KULTURA – MEDIA – TEOLOGIA
ISSN 2081-89-71
2018 nr 35, s. 24–38

Søren Harnow Klausen
Department for the Study of Culture University of Southern Denmark

Having or Being? Happiness and the Structure of Human Life

Mieć czy być? Szczęście i struktura życia ludzkiego

ABSTRACT:
The article identifies and discusses two contrasting views of happiness. There has been a strong tendency in philosophy, psychology and the social sciences to think of happiness as the possession of certain goods, be it pleasurable experiences, satisfied desires or personal traits or achievements. I argue that while this way of thinking about happiness is natural and to some extent inescapable, it clashes with the still more intuitive, but theoretically underdeveloped, notion that happiness depends on the way lives as a whole are lived or play out. I try to explicate this more holistic and dynamic notion of happiness and to motivate it by considering cases in which structural or contextual features seem to matter to happiness, while also recognizing the possible limitations of such an approach.

KEYWORDS:
concept of happiness; philosophy of happiness and wellbeing; hedonism; preference satisfaction theory; eudaimonia; atomistic vs. holistic views of happiness and wellbeing; procedural approach to wellbeing; happiness and wellbeing over time

STRESZCZENIE:
W artykule przedstawiono i omówiono dwie przeciwstawne wizje szczęścia. W filozofii, psychologii i naukach społecznych istnieje silna tendencja do postrzegania szczęścia jako posiadania pewnych dóbr, przeżywania przyjemnych doświadczeń, oraz zaspokajania pragnień. Również pewne cechy osobiste oraz osiągnięcia są odczytywane jako przejaw szczęścia. Zgadzam się, że ten sposób odczytywania szczęścia jest naturalny i poniekąd nieunikniony, jednak koliduje on z jeszcze bardziej intuicyjnym i słabo rozwiniętym poglądem mówiącym, że szczęście zależy od tego jak przeżywamy nasze życie. Próbuję tu wyjaśnić to całościowe i zmienne pojęcie szczęścia oraz uzasadnić je, rozważając przypadki, w których cechy strukturalne lub kontekstualne wydają się mieć znaczenie dla szczęścia, jednocześnie dostrzegając możliwe ograniczenia wynikające z takiego podejścia.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:
pojęcie szczęścia; filozofia szczęścia i dobrobytu; hedonizm; teoria zaspokojenia preferencji; eudajmonizm; atomistyczna a holistyczna wizja szczęścia i dobrobytu; podejście proceduralne do dobrobytu; nieustanne szczęście i dobrobyt

1. INTRODUCTION: TWO WAYS OF THINKING ABOUT HAPPINESS

While the following may seem to be mostly of interest to philosophers working with the subtle details of specific theories of happiness and wellbeing, I do think it resonates with the broader theme of the conference, viz. conceptualizations and visualizations of happiness more generally. For I am going to discuss two contrasting views which are not only found (in very different proportions) in contemporary analytical philosophy and scientific wellbeing theory, but are also ubiquitous in popular ways of thinking about happiness and human life. On the one hand, it is natural to think of happiness as the possession of a number of desirable traits or experiences, and so to concentrate on these, or, more generally, on *factors* that may be directly or indirectly conducive to happiness: Pleasurable experiences, accomplishments, interpersonal relations, satisfaction of desires etc. On the other hand, as soon as we turn to consider actual human lives and the degree to which they can be said to be successful or happy, it seems that we must take into account the way these lives are *lived* – how they unfold or played out, what the person in question has done or experienced earlier, and what they are about to do; what lies before them in the near and more distant future, what they aim at and can expect. We must also, it seems, take into account more than just the individual factors that may contribute to or detract from a person's happiness. We naturally look to the particular constellations of such factors; to the possible interactions between values, choices, beliefs, desires, experiences and actions, rather than to each of these considered in isolation. It seems, for example, to matter in which order experiences are had or goals are achieved – for example whether one has successively better or worse experiences, whether strife and hardship is somehow rewarded, or whether ambitions or potentials are left unrealized or an otherwise successful life ends in tragedy or disgrace.

I will diagnose the surprisingly widespread tendency to think of happiness as an aggregate of individual goods or qualities, and to ignore the dynamic and temporal aspects of human life when theorizing about or assessing happiness. Then I will try to show the inadequacy of an atomistic and static approach to happiness by presenting and discussing some putative counterexamples. Finally, I will briefly sketch a more holistic and dynamic account and consider possible objections to it.

2. ATOMISM IN WELLBEING THEORY

It may seem highly surprising to people not acquainted with scientific – psychological or philosophical – happiness and wellbeing research to learn that the overwhelmingly dominant tendency in such research has been to take an atomistic, static and "enumerative" approach. Extant theories have paid scant attention to the interaction among experiences and goods or the overall structure and dynamics of human life. They have tended to conceive of wellbeing[1] as an aggregate of discrete items, be it pleasurable experiences (in the case of *hedonism*), instances of *desire satisfaction* (in the case of preference theories) or the realization of objective goods like achievement or friendship (in the case of *objective list theories*). In a way, all the dominant theories have been "list-theories", the only difference being that in the case of hedonism and preference theories, the list of factors have been very short. We might speak of a "list-syndrome", as the attempt to account for the nature of happiness very often leads to listing or "enumeration" of a smaller or larger set of factors or constituents.

In contrast to this tendency, most lay people would probably assume that wellbeing, whatever it is, must be bound up with the whole messy, complex reality of human life, and more than an aggregate of discrete elements. Even researchers themselves may not have fully recognized the atomistic and static character of their own theories or its ramifications.

Some might think that the tendency may be real enough and significant as well, but that it is mostly confined to certain "reductionist" strands of social science and philosophy, and so only exemplified by theories belonging to these strands. For example, the hedonism associated with the utilitarian tradition of moral philosophy has been regularly associated with an atomistic psychology.

(Though it should be noted that a hedonist is not committed to such a psychology, but could just as well adopt a more holistic view of mental states and

[1] I shall use "wellbeing" and "happiness" more or less interchangeably in what follows. While they may (and ultimately should) be distinguished (cf. D. Haybron, *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*, Oxford 2008), the difference does not matter for my present purposes. Many philosophers, for example in the Aristotelian tradition, do not make any such distinction. Hedonists distinguish only semantically and not substantially, as they take both happiness and wellbeing to consist in a dominance of positive experiences. Even those who insist more strongly on the distinction (like Haybron) take happiness to be the central ingredient in wellbeing.

experiences). More generally, the wish to be able to quantify and measure happiness (which is also typical of the utilitarian tradition) might be assumed to have motivated an atomistic, rather than holistic approach. But while I do agree that both atomistic, "empiricist" psychology and the scientific urge to decompose, quantify and measure the phenomenon under study have been important drivers behind the "enumerative" approach to happiness, I think they can only partially explain it. For it turns out that the tendency to list and aggregate factors while ignoring their possible interactions is much more widespread. It pertains also to preference theories, even of the so-called "global" sort, and even to Aristotelian theories of happiness as "human flourishing" or life in accordance with the virtues (i.e. what is also known as "eudaimonism").

> …most lay people would probably assume that wellbeing, whatever it is, must be bound up with the whole messy, complex reality of human life, and more than an aggregate of discrete elements. Even researchers themselves may not have fully recognized the atomistic and static character of their own theories or its ramifications…

To take the case of preference theories first, it must be admitted that they often have a holistic appearance[2]. They do not literally list factors (about from, on the most general level, "listing" preference satisfaction as the one and only *type* of factor to be taken into account). Instead they leave it open what a person may or may not desire. Moreover, some preference theories grant only higher-order or "global" preferences – preferences as to how wishes to live, or how one's life should turn out in general – a constitutive role[3].

[2] The following draws on the analysis of preference theories presented in S. H. Klausen, *Ethics, Knowledge, and a Procedural Approach to Wellbeing*, "Inquiry" 2018.

[3] Cf. D. Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, Oxford 1984.

But the fact that happiness- or wellbeing-constitutive preferences are seen as pertaining to larger stretches, or overall features, of human lives does not make global preference theories any less enumerative. For the elements taken to be fundamentally constitutive of happiness or wellbeing, viz. desires or preferences, are still treated atomistically. Their satisfaction is assumed to make an independently evaluable contribution to overall wellbeing. Instances of preference satisfaction are treated analogously to e.g. the way pains or pleasures are treated by hedonism. While a person may, on such a theory, make a "holistic" judgment about the various experiences or events that occur in their lives, the theory says nothing whatsoever about how to judge and balance them; and the person could just as well prefer to live a life characterized by maximizing (discrete) pleasurable experience.

What about Aristotelian theories of *eudaimonia* or human flourishing? Are they not concerned with "whole" human beings, and whole lives, and with lives in specific contexts? Are they not "humanistic" and "non-reductionist", wedded to a seemingly "organic" view of humans and the world they inhabit? While there can be no doubt that Aristotelian theories have been accompanied, and even motivated, by holistically oriented *intentions*, the resulting theories are still strikingly enumerative and static. Happiness is taken to be a matter of *possessing* the virtues. True, virtues are traits that must be exercised, and the happy life is also described as a matter of *living* in accordance with the virtues. The virtues themselves have a holistic and dynamic appearance. Friendship, knowledge and accomplishment are acquired or unfold over time, and comprise of many different components. Yet just as in the case of the preference theories, the Aristotelian theories remain silent on the interrelations between these components. They also remain silent on the possible interactions between the virtues themselves, or about better or worse orders and ways in which they can be acquired or exercise. Ultimately, virtues or other exemplary traits or "objective goods" are treated, again exactly parallel to the way global preferences are treated by preference theories, as a kind of "mega-atoms" of wellbeing – qualities that are considered equally valuable regardless of their internal structure or external relationships, and capable of simple enumeration and aggregation. In practice, Aristotelian theories are almost also presented in the form of a list of qualities or desirable traits. Identifying the elements of a happy life is considered more than sufficient.

I shall argue below that it is very likely *not* sufficient. And it may already appear from my presentation of the dominant views of happiness and wellbeing

that they are so obviously inadequate that they are almost to be laughed at (or lamented, considering the large influence they have had). But I would like to stress that the idea of happiness as having instantiating some good, or set of such goods, is very natural and almost inescapable. It is striking that it can be found in all sorts of different philosophical theories and have been defended by philosophers of almost every possible orientation. Even Plato could not resist defining happiness as "possessing good things",[4] though this is mitigated, if not corrected, by his view that a balance between different aspects of life is required for happiness, most elaborately stated in the *Republic*[5]. Likewise, one of the few contemporary theorists of happiness and wellbeing who is explicitly committed to a holistic view, and even conceives happiness as a way of *being* rather than "having" something – Dan Haybron – cashes out his theory in terms of a set of different emotional *states* that are again, merely enumerated and not given any dynamic or holistic interpretation[6].

3. SHORTCOMINGS OF THE ATOMIST APPROACH

The shortcomings of the enumerative approach can be illustrated with an analogy. A list of qualities of desirable traits is like a cooking recipe consisting merely in a list of ingredients. In the case of cooking, this is obviously insufficient. The order in which to use the ingredients, the amount of each of them, and the specific way in which it should be treated are absolutely crucial for a successful result. The same, it might be thought, must apply to wellbeing: It is not just a matter of possessing the good things, but just as much or even more a matter of putting them to use and mixing them in the right order and proportion.

The case for holism is sometimes made by considering different "shapes of life", for example lives that go "uphill" versus lives that go "downhill."[7] We would not, so it is assumed, consider a life that starts out splendidly but then becomes steadily worse equally good to a "rags-to-riches" kind of life that starts in misery but then becomes steadily better. According to traditional atomist theories, which

[4] Plato, *Symposion* 204e–205a.

[5] See e.g. Plato, *Republic*, Book X, 618ff.

[6] D. Haybron, *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*, Oxford 2008.

[7] T. Hurka, *The Best Things in Life*, Oxford 2011, pp. 163ff.; G. Fletcher, *The Philosophy of Wellbeing. An Introduction*, London 2016.

take life-time happiness to be simply the sum of all units of momentary happiness, the lives of Anna, Magdalena and John – in which happiness is distributed as illustrated in the figure below (with the horizontal axis representing age (in years), and the vertical level of happiness) should all be deemed equally good. But, so the objection goes, they obviously don't *look* equally good, and few would prefer the lives of Magdalena or John to that of Anna.

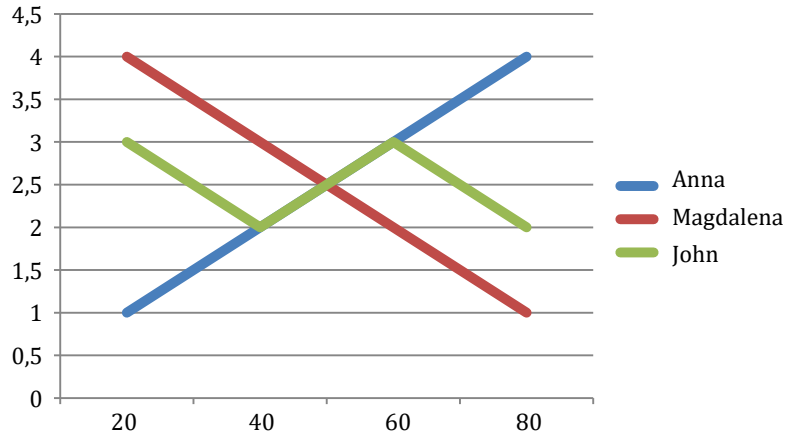

Figure 1

I do think this case has some persuasive power. It makes vivid how global, *structural* (i.e. "pattern-") properties of a life might matter to its quality, apart from the *content* of a life. But I do not consider it the strongest case. It is open to the objection that our preference for an "uphill" life is merely *aesthetic*, or otherwise culturally specific (reflecting concerns for more than just *wellbeing*).[8] After all, why should it not be considered just as good for a person to enjoy a happy childhood and adolescence as to enjoy a happy old age? Another atomist objection is that our intuitive judgment of the cases is based on the implicit assumption that the "uphill" and "downhill" movements are *perceived as such* by the persons in question, and that a "downhill" movement *feels worse* than an "uphill". But, so the objection goes, such negative and positive experiences should already be included in our estimates of overall happiness at each moment of time – and so there is no need to attend to any further, irreducible global features. The idea that

[8] G. Fletcher, *The Philosophy of Wellbeing. An Introduction*, London 2016; S. H. Klausen, *Ethics, Knowledge, and a Procedural Approach to Wellbeing*, "Inquiry" 2018, p. 1–17.

apparently holistic features, like order effects, can be "incorporated" into momentary states and qualities, and so in the last analysis accommodated by atomism, has been championed by Kahneman (2000)[9]. It may not apply equally well to all holistic features, but it does seem able to explain away at least some of the holistic intuitions elicited by illustrations of life trajectories like figure 1.

Stronger cases can be constructed by considering the impact of different *contexts* on the wellbeing value of single experiences or events. First, a holistic view of experiences, considered as "phenomenal states", that is, mental states characterised by their specific subjective "feel" or "quality", seems highly plausible[10]. Sensory experiences, e.g. of taste, sound, pleasure or pain, can be "coloured" or "penetrated" by neighbouring experiences or by accompanying cognitive states (e.g. beliefs, assumptions and expectations). The latter phenomenon has come to be known as "cognitive penetration".

This only suffices to establish a very limited kind of holism. A more substantial wellbeing holism can be defended by considering cases of *project* or *event* contexts. For it seems that the very same kind of experience, individuated in terms of its phenomenal quality, can take on a different wellbeing value by being had in a different context. My favourite example is from athletics (track, more specifically middle-distance running). Running the 1500 metres is a very pain-intensive activity. Especially the penultimate lap is known by runners to be especially gruelling, as lactic acid has built up in the muscles, while the finishing line is still too far away to switch into sprinting mode. Yet parents care much less about subjecting their children to such an ordeal than they would if a *phenomenally* similar pain was experienced by their child as a result of disease or punishment or violence. Similarly, it can make a huge difference to a person's wellbeing whether a pain is experienced in the context of lovemaking (or other erotic activities) or inflicted on them in an act of violence.

The final type of cases to be considered points to the significance of more global features of human lives. Whereas it can be doubted that the mere shape of (the geometrical representation of the quality of) a human life really matters for wellbeing, it seems less contentious to assume that the more specific *narrative*

[9] D. Kahnemann, *Experienced Utility and Happiness: A Moment-Base Approach*, in: D. Kahneman, A. Tversky (eds.) *Choices, Values and Frames*, New York 2000, pp. 673–692.

[10] B. Dainton, *The Phenomenal* Self, Oxford 2008, pp. 264ff.

structure of a life does matter so. For example, it seems reasonable to assume that the incarceration of Nelson Mandela on Robben Island must, in retrospect, be considered less bad for him than a similarly treatment of, say, a mere criminal or a less successful freedom fighter. The fact that Nelson Mandela eventually emerged as a crucial leader in the anti-apartheid struggle makes his time in prison appear not just as a harmful experience – though it no doubt was – but also as a kind of worthwhile sacrifice, and successful test of character, and so as an important piece in a highly positive overall picture[11].

The fact that Nelson Mandela eventually emerged as a crucial leader in the anti-apartheid struggle makes his time in prison appear not just as a harmful experience – though it no doubt was – but also as a kind of worthwhile sacrifice, and successful test of character, and so as an important piece in a highly positive overall picture.

However, none of the cases or the kinds of holism they are intended to support is immune to doubt or criticism. It may for example be argued that the intuitive appeal of the "narrative" holism exemplified by the case of Nelson Mandela also reflects aesthetic or culturally conventional norms rather than an understanding of wellbeing as such. We like good stories with happy endings. But it is not certain that it is better for the protagonists themselves to be part of such stories. Moreover, a further parallel objection (to the one directed at our preference for upward curvature) can be mounted, as we may implicitly focus on the way Nelson Mandela's sufferings might have contributed to his *feeling of satisfaction*, *sense of accomplishment* and *enjoyment of particular recognition and veneration* – all good things which can be captured more than adequately by a traditional atomistic theory (i.e. Mandela's early sufferings were *compensated* by the successes

[11] The case is borrowed from D. Benatar, *The Human Predicament*, Oxford 2017.

and joys in later life, for which they were partly *causally* responsible; but they did not thereby themselves become any less bad).

Nevertheless, I do think that especially the project- and event-context cases seem quite strong, and that the case for the other kinds of holism, while surely not incontestable, are also quite good (just because alternative explanations of the apparently holistic features can be given, it does not follow that these explanations are actually best or really sufficient).

4. OUTLINE OF THE DYNAMIC AND HOLISTIC THEORY OF WELLBEING

The case for holism made so far has been mainly negative (and I have not considered the possible *dynamic* aspect of wellbeing in any detail, expect for noticing the possible significance of temporal order and narrative structure). I would like to now lay out (albeit very brief) a sketch of a more positive notion of happiness as a way of living, a mode of being or doing something, instead of merely having good things. This will also serve to illustrate the limitations and challenges that such an approach gives rise to.

Most extant versions of holism have been purely programmatic or at best very tentatively formulated. Some treatments are so inconclusive that they can hardly be said to make a positive case for holism at all. Hurka, for example, does not seem overly impressed himself with the holistic view he envisages[12]. In his otherwise pioneering paper on wellbeing and time, Velleman (1991) himself does not draw the conclusion – which his reasoning otherwise seems to support – that momentary or short-term wellbeing is conditioned by narrative features of larger lifespans[13]. More unambiguous, though still very sketchy, statements of holism can be found in the work of Broome, Hausman, Raibley and Tiberius[14].

Wellbeing (or happiness) holism should be formally defined, I submit, as the view that wellbeing factors are *not* strongly *separable*, and so not *additive*. They cannot be evaluated independently of each other; and total wellbeing cannot be

[12] T. Hurka, *The Best Things in Life*, Oxford 2011, pp. 177ff.

[13] D. Velleman, *Wellbeing and Time*, „Pacific Philosophical Quarterly" 1991, 72, pp. 48–77.

[14] J. Broome, *Weighing Goods*, Oxford 1991; D. Hausman, *Valuing* Health, Oxford 2015; J. Raibley, *Welfare over Time and the Case for Holism*, „Philosophical Papers" 2012, 41(2), pp. 239–265; V. Tiberius, *Wellbeing, Values and Improving Lives*, in: R. Subramanian (ed.) *Performance and Progress: Essays on Capitalism, Business and Society*, Oxford 2015, pp. 339–357.

calculated by simply adding together the individual wellbeing values of experiences, states of events. This view can be kept purely *synchronic*; but it is highly plausible, one is attracted to the idea of holism in the first place, to assume that it also holds *diachronically*, that is, that the wellbeing of larger lifespans is more than a simple sum of units of momentary wellbeing. Moreover, holism should be understood as the view that different elements or factors in wellbeing condition each other by influencing the *weight* with which they impact on total wellbeing. For example, the sports context serves to mitigate (or "attenuate" the negative effect of pain (as the violence context might enhance it). It does not, however, suffice to completely *eliminate* the negative effect of pain, as it is still appropriate to say of a struggling runner that she is not doing so well and feel some pity for her.

I would thus suggest to set limits to a sensible holism by accepting that some factors be assigned an intrinsic wellbeing value – not a definitive *end* or *outcome* value (for this would mean a lapse back into atomism), but a definite *potential* for affecting a person's wellbeing. Pain is *prima facie* negative (i.e. bad for one); the experience of joy, or the accomplishment of a meaningful goal, is *prima facie* positive (i.e. good for one). Moreover, I suggest that there are *thresholds* above which holistic effects are cancelled out or at least very significantly weakened, and where a more standard atomistic approach may be legitimate. Excruciating pain is very bad for a person (in terms of their happiness or wellbeing), regardless of their accompanying beliefs and values or the project or event context in which they experience it (for example an act of self-sacrifice). And experience of overwhelming joy and meaningfulness is good for a person, regardless of whether it is accompanied by beliefs that it is, or occurs in a context where it might seem, inappropriate.

In defining wellbeing holism so, I have assumed a multifactor view of happiness and wellbeing, according to which several different factors can contribute fundamentally: Experiences, emotions, "likings"[15], fulfilment of desires, preferences and values[16], and even objective goods like accomplishment. The view does not, however, commit me to any specific list of such factors; and I am open to the possibility that the number of different factors might be reduced. Even if one were to fall back on a one-factor theory, e.g. a version of hedonism, it could still

[15] D. Parfit, *On What Matters*, Oxford 2011, p. 53.
[16] V. Tiberius, *Wellbeing*..., op. cit., pp. 339–357.

be maintained that different subtypes of experiences condition each other in the way envisaged above, that the order and larger temporal patterns of such experiences matter for overall wellbeing, etc.

Philosophers like Velleman[17] and even a self-professed holist like Raibley[18] have been disinclined to embrace the view that momentary wellbeing should be seen as a function of lifetime wellbeing. Instead they have favoured a kind of dualism, treating momentary or short-term wellbeing and lifetime wellbeing as two different, complementary notions. Contrary to this, I think that a genuine holism, of a diachronic sort, must indeed entail precisely that the wellbeing value of short episodes in life is determined, at least to a certain extent, by overall features of the life of which they are part[19]. Velleman and Raibley may object that such a view has the strange consequence that you can feel – and to all appearances really *do* – bad at a certain time, but really do quite well, due to events that have not even happened yet (cf. the example with Nelson Mandela's imprisonment). But this is a typical consequence of holist views, and not special to wellbeing holism. In the philosophy of language, it has been widely noticed that semantic holism has the consequence that one cannot know the complete or exact meaning of a single term from an acquaintance with the immediate linguistic context alone. Likewise, wellbeing holism should be seen as giving happiness or wellbeing a more "objectivist" interpretation, conceiving at as a state that may well be inaccessible, or only partly accessible, to the individual who is in that state. To take another example from athletics, it may be beyond my knowledge that while I struggle with pain and fatigue on the last laps of a race, I am actually doing much better than I think, because I am on the way to achieving a personal best. I do not consider this implication of wellbeing holism particularly unintuitive. It is hardly more problematic than are the consequences of other, more common forms of objectivism about happiness or wellbeing. For example, preference satisfaction theories entail that if a preference of mine is fulfilled unbeknownst to me, I will be doing better, but of course also without knowing it myself. The latter actually seems more problematic, because it makes wellbeing depend on something that it is not directly

[17] D. Velleman, *Wellbeing*..., op. cit., pp. 48–77.

[18] J. Raibley, *Welfare over Time*..., op. cit., pp. 239–265.

[19] S. H. Klausen, *Happiness and the Structure and Dynamics of Human Life*, in: Klausen, S. H., Martin, B., Camci C. and Bushey S. (eds.), *Perspectives on Happiness*, Leiden 2019 (forthcoming).

connected to my own life; whereas wellbeing holism has to do with factors that are all features of my life, and only temporarily distributed.

5. CONCLUSION: A PROMISING, BUT DIFFICULT VIEW

While there is surely a reason to develop and advocate a holistic view of happiness and wellbeing in a cautious, tentative way, because there are serious objections and alternatives to be considered, there may be deeper grounds for reservation, if not outright pessimism. One such ground has to do with the extent to which the view can be made specific and informative. It may be feared that especially the dynamic, process-life features of human life cannot be captured adequately. It is one thing – and sounds plausible enough – to say that the quality of life also has to do with how a life is lived. It is another thing, and much more difficult, to spell out specific ways in which the way a life is lived or plays out impacts on happiness, apart from mentioning the good things that are achieved or come along. I have already noticed the tendency among holistically inclined philosophers to nevertheless succumb to the temptation to present their view in an enumerative form, merely listing valuable traits and activities.

Maybe this limitation points to an even more general and fundamental obstacle. It is notoriously difficult to get a theoretical grasp of dynamic and process-like phenomena as such (the history of these difficulties can be traced back at least to the attack of the very idea and reality of movement mounted in early Greek philosophy by Parmenides and his followers. It has often been noted that the very attempt to conceptualize phenomena inevitably turns them into objects and make them appear static. Even a philosopher like Heidegger, who went to great lengths in order to avoid inappropriately objectivising human existence (and other phenomena as well), in the end had to accept that philosophizing means theorizing, and that this in turn entails some kind of objectivising – although he still hoped that more authentic or adequate forms of objectivizing, which better emphasized the dynamic and temporal aspects, could be found (see especially his lectures on the *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*)[20].

To end on a more optimistic note, however, let me note that even a general, relatively unspecified focus on relations and processes might suffice to turn our

[20] M. Heidegger, *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, Frankfurt a. M. 1975, pp. 459f.

attention, in both theory and practice, to aspects of happiness that have hitherto received too little attention. It may also lead to a different weighing of factors than would result from merely relying on standard enumerative theories. Moreover, in line with the idea that there can be more or less appropriate and sensitive ways of objectivizing and enumerating, a dynamic and holistic theory might be given specific content by describing paradigm cases of personal development, interactions

…dynamic and holistic theory might be given specific content by describing paradigm cases of personal development, interactions between events in life (and attitudes of individuals)…

between events in life (and attitudes of individuals) etc.[21] This might resemble the semi-holistic approach, which I have deemed insufficient, viz. identifying larger "chunks" of life, but still treating them as mere elements. But if done the right way, such an approach might serve to highlight the dynamic and holistic aspects that can be found *within* (or *in*) such elements, thus avoiding treating them as structure less atoms. While there may, admittedly, be limits to how far the idea of happiness as a way of being and limits can be cashed out in precise and operationalizable theory, we may at least be able to get beyond the point where happiness is understood as only the possession of good thing, and the question "how do you do?" is taken literally and seriously[22].

REFERENCES

Benatar D., *The Human Predicament*, Oxford 2017.
Broome J., *Weighing Goods. Equality, Uncertainty and Time*, Oxford 1991.
Dainton B., *The Phenomenal Self*, Oxford 2008.

[21] S. H. Klausen, *Ethics, Knowledge*..., op. cit.

[22] Work on this paper was supported by the VELUX FOUNDATION. Thanks to Katarzyna Bogacka for hosting the Warsaw conference at which the paper was initially presented.

Fletcher G., *The Philosophy of Wellbeing. An Introduction*, London 2016.
Hausman D., *Valuing Health*, Oxford 2015.
Heidegger M., *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 24, Frankfurt a. M. 1975 [1927].
Haybron D. M., *The Pursuit of Unhappiness. The Elusive Psychology of Wellbeing*, Oxford 2008.
Hurka T. *The Best Things in Life: A Guide to What Really Matters*, Oxford 2011.
Kahneman D., *Experienced Utility and Happiness: A Moment-Based Approach*, in: D. Kahneman, A. Tversky (eds.) *Choices, Values and Frames*. New York 2000, pp. 673–692.
Klausen S. H., *Ethics, Knowledge, and a Procedural Approach to Wellbeing*, "Inquiry" 2018a. (DOI: 10.1080/0020174X.2018.1529619)
Klausen S. H., *Happiness and the Structure and Dynamics of Human Life*, in: S. H. Klausen, B. Martin, C. Camci, S. Bushey (eds.), *Perspectives on Happiness*, Leiden 2019 (forthcoming).
Parfit D., *Reasons and Persons*, Oxford 1984.
Parfit D., *On What Matters*, Vol. 1, Oxford 2011.
Plato, *Symposion* (transl. A. Nehamas), Indianapolis 1989.
Plato, *Republic* (tranl. C. D. C. Reeve), Indianapolis 2004.
Raibley J., *Welfare over Time and the Case for Holism*, "Philosophical Papers" 2012, 41(2), pp. 239–265.
Tiberius V., *Wellbeing, Values and Improving Lives*, in: S. Rangan (ed.), *Performance and Progress: Essays on Capitalism, Business and Society*, Oxford 2015, pp. 339–357.
Velleman J. D., *Wellbeing and Time*, "Pacific Philosophical Quarterly" 1991, 72, pp. 48–77.

Biogram

Søren Harnow Klausen is professor of philosophy at the University of Southern Denmark. He obtained his doctoral degree from the University of Tübingen, Germany, where he has also been an Alexander-von-Humboldt research fellow. He is currently head of the research program Values, Welfare and Health Communication, and leader of the research project Elderly Welfare and Alcohol – A Tricky Cocktail, funded by the VELUX foundation. He has published in epistemology, philosophy of mind, phenomenology, value theory, welfare and happiness studies, philosophy of education and philosophy of literature.