### 1AC/1NC – Moen

#### Pleasure is an intrinsic good.

Moen 16 Ole Martin, PhD, Research Fellow in Philosophy at the University of Oslo. "An Argument for Hedonism." Journal of Value Inquiry 50(2). 2016. https://www.academia.edu/26656561/\_An\_Argument\_for\_Hedonism\_by\_Ole\_Martin\_Moen. PeteZ

Let us start by observing, empirically, that a widely shared judgment about intrinsic value and disvalue is that pleasure is intrinsically valuable and pain is intrinsically disvaluable. On virtually any proposed list of intrinsic values and disvalues (we will look at some of them below), pleasure is included among the intrinsic values and pain among the intrinsic disvalues. This inclusion makes intuitive sense, moreover, for there is something undeniably good about the way pleasure feels and something undeniably bad about the way pain feels, and neither the goodness of pleasure nor the badness of pain seems to be exhausted by the further effects that these experiences might have. “Pleasure” and “pain” are here understood inclusively, as encompassing anything hedonically positive and anything hedonically negative. 2

The special value statuses of pleasure and pain are manifested in how we treat these experiences in our everyday reasoning about values. If you tell me that you are heading for the convenience store, I might ask: “What for?” This is a reasonable question, for when you go to the convenience store you usually do so, not merely for the sake of going to the convenience store, but for the sake of achieving something further that you deem to be valuable. You might answer, for example: “To buy soda.” This answer makes sense, for soda is a nice thing and you can get it at the convenience store. I might further inquire, however: “What is buying the soda good for?” This further question can also be a reasonable one, for it need not be obvious why you want the soda. You might answer: “Well, I want it for the pleasure of drinking it.” If I then proceed by asking “But what is the pleasure of drinking the soda good for?” the discussion is likely to reach an awkward end. The reason is that the pleasure is not good for anything further; it is simply that for which going to the convenience store and buying the soda is good. 3 As Aristotle observes: “We never ask what her~~is~~ end is in being pleased, because we assume that pleasure is choice worthy in itself.”4 Presumably, a similar story can be told in the case of pains, for if someone says “This is painful!” we never respond by asking: “And why is that a problem?” We take for granted that if something is painful, we have a sufficient explanation of why it is bad.

If we are onto something in our everyday reasoning about values, it seems that pleasure and pain are both places where we reach the end of the line in matters of value.

### —AT: Instrumental Value

#### Evolutionary origins fail to discredit the intrinsic value of pleasure.

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It is almost certainly true that our ability to experience pleasure (and pain) evolved in virtue of helping us act in ways that enhance our reproductive fitness. This, in turn, explains why pleasures track things that are conducive of reproductive fitness, such as eating, drinking, and having sex. Contrary to what Pianalto takes for granted, however, this need not be in conflict with the theory that pleasure is intrinsically valuable. The reason is that the view that X tracks reproductive fitness is compatible with the view that X is intrinsically valuable. These two views would be in conflict only on the premise that reproductive fitness exhausts the room of possible intrinsic values. Such a premise, however, is implausible.

To see why, imagine that you are given the option of entering a special deal with a rather peculiar man: The Sadistic Sperm Bank Owner. He offers to start using exclusively your sperm in his clinic, and accordingly, to make you the biological father of hundreds of children. In exchange for this, he demands that he can lock you in his basement for the rest of your life and torture you whenever he wants. Should you enter the deal? If Pianalto is right, it seems that you would have a very strong reason to do so, since entering this deal would best promote that which pleasure evolved to track: reproductive fitness. Claiming this, however, seems wrong, and it seems wrong for the reason that it ignores the value that pleasure has, and the disvalue that pain has, even in isolation from their effects on reproductive fitness. Indeed, Pianalto’s theory borders on the absurd, for experiencing excruciating pain is bad, and it is bad even in cases where it has no effect (or indeed, has a positive effect) on one’s reproductive fitness.

### —AT: Desire Satisfaction

#### A desire-based theory of value is implausible.

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Desire theories sound plausible, but face a number of serious problems. One problem is that it is puzzling how a desire, in and of itself, could have the power to make anything valuable, be it experiences or anything else. To make this point, Shelly Kagan has presented the willfully bizarre example of someone who desires the number of atoms in the universe to be prime. 9 If someone had such a desire: Would it follow that for this person, life would be better if the universe did in fact have a prime number of atoms? It seems not. Or imagine a devout Muslim who has a strong desire never to eat pork, yet now and then accidentally gets small amounts of pork in her diet. She never finds out. Granted that the Islamic prohibition against eating pork is not (or at any rate: is no longer) well founded: Is this Muslim woman harmed by eating pork? It is hard to see how she could be harmed, even though it seems plain that her desire has not been fulfilled. If this is right, it seems that whether or not a desire has been fulfilled is not, in and of itself, of much value significance.

One way for desire theorists to respond to these challenges is to put restrictions on the theory, for example, a restriction stating that the subject in question must know whether or not the desire is fulfilled. 10 Such a restriction helps make desire-satisfactionism more in line with common sense, since both in the case of the man who wants the number of atoms in the universe to be prime and the Muslim woman who eats pork, the subject does not know whether or not the desire has been fulfilled.

The informed variant of desire-satisfactionism, however, also faces problems. To illustrate one problem, Derek Parfit asks us to imagine that we are offered a highly addictive drug. If we start taking the drug, we will have a strong desire for it every morning for the rest of our lives. We are guaranteed ample supplies of the drug for free and it has no adverse effects. Taking the drug will not, however, give us any pleasure. Would it be good to start taking the drug? It seems not, yet taking the drug would create a lot of desire satisfaction of which we would be aware. 11

#### The converse explanation is better.

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The underlying problem with desire theories, I believe, is that they get things backwards. What makes desire satisfaction good and desire frustration bad is the pleasure that tends to result from desire satisfaction and the pain that tends to result from desire frustration. In the absence of any hedonic impact, it is irrelevant whether a desire is fulfilled or frustrated, be it an ordinary desire, an informed desire, or an idealized desire. If this is right, it is wrong to cash out the value of pleasure and the disvalue of pain by reference to desire-satisfaction and desire frustration. Rather, we should cash out the value of desire-satisfaction in terms of pleasure and the disvalue of desire frustration in terms of pain.

### —Evil Pleasures

#### Evil pleasures produce overall disutility.

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This version of P1 is the most radical and most interesting one, and I believe it can be defended. To see how, it should first be pointed out that even if every pleasure is intrinsically valuable and every pain is intrinsically disvaluable, it does not follow that every pleasure is overall valuable and that every pain is overalldisvaluable. Though every pleasure is valuable when seen in isolation from the context in which it occurs, a given pleasure might have further effects that make its occurrence overall disvaluable, and similarly, though every pain is disvaluable when seen in isolation, a given pain might be situated in a context that makes its occurrence overall valuable.

To take the simplest case first, someone who holds that pleasure is intrinsically valuable and pain is intrinsically disvaluable might well concede that it is good that we feel pain when our skin is burned—not because feeling this pain is good in and by itself, but because this helps us avoid skin damage. This, however, does not challenge the fact that when seen in isolation from the beneficial effect, the pain that we feel when burned is bad. Goldstein suggests that it is precisely because of its badness that pain is able to play its protective role. 17

I think a strong case can be made that this explanatory model generalizes to other forms of good pains and bad pleasures. Take the case of entertaining a sexual fantasy while in a funeral. Someone who believes in the intrinsic value of pleasure would have to hold that when seen in isolation from the context in which it occurs, this pleasure is good. Importantly, however, she may also hold that it is bad in many other ways. It is bad, for example, in virtue of manifesting a serious lack in ability to value people and to deal with their deaths. It might also be bad in virtue of undermining the social function of funerals. Or take the sadistic torturer. Although someone who claims that pleasure is intrinsically good would have to maintain that when seen in isolation, this pleasure is good, she could also point out that the overall value of the occurrence of this pleasure is very bad. Most obviously, it is bad for the victim, since the pleasure motivates the torturer to continue torturing. Also, it manifests a psychological tendency of which those who believe in the intrinsic disvalue of pain have excellent reasons to be afraid. A similar explanation goes for the SS officers. If pleasure is intrinsically valuable, these officers’ pleasure is also valuable (for them) when seen in isolation from the context in which it occurs. This, however, is not a problematic thing to concede, since it is precisely thecontext that is supposed to make it bad, and by appealing to this context, someone who believes in the intrinsic value of pleasure has ample resources to cash out the badness of war criminals escaping justice. For something to be really bad, it does not have to be to be intrinsically bad. It is sufficient that it is overall really bad

Wanting intrinsic badness as well as overall badness is overkill, and upon reflection, it seems very implausible that the things that are otherwise intrinsically valuable lose their intrinsic value just in the contexts where they happen to be made overall disvaluable. It would be too lucky a coincidence, so the best explanation of our intuitions in such cases seems to be that in making the judgment that something is reallybad, we conflate various forms of badness. Becoming aware of this, it is better to conclude that even in cases of great overall disvalue, pleasure retains its intrinsic value, and even in cases of great overall value, pain retains its intrinsic disvalue.

### —AT: Masochists

#### Masochists don’t view pain as intrinsically good and even if they did, masochism is not commendable.

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To approach masochism, we should first observe that masochists do not appear to like pain in general. Masochists like specific pains in specific contexts. If the pain is of the wrong kind, if it is too intense, or if it occurs in the wrong context, the masochist reacts to the pain just like everyone else does. What, then, accounts for the apparent value of the limited range of pains that masochists pursue? The answer seems to lie in the role that these pains play in the sexual settings of which they are part. These settings seem to provide masochists with an adrenaline rush, with the excitement of pushing their boundaries, with intense sexual pleasure, with an endorphin high, and, for some, with a cathartic experience. Masochist pains, therefore, seem to be constitutive of larger wholes that, for masochists, can be quite enjoyable. If an explanation like this is the right one, then masochism is compatible with the view that all pains, when seen in isolation from the contexts in which they occur, are indeed disvaluable.

Admittedly, a critic might respond that my explanation captures many, but perhaps not all, masochists, since there are people who pursue pain in excess of what gives them joy or excitement of any kind. Some pursue outright torture. In these cases, however, it seems fine to conclude that the practice is in fact disvaluable and should probably be avoided. Indeed, this is the intuitive response to extreme pain infliction, and those who believe in the intrinsic disvalue of pain have a powerful explanation as to why such practices should trouble us.