Theories of Happiness

On the Origins of Happiness and Our Contemporary Conception

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Dedication

For Prof. Dr. Christoph Horn

Thank you for your tireless support during my years in Bonn.

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Chapter 1: Why We Need Theories of Happiness

Most people who dedicate their lives to attaining happiness don't know what it is they are looking for. And I do not mean not knowing "the way" to happiness that so many books in the popular press claim to illuminate. I am talking about what happiness *is*. The authors of such books speak to the question of what *causes* happiness, in other words, what factors in our lives, or aspects of our attitudes result in happiness. These claims, of course, depend on the author's knowledge of what happiness is. This is knowledge that we currently lack.[1]

Not only do we currently possess only a very weak understanding of what people mean when they say they want to be happy, but we also lack terminological clarity in discussions of happiness. The current state of discussion on this subject includes contributions in which authors believe they are in disagreement with others, when in fact they are not, and other contributions in which authors believe they agree with others when in fact, they do not. Further, when theoretical confusion exists, it is not surprising to find that confusion magnified in the populace as a whole.

[1] In the hopes of making this essay accessible to an interdisciplinary audience, I have in some places chosen to depart from traditional philosophical methods of citation, especially of ancient authors, as some traditional methods might not be immediately understood by someone unfamiliar with the practice. I believe that the bibliographic needs of philosophers are, nonetheless, well served in this essay.

Oftentimes the nature of happiness is simply ignored by members of the linguistic community in answers to the question "What is happiness?" and only the purported causes are elucidated. Thus, when the average person is asked what happiness is, we would not at all be surprised to hear that happiness is "being in good health," "having a loving family," or "being engaged in a fulfilling job." Happiness may even be "a walk on a beach on a quiet afternoon." Yet we can imagine many situations in which these conditions obtain, and yet the individuals offering these answers are the furthest thing from happy.

Although they differ in some very important respects, in this respect at least, our thoughts on happiness are similar to the thoughts of some members of the ancient Greek populace on the term *eudaimonia*. Aristotle noted that the masses always defined *eudaimonia* as that thing which they currently lacked, be it health, wealth, or love.[2] After the attainment of one of these, presumably the next deficit is primed to be crowned *eudaimonia*.

In this introduction, I will attempt to make the case that this theoretical and practical confusion is an unfortunate state of affairs that by all means should be righted in the coming years. Thankfully, and as we shall see shortly, I am not alone in viewing the state of discussion on happiness—within philosophy and without—as very problematic.

On several levels, it is incumbent upon us to achieve clarity in discussions on happiness. Although philosophers have an overriding interest in clean theory, this is far outweighed by the strength of the practical interest shared by millions in understanding what we want when we say that we want to be happy. In the absence of such knowledge, the danger exists that in our ignorance we might miss our goal entirely.

Whose Territory is this Anyway?

While I have never met any academic who has denied the importance of increasing understanding of happiness, I have met quite a few who have claimed that

[2] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. and trans. T. Irwin, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Pub. Co., 1999), 1095a. References to Aristotle's works in this essay will take the customary form (e.g., 1095a), referring to Bekker's marginal line numbering.

their field is not the one that bears responsibility for the answering of the question. From the beginning of the century up until the 1990s one of humankind's central goals was tossed like a hot potato from one academic discipline to another. Psychology, in which behaviorism dominated until the beginning of the "cognitive revolution", did not view happiness as a mainstream psychological issue for a variety of institutionally-based reasons elaborated below. Economics had long since given up the emotional or hedonic concept of experienced utility in favor of the preference-based approach of decision utility, and so were also not in the business of talking about happiness.[3] Philosophers, having always been interested in the ancient terms that they translated as 'happiness,' made occasional forays into the discussion of our modern conception of happiness, and although some of these were of high-quality, their number was surprisingly small and did not result in a high-profile systematic debate with unambiguous terminology.

Some of this passing of the buck may be a result of what Lawrence Sumner in his *Welfare, Happiness, and Ethics* sees as the less than clear boundary between science and philosophy when it comes to determining not in what way or why welfare matters, but what it is.[4] This diffusion of responsibility is even more prominent in the case of happiness, with several contemporary philosophers offering strangely superficial characterizations of "feeling" happiness, or to paraphrase Julia Annas in her recent article in *Daedalus*, "smiley-face happiness":

> Being happy is easily taken to be feeling happy . . . a kind of smiley-face feeling. . . . And this kind of happiness does not matter to us all that much once we start to think in a serious way about our lives. As we bring up our children, what we aim for is not that they have episodes of smiley-face feeling, but that their lives go well as wholes: we come to think of happiness as the way a life as a whole goes well, and see that episodes of happiness are not what we build our lives around.[5]

As Daniel Haybron points out, implicit in this statement as well as the entire article is the idea that if happiness is a purely psychological affair, then it could amount to no

[3] D. Kahneman and R. Sugden, "Experienced Utility as a Standard of Policy Evaluation," *Environmental and Resource Economics* 32, no. 1 (2005): 162.
[4] L. W. Sumner, *Welfare, Happiness, and Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 5.
[5] J. Annas, "Happiness as Achievement," *Daedalus* 133, no. 2 (2004): 44f. I feel obliged to note that Annas' article is almost irresponsibly polemical and seems to be based on a near-total ignorance of the state of psychological research on happiness.

more than "smiley-face happiness."[6] Fortunately, this way of viewing "psychological" happiness in philosophy has changed over the last several years, thanks in part to the efforts of scholars like Sumner and Haybron. Haybron's name, in particular, will come up repeatedly in this essay and with good reason: He has published nine major articles on the topics surrounding happiness in the last seven years and the manuscript of his forthcoming book, *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*[7] contains the most systematic treatment of theories of our modern conception of happiness to date. The influence of Haybron's groundbreaking work will be seen repeatedly this essay.

The renewed interest in happiness in philosophy has been accompanied by a similar phenomenon in psychology. Academic psychology had long avoided areas that were centerpoints of interest in what might have been called psychological inquiries in previous centuries, such as virtue and happiness. The reasons for this include the absurdly reductionist paradigm of behaviorism already mentioned, academic psychology's wish to distance itself from the humanities and establish its right to exist along a natural science model, as well as national funding priorities which emphasized the research and treatment of psychological disorders.

Thus, with a few notable exceptions, virtue, character strengths, happiness, and related issues of healthy mental functioning were sadly neglected. Although the momentum against this state of affairs had been building for a few decades, in 1998, the then president of the American Psychological Association, Martin Seligman, and his colleague Mihaly Czisksentmihaly wrote a galvanizing article that emphasized the regrettable absence of and the urgent need for research on "positive" human functioning, not least because of evidence that certain character strengths and virtues protected against the development of mental illness.[8]

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[6] D. M. Haybron, *The Pursuit of Unhappiness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, in press), Ch. 1, p. 4. Currently, chapters of Haybron's manuscript are only available in electronic form (http://www.slu.edu/~haybrond/) and without continuous pagination, for which reason citations of his manuscript in this essay will take the form: Chapter X, p. X.

[7] Ibid.

[8] M. E. P. Seligman and M. Csikszentmihalyi, "Positive Psychology [Special Issue]," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000); ———, "Happiness, Excellence, and Optimal Human Functioning [Special Issue]," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000). For indications that the character trait of optimism prevents against certain affective disorders see: M. E. P. Seligman, *Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life* (New York: Vintage, 2006).

The cogency of this appeal led to a resounding echo in the world of academic psychological research and spawned major projects in areas that psychologists have traditionally seen as the territory of philosophers.[9] This rejection of a strong focus on the study of sick, problematic, and disordered aspects of the human psyche has also had a strong impact on happiness studies. Whereas in the past there often seemed to be an implicit negative definition of happiness in academic psychology that was little more than "the absence of significant disorder," many more researchers began to think seriously about how one should best characterize happiness positively. This has led to a rich literature on the subject of happiness, but, unfortunately, this literature is plagued by terminological turbidity and a lack of philosophical insight.

Although sensitivity to philosophical considerations has greatly improved, several years ago it was not uncommon for empirical researchers to quote both Aristotle and Bentham on happiness and assume that they were talking about the same thing. Psychologists also lack extensive experience with the benefits and perils of linguistic analysis, in other words, that experience that is the hard-won legacy of philosophy's efforts in the twentieth century.

This legacy has put philosophy in an excellent position to examine socially constructed and semantically messy phenomena like happiness. Happiness has a vernacular currency, to borrow a phrase from Lawrence Sumner,[10] and it is this meaning of happiness that people use in the making of many of their most significant prudential decisions that matters to them, and not a meaning of happiness defined, for example, because it is easier for social scientists to measure.

Why is Happiness a Philosophical Topic?

Even given that happiness is not dealt with skillfully in other disciplines, and that philosophy is in the position to do this better, why is happiness a philosophical topic? To avoid confusion about the answer to this question at the very beginning, it is helpful to distinguish between happiness, on the one hand, and well-being or

[9] E.g., C. Peterson and M. E. P. Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[10] Sumner, *Welfare, Happiness, and Ethics*, 10.

welfare, on the other. Indeed, it seems that our current use of "being happy" or "happiness" is strongly psychological. Daniel Haybron offers a few examples of this:

> When parents say that they want their children to be "happy *and* healthy," they obviously aren't using 'happiness' to mean well-being. If you seek a friend's advice about your son's future, saying "I only want what's best for him," and your friend says, "Then you should encourage him to do what makes him happy," your friend is probably not suggesting, most unhelpfully, that what's best for him is to do whatever is best for him. She is offering a substantive piece of advice. The psychological notion likewise occurs in many ordinary comparatives, as when a student asks herself, "Will I be *happier* as a lawyer or a teacher?" Subjective well-being researchers often make claims about happiness: how happy people are and so forth. These researchers normally do not take themselves to be making value judgments about people's lives when describing them as happy; nor are they in a position, as empirical researchers, to make value judgments. They are simply attributing states of mind.[11]

This ordinary usage of happiness should be clearly marked off from the use of 'happiness' by some philosophers as a translation of words such as '*eudaimonia*' that really do mean something like well-being, welfare, flourishing, or living (or having lived) a good life. A good amount has been written about whether to translate *eudaimonia* as 'happiness,' and I do not intend to engage the debate at this point. I do think, however, that this translation is, *at best*, misleading for a modern reader. On the other hand, as will be clear in the "short history of happiness" presented in the following chapter, *eudaimonia* is one term on a continuum that is, indeed, best called the history of happiness, a history made up of many terms that have constantly shifted positions along the dimensions of this semantic continuum through the centuries.

What makes us hesitate to call this continuum a history of happiness and what presents us with this translation conundrum is the fact that our contemporary conception of happiness has resulted from a comparatively extreme movement on a few of the dimensions along which conceptions of happiness have moved since the birth of the first thing that we might translate as 'happiness.' This movement has been so extreme that our concept of happiness is, for most, clearly not the highest individual good and therefore bears a much fainter resemblance to previous concepts

[11] Haybron, *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*, Ch. 1, p. 13.

than most of the previous concepts do to each other. For us, to say that happiness *is* well-being or our highest individual good, is not to make a strictly descriptive claim. Instead, it is to make a claim about the value of happiness that requires argumentative support.

Not so, however with *eudaimonia*: This term was from the beginning intended to indicate the best one could hope for one's life. With some notable exceptions such as the Cyreniacs, the Greeks theorized about *eudaimonia* as the highest good describing a life of flourishing, complete in every significant respect. Although our conception of happiness is no longer that of a highest good, the roots of the term such as 'hap' meaning luck or good fortune made 'happiness' at some times in the past the word that came closest to describing a life going well in all respects. Today, however, the word has come to mean something more specific, internal, and subjective. It is for this reason, that when freshman students read Aristotle for the first time in a text that translates '*eudaimonia*' as 'happiness,' a good deal of explanation as to what eudaimonia *really* means and really meant for the lives of the Greeks is always necessary. Such explanation would not be necessary if 'happiness' did refer to something like total well-being.

In any case, should philosophers wish to use 'happiness' in a well-being sense, then it might be wise to develop two distinct terms to avoid confusion. In earlier writings, Haybron advocated talking about *psychological happiness* and *prudential happiness*, the former being the meaning common in current vernacular and the latter being the equivalent of well-being or flourishing.[12] In his latest manuscript,[13] he seems to have distanced himself from this suggestion. I think well-being or flourishing are acceptable terms for what is meant by "prudential happiness," and, in the interest of clarity, I think it best to follow common usage of 'happiness' as well as the usage of the term in other disciplines to refer only to a highly internal and subjective social construct that is not clearly equivalent with well-being. Most philosophers view happiness in this way as well, and it is for this reason

[12] D. M. Haybron, "Happiness and Ethical Inquiry: An Essay in the Psychology of Well-Being," (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, 2001), 2ff.
[13] Haybron, *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*.

that terms like 'well-being' and 'welfare' are most commonly used for referring to something like a 'good life.'

Happiness in the psychological sense, is a good which could be a component of well-being, but there also may be sound reasons why it might not be. Recent history is full of people (many of them artists and 'continental' philosophers) who have eschewed happiness as a goal. A certain artist could believe that he could create great works only through great suffering, and might claim to renounce happiness as a goal, while still believing that what he is doing is that which is *best for himself*. He is rejecting a specific good that could be a part of well-being, but that he believes is not. In our usage, the pursuit of happiness is something that can be renounced without any hint of a corresponding renunciation of a pursuit of what is best for oneself.

That said, what is meant by happiness in our usage is believed by most to have a place as one of the goods that make up well-being. Some have even argued that psychological happiness (with some qualifications) *is* well-being or welfare.[14] But, well before such a wide-reaching proposal that would certainly be challenging to defend, happiness should be studied in the course of developing what Haybron calls "prudential psychology" or the psychology of well-being, akin to moral psychology.[15] The strong interest in well-being, flourishing, and welfare in contemporary philosophy suggest that our lack of analytical understanding of happiness as a likely constituent of well-being cannot be ignored.

Since Elizabeth Anscombe's polemic, "Modern Moral Philosophy," the task of ethics has been seen more broadly. Interest in flourishing, well-being and certainly virtue ethics is a result of this wider focus and studies of our contemporary concept of happiness should be as well. It does seem difficult to ignore happiness if ethics takes seriously the answering of Socrates' question, "How ought I to live?" Moreover, happiness is de facto a philosophical topic. In the last three decades, dozens of articles on our contemporary conception of happiness have appeared in reputable philosophical journals and a fair number of books on the topic have been published.

[14] Sumner, *Welfare, Happiness, and Ethics*.
[15] Haybron, *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*, Ch. 1, p. 3ff.

Above all, happiness should be studied independently of its role in a given moral theory. Since the Enlightenment, countless moral theories have offered an account of happiness on the side, viewing it as an important building block, but seldom treating it systematically and independently from its role in the moral theory from which it arose. The Utilitarians are the most obvious example of this, but Kant, for all of the rest of his piercing psychological insight, is guilty of this as well.[16]

Others such as Haybron have offered very extensive justifications for delivering a philosophical treatment of our concept of happiness. I feel that the burden of excuse and apology lies less on those active in philosophy who wish to deal with this subject than on the part of the disciplines which up until now have given scant treatment to a phenomenon whose importance for many people is unparalleled.

The Purpose of this Essay

At present, a large number of views on the nature of happiness exist. These views are repeatedly disposed of and resurrected, both in philosophy itself and in related fields. This is partly a result of the haphazard and disconnected manner in which philosophy and other disciplines have treated happiness in the past century. One of my hopes for this essay is to contribute to a delineation of the major types of theories and a standardization of the terminology used to discuss them (although I would also be satisfied if I succeeded in simply drawing awareness to the terminological and methodological difficulties facing the field of happiness studies). In so doing, I hope to contribute to a structure whose use will enable both philosophy and the social sciences to think about these theories in an ordered manner.

One way to accomplish this is to place the topic of this essay, namely, our current usage of 'happiness' and 'being happy,' in a historical context. Chapters Two and Three attempt this and, in the process, work out seven dimensions along which things that we have called or translated as 'happiness' have moved throughout the centuries. This widens our view and assists us in not falling prey to an impression

[16] See V. S. Wike, *Kant on Happiness in Ethics*, SUNY Series in Ethical Theory (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

that the shape of our current conception of happiness is inevitable and unchanging. As mentioned above, our conception of happiness is simply one result of a combination of values on these dimensions.

In addition to placing our conception of happiness in a larger context, Chapters Two and Three attempt to reframe our knowledge of the development of various conceptions of happiness according to that which we now know about the evolutionary forces that shaped our psychological systems of emotion and motivation. One central thesis of these chapters is that the forces shaping our psychology placed us in a difficult situation, and that the history of happiness after what I will call the *philosophical turn* is best seen as a revolt against certain things that humans had been shaped to want and to value as well as ways in which the wanting and valuing occurred. I offer an explanation why certain problems existed (and continue to exist) with our conceptions of happiness and our striving to attain them as well as an explanation of how differing conceptions of happiness attempted to solve these problems.

The colorful ancestry of 'happiness' also serves to help explain the difficulties that traditional analyses of the term 'happiness' and related terms have faced. With such a rich history, it is no surprise that linguistic intuitions vary, both regarding the usage of cognates of happiness and the phrases in which they are employed. Linguistic intuitions to ostensibly similar phrases such as "living a happy life," "being happy with one's life," or simply "being happy" are by no means identical. Chapter Four deals with the issue of the various meanings of cognates of happiness and the phrases in which they are used. Once the various meanings are separated, Chapter Four also examines answers to the question of how we are to decide among competing linguistic intuitions, and how to decide which phrase to analyze if competing phrases deliver opposing intuitions.

Another problem of method is dealt with in Chapter Four, namely, the multiple meanings of the term 'subjective' when applied to theories of happiness. 'Subjective' is often used in conflicting senses in the discussion surrounding theories of happiness. On the one hand, 'subjective' is used to mean something along the lines of being "dependent on the judgment of the agent," and on the other hand "pertaining

to mental states." I argue that for the purposes of this essay and perhaps for happiness studies in general, 'subjective' should be reserved for expressing the sense of 'being dependent on the judgment of the agent' while 'pertaining to mental states' be rendered by the term 'internal.'

Chapter Five offers an elucidation of the two traditional theories of our contemporary conception of happiness, namely, hedonistic theories and life- or desire-satisfaction theories. I discuss their strengths and name the weaknesses that eventually prove fatal to these theories. I also review claims that matters other than mental states (i.e., 'external' matters) are relevant to happiness, and that moral or ethical considerations play a necessary role in our ascriptions of happiness.

The theory of happiness introduced most recently, Daniel Haybron's emotional-state theory, forms the basis of Chapter Six. Haybron's approach is one of the most plausible of the extant theories of happiness and bears systematic similarities to the psychologist Daniel Kahneman's construct of "objective happiness." Objective happiness and other major positions in empirical psychological research on happiness find their elaboration in Chapter Seven. Chapter Seven concludes with an implicit call from some psychologists for an alternative to the extant theories of happiness, a call that I attempt to respond to in Chapter Eight with the creation of the dynamic affective standard theory of happiness.

Although conducted at a level of necessary abstraction, I believe that it is important to keep in mind that in discussions of happiness, a responsibility exists beyond the normal dedication to the principles of academic debate. In the case of many issues discussed in philosophy, an author's primary responsibility is to the forthright presentation of a theory for a small group of academics. Knowing what we want when we say that we want to be happy is not simply the concern of happiness theorists. Instead, it is the concern of each person who wants to be happy and isn't quite able to explain what it is that he wants.

Chapter 2: Emancipation from Evolution I – The Advent of Philosophy

The history of happiness is a long story of a tenacious pursuit of mastery over our elusive final ends. Whether we can speak of progress in the course of this pursuit is questionable. One thing is certain: For many today, a desire for happiness seems as basic and natural as a desire for sex or for food. However, happiness, at least after the point in intellectual history that I will call the philosophical turn in happiness, has always been much more of a human or a social construction than other desires that seem to be equally self-evident. For example, for a purportedly basic, natural, and self-evident desire, it is strikingly odd that in contemporary philosophical and psychological writings and even in discussions with people on the street, so much disagreement exists about what exactly it is that we want, when we say that we want to be happy.

One needs only to look to our intellectual progenitors to find even more confusion. When we compare the competing views of what we mean today when we use the English word ‘happiness,’ with all of those things that the English word ‘happiness’ once meant *and* all those things that we choose to translate into English as ‘happiness,’ the self-evident nature of this desire becomes more doubtful still.

That confusion exists about the nature of our aim when we profess to aim at happiness is, of course, not a new insight.

More than two centuries ago, Immanuel Kant commented that "the concept of happiness is such an indeterminate one that even though everyone wishes to attain happiness, yet he can never say definitely and consistently what it is that he really wishes and wills."[17] It is one consequence of human psychology that we tend to take the most bizarre things for granted if they have always been that way. Is it not exceedingly strange that we are so unclear about that thing that we purportedly spend much of our energy—and in some cases most of our lives—pursuing? And if it really is difficult to imagine human life without this supposedly basic desire, then the supporters of the contention that the desire for happiness is a basic and naturally occurring desire should at least be able to say what it is that humans cannot be without.

I argue in this chapter that our modern conception of happiness is anything but natural. Indeed, it is highly unnatural. This has some problematic consequences for its pursuit that we would regard as tragic, were they not so common as to be almost universal *and* if we were even able to recognize these problems. In the course of the next two chapters, I build on existing work to make the claim that it served the purposes of differential reproductive success that we *not* recognize these problems with the pursuit of happiness. As further examples will show, astute students of human nature such as Immanuel Kant recognized this tragic situation over two centuries ago, albeit without having the means to explain the reasons for it. Now as a result of the immense progress in understanding of evolutionary processes, we are in the position to uncover the causes of the tragedy of happiness as well as its nature. This portion of the history of happiness will be elucidated in the second evolutionary interlude at the end of this chapter.

The history of the denotata of words that bear a semantic relationship to our word 'happiness' does not pertain directly to the ultimate end of this undertaking, namely, to understand what members of the English linguistic community, today, mean when they say that they want to be happy. Nonetheless, a glimpse into the

[17] I. Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. J. W. Ellington (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Pub. Co., 1981), 27.

evolution of the variety things called happiness is very helpful in order to understand both the divergence in our linguistic intuitions (on which so many philosophical theories of happiness have foundered), as well as the possible divergence in things that we actually do mean when we say that we want to be happy.

In spite of the wide variety emphasized above, and although no single element of their content is common to all, descriptions or definitions of happiness do seem to share at least one relatively loose formal characteristic. From the beginning, things called happiness have been a record of individual humans' greatest hopes for themselves or for their lives as a whole. This is not to say that the greatest hopes of some may not have included happiness in any meaningful way. Instead, it is simply to say that where we find things that we deem best to translate into English as happiness, then they usually have to do with the greatest hopes either for the individual or her life. Beyond this very general characterization, there are (at least) seven dimensions along which things we call happiness have moved since the philosophical turn, all of which were in place (to a greater or lesser degree) by the time ancient Greek philosophy had run its course. To work out these dimensions, I will portray selected aspects of the conceptions of happiness of the major figures of ancient Greek philosophy in a very concise fashion.

Again, things that we choose to translate into English as 'happiness' have almost always been those things that individuals most wanted from their time on this planet and often for their projected existence afterwards. Ironically, the modern or contemporary conception of happiness as it is used in English is the one that shares this characteristic in the weakest way. This is the result of a historically extreme movement on several of the dimensions mentioned above. Our highly subjective conception of happiness that in no way represents a highest good for the individual (the vast majority of those who profess that happiness matters most will, when pressed, admit that other things, e.g., moral concerns, are more important to them) is fairly unique. Even for us moderns, however, happiness, if not our highest good (as it was for many cultures in the past), often serves as a proxy for such a good.[18] This role is most evident in our decision-making processes. Very often when confronted

[18] Haybron, *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*, Ch. 2, p. 12.

with life decisions, people ask, "Will taking the job in Singapore make me happy?" or "Will marrying John make me happy?"

Although contemporary English speakers do not use happiness to refer to a highest, all-encompassing good (i.e., at a birthday celebration they might wish someone happiness *and* health), as a guide to prudential choices, 'being happy' plays a large role. Many terms from ancient times that contemporary philosophers often translate as 'happiness' (e.g., *eudaimonia*[19]) did not serve as a proxy for well-being, welfare, or flourishing; they *were* well-being, welfare, or flourishing. This is strongly evident in the writings of the (questionably titled) father of Western history, Herodotus, shortly before the beginning of a radical change in things called happiness. Before turning to Herodotus' happiness, it is worthwhile to review the purpose of this chapter. The goal here is by no means an exploratory analysis of each of the thinkers mentioned, but instead the delineation of aspects of ancient conceptions of happiness, both to uncover the dimensions along which happiness has since moved and to re-examine the historical movements of ideas about happiness within the framework of what we now know about the role of evolution in shaping the mental life of human beings.[20]

Pre-Philosophical Happiness

Herodotus bequeathed us a discussion between Croesus, famed at that time for being the wealthiest man alive, and Solon, a traveling Athenian sage and lawgiver. [21] The discussion centers on Croesus' attempt to convince Solon that he, Croesus, is also the happiest man alive. Croesus supports his claim by commanding his servants to show the wise man of Athens the massive extent of his treasures.

[19] Throughout the course of the discussion of ancient Greek thought, I will occasionally use 'eudaimonia' as a mental reminder that it is not our contemporary concept of happiness that is under discussion, but instead one that functions quite differently than ours, encompassing much more of that which is of value to us.

[20] There is a mountain of literature that extends back over several centuries—and in certain cases millennia—on the topics in this chapter and the next. As the goal of these two chapters is to place general knowledge about the ancients and their philosophical descendants in a new framework, only those works have been cited that I believe do an especially good job of working out the point in question. They serve as examples from which the interested reader can further explore the literature.

[21] Herodotus, *The History*, trans. D. Grene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 1.30.

Croesus' strategy is to show Solon that he, Croesus, lacks nothing, and therefore *must* be the happiest man in the world. This strategy fails for a reason other than that which modern readers might suspect.

To Croesus' great dismay, Solon informs him that a certain Tellus is the happiest man. Tellus was a father of brave sons who lived in a wealthy city, and his children and grandchildren had survived childbirth and were healthy. Tellus himself was wealthy and found an honorable end to his life on the battlefield. Solon does not take issue with Croesus' claim that his vast wealth contributes strongly to his happiness. Instead, Solon famously claims that Croesus should be wary that no man can be called happy until he is dead. He reminds Croesus that his admittedly extremely favorable circumstances could change drastically before or at the moment of his death.

While a modern might press the case that Croesus' wealth contributes to his happiness only insofar as it affects him positively in one way or another, Solon does not because Solon believes that happiness consists in favorable circumstances which continue to the end of one's life (and beyond). Wealth, social success or honor, the success of one's family, not to forget the circumstances of one's death and one's fame after death are all essential components of happiness.[22]

In his magisterial *Happiness: A History*, Darrin McMahon points out that Herodotus uses more than one word to describe the state that Croesus desires.[23] Not only does Herodotus use *makarios* and *oblios*, the closest approximation of which might be "blessed," but also *eutychia*, or "luck," and to capture the subtle differences in meaning among these three terms he employs the word *eudaimon* (*eudaimonia* in its noun form). At the time in which Herodotus was writing, *eudaimonia* was rapidly becoming the preferred term for indicating the presence of a flourishing, favored life, akin to our notions of individual welfare or well-being. *Eudaimonia* comes from the idea of a life having a good *daimon* (or spirit, god, demon)[24], and this means having a

[22] C. Horn, *Antike Lebenskunst: Glück und Moral von Sokrates bis zu den Neuplatonikern (The Classical Art of Living. Happiness and Ethics from Socrates to the Neoplatonists)* (Munich: Verlag CH Beck, 1998), 67. See also S. A. White, *Sovereign Virtue: Aristotle on the Relation between Happiness and Prosperity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 63f.
[23] D. M. McMahon, *Happiness: A History* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2005), 3.
[24] Ibid.

blessed, praiseworthy, life that conforms to one's wishes and has generally turned out well.

Solon's conception of *eudaimonia* corresponds in its broad strokes to other pre-philosophical sources, such as the happiness or blessedness of the Homeric hero as depicted by Terence Irwin as well as Martha Nussbaum's view of the values implicit in ancient Greek tragedy.[25] Unsurprisingly, it is also not too far off from that of many pre-philosophical, pre-agricultural cultures.[26] In these cultures, happiness is a collection of things whose importance for survival and reproduction are clear: Wealth, honor, and social success are all ways of securing one's continued survival (as well as that of one's offspring) in times of scarcity of material goods, and all three contribute significantly to one's level of attractiveness as a mate, and consequent success in attracting other highly valued mates. This is especially true in non-industrialized cultures where death, disease, etc. are a more constant companion than they are in industrialized cultures.

Further components of one's *eudaimonia* include a wife (the pre-philosophical Greek history of happiness is unfortunately framed only in terms of the *eudaimonia* of a man), healthy children, and the flourishing and success of one's family (i.e., obtaining for themselves the abovementioned goods of wealth, honor, and social success). In short, these components of pre-philosophical happiness describe the optimal external package for fulfilling what we to expect would be a male human's goals shaped by evolutionary processes. The background for these goals and the collection of desires with which early Greek philosophers were faced is best understood after a short detour through contemporary evolutionary theory.

[25] T. Irwin, *Classical Thought*, A History of Western Philosophy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 6-16; M. C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*, Rev. ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
[26] McMahon, *Happiness: A History*, 19.

The Evolution of Desire

What the human being understands as happiness…would still never be attained by him; for his nature is not of the sort to call a halt anywhere in possession and enjoyment and to be satisfied. – Immanuel Kant[27]

Many extremely gifted philosophers in both the distant and relatively recent past have struggled with the strange problems that human desires and goals (especially happiness) produce. Without an understanding of the processes that shaped our species, they often coupled impeccably acute psychological and anthropological insight with a flailing effort to explain the origins of the perplexing desires and behaviors they were describing. With the coming to light of our evolutionary origins for the first time in the late 19th century, much speculation about the origins of behavior before that time revealed itself to be just that: speculation. This did not prevent observers like Kant from recognizing the tragically bizarre situation in which humans find themselves. The evolutionary interludes in this chapter serve to explain the reasons for our predicament. For this purpose a general understanding of evolutionary thought about how our species was shaped is of great importance.

It has often been asked why *homo sapiens* developed abilities that so exceeded those of other beings shaped by natural selection. More than one theory exists, of course, but each of them posits unique combinations of existing humanoid skill coupled with persistent environmental challenges. These challenges subsequently shaped not only our skills, but importantly for our topic, also our desires and goals. Basic principles of the functioning of natural selection form a crucial background to the understanding of these theories.

Classical fitness theories, of the kind that Darwin propounded, involve the differential reproductive success of the individual only. David Buss explains differential reproductive success as "brought about by the possession of heritable variants that increase or decrease an individual's chances of surviving and

[27] I. Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. P. Guyer and A. W. Wood, trans. P. Guyer, Matthews, Eric, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000/1790), 298 (5:431).

reproducing" and as being "the 'bottom line' of evolution by natural selection."[28] Two elements were seen to be central to this success: the survival of the individual and successful mating, although the first is always subordinate to the second. W.D. Hamilton turned the classical Darwinian conception on its head in the 1960's by introducing the concept of inclusive fitness, which involved a new different view of differential reproductive success.[29] Hamilton pointed out that statistical increases of a gene in the gene pool depend on more that just mating. To begin with, one's brothers and sisters share just as much genetic material with an agent as her children do (50%), so seen statistically, genes (and perhaps cultures) will develop that encourage behaviors that will strongly favor the survival and reproductive success of an individual human's brothers and sisters. This interest in the success of our siblings, of course, includes the fate of other relatives as well (the degree diminishing in direct relation to the percent of genetic material shared with the individual in question).

Far from being an all-inclusive explanation of the meaning of the family or love, inclusive fitness merely explains how the statistical tendencies toward the increase of an individual's genes in the gene pool are determined by more than her survival and mating success. Given that differential reproductive success in the sense of inclusive fitness is *the* general evolutionary mechanism, how did this mechanism shape the specific development of humankind's comparatively immense mental capacities?

One theory focuses on the fact that humans are the group of primates that consume far more meat that any other group. This is true in the present, but more importantly, many indications point to far larger consumption of meat than other primates in our ancestral environment.[30] The "hunting hypothesis" proposes that it was tool-making and use, in tandem with the need for language skills for purposes of cooperation on the hunt that spurred the development of human mental capacity.[31]

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[28] D. M. Buss, *Evolutionary Psychology: The New Science of the Mind* (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon 1999), 7.
[29] W. D. Hamilton, "The Genetical Evolution of Social Behavior I," *Journal of Theoretical Biology* 7 (1964).
[30] Buss, *Evolutionary Psychology: The New Science of the Mind*, 75f.
[31] Ibid., 75.

Other theorists propose that the development of tools, not for hunting, but for gathering provided the impetus.[32]

Robin Dunbar takes a slightly different approach. His innovation lies in the attempt to map brain size onto social group size. In doing so, Dunbar has demonstrated impressively that *within* a selected group of vertebrate species (e.g. primates, carnivores, ungulates, birds, reptiles and fish) the logarithm of brain size is almost exactly proportional to the logarithm of social group size.[33] While other theorists claim that human brain development was spurred by demands to understand and manipulate the world, Dunbar claims that the real impetus was the evolutionary advantage bestowed upon those who could understand and manipulate (in both a positive or cooperative and in a negative sense) others in their social group or tribe. As human brain size has tripled since our last common ancestor with chimpanzees,[34] one could go further and postulate a kind of evolutionary arms race in intelligence. As intelligence and ability to manipulate increased, so did the complexity of the object of manipulation (the workings of others' minds), and thus a further increment in intelligence proved again to be of great advantage.

Dunbar emphasizes not only the advantage of understanding others in one's social group, but also the passing on of that information, specifically with regard to their value as partners in reciprocal relationships.[35] Haidt, following Dunbar, points out that gossip very often involves stories about transgressions and concludes that humans have used language (and gossip in particular) to create an ultrasocial world "in which we refrain from nearly all the ways we could take advantage of those weaker than us, a world in which we often help those who are unlikely ever to be able to return the favor. We *want* to play tit for tat, which means starting out nice without being a pushover, and we *want* to cultivate a reputation for being a good

[32] Ibid., 79.
[33] R. I. M. Dunbar, "Coevolution of Neocortical Size, Group-Size and Language in Humans," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 16, no. 4 (1993).
[34] J. Haidt, *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom* (New York: Basic Books, 2006), 53.
[35] R. I. M. Dunbar, *Grooming, Gossip, and the Evolution of Language* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996).

player."[36] While Dunbar's explanation seems compelling, I have thus far framed it only in terms of an explanation of human intelligence as an undifferentiated mass.

Evolutionary theorists, however, emphasize the content-specificity and the modularity of intelligence. David Buss' discussion is congruent with Dunbar's general arguments and explains the specific content of the challenges early humans faced in more detail.

> It is unlikely that our huge brains—the 900 cubic centimeter advantage we have over chimpanzees—have evolved to help us pick better berries or avoid snakes. These survival problems are all solved by chimps with a much smaller brain.
> It is far more likely that humans evolved such large brains as a consequence of the complexities of social living and social competition that includes forming coalitions, executing a rich repertoire of short-term and long-term mating strategies, negotiating the intricacies of complex kin networks and social hierarchies, forming long-term reciprocal alliances, and socializing children for years or decades.[37]

In Buss' characterization, we begin to get a feel for the specific social challenges our brains evolved to meet. But the specificity and modularity go even further. Take the example of phobias. A phobia is a "disrupting, fear-mediated avoidance that is out of proportion to the danger posed by a particular object or situation and is recognized by the sufferer as groundless."[38] The most prominent examples are extreme fear of heights, closed spaces, snakes, and spiders. Interestingly, as David Buss and many others have pointed out, extreme fears develop much less often in response to very frequent causes of serious harm and death in urban environments such as cars, swimming pools, and electrical outlets than to the dangers present in humans' ancestral environment such as spiders, snakes, cliffs, and tall trees with valuable fruit.[39] This imbalance in our fear responses to things which pose little threat to us in modern urban environments and things that pose comparatively very great threats to us is, of course, present at pre-phobia levels and speaks for very specific content-oriented emotional and motivational responses.

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[36] Haidt, *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom*, 54f.
[37] Buss, *Evolutionary Psychology: The New Science of the Mind*, 398f.
[38] G. Davison, J. Neale, and A. Kring, *Abnormal Psychology* (New York: John Wiley, 2004), 134.
[39] Buss, *Evolutionary Psychology: The New Science of the Mind*, 87.

Kenrick and Simpson, in concord with virtually all other evolutionary theorists, state that the evolutionary models "posit that humans do not possess a single, monolithic psychological mechanism designed to maximize their general fitness (which would be very difficult to program and highly inefficient to use). Instead, humans likely have several specific psychological mechanisms, each of which evolved to solve specific adaptive problems."[40] This is true not only of emotion and motivation, but of highly content-specific cognitive abilities. In fact, a huge body of scientific evidence supports the domain specificity view of human cognitive abilities, emotions, memory, desires, etc.[41] For example, our power of discernment and memory for human faces is an ability that is probably unequalled in any other area of our pattern discernment and memory.[42] Tooby and Cosmides call the relevant specificity in the realm of goals and desires a "motivational domain." They emphasize that

> Cases of motivational incommensurability are numerous and easily identified via careful analyses of adaptive problems. Distinct and incommensurable evolved motivational principles exist for food, sexual attraction, mate acquisition, parenting, kinship, incest avoidance, coalitions, disease avoidance, friendship, predators, provocations, snakes, spiders, habitats, safety, competitors, being observed, behavior when sick, certain categories of moral transgression, and scores of other entities, conditions, acts, and relationships.[43]

Emotions, according to Tooby and Cosmides, are the "solution to the problem of mechanism coordination" between competing domain-specific motivational programs.[44] It is also widely agreed that pleasure and pain, regardless of how one wants to define them, are part of evolved regulatory systems that encouraged or

[40] D. T. Kenrick and J. A. Simpson, "Why Social Psychology and Evolutionary Psychology Need One Another," in *Evolutionary Social Psychology*, ed. J. A. Simpson and D. T. Kenrick (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. 1997), 13. See also J. M. Bailey et al., "Effects of Gender and Sexual Orientation on Evolutionarily Relevant Aspects of Human Mating Psychology," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 66, no. 6 (1994). And D. M. Buss, "Evolutionary Psychology: A New Paradigm for Psychological Science," *Psychological Inquiry* 6, no. 1 (1995).
[41] P. Boyer and H. C. Barrett, "Domain-Specificity and Intuitive Ontology," in *Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology*, ed. D. M. Buss (New York: Wiley, 2005).
[42] Ibid., 96f.
[43] J. Tooby and L. Cosmides, "Conceptual Foundations of Evolutionary Psychology," in *Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology*, ed. D. M. Buss (New York: Wiley, 2005), 48f.
[44] Ibid., 52.

discouraged the pursuit of certain external goods, events, and/or situations.[45] Pleasure (in the widest sense of the word, including that which I will later term positive affect) became the motivational carrot to encourage humans to pursue goals that were generally evolutionarily advantageous, and pain (in the widest sense) formed the motivational stick that discouraged us from outcomes that were evolutionarily disadvantageous.

Therefore the early Greek philosophers were confronted with many widely varying things that it seemed that we just wanted, period. Many attempts to reconcile them were undertaken, but what early philosophers were unable to know is that there is an ultimate and irreconcilable tension in the universe of things that we want: "The systems that regulate our emotions were shaped not to benefit individuals or the species, but only to maximize the transmission of the genes themselves. Thus, every species experiences a tension between efforts to maintain individual welfare and efforts to maximize reproductive success."[46] This tension served as part of the background for the philosophical turn in happiness. The thinkers of the Greek city-states instigated a great debate that continues up to the present concerning what to do with this chaotic collection of desires and goals, what really is good for the individual, and what our ultimate good really is.

The Advent of Philosophy and the Philosophical Turn

The advent of philosophy marked a signal change in conceptions of happiness. Initially, however, the natural philosophers, those Greeks considered today to be the first philosophers, busied themselves comparatively less with questions of *eudaimonia* or its linguistic cousins than with explanations of the natural world. Although some of them did turn their analytical tools on the question of well-being, their distinctive contribution was to initiate philosophy as a method of inquiry through reason and observation. Some of their specific strategies for understanding

[45] R. M. Nesse, "Natural Selection and the Elusiveness of Happiness," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London: Biological Sciences* 359, no. 1449 (2004); P. Rozin, "Preadaptation and the Puzzles and Properties of Pleasure," in *Well-Being: The Foundations of Hedonic Psychology*, ed. D. Kahneman, E. Diener, and N. Schwarz (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1999).
[46] Nesse, "Natural Selection and the Elusiveness of Happiness," 1343.

the natural world, such as monism[47], were also employed in their attempts to understand happiness. The application of the monistic strategy with regard to happiness is not limited to the natural philosophers; on the contrary, the pursuit of unity in *eudaimonia* became a cornerstone of much of the thought of the classical philosophers who became active in their wake. Understanding why these strategies and why philosophical conceptions of happiness as a whole were so different from what came before requires an understanding of what made philosophy as a whole so different. For these reasons (and for their thoughts on happiness), it is helpful to sketch a crude picture of some of the views and tactics of the natural philosophers.

In contrast to the likes of natural philosophers such as Thales, Anaximander, Xenophanes, and Parmenides, giants of Greek thought such as Homer and Hesiod sought access to cosmological information through appeal to the muses. Many natural philosophers avoided (and occasionally belittled) such tactics and instead developed explanations for the composition of the world based on little more than a combination of their reason and their sense experience.[48] This led them to overthrow many beliefs about the nature of the world that had existed until this point. Interestingly, as mentioned above, their speculations often involved forms of monism. In other words, they attempted to explain the manifest image of the world in terms of only one substance. One possible motivation for the pursuit of monism is the desire for parsimony in explanation, a core value in scientific exploration of the world.

Parsimony in explanation quickly also became a core value of those philosophers who first turned the analytical method to the question of the nature of happiness. Democritus and Heraclitus were two natural philosophers who addressed this question and with Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, among others, they instigated a

[47] Not all of the natural philosophers were monists, but a significant number of them pursued monistic strategies as ways of explaining the natural world.

[48] Not all of the so-called natural philosophers took an oppositional stance to Homer, for example. Later natural philosophers such as Empedocles found it advantageous not to oppose Homer, but instead to read him allegorically.

philosophical turn in thought on happiness that severed it abruptly from conceptions that came before.[49]

We have seen that the process of development through evolution can lead to a multifarious collection of desires, goals, and values and a concomitant concept of happiness that is external, materialistic, and reflects the components of this collection. This, however, is a very unsatisfying state of affairs for a being conscious of its self, its conflicting desires and, above all, its recurrently tragic free choice among them. The messy collection of often conflicting goals that developed in *homo sapiens* is certainly not unique to our species. The twin evolutionary goals of survival and reproduction engender conflicting individual goals and desires in all species. However, the intellect of the human being, our freedom to deviate from our instincts (often by calling into question whether the desired action really is good for us), and our concomitant grasp of causality is far greater than any of the other known products of natural selection.

This combination results in a behavior and an intellectual desire that seems to be as basic a need as any: the pursuit of the causal or reason question, often phrased simply as "Why?" Anyone who has spent time with small children knows how relentless and stubborn this need can be. Of course, this "Why?" extends not simply to physical causation, but to justifications or reasons for action as well.[50] Children naturally develop a potentially endless chain of "reason questions" with regard to actions.

If one looks at an individual exemplar of species other than *homo sapiens* in terms of the causal question[51], one would suspect the best linguistic approximation of their relation to the things they pursue could be nothing more than "because they want X." Perhaps one could go as far as "because X appears to be good to them." Regardless of which locution is appropriate, other species seem to be driven by what

[49] This is not intended endorse the oversimplified *Mythos zum Logos* research paradigm. The argument in this essay limits itself to a illustrating a real development in conceptions of happiness that was instigated largely, if not entirely, by the pre-Socratic and classical Greek philosophers.

[50] Some do not believe that reasons or justifications are properly seen as part of the causal process that instigates an action. Whether they actually are matters little to the general point that we tend to ask the same sort of questions about causes (in general, i.e., not just of actions) and reasons for action.

[51] Reasons probably are unique to animals that have reached a certain stage of consciousness, like ourselves. Therefore the phrase "the causal question" is more appropriate in the case of species other than *homo sapiens*.

they desire and what they do not desire, as programmed through millennia of cycles of natural selection. Humans, on the other hand, have never been satisfied with a simple, "I want X" answer. Before philosophy, however, many chains of justification led back to the will of gods in a clear and straightforward way.

Similarly to the natural philosopher's occasional hesitance and often refusal to appeal to the Olympian gods as a simple final explanation for a chain of material causal questions, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle effectively, if not always explicitly, rejected the desires of the Olympian gods as ends of chains of justificatory questions. And even if these philosophers had no way of knowing that natural selection was the reason that many of our manifold conflicting desires and goals do not serve our best interests, it was clear to them that it certainly was the case that our best interests were often not served.

In turning the reason or justificatory question loose on Herodotic or Homeric happiness, these philosophers emphasized that they wanted to use reason to uncover what really is good for us. Socrates was not the first philosopher to ask it, but he was the first to stubbornly emphasize the importance of the question, "How should we best live our lives?" as he famously asks in Plato's early Socratic dialogue, the *Euthydemus*.[52] It is not so much what Socrates says, as an assumption implicit in the question that marks another turning point for happiness. Socrates and some of the natural philosophers before him make the assumption that we have much more control over happiness than the pre-philosophical, largely external conception suggests.

Unsurprisingly, when a conception of happiness is highly external and materialistic the influence of the gods and luck will be very strong. The relation between these two aspects and personal control over one's *eudaimonia* was a topic of great interest among Greek poets, playwrights, and, of course, philosophers.[53] Although traditionally the focus of much attention in this respect, Socrates was not the first philosopher to attempt to wrest happiness from luck or the whim of the gods.

[52] Plato, *Euthydemus*, trans. R. K. Sprague (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub Co Inc, 1993), 278 E, 79 A.
[53] H. Fränkel, *Dichtung und Philosophie des frühen Griechentums: Eine Geschichte der Griechischen Epik, Lyrik, und Prosa bis zur Mitte des fünften Jahrhunderts* (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1962), 570f., 130f., 230f., 86f., 539, 73-75.

The natural philosophers Heraclitus, Democritus, and Anaxagoras also made strong moves to instigate changes in the way the Greeks viewed happiness.[54]

Heraclitus claimed that the character of a man is his fate[55], a turning on its head of received opinion about the nature of *eudaimonia*. His statement ostensibly suggests that nothing (or little) else is responsible for *eudaimonia* other than that over which one presumably has some degree of control. Democritus describes happiness and unhappiness as phenomena of the soul[56], thus beginning the shift from external goods to internal ones. According to Aristotle, Democritus and Heraclitus are joined by Anaxagoras, who claimed that the happiest person was not someone that you would ordinarily think of.[57] According to Aristotle's interpretation of Anaxagoras, this meant a rejection of external goods as a measure of happiness in favor of a just and rational conduct of one's life.[58]

In a similar vein, Democritus seems even to have anticipated Socrates' dictum that he who is done injury is better off than he who injures.[59] This view of *eudaimonia* also means greater control over one's own happiness: one can avoid inflicting injury, but one has far less control over suffering injury at the hands of someone else. So emphasis on greater control seems to go hand in hand with a stronger internalization of *eudaimonia*. This is a clear shift in emphasis from the Homeric ideals of the hero such as renown, honor, power, property, wealth, noble lineage, and a successful family and successful children, which were primarily external to the agent, to internal factors such as psychic harmony and equanimity.[60]

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[54] Horn, *Antike Lebenskunst: Glück und Moral von Sokrates bis zu den Neuplatonikern (The Classical Art of Living. Happiness and Ethics from Socrates to the Neoplatonists)* 66, 69f.
[55] H. Diels and W. Kranz, eds., *Die Fragmente Der Vorsokratiker*, 10 ed. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1961), 22B119.
[56] Ibid., 68B170.
[57] M. Woods, "Translation of and Commentary on Eudemian Ethics," (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 1215b 6ff.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Diels and Kranz, eds., *Die Fragmente Der Vorsokratiker*, 68B45.
[60] Horn, *Antike Lebenskunst: Glück und Moral von Sokrates bis zu den Neuplatonikern (The Classical Art of Living. Happiness and Ethics from Socrates to the Neoplatonists)* 66. See also Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy*. Nussbaum describes the position of ancient moral philosophy starting with Plato as a counter reaction to the ephemeral concept of happiness that was prevalent in Greek tragedy, in other words as an immunization strategy targeted at external and uncontrollable factors composing happiness, although she does see Aristotle as an exception to this.

That this truly represents a sea change in view is illustrated by K. J. Dover's contention that a Greek could easily have used the term *eudaimon* to describe a person who had a feeling of deep dissatisfaction with his life.[61] Additionally, the criterion of psychic harmony and equanimity renders more difficult the most external (and uncontrollable) of all ideas about *eudaimonia*, namely that events after our deaths matter for our *eudaimonia*, a common part of the pre-philosophical Homeric conception and an element that will return most prominently in our examination of Aristotle's concept of happiness.

There is no denying that the aspects of increasing internalization, increasing control, and decreasing emphasis on the effect of events after our death on our happiness all do move in the direction of our modern conception of happiness. However, one thing mentioned previously should always be kept in mind in these discussions: unlike our conception of happiness, *eudaimonia* is a highest good.[62] When Democritus claims that *eudaimonia* is a phenomenon of the soul, he is making a substantive ethical claim about what should be the focal point of our valuing – what is best for us. In contrast, when we today say that happiness is, for example, desire-satisfaction, we are doing nothing more than making a descriptive claim about the nature of a phenomenon or a social construct. Additionally, *eudaimonia* is still a concept that generally extends over a whole life and is not, as our concept can be, episodic (however long the episodes may last).[63] That said, the increase in personal control and the internalization of happiness had begun in earnest. Philosophers were, thus, slowly wresting the social construction of happiness from evolutionarily pre-programmed goals and values in the direction of the considered good of the individual, independent of the evolutionary consequences of the goal, desire, or state that formed *eudaimonia*'s content.

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[61] K. J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974), 174 and n. 5.

[62] Aristippus and the Cyrenaics represent an exception to this statement; their view is dealt with below.

[63] This might give the wrong impression about the nature of our contemporary concept of happiness. We can talk about 'feeling happy,' and this is very obviously episodic, sometimes disappearing after a minute or so. 'Being happy' can mean something other than 'feeling happy,' and this long-term meaning is the philosophically relevant one. Being happy in this way is also episodic, but the episodes are longer and no outer limit is set on them. Being happy can easily extend over years and decades, perhaps even (with great luck or skill) over an entire lifetime.

Although increased personal control, increased internalization, and aspects of ethical behavior are present in the pre-Socratic philosophers, Socrates makes them the core of his philosophical analysis of happiness. In one of Plato's Socratic dialogues, the *Euthydemus*, Socrates asks "What being is there who does not desire happiness?" He continues: "…since we all of us desire happiness, how can we be happy?"[64] Of course, whether or not we all desire happiness depends greatly on what definition of happiness we are discussing. It might be the case that it is a natural human desire to want *eudaimonia* in its abstract determination as "the highest good," but this is certainly not incontestably obvious. For some reason or another, one might want something that is good, but not the highest good. This might be irrational, or it might not be, but it does possible. More importantly, even if it is a natural human longing to want the highest good, whether the highest goods and the correspondent longings for those goods that Socrates and Plato delineate really are so self-evident is another matter altogether.

In explicating his vision of the highest good, Socrates takes his lead from his natural philosopher predecessors. Especially in his attempt to unify *eudaimonia* Socrates attempts to uncover one single thing that provides an end to all of the chains of why-questions. Just as many of the natural philosophers believed themselves to have discovered the one material that lay behind the fabric of the universe, Socrates believed himself to have discovered the one "material" that composes *eudaimonia*, namely, virtue (which for Socrates simultaneously meant a kind of knowledge). In other words, Socrates seems to have been a happiness monist.

In the *Gorgias*, Socrates claims that a rich and powerful king only then has *eudaimonia* when he also has had a moral education and possesses the virtue of justice.[65] Later in the dialogue he claims that only a person who lives an ethical life could be considered blessed and happy. In *Euthydemus*, Socrates completes this thought, saying not only that wisdom is necessary for happiness, but that it is also sufficient. He says that the only determinant of whether one has a good and happy

[64] Plato, *Euthydemus*, 278e, 79a. In McMahon's treatment of this quote he mentions that the Greek word used here is *eu prattein* and not *eudaimonia*, but claims that it is clear from the context that the expression is meant to be synonymous with *eudaimonia*. See also J. Annas, *Platonic Ethics, Old and New* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 35-36 esp. note 20.
[65] Plato, *Gorgias*, trans. D. J. Zeyl (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 1987), 470e.

life is the attainment of wisdom.[66] And wisdom involves virtue attained by living in accordance with reason and as a result of proper philosophical insights.[67]

Again one can see that the determination of *eudaimonia* delivered by Socrates is highly internal (external goods seem to be completely irrelevant), extreme in terms of personal control (happiness is identical with being virtuous, something extensively if not completely under one's own control), and, of course, highly moralized (the moral aspect of living a good life is emphasized, seemingly to the exclusion of everything else usually deemed to be a part of it). This trend toward greater personal control, internalization, and moralization, which found its extreme formulation in the thought of Socrates, does not seem inevitable, nor is it even obvious why happiness should have developed in this way. Darrin McMahon speaks of the trend toward personal control of happiness as a result of the "freakish exception" in the history of the world prior to the Greeks that Greek political life represented.[68] He sees a connection between "a society in which free men had grown accustomed, through rational inquiry and open deliberation, to decide matters for themselves, and the effort to extend the sway of self-rule ever further, even to the long-standing domain of the gods." This is a play on both the idea of happiness as a gift from the gods (i.e., the shades of meaning of happiness that move towards luck, blessedness, and being fortunate) and the opinion prominent in Greek society that the only ones who are truly and *reliably* happy were the gods. The experience of being able to better control their environment through politics may well have encouraged the Greeks[69] to attempt to gain greater control over that which was inarguably most important to them—their individual *eudaimonia*.

Perhaps internalization, as suggested above, is best seen as a partial result of a desire for greater control over happiness; internalization is certainly the most

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[66] ———, *Euthydemus*, 282a. See also U. Wolf, *Die Suche nach dem guten Leben: Platons Frühdialoge* (Reinbek: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1996), 68-72. In the literature, this is referred to as the sufficiency thesis. A critical examination of the sufficiency thesis can be found in T. H. Irwin, "Socrates the Epicurean," in *Essays on the Philosophy of Socrates*, ed. H. H. Benson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 198-219.

[67] See E. Heitsch, *Erkenntnis Als Lebensführung: Eine Platonische Aporie* (Mainz: Steiner 1994).

[68] McMahon, *Happiness: A History*, 23.

[69] Although Athens is the most prominent example of a true (albeit exclusionary) democracy, many other Greek city-states had some form of citizen participation, even if they were not as extensive as in Athens.

effective way of protecting one's happiness from the vicissitudes of the external world. But it would be wrong to see this as behind-the-scenes scheming to subjugate *eudaimonia*. Instead, the movement to internalization began a long and deep-rooted debate about what is really important for us, things external to ourselves (i.e., goods that we obtain and other states of affairs in the world), things internal to ourselves (e.g., virtues, or—more hedonistically—the feelings we have as a result of the abovementioned goods and states of affairs), or a combination of both.

If the answer is, for example, the feelings themselves, then it makes sense to aim directly at them without taking a detour through the external world. In fact, many of the later schools of ancient thought go in just this direction, advocating extreme modesty or even renunciation of the pursuit of external goods in favor of the attainment of inner peace. Humanity would continue to move its conceptions of happiness back and forth on this internal-external continuum all the way up to the Enlightenment, when the pendulum went very strongly in the direction of positive feelings and other internal states. Thus far three of the seven dimensions along which human happiness has moved since the philosophical turn have been introduced: 1) degree of personal control, 2) position on an internal-external continuum, and 3) degree of correspondence with morality or virtue.

Before we move on to by far the most prominent of Socrates' students, Plato, it is worthwhile to pause and examine the views of one of Socrates' less prominent pupils, Aristippus of Cyrene. His views introduce another dimension along which happiness has wandered through the centuries: the role of happiness in a larger system of value. Aristippus is noteworthy because he does not share the common Greek view that *eudaimonia* is the highest good. Although none of Aristippus' writings survive, Diogenes Laertius maintains that Aristippus thought that individual pleasures were the highest good and that *eudaimonia* could only consist in the accumulation of individual pleasures. However *eudaimonia* is not choiceworthy in itself; it is only choiceworthy because of the individual experiences of pleasure, which were choiceworthy in themselves.[70]

[70] Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae Philosophorum*, ed. H. Long (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), II 87f. See also J. Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 227ff.

Interestingly, and unlike other Greek authors, Aristippus' description of *eudaimonia* is very similar to some theories of what we now call happiness. Hedonistic theories of happiness capture fairly exactly what Aristippus intended: happiness is an accumulation of individual pleasurable episodes. Only, unlike most moderns, Aristippus rejected happiness as a goal and advocated instead the pursuit of individual (on his view) happiness-constituting moments of pleasure. In any event, the thought of Aristippus introduces another dimension along which happiness can move, namely, the dimension of value. In other words, what place does happiness hold in a hierarchy of goods? Happiness' position in a system of values would turn out to be a source of great strife in the philosophical debate following the time of the Greeks.

Although Aristippus' view represents a rejection of the pre-eminent place of happiness in the pantheon of human values, it still does represent a strong internalization of the highest good and, thus is congruent with the movement seen in Socrates, Heraclitus, Democritus, and Anaximander. Whereas the pre-philosophical conception of the highest good referred to external goods (and thus to subjective states only by proxy), Aristippus, akin to his intellectual compatriots in the Enlightenment, thought he would be best served theoretically by going to the "source" of happiness, in other words, by concentrating on feelings themselves.

Even more so than Aristippus or Socrates, it is left to Plato to develop a conception of happiness that is radically different than anything that has come before and in doing so, engender a desire that has returned to haunt and provoke Western thinkers and mystics. Plato's point of departure is not far from that of Socrates, in that Plato, too, believes that happiness is, or is the result of, a just and ethically oriented lifestyle.[71] And Plato's *Politeia* makes the argument that this is, indeed, the case, despite the obvious difficulties, disadvantages, and even pain and suffering that could—in certain tragic situations—be the direct result of living a just life.

Plato makes at least three major arguments for his identification of justice with happiness, the first of which is a bit more understandable than the other two.

[71] G. Vlastos, "Justice and Happiness in Plato's Republic," in *Plato: A Collection of Critical Essays, II: Ethics, Politics, and Philosophy of Art and Religion*, ed. G. Vlastos (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1971).

First of all, Plato argues that justice is equivalent to a state of harmony in the soul, and therefore claims that justice involves a special sort of mental health or psychic well-being. This psychic pleasure is so great that it is never overcome by any problematic conditions external to the agent.[72] Plato delivers several arguments for this, including the fact that the unjust man places no limit on his desires, and as a result of their limitless nature, they can never be fully satisfied. An orientation towards the world characterized by injustice pre-programs and guarantees dissatisfaction.[73]

However, Plato's psychic harmony claim seems to result partly from his conviction that knowledge of the Form of the Good is necessary to be just and that a life dedicated to such knowledge brings with it the highest level of pleasure (although such a life is also choiceworthy in itself).[74] This brings us to Plato's second argument. The first and the second argument, while concentrating on differing aspects of the relation of justice to happiness, really cannot be entirely separated from each other, but this second justification of his thesis is the one that Plato thinks most important.

Plato's argument can be summarized in three major steps. Because Plato, like Socrates, has a highly intellectual view of virtue, being just and thus possessing harmony in one's soul involves a form of knowledge. This knowledge, like all knowledge according to Plato, is only possible through coming to know the Forms, and in this case specifically the Form of the Good. This equivalence between being just and knowing the Forms indicates that only philosophers can be truly just, for only philosophers have knowledge of the Forms. So what exactly is the relationship between the Form of the Good and our good?[75]

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[72] Horn, *Antike Lebenskunst: Glück und Moral von Sokrates bis zu den Neuplatonikern (The Classical Art of Living. Happiness and Ethics from Socrates to the Neoplatonists)* 75.

[73] J. Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 294-304.

[74] In an interesting twist, Plato quantifies this position and claims that the just person experiences 729 times more pleasure than the tyrant or the unjust: Plato, *Republic*, trans. G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub Co Inc, 1974), 583b-88a. On this see also Annas, *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, 306ff.

[75] Although the exact relationship is not entirely obvious, two things are relatively clear about this relationship: 1) psychic harmony/justice, which is a basic condition for eudaimonia, involves a kind knowledge of the idea of the good and 2) ultimately only philosophers are able to attain the knowledge of the Idea of the Good. The remaining citizens do not possess philosophical expertise and, therefore, have only imperfect or derivative virtues, which they learn through their upbringing in the *polis*, above

One answer to this question involves the relationship between our desires and knowledge of the form of the good. Horn proposes that by using this framework, Plato develops a teleological theory of happiness for the first time in the history of philosophy.[76] Horn's interpretation runs as follows: Plato is interested in the relation of striving or desiring, an interest exhibited in his extensive treatment of the concept of *eros* in the Symposium. There he describes striving as always desiring something beautiful.[77] Later 'beautiful' is replaced by 'good' in another formulation[78] and in this formulation it is easier to see what Plato is up to. Plato sees striving as necessarily meaning striving towards something good. This does not necessarily mean morally good, but instead simply advantageous in some regard. The Form of the Good is that which is absolutely desired and thus the fulfillment of all striving. Attainment of knowledge of the Form of the Good is the point at which all striving and desiring *ends*. And this, claims Plato, can be called nothing other than *eudaimonia*, or happiness. Happiness is the final fulfillment of all human striving.

Although (as one can imagine) such an occurrence results in pleasure (similar to that which Plato described in the first argument for the confluence of happiness and justice), this really is not the point. When confronted with that which ends all striving, additional pleasure means nothing because we, by definition, no longer have any desire for it – striving no longer exists for that pleasure. This is clearly an almost otherworldly conception; the average Greek would hardly have been able to imagine what it is like to have no further desires, let alone Plato's description of how to get there. It is not surprising that Plato resorted to analogy when pressed to describe the Form of the Good – this demand formed the impetus for his famous analogy of the cave, in which the role of the Form of the Good is described in almost mystical terms.

So, too, in the *Symposium* where we find the ascent of the lover of knowledge described as moving from the love of the particular to the general and finally to the

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all in the polis' religious cults (see Republic II and III) and A. Veltman, "The Justice of the Ordinary Citizen in Plato's Republic," *Polis* 22, no. 1 (2005).

[76] Horn, *Antike Lebenskunst: Glück und Moral von Sokrates bis zu den Neuplatonikern (The Classical Art of Living. Happiness and Ethics from Socrates to the Neoplatonists)* 76 ff.

[77] Plato, *Symposium*, trans. A. Nehamas and P. Woodruff (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 1989), 204d.

[78] Ibid., 204e.

Form of Beauty itself. Only then does the philosopher understand what true beauty is. As a result of the otherworldly feel of Plato's view of happiness, it may not come as a surprise that as a third argument for a tight relationship between justice and happiness, Plato indeed posits a maximally happy life after death for those who live justly.[79] In this world and the next, Plato's central conception of happiness might be termed the ultimate desire satisfaction theory of happiness. Happiness is not attained when certain central desires are satisfied, as is the case in contemporary theories, but instead only when a state is reached in which all desires find their completion.

Plato's radical and otherworldly vision introduces another dimension that was present in previous conceptions, but never with such importance: the temporal horizon of happiness. Plato's conception of *eudaimonia* is so demanding that its complete fulfillment is easiest to imagine in the afterlife. The issue of happiness after death was present in Herodotus' recounting of Solon's admonition to Croesus, but in contrast to Plato, the issue there was whether one could call Croesus *eudaimon* before he died, or whether one had to know the manner of his death before one could render a judgment. Following Plato, Aristotle will claim that events after one's death can affect one's *eudaimonia* as well. But in both the case of Solon and of Aristotle the issue is the question of the *continuing* of a currently excellent state to death and beyond. Plato's maximally demanding conception causes one to wonder if one can *only* be happy in the afterlife, and that things that are called *eudaimonia* before that are only weak approximations. This question foreshadows a great debate in the Christian church (and eventually among the Christian churches) about the temporal horizon of happiness.

In much of his philosophy, Aristotle, Plato's most famous student, reacted to Plato and especially to some of the more otherworldly aspects of his thought. In fact, Aristotle seems to be targeting Socrates and Plato when he says, "Some maintain, on the contrary, that we are happy when we are broken on the wheel, or fall into terrible misfortunes, provided that we are good. Whether they mean to or not, these people are talking nonsense."[80] In contrast to this "nonsense," Aristotle elects to rehabilitate

[79] ———, *Gorgias*, 523a ff. In a similar vein see ———, *Republic*, 608c ff.
[80] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1153b 19-21.

a part of the Herodotic, Homeric, tragic vision by including external goods as essential to happiness.

> Nonetheless, happiness evidently also needs external goods to be added, as we said, since we cannot, or cannot easily do fine actions if we lack the resources. For, first of all, in many actions we use friends, wealth, political power just as we use instruments. Further, deprivation of certain [externals]—for instance, good birth, good children, beauty—mars our blessedness. For we do not altogether have the character of happiness if we look utterly repulsive or are ill-born, solitary, or childless; and we have it even less, presumably, if our children or friends are totally bad, or were good but have died.
> And so, as we have said, happiness would seem to need this sort of prosperity added also. That is why some people identify happiness with good fortune, and others identify it with virtue.[81]

Thus, it appears that Aristotle is saying here that external goods belong to happiness both as enablers of fine or noble actions and as goods that simply belong to happiness, period.[82] Whatever its role, Aristotle does regard good fortune (i.e., the presence of certain external goods) as essential for happiness – in consonance with Homer and Herodotus and in contrast to Plato and Socrates. This discussion regarding the worth of externals for fine action might appear strange without an understanding of how Aristotle conceives human happiness. Aristotle, like Plato, views happiness as the highest and final end. It is useful to detail his careful depiction of the formal characteristics of a final end, as this characterization also makes clear the difference between our conception of happiness and that of many of the ancients.[83]

Aristotle characterizes happiness as the most complete or most perfect good, the self-sufficient good, and the most choiceworthy good.[84] Happiness is the most perfect or complete good because it is never chosen for the sake of another good, but instead is always chosen for its own sake. Aristotle claims that we often choose

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[81] Ibid., 1099a 27 – 99b 9.

[82] Regarding the importance of external goods for *eudaimonia*, the *Nicomachean Ethics* diverges strongly from the *Eudemian Ethics* (as well as from *Magna Moralia*). On this see, for example, J. M. Cooper, "Aristotle on the Good of Fortunes," *Philosophical Review* 94 (1985).

[83] Only a rough account is necessary for the purposes of this essay. For an excellent account of the role of a final end in Greek thought see Annas, *The Morality of Happiness*, 27-46.

[84] The following interpretation of these three characteristics is based on Christoph Horn's characterization found in Horn, *Antike Lebenskunst: Glück und Moral von Sokrates bis zu den Neuplatonikern (The Classical Art of Living. Happiness and Ethics from Socrates to the Neoplatonists)* 80-82.

honor, virtue, and pleasure, among other things, both for themselves and because we think that they will make us happy.[85] So although there are other intrinsic goods, happiness is the only one that is chosen for its sake alone.

Happiness is self-sufficient according to Aristotle because it makes a certain life choiceworthy and not deprived of anything.[86] This means that happiness alone causes a life to be fulfilled completely, causes a life to "succeed." And happiness is the most choiceworthy good because it cannot be added to other goods to make something better than itself. Happiness already includes everything that is choiceworthy and cannot be improved upon.[87]

In sum, Aristotle characterizes happiness as the final end of striving in a human life, as sufficient for a good life, and as incapable of further improvement once it is in place. Aristotle's efforts to characterize a final end represent the most systematic attempt to simultaneously unify the divergent desires shaped by evolution mentioned earlier in the chapter and to take those desires and our valuing of the corresponding external goods seriously. It is the most systematic attempt because other philosophers like Socrates and Plato, who followed the natural philosopher's material monism with their own attempts at the construction of happiness monism, did so by ignoring large swathes of human desires and goals, either by saying that they were irrelevant to the truly virtuous, and thus, wise man (Socrates) or by saying that they were miniscule in comparison to the magnitude of the final end (Plato). Aristotle's attempt at unification centers on a form of activity that provides an explanation of why each external good forms a part of human happiness.

Aristotle bases his argument on the human function, or the characteristic activity of a human being. Aristotle believes that a human being is above all, or uniquely, a rational agent, and for most of the Nicomachean Ethics this means that the function of a human being is living a life under the guidance of practical reason.[88] A life that is good for a human must be a life that is good for a being with such a function. For this reason, it must be a life *well* guided by practical reason, and thus a life lived in consonance with the virtues that are needed for achieving this good:

[85] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1097b 1-6.
[86] Ibid., 1097b 14f.
[87] Ibid., 1097b 17f.
[88] Ibid., xviii.

"…the human good proves to be an activity of the soul in accord with virtue" in a complete life.[89] Important here is that Aristotle is the first to view *eudaimonia* as an *activity*. While Socrates, Plato and the Stoics, to name but a few, all view *eudaimonia* as a *state* of the soul (the possession of virtue, for example), Aristotle emphasizes that the possession of virtue or the virtues has never made anyone happy—only their practice does so. Aristotle's view of happiness as activity (*energeia*), in contrast to many others before and after him, also explains one of his reasons for claiming that someone who lacks certain external goods cannot be happy: this person is prevented from acting in accordance with virtue.[90]

But this is not the whole story. In a strikingly Platonic twist, and after having spent virtually an entire book devoted to a very earthly and practical human happiness, Aristotle declares that the happiness he has expounded for most of the Nichomachean Ethics is a kind of secondary happiness. Primary happiness consists in philosophical or theoretical study, as this is the activity of the soul in accord with the highest virtue, namely *sophia*, the intellectual virtue.[91] Because understanding is something divine, undertaking an activity of the soul in accordance with *sophia* allows one to raise oneself above the human level.[92] Unlike *Sophia*, the corresponding highest practical virtue, *phronesis*, makes use of only a part of the soul, specifically the part that has to do with moving objects.[93]

One result of Aristotle's great attempt to reconcile the disparate goods that we value or desire by appeal to their role for our characteristic activity was a considerable amount of interpretative confusion. One central debate involves the question of whether Aristotle sees *eudaimonia* as an inclusive good or as a dominant good. At issue is the relationship between happiness itself and the individual goods that Aristotle sees as belonging to, or being necessary, for happiness. Aristotle characterizes *eudaimonia* as the most complete or most perfect good, the self-

[89] Ibid., 1098a 16-21.
[90] On the significance of the characterization of the highest human good in terms of activity, see, for example, J. M. Cooper, *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 1975).
[91] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1178a 9.
[92] Ibid., 1177b 26f.
[93] Ibid., 1176a 33ff. See also Horn, *Antike Lebenskunst: Glück und Moral von Sokrates bis zu den Neuplatonikern (The Classical Art of Living. Happiness and Ethics from Socrates to the Neoplatonists)* 82.

sufficient good, and the most choiceworthy good; understandably, interpreters have since asked how such a good might be structured. Although the rough division of interpretations of this good into either dominant or inclusive positions is neither entirely accurate nor entirely clear, it serves as a good approximation to illustrate a few of the interpretative difficulties surrounding Aristotle's project of unification.

Interpreters who more or less fall into the dominant camp are those who believe that, in the end, there is only one final answer to the child's chain of justificatory "Why?" questions: every chain ends with the same justification – we do it for *eudaimonia* or happiness. Those of the inclusivist camp, on the other hand, argue that there are a number of differing ends to such a chain and all of those ends belong to *eudaimonia* or that *eudaimonia* itself is a package of aims, much like a successful vacation. J. L. Ackrill, a leading proponent of the inclusivist interpretation, thus argues that it makes little sense that we do everything for the sake of one single thing. To say that we have friends, or go on a walk, or do anything else because we want to be *eudaimon* simply means that we value each of these things as part of the all-inclusive package.[94] Richard Kraut, who argues for the dominant interpretation, claims that Aristotle would not have thought of *eudaimonia* as something so unstructured. To use Gerald Hughes' example, we do not "mow the lawn for the sake of [mowing the lawn and having a cup of tea and watching TV] or any other such unstructured collection."[95] Kraut believes that Aristotle means that each part of *eudaimonia* has a causal effect on the achievement of the whole.[96]

The existence of this debate, which is more involved than the oversimplified characterization that I have delivered here, is a tribute to the immense challenges involved in uniting the collection of evolved goals and desires handed down to us by the evolutionary successes of our ancestors. Because virtually no one accepts the function argument in its metaphysical form (i.e. few, if any, philosophers today believe in a project of unifying goods around the function of a human being), Aristotle's bold unifying attempt appears to fall short of the mark.

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[94] J. L. Ackrill, "Aristotle on Eudaimonia," in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. A. O. Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).
[95] G. J. Hughes, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Aristotle on Ethics*, Routledge Philosophy Guidebooks (London New York: Routledge, 2001), 29.
[96] R. Kraut, *Aristotle on the Human Good* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 200-25.

Before we turn to the fascinating conceptions of happiness offered by the Stoics and the Epicureans, it is important to emphasize that the positions now given the most attention in philosophy were not the only ones floating around in Athens at the time of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Aristotle himself mentions and rejects several alternatives drawn from what he calls *endoxa*, received views which are either widely held, or held by the wise.[97] These include the idea that pleasure, or money, or honor is what comprises *eudaimonia*. Plato, too, shows a sensitivity to these views, usually represented by an interlocutor of Socrates.

In the *Gorgias*, for example, Callicles argues for allowing one's appetites or desires to balloon and expand, and to be practically intelligent enough to satisfy all of them at their height.[98] Like many desire satisfaction theorists, Callicles does not make a clear distinction about where the origin of value lies in his system: Is the satisfaction of desires intrinsically valuable, or does the satisfaction of desires merely represent the means to obtain that which truly comprises *eudaimonia*, namely, pleasure?[99] In the same dialogue that bears his name, Gorgias maintains that the supreme good is freedom, and freedom is the power to satisfy all of one's desires. It is perhaps no accident that the two positions resemble one another as Callicles and Gorgias, are said to have both belonged to the sophists, a group of rhetoricians and ostensible teachers of *aretê*, or virtue.

Although these desire-satisfaction theories of *eudaimonia* might remind us of, and are often framed in terms of, the desires and goals of the Homeric hero, their presentation by the sophists also represents a step away from the pre-philosophical happiness and from the pre-programmed goals that arose through the course of human evolution. The reason for this is a characteristic that belongs to the kinds of discussions in which the sophists were involved, in other words, a reason that belongs to philosophy proper. Their theories are a step away from Homeric happiness because the demands of the philosophical discussion created a level of abstraction

[97] Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. J. Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), Top. 100b21-23.
[98] On this and the *Gorgias* as a whole see T. Kobusch, "Wie man leben soll: Gorgias," in *Platon. Seine Dialoge in der Sicht neuer Forschungen*, ed. T. Kobusch and B. Mojsisch (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1996).
[99] Plato, *Gorgias*, 492a.

that clearly separated a theory of happiness as satisfied desires—regardless of whether the content of those desires includes specific external goods—from a theory that stipulated specific external goods to be obtained, regardless of the desires of the agent.

Terence Irwin gives the example of Achilles to illustrate this: "For a while Achilles seems to prefer the security of the divine life, even if he has to sacrifice honour and power to get it; but in the end he chooses the other elements of the divine life over security, and Homer leaves no doubt that this is recognized as the right choice for a hero to make."[100] Again, the philosophical representation of desire satisfaction theory might appear to be close to the pre-philosophical conception, but in reality it is categorically different because it does not stipulate external goals to be attained.

Even if the definitions of Callicles and Gorgias resulted in the same set of goods (honour, etc.), their abstract definition allows for a decision that one does not want certain of these things. So even in those theories that most closely resembled Herodotic happiness, the pursuit of the answer to the question of one's individual good was being answered at a reflective level that would allow for goals that were quite different from the external goals of Herodotic happiness and entirely contrary to goals one would expect to have arisen through natural selection. So, for better or for worse, the general atmosphere of philosophical discussion in Athens allowed for a rational emancipation from evolutionarily preprogrammed goals in *all* directions.

The classical opponents of the sophists, namely, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, had created grand visions of happiness, often described by their creators as divine. Yet precisely this description betrayed a disturbing fact about their theories: the outlook for attaining these "godlike" states was, by all appearances, extremely bleak. Many scholars have seen the teachings of the Stoics and the Epicureans in part as a reaction to the inaccessibility of their predecessors' views of happiness. And in the teachings of both of these schools, the movement towards the internal in things called happiness solidified. Both schools took an earnest interest in the emotional states of their followers and much of their practical teachings involved ways of alleviating

[100] Irwin, *Classical Thought*, 15.

human suffering. Like Socrates and Plato (and Aristotle to a slightly lesser degree), both schools made an attempt to increase human control over happiness, to wrest our fate from the fates. This control, however, was preached and practiced in a more accessible way than the philosophical high road advocated by Plato, Socrates and, in the end, Aristotle as well.

Epicurus, for example, admitted unabashedly that "pleasure is the beginning and goal of a happy life,"[101] while the Stoics remained true to the Socratic idea that virtue, and virtue alone, is determinative of happiness. Happiness for the Stoics is living in accordance with nature, and this is, for them, equivalent to living in accordance with virtue. This involves a distancing from one's normal concerns and adopting a somewhat more objective view of one's own desires, and, according to some Stoics, as equivalent, or nearly equivalent to the desires of others. Living in accordance with nature also meant freedom from suffering, or *apatheia*.[102] Unlike the Epicureans, the Stoics reject the value of pleasure and pain as witnessed by Seneca: "The happy man is content with his present lot, no matter what it is."[103] Thus it seems that two elements are in play in Stoic discussions of happiness. Happiness is living virtuously, or living in accordance with nature. Such living, however, also results in a "contentment with one's lot" or a kind of life-satisfaction or desire-satisfaction – being content with one's life, or what one has, no matter what external circumstances obtain.

What unites the two doctrines of Stoicism and Epicureanism is, perhaps surprisingly, their asceticism. Epicurus does not wish his followers to pursue the pleasure of the debauch, but instead advocates the pruning of desire. He believes our true desires to be very limited in nature and exclaims that he who is not satisfied with frugal food and drink, shelter, and a modicum of security "is satisfied with nothing."[104] In this sense his Stoic counterparts might almost be able to agree with him; both schools saw a problem in unsatisfied desires (even if the Stoic difficulty

[101] Epicurus, "Letter to Menoeceus," in *The Essential Epicurus: Letters, Principal Doctrines, Vatican Sayings, and Fragments*, ed. and trans. E. M. O'Connor (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 1993), 63.
[102] Annas, *The Morality of Happiness*, 159-79.
[103] Seneca, "On the Happy Life," in *Moral Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992; first published 1932), 2:115.
[104] Epicurus, "Ethical Fragment," no. 69 in *The Essential Epicurus: Letters, Principal Doctrines, Vatican Sayings, and Fragments*, ed. E. M. O'Connor (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 1993), 99.

was more morally motivated) and expounded on practices to distance oneself from one's desires or to reduce them in number and intensity.

The Stoics and the Epicureans are best placed to draw attention to another dimension along which happiness would shift after the end of the classical period: the extension of the group of people "eligible for" or addressed by any given theory of happiness. While for Socrates and Plato the highest happiness was equivalent to the highest sort of philosophical insight, Aristotle was a bit more generous to non-philosophers. Although he maintained that philosophical activity was the means of highest happiness, virtuous activity held out hope for those of a non-philosophical bent to achieve a kind of secondary happiness.

The Stoics and the Epicureans provided a conception of happiness accessible to an even wider circle of people, offering to cure them of their desires and so render them *eudaimon*.[105] These two schools drove the internalization of *eudaimonia* forward among a wide group of people by concentrating in a straightforward way on the internal states of the persons it offered to help. Not only was a wider circle addressed by the dramatic lowering of the intellectual bar, but the formal requirements for taking part in Epicurean and Stoic schools were also loosened. The Stoics preached the universal kinship of all humankind, and, like Epicurus, opened their doors to women and slaves.

This principle of eligibility for happiness would also be a major feature of the view of happiness that rapidly overtook the successes of Epicurean and Stoic thought: Christianity. And, although it seems that one might not be able to internalize happiness in a more radical way than was done by Socrates or some of the Stoics (Cicero did, indeed, argue that the Stoic with perfect virtue would be happy even on the rack[106]), Christianity took the internalization of happiness to a never before imagined extreme.

[105] See M. C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) especially chapters 4 and 10.
[106] Cicero, "Tusculum Discussions," in *On the Good Life* (London: Penguin, 1971), 58-59.

Chapter 3: Emancipation from Evolution II – Christianity and the Tragedy of Enlightenment Happiness

While Stoic and Epicurean invocations on leading a good life were well-received, their success as doctrines and their success in helping their followers cope with a life rife with pain and suffering paled in comparison with the wild success and the transformative power of Christianity. Darrin McMahon claims that some of this success arose as a result of Christianity's facility with regard to what psychologists now call *hedonic inversion*.[107]

Hedonic inversion, a new term in the vocabulary of psychology, refers to the enjoyment of feelings or emotions normally avoided or feared. A harmless example is the enjoyment some people feel watching horror movies. Many of them really do report being scared, but also report *enjoying* the experience of being scared. The Stoics claimed that one could be happy despite being on the rack (Socrates and Plato might have claimed this or something like it as well); astoundingly, Christianity

[107] McMahon himself does not use the term 'hedonic inversion,' but this is the best term for the phenomena he describes.

wielded the power of convincing people that one could be happy *because* one was on the rack. McMahon's interpretation follows.

McMahon begins with an account of the early Christian martyrs Perpetua and her personal slave, Felicitas. He recounts the day of their death in the Ampitheatre of Carthage in which—before uncomprehending crowds—the martyrs rejoiced in being scourged and taunted and went *joyfully* to their deaths. They saw their pain as a blessing because it enabled them to partake in the suffering of their savior, Jesus of Nazareth, and so attain the salvation that he promised. Jesus' promise of eternal felicity in a life after this one made possible a radical reinterpretation of the meaning of external events, one seen most explicitly in the beatitudes. The appeal of the *apatheia* of the Stoics paled in comparison.

Makarios, the word that forms the beginning of each of the beatitudes can be translated as "blessed," but just as easily as "happy." Indeed, many of the Greek philosophers mentioned above, including Plato and Aristotle, used *makarios* and *eudaimonia* interchangeably. Turning the *eudaimonia* of the Homeric hero on its head, Christianity proclaims:

> Happy are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
>
> Happy are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
>
> Happy are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
>
> Happy are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
>
> Happy are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
>
> Happy are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
>
> Happy are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
>
> Happy are those who are persecuted for righteousness's sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3-11)

Many of the elements that played a role in the strongly external happiness of Herodotus and Homer are renounced here in favor of their opposites. Through the promise of eternal happiness after death, and the narrative of achieving such happiness through temporal suffering, Christianity, the foremost symbol of which was an instrument of torture, surpassed the appeal of the classical schools as a way to deal with the vicissitudes of the world.

Together with original sin as an explanation for the suffering of this world, the hedonic inversion of Christianity reached even such intellectually world-weary scholars as Aurelius Augustinus of Hippo, better known as St. Augustine. Augustine was one of the first to give Christ's narrative a theoretical foundation and to put a Christian spin on the classical question of the degree of control an individual has over his own happiness. He emphasized that eternal happiness was a gift from God to the chosen few at the time of their death. Thus the cycle on the issue of personal control seems to have come full circle, this time having even more weight than in the discussions of the Greeks and Romans, for whom the issue was chiefly a question of personal control versus the influence of the gods in *this* life. Since much more was at stake for Christians (namely, an eternity), it is not surprising that the debate about the amount of personal control one had over eternal happiness arose time and time again, and that it did so with increasing vehemence and venom. The pendulum was pushed in one direction or the other, developing numerous heresies and eventually (in combination with other factors) causing a permanent rift in the church at the time of the Reformation.

However, the rise of the post-life emphasis in the Christian concept of happiness forced the question of what to do with things that look like happiness in this life. Despite the rejoicing one should do about the prospect of eternal life, and the power of hedonic inversion that Christianity offered the faithful, Augustine, himself, was pessimistic about the prospects for happiness in this life. He saw original sin as a transformative act that forever barred our way to earthly happiness. Christians could only take comfort in the "happiness of hope," the thought that this suffering was in the end leading them to God.

The question of earthly happiness came to a head in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, who, confronted with the intellectually powerful system of Aristotle and his emphasis on worldly happiness, held out the answer of imperfect happiness in this life and perfect happiness in the next. This *duplex felicitas* formed a kind of compromise between the schools of classical philosophy and the headlong dive into (occasionally hedonically redeemed) suffering of early Christianity. A great many further developments occurred in conceptions of happiness between late

Christianity and the Enlightenment, but to the best of my knowledge, no further significant dimensions were introduced until the very subjective conception of happiness developed in the Enlightenment.[108] I now turn to the Enlightenment, as its conceptions of happiness provide the basis and the background for our current use of the word and thus the background for the project of this essay. Enlightenment conceptions of happiness also provide the backdrop for an elucidation of the tragic nature of our contemporary conception of happiness.

The Enlightenment

The Enlightenment and its intellectual progeny pushed happiness strongly toward the subjective end of the scale, and, through their stubborn insistence on happiness as a highly internal *and* subjective phenomenon, they successfully unseated happiness from its position as the highest individual good.[109] This was not their intention. Many (though certainly not all) Enlightenment philosophers continued to see happiness as the highest good, a view expressed most explicitly by those following in their immediate intellectual wake, namely, the Utilitarians. The Utilitarians stated explicitly that happiness was *the* bearer of value and, as such, was the good that was to be maximized. Eventually, the theories of the earliest

[108] Although interesting in their own right, I have neglected to explore differing Medieval Christian conceptions of happiness in situated the afterlife. For the purposes of this investigation, I prefer to leave the spatio-temporal dimension as an "either or," in other words, either in this world or the next (or at the most both). Since this essay centers on our contemporary concept of happiness, the different *modes* of happiness in the afterlife would lead us too far afield. Nevertheless, the importance in the history of happiness of the idea of the *beatitudo aeterna* as *unio Dei* (which can be seen on the one hand as contemplative and on the other hand as love, or involving both a volitional aspect and a specific kind of *affect*) is undeniable. In an additional twist on happiness after death, Augustine in *De beata vita* adds a component to the Aristotelian trilogy of conditions of a highest good, namely, the condition that the highest good is one that should not be able to be lost. He is of the opinion that only eternal life can satisfy this condition. Abelard turns a similar line of argument against a Stoic position in his *Collationes* in an argument between the Christian and the philosopher. These and many more Christian thoughts on happiness in the afterlife have a well-deserved place in an attempt to illustrate a true history of human happiness in contrast to my current effort, which in all ages attempts only to work out the most general dimensions of the movement of things translated as happiness, and to reinterpret them in light of what we know about the forces involved in human evolution. I thank Jörn Müller for commentary that resulted in this footnote.

[109] I am aware that this sketch of "Enlightenment happiness" is an oversimplification. For example, it is unlikely that Jefferson, in developing his famous formulation of the rights of Americans, really had an emotional state or something of that sort in mind. Like most any age, views on happiness were not uniform in the Enlightenment. Nonetheless, the tendencies that I delineate here did exist and did have great ramifications for our own conception of happiness.

Utilitarians ran into the hard wall of practice, and it became unavoidably clear (even to some of them) that people care deeply about external goods as well.

Nonetheless, the ancient human dissatisfaction with a collection of divergent external goals and internal desires, as well as no real way to decide among them, provoked many Enlightenment philosophers, like some of the ancients, to again try to create an internal unity among all of our disparate goals and desires. In making the internal the point of departure for their theories of happiness, Enlightenment thinkers often did not distinguish clearly between the actual satisfaction of desires, the contentment or positive emotional state (sometimes reduced to a very coarsely conceived pleasure) that was supposed to result from desire satisfaction, and a judgment about whether enough of our desires have been satisfied.

Immanuel Kant's writings provide a good example of this. He defines happiness as "the satisfaction of all our desires [*Neigungen*]."[110] In a similar vein, Kant says the following about happiness: "All inclinations [*Neigungen*] taken together (which can be brought into a fairly tolerable system, whereupon their satisfaction is called happiness)…"[111] Other definitions of Kant's, however, go in the direction of positive emotional states. In the Groundwork, for example, he says that happiness is complete well-being (*Wohlbefinden*) and contentment (*Zufriedenheit*) with one's state.[112] It is unclear if he means a feeling of contentment, or a judgment that one is content, or both. These elements are clear in another definition from the *Metaphysics of Morals* in which he claims that happiness includes "constant well-being, a pleasant life, [and] complete satisfaction [*Zufriedenheit*] with one's condition…"[113] Many Enlightenment figures shared Kant's orientation to the question of happiness, writing as if fulfilled desires were equivalent to or automatically corresponded with positive emotional states.

Kant is also a good example of a philosopher who understood that, contrary to some of his utilitarian counterparts, emotions cannot be all that matter to us. As far

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[110] I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. K. Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), A806/B834.
[111] ———, *Critique of Practical Reason, and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*, trans. L. W. Beck, The Philosophy of Immanuel Kant (New York: Garland Pub., 1976), (5:73).
[112] Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, (4:393).
[113] I. Kant, "The Metaphysics of Morals," in *Practical Philosophy*, ed. M. J. Gregor, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

as happiness as the highest good, Kant clearly rejects this in favor of a complex position in which happiness plays several roles, the clearest of which might be rendered in an oversimplified manner by saying that happiness is a good that can cause evil, but only when the desire for it, through the fulfillment of our inclinations, takes precedence over the obedience to the moral law.[114] But Enlightenment happiness clearly could not possibly exhaust all that we value, and the priority of the moral law illustrates this in Kant's thought.

Kant's thoughts on the subject represent a clear example of happiness losing its place as the highest good. As mentioned above, however, the Utilitarians held views similar to Kant's on happiness, yet continued to see in it the origins of all value. At least one of those who in his theory and personal life attempted to aim at the highly subjective happiness of the Enlightenment famously ran into considerable trouble. John Stuart Mill was the son of James Mill—a Utilitarian and a formidable thinker in his own right, as well as a close friend of Jeremy Bentham.[115] John Stuart Mill claims to have been brought up without religion, but in his *Autobiography*, he says the following about his experience of reading Bentham's thoughts:

> When I laid down the last volume…I had become a different being. The "principle of utility," understood as Bentham understood it…fell exactly into its place as the keystone which held together the detached and fragmentary component parts of my knowledge and beliefs. It gave unity to my conceptions of things. I now had opinions; a creed, a doctrine, a philosophy; in one among the best senses of the word, a religion; in the inculcation and diffusion of which could be made the principle outward purpose of a life.[116]

For a time it seemed that this discovery did indeed lend purpose to Mill's life, but then a rapid turnaround occurred, and Mill fell into a state of despondence that probably had multiple causes. Mill asked himself if all of his hopes and dreams for reform and the happiness that would result from such reform were to be realized, would it be a "great joy and happiness" *for him*. He had no choice but to conclude that it would not. After this realization: "My heart sank within me: the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down. All my happiness was to

[114] For an extensive treatment of Kant's thoughts on happiness and its position in his ethical system see Wike, *Kant on Happiness in Ethics*.
[115] The following is based on the account of Darrin McMahon in: McMahon, *Happiness: A History*, 345-53.
[116] J. S. Mill, *Autobiography*, ed. J. M. Robson (New York: Penguin Books, 1989), 68.

have been found in the continual pursuit of this end. The end had ceased to charm, and how could there ever again be any interest in the means? I seemed to have nothing left to live for."[117] After losing faith in happiness as an end, Mill found comfort (and rich feeling beyond the pleasure and pain espoused by Bentham) in Romantic poetry. Despite Mill's claims to have fully recovered his old faith in happiness, McMahon argues that this seems not to have fully been the case. Many philosophers have agreed with him, seeing in Mill's "higher" and "lower" pleasures a criterion other than simply hedonic quality or intensity.

Indeed, after Mill's confession of doubt in the faith of utilitarianism, another striking passage makes his "recovery" unclear:

> I never, indeed, wavered in the conviction that happiness is the test of all rules of conduct, and the end of life. But I now thought that this end was only to be attained by not making it the direct end. Those only are happy (I thought) who have their minds fixed on some object other than their own happiness; on the happiness of others, on the improvement of mankind, even on some art or pursuit, followed not as a means but as itself an ideal end. Aiming thus at something else they find happiness by the way….Ask yourself whether you are happy, and you cease to be so. The only chance is to treat, not happiness, but some end external to it, as the purpose of life….This theory now became the basis of my philosophy of life.[118]

If not contradictory, Mill's assertion that he "never wavered in his conviction that happiness is…the end of life" and his statement that the only chance to achieve this was to treat some other end as "the purpose of life," at the very least raises the question why this should be and whether the value of that other external end really can be entirely derivative of the value of happiness. Similarly, in a comment on Bentham published shortly after Bentham's death, Mill claimed:

> At present we shall only say, that while, under proper explanations, we entirely agree with Bentham in his principle, we do not hold with him that all right thinking on the details of morals depends on its express assertion. We think utility, or happiness, much too complex and indefinite an end to be sought except through the medium of various secondary ends…[119]

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[117] Ibid., 112.
[118] Ibid., 117-18.
[119] ———, *Bentham*, 2 vols., Dissertations and Discussions, Political, Philosophical, and Historical (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1973), 1:384.

And the statements of Mill's own theory cast even more doubt on the hegemony of feeling in a system of values: "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied."[120] Given all of these statements, it is difficult to understand why the ends by which happiness is pursued are secondary, and why they do not have a value in themselves, even if happiness is the purported result of their achievement.

As Mill's conundrum hints, many Enlightenment thinkers went too far in their espousal of a highest good composed simply of hedonic states. And it was only in the past century that elements central to the thought of many figures of the Enlightenment, such as psychological hedonism, have been rejected through widely accepted counterarguments like that involving Robert Nozick's "experience machine."[121] The consequence of this, however, was not a rehabilitation of an earlier, more inclusive conception of happiness.

Because of the plurality of values in modern society, a coherent concept of one's highest good has been difficult to formulate. Most philosophers share the view of Richard Kraut when he says that a concept of the highest good for an individual, in other words, something akin to Aristotle's conception of *eudaimonia*, would require us to know things that we do not (and perhaps cannot).[122] For this reason, the concept of happiness has retained its strong overtones of internality and subjectivity while losing its position as a highest good. With psychological sophistication typical of his writings, Kant foresaw the tragedy of the pursuit of Enlightenment happiness in a more extensive way than Mill. More of his thoughts on happiness form the starting point for our second evolutionary interlude.

The Evolution of Desire (and not Happiness)

The evolutionary interlude in the previous chapter began with the following claim of Immanuel Kant: "What the human being understands as happiness…would still never be attained by him; for his nature is not of the sort to call a halt anywhere in possession and enjoyment and to be satisfied." It ended with the widely disparate

[120] ———, *Utilitarianism*, ed. R. Crisp (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 57-58.
[121] R. Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 42-45.
[122] R. Kraut, "Two Conceptions of Happiness," *Philosophical Review* 88, no. 2 (1979): 167.

package of goods that we seem to desire and the attempt of the Greek philosophers to find or create unity among them. Now that the Enlightenment conception of happiness has been outlined, this evolutionary interlude will explain the tragedy involved in the conception of happiness that the Enlightenment bequeathed us. John Stuart Mill cast doubt on the efficacy of a direct pursuit of happiness; Kant's pessimism goes even further in doubting the feasibility of the pursuit of happiness in its entirety. Although a bit overstated, there is a great deal of truth in Kant's claims about our nature, and the explanatory background for this truth involves a series of evolved mechanisms in humans, that, were it not for the lack of intentionality of natural selection, one would have to describe as devious.

Kant's pessimistic view of the pursuit of happiness is situated in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* and his observations do not end with the quotation above. After expressing his pessimism concerning the possibility of the attainment of happiness, Kant also rejects happiness as a possible final end of humanity: "The production of the aptitude of a rational being for any ends in general (thus those of his freedom) is culture. Thus only culture can be the ultimate end that one has cause to ascribe to nature in regard to the human species (not its own earthly happiness...)"[123] Culture is also defined by Kant as "the aptitude and skill for all sorts of ends for which he can use nature…"[124] Clearly, culture is a broad concept for Kant, but it includes among others things our knowledge and ability to manipulate the world (as well as our moral freedom). Although according to Kant culture can be seen as the ultimate end of the human species (as it clearly is not made for happiness), culture is not truly *our* end: "But with the progress of this culture….the end of nature itself, even if it is not our end, is hereby attained."[125] So, bizarrely, although culture or the building up of culture is "our" ultimate end, this is a purely descriptive assessment of the human species – it is a description of what humans tend to do, as opposed to what they intend to do as seen from the perspective of the individual agent.

[123] Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, 299 (5:431).
[124] Ibid., 297 (5:430).
[125] Ibid., 299 (5:432).

When viewed from the perspective of the agent, things can look quite different. Even in the case of those agents who do not have the intention or goal of building up culture, their individual undertakings to acquire skills and create tools that allow us to manipulate the world are often justified as a means to achieve their true intention of being happy. However, Kant's contention seems to be that even when we aim at happiness (either directly as Mill described himself before his crisis, or indirectly by pursuing skills, objects of value, knowledge, etc.), it is difficult, if not impossible to attain. In the process of striving, the tactics that we employ to attain happiness serve to build up culture.

Take John, for example. John believes that having a partner, a family, and a decent house in a good neighborhood will make him happy, and he pursues these goals by studying engineering. He earns money by developing newer, better, sleeker ball bearings, he weds his partner, has children, and buys a good house in a decent neighborhood. However, through the difficulties that seem to almost inevitably come with marriage, he and his wife irritate each other frequently, one of his kids is being disruptive at school and might have a drug problem, and his work has grown monotonous. Kant's point is fairly clear: culture is often progressing as a result of the efforts of individual agents, and individual agents cause that progress through their efforts often because they believe that it will bring them happiness. In terms of Kant's Enlightenment view of happiness, which is highly subjective, highly internal, and often strongly affective, the anticipated payoff for the achievement of these external goals is frequently disappointing, if not downright awful.

Kant puzzles at this – why should a creature exist which believes to be pursuing one thing and from the outside almost seems to be pursuing another. And although it is extremely successful in its pursuit of its non-goal, its pursuit of its actual goal is very often unsuccessful: "It would be possible for the happiness of rational beings in the world to be an end of nature, and in that case it would be its **ultimate** end. At least one cannot understand *a priori* why nature should not be so arranged, since at least as far as we can understand this effect would be quite possible

by means of its mechanism."[126] One goal of the rest of this chapter is to provide an explanation for nature's recalcitrance so well captured in Kant's elaborations above.

In the first evolutionary interlude, I introduced one role of the emotions as specific, content-oriented, emotional and motivational responses to situations that recurred again and again in our ancestral environment (e.g., a large predator running at us (fear), the (potential) infidelity of a mate and corresponding danger of lack of support and resources (jealousy), etc.). Tooby and Cosmides added that emotions are the "solution to the problem of mechanism coordination" between our competing domain-specific motivational programs.[127] I also mentioned the conception of pleasure and pain, as parts of evolved regulatory systems that encouraged or discouraged the pursuit of external goals that were either advantageous or disadvantages for our differential reproductive success.[128] This might not come as a surprise to anyone, but an important realization is missing from this picture.

A prominent evolutionary theorist, Randolph Nesse, describes this idea as the one that people have the most trouble accepting of the many that he explains: "More difficult still is the recognition that selection does not shape emotion regulation systems for our benefit, and that the motives we experience often benefit our genes at the expense of the quality of our lives."[129] In other words, what is advantageous or disadvantages for our differential reproductive success can sometimes benefit us and sometimes harm us, and therefore the process of natural selection does not necessarily result in qualities that are good for us as agents, that is to say, good from our perspective.

Indeed, Nesse co-founded the field of Darwinian medicine which, among other things, illustrates how a good many adaptations can be harmful to one's health.[130] Nesse put it succinctly in an address to the American Psychiatric Association, "If there is ever an adaptation that increases differential reproductive

[126] Ibid., 303 (5:436).
[127] Tooby and Cosmides, "Conceptual Foundations of Evolutionary Psychology," 52.
[128] Nesse, "Natural Selection and the Elusiveness of Happiness."; Rozin, "Preadaptation and the Puzzles and Properties of Pleasure."; E. T. Higgins, "Beyond Pleasure and Pain," *American Psychologist* 52, no. 12 (1997).
[129] Nesse, "Natural Selection and the Elusiveness of Happiness," 1344.
[130] R. M. Nesse and G. C. Williams, *Why We Get Sick: The New Science of Darwinian Medicine* (Vintage Books, 1996).

success at the cost of health and happiness, then too bad for health and happiness."[131] This may seem bizarre at first glance as health (if not happiness) seems to be important for differential reproductive success. However, health, *for itself*, is not a end that is selected for by natural selection. Instead, health is selected for because it allows the individual to survive long enough to reproduce (as well as to attract a mate in the case of more highly developed animals). Health is only selected for because of its value for differential reproductive success.

But because health does correlate strongly with differential reproductive success, it suffers little under its hegemony. The happiness of the Enlightenment philosophers, on the other hand, is a different story altogether. The feelings (such as anxiety) and corresponding thoughts that seem to most often conflict with Enlightenment happiness are actually parts of motivational systems that cause organisms to leave evolutionarily disadvantageous circumstances and to avoid harm in the future. So the aversive nature of anxiety and other negative feelings is actually very advantageous (often, but not always, both from the point of view of the agent and for the agent's differential reproductive success).[132] This fact alone, obviously, does not provide difficulties for happiness, but the need for such defenses in the ancestral environment (and possibly ours as well) was so extensive that negative emotions make up a large part of our emotional repertoire.

Daniel Nettle points out that of Paul Ekman's widely hailed six basic emotions of anger, fear, surprise, joy, disgust, and sadness (basic because they are recognized the world over simply by observing facial expression produced by the emotion),[133] four are negative, one can go either way (surprise), and one is positive. This distribution has to do with the more specific roles of the basic negative emotions as compared to positive emotions. Fear, for example, is a response to an occurrent danger and results in fight or flight tendencies. Disgust is a response to potential

[131] R. Nesse, *Evolution: The Missing Basic Science That Brings Psychiatry Coherence and Deeper Empathy* (http://www-personal.umich.edu/~nesse/present/, May 2005).
[132] I. M. Marks and R. M. Nesse, "Fear and Fitness: An Evolutionary Analysis of Anxiety," *Ethology and Sociobiology* 15 (1994); Nesse, "Natural Selection and the Elusiveness of Happiness," 1337.
[133] P. Ekman, "An Argument for Basic Emotions," *Cognition and Emotion* 6 (1992); P. Ekman and R. J. Davidson, *The Nature of Emotion: Fundamental Questions*, Series in Affective Science (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

contamination with damaging substances and results in avoidance, vomiting, and spitting out.[134]

This numerical superiority of negative emotions combines with another fact widely cited in evolutionary theory called 'the smoke dectector principle.'[135] Coined by Randolph Nesse, this principle attempts to explain why "we are all designed in ways that leave us likely to experience negative emotions, often for no apparent reason."[136] Nesse explains that the fear response in the ancestral environment, even if it erupts into a panicked flight from the area of berry-picking, are relatively inexpensive biologically, and crucially, very inexpensive compared to the harm against which they protect.

Nesse uses the example of being "clawed by a tiger" and the potential damage (up to and including death) that such an incident could create as compared with the circa 200 calories that a flight reaction would cost. In a rough estimation, he claims that it will be worthwhile to flee in panic whenever there is a greater than 1% chance that a tiger is in the vicinity. This means that a normal fear system will engage 99 times for every one time a tiger is actually present. In this way our fear system is akin to our preferences for the design of a smoke detector. As with false fear responses, we are willing to accept a smoke detector's many false alarms from smoking toast, cigarettes, and matches because we want a smoke detector that gives us sufficiently early warning about every actual fire.[137] This is the reason, then, why we are designed to experience frequent and multifarious negative affect: because in our ancestral environment (and in many cases today as well) such affect was extremely useful for survival, reproduction, and for the reproductive success of those who share one's genes. Of course, frequent and multifarious negative affect is not what one would wish for in a being striving to attain highly subjective and affect-oriented Enlightenment happiness.

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[134] D. Nettle, *Happiness: The Science Behind Your Smile* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 31. Disgust can also be called forth by certain human behaviors. A fascinating discussion of a theory that humans co-opted disgust to create a ultra-social (and ultra-productive) moral communities can be found in Haidt, *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom*.

[135] R. M. Nesse, "The Smoke Detector Principle Natural Selection and the Regulation of Defensive Responses," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 935, no. 1 (2001).

[136] P. Gilbert, *Human Nature and Suffering* (London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1989).

[137] Nesse, "The Smoke Detector Principle Natural Selection and the Regulation of Defensive Responses."; ———, "Natural Selection and the Elusiveness of Happiness," 1338.

Even greater problems exist with those emotions that play a key implicit or explicit compositional role in an Enlightenment conception of happiness: positive emotions. The realm of positive emotions is what gives Kant's pessimism its credibility. In comparison with fear or disgust, for example, it is less immediately clear what role positive emotions evolved to play. Eckman's only basic positive emotion, joy, for example, can be experienced in many different circumstances, but it does not necessarily lead to any specific behaviors. Why would someone with a capacity for joy have a selective advantage over someone who lacked such a capacity?

Another answer that Nesse and many others have provided involves the regulation of approach related behaviors. When an opportunity for something beneficial arises, several decisions have to be made: 1) whether to pursue the opportunity, 2) how to pursue the opportunity (e.g. walking vs. running), 3) at what point to stop pursuing the opportunity (e.g. when rate of return on gathering does fall below calories expended), and 4) what subsequent activity to undertake.[138]

This goal-approach model of positive emotion has been carefully worked out by numerous psychologists over the course of decades. This work is too extensive to be elaborated on here, but suffice it to say that Nesse's view of positive affect as less of a response to domain-specific situations, but instead as a general response to a wide variety of situations in which goals of the agent are relevant and pursuable, has considerable empirical backing.[139] Goals in this sense should not be conceived too narrowly, and certainly do include social goals of being loved, feeling trust, feeling important, etc. However, positive feelings' linkage to goals has an interesting—and for those interested in Enlightenment happiness—disturbing effect on our experience of positive feelings.

The basic principle is: positive emotions involved in the pursuit and the attainment of goals should not last very long. There were very few situations (in the ancestral environment) in which no further attempts to improve one's situation would have resulted in a positive impact on differential reproductive success. And if positive emotions exist to encourage us and to provide a reward for pursuing goals,

[138] Nesse, "Natural Selection and the Elusiveness of Happiness," 1339.
[139] Ibid.

then they should diminish quickly afterwards to encourage us to pursue other goals and attend to other concerns. Using this logic, Daniel Nettle argues that our motivational program would be very dysfunctional if it did not have a built in shut-down mechanism after a period of time. This is, in fact, exactly what we find in human beings.

Using this perspective, it is possible to bring together much of the most interesting work currently being undertaken in psychology. Psychologists have long known about habituation (becoming accustomed to a certain stimulus involved diminished response), but the area in which habituation has been especially striking has been in the area of the positive emotions. When researchers now talk of a 'hedonic treadmill,' what they mean is this: People strive for external material goods and the realization of events. When they achieve the wished-for object or outcome, they experience a rush of positive affect. Within a very short period of time, however, they return to their baseline level of affect, *in the case of almost all goods that can be attained.* Be it gaining tenure at a university, earning significantly more money as a result of a promotion, or even winning the lottery, individuals' affective state rapidly returns to baseline.[140] There are some exceptions to this, like getting married (mostly for men), but with the vast majority of events, this hedonic adaptation to the new situation occurs (and of course, even in marriage this can and does occur).

This state of affairs has led some to postulate a 'happiness set-point,' a level of happiness to which we always return after significant life events.[141] A correlate of this is the finding that many demographic factors, including some for the attainment of which we exert a great deal of effort such as income, have little effect on one's level of happiness.[142] Nettle describes the workings of our emotions in the following way: "Therefore evolution should (a) never make us completely happy, or not for long; and (b) make us quickly adapt to the baseline of the best thing we have at the

[140] T. D. Wilson and D. T. Gilbert, "Affective Forecasting," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 14, no. 3 (2005).
[141] B. W. Headey and A. Wearing, *Understanding Happiness: A Theory of Subjective Well-Being* (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1992).
[142] See D. G. Myers, *The Pursuit of Happiness: Who Is Happy - and Why* (New York: Morrow, 1992); E. Diener et al., "Subjective Well-Being: Three Decades of Progress," *Psychological Bulletin* 125, no. 2 (1999).

moment, and focus on the possibility of getting something better in the future, even if we don't know what that is yet."[143] It would be troublesome enough if this represented the extent of the workings of the behavioral approach system. Regrettably, there is an added twist: we, from the perspective of the agent, fail to understand the system in a way that, were the system intentionally designed, would be quite cruel.

A great deal of research has been done on a phenomenon called *affective forecasting*, a concept introduced by Tim Wilson and Daniel Gilbert. What they have shown is that we greatly overestimate the effect a positive or negative event will have on us emotionally.[144] Not only do we expect more from our successes than we actually receive, but we also fail to learn from repeated experiences with this phenomenon. By virtue of what Wilson and Gilbert call a *retrospective impact bias*, we believe *even after the fact* that events had a far greater positive affective impact on us than they actually did. This has been shown for a wide variety of phenomena.[145]

To sum all of this up, a situation exists in which happiness returns to a baseline level shortly after the attainment of something good in order to keep us wanting more. And, to make matters worse, it seems that we have a built-in mechanism that keeps us from realizing the extent of this habituation; we know this because people from all walks of life, and at all ages, predict that positive events will result in a positive emotion of greater intensity and of far greater duration than is actually the case. Part of this mechanism also keeps us from learning that we are again and again getting much less in terms of positive affect than we always expect, and so many of us remain trapped in the illusion that around the next corner, after the next success, with the next partner, after the next promotion, lies happiness – a devious system if ever there was one.

In this way, Kant's (often underappreciated) piercing psychological insight finds its long sought after explanation. Compare Kant's statements from the *Critique*

[143] Nettle, *Happiness: The Science Behind Your Smile*, 165.
[144] Wilson and Gilbert, "Affective Forecasting."
[145] T. D. Wilson, J. Meyers, and D. T. Gilbert, ""How Happy Was I, Anyway?" A Retrospective Impact Bias," *Social Cognition* 21, no. 6 (2003): 426.

of the Power of Judgment with that of contemporary evolutionary psychologist Daniel Nettle:

> I…argue…that these effects are probably not faults in the happiness programme; they are the way it is designed. *That is, the purpose of the happiness programme in the human mind is not to increase human happiness; it is to keep us striving*. That is why it tells us so clearly that if we just had a £30,000 salary, we would be much happier than we are now on £20,000, but as soon as we achieve that goal, whispers that perhaps it was actually closer to £40,000 that is really needed to guarantee lasting bliss.[italics mine][146]

This is why the pursuit of the Enlightenment conception of internal, subjective, and affective happiness is so problematic: Not only was what Nettle calls the "happiness motivational system" not designed for this purpose, but this system also possesses built-in mechanisms to work against just this long-term positive feeling for which many of those who seek happiness strive.

Using the same logic one can also understand why someone like Mill might have such difficulty taking direct aim at happiness. Although, as Nettle suggested, the system would certainly be dysfunctional if it did not return to a base level and encourage us to seek our happiness in further things and situations, it would be doubly dysfunctional if agents could successfully manipulate their feelings directly. If this were possible, then there would be no need to pursue the external goods (in the widest sense), whose acquisition is the entire point of the development of the motivational system.

In fact, psychologists have long known about a phenomenon called brain stimulation reward, which models something like this attempt to aim directly at our happiness. James Olds was the first to show that when rats have the opportunity to stimulate some brain regions, for example the lateral hypothalamus, they will prefer to do so rather than to attend to their bodily needs such as drinking water, even after fluid deprivation.[147] This effect, known as brain stimulation reward, has been found in all vertebrates studied.[148] The detrimental effects of boundless access to brain stimulation reward runs parallel to the detrimental effects on the health, well-being,

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[146] Nettle, *Happiness: The Science Behind Your Smile*, 43.
[147] J. Olds and P. Milner, "Positive Reinforcement Produced by Electrical Stimulation of Septal Area and Other Regions of Rat Brain," *Journal of Computational and Physiological Psychology* 47, no. 6 (1954).
[148] See E. T. Rolls, *The Brain and Reward* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1975).

and differential reproductive success of one of our ancestors who could manipulate his emotions without taking the detour through the world of evolutionarily advantageous external goods.

Returning to the point Nesse made at the outset of this interlude, not all of our desires are good for us. In addition to the systematic psychological barriers to Enlightenment happiness illustrated above, many of the things that we are strongly motivated to pursue often have almost no, or even a negative impact, on our happiness. We persist in their pursuit, all the while thinking that their attainment will affect our happiness positively. The goals of survival, reproductive success, and the survival and reproductive success of those closely related to the individual in question are the "goals" that have most clearly influenced the content of those things that we are motivated to want. Nesse again:

> The systems that regulate our emotions were shaped not to benefit individuals or the species, but only to maximize the transmission of the genes themselves. Thus, every species experiences a tension between efforts to maintain individual welfare and efforts to maximize reproductive success…We humans experience the situation much more acutely, feeling ourselves drawn into status competitions, driven to pursue sexual partners, and subject to envy despite our very best intentions. Many of these tendencies benefit our genes but not our individual selves. The dissatisfactions arising from these unending pursuits drain our capacities for happiness; however, even many people who know this still find themselves unable to enjoy what they have because of their efforts to get what their genes motivate them to want.[149]

Although a feeling of envy, for example, was probably useful in our ancestral environment as an impetus to attain goods that could increase one's probability of survival or attractiveness as a partner, the same feeling of envy is not going to be advantageous to the survival of the vast majority of people living in industrialized western democracies. It will, however, cause a great deal of psychological distress and time and effort spent striving after things that clearly do not bring happiness. Nesse continues: "The competition for scarce elite social roles requires not only extreme efforts, but also extravagant displays whose significance is proportional to

[149] R. M. Nesse, "Natural Selection and the Elusiveness of Happiness," in *The Science of Well-Being* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1343.

their expense."[150] David Buss, in pointing out one of what he calls the 'original sins' of natural selection, emphasizes that it is important to remember that in a closed gene pool, reproductive differentials comprise the engine of evolutionary change. Because selection operates on proportion and differences, "one person's gain is often another person's loss…humans have evolved psychological mechanisms designed to inflict costs on others, to gain advantage at the expense of others, to delight in the downfall of others, and to envy those who are more successful at achieving the goals toward which they aspire." And Buss concludes that "These competitive functions have come at the cost of conflict."[151]

In sum, our current predicament does seem to qualify as tragic: we are caught in the pursuit of an Enlightenment-inspired conception of happiness when our system of desiring, being motivated, acting, and achieving is premised on the rapid deterioration of just those positive feelings whose presence are often a large part of the criteria for such happiness. We are designed to a large extent to continue striving and a grab bag of evolutionarily advantageous psychological tricks very often prevents us from realizing this and modifying our actions.

Conclusion

The happiness motivational system seems to have been working exactly as it should have before the first philosophers arrived on the scene. The purpose of the system was to motivate us to pursue goods and situations external to ourselves that were advantageous for our differential reproductive success. Therefore, it is no surprise that pre-philosophical happiness was an ideal representation of just this: a collection of external goods, all of which had very directly to do with an individual human male's differential reproductive success. Through time, the increase in intelligence that brought us the unusual evolutionary success that we now enjoy also gave birth to a conflict of a unique kind.

While this increased intellectual capacity gave us unprecedented advantages in creative problem-solving (creation of tools, development of hunting, social, and

[150] Ibid.
[151] D. M. Buss, "The Evolution of Happiness," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 18.

war strategies), it also had the revolutionary consequence that we alone, among the species of this planet, were able to reflect on what is *really* good for us. We, in contrast to all other known products of natural selection, found ourselves in the position of being able call our evolutionarily preformed ends into question. Precisely this is what the founders of western philosophy did.

As a result of many factors, not least among them a desire for unity in the disturbingly cluttered collection of goods that are our genetic inheritance, as well as a stubborn inborn urge to find an ultimate end to the chain of 'why questions' that are potentially precipitated every time we act in a less than habitual fashion, philosophers attacked this question of what was really good for us in a rational, systematic, *and* radical way. The elusive end of all of our actions, freed from a *straightforward*, "because the gods will it," found itself in wild (and wildly differing) places in the thought of the early Greek philosophers. A conception of happiness that puts the pursuit of philosophy at its center diverges radically from the function that the happiness motivational system was designed to serve.

I do not claim that ancient Greece was the only place where this rational reconsideration of the evolutionarily shaped goals of the happiness motivation system occurred. Instead it represents one example for such an occurrence; other examples may well (and probably have) existed in other times and places. What I attempt to point out is the structure of the change from a conception of happiness that includes what we would expect to be the product of the happiness motivational system (i.e., things straightforwardly beneficial to the spread of the genes of the individual), to a rationally chosen happiness based on what an individual believes to be her highest good. I also do not intend to claim that certain phenomena that are antagonistic to the individual's differential reproductive success, like celibacy (although celibacy is not necessarily antagonistic to differential reproductive success: see inclusive fitness discussion above) did not exist before the philosophical turn. The difference is the widespread and systematic rational reconsidering of our final good and our methods of pursuing it.

Although consensus certainly did not arise as a result of this systematic reconsideration, this process did effect an emancipation from the highly external

conception of *eudaimonia* that the happiness motivational system was designed to produce, and so, also a human emancipation from evolution. This emancipation is represented by our attempt to escape both the strictures the external world placed on our happiness as well as the trickery of the happiness motivational system itself. It is now taken for granted that we can, in the name of happiness, choose things that oppose in a powerful and total way any behavioral pattern that could conceivably be a "goal" given us by natural selection. It is often far from easy to pursue these goals, however. And in our attempts to pursue our individual good against those things that natural selection shaped us to want, we owe much to these early imaginings of the Greek philosophers. The philosophical turn in happiness, then, involves the rational re-examination and revision of the conception of happiness that most closely represents the external goals that were produced by the happiness motivational system and that are, therefore, also that collection of goods that are most beneficial to the differential reproductive success of the individual, or, more precisely, her genes.

Interestingly, the main dimensions along which conceptions of happiness would move in the centuries since the Greeks were established fairly quickly. With no claim to completeness the following seven dimensions are introduced in this chapter:

1. *Internal/External dimension*: mental states (in the widest sense) vs. external goods
2. *Subjective/Objective dimension*: dependence on a judgment of the agent vs. no such dependence
3. *Personal Control dimension*: complete to none
4. *Temporal Horizon*: this life or the next life
5. *Position in a System of Value*: highest good to no relevant position
6. *Extension of circle of eligible individuals*: for example, exclusion of women, slaves, members of other religious communities, etc.
7. *Role of morality/virtuousness/the interests of others*: for example, identity with happiness, part of the content of happiness, a partial cause of happiness, no relationship to happiness, or even an oppositional relationship to happiness

Our contemporary conception of happiness, the main subject of this essay, is a descendant of the highly subjective, internal, and affective conceptions of the Enlightenment. Such a conception of happiness is as far removed from evolutionary goals as a conception of happiness based centrally on the practice of philosophy and

is fraught with perhaps even more problems. This highly subjective and highly internal conception of happiness resulted in an irreconcilable tension with the other role of happiness as some sort of highest good. Because it is so clear that things other than the internal matter to us, this tension, seen most clearly in the writings of John Stuart Mill, ultimately became untenable. However, instead of returning to a content-rich conception of happiness for which many feel we have no axiological traction, happiness retained its newly won highly affective and subjective nature while being deprived of its role as a highest good. Through the Enlightenment, happiness became one good among many others – albeit, for most, an extremely important one.

Many Enlightenment figures, like some hedonists before them, also took the happiness motivational system head on. They recognized the carrot and stick approach of our emotional reactions to the world, and decided to go directly to what they saw as the "source" of our valuing and desiring instead of tiptoeing around the external goods that this system was motivating us to pursue. Pleasure and other positive internal states were what mattered; if they could be obtained without reference to external goods or situations, so much the better. Unfortunately for this Enlightenment conception, the direct pursuit of feelings seems to be highly counterproductive because of the protections built into the happiness motivational system against just such tampering. Not only is it not effective, it seems that the direct pursuit of feelings often has undesirable affective consequences as illustrated in the case of Mill.

Indirect pursuit of happiness is more promising, but the second evolutionary interlude has provided us with good reasons to believe that Enlightenment happiness runs into a far greater problem in its realization than the pre-philosophical "natural happiness" ever did. The difficulty, as recognized by Kant in an act of impressive psychological insight and scientific prescience, is that the happiness motivational system is explicitly designed not to produce a high level of continuing positive feelings, but instead to keep us striving for external material goods, events, or states of affairs (or striving for the progress of culture as Kant in his teleologically tinged interpretation claimed), many of which are not good for us but were at one time good for our differential reproductive success. This "devious" system also leads to strong

overestimations of the impact of external events on our affective state (poor affective forecasting is a good way to keep us striving), but as if that were not enough, we are also prevented from learning from the experiences we have with affective results of our strivings that are much smaller than expected. This retrospective impact bias ensures that we will continue with our extremely poor affective forecasting and continue to hunt for our happiness over the next hill.

Very lucky and usually extremely disciplined people have developed ways of beating the happiness motivational system. Ironically for many proponents of Enlightenment happiness, one of the most radically effective and quickest ways of overcoming the link between negative external events and emotional suffering is a narrative or a world view such as the one Christianity offers. For those of strong convictions, the Christian narrative of redemption through suffering has the power to turn the emotional significance of events on their head.

Contrast this with Mill, who, raised without religion to pursue his happiness and the greatest happiness of the greatest number, ran into considerable emotional difficulties with the direct pursuit of his own happiness. The protections of the happiness motivational system against those attempts to aim directly at one's feelings are easy to understand. If we could manipulate our feelings directly, i.e., in a straightforward way, to the point that feelings of the same high quality could be induced by us as those that we experience as a result of the achievement of important external goals (fleeting as these feelings may be) then, like all vertebrates with control over Brain Stimulation Reward, we would be in danger of neglecting the goods, events, and situations which provide us with our differential reproductive success.

So Enlightenment thinkers, by going to what they saw as source of evolution's carrot and stick approach to human motivation, attempted to co-opt the happiness motivational system for a purpose for which it was not designed and, thus, may have passed on to us something of a fool's errand. While seeming to offer us more control as a result of its strong internality, a strongly affective conception of happiness often results in frustration, as we come to see that many things that we are motivated to want simply do not result in our ultimate goal of happiness. This does

not mean that the goal of enduring positive emotional state is unreachable, but it does mean that what we usually and very *naturally* believe to be the best way of attaining this state, namely, by acting through the goal-oriented happiness motivational system, is not the most effective means to our end. The tragedy of all this is that we seem to have an inherent and, thus, natural belief that the achievement of happiness is best pursued through things that are not conducive to it at all.

From the vantage point of the end of this chapter and in light of the numerous dimensions along which happiness has moved throughout the centuries, it is easier to understand why 'happiness' may be the bearer of multiple meanings and remnants of meanings. 'Happiness' and its cognates do call forth linguistic intuitions that conflict in obvious ways. In the next chapter I explore the question of whether or not it is possible to untangle our collection of linguistic intuitions concerning happiness. I believe that this is possible, although, in the end, there may be two things that we want to call 'happiness' for the purposes of philosophical and psychological research.

Chapter 4: How to Begin a Philosophical Investigation of Happiness: Methodological Issues

The previous chapter brought to light the great historical variation in things called or translated as 'happiness.' In the face of such diversity, it might be thought that the determination of what we mean when we say that we want to be happy might be as hopeless a cause as any. Indeed, this conclusion has been reached by some philosophers[152] who have consequently turned their attention to other matters. This conclusion is unacceptable for several reasons; chief among them is the practical importance of the concept for our lives. As long as the vast majority of people in Anglophone societies claim that one of their major, if not their main, goal is to "be happy," this desire and correspondent striving possesses a magnitude of importance that should not be ignored. Although this burden is shared by many disciplines, the task of the first level of analysis of the use of phrases employed to refer to happiness falls to philosophy.

It may be that, as skeptics claim, the method of linguistic analysis will not result in a single meaning of the phrases or phrases that we ultimately choose to

[152] This conclusion results most often in a simple silence on matters of happiness, but is also revealed, for example, in Cowan's cynicism concerning theorizing about happiness: J. L. Cowan, "Why Not Happiness?," *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* (1989): 149.

analyze. Even if it should turn out to be the case that we cannot find the one thing that the relevant phrase refers to, it is incumbent upon us to identify these different meanings of the phrase, and label them to avoid the confusion that currently reigns in this area. Daniel Haybron, the contemporary philosopher who has made the most concentrated attempt at systematizing thought on things called 'happiness' suggests that, in addition to clearing up the confusion, it is also possible to find what he calls the "philosophically primary" meaning of happiness, or the conception among things that might be called happiness that has the greatest relevance for our philosophical interests in the subject.

This suggestion is found in Haybron's essay "What Do We Want from a Theory of Happiness?"[153] that is devoted solely to the elucidation of a methodological framework for developing and assessing theories of happiness. Haybron opens the discussion with the question of how we are supposed to tell a good theory of happiness from a bad one. Ordinarily we prefer theoretical explanations that best match the meaning of the ordinary language term. However, Haybron claims that this approach has not proved to be very successful in the exploration of the meanings of 'happiness.'[154]

In light of the findings of the previous chapter, it should come as no surprise that Haybron, too, believes that the term 'happiness' seems to admit of many meanings, some or all of which shade gradually into one another. Haybron believes, however, that the two philosophically interesting conceptions that intuitions about modern English use of 'happy' seem to support most readily involve either a positive orientation to one's life as a whole (an implicit or explicit judgment) or a generally positive emotional state.[155]

Although some uses of 'happiness' and its cognates do deliver such philosophically interesting intuitions, there are a good many uses of 'happy' and its cognates that have little to do with anything that might justly be called happiness. 'Feeling happy,' for example, can be used to designate a momentary surge of positive feeling. Even further from the realm of philosophical interest are other uses of

[153] D. M. Haybron, "What Do We Want from a Theory of Happiness?," *Metaphilosophy* 34, no. 3 (2003).
[154] Ibid.: 306.
[155] See Haybron, "Happiness and Ethical Inquiry: An Essay in the Psychology of Well-Being."

'happiness' and its cognates, which, unfortunately, often find their way into the philosophical and psychological discussion about candidates for a theoretical explanation of our modern conception of happiness. In the interest of avoiding confusion in this essay and in the hopes of eliminating these problems in the discussion at some point in the future, it is best to review these uses now.

Usage of 'Happiness' and its Cognates

'Happiness' and its cognates bear a strong etymological relationship to the word 'hap'. Although since having fallen out of common usage, 'hap' means chance or luck, thus calling forth visions of fortune (especially good fortune), an element shared by many of the conceptions of happiness outlined in Chapter Two. J. P. Griffen is one philosopher who has discussed the relationship of 'hap' and 'happiness' and while emphasizing the strong drift in the use of the word, he also agrees with the thesis mentioned above that the modern use of 'happy' contains a large etymological residue of things that came before.[156] He also echoes virtually all contemporary happiness theorists in seeing a movement toward both the internal and the subjective in the modern conception of happiness. He explains the relation to 'hap' by saying that 'happiness' has moved from referring to that which is fortunate ('hap'), to having a positive orientation towards a fortunate life situation. Griffen continues:

> There is no definition of 'happiness', in the sense of a list of essential properties. Few words in a natural language, especially words covering as much ground as 'happiness', allow definition in that form. We can use these words correctly; hence we know their meaning. But we know it by catching on to the use of the words, not by catching on to a set of defining properties.[157]

Although this may be true of the term 'happiness,' it is not true of the individual set phrases in which cognates of happiness are used. They can be clearly outlined, and after discussing the ones we should ignore in the course of analysis, one phrase will be chosen as particularly relevant for our practical and theoretical interests in

[156] J. P. Griffin, "Happiness," *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 4 (1998): 226.
[157] Ibid.

happiness. This phrase will be the starting point of the analysis, but first some of uses of 'happy' and its cognates must be separated.

Happy Persons vs. Happy Lives

Lives are not things to which we ordinarily ascribe mental states. We don't say, "the life thought, felt, believed that…" Instead, we refer to the agent living the life as having thought, felt or believed. We will see later that all empirical scientists and many philosophers do see a highly internal and subjective use of 'happy' that, when using the term to describe a person, makes strong reference to mental states. However, because lives contain much more than mental states (lives might be best characterized by external events *and* the mental states with which they interact), it should not come as a surprise that the phrase "having a happy life" or "living a happy life" makes stronger reference to external goods than simply 'being happy' does. As von Wright has pointed out, because the use of 'a happy life' has a wider scope and necessarily encompasses more external goods than does the use of 'a happy person,' the phrase "living a happy life" comes closer to something like well-being or *eudaimonia* than simply 'being happy' does. Although this could certainly be debated, Von Wright believes that it would thus be possible to say that someone had a happy life, even if for a long period of time he was a most unhappy person.[158] Others might argue that internal and/or subjective happiness is a necessary part of living a happy life; more plausible, perhaps, is an argument in the other direction, namely, that someone who is happy might not be leading a happy life (e.g., as a result of systematic deception).

Thus, most happiness theorists agree that a happy life encompasses more than only psychological states. The concept of a happy life—as something akin to a sufficient amount of well-being, welfare, or flourishing over the course of a whole life—might turn out to be a philosophically interesting one. However, what most people claim to want is to "be happy." We never ask anyone "Do you have a happy life?" But we do ask old friends and people who are important to us, "Well, that all

[158] G. H. von Wright, *The Varieties of Goodness*, International Library of Philosophy and Scientific Method (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), 97.

sounds good, but are you happy?" 'Being happy' is probably the usage most central to our interest in happiness, and it certainly pays to examine what it means. However, before a decision is made in its favor, a few other types of phrases containing cognates of happiness must be examined.

Relational Happiness

'Happy' can also be used in a way that has little to do with the happiness of individuals (or their lives). For example, 'happy' can be used with a complement, such as 'with,' 'that,' 'about,' 'to,' 'at,' or 'in.' Wayne Davis calls this usage "relational happiness" as opposed to "non-relational happiness" or happiness occurring without a complement.[159] Since other philosophers have taken up Davis' nomenclature, I will follow suit with the one reservation that "relational happiness" often refers to things that have nothing to do with anything that we would call happiness (as will shortly become clear). In those instances when it does refer to things that we might call happiness, this relation is accidental and has nothing to do with the meaning of the relational happiness phrase itself. As such, it seems to be almost absurd to call this usage any kind of happiness, but in the interests of terminological continuity I will do so.

D. A. Lloyd Thomas, agrees with Davis on relational happiness in substance, and claims that 'being happy with' or 'being happy that' have the meanings of 'contented with' or 'satisfied with.'[160] Davis contrasts the relational use of 'happy' with the nonrelational use of 'being happy' in the following example: "John may be happy on Friday that he is leaving town for the weekend, even though he is not happy (he had a bad week); and he may be happy on Sunday, even though he is not happy that he has to return to the drudgery tomorrow (he had a good weekend)."[161] Here one can see why it is the case that if relational happiness refers to something that we might call 'happiness,' it does so accidentally. One can be 'happy with' anything, even when deeply unhappy or deeply dissatisfied. A boss can report that he is happy

[159] W. Davis, "A Theory of Happiness," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 18 (1981): 111.
[160] D. A. L. Thomas, "Happiness," *Philosophical Quarterly* 18, no. 71 (1968): 101f.
[161] Davis, "A Theory of Happiness," 111.

with the work of one of his employees, even when simultaneously contemplating suicide.

An interesting twist occurs in connection with this phrase when social scientists ask individuals if they "taking everything together, are happy with their situation right now" or are "happy with their lives." These examples of items found on psychological questionnaires often are interpreted as referring to the happiness of individuals, but they only do so in virtue of the questionable premise that life-satisfaction theories of our contemporary concept of happiness are, indeed, correct. Why? Because although the social scientists posing these questions clearly think that by virtue of employing the word 'happy' they are measuring the happiness of the individual in question, what they really are doing is simply asking individuals if they are satisfied or content with their lives. They are employing a phrase that includes the word 'happy' and yet has no intrinsic connection to any meaningful conception of happiness, and instead means simply "being satisfied with something." This is but one example of the many pitfalls that careful philosophical analysis can help social scientists to avoid.

Behavioral Happiness

A less common use of a cognate of 'happiness' exists and is termed the "behavioral" use of 'happy' by Lynn McFall, Theodore Benditt and D. A. Lloyd Thomas.[162] This variant is often signaled by the employment of the adverb 'happily.' McFall's example: "He happily demonstrated this to be the worst of all possible worlds." Her explanation of the behavioral use is that it describes someone who is acting in a way that we would expect someone who is happy to usually act.[163] But it could just as easily mean something along the lines of "obliging." An example: "He happily opened the door for the maid of honor." We do not necessarily expect someone who is "happy" to open doors in a certain way, and in this context 'happily' seems to mean "glad to oblige." In other words, 'happily' can describe the state of

[162] T. Benditt, "Happiness," *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* (1974): 5; L. McFall, *Happiness*, Studies in Moral Philosophy; Vol. 1 (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 14; Thomas, "Happiness," 103.
[163] McFall, *Happiness*, 14.

mind of someone who is, of course not necessarily happy, but ready and willing to do something for a guest or another person in need of assistance.

The relational and behavioral uses of 'happy' are important to an exploration of human happiness, not because they refer to anything that could plausibly be called happiness, but because social scientists as well as philosophers occasionally employ them in arguments about what happiness is. From the examples above it should be clear that these are the wrong usages to take as a starting point when trying to understand what we want when we say that we want to be happy.

Being and Feeling Happy

The state referred to by the expression, 'feeling happy,' is philosophically uninteresting, unless examined as a part of a general philosophical investigation of the emotions. General agreement exists that to say that "I am feeling happy today" is simply to make a report of an occurrent emotional state. 'Being happy,' on the other hand, can refer to something much more complicated. When crises arise in which life decisions must be made, it is not uncommon to hear parents say of their children, "I don't care if Andy doesn't X, I just want him to be happy." X may be getting a well-paying, well-regarded job when the child would struggle under its demands, continuing the family tradition by joining the military, or engaging in a less than satisfactory but socially-desirable marriage. When making our own life decisions, we often appeal to being happy (or being happier) and ask ourselves questions such as, "Would I be happier as a professor or a high-school teacher?" We say to people about our newborn children, "I just want him to be happy and healthy."

More than 'having a happy life' or 'feeling happy,' 'being happy' seems to be our predominant and most frequently appealed to (if not overriding) prudential concern. And because of its prudential importance, 'being happy' is also the usage which most contemporary philosophical investigations of our contemporary conception of happiness use as a starting point. This essay, too, will follow others in using 'being happy' as a point of departure. The focus of this essay, therefore, will be *people* who *are* happy, and not lives that are happy or a person simply "feeling happy today." Our topic is the far more prevalent use of 'happy' as predicated of persons.

Delving deeper into the use of 'being happy' at this point would be to jump ahead to the discussion of classical theories of our contemporary conception of happiness, so instead one final relative of 'happy' will be examined.

'Happiness'

The noun 'happiness' is a term from which it is extremely difficult to derive linguistic intuitions. One reason for this could be that 'happiness' is used far less frequently than appeals to 'being happy.' We seldom say, "I want happiness" unless we mean something very special and unique, in other words, something that isn't encompassed in the ordinary desire to simply, "be happy." For this reason, virtually no theorists begin their investigations with linguistic intuitions of what 'happiness' means. The question that is usually asked is "When do we say that someone is happy?" or "When can we say that someone is living a happy life?" The question, "When can we say that someone is in the possession of happiness?" is not frequently encountered in the literature.

There is one context in which this noun form does enter the discussion, and this, unfortunately, represents more of a stumbling block for serious analysis than anything else. The context is the following: an author paints a picture of happiness or being happy that corresponds to the demands of a rival theory of happiness and then asks something like the following question: "But can we really say that a person in situation X is in possession of real (or true, or deep) happiness?" This question is also stated using the adjectival form: "But can we really say that a person in situation X is really (or truly, or deeply) happy?" However the noun form is found more frequently in combination with the "real, true, or deep" question.

Attempting a philosophical examination of happiness by asking questions about 'true' happiness is, in my estimation, about as helpful as attempting to undertake a philosophical investigation of love by asking whether something is "true love." As several commentators have remarked, asking about true or real happiness allows interpreters to pack just about anything into the concept. Wayne Davis describes this strategy as referring to *ideal* or *perfect* happiness. He argues that asking if something is 'real' happiness can be interpreted akin to asking if a certain

person is a "real man."[164] One can see how drastically distorting the "real happiness" formulation can be when one examines this latter question without the 'real.' How different are the questions, "What is a man?" and "What is a real man?" One might feel invited in the first instance to describe a man as a human being with a certain physiology, in contrast to human beings who are women. One will find entries in dictionaries for 'man' but none for a 'real man.' And those who claim to know what a 'real man' is, are liable to say widely divergent things, such as "Real men don't cry." This claim is likely to be answered by someone claiming that "If you can't cry, then you're not a real man." The qualifications 'real' and 'true' result not only in very different answers, but answers that are loaded with highly specific and highly individual value judgments.

To see how far our semantic transformation of social constructs can go when they are modified by 'true' or 'real', consider someone with little to no prior knowledge of competition trying to define and analyze the concepts of winning or losing in sports. Tennis, for example, is played according to certain rules which clearly determine who wins or loses. However, if a person X violates social expectations *that have nothing to do with winning or losing in the narrow sense* and plays too roughly, to aggressively, without honor, only for money, behaves badly after the match, or has a personal life rife with qualities that are less than socially desirable (while the loser, Y, exhibits the opposite and socially desirable behavior), then some will say "But Y is the real winner." Y, in fact, actually lost, but the use of 'true' or 'real' can go so far as to override the narrow definition of the word. We have a tendency not to want to accord socially valued titles to persons who violate social rules, whatever form they may take (e.g., "He's not truly rich because he doesn't know the love of a good women" or hasn't found Jesus, etc.). This has something to do with the narrow meaning of the word only very tangentially, and can even lead to a complete inversion of the social construct we are searching to understand. How unfortunate for the outsider who seeks to understand what winning or losing means in tennis and is told that the winner is "really" the loser.

[164] Davis, "A Theory of Happiness," 111.

In the case of 'being happy' we are all still in the position of the outsider. While the 'true' or 'real' qualifications would be problematic enough if taken seriously by a philosophical analysis of terms that are relatively clear like 'winning' and 'losing,' the addition of these qualifications in the case of a concept as semantically divergent as 'happiness' results in serious difficulties. Davis illustrates some of the conditions that interpreters could attempt to exclude on the basis of the "true" happiness question: "if his happiness is due to the satisfaction of evil desires; if it is based on ignorance or false belief; if it is impermanent; or if he has no appreciation of the higher things in life."[165] Davis goes on to say that the ascription of "true" happiness is implicitly an evaluation of the person or of his happiness. He is correct in asserting this, but his list is somewhat tame. For many, "true" happiness cannot be had without finding Jesus, or accepting Mohammed. Even if one has found the "right" faith, one might not have true happiness unless one has reached nirvana (most likely in the life after this one). And, most significantly, "true happiness" can be used to pack in just about everything described in the previous chapter in the widely varied history of things we translate as happiness. "True happiness" can call forth any and all of these things, leaving us with an interpretative mess and little hope for meaningful discussion. In sum, there seems to be no end to the criteria that one can pack into 'true happiness,' and for that reason, its use should be avoided in philosophical investigations of happiness.

These distinctions are important, as many a writer on happiness has ignored them and moved swiftly from our intuitions about 'being happy' to our intuitions about 'happiness,' to our intuitions about 'being truly happy,' to our intuitions about 'true happiness' without so much as blinking an eye. In this essay I pursue the comparatively modest aim of trying to understand what we want when we say that we want to *be* happy.

[165] Ibid.

Methodology

It is now possible to turn to the methodological issues that Haybron raises in "What Do We Want from a Theory of Happiness?" in greater detail. As mentioned above, Haybron's starting point is his conviction that 'happiness,' or even 'being happy,' are neither univocal nor well-defined, and thus present problems for straightforward, traditional conceptual analysis. It is a solution to this difficulty that he seeks in his essay. This difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that philosophy has already used 'happiness' extensively, and not in the sense of the folk psychological concept that is the focus of this investigation.

The word 'happiness' is burdened in philosophical use as a result of its long-standing function as the translation of many terms that bear an imperfect relationship to our contemporary conception of happiness, especially a term that definitely does refer to a highest individual good, namely, *eudaimonia*. While the great majority of contemporary philosophers who have written dedicated articles on happiness have accepted the folk usage of happiness to indicate some sort of psychological state, others, usually treating happiness in conjunction with a moral theory (most often ancient theories of ethics, or virtue-theories inspired by ancient conceptions) have mixed the two senses, or argued that our concept of happiness either is or contains weighty elements of well-being. As mentioned in the introduction, Haybron calls the well-being usage of happiness "prudential happiness" as opposed to our conception of "psychological happiness."[166] While this division is helpful, I will call this kind of happiness "well-being happiness" to eliminate confusion resulting from the fact that most people believe psychological happiness to have immense prudential value. And because "psychological" happiness refers to our contemporary folk conception, I generally refer to psychological happiness simply as 'happiness' in this essay. Haybron describes the two approaches in the following way.

> The theorist of prudential happiness stipulates at the outset that happiness is valuable, a kind of well-being, and then asks whether this condition is merely a state of mind. The theorist of psychological happiness, on the other hand, stipulates that happiness is just a state of mind and wonders what *sort* of

[166] Haybron, "What Do We Want from a Theory of Happiness?," 306.

> psychological state it is. Having answered this question, we may then ask how valuable this state is. Perhaps it is not valuable at all.[167]

Haybron's examples of the psychological use of happiness in Chapter One should serve to illustrate that outside of philosophical usage, there is an important usage of happiness that is not equivalent to well-being, flourishing, etc. For example, if happiness were well-being, our wish for the "health and happiness" of someone's children would be bizarrely redundant (or we would have a bizarre concept of well-being that would in some way exclude health). It seems evident that the folk concept of happiness is not in any way clearly equivalent to well-being. In this regard, a comment of Haybron's about how not to develop a theory of happiness is highly relevant.

Normative Adequacy

Haybron problematizes what he calls the "pure normative adequacy" approach to happiness. Normative adequacy is a concept borrowed from Lawrence Sumner and describes the procedure of choosing a meaning for happiness in part or wholly based on its function in a specific moral system. Haybron's example is the utilitarian conception of happiness. Without becoming entangled in the actual facts of the matter, imagine that the early Utilitarians chose a strongly hedonistic theory of happiness in part based on the role that such a theory would play in their moral system. Or even better, say a virtue theorist were to introduce happiness into her moral system as a sort of final end, in which practice of the virtues play the most significant role (none to my knowledge have done this in so obvious a way). It is not unlikely that happiness was often a victim of such an approach as, at least in modern theories, definitions of happiness were often developed as an (albeit important) side note to the main action in the theory in question.

Haybron rightly contends that while other concepts might be better suited to such treatment, 'happiness' should not be approached in this way. 'Happiness' is not a theoretical term to be employed and defined as we please; instead it is a folk concept with enormous value to the lives of the people who employ it. Concepts like

[167] Ibid.

'well-being' that are by nature more theoretical are more conducive to such an approach. 'Well-being' is so theoretical that it might not specify any content at all on its own; it seems to simply mean that which is good for a person. Adding content to a theoretical term or even creating a new term and then explaining what one stipulates it to mean are both legitimate ways of enriching one's theoretical system; usurping a folk concept to make one's system more practically interesting is not. In short, happiness is not a term that is "up for grabs."[168]

Scientific Naturalism

A second approach that Haybron rejects is that of "scientific naturalism." This idea is present in many non-philosophical writings on happiness and claims explicitly or implicitly that happiness is whatever empirical science discovers it to be. The difficulty with this assumption is that our pre-theoretical notion of happiness is too vague and encompasses too many intuitions for empirical research alone to decide the question.[169] Contrary to the tone of some social scientific articles, there is no experiment, survey, MRI procedure, etc. that could determine what happiness is. What is possible is that observations won from such procedures could put us in a position to refute certain theories of happiness by undermining their premises (Haybron makes this argument with regard to life-satisfaction theories of happiness)[170], but the determination of what we mean when we say that we want to be happy must be sorted out philosophically before empirical scientists go to work on testing it. One can not legitimately make the claim that a certain empirical factor interacts in a certain way with *happiness* when one does not possess a definition of happiness in the first place. Social scientists have approached this problem by avoiding definitions of happiness and instead using technical terms such as subjective well-being, terms which they believe are wide enough to capture whatever it is that we really mean when we talk of happiness. However, it seems that in the end many empirical scientists cannot resist the temptation to drop the technical term they

[168] Ibid.: 306ff.
[169] Ibid.: 312.
[170] See D. M. Haybron, "Life Satisfaction, Ethical Reflection, and the Science of Happiness," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 8, no. 1 (2007). And more extensively in Chapter Four of Haybron, *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*.

employed in much of their research and inform their readers at the end of their articles what they have learned about 'happiness.'[171]

Reconstructive Analysis

To explain what is actually needed to develop a theory of happiness, Haybron takes his lead from Ned Block. Block has famously described consciousness as a "mongrel concept", in other words, as a folk psychological concept that has more than one definite meaning. This state of affairs has led no philosopher (to my knowledge) to suggest that we should cease investigation of consciousness. Instead, many, including Block, have advocated reconstructing the concept in some systematic way. Block himself thinks that 'consciousness' refers to three different types of phenomena, which he calls phenomenality, reflexivity, global availability.[172]

Haybron suggests a similar approach to happiness, one that I heartily endorse. He suggests we follow Block in pursuing what Haybron calls *reconstructive analysis*. It may be that 'being happy' admits of multiple paraphrases and if that is the case, we should delineate each of them and perhaps, if possible, choose the one among them that is *philosophically primary*, a term that Haybron borrows from Lawrence Sumner. This means that if there is more than one phenomenon that we can call happiness, then we should choose a primary meaning based on 1) descriptive adequacy and 2) the practical interests of those who use the concept in their everyday lives.[173]

Descriptive adequacy is a term that Haybron again borrows from Lawrence Sumner, who introduced it in an exploration of welfare.[174] Descriptive adequacy means basically that a conception of happiness should not violate too many of our linguistic intuitions. A theory of happiness should describe something that is recognizable as happiness. This is obviously a flexible criterion, but the goal, of course, is working out a core or philosophically primary meaning; as Haybron emphasizes, if too many intuitions are ignored, we risk changing the subject, or

[171] See Chapter Seven of this essay for an extensive treatment of this subject.
[172] N. Block, "Consciousness," in *Encyclopedia of Cognitive Science*, ed. L. Nadel (New York, NY: Nature Publishing Group, 2003).
[173] Haybron, *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*, Ch. 2, p. 2.
[174] Sumner, *Welfare, Happiness, and Ethics*, 10.

sliding slowly into the development of an artificial construct in order to avoid controversy, a tactic employed by some social scientists as mentioned above.

Attending to our practical interests in the matter of happiness is a criterion that is not truly separate from descriptive adequacy, but it is helpful to address it separately. Haybron lists four practical interests that we have in happiness: we employ some form of the 'being happy' question or contention in 1) deliberation about important decisions, 2) evaluation or assessment of our own or others' conditions, 3) prediction of others' thoughts and actions, and 4) explanations of others' thoughts and actions.[175]

The first two interests are the most crucial in our dealings with happiness. In Chapter One I mentioned Haybron's claim that 'being happy,' although it clearly does not exhaust all that is necessary for well-being, often serves as a proxy for well-being in our practical reasoning.[176] As mentioned above, well-being is an abstract and formal term; I have never heard anyone wishing someone else "well-being" or asking "and how is your well-being?" The one context with which I do associate it is concern about the state of a child's physical or mental health: "The court is very concerned about the well-being of the child." It is very unclear to both laypersons and philosophers what well-being actually entails (although we would be greatly surprised if someone developed a concept of well-being and excluded health, for example), and even how to go about investigating it.

Happiness, on the other hand, seems to be clearly content-filled—at least this is the case I make in the remainder of this essay. We do know what direction we are hoping for when we wish someone happiness. And the best route to determining this direction lies in following our linguistic intuitions about the most commonly used phrase concerning happiness, namely, what it means to "be happy."

The Subjective-Objective Distinction

Although the purpose of Lawrence Sumner's astute treatment of the subjective-objective distinction in *Welfare, Happiness, and Ethics* is somewhat different than

[175] Haybron, "What Do We Want from a Theory of Happiness?," 314f.
[176] Ibid.: 312.

that of this undertaking, his discussion of subjectivity and objectivity is comprehensive, and his solution in the form of a definition of the terms 'subjective' and 'objective' illustrates the difficulties involved in the attempt to define these terms in the context of theories of happiness.

Sumner's aim in defining subjectivity and objectivity is to categorize theories of welfare. Welfare and happiness are not so far distant for his discussion not to be relevant to the current essay. Sumner points out that 'subjective' and 'objective' are, in fact, used in widely differing ways depending on the context. Sumner provides a non-exhaustive list of usages of the term 'subjective,' a list that is worth quoting in full:

> Along with such other persistent offenders as the real and the natural, the concept of the subjective is one of the most treacherous in the philosopher's lexicon. In different contexts and for different purposes the realm of the subjective has been delineated by means of a number of features: privacy, immediacy, incorrigibility, unverifiability, unquantifiability, relativity, arbitrariness, reliance on judgment or intuition, and immunity to rational arbitration.[177]

He makes the point that each member of this list is logically distinct from every other, and that the resultant boundary drawn around the subjective and the objective would be different in each case. As the authors of the current literature on happiness use varying definitions of 'subjective' to classify their own and others' theories, it is unsurprising, given the length of the list, that some confusion results in the current philosophical (and certainly in the non-philosophical) discussion of happiness. Sumner's solution to the diversity of senses of 'subjective', however, has not yet been mentioned. He claims that none of the abovementioned concepts is essential to subjectivity, but that there is a definition of the concept which explains why we sometimes use 'subjective' to mean each of the terms in the list.

This core definition has to do with the central meaning of the word subject, namely, "anything capable of conscious states or processes."[178] In this definition, 'consciousness' is used in a very liberal way, as opposed to its stricter use often employed by philosophers to mean only beings capable of language or self-

[177] Sumner, *Welfare, Happiness, and Ethics*, 27.
[178] Ibid.

awareness. Sumner connects this to Thomas Nagel's condition for the ascription of conscious mental states: "an organism has conscious mental states if and only if there is something that it is like to be that organism—something that it is like *for* the organism."[179] According to Sumner, this criterion is, however, not sufficient for the characterization of a subject. Not only do subjects have conscious mental states, but these states must evince both unity and continuity. An individual subject is thus a "unique, enduring centre of consciousness."[180] In addition, Sumner's criteria of unity and continuity cannot be grasped without recourse to personal indexicals. This means that for me as a subject, these conscious mental states have to be *mine*. The spatial and temporal indexicals, the *here* and *now*, are also essential aspects of our concept of a subject.

At this point, Sumner transitions from what he views as the philosophically primary sense of 'subject', to the philosophically primary sense of 'subjective.' He relates that *one* of the definitions in the Oxford English Dictionary characterizes 'subjective' thusly: "proceeding from or taking place within the subject; having its source in the mind; belonging to the conscious life." In other words, while the mental not identical with subjective, it "provides the content or substance of the subjective." Sumner thus sees the subjective as mind-dependant and the objective as not mind-dependant.

Although one could follow Haybron in adopting Sumner's perspicuous analysis of 'subjective' in the case of theories of happiness, a problem exists with this approach. This problem can be illustrated by a comparison with an argument by G.H. von Wright for the subjectivity of happiness.

For von Wright, the person's judgment on happiness is "final whatever we think we should say, if we were in his circumstances (because) every man is the best and most competent judge of his prospects of happiness."[181] This evokes some of the other senses of subjectivity compiled in Sumner's list, especially the judgment dependant sense. This sense of subjectivity is well-established in the literature on our

[179] T. Nagel, *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge University Press, 1979), 166.
[180] Sumner, *Welfare, Happiness, and Ethics*, 30.
[181] von Wright, *The Varieties of Goodness*, 99.

current concept of "being happy." For example, it is this sense of 'subjective' that is primarily operative in Richard Kraut's classic essay "Two Conceptions of Happiness."[182] The difficulty with the sense of 'subjective' that Sumner proposes and Haybron, following Sumner, also adopts is that it is not a particularly useful way of characterizing theories of happiness. Our contemporary use of happiness is so widely accepted to be primarily (if not only) concerned with mental states that Haybron admits that *all* contemporary theories of happiness are subjective theories, as they all primarily point to one or another mental states as that which constitutes happiness.

Viewed from the perspective of the welfare/well-being debate, something in which both Sumner and Haybron have a strong interest, this might seem unproblematic, but, as mentioned above, it conflicts strongly with the terminology used by many in the debate on our concept of happiness. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, not only has the judgment-based use of the word 'subjective' played such a central role in the contemporary discussion of happiness, but in the course of this essay the case will be made that it is an intrinsic part of our ordinary concept of happiness as well. Similarly, in virtually all discussions of life-satisfaction theories of happiness, 'subjective' is used in this judgment-dependent way. Clearly, because of its (often overlooked) ambiguous use in the literature, a decision must be made about how to use it in this essay. Because other fairly straightforward options for referring to a theory's dependence on mental states are available, and because judgment-dependency marks an important difference in theories of happiness, I believe it better to employ 'subjective' in its sense of "dependent on judgment of the agent."

This determination of 'subjective' has the added advantage of meshing nicely with some uses of the terminology in the social sciences as well. Since happiness has long been taken to be a primarily mental affair in the social sciences, and because it is useful to distinguish theories that are judgment-based from those that are not, 'subjective' in the work of social sciences on happiness has long been seen as meaning "judgment-dependent." For example, when the Nobel-prize winning

[182] For example, it is this sense of 'subjective' that is primarily operative in Kraut, "Two Conceptions of Happiness."

psychologist Daniel Kahneman attempted to remedy several recall biases in emotional memory in the realm of happiness by introducing a model of timed samples of the emotional states of a person, he calls the result, if sufficiently positive, "objective happiness." In this case, Kahneman clearly makes use of the judgment-dependant sense of 'subjective.'[183] This determination has the effect of rendering certain theories of happiness, such as hedonistic theories, emotional state-theories, and many desire-satisfaction theories, objective theories of psychological happiness. Such theories must be categorized as objective because no judgment is passed in the process of determining whether a given individual is happy.

Hedonistic theories, for example, are often characterized by something like a preponderance of pleasure over pain. Some stipulate a specific ratio as a criterion for happiness, such as spending more than 50% of one's time in a pleasurable state. For a given individual, this ratio exists independent of their judgment and determines their happiness whatever they, themselves, may judge their own state of happiness to be. One reason for the continuing confusion about subjectivity and objectivity in the discussion of our concept of happiness is that many theorists unfortunately neglect to differentiate between subjectivity in terms of mental states and subjectivity in terms of judgment-dependency. Often, theories of happiness are underdeveloped in the sense that their creators talk as if they rely both on an individual judgmental standard and on the exceeding of a threshold set for all individuals independently of the opinion of any one specific individual. Hedonistic theories are a good example of this. In many hedonistic theories, the issue of someone making a judgment about her happiness that is contrary to the actual balance of pleasure over pain is simply ignored.

As for emotional-state theories, the premier proponent of such a theory, Daniel Haybron, writes that, "Those who have spent much time gaining the perspective of living outside mainstream civilization know well that many of us may not have a clue

[183] D. Kahneman, "Objective Happiness," in *Well-Being: The Foundations of Hedonic Psychology*, ed. D. Kahneman, E. Diener, and N. Schwarz (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1999); ———, "Experienced Utility and Objective Happiness: A Moment-Based Approach," in *Choices, Values and Frames*, ed. D. Kahneman and A. Tversky (New York: Cambridge University Press and the Russell Sage Foundation, 2000).

how happy, or unhappy, we really are."[184] Rejection of judgment-dependency in happiness determinations forms the crux of Haybron's article, "Do We Know How Happy We Are?"[185] Thus, although Haybron's theory would clearly be classified as subjective according to the mental-state criterion of subjectivity, it is clearly not subjective according to the criterion that will be employed in this essay, namely, judgment-dependency.

However, a term must also be employed to designate dependence on mental and extra-mental states in theories of psychological happiness. For a theory of happiness to have an objective qualification in the sense of mental-state subjectivity, the fact of the matter concerning an agent's happiness must be partly reliant on something other than mental states. One example of this would be a theory that uses a hedonistic criterion for happiness (i.e., strongly equates happiness with pleasure), yet demands that the agent must not be deceived with regard to those things which most centrally cause his happiness (e.g., having an unfaithful wife, when he receives great comfort from his belief in her fidelity). Although centrally reliant on mental states, such a theory incorporates demands on extra-mental states. Because 'subjective' cannot be used to refer to mental states, another term must be found. For the purposes of this essay, the term 'internal' will stand for theories or elements of theories that make reference to mental states, and the term 'external' will stand for elements of theories that make reference to extra-mental states.

Conclusion

Our use of happiness and its cognates do not possess one distinct meaning, but instead result in many different meanings depending on their linguistic form and the context in which they are used. After dealing with the relational and behavioral uses of cognates of happiness, I made the case that the usage 'being happy' in its various forms represents our primary practical interest among all of the usages that might refer to something that could conceivably be called happiness. The focus of

[184] Haybron, *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*, Ch. 6, p. 29.
[185] D. M. Haybron, "Do We Know How Happy We Are?," *Nous* (in press).

this essay is therefore people who *are happy* and not the leading of happy lives or feeling happy. Additionally, as a result of the function of 'true' and 'real' that allows members of the linguistic community to depart drastically from the core definition of the word in question for the purposes of sanctioning members of the community who exhibit behaviors generally deemed undesirable, the use of phrases involving 'true' or 'real' happiness should be ignored in a linguistic analysis.

It is also clear that our contemporary conception of happiness is not in any obvious way equivalent to flourishing or well-being. Two approaches to the investigation of our conception of "psychological happiness," normative adequacy and scientific naturalism are misguided (if pursued intentionally) and counterproductive (if, as is usually the case, pursued unintentionally). Reconstructive analysis along the lines of Ned Block's reconstruction of 'consciousness' is the proper way to proceed. Even when only examining 'being happy' it may well be the case that more than one definition answers to the use of variations of this phrase. If so, then in the interest of progress in this field, the different senses should be worked out and named. A final stumbling stone to clarity in the discussion of happiness must also be eliminated: the ambiguous use of 'subjective' and 'objective.' For the purposes of this essay, 'subjective' will be used to indicate dependence on the judgment of the agent in question, and 'objective' will be used to indicate an absence of such dependence. An alternative meaning of subjective, namely, mind-dependence or dependence on mental states, will be rendered by 'internal,' and 'external' will be used to indicate the absence of such dependence.

Chapter 5: Traditional Theories of Happiness

In the last chapter, I argued that 'being happy' is the best place to begin to look for something unitary that we can reasonably call happiness. Many authors have remarked that even 'being happy' seems to have two senses: an occurrent sense, which basically is equivalent to 'feeling happy,' and a longer-term sense[186]. Contextual cues usually make it clear when the occurrent sense is the one in play. After achieving a great athletic feat, for example, winning a gold medal at the Olympics, it would not at all surprise us to hear the winner say "I can't tell you how happy I am right now." And if we were to ask her right after winning, "So, are you happy?" it would be obvious from the context of the conversation that we are referring to her occurrent emotional state, and not to any long-term reflective assessment (something that given the tumultuous state of her current emotions probably would not even be possible for her).

Contrast this with meeting an old friend whom you haven't seen in a while and, after talking for half an hour, asking him, "So, things seem to be going well with your job and the family, but how are *you*? Are you happy?" You would be quite disappointed if, like our Olympic athlete, he did nothing more than report his current emotional state. How he is feeling in this moment is something in which you

[186] Wayne Davis calls this the dispositional sense.

probably aren't even interested. What interests you and provokes you to ask this question is something longer-term in nature.

The relation between the occurrent and the longer-term senses of 'being happy' explains some of our practices in answering these sorts of questions, such as qualifications for atypical current mood. Because of the existence of the occurrent use, we don't simply answer yes when we are happy in the long-term sense, but are currently in a bad mood. To avoid confusion we would probably explain the situation. To our old friend, we might say something like, "Well, right now I'm really ticked off about being passed over for the partnership at work, but generally, yeah, I am happy."

All of the traditional theories of our concept of happiness take this longer-term happiness to be the phenomenon in need of explanation, and all agree that this longer-term happiness is more than just feeling happy (or the occurrent use of "being happy"). The three most prominent types of theories of our concept of happiness are hedonistic, life-satisfaction, and emotional-state theories. Beyond this categorization, two general conditions exist that theorists sometimes apply to any theory inhabiting one of these categories. First of all, they sometimes require that external circumstances not be in conflict with the beliefs that result in an individual judgment of happiness (or similarly, the beliefs that produce pleasure or feelings of happiness not be based on deception or an illusion). Secondly, some argue that happiness has an evaluative or an endorsing character. Most of these latter arguments move in the direction of prohibiting ascriptions of happiness to people who have a morally bad character. I believe both of these concerns are exaggerated, and although it is not possible here to refute all arguments made in defense of these two propositions, at the end of this chapter, I will deal with examples of each.

The following text presents general difficulties with hedonic and life-satisfaction views of happiness. Because Daniel Haybron has very recently produced excellent, thorough, and lengthy critiques of hedonism and life-satisfaction theories

of happiness, I refer the interested reader to them[187]; only the most problematic aspects of such theories find a place here.

Three Theories of Happiness

Hedonistic Theories

Hedonistic theories represent happiness as a "balance of pleasure over pain" (e.g. Parducci, 1995, p.9). To avoid terminological confusion, it should be made clear at this point that 'hedonism' as used in philosophy ordinarily refers to something other than hedonism about psychological happiness. Two other basic types of hedonism exist, namely, ethical hedonism (a normative theory) and psychological hedonism (a descriptive theory). Ethical hedonists maintain that one *should* seek pleasure or that pleasure is the only thing worth seeking. Psychological hedonists claim that pleasure is the only thing that humans (and presumably other creatures) ever do seek. Psychological (or motivational) hedonism has been largely discredited and because of similar implausibility, crude forms of ethical hedonism find few defenders today. Not so, however, with hedonism about psychological happiness; it is alive and well, and is not nearly as implausible as its normative and motivational counterparts.[188]

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[187] See e.g., Haybron, "Life Satisfaction, Ethical Reflection, and the Science of Happiness." and chapters 3 and 4 of Haybron, *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*.

[188] Haybron was also the first to extensively categorize theories in their hedonistic and life-satisfaction variants. I relate his categorization with slight changes: philosophers who propounded hedonistic theories of psychological happiness include Locke, Bentham, and Sidgwick and in the recent past R. B. Brandt, *Ethical Theory: The Problems of Normative and Critical Ethics*, Prentice-Hall Philosophy Series (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1959); ———, *A Theory of the Good and the Right* (Oxford: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1979); ———, *Morality, Utilitarianism, and Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); R. Campbell, "The Pursuit of Happiness," *Personalist* (1973); T. L. Carson, "Happiness and the Good Life," *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* (1978); ———, "Happiness and Contentment: A Reply to Benditt," *The Personalist* 59 (1978); ———, "Happiness and the Good Life: A Rejoinder to Mele," *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy* (1979); ———, "Happiness, Contentment and the Good Life," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* (1981); W. Davis, "Pleasure and Happiness," *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* (1981); Davis, "A Theory of Happiness."; A. O. Ebenstein, *The Greatest Happiness Principle: An Examination of Utilitarianism* (New York: Garland, 1991); J. Mayerfeld, "The Moral Asymmetry of Happiness and Suffering," *The Southern journal of philosophy* 34, no. 3 (1996); J. Mayerfield, *Suffering and Moral Responsibility* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); A. Sen, *Commodities and Capabilities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); T. L. S. Sprigge, "The Greatest Happiness Principle," *Utilitas* 3, no. 1 (1991); J. Wilson, "Happiness," *Analysis* 29, no. 1 (1968). Psychologists often defend hedonistic theories of psychological happiness. Two examples of those who see pleasure as the central building block of

Hedonistic theorists claim that one is happy when one experiences more pleasure than pain. So what is pleasure? Daniel Haybron distinguishes three categories of theories of pleasure, the first two of which he borrows from Lawrence Sumner and the last from Fred Feldman. Sumner categorizes theories of pleasure as either intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic theories of pleasure claim that there is a common unanalyzable feeling tone to all pleasurable experiences. Extrinsic theories of pleasure claim that it is the subject's attitude towards a certain felt experience that makes that experience one of pleasure.[189]

Confusingly, Fred Feldman's view of pleasure is called the "attitudinal view." However, unlike extrinsic theories of happiness, Feldman's attitudinal view does not require any occurrent feeling at all. On his view (which does not gel with our usual talk about pleasure) the propositional attitude itself constitutes the pleasure and the object of the propositional attitude is a fact or a state of affairs and not a feeling. To support his argument that pleasure does not require a feeling, many of his analyzed sentences or phrases are similar to this one: "being pleased that you live in Massachusetts." The reader might be reminded of our discussion of the relational use of happiness. In my opinion, "being pleased that" and "being pleased with" bear as little relation to something that we call pleasure as "being happy with" and "being happy that" bear to happiness.[190]

These usages sometimes describe situations in which one could have a positive feeling, whether one does or not, but more often they represent nothing more than ways to describe conformity with values or standards. The discussion in the previous chapter of 'relational happiness' and the example of "being happy with his work" run exactly parallel to what we might call 'relational pleasure' and the phrase "being pleased with his work." And these two locutions may represent only the

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psychological happiness are A. Parducci, *Happiness, Pleasure, and Judgment: The Contextual Theory and Its Applications* (Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates, 1995); Kahneman, "Objective Happiness." Among the philosophers, some talk as if other elements, such as desire satisfaction are equivalent to pleasure. Wayne Davis is one example.

[189] Sumner, *Welfare, Happiness, and Ethics*, 87ff.

[190] See F. Feldman, "On the Intrinsic Value of Pleasures," *Ethics* 107, no. 3 (1997); ———, *Utilitarianism, Hedonism, and Desert: Essays in Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); ———, "The Good Life: A Defense of Attitudinal Hedonism," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 65, no. 3 (2002); ———, *Pleasure and the Good Life: Concerning the Nature, Varieties, and Plausibility of Hedonism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

smallest uptick in standards met from "being satisfied with his work." Saying that I am pleased with his work means only that his work meets a certain standard that I hold completely independently of how I feel at the time of the assessment of his work. If I want to get a confederate of mine into the position that the industrious worker currently occupies, I might have very negative feelings about the fact that he has been working so well.

Whatever theory of pleasure predominates in a given hedonistic theory of happiness, two main problems exist with all theories of this kind. The first is that pleasure and pain (or "unpleasure" as some prefer) are simply the wrong criteria to use for determining one's happiness. It seems strange to say that people's happiness or unhappiness *is* the experiencing of either a great deal of pleasure or unpleasure. Haybron splits this objection into two parts, the problems of irrelevant pleasures (the fact that very many pleasures, even very intense ones may fail to have any impact on one's happiness), and the problem of psychological superficiality (the fact that pleasures fail to move one deeply). It seems to me that these are strongly related, so I will not treat them separately.[191]

Haybron uses the example of a sufferer of chronic pain to illustrate psychological superficiality. He points out that if experiencing a great deal of pleasure or pain *is* happiness or unhappiness, then we should include a sufferer of chronic pain in our category of unhappy persons. While Haybron agrees that it is certainly very likely that someone suffering from chronic pain is unhappy, he emphasizes that pain does not *constitute* the sufferer's unhappiness – rather it is the *source* of his unhappiness. It is possible that he (being, for example, a highly disciplined Buddhist monk and thus being able to direct his awareness away from the pain) is indeed not unhappy[192]. The converse is true of pleasure: While a series of very pleasurable experiences could cause an individual to be happy, it certainly does not have to have this effect, and pleasure itself does not seem to constitute our happiness. In the use of the concepts of pleasure and pain, hedonistic theories are, at the very least, over-extended or overly inclusive in the states they take to be possible constituents of happiness. Depending on the definition of pleasure in the theory in

[191] Haybron, *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*, Ch. 3, p. 3.
[192] Ibid., Ch. 3, p. 6.

question, they may also be too narrow in that they do not include many states that are indeed constituents of happiness.

A sufferer of chronic pain may be unhappy, but not necessarily so. She is unhappy only if the pain produces *negative affect*, if it 'gets her down.' Being a kind of qualia, affect is, by its very nature, difficult to formulate in words, but is an unavoidable component of our mental lives. We see this when we take a closer look at emotions. As their name indicates, component theories of emotions recognize that emotions are composed of disparate parts. One of these, the cognitive component, is relatively easy to put into words. If a pet of ours dies, and someone asks what our problem is, we can answer, "My pet hamster Scruffy died, and she was very important to me." If emotions exhausted themselves in this cognitive component (as some theorists have suggested), then losing friends and family members – or pets for that matter – would be far less discomfiting than it actually is. For purposes of this essay, we can define affect as the characteristically *felt* aspects of emotions. By contrast neither pleasure nor pain need to be any part of any emotion or mood.

That affect is something independent of physical pain can be seen in the concurrent experience of positive affect and physical pain. The example that Haybron chooses for this is enjoying (experiencing positive affect) the probing of one's painful tooth.[193] More paradigmatically, one could think of positive affect produced by cognitions that run counter to the pain one is currently experiencing. For example, one could also think of the affect produced by the knowledge that one has saved one's child's life while simultaneously incurring serious physical harm (and, thus, physical pain) to oneself. The positive affect and physical pain associated with a very successful marathon is another example. Concurrent negative affect and physical pleasure is also certainly not uncommon. The most common example mentioned in the literature is solitary orgasm or orgasm with a partner about whom one has reservations. In such situations it is possible to experience physical pleasure while simultaneously being in a negative emotional state. In hedonistic conceptions of happiness, pain and pleasure are usually defined widely in order to encompass positive and negative affect. However, the only parts of the extension of the concepts

[193] _____, "Happiness and Ethical Inquiry: An Essay in the Psychology of Well-Being," 91. Haybron borrows this example from Sumner, *Welfare, Happiness, and Ethics*, 101.

of ‘pleasure’ and ‘pain’ that are relevant for happiness are positive and negative affect. These concepts will be further elucidated in the discussion of the DAS theory of happiness.

The second problem plaguing hedonistic theories is the question: What is the “balance” in the definition of happiness as a “balance of pleasure over pain.” Is more than 50% pleasure required for happiness, or more than 60%? How about 80%? How is this choice to be made, and who is to make it? In Chapter Six, the case will be made that this determination cannot be carried out in the form presented in many hedonistic theories of happiness. This series of questions can be brought to a point in the following way. When a happiness theorist has decided on something that happiness is *about* – for example, hedonistic theories claim that happiness is *about* the presence of pleasure and relative absence of pain – how does one determine at what point happiness begins? This problem I will call the *threshold problem*[194] of happiness. The threshold problem is a major challenge, not just for hedonistic theories of happiness, but for many theories, including psychological theories like that of Daniel Kahneman (1999). Because the threshold problem is the central difficulty facing Daniel Haybron’s emotional-state theory, it finds its full elaboration in Chapter Six in which Haybron’s theory is introduced. In the exposition of the DAS, I explain why the way we use “happy” in terms of someone’s ‘being happy’ makes it impossible to designate an objective amount of either pleasure or positive affect above which we can say that someone is happy.

Life-satisfaction Theories

Life-satisfaction and desire-satisfaction theories comprise a second category of theories of happiness. These two types of theories are very difficult to distinguish from each other. Desire-satisfaction theories describe happiness as the satisfaction of certain central desires (rarely do its proponents claim implausibly that happiness is the satisfaction of all desires) for one’s life. Life-satisfaction theories describe

[194] In earlier versions I called this the “determination problem” of happiness, but since then, Haybron has recognized this problem with regard to his own emotional-state theory, and in dealing with it explicitly, has called it the threshold problem of happiness. In the interest of terminological consistency, I will adopt his term for this essay.

happiness as the satisfaction of certain standards or goals for one's life. Well, this is really describing the same process: when we have standards or goals for our lives, we desire their satisfaction or attainment, and when we have a central desire for our lives, then inherent in this desire is a goal or a standard towards which we strive. For this reason the two types of theories are structurally identical, and simply describe this process either from the perspective of the end-state that is achieved (satisfaction of a standard or standards for one's life), or from the perspective of the desire that is extinguished through the satisfaction of the standard. For that reason, when I describe difficulties with one or the other, in most cases, the difficulties apply to both. Despite the difficulties with such theories, they retain great popularity among happiness theorists.[195]

Now, there is hint in our linguistic usage that a problem exists with this group of contentions. Just as physical pleasure or pain could result in positive or negative affect, it seems that the satisfaction of these central desires could *result* in happiness, but the satisfaction is not itself happiness, even if it *always* were to result in happiness. It will become evident in the course of the ensuing discussion that even this last claim is not true.

The basic problem with these conceptions is that happiness does not track the satisfaction of desires or standards; instead it tracks positive affect. We can easily imagine cases in which someone has satisfied all of their central desires and is not

[195] Again, I approve strongly of Daniel Haybron's classification of works of proponents of life-satisfaction theories of happiness, which, with a few additions, includes R. F. Almeder, *Human Happiness and Morality: A Brief Introduction to Ethics* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2000); R. Barrow, *Happiness and Schooling* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1980); Benditt, "Happiness."; Campbell, "The Pursuit of Happiness."; R. Nozick, *The Examined Life: Philosophical Meditations* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989); N. Rescher, *Welfare: The Social Issues in Philosophical Perspective* (Pittsburgh University of Pittsburgh Press, 1972); Sumner, *Welfare, Happiness, and Ethics*; E. Telfer, *Happiness: An Examination of a Hedonistic and a Eudaemonistic Concept of Happiness and of the Relations between Them* (London: Macmillan, 1980); von Wright, *The Varieties of Goodness*. In addition in several works, authors have attempted to set life-satisfaction equal to well-being, often using 'happiness' to refer to well-being. These include: J. Kekes, "Happiness," *Mind: A Quarterly Review of Philosophy* (1982); McFall, *Happiness*; H. Meynell, "Human Flourishing," *Religious Studies* 5 (1969); W. Tatarkiewicz, *Analysis of Happiness*, Melbourne International Philosophy Series ; V. 3 (Warszawa: PWN / Polish Scientific Publishers, 1976); Thomas, "Happiness." Social scientists also often see life satisfaction as happiness: see R. Veenhoven, *Conditions of Happiness* (Reidel, 1984). Or they see it as a component of happiness: see E. Diener and R. E. Lucas, "Personality and Subjective Well-Being," in *Well-Being: The Foundations of Hedonic Psychology*, ed. D. Kahneman, E. Diener, and N. Schwarz (New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation, 1999).

happy – in fact, they might be extraordinarily depressed. The satisfaction of a goal often results in an elated feeling with a drop-off shortly afterwards as one wonders what one should do now. Disappointment with goal achievement or desire-satisfaction is a common and well-known phenomenon.

So, some satisfied desires bring with them positive affect, and some do not. This is even clearer in the case of desires that are not central. A vast universe of possible desires exists whose satisfaction brings with it no positive affect. Cheating on one's partner by having a one-night stand might be a good illustration. It is possible to strongly desire to spend the night with a person one barely knows and – when that desire is realized – to experience no positive affect during the experience or afterward. Perhaps one's guilty conscience ruined what positive affect one would have gained from the experience or perhaps it simply wasn't what one expected. Satisfied desires or standards and positive affect are, indeed, disparate elements. Now, since people whose desires are satisfied without any affective impact also do not claim to be happy, it seems that only those desires that bring with them positive affect could be legitimately thought to be relevant for happiness.

It is also clear that our claims about whether or not we are happy can change without any intervening desire satisfaction. Take the example of an older man who has had a slight cold that he just can't kick. Of course he desires to be rid of the illness, but let's say he becomes deeply involved in an activity that isn't particularly pleasant for him (the activity does not provide a positive affective payoff that could affect his happiness) over several months and slowly recovers from the cold without really being aware of his gradual recovery. When asked after several months of being healthy again, he says that he is happy; whereas while he had the cold he reported that he wasn't happy. He isn't happier, however, because his desire to be healthy was satisfied – in fact, he doesn't even think about the fact that he was sick when he answers. He has simply been feeling better because he is in good health. In short, not only are desire satisfaction and positive affect disparate elements, but they also do not necessarily move in lockstep with each other.

Perhaps the clearest example of the lack of necessary correspondence between satisfied desires and positive affect is postpartum depression. Becoming a

mother is for many a very central desire, or to phrase it differently, a central part of their standard for satisfaction with their lives. For some it might be their most central desire. Yet in some cases when this desire is realized, a disconnect occurs between the fulfillment of their strong desire or their central goal or standard and their mood. It is hypothesized that this is a result of rapid hormone changes after delivery.

That happiness is not the satisfaction of central desires or standards is also evident in the cases of people who claim to be happy while very central desires or standards, even those for health, work, companionship, parenthood, etc, are *not* satisfied. Having a partner is for a great many a central desire, yet there are many people who claim to be, and most likely are, happy in spite of not having yet found or having, at some point in the past, lost a partner. This is not to say that unfulfilled desires cannot make us unhappy; they certainly can, but only insofar as they produce negative affect. It is also not to say that the fulfillment of central desires cannot contribute to our happiness (although the work of Gilbert and Wilson has called the extent of their role in happiness into question[196]). But again, when fulfilled desires do contribute to our happiness, they do so by playing a causal role in producing happiness by producing positive affect. Fulfilled desires might be a cause of happiness, but they do not constitute happiness.

The disconnect between happiness and life satisfaction is evident in our linguistic usage as well. If we were to ask a person if she is satisfied with her life, we might get, after a thoughtful pause, an answer like this, "Yeah, I'm satisfied with my life." Not only could we still ask her, "And are you happy?" without being redundant, but she could then, again after a thoughtful pause, say, "Hmmm…no I wouldn't really say that I'm happy." The opposite situation, mentioned at the end of the last paragraph, is probably even more common: people are often happy without being satisfied with their lives, in other words, with many desires, for partnership, children, a meaningful job, etc., still outstanding. This is not to say that there is no correlation between life-satisfaction and happiness. Indeed, people who are happy are very often satisfied with their lives, and they are often satisfied with their lives *because* they are happy. Happiness is for many an important criterion for life satisfaction. Conversely,

[196] Wilson and Gilbert, "Affective Forecasting."

being very satisfied with one's life could be a source of positive affect and, thus, relevant to happiness. I am also not trying to call into question the value of life-satisfaction as a measure of well-being or welfare. I am simply saying that life-satisfaction and happiness represent disparate phenomena.

Interestingly, empirical evidence underlines the fact that people do see life satisfaction and happiness as different concepts. Glatzer, for example, found that "42 to 49 percent of those rating themselves as "completely satisfied" also reported significant symptoms of anxiety and related forms of distress. And six to seven percent of the completely satisfied reported that they were "usually unhappy or depressed."[197] Keep in mind, this isn't just those who are satisfied with their lives, but those who are *completely* satisfied with their lives. Needless to say, someone who is usually unhappy or depressed is not happy no matter how satisfied with her life she is. If not all of the "completely satisfied" are happy, how many of those who are simply "satisfied" with their lives also lack happiness? The conclusion that happiness and life satisfaction are disparate social constructs seems unavoidable.

External Elements in Theories of Happiness

While there are no defenders of complete externality of psychological happiness, there are those who qualify their internal theories of happiness with external criteria. If internal theories of happiness are bounded by external criteria and they are also subjective theories of happiness, then they also have objective criteria in the sense of judgment subjectivity. In other words, they are automatically dependant on something other than the judgment of the agent. This is the case in Richard Kraut's argument below. He argues that some external circumstances can limit the correctness of judgments of happiness. So his theory of happiness has external qualifications (i.e., elements external to the mental life of the agent do make a difference in happiness) and objective qualifications (the agent's judgment of her own happiness can be wrong given certain external events).

[197] W. Glatzer, "Quality of Life in Advanced Industrialized Countries: The Case of West Germany," in *Subjective Well-Being: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1991), 263.

It does not have to be the case that qualifications of both kinds are made. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Daniel Haybron introduces limitations on the correctness of our judgments but does not do so by making reference to any extra-mental states. His theory of happiness entails the conclusion that we may very often be wrong about our own happiness, simply because we have a flawed memory and understanding of our own mental states.[198] Von Wright, on the other hand, claims that if an individual believes that he is happy, then he is.[199] Jonathan Freedman might have meant this when he says, "If you feel happy, you are happy, that's all we mean by the term."[200] David Myers also seems to be of this opinion. After quoting Freedman, he writes, "Moreover, if *you* can't tell someone whether you're happy or miserable, who can?"[201] The view that the agent is the ultimate judge of his own happiness is termed by Kraut, "extreme subjectivism"[202] and though he does not name his own view, we could term it "subjective with objective qualifications."

Typically, proponents of life-satisfaction theories of happiness are the strongest supporters of objective qualifications in the mental-state sense, and it is fairly easy to see why. If the object of the happiness judgment is, indeed, a life, then cogent arguments are easy to make that the object of the judgment encompasses more than simply the mental states of the agent. If one were to claim that the object of the judgment does not extend beyond mental states, then (keeping in mind the discussion of "lives" and their necessary external elements in the previous chapter), it would be questionable whether the judgment is about "a life" at all. Even those philosophers who do not explicitly support a life-satisfaction view of happiness often slip into other usages to achieve their argumentative goals. It is at this point that many begin to talk about "living happily," "living a happy life," and "being happy with one's life." These phrases evince gradations in the degree to which they take one's life as the object of the happiness judgment. The closer a theorist gets to taking "a life" as

[198] Haybron, "Do We Know How Happy We Are?."
[199] von Wright, *The Varieties of Goodness*, 97.
[200] J. L. Freedman, *Happy People: What Happiness Is, Who Has It, and Why* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 115.
[201] Myers, *The Pursuit of Happiness: Who Is Happy - and Why*, 27. Of course, depending on what happiness is, it could well be the case that, as Haybron suggests, other people might know the state of our happiness better than we do ourselves.
[202] Kraut, "Two Conceptions of Happiness," 178.

the object of the judgment, the better the argument for external qualifications to an internal theory.

Richard Kraut has provided one of the most well-known defenses of the idea that a subjective theory of happiness must be qualified by extra-mental circumstances, and that, in particular, deceived happiness is not true happiness. In the end he does not reach a firm conclusion, insisting that he is "not denying that it is sometimes correct to call a person happy merely because he feels that way about this life." Because his argument is typical of this viewpoint, it is profitable to examine its strengths and weaknesses.

Kraut uses many different phrases to describe happiness: "living a happy life," "living happily," "being happy with one's life," "being happy," and simply "happiness." To some extent, he is entitled to switch between phrases like "being happy" and phrases referencing an attitude toward one's life, as his position is clearly a life-satisfaction theory of happiness. However, he never specifies the relation of these different phrases to one another and tacitly assumes their semantic identity. Herein lies one of the stumbling blocks of his argument. Just one of the difficulties with this confounding of the different meanings goes as follows: The virtually non-existent relationship between the relational use of happy (I'm happy with the quarterly report) and anything we would call 'being happy' has already been explained at length. It is deeply problematic to employ the relational use of 'happy' with reference to one's life and, without further explanation, equate this with being happy. But such phrases are needed to achieve the intuitions that Kraut seeks to call forth. Kraut's initial thought experiment runs as follows:

> Suppose a man is asked what his idea of happiness is, and he replies, "Being loved, admired, or at least respected by my friends. But I would hate to have friends who only pretend to have these attitudes towards me. If they didn't like me, I would want to know about it. Better to have no friends at all, and realize it, than to have false friends one cannot see through." Suppose that what this man hates actually comes to pass. His so-called friends orchestrate an elaborate deception, giving him every reason to believe that they love and admire him, though in fact they don't. And he is taken in by the illusion.

Kraut then asks, "Is this a happy life? Is he a happy man?", clearly assuming that the questions ask the same thing. It is at this point that he introduces the term "extreme subjectivism" to designate the view that assents to the above questions. Surprisingly,

he then begins to offer powerful arguments for the cogency of this kind of subjectivism:

> Just as unfounded fear is still fear, so unfounded happiness is still happiness. For consider what we would say if the deceived man became suspicious of his friends, and came upon an opportunity to discover what they really think of him. Would we say that he is finding out whether he is really happy? Wouldn't it be more natural to say that he is finding out whether his happiness has been based on an illusion?[203]

Although this is, by all appearances, a strong argument, Kraut maintains that this analysis is too simple. His objection runs as follows: "When a person is asked what his idea of happiness is, he quite naturally answers by describing the kind of life he would like to lead."[204] Now, "What is your idea of happiness?" is hardly a common question; "What is happiness for you?" might be a more innocuous stand-in for Kraut's purposes.

Even granting Kraut his "idea of happiness" question, the conclusion that he draws from it is exaggerated and results in a particularly weak form of life-satisfaction theory. I have argued above that 'happiness' is a word that evokes a very wide range of intuitions (e.g., up to and including attaining nirvana) far wider than the simple question "Are you happy?" or "Is she happy?" It is this comparatively simple use in which we have a great practical interest, and which I have argued should form the beginning of our investigations.

Kraut concludes that "Evidently, when we ask someone, 'What will make you happy? What is your idea of happiness?', we are not requesting that he specify the conditions under which he will be in a certain psychological state." Instead, according to Kraut, we respond with the standards we impose on our lives and the goals we are pursuing.[205] Kraut is correct in asserting that we do sometimes respond with goals and standards to these questions, however, as mentioned in the life satisfaction section above, if these goals were to be achieved and these standards were to be met with no accompanying affective payoff, then we would not claim to be happy.

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[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Ibid.

This cognitive-affective divergence is the Achilles' heel of all life-satisfaction theories of happiness. Considering this, perhaps our responses to Kraut's "idea of happiness question" are more like predictions than standards. One way in which Kraut makes this sound implausible is in his description of what our answers are predictions of. When he says that they are predictions of the conditions under which we will be in a certain psychological state, he makes it sound like it is one occurrent state, as in 'feeling happy,' or the occurrent use of 'being happy.' However, happiness in its longer-term sense is much more than this. At the very least it is a series of psychological states linked by some overarching organizational structure. A prediction of the conditions necessary to find oneself in a "state" like this does not sound implausible at all. This is especially clear in alternative phrasings of questions about happiness. For example, in the case of the question, "What do you think will make you happy?", it is not clear why this question should be calling for standards (in the sense that Kraut uses the term, that is to say, standards for external goods or events) instead of predictions of what will put us in a specific long-term psychological state.

How can we be sure that predictions and not standards for happiness result even from Kraut's question? One way would be to elaborate on the cognitive-affective divergence by considering a case in which an agent is in a state that we would refer to as prototypical unhappiness and *no* deception is involved. Say we ask a college graduate embarking on a career in investment banking what his 'idea of happiness' is. He responds with a paean to "success" and elaborates on the goods he expects to acquire as a result of that success. When we visit him again two decades later, he has acquired all the goods he mentioned in his answer, but is nonetheless deeply depressed. His possessions give him no pleasure, and he is of the opinion that he has wasted the best years of his life with 16+ hour workdays. His marriage has collapsed and his 'work friends' turned out to be no more than that. As a result of all this, he is contemplating suicide. In short, we would describe him as unquestionably unhappy.

Throughout his career, his achievement of the goods he claimed composed his "idea of happiness" did at no point bring with it the positive affective payoff that

he expected and at no time did he call himself happy. At our reunion, we ask him again what his idea of happiness is. He replies that he still thinks that happiness is all of those things that he has achieved, and he just does not understand what went wrong or why he feels the way he does. Now, if we agree with Kraut and view people's answers to happiness inquiries as standards instead of predictions, we would be in the absurd situation of having to call him happy even though he himself believes otherwise and even in the face of his thoughts of suicide. Imagine another variation on his answer to our second inquiry about his idea of happiness. This time he says, "Well, I thought X, Y, and Z were happiness, but I was wrong. I'm depressed as hell now and, right now, I have no idea what happiness is." How would we, according to Kraut's theory, judge the happiness of someone who has no "idea of happiness" for his life in terms of goals, standards, etc.? Would it be neutral despite his serious contemplation of suicide? The point is that an individual's idea of happiness in the sense that Kraut is talking about it is not determinative of his or her happiness; positive and negative affect is. Emotional state is determinative of happiness independent of standards for external goods or situations reached or missed. Our banker friend is unhappy when depressed and suicidal independent of his "ideas" of happiness, and even when he has none at all. The time interval can be shortened as one pleases – at no point in time do goals achieved or standards met result in self- or other-described happiness unless a positive affective payoff exists.

A modification of an example that Kraut uses in a different context is also enlightening in this regard: someone whose family is living abroad in a remote region of a war-torn country is deceptively informed that they have been killed. After another year passes she finds out the truth, namely that they are all alive and well. Would we say that during that year she really was not unhappy, because her unhappiness was based on a deception? Hardly.

The purported dependency of happiness on extra-mental states stands and falls with the cogency of life-satisfaction theories of happiness. Because life-satisfaction theories of happiness are inaccurate, appeals to "a happy life" or the mutant "being happy with one's life" are not informative regarding the phenomenon that we commonly view as happiness.

Evaluative Happiness - Happiness and Morality

Many philosophers have argued (most very briefly and on the periphery of the grounding of a moral theory) that immoral people cannot be happy, or that we cannot ascribe happiness to them. These objections can be divided into three basic categories: 1) intuitions about human psychological makeup, 2) objections based on a well-being (as opposed to a psychological) understanding of happiness, and 3) general intuitions based on our use of words.

The first of these is an empirical thesis. The basic idea of theorists arguing along these lines is that committing sufficiently evil acts either results in a disordered psyche, with feelings of guilt, anger, etc., that are incompatible with a kind of tranquility or deepness of positive feeling necessary for happiness; or that such acts *result* only from a disordered psyche, one filled with too many elements that contradict a positive judgment of a person's happiness. The psychological makeup thesis might well be true under certain conditions. Given the way the human mind works, it may be the case that certain evil acts are not compatible with a certain amount of stable positive affect. This certainly seems to be the case with many criminals with whom we are acquainted. There is a catch, however, with the first interpretation: The acts in question must be evil or very wrong not from an objective point of view, or from the point of view of third parties, but from the agent's own point of view.

If having a bad conscience and experiencing guilt play a large role in this first interpretation, then clearly the agent must perceive herself to be have committed an evil act in order for psychological disorder to follow. This, unfortunately, fails to include a great many people who we normally take to have committed evil acts. Acts that are aggressive and result in pain and even death can be a source of great pride when the perpetrator of such acts believes that they were necessary to achieve some very fine and good end, such as justice, the achievement of an ideal state, the salvation of a community, town, city, state, nation through purification or ridding itself from dangerous or pestilential elements, etc. Heroes of past cultures include quite a few who initiated or carried out wars of conquest, including the rape and

pillage of civilizations and cultures considered to be 'other.' The necessity of the perception of oneself as being a committer of wrongdoing places serious restrictions on the extension of those individuals who cannot be called happy as a result of their objectionable acts. Additionally, if the acts are not perceived to be evil, then perhaps they don't have to result from a disordered psyche either.

Even if the perpetrator of evil acts is aware that the acts are wrong and sees them as wrong it seems that this knowledge must have the appropriate relationship to her emotional life to secure the kind of effect necessary for the withholding of a judgment of happiness. Think about the example of a corporate executive who knows very well that one branch of his company that he directs does something very bad. Maybe he likes this fact, maybe he delights in finding a legal loophole, tricking the authorities, beating out his competitors. Perhaps he likes the image of himself as a ruthless corporate executive. Examples are easy to construct in which the perpetrator bears a closer and more personal relationship to the wrongdoing, and perhaps enjoys his self-actualization, enjoys feeling his power, and enjoys being the sort of person who flouts morality, convention, etc. Although all of this seems highly plausible, no one has ever doubted that happiness comes in degrees, and it might be the case that unique psychological kinds of deep and reliable positive feeling exist that come only from certain virtuous or deep compassion for one's fellow beings, as Tibetan Buddhism, for example, strongly emphasizes. In the end, these are questions that only empirical studies can answer.

The second appeal to morality in happiness involves descriptions of happiness that are based on a conception of happiness as well-being. Claims for morality as a condition for or as a part of happiness based on a conception of happiness as well-being as opposed to a psychological understanding of happiness are trivially true (assuming that well-being does include elements of other-concern, morality, or virtuous living), but do not jive with our very heavily psychological use of 'being happy' as explicated up until this point.

The third and strongest approach to this question claims that evil people cannot be happy based on general intuitions about our use of 'happiness' or 'being

happy.' The statements of J. J. C. Smart and R. M. Hare are cases in point. Smart claims:

> The notion of happiness ties up with that of contentment: to be fairly happy at least involves being fairly contented, though it involves something more as well…to call a person "happy" is to say more than that he is contented for most of the time, or even that he frequently enjoys himself and is rarely discontented or in pain. It is, I think, in part to express a favorable attitude to the idea of such a form of contentment and enjoyment.[206]

Hare's contribution is similar in tone:

> To be brief, we may say that, when somebody calls somebody else happy, there is a rather complicated process of appraisal going on; for the appraisals of both of them are involved, but in a different way…before we call a man happy we find it necessary to be sure, not only that *his* desires are satisfied, but also that the complete set of his desires is one which we are not very much averse to having ourselves.[207]

These two statements are interesting because, although they may appear to, they do not actually deliver an argument for exclusion of evil deeds or evil people from the extension of people who are happy. It appears that they do, but only if the observer that Hare and Smart are talking about is actually a good person him- or herself. Even if they are correct in maintaining that our use of 'happy' does have this evaluative touch, the evaluative touch itself is subjective in being dependant on the perspective of the person doing the judging. A racist might despise many desires of the non-racist and consequently withhold a judgment of happiness.[208]

Irwin Goldstein argues at length that in addition to the psychological use of happiness we have been dealing with here (which he calls a hedonic view of happiness), there is another one that is evaluative, prescriptive, and even moral. However, even Goldstein begins his analysis with a discussion of what 'real' or 'true' happiness is.[209] Among the six different things Goldstein claims we can mean when we talk about 'true' or 'real' happiness is a paradigmatic example of happiness. A sub-category of paradigmatic 'true' happiness is moral happiness. It may also be

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[206] J. J. C. Smart, *An Outline of a System of Utilitarian Ethics* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1961), 13f.
[207] R. M. Hare, *Freedom and Reason* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 126-8.
[208] For a lengthier evaluation of these two quotations see Cowan, "Why Not Happiness?," 143.
[209] I. Goldstein, "Happiness: The Role of Non-Hedonistic Criteria in Its Evaluation," *International Philosophical Quarterly* (1973): 523.

the case as Goldman claims, that this meaning also occasionally plays a role even when 'true' is not used. However, as discussed earlier, I consider this usage to be as peripheral as the usage that denies that someone who won a tennis match is the "true winner" of the match. And this is a move that we can (or at least often do) make with every term that has a relatively clear primary and narrow meaning and faces a potentially boundless set of conditions of approval that we might wish for someone who is in this social role or to whom a socially desired good (like happiness) is attributed. This applies to a leader (he's not a true leader; a true leader asks the opinions of those under him before he acts), a policeman (he's not a real cop, a real cop is willing to bend the rules and cut corners to get things done), a winner, and on and on. The same can be said of attributions of desirable characteristics such as success (he's not successful, to be truly successful one must be admired by one's subordinates) and of course "being happy." Our tendency to hesitate to ascribe positive evaluations to individuals that we do not like or approve of in some way does not necessarily have much to do with the narrow meaning of the specific positive evaluation that is in question. The reason for our hesitation to do this is most likely a form of social control, and might also include envy, or a pre-form of Schadenfreude.

Whatever our motivation is, the result is that very often negative evaluations that have little to do with the core meaning of the positive evaluation that is to be ascribed cause us to hesitate to ascribe the rightly deserved positive evaluation. One move that we make to enable this is to resort to "truly" or "real" in front of the positive evaluation and to deny that the agent meets this new, higher bar. I will refrain from repeating all of the ways mentioned in Chapter Three in which one could be said not to be truly happy. Suffice it to say that my contention is that for happiness, there is a narrow, non-evaluative meaning that is indeed the most common sense of 'being happy.' Many of the hedonistic and life-satisfaction theories of happiness agree with this statement, as do all of the theories that I will elaborate on in the next three chapters. Although I am skeptical of the claims of proponents of externality and morality in psychological happiness, I in no way regard my arguments here as a refutation of their claims. In light of the history of things called

happiness, the possibility that residue exists in the meaning of the term that leans toward fortunate, lucky, and even moral is one to which we should be open if convincing arguments for it are brought forward.

Conclusion

Even the phrase chosen for analysis in this essay has at least two meanings. Depending on the context 'being happy' can be used either in its occurrent sense, as an equivalent to 'feeling happy,' or in its long-term sense. The meaning of the long-term sense is the object of this essay and the explanatory target of the following two major categories of theories of happiness.

Hedonistic theories of happiness are correct in claiming that happiness is divorced from external events, and that it has to do with the way that we feel. But pleasure encompasses far too much to be the "substance" of happiness. Many pleasures, even very intense ones, are irrelevant for happiness, and the hedonistic "balance" formulas for determining happiness suffer from the threshold problem. Instead, positive and negative affect are the relevant determinants of happiness.

Life-satisfaction theories emphasize the judgmental aspect of theories of happiness, but the proper object of the judgment of happiness is not "our lives." Happiness does not track objective changes in our lives or our attitudes toward them. Instead, it tracks the relative presence of positive affect and relative absence of negative affect. Cases of cognitive-affective divergence make this clear. Thus, life-satisfaction and happiness are different concepts.

Two qualifications made on theories of our contemporary conception of happiness are based on exaggerated concerns. Richard Kraut argues for the introduction of external qualifications because he claims that happiness involves the meeting of standards for one's life. However, these "standards" are best understood as predictions of the relative presence of positive affect and the relative absence of negative affect. One indication that this is the case: people do not claim to be happy when the meeting of the "standards" in question is accompanied by strong negative affect. Most arguments for the introduction of external qualifications on theories of happiness are based on life-satisfaction theories of happiness, and since life-

satisfaction theories of happiness are deficient, these arguments fail as well. Several authors, including Hare and Smart argue for a different qualification by saying that happiness is an evaluative and not a purely descriptive phenomenon. I argue that the hesitance to ascribe happiness to people who violate social norms has little to do with the core meaning of happiness, but instead has to do with a general practice of social control through which we refuse to ascribe many terms that are generally viewed positively to individuals who do not meet our expectations. These arguments are not meant to end the debate, but instead to point out problems with existing argumentation for these two qualifications on happiness.

Chapter 6: Emotional-State Theory

A more attractive approach to happiness than that which hedonistic or life-satisfaction theories offer is found in Daniel Haybron's emotional-state theory.[210] Problematic talk of satisfaction of desires or standards for one's life is eliminated, and pleasure is replaced by a more plausible constituting factor of happiness, namely, positive affect. This move away from hedonistic theories marks the most important contribution of Haybron's emotional-state theory, so it is worthwhile, first of all, to get clear on what positive affect is not. Haybron emphasizes that when we talk of happiness, there is a temptation to think about positive affect in very simple terms. We can call this, as Julia Annas does, "smiley-face" happiness. For the felt part of an emotion to be classified as positive affect, it certainly does not have to be expressed in excessive, canting smiles that many people find off-putting, if not downright revolting; instead, feelings of deep engagement, tranquility, meaning, and love are paradigm examples. Indeed, what upsets many people about smiley-faced happiness is its seeming artificiality, and the effort that goes into maintaining it. In other words,

[210] Haybron's elaborations of his emotional-state theory can be found in several texts. For the purposes of this chapter, I have chosen to concentrate on his most recent account of it in his manuscript in press: Haybron, *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*. However, he has also defended the theory in: D. M. Haybron, "On Being Happy or Unhappy," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 71, no. 2 (2005). Additionally his Ph.D. dissertation is rife with material not found in other published works: Haybron, "Happiness and Ethical Inquiry: An Essay in the Psychology of Well-Being."

it seems to be forced, and it remains an open question whether forced positive affect is positive affect at all. Take David Myer's borrowed description of Martha, a forty-three-year-old wife of a physician who discovers that her husband had been having affairs. She remembered "smiling and clutching my charge card on the way to the mall as I cheered myself by thinking he was just 'working late' today."[211] This kind of forced affect does not seem like a good candidate for something that is happiness-constitutive and Haybron's explanation of the importance of the centrality of affect (outlined below) provides an explanation for this.

In short, the widely varying felt parts of emotions that are categorized under the rubric of positive affect need not be accompanied by smiling, and when a superficial feeling is accompanied by smiling, it need not be positive affect. Haybron, in fact, makes the point that "feeling happy" is just one of the many happiness-constituting states collected under the rubric of positive affect. Many of the states that we would plausibly take to be happiness-constituting are characterized more accurately by terms and descriptions such as tranquility, feeling fulfilled, and a feeling of meaning, than by "giddy exhilaration."[212]

In his argument for positive affect's central role in happiness, Haybron claims that the establishment of positive affect as that state which is happiness-constituting is more important than the question of whether or not one is actually happy:

> My arguments will focus not on what it is to *achieve* happiness, but on the more fundamental question of what makes a state *happiness-constituting*: in virtue of what a state makes a constitutive difference in how happy or unhappy we are. This is the crucial issue: for we want to be as happy as we can be, consistently with the other things that matter. The further question of whether we will actually be happy, period, is less pressing.[213]

Although Haybron believes positive affect to be happiness-constituting, he does not believe that happiness *is* an emotion or mood. Instead happiness is "a *condition* consisting in (at least) the aggregate of a person's emotions and moods."[214] While the term 'condition' captures the intermittency and dispositionality that Haybron is aiming for, he refers to his theory as an "emotional-state" theory for the most part, as

[211] Myers, *The Pursuit of Happiness: Who Is Happy - and Why*, 26.
[212] Haybron, *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*, Ch. 5, p. 5.
[213] Ibid., Ch. 5, p. 3.
[214] Ibid., Ch. 5, p. 5.

he believes that "emotional condition" has negative connotations and is frequently used to refer to emotional dysfunction of some sort or another, such as depression. Nonetheless, "emotional condition" is a helpful term to keep in mind when examining Haybron's theory, as emotional state can give the impression of referring to one occurrent and static cut-out of one's emotional life. Furthermore, Haybron often does compare the emotional condition that is depression and the emotional condition that is happiness, especially when explaining the dispositional nature of happiness. Thinking of happiness as the positive counterpart to depression is perhaps the easiest way to get a handle on what Haybron intends the emotional-state theory to be.

Haybron's view is marked by three important differences between Haybron's emotional-state theory and hedonistic theories of happiness. The first is the rejection of pleasure as the category of states that constitute happiness and pleasure's replacement with positive affect. Secondly, emotional-state theory, through its move to positive affect, rejects superficial pleasures that do not move one or have an impact on one's central affective state (a term that will be explained in a moment). Thirdly, the determination of one's emotional condition does not simply include the sum of emotions that have occurred, but also their dispositional and unconscious aspects. In the following, we will see how these differences play out.

Haybron begins the description of his theory by drawing a parallel between it and life-satisfaction theories. Whereas life-satisfaction theories ask the individual to judge that her life is going well for her—thus an endorsement of the intellect—the emotional-state theory thinks of the happy individual as "responding favorably, in emotional terms, to her life—responding emotionally to her life as if things are generally going well for her."[215] In parallel to life-satisfaction theory's endorsement of the intellect, Haybron claims that happiness involves the endorsement of the "emotional aspect of the self."[216] He calls this *psychic affirmation*.[217]

Haybron divides this sort of affirmation into three categories: 1) *attunement*, which describes a general feeling of being "at home" in one's life, feeling safe,

[215] Ibid., Ch. 5, p. 7.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Ibid.

secure, and able to let one's defenses down, 2) *engagement*, which describes an affirmation of one's activities, projects, and goals. Engagement answers the question if they are worth investing in, or if it would be better to disengage from them, 3) *endorsement*, which describes a relationship to life that is affirming, a view that one's life is "positively good" and contains things that are to be sought again in the future.[218]

The typical dimensions of folk psychological emotions that belong to attunement are peace of mind on the positive end as opposed to anxiety on the negative end, confidence as opposed to insecurity, and 'uncompression' as opposed to compression.[219] Engagement encompasses the dimensions of exuberance or vitality as opposed to listlessness, and flow as opposed to boredom or ennui. To endorsement belong the dimensions of joy as opposed to sadness, and cheerfulness as opposed to irritability. Haybron admits that this schema is somewhat oversimplified; its purpose is to give us a feeling for what he means when he says that the emotions that belong to positive affect are forms of psychic affirmation.[220]

Haybron moves from this description of the various kinds of positive affect to a discussion about why he considers moods and emotions to be happiness-constituting while other felt phenomena, such as some pleasures, are not. The difference lies in what he calls the centrality of the given affect. Haybron claims that all affect can be positioned on a dimension of central vs. peripheral. Amusements are peripheral and may have a very slight effect on our happiness, if any. Grief about the death of a loved one is central and will certainly have a great and lasting effect on our emotional condition.[221]

Haybon rightly maintains that this distinction is made in folk psychology, even though there is no common term for it. Psychological deepness might come close; we often talk of a deep feeling of sadness or a profound sadness. In addition, the difference does not seem to be one of intensity. Haybron employs the example of orgasm to illustrate this point. An experience of orgasm could be very intense, yet

[218] Ibid.
[219] Compression is a term used by Haybron to indicate a particular sort of negative affect (the details of which are not relevant to this essay) and uncompression is simply its opposite.
[220] Haybron, *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*, Ch. 5, p. 7.
[221] Ibid., Ch. 6, p. 4.

fail to "move us." In explaining the central vs. peripheral distinction, Haybron again emphasizes the inadequacy of pleasure as a constituting factor for happiness as well as the inadequacy of hedonic theories as theories of happiness in general; a low intensity cheerful mood, or even tranquility contributes more to our happiness than a high intensity, but peripheral experience like orgasm.[222]

Central affective states have several characteristics: 1) they are productive, that is to say, they generate other affective states, cognitions, and physiological changes 2) they are persistent – after occurring they do not disappear immediately 3) they are pervasive, in other words, they permeate and set the "tone" of consciousness 4) they are profound – there is a psychological depth to them that physical pains or pleasures lack. Haybron claims, additionally, that all central affective states are either moods, mood-constituting emotions, or a combination of the two.[223]

According to Haybron, happiness involves central affective states, and, additionally, mood propensities. This latter entity, as a reflection of point 1) above, is a tendency for certain moods or emotional states to be produced. An individual is happy not just by virtue of the number of experiences of positive affect that she has, but by virtue of her tendency to respond to certain things in a positive way. For example, someone who is happy responds to neutral or positive events in a different way than someone who is unhappy, and she recovers her tranquility or whatever state usually constitutes her happiness more quickly than someone who isn't as happy as she is. In other words, we can see her to be a happy individual even through her experience of negative affect. Haybron also claims that mood propensities involve more than a person's temperament – while this, as Haybron sees it, is fixed, happiness and unhappiness are states that can change. However, like temperament, they also have a dispositional character.

In my opinion, the divisions that Haybon draws between central affective states and other affective states are somewhat vague, if they, in fact, exist at all. I would claim that *all* affective states meet the first three qualifications to varying degrees. Indeed, Haybron, in his elaboration of the persistency requirement of central affective states, says, "when they occur, they generally last a while. Perhaps only a

[222] Ibid.
[223] Ibid.

minute or so, usually longer."[224] This criterion (one-minute length) for the characteristic of persistence is an extremely inclusive criterion for central affective states, and illustrates the vagueness of the concept.

While Haybron's discussion of mood states, mood propensities, etc., is interesting in its own right, I believe that the differences between the various kinds of affect that Haybron attempts to point out are not as relevant to happiness as he believes them to be. In past formulations of his emotional-state theory, when it came time for him to state explicitly what happiness is, he wrote, "To be happy is for one's emotional condition to exhibit a sufficiently favorable balance of positive versus negative." This is vague. The next definition is a slight improvement, "one is happy if, and only if, one's emotional state is predominantly positive and one is relatively free of seriously negative affect." Haybron himself recognizes the vagueness of these determinations and admits that the problem of a happiness cut-off point is "surprisingly difficult." His vagueness on this point makes it clear that Haybron's theory is vulnerable to the threshold problem mentioned above in the treatment of the hedonistic theories.

The threshold problem of happiness involves the difficulty of determining the "beginning" of happiness when a theorist has determined something that happiness is about, or constituted by. For ease of discussion, let's call this its "substance." For the hedonistic theories, the substance of happiness is pleasure, for Haybron's theory it is positive affect, and as we shall see shortly, for Daniel Kahneman's theory of objective happiness (1999) it is utility. In each case the following question arises: How much of the substance must one have to be happy. These theories face the following conundrum in their determination of an answer to this question, in other words, in identifying a necessary level of the substance: If proponents of the theory say that 70% (for simplicity's sake, imagine that the amount of the substance is measured by the amount of time in which a person 'experiences' the substance) of positive affect is necessary for happiness while a person may have no more than 30% negative affect, what do they do with all of the people who have 65% positive and 35% negative affect and claim to be happy? Or 55% and 45%? In answer to this, they

[224] Ibid.

could lower the standard and simply say that a person is happy when they have more than 50% positive affect.

But might there still not be people with less than 50% positive affect who claim to be happy, and what of the people with *more* than 50% positive affect who claim *not* to be happy? Are people's convictions about their own happiness irrelevant when we talk about *their own* happiness? Are they always wrong when their judgment diverges from the objective standard? Most importantly, what possible justification do we have for setting a specific, objective level of the substance necessary for happiness? I believe that the threshold problem dooms to failure all theories of happiness which approach the question in this way. It is not possible to set a universal standard for the amount of the substance necessary for people to be happy, neither happy nor unhappy, or unhappy. This is not the way that we use the word, 'happy,' and does not fit to the phenomenon that we describe with it.

The threshold problem is that on which many theories of happiness founder and, consequently, that about which many theories say virtually nothing at all. It comes as no surprise in light of the rest of his excellent contributions to the literature, that in the most recent formulation of his theory, Haybron shows his awareness of this problem and deals with it extensively while admitting that he has not provided a final resolution. He begins by emphasizing the problems with the views he tacitly accepted in earlier versions. For one, a "predominance" view does not allow for the wide number of cases of people who would not say that they are either happy or unhappy, but instead would position themselves somewhere in between. This is a problem for most any threshold, simply conceived. Secondly, a simple 50% threshold evinces a lack of sensitivity to our idea that crossing this threshold is to cross an important threshold.

There is one crucial difference, however, between Haybron's and my framing of the problem. In his discussion of borderline cases of happiness or unhappiness, Haybron never mentions the perspective of the person making the judgment. He introduces examples like that of Sam, who experiences positive affect around 55% of the time and negative affect about 38% of the time, with the positive and negative affect being of equal strength. Haybron then says, "It is not the least obvious that

Sam should be counted happy, particularly if we reflect on what it would be like to have that much negative affect."[225] Interestingly, in this example, Sam's opinion about his own happiness is irrelevant – it is simply not mentioned.

Using the example of Sam, Haybron conducted a informal survey of six sections of an introductory ethics course with the results that 38% called Sam moderately happy, 34% said that he was neither happy nor unhappy, and 24% called him moderately or very unhappy. Haybron uses this as evidence that the 50% rule is inappropriate, but does not seem to doubt the enterprise of finding some objective limit. To my mind, far more interesting is the diversity of the responses – when 38% call Sam moderately happy, 34% believe that he is neither happy nor unhappy, and 24% call him unhappy. Might it not be the case that this very subjectivity of the individual standards applied plays a significant role in our understanding of happiness as a whole? This is the case that will be made in the explication of the dynamic affective standard model of happiness.

Haybron clearly recognizes the difficulty involved in obtaining an objective threshold of happiness, but does not realize the source of the difficulty – that part of our contemporary conception of happiness is the standard of the individual as to how much positive affect is necessary for happiness. Instead, he makes reference to a paper by Fredrickson and Losada in which they argue that healthy functioning or "flourishing" requires at least a 2.9:1 ratio of positive to negative affect, while lower ratios are a sign of "languishing."[226]

Although Haybron regards such proportions as interesting, he does not ultimately think that this is the way in which we go about determining someone's happiness. Instead, we get a general sense of someone's emotional condition. If she has cheery feelings throughout the day, but at night when she is undistracted, cries regularly, then it is doubtful that we would call her happy. If some measure of tranquility is not there, then happiness is not there either, no matter what kind of proportion one finds. In the end Haybron concludes that "perhaps *no* fixed threshold, in terms of the proportion of positive and negative affect…can yield intuitively

[225] Ibid., Ch. 6, p. 18.
[226] B. L. Fredrickson and M. F. Losada, "Positive Affect and the Complex Dynamics of Human Flourishing," *American Psychologist* 60, no. 7 (2005): 678.

plausible results."[227] Haybron, however, does not claim this for the reasons that the DAS does so; instead, he claims this because of his view of happiness as an emotional condition, somewhat akin to depression. Just as depression is more than simply the number of experiences of negative affect that one has, happiness is more than the number of positive affects that one has.

According to Haybron happiness is: "to respond emotionally to one's life as if conditions are broadly favorable, with any problems being minor. In general, things are good, with no serious concern required; one's 'affective welfarometer' so to speak, is in the green zone. To be unhappy is to respond as if one's problems are major, threatening even the minimal achievement of one's needs or goals (as the psyche 'sees' them)."[228] This description does not seem to bring us any sort of solution to the threshold problem. Haybron makes another, similar suggestion: "…to be happy, one's emotional condition should be broadly favorable—across the three dimensions of attunement, engagement, and endorsement—with negative emotional states comprising a relatively minor part of the picture. This is the state of 'psychic affirmation.'"[229] A state of "psychic rejection" on Haybron's view is represented by the emotional state of the unhappy person: "…an unhappy person's emotional condition will exhibit negative affect to a major extent, or will fail broadly to be favorable while having substantial levels of negative affect."[230] While it does not seem that we have come closer to any sort of threshold with these descriptions of happy and unhappy people, it does seem fairly clear what Haybron is getting at: a condition, similar to depression but oppositely poled, that is made up not just by instances of affect, but also dispositions to react with affect of a positive valence.

It is probably best to let him repeat it in his own words in his summing up of the "intuitive idea" of his theory: "The intuitive idea is for happiness to embody an emotional response appropriate to good conditions with only minor problems, so one might be happy despite having lots of relatively minor negative affects, since this might be compatible with one's basic emotional condition being broadly favorable." What Haybron is struggling with here in saying that we are responding "as if" things

[227] Haybron, *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*, Ch. 6, p. 21.
[228] Ibid., Ch. 6, p. 22.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Ibid.

were going well for us in the world is not simply a characterization of the happy person, but also the question of how to define positive affect. As a felt phenomenon, we can name feelings that are different examples of positive affect, but a further characterization would have to go in the way in which Haybron is pointing. Positive affect evolved as a kind of psychic affirmation of things in the world that were in some way evolutionarily advantageous. This is a functional description of positive affect in its usual role. This is not to say that positive affect cannot be called forth or maintained in other situations, but it requires great emotional skill (and presumably much practice) to subjugate positive affect to our desires for the kinds of emotion that we would like to have independent of external events.

Conclusion

I believe Haybron's theory to be greatly superior to the hedonistic and life-satisfaction theories prominent prior to his writings on the subject, and in the end I will suggest that Haybron's position does capture important insights of one sense of our use of 'being happy' that I suggest we call "objective happiness." This term is borrowed from Daniel Kahneman's title for his happiness construct, which will be examined in the following chapter. He, too, is concerned with developing some way of talking about happiness independently of the judgment of the individual in question. My justification for splitting happiness into "subjective" and "objective" happiness will be clear only after the elucidation of the dynamic affective standard theory, but suffice it to say that Haybron's theory is the best description that we have of happiness independent of the judgment of the individuals concerned.

That said, not only is Haybron's determination of happiness vague as a result of suffering from the threshold problem, but he also ignores one intuition that I will argue is fairly central to the way that we use 'being happy.' One of Haybron's conclusions illustrates this problem:

> This view of happiness also gives the lie to any notion that happiness could be largely transparent to us. While it takes little discernment to figure it out when you feel happy, it takes a lot to figure out how you are doing across the several dimensions of your emotional condition, some aspects of which do not involve conscious or even occurrent states…Those who have spent much time gaining the perspective of living outside mainstream civilization know

> well that many of us may not have a clue how happy, or unhappy, we really are.[231]

The claim that "many of us may not have a clue how happy…we really are" is a bold statement. Here Haybron runs roughshod over the strong intuition that the individual's own thoughts about the issue make some difference in the determination of her own happiness. Haybron really does treat happiness as something that is either there or not – a psychological condition that can be determined objectively, from the point of view of a third party with sufficient knowledge of the individual's emotional state. Although I agree with Haybron with regard to the states (positive affective states) that are happiness-constituting, I believe that when we say that someone is happy, we are doing something quite a bit different than what he suggests, and this is the motivation for the development of the dynamic affective standard theory explained in Chapter Eight. Although in the end I will suggest for clarity's sake that we call that which the dynamic affective standard theory describes "subjective happiness," I think it comes closer to describing our use of 'being happy' than a theory that describes a conception of happiness about which many of the agents experiencing it "may not have a clue" whether or not they are experiencing it.

[231] Ibid., Ch. 6, p. 29.

Chapter 7: Psychological Approaches to Happiness

How have psychologists approached happiness? For the most part, psychological study of happiness has been results-oriented and data-centered and, indeed, consciously so. As recently as 1998, Ed Diener argued that psychologists needed to know more "elementary facts before a large theory is created."[232] This approach to research on topics related to happiness has proven to be very valuable. The bulk of work on happiness has involved psychologists stipulating the characteristics that the construct that they would like to investigate should possess, and then attempting to understand what exactly influenced measurements of that construct to move in a positive or negative direction. Ed Diener's research on the construct subjective well-being is a good example of this. Subjective well-being is a term that he coined and uses to describe: 1) life satisfaction 2) high frequency of positive affect and 3) low frequency of negative affect.[233] This type of research has resulted in fascinating studies of the influence of personality[234], demographics[235], and

[232] E. Diener, J. J. Sapyta, and E. Suh, "Subjective Well-Being Is Essential to Well-Being," *Psychological Inquiry* 9, no. 1 (1998): 35.
[233] E.g., Diener et al., "Subjective Well-Being: Three Decades of Progress."
[234] E.g., Diener and Lucas, "Personality and Subjective Well-Being."
[235] E.g., M. Argyle, *The Psychology of Happiness*, 2nd ed. (Hove: Routledge, 2001); ———, "Causes and Correlates of Happiness," in *Well-Being: The Foundations of Hedonic Psychology*, ed. D. Kahneman, E. Diener, and N. Schwarz (New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation Russell Sage Foundation, 1999). And Myers, *The Pursuit of Happiness: Who Is Happy - and Why*.

genetics[236] (just to name a few) on these constructs. Although many of the constructs examined (i.e., life-satisfaction) are not precisely what we have in mind when we talk about 'being happy,' they, nonetheless, most likely bear a relationship to it that is strong enough for the majority of correlations to hold.

Alternatively, psychologists, realizing that 'the good life' extends beyond happiness, have begun to examine other constructs which come closer to the philosophical concepts of the ancients that have been translated into English as 'happiness.' For example, Carol Ryff criticized the one-sided psychological attention given to happiness or life-satisfaction and argued that additional aspects of psychological well-being were being neglected. Indeed, she found that positive relations with others, autonomy, purpose in life, and personal growth, although clearly subjectively valued, were not strongly related to previous assessment indexes focusing on life satisfaction or happiness.[237]

In a similar vein, Alan Waterman contrasted what we have been calling, for clarity's sake, psychological happiness with a eudaimonic conception of well-being which involves people living according to their *daimon*, which for Waterman means their "true self." This results in a state he calls "personal expressiveness" that occurs when people's "life activities" are most congruent with their deeply held values and when they are fully engaged. When this happens, people feel alive, authentic, and live as they truly are (thus personal expressiveness).[238] And Richard Ryan and Edward Deci have developed "self-determination theory" which posits three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness.[239] In sum, much work has been done in the last few years both on issues surrounding psychological happiness and on issues surrounding the good life or flourishing.

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[236] E.g., D. Lykken, *Happiness: The Nature and Nurture of Joy and Contentment* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); D. Lykken and A. Tellegen, "Happiness Is a Stochastic Phenomenon," *Psychological Science* 7, no. 3 (1996).

[237] C. D. Ryff, "Happiness Is Everything, or Is It? Explorations on the Meaning of Psychological Well-Being," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 57, no. 6 (1989).

[238] A. S. Waterman, "Two Conceptions of Happiness: Contrasts of Personal Expressiveness (Eudaimonia) and Hedonic Enjoyment," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 64, no. 4 (1993).

[239] R. M. Ryan and E. L. Deci, "Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000); ———, "On Happiness and Human Potentials: A Review of Research on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being," *Annual Review of Psychology* 52 (2001): 146f.

That said, Peter Salovey and David Pizarro recently made an observation about psychology in general that I believe to be particularly true of the field of empirical happiness studies. They remark on psychology's data-driven nature and, while expressing understanding and support for this approach, say it "…can lead to an accumulation of theory-independent research. However, in the absence of a guiding theoretical model, science progresses slowly. In spite of its empirical riches, the field's growth is stunted."[240] Because the empirical study of happiness has followed Diener's advice and has, for the most part, stayed away from theories or definitions of happiness, Salovey and Pizarro's diagnosis is especially true of this field.

As mentioned above, what psychology has done instead of developing a major theory, is to create constructs that ostensibly have something to do with happiness while simultaneously leaving the question as to of whether they *are* happiness open. One example of this is W. Wilson's early studies on "avowed happiness." In calling the construct he was measuring "avowed happiness," Wilson hedged on whether avowed happiness really is happiness.[241] However, this hedging, which continues to the present day, is beginning to have an ever-greater effect on the field as a whole, even in the view of some of the researchers active in this field. Diener himself attests to this when in a recent article he and Ulrich Schimmack state, "Although this finding may seem trivial, it is noteworthy that many studies of 'Happiness' do not include the item *happy*. The reliance on scales with questionable content validity has led to counterintuitive findings…"[242] This problem has led some psychologists to call for clarity at the theoretical level.

David T. Helm expressed an obvious truth in writing that, "We must first come to a consensus on the definition of happiness, then examine ways to measure it

[240] P. Salovey and D. A. Pizarro, "The Value of Emotional Intelligence," in *Models of Intelligence: International Perspectives* ed. R. J. Sternberg, J. Lautrey, and T. Lubart (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2003), 266.

[241] W. Wilson, "Correlates of Avowed Happiness," *Psychological Bulletin* 67, no. 4 (1967).

[242] U. Schimmack and E. Diener, "Experience Sampling Methodology in Happiness Research," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 4, no. 1 (2003): 3. Content validity refers to the degree to which the means of measuring the construct or the construct itself actually does measure what it is intended to measure, in this case, happiness.

or determine who is happy by that definition."[243] In spite of the logic of this statement, psychological research on things that might be happiness has progressed and grown over the last thirty years without a protracted discussion about what exactly happiness is. One unfortunate result of this is not just a lack of clarity about the nature or definition of happiness, but also a lack of clarity about the constructs chosen to stand-in for happiness in the interim.

The two most prominent researchers in this field, Ed Diener and Daniel Kahneman have chosen opposing strategies for dealing with this problem. Diener, in an effort to capture happiness (no matter what it turns out to be) in his construct, has made his construct of subjective well-being so encompassing that at one point Diener and his colleagues call it a field (i.e., the "field of subjective well-being") instead of a construct.[244] The connections between these constructs and happiness are often contradictory when compared from one article to the next and sometimes even within a single article. Daniel Kahneman, another prominent happiness researcher, has taken the opposite approach. Instead of creating a construct so broad that it must encompass any conceivable theory of happiness, Kahneman has introduced a very narrow concept that he calls "objective happiness." Without claiming that objective happiness really *is* happiness, he argues that research in the field of happiness studies should center on objective happiness.[245]

Not only do empirical researchers employ widely differing constructs in attempting to study happiness, but they also use a very wide variety of measures to examine disparate phenomena that are then all called happiness. The difficulty facing empirical researchers in all of this is that happiness is a folk psychological concept and, therefore, conditions exist for its use and its meaning. It is not a concept that is "up for grabs," to be defined as we see fit.[246] Thus, a call to refrain from simply stipulating a definition of 'happiness' is by no means a matter of philosophical pedantry. Instead it reflects the enormous importance that members of the linguistic

[243] D. T. Helm, "The Measurement of Happiness," *American Journal on Mental Retardation* 105, no. 5 (2000): 326.
[244] C. Kim-Prieto et al., "Integrating the Diverse Definitions of Happiness: A Time-Sequential Framework of Subjective Well-Being," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 6, no. 3 (2005): 261.
[245] Kahneman, "Objective Happiness."
[246] See Haybron, "What Do We Want from a Theory of Happiness?."

community attach to their use of the word. Not only do people often claim that they want to be happy, but they sometimes even claim that happiness is the single most important thing in their lives. The advice of scientists on this issue should be based on that thing which people actually want, and not something that eliminates memory errors or is easy to measure. In other words, their advice should be based on what happiness actually is. However, the content validity of measures of happiness will be extremely difficult to establish with certainty before we uncover what we mean when we say that someone is happy. It seems too obvious to have to state, but knowing what happiness is represents the ultimate prerequisite for determining whether a psychological measure of happiness really does measure happiness.

Ed Diener's Approach

As mentioned above, Ed Diener's approach to doing research on happiness without getting involved in a protracted discussion about the definition of happiness was to develop the construct of subjective well-being (also referred to as SWB). Because this construct was designed to encompass whatever happiness is, a lack of clarity abounds as to what this construct actually entails. This is evident at a fairly obvious level when psychologists other than Diener attempt to describe the relationship between happiness and SWB. One example of this is Ryan and Deci's discussion in their extensive review of the well-being field in 2001.[247] They explain at the outset that "SWB consists of three components: life satisfaction, the presence of positive mood, and the absence of negative mood, together often summarized as happiness".[248] Later, however, they conclude an argument about Diener & Lucas' study of positive and negative affect[249] in the following way: "Thus, because having more positive emotion and less negative emotion is SWB, the studies imply that people, in general, have fairly high SWB."[250] In this latter determination, Ryan and Deci simply leave out life-satisfaction as a component of the construct SWB. As our

[247] Ryan and Deci, "On Happiness and Human Potentials: A Review of Research on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being."
[248] Ibid.: 144.
[249] E. Diener and R. E. Lucas, "Subjective Emotional Well-Being," *Handbook of emotions* 2 (2000).
[250] Ryan and Deci, "On Happiness and Human Potentials: A Review of Research on Hedonic and Eudaimonic Well-Being," 150.

discussions of the divergence between emotional experience and satisfaction with life shows, it really does make a difference whether or not life satisfaction is included in SWB.

In addition, empirical research has shown that not only are affect and life satisfaction theoretically distinct, they are also empirically separable.[251] Diener himself says, "Despite a preponderance of negative affect, however, the caretaker [of an Alzheimer's patient] might still evaluate his overall life positively. This discrepancy between affect and cognitive judgments can occur for several reasons."[252] This looseness of the construct of SWB bears a special urgency if a researcher would like to claim that SWB is equivalent to, or just is, happiness.

The theoretical difficulties that arise when others write about Diener's work do not result from misunderstandings of the otherwise clear construct of SWB. Instead, a fundamental opaqueness exists at the level of the original research. On the one hand, Diener occasionally equates happiness strongly with the relative presence of positive and the relative absence of negative affect independent of the individual's judgment of life-satisfaction. For example, Diener and Lucas, after first emphasizing the distinctness of the three components of SWB, namely, life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect, go on to claim that the two latter elements, in the proper combination, can determine happiness independently of life satisfaction.[253] In a separate article, Diener, Sandik, and Pavot claimed that happiness *is* the frequency, and not the intensity, of positive versus negative affect, again leaving out the component of life satisfaction.[254]

More recently, however, the titles of Diener's articles indicate an abandonment of the view of happiness as a combination of positive and negative affect. Diener, Napa Scollon, and Lucas collaborated on the article, "The evolving

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[251] R. E. Lucas, E. Diener, and E. Suh, "Discriminant Validity of Well-Being Measures," *Journal of Personality and Social Psycholology* 71, no. 3 (1996); E. Diener, C. N. Scollon, and R. E. Lucas, "The Evolving Concept of Subjective Well-Being: The Multifaceted Nature of Happiness," *Advances in Cell Aging and Gerontology* 15 (2003): 205.

[252] Diener, Scollon, and Lucas, "The Evolving Concept of Subjective Well-Being: The Multifaceted Nature of Happiness," 205.

[253] Diener and Lucas, "Personality and Subjective Well-Being," 213.

[254] E. Diener, E. Sandvik, and W. Pavot, "Happiness Is the Frequency, Not the Intensity, of Positive Versus Negative Affect," in *Subjective Well-Being: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, ed. F. Strack, M. Argyle, and N. Schwarz (Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press, 1991).

concept of subjective well-being: the multifaceted nature of happiness."[255] Although sometimes hedging, it is not only in the title of the article that they use SWB and happiness interchangeably. They make the following claim:

> Formerly researchers were searching for the core of SWB, but it is clear that there are multiple components that combine in complex ways, and that no single one of them reflects "true happiness." Instead SWB must be studied as a multi-faceted phenomenon. People combine the basic building blocks of SWB in different ways.[256]

They are right about happiness in both a positive, helpful way and a way that is less helpful. On the one hand, it may, in the end, be helpful to separate two different meanings of 'happiness' and name them for the purposes of theoretical discussion. On the other hand Diener and his colleagues needlessly increase the confusion surrounding happiness by starting their investigation with a construct (SWB) that has no clear definitional boundaries, then adding multiple disparate subjectively valued phenomena to it (because they are so unsure about what to call happiness), only to declare that no one aspect of happiness (by which they mean SWB) is true happiness.

This problem arises because Diener and his colleagues insist on lumping happiness (having to do with positive and negative affect) and life satisfaction (which certainly very often uses happiness as a criterion, but does not always track happiness) together in one construct. Essentially without argument, Diener and his colleagues have given up on the project of finding a definite meaning for 'happiness.' This is an excellent example of attempts by some psychologists to short-circuit the process of philosophical analysis, and simultaneously makes clear the need for philosophical examination of these areas. Psychologists avoid philosophical analysis, not because they believe it to be lacking in value, but because, for the most part, they do not possess the tools to engage in it.

This approach to research results in constructs like SWB which appear to have no theoretical core, and thus offer no possibility for delimiting the phenomena that compose them. Diener and Eid offer a description of SWB:

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[255] Diener, Scollon, and Lucas, "The Evolving Concept of Subjective Well-Being: The Multifaceted Nature of Happiness."
[256] Ibid.: 190.

> SWB refers to people's multidimensional evaluations of their lives, including cognitive judgments of life satisfaction as well as affective evaluations of moods and emotions…Furthermore, SWB can be conceptualized as a momentary state such as the current mood or feelings of an individual, as well as an enduring trait such as the average mood level or the frequency of positive and negative affect in a specific period of time, e.g., several weeks or months.[257]

Since emotions may not always be and moods certainly are sometimes not evaluations of one's life, it is questionable what holds this concept together, other than being a collection of things that we ostensibly (and subjectively) value. In an earlier article, Diener says:

> …subjective well-being (SWB)…in colloquial terms is sometimes labeled "happiness." SWB refers to people's evaluations of their lives—evaluations that are both affective and cognitive. People experience abundant SWB when they feel many pleasant and few unpleasant emotions, when they are engaged in interesting activities, when they experience many pleasures and few pains, and when they are satisfied with their lives. There are additional features of a valuable life and of mental health, but the field of SWB focuses on people's own evaluations of their lives.[258]

It is clear that individual emotions, for example, John being mad at Tom for stealing his lunchbox, are hardly evaluations of people's *lives*. Granted, most if not all emotions involve instant evaluations of situations, events, or objects in the world, but each of these implicit evaluations of something in the world can hardly be seen as an evaluation of one's life. And this is not simply the case on the side of "emotional evaluations." Diener and his colleagues also include the study of "domain satisfactions" (i.e., satisfaction with family life, with work, with one's love life, etc.) in SWB. Now it is clear that domain satisfactions are also no longer evaluations of a life in the strict sense of the word; they are evaluations of specific aspects of our lives, some of which might be relatively unimportant for the person doing the evaluating. And it is unclear, once subjective judgments go beyond the specific target of "my life," what line can be drawn to exclude from SWB ever more specific judgments of satisfaction with situations and objects. Therefore, it certainly does

[257] M. Eid and E. Diener, "Global Judgments of Subjective Well-Being: Situational Variability and Long-Term Stability," *Social Indicators Research* 65, no. 3 (2004): 245f.
[258] E. Diener, "Subjective Well-Being: The Science of Happiness and a Proposal for a National Index," *American Psychologist* 55, no. 1 (2000): 34.

seem to be the case that there is no clear delimitation for things that make up subjective well-being.

Kim Prieto, Diener, and their colleagues' article, "Integrating the diverse definitions of happiness: a time-sequential framework of subjective well-being," (again using the terms SWB and happiness interchangeably) attempts to place SWB on a sounder theoretical footing.[259] In their abstract, however, they, perhaps unintentionally, pay homage to the expanse and lack of coherence of what is ordinarily termed the construct of subjective well-being by instead designating it as a *field* containing certain constructs. They state: "The field of subjective well-being (SWB) is primarily concerned with people's evaluation of their lives; however, it includes a wide range of concepts, from momentary moods to global life satisfaction judgments. We propose a framework that integrates these diverse constructs."[260] In this article in particular it is evident how diverse the range of phenomena is that Diener and his colleagues attempt to cover with the umbrella of subjective well-being, something which may have motivated their talk of it as a field. Bizarrely, in light of the title of the article, Kim Prieto, Diener and colleagues begin the article talking about SWB as encompassing "a wide range of components, such as *happiness*, life satisfaction, hedonic balance, fulfillment, and stress" [italics mine].[261] Obviously if SWB is happiness, as is suggested in the title and in many other of Diener's publications, then happiness cannot also be a component of SWB. At the most basic level one can protest here that happiness cannot be a component of happiness.

Continuing, the authors outline a sequential framework for the study of subjective well-being that involves four stages or levels: 1) events and circumstances, 2) emotional reactions, 3) recall of emotions, and 4) global judgments. They see things that can be called happiness or SWB at each of the latter three levels, none of which they believe is "true SWB" (by which they presumably also mean "true happiness"). Thus, Diener believes that happiness is found at any and all of the last three levels and offers a framework so loose that it could perhaps be found multiple

[259] Kim-Prieto et al., "Integrating the Diverse Definitions of Happiness: A Time-Sequential Framework of Subjective Well-Being."
[260] Ibid.: 261.
[261] Ibid.

times at each level. For example, hedonic theories of happiness, Haybron's emotional-state theory, and Kahneman's objective happiness are all to be found at stage two of Kim Prieto and Diener's SWB continuum.

Although he does not mention hedonic or emotional-state theory explicitly, Diener does place Daniel Kahneman's "objective happiness" at stage two with all other approaches that view "SWB as an aggregation of multiple emotional reactions over time."[262] Kahneman's construct is discussed in detail below, but suffice it to say that it involves random sampling of occurrent emotions using, for example, the experience sampling method (ESM). This is often done with a Palm computer or with a beeper that notifies the person at regular intervals that it is time to report their current emotional state. This information is then summed to determine the amount of time spent in positive and negative emotional states (as well as the intensity of those states).

At stage number three, Diener sees efforts such as those of Bradburn[263] and others that involve asking respondents about their emotions over a certain period of time: "Instead of inquiring about how happy or satisfied a person is in general, researchers…ask respondents to recall whether they experienced a number of relevant feelings, such as "depressed," "joyful," or "on top of the world" during a certain period of time."[264] At stage number four, Diener sees SWB as "personal global judgments of satisfaction and quality of life. Research based on this approach often involves large surveys, in which respondents are asked to self-report on their general happiness or satisfaction with large global domains, such as work or social relationships."[265]

This sequential framework allows for an explosion of things called happiness, with multiple phenomena that are legitimately called 'happiness,' situated at each of the three levels. As to what happiness is, I claim that it is none of the things that have yet been listed in the sequential framework. It is neither emotional reactions, nor recall of those reactions, nor is it an underdetermined global judgment – although it

[262] Ibid.: 263.
[263] N. M. Bradburn, *The Structure of Psychological Well-Being* (Aldine Pub. Co., 1969).
[264] Kim-Prieto et al., "Integrating the Diverse Definitions of Happiness: A Time-Sequential Framework of Subjective Well-Being," 263.
[265] Ibid.

does involve each of these components as we shall later see in the elaboration of the DAS. The sequential framework is helpful in categorizing the different measures that psychologists use when investigating things they think could be happiness, but I question whether offering legitimacy by granting the title of "happiness" to just about everything that psychologists measure in this area really represents forward progress. For example, it completely avoids the argument of the relative merits of emotional-state theory versus life-satisfaction theory. The field can certainly do better than this "anything goes" approach.

In sum, Diener, confronted with disagreement in the field about the nature of happiness, attempted to provide a solution that would make further research possible by creating a wide-ranging construct that encompassed both positive and negative emotions, a judgment of life satisfaction, and the sum of satisfaction with specific domains. Later he expanded his wide-ranging construct into a field and legitimized almost every definition of happiness in that field by claiming that just about everything along the sequential framework is happiness in one way or another. Other prominent early happiness researchers have chosen a similar route. Michael Argyle and his colleagues viewed happiness as the frequency and intensity of one's experience of joy, one's average level of satisfaction, and the absence of negative emotions.[266] Although researchers choosing this strategy may be on the safe side when it comes to being certain that the demographic variables, etc., that they are studying correlate with happiness (because at least one of the things in their constructs must be happiness), the justification for the coherence of these elements is absent, and so no real theory is created. And when that coherence-giving reason is absent, it is difficult to exclude anything that we subjectively value from the vague conception of happiness that is the inevitable result of this approach.

[266] M. Argyle, M. Martin, and J. Crossland, "Happiness as a Function of Personality and Social Encounters," in *Recent Advances in Social Psychology: An International Perspective*, ed. J. P. Forgas and J. M. Innes (North Holland: Elsevier Science Publishers, 1989); M. Argyle, M. Martin, and L. Lu, "Testing for Stress and Happiness: The Role of Social and Cognitive Factors," in *Stress and Emotion: Anxiety, Anger, and Curiosity*, ed. C. D. Spielberger and I. G. Sarason (Philadelphia, PA: Taylor & Francis, 1995).

Daniel Kahneman's "Objective Happiness"

As mentioned above, Daniel Kahneman has taken a narrowing approach (in contrast with Diener's broadening approach) to unifying research on happiness. Kahneman splits happiness into two parts by developing the construct of 'objective happiness.' This construct eliminates the need for long-term recollection of the valence of affect, thus avoiding the biases involved in such recollection, such as peak-end bias and duration neglect.[267] He describes his division in the following way: "*Subjective happiness* is assessed by asking respondents to state how happy they are. *Objective happiness* is derived from a record of instant utility over the relevant period."[268] Kahneman assumes a fairly hedonistic conception of what he calls 'instant utility' though he admits that other elements will have to be added to complete our picture of such 'utility': "Being pleased or distressed is an attribute of experience at a particular moment. I will label this attribute 'instant utility,' borrowing the term 'utility' from Bentham (1789/1948). Instant utility is best understood as the strength of the disposition to continue or to interrupt the current experience."[269] Of course, this is confounding two different things; it is quite clear that we can want things to continue for reasons of guilt, habit, the meaning of the event, etc., that are nonetheless extremely distressing to us. At least in this respect, it is clear that Kahneman has not diminished, but instead added to the challenges facing his theory in his attempt to escape the difficulties facing hedonistic theories.

Kahneman summarizes the reasons for his objections to traditional measures of happiness in the following passage:

> The perspective of the present chapter…seeks an objective and normatively justified definition of "true" well-being that is based mainly on information about instant utility. An assessment of Helen's objective happiness in March should be made on the basis of the relevant aspects of her life during that month by applying definite rules to summarize this information in a single

[267] Kahneman, "Objective Happiness."; D. Kahneman and A. B. Krueger, "Developments in the Measurement of Subjective Well-Being," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20, no. 1 (2006); Kahneman, "Experienced Utility and Objective Happiness: A Moment-Based Approach." Peak-end bias is a tendency for us to remember pain or emotions occurring during events based on the most intense feeling occurring during the event and way the event felt at its conclusion. Duration neglect describes our tendency to ignore the length of an experience when assessing the affective aspect of the experience.

[268] Kahneman, "Objective Happiness," 5.

[269] Ibid., 4.

> value. Helen's own judgment of how happy she was in March is viewed as a fallible estimate of her objective well-being. This conception does not deny the significance of Helen's evaluation of her life…In the present framework, however, what Helen thinks about her happiness matters to her "true" or objective well-being only to the extent that her thoughts affect the pleasantness or unpleasantness of particular moments in her life.[270]

Although Kahneman's 'objective happiness' is a useful construct and deserves extensive examination, it suffers from an underdetermined "substance" of happiness. In this case, emotional-state theory provides a much more cogent account of that which forms a basis for the way in which we use the word 'happy' to describe ourselves and others, namely, positive affect. Objective happiness, however, joins emotional-state theory in suffering from the threshold problem. Indeed, where are we to draw the line that determines who is happy according to an objective measure of affect over time?

Kahneman's definition of objective happiness' counterpart, subjective happiness, is also problematic. For one thing, it is not really a definition at all. Although Kahneman spends much time telling us what objective happiness is (a task simplified by the fact that objective happiness is what Kahneman stipulates it to be) he only tells us how subjective happiness is *assessed*: "*Subjective happiness* is assessed by asking respondents to state how happy they are."[271] What subjective happiness *is*, is not dealt with at all. If Kahneman intends this to be a kind of definition, then one difficulty with this definition of subjective happiness (as nothing more than individuals' avowals of happiness) is that it eliminates the possibility of incorrect judgments about one's own happiness. However, we do believe that people can be wrong about their own happiness (Haybron even seems to believe that many of us often are). If people cannot be wrong about their own happiness, and if there are no procedural requirements for making this judgment, then happiness is reduced to the simple act of making the judgment or perhaps even the statement, "I am happy," with absolutely no phenomenon behind it. Perhaps it is partly in light of these difficulties that in Kahneman's most recent writings on the subject, he does not

[270] Ibid.
[271] Ibid., 5.

mention 'objective happiness.'[272] Instead he places himself within the umbrella of SWB. Instead of objective happiness, he talks simply of "net affect" or "experienced utility," which represent the differential of positive over negative affect that one experiences.

Kahneman's objective happiness and Haybron's emotional-state theory are structurally very similar. Both theories reject an approach to happiness based on the judgment of the agent, and in this way they are objective with regard to judgment subjectivity. Haybron has the more robust theory, but in principle, what Kahneman says about assessing a person's happiness would be roughly the way in which one would have to assess happiness in an emotional-state theory. As Haybron's mood propensities are more difficult to measure (and should ordinarily, and certainly over a long period of time, be reflected in actual affect and mood), one would measure net positive and negative affect in much the same way that Kahneman suggests. The important common denominator in both theories is that an observer with (admittedly impossible) complete access to the experienced affect of the agent would be able to determine the happiness of the agent independent of her standards or judgments based on those standards. As I suggested above, it would serve well the cause of clarity in discussions of happiness to follow Kahneman and call such theories "objective theories of happiness."

There certainly is a kind of objectivity in all of our judgments about happiness; no one is an extreme subjectivist in the judgment sense – that is to say, no one believes that happiness is determined only by the agent's judgment about her own happiness. If this were not the case, no real limits would exist regarding that for which the concept could stand. Nevertheless, in Chapter Eight I make the case that we ordinarily allow much more room for subjective judgment about happiness than objective theories like those of Haybron and Kahneman allow. The above statements from Kraut and von Wright show that others share this intuition. Philosophers and psychologists alike have emphasized the importance of the agent's own judgment of his happiness for his happiness.

[272] Kahneman and Krueger, "Developments in the Measurement of Subjective Well-Being."

One philosopher who has taken direct aim at Kahneman's construct and some of his claims (in particular his claim that objective happiness should supplant self-report, judgment-based measures of SWB for the purpose of policy-making) is Anna Alexandrova. In her article entitled, "Subjective Well-Being and Kahneman's 'Objective Happiness,'" Alexandrova takes the position that Kahneman's averaging of positive emotional states of the subject precludes several aspects of happiness that we generally view as essential to the concept and that become clear to the subject only retrospectively.[273] At the very least, no argument based on our use of 'being happy' exists to eliminate these aspects in favor of an objective averaging approach.

Indeed, at least one psychologist, Sonja Lyubomirsky, has recently responded to Kahneman and brought forth a suggestion for measuring "subjective happiness."[274] In 1999, Lyubomirsky complained that a measure of subjective happiness was missing in the psychological literature. She begins her attempt to create one with the question of how one determines whether someone is a happy or an unhappy person. Instead of seeing this as primarily a problem of determining what happiness is, she, like many psychologists, sees the problem as one of how to measure levels of happiness. This eschewing of the difficult philosophical discussion is especially clear in her phrasing of the challenge at hand: "How does one discern then if someone is a happy or an unhappy person? Every student of happiness and well-being has had to tackle the problem of how to measure levels of individual happiness."[275] Ignoring many of the issues discussed in this essay up until this point, she dives right into a discussion of whether there are any reliable psychophysical measures or brain techniques to differentiate happy and unhappy people, and concludes that there are not. From there, she moves on to discussing the various self-report-based techniques, the most widely used of which is Bradburn's Affect Balance Scale.[276] This scale assesses the balance of positive and negative affect that an individual has experienced over the past four weeks, and in so doing, is taken by some to measure the affective

[273] A. Alexandrova, "Subjective Well-Being and Kahneman's 'Objective Happiness'," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 6, no. 3 (2005).
[274] S. Lyubomirsky and H. S. Lepper, "A Measure of Subjective Happiness: Preliminary Reliability and Construct Validation," *Social Indicators Research* 46, no. 2 (1999).
[275] Ibid.: 139.
[276] Bradburn, *The Structure of Psychological Well-Being*.

component of subjective well-being. A myriad of scales tap the cognitive component of subjective well-being, chief among them Diener's Satisfaction with Life Scale.[277]

Lyubomirsky clearly believes that none of these methods are able to capture subjective happiness, which she describes as a "global, subjective assessment of whether one is a happy or an unhappy person,"[278] and criticizes Diener's attempts to equate his construct of subjective well-being with happiness[279] when she says: "…most individuals are capable of reporting on the extent to which they are a happy person (or an unhappy one), and this judgment is likely not equivalent to a simple sum of their recent levels of affect and their satisfaction with life."[280] Echoes of the earlier argumentation of numerous philosophers against life-satisfaction theories of happiness are evident in her argumentation as well: "For instance, one may conceivably appraise oneself as a very happy *person*, despite having only a somewhat happy *life*."[281] She also shows sensitivity for the threshold problem, or at least to difficulties of Kahneman's suggestion of summing of units of utility to determine an individual's happiness: "Conversely, one may identify oneself as a generally unhappy person, despite having felt 'pleased,' 'proud,' and 'particularly excited' in the previous month (as items on the Affect Balance Scale would suggest.)"[282] She then suggests her alternative, which involves a four item scale that she calls the Subjective Happiness Scale. Interestingly, each of the four items use variants of the verb "is" and the adjective "happy," in other words, variants of the basic phrase suggested in this essay as being central to the analysis of happiness. Although Lyubomirsky does not deliver a theory of what happiness (or subjective happiness) is, she does indicate that dissatisfaction exists with the lack of clarity surrounding subjective approaches to happiness (as is the case in Diener's attempts), as well as with the incompleteness of objective approaches to happiness (such as

[277] E. Diener et al., "The Satisfaction with Life Scale," *Journal of Personality Assessment* 49, no. 1 (1985).
[278] Lyubomirsky and Lepper, "A Measure of Subjective Happiness: Preliminary Reliability and Construct Validation," 139.
[279] Diener and Lucas, "Personality and Subjective Well-Being."
[280] Lyubomirsky and Lepper, "A Measure of Subjective Happiness: Preliminary Reliability and Construct Validation," 139f.
[281] Ibid.: 140.
[282] Ibid.

those suggested by Haybron and Kahneman). It is this gap in the philosophical and psychological literature that I hope the next chapter contributes to filling.

Conclusion

Most psychologists have remained cautious about defining happiness and have instead done work on constructs that purport to be related to happiness, even if they turn out not to *be* happiness itself. This atheoretical approach, while producing much interesting research, has resulted in stunted growth in the field as a whole. Until consensus is reached on what happiness is, empirical researchers will not have any way of knowing to what degree that which they are studying bears a relation to happiness. Two prominent happiness researchers, Ed Diener and Daniel Kahneman, have chosen opposing strategies to deal with this problem. Diener has developed the construct of subjective well-being, which includes judgments of life satisfaction and domain satisfaction, as well as measures of emotional experience. In later articles, the number of phenomena that subjective well-being encompasses becomes even greater, with its proponents talking about the "field of subjective well-being." This is an inevitable result of developing a construct that hopes to encompass everything that happiness could be and, as a result, lacks a theoretical core.

Kahneman, on the other hand, has chosen a narrowing approach to happiness studies. He introduced the construct of 'objective happiness,' which is an objective (i.e., independent of the memory or judgment of the individual in question) record of the affect of an individual if it meets certain criteria for the amount of "instant utility" experienced. Anna Alexandrova has criticized Kahneman's construct on several accounts and Sonja Lyubomirsky has called for a theory of 'subjective happiness.' The dynamic affective standard theory represents one such account of a theory of subjective happiness.

Chapter 8: The Dynamic Affective Standard Theory

Many happiness theorists are of the opinion that the hedonistic, life-satisfaction, and emotional-state categories of theories exhaust the possibilities for an understanding of our use of the concept 'happiness.' But since all are in some way deficient, something must exist that can fill the gap and explain what we mean when we say that we want to 'be happy.'

Happiness and Judgments of Positive Affect

One way to approach this question is to look at what exactly we are doing when we call ourselves happy. It does seem that we are making a judgment, as the proponents of life-satisfaction theories claim, but it is also clear that happiness and life-satisfaction diverge. The judgment is therefore one that does not have 'satisfaction' with 'our lives' as its object. As discussed extensively in Chapter Five, in situations of divergence, happiness tracks affect and not the attitudes directed toward the changing external circumstances of our lives.

Therefore, life-satisfaction theories are attractive because they pick up on a process that actually occurs. They do not, however, follow it through to its completion. Life-satisfaction theories see happiness in the following way: happiness is an attitude we have toward our lives in reaction to our varying life circumstances.

When someone asks us if we are happy, we think about how our lives are going and whether our central desires for our lives are being fulfilled. We might typically think about our jobs, our families, our friendships, our romantic relationships, etc. It is far from my purpose to deny much of this account; we do, in fact, examine selected things in our lives. The catch, however, has already been illustrated. When we think about these varied aspects of our lives for the purpose of answering the question, "Are you happy?" (which from here on will be referred to as the "happiness question,") the result of our evaluation does not track the attitudes about whether our lives are meeting certain standards or whether our desires are being fulfilled – instead, it tracks positive affect. This becomes especially evident when standards met or desires satisfied diverge from positive affect.

Life-satisfaction theories thus have paid close attention to what we do when we think about our own (or others') happiness, but these theories fail to take into account the fact that the judgment is, in the end, only about goals and desires, etc., *insofar* as they have a positive affective payoff. Life-satisfaction theories have nonetheless been widely accepted because they identify correctly that happiness involves a judgment, and positive affect often does track desires satisfied and goals achieved.

One might make the following objection to my claims thus far: If the judgment involved in happiness is really just about positive affect, why do we not then ignore external events and situations and think about positive affect directly? The simple answer to this question is that this is just not the way our mind works. As illustrated in Chapters Two and Three, our minds have evolved to serve certain purposes and the efficient memory of free-floating emotions was not one of them.

It is best to start with a simple and straightforward example: When we are asked how happy we have been in the last hour, we would probably think mostly about our mood and our feelings. How are we feeling right now; how were we feeling at the beginning of the hour? It is very likely, however, that we would not be able to remember exactly how we felt one hour ago, say at 11:37 am. How would we overcome this obstacle? We would probably try to think of what we were doing at 11:37, and then think about how that activity made us feel. Oftentimes the feeling

and the activity are so interwoven in our memory that it is not necessary for us to reflect on how the activity made us feel – it is simply obvious. So the way in which we remember how we were feeling, even over short periods of time, is to remember the events which caused or accompanied that feeling.

Our memory for feelings by themselves is not anywhere near as refined as our memory for events or facts. The likely reason for our weak memory of feelings, independent of events during which they occurred, is that in our evolutionary development remembering what feelings one had at a certain period of time, independent of what was going on at the time, was nowhere near as important as remembering events and facts *and how we felt about them*. A feeling with *no* relevance to the external world, that is to say, not even with an uncertain relevance (an uneasy feeling that later turns to wariness as one views the slightly unusual facial expressions of a traveling companion), is of no value to survival or reproduction. Feelings, however, serve an incomparably important role when combined with external events; feelings are typically the signals for the salience of these events for our lives, and they often mark out the external events that are particularly important for us to remember. Thus, they are remembered in combination with these events. So, feelings hang on external events in our memory; the two are remembered as a package with the event often being the primary tag by which we call the package back into consciousness.[283]

So the answer to the objection introduced above is that we do think directly about positive and negative affect, but as a part of our mental landscape, they are hung on events, people, thoughts we have had, goals achieved, etc. Accessing these mental representations is the most efficient way to access affect. It seems then that happiness involves a judgment about affect accessed by way of various mental representations. Life-satisfaction theorists have caught onto this, but do not seem to have understood the whole process, thinking instead that the process was only about the mental representations, and not about the affective information gathered through them.

[283] This is not to say that this cannot work the other way around, as in the case that we have a strong feeling and remember the last time that we had this feeling. This sort of connection occurs far more infrequently than the typical case of remembering events and the feelings that accompanied them.

Happiness: Judgments vs. Standards

It seems that we have two possible determiners of happiness at this point. One could take the position that the result of the judgment about positive affect is what determines happiness. We would then ascribe first-person authority to the author of the judgment. This would mean that a person can *never* be wrong about his or her own happiness; *whatever* the result of the judgment is, it is right. The other possible position focuses on the individual standard of the agent as the determiner of whether or not someone is happy. This position leaves room for incorrect judgments of happiness as a result of improper application of the standard, and it also leaves room for standards that are themselves illegitimate. The DAS denies the first-person authority of judgments of happiness and instead takes the second position, claiming that people can certainly be wrong about their own happiness in several different ways.

To understand the role of the standard in the DAS it may be most helpful to review what it is the DAS is rejecting, namely, the first-person authority of judgments of happiness. To be clear, what is not at issue here are dishonest claims about one's happiness. An honest claim means that the person in question, let's call him Rob, does not hold one conviction and communicate another. Rob could tell us that he is happy for reasons of social desirability, for example, while knowing full well that he is unhappy. This kind of self-promotion is not the issue under consideration since Rob himself does not believe his own statement. The question is: Are honest, or earnest claims of happiness always to be taken at face value? Is the person doing the judging always right when she believes that she is happy?

The model cases of first-person authority are things like pain, or seeing colors or objects. If someone honestly says that he feels a pain in his leg, then he really does feel pain. If someone honestly claims that he sees a stone in front of him, then he really does have an image of a stone before him in some way, independent of what actually exists in the world. What relation does happiness bear to these examples of first-person authority?

These examples of clear first-person authority are examples of direct experience. Happiness, however, is a judgment, and as such, can be flawed. The primary way in which individual judgments of happiness can be flawed involves a violation of what I will call the *procedural requirement of happiness*. This is best illustrated with an example.

Let's say that Rob actually decides to make a happiness judgment. Human minds (including Rob's) work in stranger ways than we often realize, and, as psychological experiments have shown, unconscious influences on judgments are very common. Take the following deep-rooted conviction of Rob's: "It is wrong for me to be unhappy because God put me on this earth. God is good, and therefore what he does is good. For that reason, I really ought to be happy." Although parts of this argument have been a part of Rob's conscious life in the past, he is not fully aware of this conviction when it comes time to make the happiness judgment. Nonetheless, this conviction does have a strong impact on his judgment.

In fact, Rob claims to be happy even when only 10% of his day is accompanied by positive affect, and his judgments often ignore massive negative affect. It is not that he is not aware of the negative affect in general; it is just that he half-consciously, half-unconsciously avoids taking it into consideration when he makes the happiness judgment. Rob's judgment of his own happiness does not exhibit the normal random variation that is always present in judgments of happiness (as a result of changing patterns of affect and of the dynamic nature of the standard discussed below). Instead, his judgment is always *biased* in a positive direction. He himself believes (mostly because he wants to believe) that he is, indeed, happy. His family and friends have been urging him to enter therapy because they believe he is depressed, but Rob does not see any problem with his life.

Is there a systematic way that we can separate legitimate considerations in the judgment of happiness from those that are illegitimate? Indeed, there is. The forces at work in a judgment of happiness that can influence the standard in a non-biased manner are thoughts, convictions, memories, etc., about what happiness *is*. In a biased decision the forces influencing the standard – and usually in a more extreme way – are thoughts and convictions about what the *result* of the judgment *should be*,

as a result of considerations external to happiness, per se. There are more than a few considerations of the latter sort. One common one has to do with the fact, pointed out by Haybron, that we often use happiness as a proxy for our overall well-being, even though it is not the only aspect of well-being that we care about.[284] For some people (perhaps many of them reside in the United States), being unhappy is akin to admitting that one is a failure, or a "loser" in the game of life. For others, an admission that they are unhappy might force them to make a difficult decision about their marriage. These are all not considerations about how much positive affect one can expect in life, or what level of richness of positive affect is enough to call oneself happy. They are considerations that instrumentalize happiness for purposes external to happiness itself. This provides the background for the *procedural requirement* for judgments of happiness: The happiness judgment should be about happiness, and refrain from instrumentalizing the judgment for external considerations.

The vast majority of flawed happiness judgments are going to be violations of the procedural requirement. But what about those cases in which the procedural requirement is not violated and an unusual assessment of happiness results? Take Sarah for example. Sarah's judgment of happiness is free of unconscious influences extraneous to her happiness, but still regularly calls herself happy when she experiences positive affect only five percent of the time on a given day, with ninety-five percent of her time accompanied by negative affect. This sounds very abstract, so let us make it concrete. Sarah cries herself to sleep almost every night, experiences intense anxiety at work and sadness alone in the evenings, but experiences a bit of positive affect (5% of her day) when she watches one of her favorite sitcoms. Is Sarah happy? No, she is not. Sarah applies an unusual standard for her judgment of happiness. In order to understand why her standard is not legitimate, and why she is not happy, we must leave the abstract level at which we have been discussing positive and negative affect. We also have to explore in greater detail what happiness is all about.

It is easy to lose oneself in the abstract discussion about 'positive affect' and forget what we are really talking about. Positive affect does not exist by itself, but

[284] Haybron, "On Being Happy or Unhappy," 1.

instead, it is a way of characterizing many distinct emotions that can be individuated (to various degrees) and identified according to their unique characteristics. Some examples are bliss, cheerfulness, calmness, contentment, delight, delirium, ecstasy, elation, enchantment, euphoria, exhilaration, exuberance, gaiety, gladness, glee, hilarity, hopefulness, joviality, joy, jubilation, light-heartedness, mirth, optimism, peacefulness, playfulness, rejoicing, repose, tranquility, vivacity. It is these emotions and others that constitute happiness.

However, because happiness involves a summing across many distinct emotions, it is more abstract than a specific emotion like joy. As mentioned earlier, the transition from one emotion to another is a process which is difficult to pinpoint. At what point in intensity does frustration become anger? There are paradigm cases of both frustration and anger but the delimitation between the two is not entirely clear. Delimitations, which are almost always difficult, are especially difficult in the case of emotions. This does not hinder us in our use of the words 'angry' or 'frustrated'. So for something like happiness, which is more abstract than a simple emotion (as it involves the summing of them) it is likely that the borders will be, indeed, difficult to draw. Likewise, paradigm cases of happiness do exist, and they certainly do not have to be of the ecstatic variety – tranquility will do just as well and is probably more characteristic of happiness than a collection of more intense emotions. It may well be that there are numerous disparate paradigm cases of happiness, for example contentment vs. ebullience. The ideals of complete tranquility or constant ebullience allow for reductions in intensity and frequency while still being happiness. How many of these positive emotions are necessary for happiness is a matter that must be solved in the same manner as what degree of intensity is needed for frustration to become anger: It is a matter of our usage of the words. At this point, an analogy might be helpful.

In American society (and most likely in many others) a concern exists about having or earning "enough money." Enough for what? Ideas about this differ, and they do so partly according to the social group in which you have been raised. You hear about it in the prudential conversations of your family and friends, and it is often mentioned explicitly. Through this process, you develop an idea of what it means to

have enough money. In time you come to believe that, of course, you certainly should earn enough money – otherwise, well, you'll have problems. So "having enough money" represents an extremely important life goal. But it is also socially constructed. For someone who has grown up in a disadvantaged environment 'earning enough' might mean $30,000 a year. For someone from a less disadvantaged environment it might be $55,000, and for someone who is very privileged, it could extend up to $200,000, and it is to be expected that for the children of the very wealthy, even higher standards apply.[285]

The justifications for levels of earnings that are 'enough' differ greatly depending on one's level of income. At the lower end of the scale, the main concerns might include clothing, food, schooling, and living in a relatively safe neighborhood. At the upper end, concerns might revolve around being able to move easily with one's social peers. So there is variation among standards, but in each case, there is a vague idea of what is enough for a decent life. The exceeding of the exact monetary level is fairly irrelevant – an exact monetary goal is probably not what one has in mind anyway. It is when you get to the general area of 'enough' income that you start to feel satisfied, and you are more satisfied the closer you get. At some point you have the feeling, "Ok, this is enough. It would be nice if I had a bit more, but I really don't need it, and I'm not going to kill myself trying to get it." This is, of course, not true of all people. For some, in money as well as in positive affect, no matter how much is acquired, 'enough' never makes its appearance in their lives.

As mentioned earlier, although "earning enough" is a social construction, it has great importance for us. It is an essential part of a vague conception that we have of a good life. In this way it is similar to the level of positive affect we each think is necessary for happiness. Happiness, too, is part of a vague conception that we have of a life that is good – our society gives us hints (some of which may be unrealistic) of how much 'feeling good' can be expected as a part of a decent life. So why is it valuable that you reach this level? Well, even more so than with income, if you are happy, you may also have a strong tendency to feel as though your life is a success.

[285] Of course, there are many influences on one's idea of "earning enough." For influences of one's environment on such social constructs see: G. Rivlin, "In Silicon Valley, Millionaires Who Don't Feel Rich," *The New York Times* 8/5/2007.

In fact, as I mentioned earlier, happiness serves as a proxy for well-being in our lives. We often say to our children, "John, I don't care about X (e.g., you succeeding in becoming a doctor), I just want you to be happy." And when we make life choices, we often think about what effect they will have on our happiness.

One reason for this is the connection that was illustrated in our discussion of life-satisfaction theories. Although there is no necessary connection, positive emotions correlate strongly with the occurrence of other things in our lives that we value (even if this correlation is less strong and lasting than we believe). Thinking about well-being in general is a difficult task; for the great majority of us, and perhaps all of us, it is undoubtedly a concept much vaguer than happiness. Happiness is, therefore, both a major part of socially and individually constructed good life and a proxy for our conception of a good life in our small and large decisions. If we, in our lifetime, achieve the level of positive affect and relative absence of negative affect that we have internalized as belonging to a good life, we may well feel that we have done a fairly good job in life.

We are now in a better position to explain why Sarah's standard for happiness is illegitimate. So far we have established that saying that someone is happy involves a standard for positive affect that is based on the amount of positive affect we can expect from a vague conception of a "good life." Like the standard for "enough money," there can be variation in the standard for enough positive affect to call oneself happy, but in both cases there are objective limits to the variation.

The analogy itself is not perfect because happiness is a much tighter social construction than having enough money. All other things being equal, we would say that someone who cannot feed himself and his family does not have enough money whatever he might claim, because it is difficult to argue for any conception of the good life that encompasses the inability to feed oneself and one's family. Restrictions also hold in the case of happiness, and a much wider range of ongoing or recurrent states of affairs exist that preclude one's being happy. Most of these involve the presence of strong negative affect.

As Haybron has rightly claimed, happiness is also characterized by the relative absence of strong negative affect. I mentioned this aspect earlier but have for

simplicity's sake concentrated up until now primarily on the role of positive affect in happiness. In most cases, I will continue to only mention positive affect with regard to the standard, but what I mean in each case is both the minimum level of positive affect necessary for happiness and the maximum allowable level of negative affect.

When one looks back at the list of emotions that have positive affect as a common element, all of them are incompatible with simultaneous strong negative affect. In fact, some paradigm examples of happiness such as contentment, peacefulness, and tranquility seem almost to be defined by the absence of strong negative affect, and shattered by its presence. Although in a state of tranquility positive affect should not be too intense, there is much more room for intense positive affect than for corresponding levels of negative affect. In fact, relatively strong positive affect can come and go (as long as it is not ecstatic or wild positive affect) without ending a state of contentment, but strong negative affect would not be compatible with this state.

Thus, one of the greatest attractions of happiness is the freedom from serious and lasting disturbance by negative emotions. Indeed, this almost certainly accounts for part of the powerful appeal of happiness. When one reads stories about people who changed course and started searching for happiness in their lives, the reason is very often strong and regularly recurrent negative emotions, such as frequent anxiety, hatred, depression, feelings of meaninglessness, sadness, etc., and far less often the desire to simply experience more positive affect.

So, in both the case of "enough money" and the case of happiness, there are objective limits on possible standards, there is intersubjective variation of standards (different agents have different standards), and there is intrasubjective variation of the standards (long-term and short-term change in a single agent's standards). Sarah's standard violates the objective limit on the maximal amount of negative affect allowed to simultaneously exist with happiness (crying herself to sleep every night, strong anxiety at work) and the objective requirement for the minimal positive affect necessary for happiness (only 5% of her day). Sarah's case is intuitive, but there are other cases that are less clear-cut. Zeroing in on the objective limits and

requirements for happiness would have to be done in the same way that we would determine a rough border between frustration and anger.

The job of finding the bottom limit for happiness must be undertaken with reference to the linguistic community which is the source of the social construction of a "good life," and the positive affect that should (as well as the negative affect that should not) accompany it in the first place. Practically, this might be difficult to do – perhaps it would involve something like developing extensive descriptions of affective states of people with dubitable happiness claims, presenting them to a large number of people, and analyzing the results. A successful result of such an undertaking would be a range of legitimate standards for happiness. The result could look something like the following: light negative affect is allowed, but not for more than 70% of one's total time. The longer the period of light negative affect, the more intensive the remaining positive affect has to be in order to cancel it out. Serious negative affects have to be intermittent and thus not continuous or regularly recurrent in close intervals. The important thing is that above the bottom limits, there will be a range of legitimate standards and, thus, also a multitude of different standards for happiness. The difference between this and previous approaches is best illustrated by the example of Haybron's efforts in this regard.

Haybron, because he does not take the standard of the individual into account, is searching for some sort of objective limit, which, as the results of his informal survey suggest, is extremely problematic. What the DAS searches for is a range within which individual standards can legitimately vary, because intrinsic to our use of "being happy" is the idea that a person's own perception of the amount of positive affect necessary for a vaguely conceived 'good life' matters in the determination of her happiness. Just as with 'enough money' there will be a bottom level below which the concept begins to not make any sense, but this bottom of the range of legitimate standards allows for individual minimum standards for the amount of positive affect necessary for happiness that lie far above it.

But why would someone like Sarah claim that she is happy when her life seems to most of us to be so miserable? Most cases of bizarre claims are going to be cases of bias, cases of people who instrumentalize the judgment of happiness for

other purposes, thus violating the procedural requirement. And what of the others? There are people who are seriously mentally ill, who make all sorts of erroneous claims about themselves and the world and no doubt about their happiness as well. Additionally, there are always people who are not competent speakers of the English language. Beyond this, cases of claims that violate the standards of the linguistic community should be fairly rare. They certainly are possible, and the people who make such claims, (i.e., who say that they are happy while simultaneously feeling very little positive affect and serious negative affect) might not understand the various positive emotions that are the source of the positive affect; perhaps they have experienced very few of them in their lives. We can safely assume that there are some people, like some of the depressed, whose brains are such that it is difficult for them to experience positive emotions. These people may be in a situation similar to those who are red-green colorblind. They may simply not understand what other people are talking about when they speak of specific qualities of positive emotions, just as some people will never understand the difference most people see between red and green. But the vast majority of people with very little positive affect have enough experience with the linguistic community to know that they are unhappy. It could still be useful to pursue the kind of survey outlined above, but the cases of non-biased *and* erroneous happiness claims should be very limited in number.

The Dynamic Nature of the Individual Standard

At first glance, however, there appears to be a glaring difficulty with this description. Aren't we sometimes, if not always, happy without thinking about the fact that we are happy, much less judging that we are so? To make matters worse, if the standard is the determiner of someone's happiness, what need is there for the judgment? If an individual's standard is in place, then there should be a fact of the matter about whether she is happy before any judgment is made.

The situations in which we clearly are happy, that is to say, the situations in which it appears that no judgment has taken place, are situations in which the judgment according to our individual standards is (or would be) exceedingly obvious. It seems that in these cases, instead of deciding, or really even making a judgment,

we simply identify the existence of a certain system of mental states, much in the same way that, when we have 20 million dollars in various banks, we just know that we have enough money without adding up the balance of each account. In these cases, our level of positive affect exceeds any possible standard we could come up with, and we thus know that we are happy. It is still the case that a judgment is made, but a case could be made for the existence of happiness before the judgment is made precisely because the amount of positive affect overpowers any possible upward change in our standard. For this reason, there are extended periods of time in which we could answer the happiness question positively in the bat of an eye, and even periods of time when we are aware of being happy while we go about our daily lives. In those situations, there is nothing that could change our *standard* of the amount of positive affect necessary for happiness so dramatically that it would have a material effect on our judgment. This is not to say that nothing could happen to decrease the amount of our positive affect.

This type of "carrying knowledge of happiness with us" situation seems, however, to be the exception and not the rule. Our answer to the happiness question ordinarily develops a bit differently. We more often than not return a positive or negative answer to the happiness question after a short pause. There is something we have to decide, something we have to judge, before we can say that we are happy. As we will see later, the reason the judgment is necessary, in the vast majority of cases, is that up until that point, although there may be an range specific to the agent in which the agent's standard can move, the actual position of the standard within this range is not yet established. An examination of the possible ways in which standards can diverge will cast light on this process.

Differences in individual standards of happiness show themselves along three lines of comparison. Firstly, individuals can have differing standards for happiness. Let us call this *interpersonal* divergence of standards. Secondly, the standard of one and the same individual can change over a long period of time (e.g., adolescence to adulthood). Let us call this *long-term intrapersonal* divergence of standards. Finally, the standard of one individual can change over a very short period of time as a result of context effects and chance thoughts. Let us call this *short-term intrapersonal*

divergence of standards. It is this last type of divergence that precludes the establishing of happiness prior to the occurrence of the judgment.

There is no constant, unchanging standard of happiness imprinted on our consciousness, although there probably is a range within which the standard moves. Instead, I propose that, as has been shown in judgments of life-satisfaction[286], our standard for happiness is quite flexible and very sensitive to context effects. The fact that these fluctuations occur within an agent's range of standards for happiness does not lessen the legitimacy of each standard that is produced on the occasion of each judgment. Indeed, how should it? Although the experiences we have just had and the cognitive associations we make right after being asked the happiness question affect the standard, because all standards within the individual range are subject to these effects, none is any more legitimate than any other. For that reason, we are left with the surprising result that in most cases, happiness does not exist until the judgment is made, not because of the result of the judgment, which, as we have seen, can be flawed, but as a result of the fixing of the standard that occurs at the time of the judgment. Up until that point, all we have is a jumble of various affects waiting for a standard.

To illustrate this, imagine that Jane is asked if she is happy and she responds that she is happy. Jane has also just finished watching a documentary on the tribulations of people with major depressive disorder. If we had asked her yesterday, she would have taken the same level of remembered affect[287] that forms the basis of her judgment today to constitute unhappiness, but her intuitions about what level of positive affect is necessary for happiness have changed after watching the documentary. Probably unbeknownst to her, she has lowered her standard for

[286] N. Schwarz and G. L. Clore, "Mood, Misattribution, and Judgments of Well-Being: Informative and Directive Functions of Affective States," *Journal of personality and social psychology* 45, no. 3 (1983); N. Schwarz and F. Strack, "Reports of Subjective Well-Being: Judgmental Processes and Their Methodological Implications," in *Well-Being: The Foundations of Hedonic Psychology*, ed. D. Kahneman, E. Diener, and N. Schwarz (1999).

[287] As Robinson and Clore have demonstrated, short-term and long-term emotional memory seem to use different processes, short-term having to do with memories of the specific episodes in question and long-term having to do with beliefs about how one felt, would feel, etc. in a given situation: M. D. Robinson and G. L. Clore, "Belief and Feeling: Evidence for an Accessibility Model of Emotional Self-Report," *Psychological Bulletin* 128, no. 6 (2002); ———, "Episodic and Semantic Knowledge in Emotional Self-Report: Evidence for Two Judgment Processes," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 83, no. 1 (2002).

ascribing the term ‘happy’ as a result of seeing people experiencing an overwhelming amount of negative affect, a state in which she, too, could partake if her circumstances were to change. But this is only one possible direction in which her standard could go. If Jane had made a different association, perhaps concerning her friend Jill who overcame depression to be one of the happiest people she knows, her standards for the necessary level of positive affect might have gone up instead of going down.

So this is one interesting result that the DAS has for our thought on happiness: Happiness, at least in the cases in which we are not already carrying the results of the judgment around with us, does not exist until the judgment is made. A collection of positive and negative affects exists, but they only have the potential to be happiness – or unhappiness for that matter. They are not either of the two until the standard is in place and the specific past experiences or beliefs about affect are accessed. This occurs when the question is asked and the process of making the judgment begins.

For another example of the change in our happiness-standards, imagine a young man, let us call him Pablo, who spent his formative years in the midst of a civil war. During the four years of the war, Pablo was relatively unhappy as a result of mental stress and physical injuries. There were times when he did tell people he was happy, though. In these situations, it was enough that his physical pains decreased significantly, without going away. In spite of these pains, he experienced positive affect because of the *reduction* in pain. Infrequent and low intensity positive affect was enough for Pablo to claim to be happy over a given period of time. Now, five years after the end of the war, Pablo is a successful businessman. He owns several stores and is married with two small children. His life is generally quite pleasant. Now, however, in order for him to say that he is happy, positive affect of much greater intensity and frequency is required.

In Pablo’s case one could object that this is just another example of being on what psychologists call a hedonic- or a satisfaction treadmill: Pablo still calls the same collection of affects happiness and unhappiness, but the external objects and situations that lead to these emotions have changed. Indeed, Pablo’s standards for

external goods (in the widest sense of the word) have changed, and what has changed about them is the amount of positively valued external events or goods that Pablo needs to experience in order to feel positive affect. Whereas during the war, Pablo experienced strong positive affect simply when he had something to eat, no matter how ill-tasting it was, now Pablo requires much higher-quality food to experience positive affect.

This is doubtlessly the case. It is clear that Pablo's standards for feeling positive affect in response to external states of affairs have changed, but this is not the only change that has taken place. Pablo's demands on happiness have also changed, as explained above, and these are two separate levels. The first level is the amount and quality of external stimulus that Pablo needs in order to respond with a given amount of positive affect. The second level is the amount and quality of positive affect that Pablo considers necessary for happiness. Changes on *both* levels take place after the end of the civil war. Pablo has become accustomed to greater amounts and higher quality of positive-affect producing goods, and he has become accustomed to greater intensity, longer duration, and higher quality of positive affect.

In sum, one's standard for the minimum amount of positive affect and maximum amount of negative affect can vary strongly over the short-term and long-term. Because of short-term variations, in most cases the judgment is necessary not because of its result, which can be flawed in several ways, but because of the need for the fixation of the dynamic standard.

Contradictory and Correct Judgments?

Contradiction is never pleasant, and it might be thought that it could cause a problem for a theory that takes individual standards into account. For example, what happens when two people judge the happiness of a third and contradict each other? Still more problematically, what happens when the judgments of one person about the same period of his past are contradictory when the judgments are made at different times? To illustrate this problem, let us take Jakko, who was a successful punk rocker in his youth. Jakko eventually settled down, started a family, and became a loving father to his three children. When Jakko was in his punking prime,

he described himself as happy, and now, in retirement and caring for his children, he also describes himself as happy. Problematically, however, he now, looking back on his rocking days, claims he wasn't happy then. Through the warm and loving feelings that he has experienced in his family, Jakko has come to value a different kind of positive affect, an affect that has a warmer and deeper tone than the excited, wild feelings of conquest of his younger days. When he now thinks about the drugs, the women, the parties, etc. that he so valued in his twenties, he wonders how he could have called himself happy on the basis of the feelings he derived from all of that. It thus seems that we have a contradiction, with the same person making two conflicting claims about his happiness during one period of time. So how do we determine which party is in the right? And who is wrong: Jakko the family man, or Jakko the punk rocker?

The DAS contends that they are both right – and both wrong for that matter. To explain this it is perhaps best to introduce both a modified example used by John Macfarlane and his concepts of "context of use" and "context of assessment" to explain our use of the word 'know'.[288] Imagine that Mike has a fit of environmental sensitivity and has decided to take the bus to work this morning. He leaves his car in the driveway, and the bus carries him to work just in time to be greeted by his officemate, Bob. After hearing that Mike took the bus to work, Bob immediately asks Mike, "Well, do you know where your car is?" Mike replies that yes, of course he knows where his car is. He left it in the driveway not an hour ago. Bob points out that car thieves have recently been active in residential areas after people leave for work, and asks Mike how he knows that his car hasn't been stolen. Mike resigns and admits that he actually doesn't know where his car is, he only believes (and hopes) that it is still in his driveway.

In this case, the standard that Mike uses for the application of the word 'know' has changed. Macfarlane explains this by saying that although the context of use has stayed the same, the context of assessment has changed and with it the standard that we use for the application of 'know' has changed as well. Varying

[288] For MacFarlane's discussion of context of use and context of assessment, see J. MacFarlane, "The Assessment Sensitivity of Knowledge Attributions," in *Oxford Studies in Epistemology 1*, ed. T. S. Gendler (2005); ———, "Knowledge Laundering: Testimony and Sensitive Invariantism," *Analysis* 65, no. 2 (2005).

demands are put on ‘know’ at certain times depending on the needs of the parties involved in the conversation. These can be consistent within a certain context—the standard for the use of ‘know’ in the command center of the nuclear arsenal of the United States is presumably higher than Mike’s claims about the location of his car—or they can change within the course of the conversation, as was the case with Mike and Bob.

This does not mean, however, that Mike was simply wrong when he answered the question. In fact, if asked a similar question in the future, he would again respond that he knows where his car is. It is not as if he has learned a lesson about the criterion necessary for knowledge of his car’s whereabouts. Instead, he has simply accepted a changed standard in a particular situation. This means that Mike’s claims are correct and incorrect, or true and false depending on the standard which obtains in the situation.

In the same way, Jakko, looking back on his twenties with a different standard for happiness than he had back then, could rightly claim that he was not happy back then. But from the perspective of his twenties, he was happy (and if his punk rocker self could have knowledge of Jakko the loving father, he might also claim that Jakko the father is by no means happy). As long as an individual’s standard for happiness moves within the bounds set by the linguistic community, no standard is more legitimate than any other. In the case of happiness everything depends on the perspective of the individual and her individual standard for the amount of positive affect necessary for happiness. This also applies to two people assessing the happiness of a third, and to some degree, two people arguing about the happiness of one of them. For example, Susan and Jim are having a disagreement about Jim’s happiness. In this case, however, although neither one of their standards is more legitimate than the other, Jim’s judgment has priority in two ways. First of all, Jim’s standard is the one which is practically relevant for his life decisions. Jim is looking to make himself happy, and he will do so by meeting his standard for happiness, not Susan’s. Secondly, Jim has better epistemic access to the emotional states that Susan and Jim are taking as the basis of their judgments. So although standards themselves, as long as they move within the range set by the linguistic

community, are not more or less legitimate, other considerations such as prudential relevance and epistemic access can explain the priority we often assign to agents' own assessments of their happiness.

Conclusion

The dynamic affective standard theory (DAS) attempts to provide a resolution to the problems plaguing other theories of our contemporary conception of happiness. According to the DAS, happiness involves an individual and variable standard for positive affect typically set by the agent at the time of the judgment, as a result of her interpretation of the amount of positive affect that can be expected from a socially constructed "good life." So, like life-satisfaction theories, the DAS recognizes that the judgment of the individual is important to happiness, but also does justice to the fact that external events called to mind in the judgment are only relevant to happiness if they produce a positive affective payoff. Happiness tracks affect in the case of divergence between affect and satisfaction of central desires or satisfaction with our lives as a whole. One reason for the plausibility of life-satisfaction theories is the fact that we do think about external events, situations, and material goods when making judgments of happiness, but, again, these external phenomena are only relevant for our judgments of happiness insofar as they make an affective difference in our lives. We think about these elements, instead of thinking directly about the emotions in question, in part because although happiness is strongly affective, our minds are such that emotions are recalled by calling forth the events that triggered them.

So, in contrast with the view of most hedonistic theories and the emotional-state theory, personal standards *are* relevant for the way we use 'being happy,' but the personal standards in question are standards for the amount of positive affect that is to be expected from a vague conception of a socially constructed 'good life' and not for *external* aspects of the good life itself (happiness is presumably an internal aspect of such a good life). Nonetheless, the emphasis on the importance of personal standards does not cede complete first-person authority on the state of their own happiness to the agents themselves. First of all, judgments about happiness must

follow the *procedural requirement of happiness*. This means that things that influence the agent's standard should do so in a non-biased manner and, thus, should involve thoughts, convictions, memories, etc., about what happiness *is*. In a biased decision that violates the procedural requirement, the elements that influence the standard are thoughts and convictions about what the *result* of the judgment *should be*, as a result of considerations external to happiness, per se.

Unusual claims about happiness that do not violate the procedural requirement and, thus, represent unusual individual standards for happiness are not all legitimate. Even though "having enough money" is a social construction that admits of a wide variation, there are some situations, such as not being able to feed oneself or one's family, that cannot be considered to be instances of "having enough money." A similar situation exists in the case of happiness. Although variation exists in this social construct, some states, especially those involving strong negative affect, cannot be reconciled with "being happy." To develop some sort of bottom limit would be a task for empirical psychological research involving the presentation of descriptions of individuals' affective lives to large numbers of participants who would then determine whether the descriptions were those of people who could rightly be called happy, unhappy, or neither happy nor unhappy. Although this approach appears to be similar to that which Daniel Haybron recommended, it differs in one crucial way. Because Haybron's emotional-state theory rejects individual judgment as a determinant of an agent's happiness, he is in the difficult position of trying to find a cut-off for happiness that is independent of the individual's standards, in other words, completely objective, something that, by his own admission, he has not yet succeeded in finding. Because the DAS admits of a range of legitimate individual standards, the task here is not to find an objective cut-off of happiness for all people, but instead to find the bottom of the range, below which claims of happiness no longer make sense.

In the DAS, both the judgment and the standard are crucial to the determination of an individual's happiness. If standards were static, then we could reasonably say that there is a fact of the matter about whether an individual is happy *before* any kind of judgment is made. However, psychological experiments have

shown that standards in life-satisfaction judgments are not at all static, in part as a result of being subject to a number of context effects. There is good reason to assume that the same is true of standards for happiness. It is most likely that for each agent a range exists within which standards for happiness will vary. As a result of this short-term *intra*individual variation, the agent's standard for happiness can be said to be a *dynamic* standard. For that reason, it is not until the moment of the judgment that the standard is set and a determination of happiness can be made.

Because legitimate standards for happiness can vary both interindividually and intraindividually, there is room in the realm of happiness for seemingly contradictory, but true and legitimate judgments of a single agent's happiness, whether they be made by one and the same agent at different points in time or simultaneously, for example, by different agents about a third agent. This phenomenon is explained by reference to John Macfarlane's trenchant analysis of our changing standards for the use of the word 'know.' Even when the context of use of happiness claims remains invariant, the context of assessment can change. The standard in place in the context of assessment determines whether the happiness claim is accurate or inaccurate. In sum, the DAS offers the most detailed and most plausible account of what we mean when we say that we want to be happy.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

This investigation found its beginning in concern about the confusion reigning in philosophical and psychological discussions of happiness. This is a state of affairs that does not do justice to the strong and widely-held practical interest in this concept. A case was made that not only is happiness rightly part of the purview of philosophy, but that philosophy is the only discipline with the analytical tools to parse this folk concept in an appropriate way.

Indeed, things called happiness have a lengthy history in philosophy, and that history goes a long way in explaining the divergence in our linguistic intuitions among the various uses of 'happiness' and its cognates. Without boring the reader with a repetition of the extensive summary at the end of Chapter 3, suffice it to say that the philosophical turn in conceptions of happiness represented a human emancipation from evolution. The pre-philosophical conception of happiness was a collection of external goods, all of which bear a fairly straightforward relationship to differential reproductive success of a male human being. This type of happiness was exactly the sort which the happiness motivational system was designed to pursue. Quite logically, the happiness motivational system was formed to motivate us to obtain external goods (in the widest sense of the word, i.e., advantageous situations, etc.) that influenced our differential reproductive success in a favorable way.

For various reasons, early Greek philosophers attempted to find unity in the world of the goods that we value, and their attempts sometimes led to surprising places, places far afield from pre-philosophical happiness and correspondingly far afield from anything that could be viewed as a pre-formed goal arising from natural selection. The current endpoint of the development of our concept of happiness owes much to the Enlightenment, being very subjective, internal, and affective. Interestingly, it is just this sort of continuous positive affective state that the happiness motivational system was designed *to avoid*. As Kant so shrewdly observed over two centuries ago, "nature" did not design us to be happy. Humans were shaped by natural selection not to be happy, but in numerous respects and for numerous reasons, to be unhappy. Unhappiness provides us with an incentive to continue striving for those goods and situations that bring us greater differential reproductive success. This can be seen in a variety of mechanisms uncovered in recent years by empirical psychology that serve to do just that: to make certain, that even if we achieve the things for which we strive, our positive reactions to these achievements dissipate very rapidly, and in almost every case, much more rapidly than we expect. This, as well as other factors named in Chapter Three, provides an explanation for a disturbing human tendency to continue to look for happiness in places it cannot be found and when it is not found, to believe that it can be found in the *next* place it seems natural to look.

Knowledge about this shell game that our evolutionarily preformed desires and the happiness motivational system is playing with us would be a very valuable addition to the prudential decision-making procedures of the general populace. Parts of this "devious" system have been recognized by all the major religious traditions and many philosophical schools. But without a cogent explanation of *why* the pursuit of desires so often fails to deliver the promised result, exhortations to avoid their satisfaction often seem like so much moralized prohibition of enjoyment, pleasure, or fun. Such an explanation is one part of what this evolutionary reframing of our conceptions of happiness attempts to offer. It also offers a perspective on the material with which the early Greek philosophers had to work in their attempts to find something to call happiness that would represent an improvement on that which was

already on offer. This very short history of happiness served also, of course, to prepare the ground for a determination of what it is that we mean when we say that we want to be happy.

In the end, the appeal of the attempts of traditional theories of happiness to make this determination is fairly clear. Hedonistic theories are certainly onto something. They realize that happiness is both divorced from external events, and that it has to do with the way that we feel. However, pleasure has far too broad an extension to be the basis of happiness and is simply not the criterion that we aim at in talk about happiness. Proponents of hedonistic theories of happiness failed to recognize that happiness involves a judgment (either a tacit or an explicit one), and their simple "balance" formulas neglected both individual standards themselves and the dynamism of those standards. In addition, they neglected the differing relative importance of positive and negative affect for happiness. To put it in their language, pain cannot simply be weighed against pleasure in a determination of happiness. The existence of major and regularly recurrent negative affect cannot be outweighed by an equal number of strong positive affects. One of the strongest attractions of happiness is the freedom from regularly recurrent strong negative affect.

Life-satisfaction theories recognize the importance of judgments for happiness. What life-satisfaction theories miss is the fact that happiness does not track objective changes in our lives, nor our attitudes toward them, nor the meeting of goals or the attainment of standards for *external* events. Instead, it tracks positive affect. For that reason, among others, life-satisfaction and happiness are disparate concepts.

Emotional-state theory is somewhat similar to hedonistic theories. Although more highly developed, especially in view of its criticism of pleasure and pain as the building blocks for happiness, emotional-state theory, like hedonistic theories, fails to see that a determination of happiness does involve individual judgments. And because emotional-state theory does not recognize this, it is cast into a state of immobility when it attempts to make a final determination of the limits of its account of happiness. Emotional-state theory teeters between a view of happiness as a sort of

long-term emotional condition on the one hand, and a vague summation along the lines of the hedonistic theories on the other.

The dynamic affective standard theory claims that happiness involves an individual and variable standard for positive affect. This is usually set by the agent at the time of the judgment as a result of her interpretation of the relative presence of positive affect and the relative absence of negative affect that can be expected in a vague conception of a socially constructed "good life." The standard for positive and negative affect is the determiner of happiness, while the actual judgment that is made based on this standard can be flawed in numerous ways, most prominently by violating the procedural requirement. However, because the standard is dynamic and undergoes short-term variations, an act of judgment on the part of the agent in question is necessary, as the standard is usually first set at the time of the judgment. As a result of the unclear status of the standard before the occurrence of the judgment, happiness usually does not exist up until the point in time at which the judgment is made; instead all that exists is a collection of various affects.

The exception to this is the class of situations in which the basis of the happiness judgment is made up of so much positive affect and so little negative affect that no upward change in the agent's standard could make a material difference in the determination of the agent's happiness. The range of legitimacy for such individual standards is determined by the extension of the social construction created by the linguistic community. Within that range there is room for conflicting, but correct and legitimate, judgments of a single agent's happiness. The interpersonal, short-term intrapersonal, and long-term intrapersonal divergences in standards for happiness can all result in conflicting judgments. The correctness of each of these judgments depends on the time of evaluation of the result of the judgment and the standard for happiness that obtains at that time. However, for epistemic and prudential considerations, the judgment of the agent about her own happiness has additional weight as long as it meets the other criteria for legitimacy. I believe that the DAS provides the best description of our use of happiness and its cognates. However, as there is much interest in both philosophy and psychology in the amount of affect that an individual experiences, independent of her judgment about her experience of

affect, for the sake of clarity it might be best to refer this actual occurrence of affect (on the positive end of the spectrum) as "objective happiness." That which the DAS describes, again for the sake of clarity, could be called "subjective happiness."

In this essay, I have attempted to demonstrate that the dynamic affective standard theory provides a detailed account both of what happiness is, and of our behavior towards our own and others' happiness, while simultaneously explaining the attraction and resolving the inadequacies of previous theories.

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