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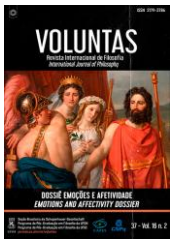

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Article

Towards a unified theory of happiness: Nozick versus Haybron

Rumo a uma teoria unificada da felicidade: Nozick versus Haybron

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RESUMO

Neste artigo, apresento um quebra-cabeça, uma tríade inconsistente de afirmações, referente a visões comuns sobre a natureza e o significado da felicidade. Argumento que encarar a felicidade como uma emoção nos ajuda a resolver esse quebra-cabeça ao introduzir condições que definem quando as emoções são apropriadas. Rejeito a visão de Haybron de que nossa noção de felicidade é ambígua e concordo com Nozick sobre como combinar diferentes elementos em uma teoria unificada da felicidade. Saliento que a unificação no nível semântico deixa outras questões em aberto.

Palavras-chave: Felicidade; Emoção; Bem-estar subjetivo

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I present a puzzle, an inconsistent triad of claims, pertaining to common views about the nature and significance of happiness. I argue that viewing happiness as an emotion helps us to resolve this puzzle by introducing conditions of when which emotions are appropriate. I reject Haybron's view that our notion of happiness is ambiguous, and I side with Nozick on how to combine different elements in a unified theory of happiness. I point out that unification at the semantic level leaves other issues ope.

Keywords: Happiness; Emotion; Subjective well-being

1 INTRODUÇÃO

For much of its history, philosophy has considered happiness to be central to human lives. Ancient philosophy focuses on specifying the nature of *eudaimonia*. Its

place as what living a human life is ultimately about is unquestioned. There must be something that plays this role and, as far as the name of our ultimate end is concerned, Aristotle says, there is general agreement that we should call it happiness.[1] Specifying the nature of happiness, conceived as our ultimate end, is the task of ancient ethics.

In contrast to ancient ethics, the utilitarian tradition doesn't start from Aristotle's formal conditions, like self-sufficiency and choiceworthiness for its own sake, which our ultimate end, whatever it is, must satisfy. Utilitarians start from observing human nature. We shun pain and we seek pleasure. These basic impulses, which we share with other animals, provide the starting point for motivational as well as axiological theories. In the opening sentence of his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Bentham endorses this dual role of pleasure and pain. 'Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do'. Bentham goes on to say that it doesn't matter whether we call it pleasure or happiness (or benefit, or advantage, or good).[2] We end up with a hedonistic, i.e. pleasure-based, conception of happiness which is the source of our obligations both as individuals and as collective agents.

The ancients agree with the utilitarians, although for different reasons, on the paramount role of happiness: they agree, we can say, axiologically. They disagree about the nature of happiness. Contrasting what he calls 'refined people' with the masses, Aristotle says that only 'the coarsest people', see happiness 'as pleasure, and so they like the life of enjoyment'[3]. For Aristotle, a good life will contain pleasure. However, pleasure will be a by-product of developing one's natural capacities, in particular one's rational nature. Doing things well and living well requires the development of the virtues, like courage, justice and benevolence, which are the basis of a human life lived well.

[1] See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (1095a).
[2] Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1781).
[3] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (1095a).

Since the beginning of this century, the utilitarian perspective on happiness has drawn increasing support from economists. Unhappy with monetary measures of how well a society is performing, economists like Richard Layard and Daniel Kahneman have pushed economics towards studying what really matters to people, namely their happiness. What do they mean by happiness? Layard gives the following answer.

> So by happiness I mean feeling good – enjoying life and wanting the feeling to be maintained. By unhappiness I mean feeling bad and wishing things were different. There are countless sources of happiness, and countless sources of pain and misery. But all our experience has in it a dimension that corresponds to how good or bad we feel[4].

Kahneman suggests that we should regularly ask people how they feel on a scale from 1-10 and when we have enough data points, we can answer a question like how happy a person was in a given period[5]. Both Layard and Kahneman refer to Bentham and his hedonic calculus as their inspiration. Layard and his movement 'Action for Happiness' has gained political traction. We see this in the annual World Happiness Report, of which Layard has been a leading author since its inception in 2012, as well as in the UN Declaration 65/309 (2011) which recognizes the motivation to move away from purely monetary measures and encourages government to develop instruments to measure a society's happiness and to focus policy on this aim.

Ancient philosophers have reacted with dismay. Julia Annas reports her amazement that after her book on ancient ethics, *The Morality of Happiness*, appeared, she was added to the 'World Database of Happiness.' The research on happiness and subjective well-being she found there left her unimpressed. 'Philosophers (and some psychologists, too) will find it unsurprising that if you rush to look for empirical measures of an unanalyzed 'subjective' phenomenon, the result will be confusion and banality'[6]. What is her main point against hedonic accounts of happiness? In a slogan, a good life is not built on smiley-face feelings. On Layard's account, who said that happiness is feeling good and that every experience comes with a measurable hedonic

[4] Layard, R. *Happiness, Lessons from a New Science*, p. 16.
[5] See Kahneman, D. *Objective Happiness*.
[6] Annas, J. *Happiness as Achievement*, p. 44.

tone, a good life is made up of happy moments. Annas thinks that such a view would violate ordinary thinking about happiness. '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'[7].

If we accept this criticism, does this mean that we have to accept a broadly Aristotelian account of happiness? By this I mean an account that focuses on familiar things, like strong personal relationships, friendship, engagement and achievement in worthwhile projects, understanding, virtue, meaning, and, on the experiential side, enjoyment and pleasure. A happy life would be a good life that contains all such things in the right measures. Once we have such an inclusive picture of happiness, and it doesn't matter here whether this is exactly what Aristotle had in mind or not, it could happen that gains in one aspect of inclusive happiness compensate for losses in another dimension. Suppose you take on a new role with increased responsibility. To stay close to Aristotle, let us assume that it provides better opportunities for virtue, i.e., for the development and manifestation of your rational capacities. However, your increased responsibility increases your anxiety. On the inclusivist picture, such a trade-off could be for the better. Happiness lost here is compensated for by the happiness gained there due to the exercise of your rational capacities. So, on such a view, you might become happier although you have become more anxious. To many ears, this will sound implausible: You can't become happier whilst feeling less happy.

If we accept this point, we commit ourselves to understanding happiness in psychological terms, and we seem to have come back to a broadly Benthamite conception of happiness. How can we move forward in this debate?

2 THE PUZZLE

The observations made so far are part of a puzzle. The following three claims, all apparently plausible, are jointly inconsistent.

[7] Annas, J. *Happiness as Achievement*, p. 45.

The first claim pertains to the significance of happiness. What more can I want for my children than that they live happy lives? If I have lost contact with them – suppose I have to live in solitary confinement – and I am told that their lives are happy, I will be reassured, and I can stop worrying about them. When you wish someone 'Happy Birthday' or 'A Happy New Year' your wishes are not restricted to one specific aspect of the lives of those you wish well. You don't leave anything out in such wishes. If you add 'and stay healthy' to your wish you specify your wish rather than add to it. In this way, calling a life 'happy' provides an inclusive positive overall evaluation. This matches the characteristics Aristotle thought *eudaimonia* to have. 'A self-sufficient good is that which is taken by itself to make life choice-worthy and lacking in nothing. This is what we take eudaimonia to be'[8]. If we are happy, we lack nothing.

The second claim is based on the observation that you can't become happier by becoming more anxious. It commits one to regard happiness as a psychological feature. Being happy is a way of experiencing one's life. The third claim points out the conflict between the first two claims. An overall evaluation of a life is not restricted to purely psychological facts. A good life needs more than good feelings. Nozick's experience machine famously illustrates this point.

The inconsistent triad (1)-(3) will illuminate debates about happiness.

(1) Happiness is an inclusive overall evaluation of a life. A happy life is a life that goes well.

(2) Being happy is being in a psychological or mental state.

(3) Inclusive evaluations of a life cannot be done in purely psychological terms. For example, for a good life you need friends, not just the feeling of having friends.

We can state the issue like this: The nature of happiness as a psychological state cannot, it seems, capture its claimed overall significance. The debate between the ancient eudaimonists and the utilitarian hedonists shows two different reactions. Whereas a hedonist will accept (1) and (2), he will have to reject (3). In contrast, a

[8] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1097b.

eudaimonist will accept (1) and (3), and, consequently, reject (2). There is, however, a further option: we can hold on to (2) and (3) and reject (1).

A puzzle arises because all the three claims have support in our ordinary thinking about happiness. Thus, any solution of the puzzle will have to explain why a premise that seemed plausible must, ultimately, be rejected. To capture its intuitive pull as far as possible is part of offering a solution to the puzzle.

3 HAYBRON'S VIEW

The rejection of (1), happiness is not an overall evaluation of a life, can take different forms. I will start with Daniel Haybron's view which, read one way, falls into this category. In a nutshell, he thinks that the hedonist and the eudaimonist are both right. However, they are right about different notions of happiness. Eudaimonism is correct when we take happiness to mean something inclusive, like well-being. This will provide us with a concept that evaluates lives overall, which accounts for (1), and it won't be restricted to psychological states, thus validating (3). According to Haybron, there is, in accordance with (2), a different notion of happiness, a purely psychological notion. Such a notion, however, will not be sufficiently inclusive to support (1) or that happiness, thus conceived, would be all that mattered. (Haybron denies (1) when we read happiness psychologically.) His philosophical interest focuses on elucidating this psychological notion.[9] According to Haybron, the debate about happiness between the eudaimonist and the hedonist is a pseudo-debate. They are talking past each other. The concept of happiness is itself ambiguous between a well-being notion and a psychological notion. The eudaimonist makes claims about the former, whereas a hedonist about happiness makes claims about the latter.

[9] Haybron distinguishes a happy life from a meaningful life and both from a morally good life. He offers what he calls an emotional-state view of the psychological notion of happiness. See Haybron, D. *Happiness. A Very Short Introduction* and, for example, Haybron, D. *On Being Happy or Unhappy*. Similar to Haybron's distinction, Daniel Nettle distinguishes between there notions of happiness which he calls level 1 Happiness, level 2 Happiness, and level 3 Happiness, which correspond to hedonism, life-satisfaction views and eudaimonism. See Nettle, D. *Happiness: The science behind your smile*.

At the start of his *Stanford Encyclopedia* entry on Happiness, Haybron explains his view as follows.

> In short, philosophical "theories of happiness" can be about either of at least two different things: well-being, or a state of mind. Accordingly, there are essentially two bodies of philosophical literature about "happiness" and two sets of debates about its nature, though writers often fail to distinguish them. Such failures have generated much confusion, sometimes yielding bogus disagreements that prove to be merely verbal. For instance, some psychologists identify "happiness" with attitudes of life satisfaction while remaining neutral on questions of value, or whether Bentham, Mill, Aristotle, or any other thinker about the good life was correct. Such researchers employ the term in the psychological sense. Yet it is sometimes objected against such claims that life satisfaction cannot suffice for "happiness" because other things, like achievement or knowledge, matter for human well-being. The objectors are confused: their opponents have made no claims about well-being at all, and the two "sides," as it were, are simply using 'happiness' to talk about different things. One might just as sensibly object to an economist's tract on "banks" that it has nothing to say about rivers and streams.

When a friend, who lives close by the river, tells me that his bank has been flooded, I might enquire whether this means that his house is in danger as well or whether he is telling me that our river, the Ouse, has swamped the local NatWest branch (or, possibly, both). Whatever he tells me, I will take his word for it. Take Bentham's claim that happiness, for his purposes, can be equated with pleasant feelings. Happiness, accordingly, is, for Bentham, a purely psychological notion. Nevertheless, Bentham undoubtedly invests happiness with normative significance. It is, after all, the consideration that underlies all acceptable moral rules, and legislators are tasked with making laws that maximize general happiness. Haybron will say that Bentham talks about happiness in the well-being sense; he just has, in his eyes, a wrong view about it. And so, Haybron's insistence that the concept of happiness is ambiguous notwithstanding, philosophical discussion will ensue about how best to understand well-being or, in Bentham's vocabulary, happiness.

Kahneman focuses on what he has called 'instant utility'[10] and later 'experienced utility'[11]. Each experience, he thinks, come with a hedonic tone: it feels more or less pleasant or unpleasant. Because of human biases, for example, we focus on salient features of episodes like the highpoint and the endpoint, memory is not an ideal tool to access hedonic tones over time. Kahneman favours what is called experience sampling. You get a beep every hour or every five minutes and are asked to describe your current experience in terms of its experienced utility. If being asked how you feel is part of your experience, it won't be far-fetched to claim that such observation will influence what is being observed. Brain monitoring, ideally unintrusive, might be the answer to this worry.

> Edgeworth (1881/1967, pp. 98–102) suggested the idea of what he called the 'hedonimeter' – an imaginary instrument, analogous with the barometers used in weather-recording stations, which could measure the level of pleasure or pain that an individual was experiencing at any moment and then plot this as a continuous function of time. The integral under the curve plotted by the hedonimeter would be a measure of the individual's happiness for a given period'[12].

Kahneman is a driving force in the movement of happiness economics. Instead of working with people's preferences, representable by utility functions, economics should re-orientate itself by replacing preferences, or 'decision utilities', by experienced utilities.

Like Kahneman, Layard works with a psychological notion of happiness. Happiness, he said, is feeling good. Why is happiness, thus conceived, important? Layard says, 'No other good besides happiness can convincingly claim to be the ultimate goal'[13]. He claims that 'happiness is the only human experience good in itself"[14]. How should we apply Haybron's distinction between different concepts of happiness to Layard? Layard moves freely between the psychological notion of happiness and the

[10] Kahneman, D. *Objective Happiness*.
[11] Kahneman, D. Sugden, R. *Experienced utility as a standard of policy evaluation*.
[12] Kahneman, D. Sugden, R. *Experienced utility as a standard of policy evaluation* p. 162.
[13] Layard, R. *Happiness, Lessons from a New Science*, p. 123.
[14] Layard, R. *Happiness, Lessons from a New Science*, p. 127.

notion of well-being. The following comes from Layard's more recent book on this topic. 'By wellbeing we mean how you feel about your life, how satisfied you are. We do not mean the external circumstances that affect your wellbeing. We mean the thing that ultimately matters: your inner subjective state – the quality of your life as you experience it, how happy you are'[15].

Since Diener & Diener's famous essay 'Most people are happy,' subjective well-being or SWB has become the central concept in happiness studies: 'Subjective well-being (SWB), referred to colloquially as "happiness", is a person's evaluation of his or her life. This evaluation is both cognitive (e.g., life satisfaction judgments) and affective (pleasant and unpleasant emotional reactions)'[16]. The core question of the World Happiness Report is how far up you are on the Cantril ladder, where the top of the ladder represents the best possible life for you and the bottom the worst, in other words, how happy are you with your life as a whole? Remember what Haybron said, '[...] it is sometimes objected to such claims that life satisfaction cannot suffice for "happiness" because other things, like achievement or knowledge, matter for human well-being. The objectors are confused: their opponents have made no claims about well-being at all, and the two "sides," as it were, are simply using 'happiness' to talk about different things.' In contrast to Haybron's analysis, Layard and De Neve claim that life satisfaction surveys are the best tool to find out about what really matters to people, namely their happiness. He wouldn't accept any conceptual confusion on his part. The 'new and ambitious science of well-being' is of paramount moral and political significance. 'Its results are as relevant to how we conduct our own lives as to how we want policymakers to conduct theirs. But there can be no more important way to think about the future of humanity. If we want a happier world, the science of wellbeing is there to help us'[17].

How can we solve the puzzle posed by the three claims above? Happiness is a psychological notion (2). It is used to evaluate lives (1). Appropriate life evaluations

[15] Layard, R. and De Neve, J.E., *Wellbeing*, p.13.
[16] Diener, E. and Diener, C., *Most people are happy*. p181.
[17] Layard, R. and De Neve, J.E., *Wellbeing*, p.24.

require the consideration of non-psychological features (3). Haybron suggested that adherents of (2) use happiness in one sense and are, thus, not committed to claims (1) and (3), which use happiness in a different sense. The happiness economists will object to this analysis. They use happiness unequivocally. Being happy is being in a psychological state. Nothing matters in itself but being happy. We can object to this comeback of hedonism on philosophical grounds but not, I think, on grounds of conceptual confusion. Kahneman mentions the rejection of hedonism as one of the main objections to his approach: 'human well-being may be thought to depend, not only on the sum of moment-by-moment affective experiences, as measured by an Edgeworthian hedonimeter, but also on other aspects of life, such as autonomy, freedom, achievement, and the development of deep interpersonal relationships, which cannot be decomposed into momentary affective experiences.'[18] Thus, Haybron's dissolution of the puzzle via the disambiguation of its central notion, has limited appeal. It would need to insist on an authoritarian interpretation of what happiness economists really mean. However, when we encounter real ambiguity, as in the case of the friend living close to a river, such an interpretation would not be plausible.

My second observation on Haybron's attempt to dissolve the puzzle expresses a different meta-philosophical attitude. Often philosophical problems arise because philosophical reflection shows that our practices contain common-sense commitments that are in real or at least in apparent tension with each other. We see ourselves as free and responsible agents. We know we are part of nature, and we also know that nature is governed by its own laws. When we ask how we can be free, would it be helpful to distinguish a compatibilist from an incompatibilist notion of freedom, so that in a debate between these views participants are really talking past each other because the notion of freedom is, one might claim, ambiguous? To take another example. Is what we ought to do determined by the features of the situation we find ourselves in, as GE Moore thought, or is it determined by the agent's take on the situation, as HA Pritchard argued? The stance of practical reflection is captured by the question, what should I do

[18] Kahneman, D. Sugden, R. *Experienced utility as a standard of policy evaluation* p.176.

in the situation I find myself in? Philosophers like AC Ewing (and his present-day followers), who suggested that we need to distinguish between different notions of ought, the subjective and the objective ought in particular, deny that the presupposition of practical thought, namely that there are answers to our practical questions, is in place. Disambiguation would undermine philosophical reflection. Given this meta-philosophical attitude, it seems that continuing the search for an answer to our puzzle without distinguishing different concepts of happiness is worthwhile. This will bring me to the second attempt of denying the first premise. It is inspired by Nozick's remarks on happiness in *The Examined Life*, though I will only mention Nozick at the very end.

4 HAPPINESS AS AN EMOTION

Building on the work of Charles Darwin, Paul Ekman has argued that there are six basic emotions which are to be explained in terms of their evolutionary function, and which are shared by all people. They are anger, fear, disgust, surprise, sadness, and joy or happiness.[19] 'Emotions', Ekman says, 'are a process, a particular kind of automatic appraisal influenced by our evolutionary and personal past, in which we sense that something important to our welfare is occurring, and a set of psychological changes and emotional behaviors begins to deal with the situation'[20]. Seeing happiness as an emotion will help to address our puzzle. For my purposes, the details of Ekman's account don't matter, nor will I be able to engage in a general discussion about the philosophy of emotions. There is one aspect I will rely upon: emotions have conditions of appropriateness; they can be appropriate or inappropriate. Fear is an appropriate response to danger, anger to injustice, surprise to the unexpected, and happiness is appropriate when one is confronted with good news, either about one's own situation or about things one cares about. Appropriateness requires emotions to be about something; they are based on perceptions of environmental changes and come with

[19] See Ekman, P. and Friesen, W.V., *Constants across cultures in the face and emotion* for Ekman's early work. See also Ekman, P., Dalgleish, T. and Power, M., *Basic emotions*.
[20] https://www.paulekman.com/universal-emotions/

their distinctive phenomenological character. Experiencing an emotion feels like something which in turn triggers a subject's responses to the perceived change.

When I argued for (1), namely that happiness can be used as an overall evaluation of a life, I said that wishing you happiness is meant to leave nothing out. This created a tension with the claim that leading a happy life requires more than just being in certain psychological states. The idea of appropriate happiness relieves this tension. Happiness will only be appropriate when its conditions of appropriateness have been met, i.e., when it is a response to good things happening to you. This assures that a happy life, when happiness is an appropriate reaction to a life's features, will contain the non-psychological material commonly associated with good lives. Our puzzle has been solved. Happiness is a purely psychological notion. It names an emotion which the hedonists rightly pointed out, feels good. However, when we use it to evaluate lives or situations in general, we presuppose that the conditions which make happiness appropriate are in place. Appropriate happiness measures the goodness of lives, and appropriate happiness goes beyond the psychological. When I am told that my children are happy, I don't see them being drugged or in other ways made happy by artificial means. I am relieved because I understood being happy as being appropriately happy. They laugh with their friends or, if they have any, with their own children. They do things they find worthwhile. They see the world as it is, and luckily, what they see makes them happy.

I said earlier that eudaimonists and hedonists differ in their understanding of happiness but agree on its value. Kant thought that although everyone aims at one's happiness, being happy has only conditional value[21]. For him, the good will is the condition under which happiness is valuable. Structurally the approach offered here follows Kant. Human happiness is only conditionally valuable. The condition of its value, in the approach offered here, is not a good will, as it is in Kant, it rather is that the emotion is appropriate.

[21] See Kant's *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals*.

Seeing happiness as an emotion has the following three advantages. Two of those have to do with the evolutionary story behind emotions. Our ability to have emotions has evolutionary advantages. Consider, for example, the flight response which is part of fear or the general bodily activation which happens when gripped by anger. Negative emotions, like fear or anger, are an important part of our behavioral repertoire to deal with a world that doesn't always align with what we wish for. The first advantage of the view defended here is that it allows negative emotions, like fear or anger, to play a positive role. The evolutionary psychologist Randolph Nesse points out that 'Anxiety is not an enemy to be fought, but a protective signal that alerts us to potential danger. [...] the presence of bad feelings is most reliably associated with defenses, not defects'[22]. The flipside of this view is that positive emotions can play a negative role. In her essay 'The Dark Side of Happiness,' June Gruber argues that '... happiness can be a source of dysfunction if it is experienced in the wrong amount, at the wrong time, or in the wrong way'[23].

You run away from what you fear, you seek what makes you happy. If you find it, you linger on. You extend the time you spend in a happy situation. After a while, your happiness recedes, and you look for new opportunities. If you lose what you cherish you react with sadness. Activity drops, your sad expression signals to others your need for support. Like in the positive case, the negative emotion will lift after a while. It's rare to grieve forever. This process, the weakening of both positive and negative emotions over time, is called adaptation. Our happiness returns to its base level. Naturally, this is worrying for hedonists[24]. Regardless of how many goods you throw at people, the happy reaction you aim at instilling in them is fragile and will vanish over time. Although this puts an obstacle into the path of hedonist policies, it is an advantage from an evolutionary point of view to return to your normal setting and seek out new opportunities. If we see happiness as an emotion from an evolutionary perspective, it can explain this process of adaptation. This is the second advantage of this view.

[22] See Nesse, R.M., *Natural selection and the elusiveness of happiness*.
[23] Gruber, J., Mauss, I.B. and Tamir, M. *A dark side of happiness?* p. 222.
[24] See Layard, R. *Happiness and public policy: A challenge to the profession*.

The third advantage arises from the idea that happiness is a response to things happening in your environment. This explains why happiness is best pursued indirectly. To achieve appropriate happiness, you have, normally, to bring about the things to which happiness is an appropriate response. This doesn't mean that one should never work on the response side of things. When normal responses are impaired, one should try to align them with what is happening. Furthermore, our standards for what is good and noteworthy are malleable. A person might be overly ambitious and never quite satisfied. Learning to appreciate what one has got and enjoying the small things in life is advice that should not be excluded when talking about appropriate happiness.

5. NOZICK'S VIEW AND WHERE DID WE GET TO?

There is a tension between the psychological or subjective side of happiness and the objective elements of what it is to lead a happy life. This tension, I have suggested, can be resolved when we consider happiness to be an emotion with conditions of appropriateness that will, often, involve how the world is[25]. To illustrate this claim consider the following example. Your child recovers from an illness. It makes you happy to see him or her running around the house as he or she used to. Such happiness, I have suggested, has a positive impact on your life. It registers that things are improving and are, now, going well.

Robert Nozick embraced the same view, and he expressed it better than I can.

> We want experiences, fitting ones, of profound connection with others, of deep understanding of natural phenomena, of love, of being profoundly moved by music or tragedy, or doing something innovative, experiences very different from the bounce and rosiness of the happy moments. What we want, in short, is a life and a self that happiness is a fitting response to – and then to give it that response[26].

[25] See Sizer, L. *Good and good for you: An affect theory of happiness* for a view that portrays the dialectical situation in a way similar to how I see it. Whereas I emphasize the appropriateness of emotions, she thinks of emotions as embodied states. This should, in her view, overcome the gulf between subjective and objective elements of happiness. She says, 'The embodied nature of emotions illustrates how subjective and objective features interact and constrain each other' (Sizer, L. *Good and good for you: An affect theory of happiness*, p. 146). In her account, seeing happiness as a mood plays a central role.

[26] Nozick, R. The *examined life: Philosophical meditations*, p. 117.

I called this paper 'Towards a unified theory of happiness.' In rejecting Haybron's ambiguity thesis, I have taken a step towards semantic unification. But I admit that there is more to be done.

Nozick distinguishes between three notions of happiness as an emotion, and he adds a happy disposition or mood as a further notion of happiness. The first notion fits best with happiness as an emotion: the sun is shining; it warms you. You are happy about the nice weather after a cold spell. The change you notice triggers happiness as a response. The second notion is the feeling of satisfaction when you take your life to be good now, when things important to you have fallen into place. The third notion applies to your life as a whole. It is this notion that underlies the first claim of the problem I discussed, namely that in calling a life happy we provide an overall evaluation of this life. It is a task for further unification of happiness to show how Nozick's first notion, responding to good news, and this third notion of overall evaluation fit together.

When the sun is out or when your child has recovered, you are confronted with an event that will trigger your positive emotional response. But you cannot, in the same way, relate to your life taken as a whole. You cannot get your whole life into focus. There is simply too much that has happened. So, you focus on salient aspects. You remind yourself of your achievements and your mistakes. Selected focus will lead to a biased evaluation. We are familiar with the fact that good things loom large in our memory and the not so good things are, if this is feasible, pushed towards the periphery. Furthermore, there is a conceptual issue of how one should combine the good and the not so good. When the people who work for the World Happiness Report ask you, how happy you are with your life as a whole, you might struggle to give an answer[27]. You can separate the positive from the negative things that happened to you, but there is no algorithm that puts them back together again. And even if you manage to do this in

[27] Nussbaum makes this point in stronger terms. When pressed to answer an overall evaluative question, she writes, 'Notice here the bullying we encountered before: People are simply told that they are to aggregate experiences of many different kinds into a single whole, and the authority of the questioner is put behind that aggregation' (Nussbaum, M.C. *Who is the happy warrior? Philosophy, happiness research, and public policy*, p.339).

your own way, it seems to be a reflective evaluation rather than a direct emotional response. This is a problem a unified theory of happiness would need to address.

Furthermore, when we consider the approach taken here which talks about appropriate happiness it is left open how much force these conditions of appropriateness have and should have. Take a person whose circumstances are not good, at least compared to our own circumstances, who is nevertheless happy. Should we criticize or admire this person? Should we say that this person's happiness is inappropriate; that it doesn't reflect the person's real circumstances and that such misguided or empty happiness doesn't make this person's life better? Or should we think the opposite and claim that being happy with what one has got, even when it is little and certainly less than what others have got, is making the best of circumstances which are not ideal. Amartya Sen takes the former approach, when he criticizes subjective accounts of well-being with his examples of the happy slave or the oppressed housewife who has identified with her role. The latter approach fits our response when we see the smiling face of Matthieu Ricard, the molecular biologist who became a Buddhist monk, who, let us assume, makes the most out of less than we have. On a general level, this issue can be pressed further. Being happy is feeling good, so should we not be happy with our feeling this way, regardless of whether it is appropriate or not?

6 CONCLUSION

I have presented a puzzle, an inconsistent triad of claims, which allows us to see debates about the nature and significance of happiness as different reactions to this puzzle. I have claimed that seeing happiness as an emotion helps us to solve this puzzle. Emotions can be appropriate or inappropriate. Happiness is an appropriate reaction to good news. Focusing on appropriate happiness allows us to combine the psychological side of happiness – how being happy feels – with its non-psychological aspects – a happy life needs more than feeling great. Nozick, I said, held the same view. I engaged with Haybron's suggestion that talk of

happiness suffers from an inherent ambiguity. In rejecting his suggestion, I have taken a step towards a unified account of happiness. I have argued for unity on the semantic level. In the last section, I indicated that this leaves some matters unaccounted for. How should one react to all this? And which reaction would be appropriate? I need the help of others to answer these questions.

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