pain asymbolia should tell us anything about the nature of pain.

¹⁰⁶ For discussions of pain asymbolia and its philosophical implications, see Berthier et al. (1988), Corns (2014), Grahek (2007), and Klein (2015b).

according to these accounts, pain is intrinsically bad for people with pain asymbolia. This is the wrong result.

Attitudinal theories seem to get right what felt-quality theories get wrong here. They are able to say that because the person's attitude determines whether a given experience is a pain, the sensation of pain experienced by pain asymbolics does not detract from well-being. No disfavoring attitude, no harm. But, as Kahane notes, attitudinal theorists are not let off the hook that easily.¹⁰⁷ He points out that there are two lessons that we should learn from considering pain asymbolia. The first is the one we have already considered and that attitudinal theorists capture: it is implausible that a person's well-being could be drastically reduced by a sensation of pain towards which she is utterly indifferent. The second lesson, though, is that it is implausible that a person's well-being could be drastically reduced by pain of which she is completely unaware. Because we do not necessarily have strong introspective access to our attitudes, attitudinal theorists leave room for the possibility that we could be in severe pain (provided we have a strong unconscious attitude) and not know it.¹⁰⁸ But that aligns neither with our intuitions of what it is like to be in severe pain, nor with our intuitions about what it is like to experience a dramatic reduction in well-being.¹⁰⁹

(4) Consonance

A theory's ability to accommodate our intuitions about pain asymbolia cases requires it to say that if a person does not mind being in pain, that experience is not bad for her. It

¹⁰⁷ Kahane (2016), 213.

¹⁰⁸ To motivate the view that it is possible to be unconscious of our attitudes (be they strong or otherwise), see King & Carruthers (2012).

¹⁰⁹ Daniel Haybron (2008) and Eric Schwitzgebel (2008) argue that it is quite possible to have unpleasant experiences about which one is entirely unaware. A lot hinges on the kind of attitude in question, and there is plenty of disagreement amongst attitudinal theorists on this front.

also requires it to say that a person's well-being cannot be drastically affected by pain of which she is unaware. There is, however, a similar consideration that demands a bit more. It seems quite reasonable to expect our view to be able to accommodate the intuition that a pleasant experience benefits a person more if she welcomes it than if she is neutral or averse to it, and that an unpleasant one harms her more if she is averse to it than if she is neutral or welcoming to it.

Attitudinal views are able to accommodate the intuition because they hold that experiences do not benefit unless a welcoming attitude is present, and that they do not harm without an unwelcoming attitude. Felt-quality views, on their own, cannot, as they do not make reference to a person's attitudes.¹¹⁰ Another desideratum, then, for an account of pleasure and pain is this. For lack of a better term, let us call the notion that pleasure benefits a person more when she welcomes it, and that displeasure harms her more when she is averse to it, "consonance."

(5) Motivation

A related consideration is the motivational nature of pleasure and displeasure. Some people have the intuition that pleasure and displeasure essentially (but defeasibly) motivate people to action.¹¹¹ It seems like a non-accidental fact that we seek out pleasant experiences, and that we avoid unpleasant ones. Some attitudinal accounts have no problem accounting

¹¹⁰ A view of *well-being* which employs a felt-quality view might well have it that welcome pleasures benefit more, and that unwelcome displeasures harm more, but that is work that has to be done; it is not "built into" the theory, so to speak. Consonance seems to me to be part of the nature of the goodness of pleasure and the badness of pain.

¹¹¹ See Murat Aydede (2014), Aydede & Matthew Fulkerson (2014), Klein (2015a), and Martínez (2011).

for this fact.¹¹² Take desire-based attitudinal views, for example. According to them, if a person experiences pleasure, then that person necessarily experiences a desire. Insofar as it is clear that desires are inherently motivational, it is also clear on these accounts that pleasure and displeasure are inherently motivational.¹¹³

A puzzle for felt-quality views is to explain how mere feelings can serve this function.¹¹⁴ If pleasure and pain are reducible to felt qualities, then why would it be the case that people are very reliably drawn towards one type of felt quality, and averse to another? How can we explain that pleasure and pain are, by their very natures, motivating in a way that two other phenomenologies (say, the qualitative character of seeing blue and that of seeing red) are not? As Aydede points out, while felt-quality views can note that there is a reliable connection between pleasure and pain and motivation, they have to accept that the connection is contingent.¹¹⁵

(6) Feeling-Centrism

Many people have a very strong intuition that pleasures are pleasures and that pains are pains in virtue of *what it feels like* to experience them.¹¹⁶ Bradford, for instance, writes, “The commonsense view is that the unpleasant has a recognizable phenomenological character of negative valence - to be unpleasant is to be an experience that feels a certain

¹¹² This claim is bolstered by the fact that some people call attitudinal views of pleasure and pain “motivational views.” See, for example, Heathwood (2007a) and Smuts (2011).

¹¹³ It is not as apparent that attitudinal accounts that are not desire-based can account for this intuition, however. It might be that while desiring necessarily involves motivation, liking, approving or valuing does not.

¹¹⁴ See Bramble (2013) for a way that phenomenological theorists might respond to this puzzle.

¹¹⁵ Aydede (2014), p. 123.

¹¹⁶ For just a few examples, see Bradford (2020), Bramble (2013), Kahane (2016), p. 201, Lin (2020), p. 521, Pallies (2021), and Smuts (2011), p. 257.

way, to wit, bad.”¹¹⁷ It seems overwhelmingly plausible to say that experiencing pleasure *feels good*, and that being in pain *hurts*.¹¹⁸ Felt-quality views center this intuition: all pleasures (and displeasures) necessarily involve either a distinctive feeling or some kind of hedonic (or doloric) tone. Attitudinal views, on the other hand, are seriously deficient in this respect because they do not require pleasures and displeasures to have a particular kind of feeling (or even any feeling at all). For them, an experience is a pleasure or displeasure for a person in virtue of her attitude towards that experience, regardless of whether (and what) feelings are involved. This allows for the possibility that something totally benign like an afterimage, for example, could become an intense pain that severely harms a person if she takes up a negative attitude towards it.¹¹⁹ Another desideratum, then, is for our theory to involve some appeal to the centrality of the feeling in its account of pleasure and displeasure.

(7) Order of Explanation

A closely related (but distinct) consideration involves the order of explanation between reasons, value, and the experience of pleasure or pain. Is pleasure good because we like it, or do we like it because it’s good?¹²⁰ While many, myself included, feel compelled by the intuition that we like pleasure because it is good, it is even harder to deny the intuition, *mutatis mutandis*, when considering pain. Irwin Goldstein writes, “*The nature of the experience is our reason for disliking pain, and that is the end of the matter.*”¹²¹ People have reason to

¹¹⁷ Bradford (2020), p. 237.

¹¹⁸ A similar thought can be found in both Heathwood (2007b) and Pallies (2021).

¹¹⁹ This example is Kahane’s (2016), p. 211.

¹²⁰ See Heathwood (2007a), pp. 38-40, Pallies (2021), Stuart Rachels (2000), p. 192, and Smuts (2011), pp. 249-254 for compelling discussions of the Euthyphro objection to attitudinal views. See also Michael Brady (2018), who offers a different kind of desire-based view with the aim of avoiding the objection.

¹²¹ Goldstein (1980), p. 357.

want unpleasant experiences to stop. Felt-quality views understand that in a non-circular way: people have reason to want certain experiences to stop because of what those experiences feel like.

What that amounts to for attitudinal theorists is that people have reason to want certain experiences to stop because they want those experiences to stop. But this is wrong. Wanting pain to stop does not seem like an arbitrary preference in the way that disliking the taste of seaweed does. Attitudinal views miss the crucial insight that pain is bad for a person because what it feels like to be in pain is bad. It is an advantage of felt-quality views that they ground pain's badness (and pleasure's goodness) in the felt quality of the experience. Pain is bad because it hurts.

(8) Experience Requirement

An experience requirement is often discussed in the well-being literature, but it seems to me that we should also invoke something like it for our account of the goodness of pleasure and the badness of displeasure. This is to say that there should be an experience requirement on the theories under consideration which holds that pleasures and displeasures are necessarily experienced.

James Griffin introduced the term "The Experience Requirement" to refer to a constraint on desire-satisfaction theories of well-being.¹²² The thought is that the satisfaction of a desire is good for someone only if she *experiences* that satisfaction. Parfit also motivates something like the experience requirement for theories of well-being by noting that if it were

¹²² Griffin (1986), pp. 13-4.

false, a person's well-being could, in principle, be affected after her death.¹²³ We can take the spirit of this thought to guide our present project. Let us subject our theory to the constraint that there can be no pleasure or displeasure without a subjective experience of it.

Felt-quality theories can easily accommodate this intuition. Since, on these accounts, pleasures and displeasures amount to felt qualities, they are necessarily subjectively experienced. It is not clear, however, that attitudinal theories can do the same. Whether they are able to depends on the precise details of the attitudinal account in question. Heathwood's attitudinal view, for instance, meets this desideratum because it holds that subjective satisfaction of desires is necessary for pleasure.¹²⁴ It is worth noting, though, that not all attitudinal accounts can; it is not "built into" the theory. If, as on some attitudinal accounts, the attitude in question does not require subjective satisfaction, then it is not clear that the experience requirement (the one relevant to theories of pleasure and displeasure) would be met.

(9) Ontological Uniqueness

The penultimate desideratum has to do with the somewhat nebulous intuition that there is something special about pleasure that isn't captured if we imagine that it is reducible to our attitudes.¹²⁵ There is intuitively a difference between pleasures and just anything towards which we have favoring attitudes.¹²⁶ Consider, for instance, the implications of a basic desire account. It says that any object of (the relevant kind of) my favoring attitudes is

¹²³ Parfit (1984), p. 433. Citation taken from Lin (2021).

¹²⁴ Heathwood (2006).

¹²⁵ For rhetorical ease, I will focus only on pleasure, but the same considerations hold *mutatis mutandis* for displeasure.

¹²⁶ See Crisp (2006), Pallies (2021), and Smuts (2011) for discussions of this worry.

a pleasure. But it seems as though I can desire to experience sorrowful art, for example, without that experience being pleasurable. Similarly, I can compulsively desire to wash my hands, without the satisfaction of that desire counting as a pleasure. Much will depend upon the details of the attitudinal view in question, but for now, suffice it to say that not accounting for the intuitive difference between satisfied desires (or the equivalent state for other attitudes) which are and are not pleasures fails to capture an essential feature of the nature of pleasure. Pleasure seems to be an ontologically distinct thing from other things that benefit.

One might think that what demarcates pleasures from other satisfied desires is the object of the desire in question. Perhaps only attitudes that are about sensations qualify as pleasures and pains. (This would also address the experience requirement discussed in the previous section.) While this is admittedly a plausible place at which to draw the line, it is unlikely to satisfy many attitudinal theorists. Feldman, for instance, takes it to be an essential feature of his view that it is able to say that a person who is incapable of feeling sensations can still experience pleasure and pain.¹²⁷ This issue is one that very clearly boils down to one's intuitions about the priority of desiderata. I do not share Feldman's view that we should account for the supposed pleasures and pains of someone incapable of feeling sensations, and think it vastly more important to account for the ontological uniqueness of pleasures, but this amounts to little more than a bare intuition. In any case, there is a deeper, related worry in this neighborhood to which we now turn.

(10) Reining in Value Conference

¹²⁷ Feldman (2004), pp. 64-5.

There is no independently motivated reason to think that there is a meaningful difference between the value-conferring power of attitudes that are directed towards sensations and that of attitudes that are directed at other kinds of things.¹²⁸ Attitudinal theorists hold that something is a pleasure in virtue of a person's attitude. This locates the value-conferring power, so to speak, in our favoring attitudes. This means that there is *prima facie* pressure to think that if attitudes can confer value in some cases, then they can in others, too. If one accepts that a person's attitude towards a sensation renders that sensation valuable, there is theoretical pressure to then also accept that a person's attitude towards non-sensations renders those things valuable. But this is a step too far for many people. This brings us to our final desideratum, which is that our theory of pleasure and displeasure not wed us to the more contentious claim that attitudes are more generally value-conferring.

Before we proceed, we need to address an objection to these final desiderata. Perhaps the most plausible explanation of what distinguishes attitudes that correspond to pleasure from attitudes that do not is that it is simply a matter of linguistic convention. For instance, there are some satisfied desires to which we, as a matter of mere convention, refer as pleasures (such as the feeling of warm sun on one's skin), and some to which we do not (such as the proposition that Mercury is closer to the Sun than Venus).¹²⁹ If our main aim were to provide an account of pleasure that maps onto our usage of the term as accurately as possible, then perhaps it's true that attitudinal accounts are not best suited for that purpose. But, the attitudinal theorist could rightly point out, that is not our main aim. We have set out

¹²⁸ See Steven Wall & David Sobel (2021) for an excellent discussion of this point.

¹²⁹ I am discussing satisfied desires, in particular, for rhetorical ease. The same considerations apply to other favoring attitudes directed towards objects, experiences, or states of affairs.

to provide the most plausible account of the nature of pleasure which accounts for its goodness. If the explanation of the way that pleasure benefits proves to be the same explanation of how other things benefit, then so be it. To demand that pleasure benefit in a different way than other welfare goods is to stack the deck against attitudinal views.

The problem with this response is twofold. First, because we have the intuition that pleasure exists not merely as a linguistic convention, but as an ontologically unique phenomenon, it is a mark against attitudinal views of pleasure that they are unable to distinguish between the satisfied desires that count as pleasures and those that do not in a way that does not rely on linguistic convention. Second, many people who do not have the intuition that all satisfied desires benefit do have the intuition that pleasure benefits. This suggests that, regardless of the plausibility of subjectivism as an account of *well-being*, attitudinal accounts of pleasure are deficient in that they cannot constrain the subjectivist component of the view. Another way of illustrating this point is to consider someone who is compelled by the arguments that a person must like a sensation in order for that sensation to be a pleasure, but who is not willing to concede subjectivism about well-being; that is, they are not convinced that just any satisfied desire benefits a person. Kagan (2009) and Parfit (2011) are just two who fit this description.

In section 4, I argue that the hybrid view that I defend has an advantage in this respect. I go into more detail about this point there, but for now, suffice it to say that attitudinal views (a) cannot explain the ontological uniqueness of pleasure, and (b) do not provide the space to vindicate the very plausible intuition that a person's attitudes play a

crucial role in determining whether something is a pleasure without letting subjectivism run rampant.

2. Choosing a Hybrid Account of Pleasures and Pains

In the next section, I argue that a hybrid account of pleasure and displeasure fulfills more desiderata than either the attitudinal view or the felt-quality view alone. The precise ways in which it does better, though, depend greatly on the details of the hybrid account in question. Bradford (2020), Kahane (2009, 2016), and Lin (2020) have the most promising such views. In this section, I explain what I take to be the main problems with each of their theories before introducing my own.

Lin defends the following hybrid view of pleasure (which I call “The Attitudinal Hybrid View”):

The Attitudinal Hybrid View (AH): There is a kind of favorable attitude, A, that is partly constituted by a certain phenomenology, P. An attitudinal pleasure is an experience consisting, at least in part, of your tokening A toward a state of affairs. A sensory pleasure is an attitudinal pleasure whose object is an obtaining state of affairs consisting of your presently experiencing a particular sensation.¹³⁰

He remains agnostic about the particular kind of favoring attitude required by AH, which makes the view compatible with various types of attitudinal theories. Note that Lin’s view is about only the nature of pleasure. Kahane (2009, 2016) holds a very similar view, but his is about only the nature of pain.¹³¹ According to Kahane, there are two necessary components to pain: a sensation or a state of affairs, and an *affective* aversion (which itself has a sensation)

¹³⁰ Lin (2020), p. 519.

¹³¹ There are important differences in the details between Kahane’s and Lin’s view, but they are not especially relevant to the argument that I am making here.

to that sensation or state of affairs. He calls his hybrid view “the felt-aversion theory of pain”¹³²:

The Felt-Aversion Theory of Pain (FA): There is an attitude of aversion, *A*, that is partly constituted by a certain phenomenology, *P*. An attitudinal pain is an experience consisting, at least in part, of your tokening *A* toward a state of affairs. A sensory pain is an attitudinal pain whose object is an obtaining state of affairs consisting of your presently experiencing a particular sensation.¹³³

Because AH and FA are structurally very similar, I will refer to them collectively as “attitudinal hybrid views.” Attitudinal hybrid views are ones according to which (1) pleasures and displeasures involve certain attitudes and (2) those attitudes have a certain phenomenology. They have several advantages over pure felt-quality views, because, unlike felt-quality views, attitudinal hybrids can meet desiderata (2) (HSG cases), (3) (pain asymbolia cases), (4) (consonance), and, depending on the nature of the attitude in question, (5) (motivation). They also have important advantages over purely attitudinal views, because, unlike purely attitudinal views, they meet (6) (feeling-centrism), (8) (the experience requirement), and perhaps even (9) (ontological uniqueness), on some interpretations.

The most significant mark against attitudinal hybrid views is that they do not meet the order of explanation requirement (desideratum 7).¹³⁴ They do not allow us to say what is most natural to say: we like pleasure because it feels good, and we dislike pain because it feels bad. Both views locate the feeling of pleasure and pain in the required attitude (rather than in the experience toward which the attitude is directed). As a result, the reason that we

¹³² In Kahane (2009), he refers to the view as the “experiential dislike theory.”

¹³³ This is my formulation of Kahane’s view, which I have based heavily on Lin’s above formulation of his view of pleasure.

¹³⁴ Attitudinal hybrid views are also subject to the heterogeneity objection. Lin (2020), pp. 519-20 readily admits this, but compellingly argues that we should not find that objection decisive.

like or dislike an experience is not necessarily due to how it feels. Indeed, the experience toward which our attitudes are directed need not have any feeling at all. On these views, then, we do not like pleasant experiences because they feel good, but rather, they feel good because we like them.

The views, moreover, do not afford us the ability to rein in value conferrence, desideratum (10). They leave us no room to think that favoring and disfavoring attitudes are a necessary part of pleasure and pain without also accepting that those attitudes are value-conferring more broadly.

Bradford introduces what I take to be a more promising hybrid account of pain, which she calls “Reverse Conditionalism”:

Reverse Conditionalism: S’s painful experience E (at t) is intrinsically bad for S (at t) if and because E has a negative feeling tone, *unless* S has a relevant attitude towards E, intrinsically, de re, and at t.¹³⁵

Reverse Conditionalism delivers the intuitive result that pain is bad because of the way that it feels. On this account, the sensation of pain is bad for a person *unless* she has a certain kind of attitude towards that pain. Unlike attitudinal hybrid accounts, Reverse Conditionalism locates pain’s badness in the sensation of pain itself (the experience towards which we might have an attitude), and thus gets the order of explanation right (desiderata 6 and 7). That sensation is bad by default, but it can become value-neutral if it is accompanied by the relevant attitude. Additionally, because the required attitude only has the power to defeat

¹³⁵ Bradford (2020), p. 247. While Bradford’s view is about only the nature of pain, we can imagine a similar view for the nature of pleasure.

that which is, by default, bad, it is able to account for the ontological independence of pain and it has the ability to rein in the conferrence of values (desiderata 9 and 10).

As I see it, this view faces three issues. First, as with felt-quality views, it is subject to the heterogeneity objection. Second, it delivers the wrong result in pain asymbolia cases. Third, it does not accommodate the “consonance” intuition that pain harms a person more if they are averse to it than if they are neutral to it.

That Reverse Conditionalism is subject to the homogeneity objection is straightforward. The view does no better than pure felt-quality views in regards to the heterogeneity objection because it too holds that all pains share a felt quality.

What I take to be the more serious problem is that Reverse Conditionalism has trouble accommodating pain asymbolia cases. Recall that pain asymbolia causes people to feel the sensation of pain, but to not be bothered by it. It is quite plausible that people with pain asymbolia are not harmed by this kind of pain. According to Bradford’s view, pain harms unless one adopts a defeating attitude towards it. If we interpret pain asymbolia cases to be ones in which a person does not have any attitude at all towards the sensation of pain, then Reverse Conditionalism delivers the wrong result. Bradford acknowledges this objection, and responds by noting that there are different ways to understand pain asymbolia cases.¹³⁶ We discussed one way of doing so which proved to be problematic for her view. Another way, though, is to imagine that people with pain asymbolia do in fact have an attitude towards their pain - one of unbotheredness or equanimity. If we stipulate that

¹³⁶ Bradford (2020), p. 249.

unbotheredness or equanimity is a value-defeating attitude, then Bradford can say that people with pain asymbolia are not harmed by their pain.

I take this to be an unsatisfying solution for a number of reasons. First, while it may be the case that people with pain asymbolia do in fact have an attitude of unbotheredness or equanimity towards the sensation of pain, it is far from clear that that is in fact the case. Moreover, even if it is an accurate way of describing the attitudes of *some* people with the condition, we have no reason to think that it is a necessary component of pain asymbolia. Maybe we should understand people with pain asymbolia as being people for whom the sensation of pain does not demand attention in the way that it typically does. In any case, even if actual pain asymbolics always have some kind of neutral attitude towards their sensation of pain, we can imagine a different kind of asymbolia where that is not necessary; where instead it simply prevents people from adopting any kind of attitude towards the sensation of pain.¹³⁷ If we were convinced that the sensation of pain does not harm people who adopt an attitude of unbotheredness towards it, then we should also be convinced that the sensation of pain does not harm people who adopt no attitude towards it at all.

These considerations help illuminate Reverse Conditionalism's inability to account for another desideratum: the intuition that pain is worse for someone who is averse to it than for someone who is neutral towards it (desideratum 4, consonance). Compare two people who experience the sensation of pain (in equal intensity and duration) in their toes from standing outside in the snow. Abby adopts no attitude towards the sensation (she

¹³⁷ For a defense of the view that imagination can help produce justification for beliefs, see Derek Lam (2018).

might not even notice it). Blake actively dislikes the feeling. It seems obvious that the experience is worse for Blake than it is for Abby. Reverse Conditionalism tells us that the pain is equally bad for them, provided that there is no value-defeating attitude present in either case. So, not only is Reverse Conditionalism unable to account for the fact that the sensation of pain cannot be bad for someone if she does not adopt an attitude towards it (which is a lesson we learned from pain asymbolia), it is also unable to capture the intuitive thought that pain is worse for someone who dislikes it than it is for someone who simply fails to adopt an attitude towards it.

3. The Endorsed-Feeling View

In this section, I introduce a new hybrid view of pleasure and pain that fulfills more desiderata than any view discussed thus far. I call this view “The Endorsed-Feeling View”:

The Endorsed-Feeling View: S’s pleasant experience E at t is intrinsically good for S at t if and only if, and because E has a pleasant felt quality, *and* S has a relevant attitude towards E, intrinsically, de re, and at t. S’s unpleasant experience E at t is intrinsically bad for S at t if and only if, and because E has an unpleasant felt quality, *and* S has a relevant attitude towards E, intrinsically, de re, and at t.

The Endorsed-Feeling View maintains the primary benefits of Reverse Conditionalism. It holds that if a person welcomes a sensation of displeasure, then it does not harm her. (It also holds that if one does not have a favoring attitude towards a sensation of pleasure, that experience does not benefit her.)

Another shared benefit between Reverse Conditionalism and my view is that it also locates the badness of pain (and the goodness of pleasure) in the way those experiences feel. Reverse Conditionalism holds that the badness of pain is located in the way that it feels, but can be defeated by an attitude. My view also locates the badness of pain in the feeling, but it

instead holds that a certain kind of attitude is *required* for the badness to be realized. Even though my view requires an attitude to instantiate the value, the goodness or badness of an experience is located in its felt quality. We should think of the required felt quality as being primed for goodness and badness in a way that other experiences are not. The goodness and badness get realized with the right attitude, but the evaluative power is in the qualitative character of the experiences.¹³⁸

The most important difference between the two views is that mine holds that certain attitudes are necessary for welfare to be affected by sensations of pleasure or pain. Our attitudes do not just serve as potential defeaters, but rather act as essential components of beneficial pleasure and harmful displeasure. The appropriate attitude towards pleasant or unpleasant sensations is what enables the goodness or badness of the sensation in question to be realized. Though the attitude is subservient to the sensation, it is what allows the goodness or badness to “touch” the person, to affect their well-being. This difference allows The Endorsed-Feeling View to meet more desiderata than any view discussed so far.

Of course, there remain many details that would need to be filled in for a complete account. One such detail is an explanation of how the degree of benefit or harm is determined. Another question concerns the nature of the required attitude. Is the attitude in question a desire? Will any type of pro-attitude do the trick? We would also need to know more about the kind of felt quality at play. Is it a distinctive feeling or is it a hedonodoloric

¹³⁸ It might be helpful to think of my view as a version of a “loving the good” view, according to which moral goodness is realized only when a person responds appropriately to the good in question. Variations of this view (more or less) can be found in Robert Merrihew Adams (1999), Feldman (2002), Kagan (2009) and Parfit (1984), pp. 501-2. I am open to the possibility that this commits me to saying that liking pleasure is the “correct” response to experiencing that sensation, and *mutatis mutandis* for pain, but I do not have the space to expand upon this here.

tone? For the purposes of this paper, I will remain agnostic about which variation is the right one. My aim here is simply to provide a skeletal account of the best *type* of hybrid view. My claim is that the best hybrid view - and moreover, the best view of pleasure and displeasure - is some variant of The Endorsed-Feeling View.

4. How The Endorsed-Feeling View Does Better

As we have seen, of the above desiderata, attitudinal views are able to capture homogeneity, HSG cases, fittingness, and possibly motivation, while felt-quality views meet feeling-centrism, order of explanation, the experience requirement, ontological uniqueness, and reining in value conferrence. In what follows, I argue that my view meets all of the desiderata other than homogeneity, and that it does better on homogeneity than pure felt-quality views or Reverse Conditionalism.

The desideratum by which The Endorsed-Feeling View does the worst is homogeneity. Because it holds that a necessary part of pleasure (and displeasure) is either a distinct feeling or a hedonic (or doloric) tone, it takes on all the problems that felt-quality views had in this respect. There is not much to be said on this front to those for whom the heterogeneity objection is a deal-breaker. Still, I think it is worth briefly noting a few things. As previously noted, because of the nature of phenomenology, it is perhaps not surprising that many people cannot introspectively locate a similar feeling among different sorts of pleasant and unpleasant experiences. In addition to this, the pleasantness that we experience from being hugged by a loved one, for instance, is all bound up in a host of other experiences occurring simultaneously. There is the feeling of warmth, the feeling of your arms around the other person, the feeling of their arms around you, the feeling of your

cheek against theirs, their smell, the temperature of the room, the feeling of your clothes against your skin, other thoughts you may have throughout, etc. All of these distracting experiences make it hard to disentangle one phenomenology from another.¹³⁹

There is also a related heterogeneity concern that attitudinal theorists must address that I will briefly discuss. An essential part of any attitudinal theory of pleasure and pain is a characterization of what kind of attitudes are required. While this is a sprawling question that goes far beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth noting that any proposal will have to address the question of whether there is a phenomenal experience involved in having the attitude. It strikes me as wrong to suppose that there is no phenomenology involved in having an attitude. There is something that it is like to, for instance, have a desire. But, if that's true, then no matter which account of pleasure (and displeasure) that we employ, it is not accurate to say that there is no phenomenology that all pleasant (or unpleasant) experiences share.

In any case, here is something that my view can say about the homogeneity objection that neither Reverse Conditionalism nor pure felt-quality views can: one thing that all pleasures (and displeasures) have in common is a favoring (or a disfavoring) attitude. The heterogeneity problem can be framed as the need to provide an answer to the question of what it is about our vastly different experiences in virtue of which we can classify them as pleasures (and pains). Attitudinal theorists provide a satisfying answer to this question by

¹³⁹ This is further complicated by the fact that many of these experiences may be causally required for pleasure to occur. It does not really capture the whole picture, then, to refer to them as "distracting." See Aydede (2014) for an adverbialist view of pain (that could be extended to pleasure) according to which there is a kind of doloric tone common to all painful experiences. For Aydede, pain is not something that occurs over and above all the other experiences; rather, those experiences are all infused with or permeated by pain.

pointing to attitudes. My view agrees: it is true that experiences are pleasures in virtue of a certain kind of attitude (provided that the attitude is directed towards the right kind of thing).

If that is not convincing, consider how well The Endorsed-Feeling View meets the rest of the desiderata that we have discussed. We will take them in order. First, it gets the right result in HSG cases. Recall that HSG cases are ones in which a person likes (and indeed sometimes seeks out) unpleasant sensations, but in which we do not have the intuition that the person is thereby harmed. Because my view requires a negative attitude for an unpleasant sensation to harm a person, and because that attitude is missing in HSG cases, it does not hold that HSG experiences harm those who have them.

The Endorsed-Feeling View also gets the right result in pain asymbolia cases. In order for a painful experience to harm a person, that person must have a disfavoring attitude towards the pain. Pain asymbolics are missing that attitude. My view respects the intuition that a person's well-being cannot be drastically reduced by a sensation about which she is utterly indifferent. It also has an advantage over Reverse Conditionalism in this regard. If we think of people with pain asymbolia as ones who do not adopt any attitude towards the sensation of pain, my view does not deliver the counterintuitive result that the sensation is bad for them.

The other lesson that we learned from considering pain asymbolia was that it is implausible to think that someone could be intensely suffering and unaware of that fact. As we saw in our initial discussion, while attitudinal theorists have no problem accounting for the previous intuition, this second one seems to cause them more difficulty. As long as my

view holds that the intensity of the felt quality plays some role in determining degree of harm, it has no such difficulty.

The Endorsed-Feeling View also does better than Reverse Conditionalism or pure felt-quality views when it comes to consonance. It delivers the verdict that pleasure benefits a person more if she welcomes it than if she does not (and that pain harms her more if she is averse to it than if she is not). Consider again the case of the pain Abby and Blake experience from their feet in the snow. Felt-quality views say that the two are harmed equally as long as the felt quality is the same for each person. Reverse Conditionalism says that Abby, who adopts no attitude towards her pain, is harmed as much as Blake, who hates his pain. When no defeater enters the picture, Reverse Conditionalism functions like a felt-quality view. My view, on the other hand, tells us that Abby is not harmed by her pain because she does not have a disfavoring attitude towards it. What's more is that, depending on the details of my hybrid account, there is room for the possibility that attitudes serve not just as defeaters, but as enhancers of the size of the benefits and harms.¹⁴⁰

Because of its attitudinal requirement, The Endorsed-Feeling View is able to account for the inherently motivational nature of pleasure and displeasure (at least insofar as attitudes do). As with attitudinal views, my view guarantees that a positive attitude is involved in every instance of pleasure, and that a negative attitude is involved in every instance of displeasure.

In its explanation of the nature of pleasure and displeasure, The Endorsed-Feeling View centers the way that those experiences feel. Necessarily, pleasure involves feeling good,

¹⁴⁰ This is true provided that the kind of endorsed-feeling view we adopt allows for attitudes to modulate the size of benefits and harms, at least to some degree.

and displeasure involves feeling bad. As a result, it does just as well as felt-quality views do with regard to feeling-centrism.

It also gets the order of explanation right. Pleasure is not good because we like or desire it. Nothing about The Endorsed-Feeling View entails that attitudes are the kinds of things that ground goodness, or that they have value-conferring power on their own. The attitude required, according to my view, is merely an enabling condition. It is subservient to the feeling. Although pleasures are good only when they are accompanied by a favoring attitude, they are in those circumstances good in virtue of how they feel, not in virtue of being favored.

Because of The Endorsed-Feeling View's fidelity to the tenet of felt-quality views that a necessary part of pleasure and displeasure is a felt quality, it, too, meets the experience requirement. If someone experiences pleasure or displeasure, then they necessarily have a certain kind of experience.

My view can also account for the way in which pleasure and displeasure are ontologically unique. Experiences are only pleasures in virtue of a felt-quality, which means that not just any object of a favoring attitude counts as a pleasure. This allows it to account for the ways in which pleasure is ontologically distinct from other things towards which we have favoring attitudes.

A particularly appealing advantage of The Endorsed-Feeling View is that it is in the unique position to resist subjectivism while accommodating the intuition that a person cannot benefit from pleasure if she does not like it (and that she cannot be harmed by displeasure if she likes it). Though ultimately unsuccessful, Parfit (2011) mounts the most

promising existing argument to accommodate this intuition. While I think that his strategy fails, briefly reviewing it here will help showcase an important advantage of The Endorsed-Feeling View.

Steven Wall & David Sobel point out that at the heart of Parfit's argument is the claim that there is an important and meaningful difference between the value-conferring power of "likings" and desires.¹⁴¹ For him, likings are the kind of favoring attitude that we take towards our sensations.¹⁴² In *On What Matters*, he goes to great lengths to constrain subjectivism by spending considerable time arguing that unlike likings, desires cannot ground reasons. He wants to be able to say that pleasure necessarily involves a favoring attitude, but that favoring attitudes are not more broadly value-conferring. If successful, he could account for the importance of attitudes in the determination of pleasures and pains without letting subjectivism run rampant. But, as we have discussed, there is theoretical pressure to move from the claim that our attitudes are value-conferring when it comes to sensations to the claim that our attitudes are value-conferring in other cases. Herein lies the tension that Parfit ultimately fails to resolve. His attempt to do so is to insist that likings are not desires because likings apply only to our occurrent sensations, whereas desires range more broadly over objects and states of affairs. Wall & Sobel convincingly argue that this strategy is doomed.¹⁴³ There is simply no principled way to distinguish likings and desires in a way that would justifiably grant one more value-conferring power than the other.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Wall & Sobel (2021).

¹⁴² Parfit (1984), p. 494, p. 501.

¹⁴³ Wall & Sobel (2021), p. 13.

¹⁴⁴ Wall & Sobel take Parfit's inadequacies here to show that if we agree with Parfit about the normative role of likings, then we ought to be willing to grant a more robust role to the normative force of attitudes as they pertain to well-being. While I agree with this conditional, I think that we should reject the antecedent.

If we employ The Endorsed-Feeling View, then we do not need to grant that attitudes generally have the kind of value-conferring power that Parfit was worried about. Again, my view requires pleasures to have a certain kind of feeling, and locates the value in the way those experiences feel. The attitudes merely act as an enabling condition for the person to be benefitted by the feeling in question. The attitudes do not confer value; they enable it. This provides a satisfying way to do what Parfit failed to do. The Endorsed-Feeling View allows us to accept that pleasure cannot benefit a person unless she has a favoring attitude towards the sensation, but to draw the line there.

5. Conclusion

I set out ten desiderata that an account of the nature of beneficial pleasure and harmful pain should aim to meet. I showed that pure felt-quality views can meet six of those desiderata, and that purely attitudinal accounts can meet four to seven (depending on the details of the attitudinal view in question). Given that hybrid views can meet more desiderata than either of the traditional views can, this gives us reason to prefer them. I canvassed three hybrid views, and mounted an argument to show that each of those views are unsatisfactory. The discussion paved the way for me to introduce a new hybrid view, The Endorsed-Feeling View, which meets more desiderata than can either of the traditional views, or any of the extant hybrid views. While The Endorsed-Feeling View still needs much fleshing out, I hope to have shown that it merits the work required to do so.¹⁴⁵

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CURRICULUM VITAE

NIKKI FORTIER

Department of Philosophy
541 Hall of Languages, Syracuse University
Syracuse NY 13210
nfortier@syr.edu
www.nikkifortier.com

EDUCATION**Ph.D. Philosophy, Syracuse University (June, 2023)**

Dissertation: “Bringing Hedonism Back: Toward a Felt-Quality View of Well-Being”

In this set of papers, I make a case for the view that a person’s well-being is determined by pleasures and pains characterized by felt qualities.

Committee: Ben Bradley (co-advisor), David Sobel (co-advisor), Chris Heathwood, Hille Paakkunainen

M.A. Philosophy, University of Manitoba (June, 2014)

Concentrations: Normative Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy

B.A. (honors) Philosophy, University of Manitoba (June, 2012)

Minor: Women and Gender’s Studies

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

Normative Ethics, Metaethics

AREAS OF COMPETENCY

Philosophy of Feminism, Social & Political Philosophy, Medical Ethics

PUBLICATIONS

- “Epistemic Reasons, Transparency, and Evolutionary Debunking” co-authored with Nicole Dular in *Philosophia* 49 (2021), 1455-1473.
- “COVID-19, Gender Inequality, and the Responsibility of the State” in *International Journal of Well-Being* 10 (2020), 77-93.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

- “The Endorsed-Feeling View of Pleasure and Pain”
- “Pain and Immediacy”
- “The Spirit of Resonance”
- “The Trouble with Genuine-Attraction Desires”

COURSES TAUGHT AS AUTONOMOUS INSTRUCTOR

- Philosophy of Feminism, Syracuse University (Fall 2020, 2022, 2023; Spring 2021, 2022, 2023)
- Medical Ethics, Syracuse University (Summer 2019, 2020, 2022, 2023; Fall 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023; Spring 2023)
*I am developing an online version of this course for the College of Professional Studies, to be launched in Fall 2023.
- Social & Political Philosophy, Syracuse University (Fall 2017, Spring 2018, Spring 2023)
- Stem Cells & Society, Syracuse University (Spring 2021, co-taught with Scott Erdman, Department of Biology)
- Theories of Knowledge & Reality, Syracuse University (Spring 2020)
- Logic, Syracuse University (Fall 2019)
- Contemporary Ethics, Syracuse University (Spring 2019)
- Human Nature, Syracuse University (Fall 2018)
- Critical Thinking, Syracuse University (Spring 2017, Summer 2018)
- Ethics and Contemporary Issues, Syracuse University (Summer 2016)
- Environmental Ethics, University of Manitoba (Summer 2015)

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS

- Philosophy of Feminism (Fall 2016)
Professor: Kara Richardson
- Theories of Knowledge and Reality (Spring 2016)
Professor: Kevan Edwards
- Introduction to Social and Political Philosophy (Fall 2015)
Professor: David Sobel
- Contemporary Ethics (Spring 2015)
Professor: Lawrence Thomas

- Introduction to Philosophy (Fall 2014)
Professor: Andre Gallois
- RA, University of Manitoba (Fall 2013)
Research Assistant for Esa Díaz León on a SSHRC-funded project on race and gender
- TA, University of Manitoba (Summer 2012-Summer 2013)
Courses: Ethics and the Environment, Clinical Ethics (Dept. of Medicine), Critical Thinking, Introduction to Philosophy

AWARDS AND HONORS

- Syracuse University Department of Philosophy Summer Scholarship (2014)
- University of Manitoba Department of Philosophy Scholarship (2013)
- Hartman Award, University of Manitoba (2013)

PRESENTATIONS

- “The Trouble with Genuine-Attraction Desires”
Syracuse University: ABD Workshop, Spring 2022
 - “Failing to Resonate with Subjective Accounts of Well-Being”
University of Kansas Workshop on Well-Being, Summer 2018
 - “Crop-Tops are Objectively Not-Cute: A response to Haslanger’s argument for social milieu relativism”
Syracuse University: Graduate Student Working Papers, Fall 2015
 - “Akrasia is Necessary for Blameworthiness”
Minorities in Philosophy, Syracuse University: Women’s Working Papers, Spring 2015
 - “A Defense of a Broad Conception of Negative Liberty”
University of Manitoba Student Conference, Spring 2014
 - Comments on “Normative Perfectionism for Dependent Social Rational Animals” by Brad Cokelet
University of Kansas, Workshop on Well-Being, Summer 2019
 - Comments on “Unwelcome Trust” by Justin Bzovy
Western Canadian Philosophical Conference, October 19, 2013
-

SERVICE

Professional

- *Ad hoc* referee for the *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, *Ergo*
- Coordinator between *Journal of Ethics & Social Philosophy* and *Pea Soup*, 2017-2019
- Chair, *Central APA*, 2022
- Chair, *Workshop in Normative Ethics*, University of Arizona, 2018

Departmental

- Lecturer, Syracuse University's Philosophy for Children Program with Southside Academy Charter School, 2014-2015, 2017-2018, 2021-2022
- Visual designer for conference promotional materials, Syracuse University, SPAWN Conference, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019
- Co-organizer, Syracuse University, Women's Group 2016-2017
- Reception Coordinator, Syracuse University, 2015-2016, 2017-2018, 2018-2019
- Co-organizer, Syracuse University, Graduate Conference, 2014-2015
- Reviewer, Syracuse University, Graduate Conference, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2022