

TOWARDS A COMPLETE ACCOUNT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL HAPPINESS

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Abstract

Psychological happiness can be defined as a profound state of mind which figures strongly in our prudential evaluations and deliberations. I believe that current theories of happiness describe a state of mind that is either ubiquitous, but not as profound as we take happiness to be, or profound, but not as ubiquitous as we take happiness to be. The most plausible theory of psychological happiness currently on offer – the affective state theory – is inadequate in that it fails to make the right distinction between those affects that contribute towards happiness (happiness-constituting affects) and those that do not contribute towards happiness (non-happiness constituting affects). I believe that the correct distinction between happiness-constituting affects and non-happiness-constituting affects is that only affects based on a person's values are happiness-constituting; it is the relationship between happiness and our values that makes happiness so prudentially valuable.

A complete theory of happiness must provide an account of how psychological happiness relates to our prudential values. In this paper I begin to develop the sentiment satisfaction theory of psychological happiness, which is the view that happiness is constituted by affects based on our values, and that our values are constituted by our sentiments. Sentiments are dispositions to experience various emotions and moods; the emotions and moods that are caused by our sentiments can be viewed as expressions of our sentiments (or values). Positive emotions and moods constitute sentiment satisfaction; negative emotions and moods constitute sentiment frustration. I suggest, then, that we can view happiness as consisting in the positive emotions and moods that constitute sentiment satisfaction. Furthermore, instances of sentiment satisfaction are tied together by our underlying emotional dispositions and the effect that

emotions have on our motivation towards further instances of sentiment satisfaction.

What is (/are) this (/these) thing(s) we call happiness?!

To illustrate the sort of problems that occur with the term ‘happiness’, consider certain findings from the so-called ‘science of happiness’ or ‘science of subjective well-being’ (consisting mainly of empirical researchers from psychology and economics). Researchers suggest that having children does not make one significantly happy, or conversely, that becoming disabled does not make one significantly unhappy (Gilbert, 2006). To most people, this seems intuitively wrong. Therefore, a common rejoinder from philosophers (and laypersons) to such claims is that empirical researchers are not “really” talking about happiness, or at least, not the kind of happiness that we care about, but something else altogether (which is not so important).

The question remains, though, whether such empirical researchers are using a different conception of happiness, or a different concept of happiness. Some concepts, particularly ‘big’ concepts such as happiness, justice, and race, while generally understood, may be unclear. There is no shared clear definition of them. A ‘conception’ is a particular understanding or articulation of the concept in question. For example, empirical researchers often identify happiness with self-reported overall life satisfaction; ‘life satisfaction’ is a conception of the concept of happiness. Alternatively, empirical researchers sometimes identify happiness with one’s balance of pleasure over displeasure, or one’s overall hedonic tone; ‘hedonism’ is another conception of the concept of happiness. A ‘profound state of mind’ and ‘a life that is good for someone’, however, do not offer different conceptions of the concept of happiness; they are different concepts altogether. Presumably, life satisfaction theorists and hedonists could both be offering different conceptions of ‘a profound state of mind’ without making any claims as to what constitutes ‘a life that is good for someone’.

Haybron (2008) argues that ‘happiness’ has at least two important senses in philosophical usage, which he calls ‘*psychological* happiness’ and ‘*prudential* happiness.’ These senses denote different concepts, used by different theorists to refer to different things, which each has several competing conceptions. When two people talk about happiness it is not obvious, according to Haybron, whether they are talking about the same thing; they may be using the same term, but they may be using that term to refer to different subject matters altogether (Haybron, 2003).

'Psychological happiness' refers to a broad and long-lasting aspect of an individual's state of mind. This is to be distinguished from the discrete emotion happiness. 'Happiness' is often used to denote one of the garden-variety emotions, similar in affect to the emotion of joy; it fits naturally alongside other typical emotions such as disgust, envy, sadness, shame, anger, jealousy, fear, surprise, and so on. Such emotions are episodic, or occur in response to a particular event. Psychological happiness, in contrast, is a long-term psychological state, which is generally considered to be central to an individual's well-being. It is not, however, to be identified with well-being. We say things such as "I just want my children to be healthy and happy," suggesting that there is more to well-being than psychological happiness.

Moreover, 'psychological happiness' is essentially descriptive, rather than normative. Its use is often thought to involve no more commitment to matters of value than the use of terms such as 'tranquility' or 'depression': one could reasonably say that a person is psychologically happy even though her life is dismal.

'Prudential happiness', on the other hand, does identify happiness with well-being. If you have ever thought about whether it would be better for you to have a different career, get married, or make some other major life change, then you have wondered about your own well-being (Tiberius, 2008). If you have considered how to respond to the needs or wants of another person (a dependent, spouse, or friend) for his or her sake, then you have thought about the well-being of others. In this sense, well-being is one of the main goals of life for individuals and of social policy for governments and aid agencies. Our interest in well-being is fundamentally practical (Haybron, 2003). We want to know what it is so that we can achieve it for ourselves and help others to achieve their own.

Things that affect our well-being are prudentially valuable – they have prudential value. When we speak of a good friend, a good meal or a good plan we are often guided by our ideas about what is prudentially valuable *for* this or that person (Kraut, 2007). The prudential value of a thing concerns how good the thing is for someone or something (Griffin, 1986). Prudential value is considered to be only one of the many kinds of 'life-value'; a person's life may be going well, but lack other valuable properties such as aesthetic value, perfectionist value, or ethical value (Sumner, 1996). An individual's life may be going well for them, for instance, but not going well in general.¹

¹ Indeed, in earlier work, Haybron identifies an additional kind of usage of the term 'happiness', namely 'perfectionist happiness' (Haybron, 2000). In contrast to referring to a profound state of mind (psychological

To ascribe prudential happiness to people, then, is to say that their lives are going well for them. It is to make a value judgement about their lives. Haybron (2000) argues that this usage is the most natural reading of talk about leading a *happy life*, as opposed to *being happy*; being happy is simply a profound state of mind, but having a happy life involves an evaluation of how one's life is going. To find out what makes people prudentially happy is to find out what sort of things make people's lives go better for them. In principle, it is possible that we could find this out without considering related psychological matters at all. The use of 'happiness' to discuss pre-modern philosophy almost always takes this prudential meaning, as when it is employed to translate 'eudaimonia'. Aristotle's theory of happiness, therefore, is a theory of prudential happiness (Haybron, 2008).

In sum, I think that we have reason to believe that the term 'happiness' refers to at least two conceptually different things: 'a profound state of mind' and 'a life that is good for someone'. This paper is concerned only with the former concept – happiness as a profound state of mind, or psychological happiness. Haybron further claims that psychological happiness provides us with a primary philosophical concept of happiness in that it is psychological happiness (a particular profound state of mind) that we typically refer to in our use of the term (Haybron, 2003). If we want to talk about prudential happiness, he suggests, we would be better off using the term 'well-being'. Psychological happiness, on the other hand, is worth talking about in its own right. We care about the profound state of mind that we call 'happiness' in our practical deliberations and evaluations. An account of happiness, therefore, should focus on trying to provide a descriptively adequate account of this state of mind.

I do not believe that current theories of psychological happiness adequately describe the profound state of mind that we use the term 'happiness' to refer to. In short, I believe that current theories of psychological happiness describe a state of mind that is either ubiquitous, but not as profound as we take happiness to be, or profound, but not as ubiquitous as we take happiness to be. In the next section I briefly review the three main theories currently on offer.

A short overview of current theories of psychological happiness

Philosophers have traditionally distinguished two accounts of (psychological) happiness:

happiness), or 'a life that is good for someone' (prudential happiness), perfectionist happiness refers to 'a life that is good in general'. This is perhaps most clearly seen in ancient works, whereby the term 'the good life' (that is, a life that is good in general) is often used synonymously with the term 'a happy life' (Annas, 1993).

hedonism, and the *life satisfaction* theory. Hedonists identify happiness with the individual's balance of pleasant over unpleasant experience (Brandt, 1979; Kahneman et al., 1999). The hedonist about happiness need not accept the stronger doctrine of welfare hedonism, the view that identifies well-being with the individual's balance of pleasant over unpleasant experience (Crisp, 2006; Feldman, 2004; Layard, 2005).²

Life satisfaction theorists identify happiness with having a favourable attitude toward one's life as a whole. This basic schema can be filled out in a variety of ways, but typically involves some sort of global judgment, an endorsement or affirmation of one's life as a whole (McFall, 1989; Nozick, 1989; Tatarkiewicz, 1976; Telfer, 1980). This judgment may be more or less explicit, and may involve or accompany some form of affect (Sumner, 1996). It may also involve or accompany some aggregate of judgments about particular items or domains within one's life (Diener, 2008).

Haybron's *emotional state* view (which he calls an "*affective state*" theory) departs from hedonism in a different way: instead of identifying happiness with pleasant experience, it identifies happiness with an agent's emotional condition as a whole (Haybron, 2001). This entails two distinctions. First, the emotional state view focuses on emotions and moods rather than pleasure. Second, the emotional state view is concerned with global rather than local emotional states i.e., one's overall emotional state in contrast to particular emotional or pleasurable episodes. It might also include a person's *propensity* for experiencing various emotions and moods. Happiness on such a view is more nearly the opposite of depression or anxiety, whereas hedonistic happiness is simply opposed to unpleasantness (Haybron, 2005).

Problems with current theories of happiness

As mentioned in the previous section, the two best-known accounts of what happiness is are the *life satisfaction* and *hedonistic* theories. I do not think that either theory is adequate. In this section, I will go through both in turn, highlighting the problems with each view. I will then look at the most plausible theory of happiness currently on offer, Haybron's *affective state* theory, which accounts for the problems faced by life satisfaction and hedonistic theories. I believe that the affective state theory, however, fails to account

² Hedonism about (psychological) happiness should also be distinguished from psychological hedonism – the view that all action aims at pleasure – and normative hedonism – the view that the only thing of intrinsic value is pleasure.

for the prudential relevance (or, perhaps better, the prudential importance) of happiness; a complete theory needs to provide an account of how psychological happiness relates to our prudential values.

Life satisfaction theories

According to life satisfaction theories, happiness consists in holding an overall positive appraisal or endorsement of your life. Such assessments are *global* judgments in the sense that they are supposed to be reports about life overall, not just a particular aspect of one's life, or life at a very specific time. Further, these assessments are *about* how one's life is going: they are not simple expressions of mood or desire; rather, they represent an evaluation of one's life as a whole. Finally, these judgments are not purely cognitive; they include an affective component of approval or satisfaction (or disapproval/dissatisfaction).

At first glance, it seems plausible to identify happiness with life satisfaction. If the subject does not find politics to be as important as poetry to how happy she is, then the life satisfaction view will place more value on poetry in its assessment. This seems correct – if something does not affect how we assess our lives, then how could it affect our happiness? Life satisfaction theorists, therefore, identify happiness with life satisfaction. Our level of life satisfaction does not merely correlate with our level of happiness. Rather, our overall life satisfaction constitutes our happiness.

In this sense, judgements of our overall life satisfaction can be thought of as authoritative assessments of our happiness. However, I think we have many reasons to doubt the supposed authority of life satisfaction judgements. I will consider one reason here, which I consider to be significant.³ That is, judgements of our overall life satisfaction are made from a perspective that is highly context-sensitive. A context-sensitive view of happiness would maintain that happiness is not just sensitive to the most important features of a subject's life, but also to the current practical interests and circumstances of the subject.

3 Another serious reason to doubt the identification of life satisfaction with happiness, which I am unable to deal with here, is that even though judgements of life satisfaction involve an affective component of approval or satisfaction (or disapproval/dissatisfaction) there are many counterexamples in which life satisfaction and emotional state sharply diverge. Haybron (2007) provides the example of a tortured artist who might think emotional matters unimportant, or even that it is good to be depressed, and thus be satisfied with her life. Her life is going well by her lights, as she is getting and doing what matters to her. Proponents of the life satisfaction theory may in fact see such examples as an attraction of the life satisfaction view – if the tortured artist is satisfied with her life then who are we to say that she is not really happy? But, I agree with Haybron in thinking that it is more natural to say that such a person is not happy, but in her values has rejected happiness in favour of having high life satisfaction.

However, this is not how we employ the notion of happiness in deliberating and evaluating over our practical concerns. We consider our level of happiness to be indicative of how well the most important features of our lives are going, not merely a reflection of our current practical interests and circumstances. It may be that life satisfaction judgments overly reflect how well we are doing in respect to our current practical interests and circumstances, in contrast to the most important features of our lives.

Anyone who reflects on this matter can probably recall making different assessments of how his or her life is going depending on the perspective from which one is making the judgement. Probably all of us have, for instance, assessed our lives from what might be called the “perspective of gratitude”: looking at our lives vis-à-vis those less fortunate than ourselves: the poor, the afflicted, or the dead (Tiberius, 2008). But sometimes we consider our lives from a “Stoic” perspective, in relation to those whom we most admire: am I living as well as I should, making the most of my life? (Annas, 1993) Which perspective we take is highly context-sensitive; it depends on our practical interests and circumstances as well as the most important features of our lives (Kahneman, 1999; Schwarz & Strack, 1999).

We take a perspective when we make assessments of how our lives are going, or when we make specific judgments in the service of deciding, choosing or planning (Tiberius, 2008). Because our attention to various things that are important to us waxes and wanes, and because our particular circumstances can make some things seem more important at a particular time, we can change our perspective and it can also be manipulated or changed for us. For example, a person who has just overcome a threat to her health might evaluate her life from a perspective in which health is very important and she might think that her life is going very well. At another time, when she is equally healthy, but the value of health has become less vivid to her, she may think that life is going less well.

Therefore, the life satisfaction theorist might claim, only judgements made after drawing a subject’s attention to the facts that are most relevant to her core commitments or values are authoritative of the subject’s happiness. This forces the subject to take a more accurate perspective on her life; it forces her to pay attention to certain things that she might otherwise ignore or downplay. For example, a person who values physical health more than money will think about her good fortune as compared to others with respect to health, and will not dwell as much on facts about how her possessions compare to what the Joneses have.

However, this proposal suffers from the problem that such judgements are rare. That is, we typically do not judge our lives from the ‘correct’ perspective. Rather, studies show that we judge our overall life satisfaction from the point of view of our current ‘practical perspective’ or based on ‘trivial’ facts of our current situation (Schwarz & Strack, 1999). In contrast, states of happiness, unhappiness, and states in between are generally considered to be ubiquitous. We frequently adequately deploy the notion of “happiness” in our prudential evaluations and deliberations. In this sense, for our practical purposes, the less a conception of happiness tends to apply to our lives, the less we ought to care about the conception (Haybron, 2003).

In sum, judgements of life satisfaction frequently diverge, sometimes quite radically, from states of mind that are prudentially useful, that is, states of mind that consistently track how well our lives are actually going. Judgements of life satisfaction often fail to reflect our important values or commitments, as shown by the finding that mood appears to be a more important determinant of life satisfaction reports than judgments of specific domains of life such as work, marriage, etc. (Schwarz & Strack, 1999). Further, attempts to modify the life satisfaction account in order to include only judgements of overall life satisfaction that correlate with our important values render happiness a rare phenomenon. This is both descriptively and practically inadequate. Happiness, unhappiness, and the states in between are generally considered to be ubiquitous. We frequently make adequate use of the notion of happiness in deliberating and evaluating over our practical concerns. Again, for our practical purposes, the less a conception of happiness tends to apply to our lives, the less we ought to care about the conception.

Hedonist theories

According to hedonist theories, happiness is the condition of having a favourable balance of pleasure over displeasure. Hedonism identifies well-being with the individual’s balance of pleasant over unpleasant experience. Such experiences are considered to be ubiquitous; in principle, any experience can be pleasant or unpleasant, depending on how one reacts to it. That is, if one likes, welcomes, or otherwise has the right kind of pro-attitude towards an experience, then such an experience is pleasant (Feldman, 2004). Crisp suggests that the terms ‘enjoyment’ and ‘suffering’ are perhaps better suited than ‘pleasure’ and ‘pain/displeasure’ to denote this broad hedonic aspect of our experiences (Crisp, 2006). Therefore, following this suggestion, hedonists claim that states of enjoyment or suffering directly make us happier or unhappier.

The attraction of hedonism is that enjoyment and suffering seem to be prudentially valuable states of mind (could we make sense of something's being valuable to an individual if nothing ever seemed enjoyable to her or resulted in her suffering?) and so fits with the notion of happiness as a prudentially valuable state of mind. However, I think that we have two reasons to doubt the supposed prudential value of unqualified enjoyment. First of all, hedonistic theories are too inclusive: in its usual incarnations, all enjoyments and sufferings are considered happiness-constituting. Yet pleasures can seem trivial or superficial, making no difference to, or indeed detracting from, how happy we are. Happiness-constituting pleasures are, in some sense, profound, which, by definition, excludes cases of trivial enjoyment.

Hedonists might object, however, that more profound cases of pleasure, such as tranquility or peace of mind, are only more profound in degree, not in kind. That is, non-trivial pleasures consist in either a higher quantity or quality of pleasure, or both. Therefore, trivial pleasures do contribute toward one's happiness, but just not that considerably, and this is to be expected. Indeed, we can imagine cases where so-called trivial pleasures may be exaggerated in such a way that they do have a considerable impact on one's happiness. It is not out of place, for example, for someone to come off a rollercoaster and exclaim, "I am so happy!" despite the fact that the enjoyment of the amusement ride would normally be considered a trivial one.

Despite these considerations, I think that hedonists are still left with a problem. Aside from issues of whether there are lower or higher pleasures, I think that there remain to be cases of enjoyment or suffering that do not contribute towards one's happiness. That is, we can agree with the hedonist in many ways yet still disagree over what affective states are prudentially valuable, and therefore, happiness-constituting. We can agree that a greater quantity or quality of pleasure contributes more to one's happiness than a lesser quantity and quality of pleasure. We can further agree that small quantities of lower pleasures can contribute towards one's happiness, albeit not that much. However, I think that we can still maintain that some pleasures do not contribute towards one's happiness; some pleasures are not prudentially valuable, and therefore not happiness-constituting. A complete theory of happiness needs to provide an account of which states of mind do relate to our prudential values and which do not.

The second reason to doubt the supposed prudential value of unqualified enjoyment is that hedonistic theories are psychologically superficial: hedonism incorporates only the

experiential aspect of our emotional conditions. Yet our emotional states consist in more than just experiences. Our emotional lives are extremely rich, and are not exhausted by their experiential surfaces. They involve unconscious processes of various sorts, and often have physiological components (Prinz, 2004). Recall, again, the paradigm cases of happiness and unhappiness: it is simply not credible to regard them merely as so many experiential episodes. One is unhappy by virtue of being depressed, not by virtue of experiencing the unpleasantness of depression (Haybron, 2001). In short, happiness has depth that is left unaccounted for by hedonism.

Hedonistic theorists might object, however, that one's underlying emotional condition matters to one's happiness because it disposes one to experience enjoyment or suffering. We value our disposition to experience enjoyment in virtue of the enjoyment that occurs as a result of such dispositions. That is, it is one's experience of enjoyment or suffering that is directly happiness-constituting. In this sense, of course one's disposition to experience enjoyment contributes towards one's happiness, but only indirectly, as a means to experience enjoyment in general.

I do not think, however, that this adequately describes how we think about happiness and the effect it has on our lives. A happy person is prone to take greater pleasure in things, to see things in a more positive light, to take greater notice of good things, to be more optimistic, to be more outgoing and friendly, and to take chances more often. She is also slower and less likely to become anxious or fearful, or to be angered or saddened by events. That is, she confronts the world in a different way from the unhappy (Haybron, 2008). We judge such people to be happy without necessarily knowing that they will continue to experience enjoyment in their lives. In short, I think that we regard happiness as a state of being, not merely a state of one's consciousness. Therefore, any adequate conception of happiness must incorporate the deeper elements of one's emotional condition as well as one's experiential episodes. Hedonism fails to do this.

In sum, as a result of reducing happiness to our experiences of enjoyment and suffering, hedonism is both too broad and too narrow. First, its conception of happiness is too broad in that it allows pleasures that we would not consider to make a difference to our happiness to be happiness-constituting. Second, its conception of happiness is too narrow in that it fails to account for our underlying emotional condition – our dispositions to experience enjoyment and suffering. We think of happiness as an indication of how well we are doing in our lives, not merely a collection of experiences.

Affective state theories

Haybron (2005) draws upon the two problems of hedonism highlighted above (and others) in the development of the affective state view, which takes happiness to consist in a subject's emotional state. According to the affective state theory, if one's emotional state is basically positive, one is happy.

The affective state theory differs from hedonism, therefore, in two important ways. First, as we have just seen, hedonistic accounts tend to count all pleasures as happiness-constituting, whereas affective state theories exclude physical and intellectual pleasures except insofar as these have emotional aspects (e.g., reactions of liking or wanting). They may also exclude trivial emotional pleasures, focusing only on comparatively deep or strong emotions, or even solely on moods. Second, affective state theories can incorporate subjects' dispositions to have emotions and moods; these obviously aren't experiences of any sort. In sum, an affective state theory of happiness maintains that happiness is constituted by one's most prudentially important, or *central*, affective states, and by one's *propensities* to have central affective states (Haybron, 2005).

I think that the affective state theory is the most plausible theory of happiness currently on offer. It is descriptively and practically adequate in that it conceives of happiness as a long-lasting, prudentially important state of mind, which is universal, ubiquitous and (to a certain extent) epistemically accessible. However, I do not think that it offers us a complete theory of happiness. I will build on the problems of the affective state theory more fully in the development of my own theory, the sentiment satisfaction view, below. For now, I will briefly discuss and draw attention to the limitations of the main feature of the affective state view, namely that happiness is constituted by central affective states.

Haybron's distinction between central (prudentially significant) and peripheral (prudentially trivial) affective states – centrality of affect – concerns whether a given affect involves one's emotional condition (Haybron, 2005). Some affective states are psychologically profound, or central, whereas others are comparatively superficial, or peripheral. Affective states such as feeling "in the zone," being in an expansive mood, delighted with one's life, or blessed with a sense of fulfillment or well-being, are all central affective states; they all alter our emotional conditions while they last. In contrast, physical pains and pleasures, such as the suffering of an irritating itch or the enjoyment of eating a cracker are peripheral affective states.

Haybron argues that our ordinary talk of the central/peripheral distinction signifies a genuine, and important, distinction in our emotional lives. For instance, we talk of something's not just amusing or annoying you, but "getting to you," "bringing you down," "lifting you up," "moving" you, "perturbing" or "disturbing" you, and so on. Conversely, something might just "bounce right off you": any emotional reaction you have is small, swift, and quickly forgotten. Haybron also notes that we say things like "I *am* depressed," or "I *am* happy," in contrast with "I am *experiencing* pleasure". In this sense, we can identify with our central affective states, but not with our peripheral states. In a similar vein, many central affective state terms can be adapted to denote personality traits: we have depressive, anxious, serene, cheerful, and happy personalities; we do not speak of annoyed, amused, or pained personalities. Haybron claims that our propensities to experience central affective states are literally "a part of who we are: the self." (Haybron, 2008, p.184).

I agree with Haybron that affective states with such hallmarks tend to be happiness-constituting, and I think he is right to emphasize their importance for a theory of happiness. Furthermore, Haybron often identifies central affective states with moods. It seems plausible that moods or "mood-constituting" affects make us either happy or unhappy in that moods are considered to be essentially prudential (Lazarus, 1992; Goldie, 2000; Prinz, 2004). However, whereas hedonism was too broad in that it failed to make any distinction between happiness-constituting affects and non-happiness-constituting affects, I think that the affective state theory is not broad enough. That is, I think that the central/peripheral distinction may be unnecessarily restrictive, dismissing so-called 'trivial' affective states that may in fact be happiness-constituting.

The problem with the central/peripheral distinction is that, beyond linguistics and phenomenology, it is not obvious what central affective states consist in. What is the psychological difference between happiness-constituting affects (central affective states) and non-happiness-constituting affects (peripheral affects), according to Haybron? Here he is deliberately vague, and offers five hallmarks of central affective states rather than a precise definition. First, what primarily distinguishes central affective states is that they dispose agents to experience certain affects rather than others. That is, while they last they amount to something much like short-lived alterations in one's temperament, or personality. For example, a deep contentment disposes one to enjoy things, and not to become upset over minor events. Second, central affective states are productive in that they cause many and various other states, such as other affective states, physiological changes, biases in cognition, and so on. Third, central affective states tend to be persistent

or long lasting. Fourth, they are often pervasive in that they are non-specific in character, seemingly providing what Lazarus would call “the existential background of our lives” (Lazarus, 1992). Finally, central affective states are profound; profundity is what we have in mind when we speak of something’s “getting to” us. (Haybron, 2005)

This is all fair enough, but I do not think that any of these features of central affective states offers us the distinction between happiness-constituting affects and non-happiness-constituting affects that we are looking for. Happiness-constituting affects seem to have non-instrumental prudential value. Happiness is generally considered key to wellbeing – high on the list of things that are most important to human welfare. That is, after all, largely why we place so much importance on it in our deliberations and evaluations of individuals’ conditions. People frequently organize their lives around what they think will make them happy. Happiness-constituting affects, therefore, should directly contribute, in some way, towards our well-being. The distinction we are looking for between non-happiness-constituting affects and happiness-constituting affects, then, is the distinction between affects which directly make a difference towards our well-being and those that do not.

The last hallmark of central affective states, provided by Haybron, does come close toward providing us with the nature of this distinction: happiness-constituting affects are, in some sense, profound. But Haybron does not provide us with any further reasons why central affective states are profound. As such, he fails to adequately describe what is going on in the paradigm cases of happiness listed above. Feeling contented, or at peace, or in high spirits, feels positively profound for a reason. Likewise, feeling depressed, or anxious, or compressed, feels negatively profound for a reason. An adequate theory of happiness should be able to provide an answer to the question: For what reason does something (fail to) contribute towards a subject’s happiness or unhappiness?

I think that we can find the beginnings of an answer to this question in the life satisfaction theory of happiness. Judgements of life satisfaction seem to carry authority over one’s happiness because they are based on one’s *values*. If a subject really does not value politics, but does value poetry, then only poetry will affect his reported life satisfaction. Although we have already cast doubt on the supposed authority of one’s judgements of life satisfaction, I think that the appeal to one’s values in evaluating one’s happiness is largely correct. I believe that it is because one’s affective states are in some sense connected to one’s values that they feel so profound. Therefore, I further believe that it is because one’s

affective states are in some sense connected to one's values that they contribute toward one's happiness.

Through failing to restrict affective states in the right way, Haybron overly restricts the kinds of affects that contribute toward one's happiness. That is, I believe that there are many affective states that are based on our values, and therefore, contribute towards our happiness, but would not be considered central affective states as described by Haybron. We can feel a mild sense of achievement, for example, from making progress towards an important goal, but such feelings would not necessarily constitute a central affective state. Despite the fact that we care about such feelings, our mild sense of achievement may not dispose us toward experiencing other central affective states or be as productive, persistent or pervasive as Haybron claims central affective states tend to be. Therefore, the hallmarks of central affective states are not necessary for an affective state to contribute toward one's happiness. What is necessary for an affective state to be happiness-constituting is that it must be based on our values.

Under such a distinction, I think that many of Haybron's 'peripheral' or 'trivial' affective states may indeed contribute towards one's happiness, albeit by a very small amount. The contribution an affective state makes toward one's happiness is a matter of degree: the more prudentially important the value on which the affective state is based, the more the affective state contributes toward one's happiness. This explains why the paradigm cases of happiness and unhappiness tend to make such a difference toward one's level of happiness. We experience feelings of tranquility when our most important values are not being frustrated in any sense; we experience anxiety when our most important values are under threat, and so on. I will explore the connection between our affective states and our values more fully in the development of my sentiment satisfaction account of happiness. For now, it is enough to realize that the distinction between affective states that contribute toward our happiness, and those that do not, is grounded in our values. Affective state theories fail to realize this, and therefore do not provide an adequate account of happiness-constituting states.

To conclude, I believe that the two main constituents of affective state theories, central affective states and propensities to have central affective states, point toward the two most important constituents of happiness. In this sense, I think that Haybron's affective state theory is the most plausible pre-existing theory of happiness. However, I have argued that Haybron's conception of happiness-constituting affects is incomplete. The appeal to

mood or mood-constituting affects fails to sufficiently account for the important aspects of happiness-constituting affects, namely that they are based on our values. I will now attempt to build upon these problems in the development of my own theory of happiness, the sentiment satisfaction theory.

Towards a complete theory of psychological happiness

Let us sum up the argument so far. Psychological happiness can be defined as a profound state of mind, which figures strongly in our prudential evaluations and deliberations. I believe that current theories of happiness describe a state of mind that is either ubiquitous, but not as profound as we take happiness to be, or profound, but not as ubiquitous as we take happiness to be. The most plausible theory of psychological happiness currently on offer – the affective state theory – is inadequate in that it fails to make the right distinction between the affects that contribute toward happiness (happiness-constituting affects) and affects that do not contribute toward happiness (non-happiness constituting affects). I believe that the correct distinction between happiness-constituting affects and non-happiness-constituting affects is that only affects based on a person's values are happiness-constituting; it is the relationship between happiness and our values that makes happiness so prudentially valuable.

A complete theory of happiness must provide an account of how psychological happiness relates to our prudential values, that is, the things we care about, attach importance to, regard as mattering, and so on. In this section, I will briefly outline a potential account.

Now, there are many possible accounts of the sort of pro-attitudes that are connected to our values. It may be, for example, that we receive pleasure or enjoyment from the things that we value, or that we value all the things that we desire. I have already discussed the problems of hedonism above, and believe that similar problems can be raised in relation to desire-satisfaction theories. That is, I do not think that enjoyment or desire-satisfaction (or indeed life satisfaction, or central affective states) are necessarily connected to the things that a person cares about. More sophisticated accounts of the kind of subjective state that is plausibly connected with a person's concerns are possible; for instance, it may be our endorsed pro-attitudes, that is, the enjoyments or desires with which we identify which matter in terms of our values. I welcome such accounts. However, I do not think that those of these accounts currently on offer successfully provide us with a plausible connection between a certain kind of subjective state and our values. Unfortunately, I cannot fully justify this claim here. What I can do is offer the beginnings of an account

that I think can do this work. My account identifies our sentiments (that is, our emotional dispositions) with our values. It is called the ‘sentiment satisfaction theory’ of happiness.

The sentiment satisfaction theory

The sentiment satisfaction theory takes happiness to consist in the satisfaction of one’s sentiments and one’s underlying disposition for sentiment satisfaction. One could view such an account as a modified version of the affective state theory reviewed above. The rough idea behind the account is that happiness is constituted by the on-going fulfillment of one’s values, which are, in turn, constituted by the on-going fulfillment of one’s emotional dispositions. I will begin by defining what sentiments are and why they are essentially linked to our values, and then explain what I take sentiment satisfaction and one’s underlying disposition for sentiment satisfaction to consist in.

Sentiments are states such as cares, likes and dislikes, loves and hates. These are all affective dispositions (Prinz, 2004). Liking something is being disposed to feel certain emotions about that thing. If you like something, interactions with it should cause joy or other positive affects; conversely for dislikes. In this sense, sentiments are always dispositions. Sentiments manifest themselves as an emotion that one experiences.

Sentiments can manifest themselves in a variety of different emotional states. If you like someone, then you experience joy in her presence. But you may also experience excitement when anticipating your next encounter, sadness when you are apart, distress when she is harmed, and so on. Alternatively, if you dislike someone, you may experience anger, disgust, or contempt in her presence. You may even experience ‘Schadenfreude’ when she falls victim to misfortune.

The sentiment satisfaction theory is a new theory of happiness. This is, in part, due to the fact that sentiments have received relatively little attention in the philosophical literature. Attention has been traditionally focused on other psychological states such as desire and pleasure. I think that sentiments are important, however, because they provide a link between our affective states and our values (Prinz, 2007). In the previous section, I claimed that the distinction between happiness-constituting affective states and non-happiness-constituting affective states is grounded in our values; only affective states based on our values contribute towards our happiness. I believe that our values are based on our sentiments in such a way that only affective states based on our sentiments contribute toward our happiness.

A view which grounds our prudential values in our sentiments is a *sentimentalist* view of prudential value (McDowell; 1987; Wiggins, 1987; Prinz, 2007). I believe that sentimentalism can be defended by a host of intuitions (and further empirical evidence in favour of such intuitions) that emotions are both necessary and sufficient for making prudential judgements, and that our prudential judgements refer to properties that have the power to cause such emotions in us. That is, when we judge someone or something to be good for us, we are referring to the fact that it has the power to reliably cause certain emotions in us; or alternatively put, when we judge someone or something to be good for us, we are referring to the fact that we have a sentiment towards it (Prinz, 2007).

Unfortunately, I am unable to defend prudential sentimentalism here. It is important to note, however, that it is different from expressivist accounts of prudential value, which maintain that prudential judgements do not refer to anything, but merely express the attitudes of those who make them (Blackburn, 1984; Gibbard, 1990). In contrast, I believe that not only do our prudential judgements refer to facts about our emotional dispositions, but also our emotions refer to our concerns (that is, organismic-environmental relations that bear on our well-being: see Prinz, 2004). Thus, contra expressivism, I believe that whenever we experience an emotion that is based on our sentiments, the object of the emotion is taken to be good or bad for us (in that the emotion represents its object as bearing on our concerns). In short, sentimentalism entails that our emotions are essentially linked to what is valuable to us.

We are now in a position to see what sentiment satisfaction consists in. First of all, it is important to note that sentiment satisfaction does *not* simply consist in the emotional manifestation of a sentiment. Experiencing distress when one's partner is far away can be viewed as the manifestation of sentiments of love towards one's partner. However, I do not think that such a manifestation of one's sentiments entails the satisfaction of one's sentiments. Rather, it entails the opposite: one's experience of distress represents that one's sentiments of like or love towards one's partner are being frustrated, not satisfied.

The satisfaction of sentiments is similar to the experienced satisfaction of desires. On one reading, desires can be viewed as a disposition to feel various emotions if the desired state

of affairs comes true.⁴ One may desire wealth in this sense: If wealth comes, one will be pleased; if it doesn't, one will be disappointed or even bitter. The satisfaction of one's desire for wealth will normally result in experiencing positive emotions. I think that the same is true of the satisfaction of one's sentiments. One's liking of or love for one's partner, then, is satisfied through the manifestation of various positive emotions that stand in relation to such a sentiment.⁵

This does not entail that all experiences of positive affect are instances of sentiment satisfaction. That is, positive affect is necessary for sentiment satisfaction, but not sufficient. Only positive emotions and moods based on one's sentiments are instances of sentiment satisfaction. For example, one could be hypnotized to feel joy at something that one would not normally find joyful. This is not an instance of sentiment satisfaction since the joy experienced was not caused by sentiments in long-term memory, but rather by extraneous facts. Such an experience would not be a legitimate expression of one's prudential attitudes. In short, sentiment satisfaction consists in the manifestation of various positive emotions that stand in relation to one's sentiments.

We can now put all these elements together to formulate our theory of happiness. Happiness is constituted by positive emotions and moods based on our values. Our values are constituted by our sentiments – our likes, dislikes, loves, hates, and cares. In this sense, emotions and moods that are caused by our sentiments are based on our values. Positive emotions and moods caused by our sentiments are instances of sentiment satisfaction. Happiness consists in sentiment satisfaction.

An immediate objection to this formulation is that happiness seems to be only based on our most important or broadest values, and not on every one of our values. Some

4 Desires are sometimes taken to be other states of mind, however. I agree with Prinz (2004, p.196) that "desire is not a unitary construct." To desire something is, oftentimes, a motivation to attain it. Yet, we also use the word 'desire' to describe our attitude toward things that we cannot strive to attain, or we use 'desire' to refer to an emotion, or, indeed, as a sentiment such as above.

5 One may object that sentiments cannot be satisfied in the same sense that desires can be. Whereas desires seem to have a world-to-mind direction of fit (the world must be changed, i.e. made to 'fit' the mind, in order for the desire to be satisfied), sentiments may not seem to have this character. I disagree that sentiments do not share the same kind of character as desires in this sense. The objects of a sentiment are represented as either desirable or undesirable in the same way as objects represented by desires; and sentiments provide reasons for action in the same way as desires provide reasons for action. Thus, when we experience positive emotions, based on a sentiment, we can say that the sentiment was satisfied in the relevant sense.

theorists, for instance, believe that happiness seems to emotionally represent our overall condition or how we are faring in general, not how certain things are going in particular (Haybron, 2008). Yet, given how broadly the notion of a sentiment is construed by the sentiment satisfaction theory (that is, any liking, caring etc.), it includes sentiments for specific and trivial things such as either liking or not liking crackers, or loving our spouse and hating our boss. Such sentiments, the objection goes, only contribute toward our happiness so long as they represent how well things are going in general.

If such an objection were to hold, the alternative account would maintain that only one's sentiments that relate to how one is faring in general are prudentially important and therefore happiness-constituting. One way of determining whether a sentiment is related to how well things are going overall would be whether it is manifested in the form of moods or mood-constituting emotions (emotions that further result in the manifestation of moods) rather than standard emotions. Moods can be viewed as essentially prudential affective states in that moods have as their object how one is faring in general, or how well things are going in a broader sense (Lazarus, 1992; Goldie, 2000; Prinz, 2004). In contrast, emotions are generally considered to have more specific objects, which may or may not be the concern of happiness.

I think that we should reject such an alternative, however, in that the prudential importance of a sentiment is a matter of degree. I agree that prudential sentiments that are manifested in the form of moods (such as a sentiment toward one's self-worth) may be very prudentially important. I further agree that prudential sentiments that are manifested in the form of emotions that further result in the manifestation of moods may also be prudentially important. But that does not mean that prudential sentiments that are manifested in the form of emotions alone are not prudentially important. Consider, for example, the intense joy that a parent experiences from the birth of their newborn child. The parent is happy *with* the birth of his newborn child. Of course, such joy may result in a further lasting joyous or contented mood. However, even if it did not, I think that it would significantly contribute toward the parent's happiness. It would be overly dismissive to deny the prudential importance of the specific emotion, separate to the mood that it may or may not induce. I think we can take a similar line with more trivial sentiments, such as the sentiments toward eating crackers; it would be overly dismissive to deny the prudential importance of the specific emotions induced through eating the

food that one likes. In short, I believe that all emotions based on sentiments represent prudentially significant aspects of our lives.⁶

We now have a clear view of what the sentiment satisfaction theory consists in. Happiness, under such a view, consists in the manifestation of one's sentiments in the form of positive moods and emotions. Conversely, unhappiness consists in the manifestation of one's sentiments in the form of negative moods and emotions. Moreover, the satisfaction (or frustration) of one's most important sentiments will contribute toward one's happiness (or unhappiness) more than the satisfaction (or frustration) of one's less important sentiments.

The emphasis on sentiments also has the advantage of tying together instances of sentiment satisfaction. Recall that one of the main attractions of the affective state theory is that it conceives of happiness as an individual's positive state of being rather than the mere succession of positive prudential affects. I think that this is an essential feature of happiness; a theory of happiness should include elements of an individual's underlying emotional condition as well as experienced sentiment satisfaction. Sentiments simply *are* the elements that make up an individual's underlying emotional condition; they are dispositions to experience certain emotions in response to certain events.

Furthermore, instances of sentiment satisfaction do not merely represent that we have satisfied our respective values, but that we are in the process of satisfying such values in the long run. That is, (sentiment-based) emotions have a significant *guiding* role in our deliberative economy: their function, in effect, is to pick out things worth pursuing as ends in themselves, and to motivate us to do so. Positive instances of sentiment-satisfaction, in this respect, not only constitute instances of satisfying our values, but are also part of the ongoing positive process of consistently satisfying our values.

We can now take stock, and review the key features of the sentiment satisfaction theory. We can view the sentiment satisfaction theory as putting an important constraint on

⁶ It may be that the linguistic phenomena highlighted by Haybron (2008) in his discussion of the central/peripheral distinction do mark a sharp distinction between prudentially important sentiments and prudentially trivial sentiments. Emotional manifestations of a sentiment may either "get to" us or fail to "get to" us. If this is the case, then I agree that we should restrict the sentiment satisfaction account to include only prudentially important sentiment and not prudentially trivial sentiments. However, in the absence of such an argument, I believe that it would be a mistake to dismiss certain sentiment-based emotions as contributing toward one's happiness.

the affective states that contribute toward one's happiness. The affective states that are happiness-constituting are the ones that are based on one's values, which I have claimed are constituted by one's sentiments. Sentiments can also adequately account for the elements of an individual's (experienced and underlying) emotional condition that are constitutive of happiness. Sentiments have different degrees of prudential importance, and therefore contribute to one's happiness in various degrees. Further, sentiment satisfaction can either positively influence one's chances for future sentiment satisfaction, or negatively influence one's chances for future sentiment satisfaction. Put together, these features of sentiments give us a view of happiness as an overall positive state of being, which encompasses one's development toward a life of consistent satisfaction of our values.

Interestingly, the sentiment satisfaction view can be seen as the emotional counterpart to a heavily constrained version of the life satisfaction view of happiness. I believe that constrained versions of the life satisfaction view are trying to capture the same thing as the sentiment satisfaction theory: the specific kind of state of mind that relates to the satisfaction of one's most important values. Tiberius (2008) argues, for instance, that judgements of overall life satisfaction taken from the right perspective (what she calls the 'reflective perspective') do provide us with accurate representations of an individual's happiness. The right perspective, according to Tiberius, consists in considering one's values to the right degree, how much one's values are being satisfied, and the likelihood of one's values being satisfied in the future.

However, the difference between the two theories is that sentiment satisfaction is ubiquitous whereas judgements of overall life satisfaction from the 'reflective perspective' are not. For a theory of happiness to be both descriptively and practically adequate, it must describe a profound state of mind that is considered to be ubiquitous. We are continuously affected by occurrent emotional states and our underlying emotional condition. In short, I think that the sentiment satisfaction theory of happiness describes the state of mind that our informed judgements of overall life satisfaction are based on.

Conclusion

The most plausible theory of psychological happiness currently on offer – the affective state theory – is inadequate in that it fails to make the right distinction between affects that contribute towards happiness and affects that do not contribute towards happiness. The correct distinction between happiness-constituting affects and non-happiness-constituting affects is that only affects based on a person's values are happiness-constituting.

I believe that an adequate theory of happiness must provide us with such a distinction. It is the relationship between happiness and our values that makes happiness so prudentially valuable.

As I argued, we can view happiness as consisting in positive affects based on our values. The sentiment satisfaction theory of happiness maintains that our values are constituted by our dispositions to experience various emotions, or by our sentiments – our likes, dislikes, loves, hates, and cares. In this sense, emotions and moods that are caused by our sentiments are based on our values. Positive emotions and moods caused by our sentiments are instances of sentiment satisfaction. I suggested that we can view happiness as consisting in the positive emotions and moods that constitute sentiment satisfaction. Furthermore, instances of sentiment satisfaction are tied together by our sentiments, or our underlying emotional dispositions, and the effect that they have upon our motivation toward further instances of sentiment satisfaction.

Finally, I think that the sentiment satisfaction theory of happiness provides us with a more demanding view of happiness (and perhaps also well-being) than is generally considered. I believe that people frequently fail to satisfy their most important sentiments, either through the misrepresentation of their emotional nature or through failing to act in a way that will satisfy their sentiments in the long-run. The fact that the sentiment satisfaction theory of happiness is more demanding than typical theories of happiness is significant for the investigation of the relationship between happiness and well-being. Happiness is generally considered not to carry enough prudential weight to constitute well-being. As a result, well-being is generally considered to be something above and beyond the psychological condition of happiness. I believe, however, that an adequate theory of happiness should provide us with an account of a state of mind which justifiably represents how we are faring in life. The sentiment satisfaction theory does just this. In this sense, the sentiment satisfaction theory of psychological happiness may also provide us with an adequate account of well-being. With a complete account of psychological happiness, I believe we can begin to satisfactorily investigate the relationship between the two concepts.

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