

## The Evaluative Role of Pain

Eric suggested in class that pain fulfills criterion “E”, the evaluative role that mental objects seem to have. Pain is not bad because we assign it the value “bad”. It just *is* bad (intrinsically bad, I would assume).

However, it seems—at least in some cases—that pain is bad because of the value we assign to it. Consider the case of the devout Christian. The devout Christian views physical pain as a way to share in the suffering of Christ (indeed, Pope John Paul II spoke of his great physical suffering as a blessing). He considers his pain a good thing, because it allows him to meditate on the sufferings of Christ and therefore become a better Christian. Pain is not bad for the devout Christian. Use another example, if you like. For the hedonistic masochist, too, pain is not bad. It is a source of pleasure for him, and he does not consider what gives him pleasure to be bad.

Now, does this mean that those of us who consider pain to be intrinsically bad are really just assigning the value “bad” to pain? I do not know, and a one page paper hardly seems the place to discuss the question. If pain is not bad by assignment, then it fulfills the evaluative role. If pain is bad merely by assignment, though, it does not fulfill the evaluative role. This does not mean, of course, that pain does not have a place among the mental. Pain appears to play a behavioral role, it is “introspectible from the ‘inside’”, and it is either not located in space, or indeterminately located in space.