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Good and Good For You: An Affect Theory of Happiness[1]

LAURA SIZER
Hampshire College

I. Introduction

Happiness is something we all want and strive for. But what *is* it and why do we want it so badly? Philosophers have offered two sorts of answers to the first question, identifying happiness either with a psychological state or condition (a feeling, emotion or set of judgments), or with the conditions of a life—how well the life is going for the person living it, often measured by some objective standard of value. These two approaches, what I'll henceforth refer to as subjective, or 'good feelings,' and objective, 'good lives' accounts of happiness, reflect tensions in our intuitions about the nature of happiness. Each approach captures different, but important, features of our intuitions, making it difficult to accept either a purely subjective or objective view. This has led some philosophers to suggest that these are not competing accounts of one thing, 'happiness,' but accounts of several different things to which everyday language has, unfortunately, given the same name (Thomas 1968; Haybron 2000). Others propose that each is a necessary component of happiness, that happiness is a matter of possessing both the relevant subjective and objective properties (Kraut 1979; Nozick 1989, e.g.). I think this latter view is right, but that we need to better understand why or how these two elements are important and how they might be linked. In this paper I argue that an affect theory of happiness is able to reconcile both the subjective and objective strands of our intuitions about happiness.

[1] Thanks to the members of the PATF and Cognitive Science reading groups, particularly Ernie Alleva, John Connolly, Jay Garfield, and Joe Moore, who read and commented on earlier versions of this paper. Special thanks to the anonymous reviewer for many helpful comments and suggestions.

My focus will be on how to reconcile the roles played by subjective, psychological states and objective facts about the conditions of a life, but because it is difficult to pry apart the claim that objective facts about a life matter, from the claim that *certain* objective facts matter more than others, my argument also suggests some objective constraints on the standards for evaluating what counts as a good life. My account therefore does contribute something to debates over the proper conception of well-being, as well as the debate about the roles of subjective and objective properties in happiness.

Our varied uses of the terms 'happiness' and 'happy' in everyday discourse illustrate some ambivalence in our intuitions about the nature of happiness. On the one hand, I may proclaim that I am happy to see you, that I am happy about winning the race, or that eating the ice cream sundae makes me happy. I will refer to this sort of happiness as *local happiness* because these instances are tied to definite times, objects or events. Local happiness is about or associated with a particular event and therefore somewhat circumscribed by it.[2] Other uses of 'happy' are not associated with particular events but with significant spans of time, entire lives, and hoped-for futures. I will say that I want to be happy in a general but perhaps more profound sense, and that I wish such happiness for my children and friends. Surely the happiness I wish for my child is not merely the happiness of an ice cream sundae, or even (or especially!) a lifetime of such happinesses. Happiness in this more profound sense is something we strive for, perhaps because we view it as the ultimate good or goal. At the very least we imagine that it has significant and far-reaching effects on our lives. I will refer to this as *global happiness*. Psychologists have tended to view happiness in terms of local happiness, whereas philosophers have typically focused on global happiness.[3] Clearly both are part of our intuitive notion of happiness and therefore a satisfactory account of happiness should make sense of both local and global sorts of happiness. My goal in this paper is to propose an account of happiness that does this, and can also explain why with happiness, good feelings and good lives come hand-in-hand.

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[2] Kekes (1982) makes a similar distinction, between what he calls 'episodic' and 'attitudinal' happiness.

[3] The situation in psychology has changed with the recent upsurge of interest in positive or hedonic psychology. For example, Schwarz and Strack (1999) use the term 'global well-being' to refer to well-being or happiness with one's life as a whole over a significant period of time.

II. What is happiness?

To begin, we need a better sense of what a theory of happiness should accomplish—which of our intuitions seem central to the notion of happiness, and must be accounted for by any successful theory of happiness. In fleshing this out, I am greatly aided by Dan Haybron's (2003) discussion of the topic. However, Haybron limits his analysis to what I would call subjective global happiness, and does not consider either local happiness or objective, 'good lives' theories.[4] The properties I will discuss are those that seem to be shared by or neutral with respect to the local/global and subjective/objective distinctions.

The first thing to note about happiness is that, whatever it is, it is something very important to us and that most of us hope and strive for. Some argue that it is the *summum bonum*, the thing we strive for, everything else being merely a means to it. So whatever happiness is, it must be something worthy of such wanting and striving. It may be worth wanting because it feels good, or because it is in some sense good for us (or perceived to be), or both. Whatever happiness is theorized to be, it should be something that is in some significant way *worth wanting*.[5]

Because we view happiness as worth wanting, it figures prominently in our choices and judgments about our lives. Haybron points out that happiness plays important explanatory/reason-giving and evaluative roles in our decision making. We choose particular careers, hobbies and relationships because we think that these things will make us happy. Likewise we may switch careers, abandon hobbies and end relationships because they no longer make us happy (or because something else comes along that promises to make us happier). So happiness, whatever it is, must be able to play such *explanatory and reason-giving roles*.

Haybron goes on to argue that happiness has what he calls '*causal depth*'. This captures the fact that happiness has wide-ranging, significant, and often deep and persistent effects on us and our lives. This is most applicable to global happiness, and explains in part why it is so desirable; global happiness *affects* us in many ways and, we think, *changes* us and

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[4] Haybron uses the term 'psychological happiness' to refer to the sort of happiness that he focuses on, and 'prudential happiness' to refer to 'good lives' or eudaimonic accounts that he excludes from his discussion. His 'prudential happiness' doesn't quite match up with my characterization of objective theories. Prudential happiness, per Haybron, ''stipulates at the outset that happiness is valuable, a kind of well-being, and then asks whether this condition is merely a state of mind'' (2003, p. 306).

[5] Haybron captures a similar idea when he describes the 'prudential value' of happiness.

our lives for the good.[6] Local happiness is by its nature more circumscribed in its effects but nonetheless produces powerful (but perhaps more temporary and limited) changes. One of the reasons why happiness matters to us has to do with its power to affect us and our lives.[7]

Now we have several desiderata for a theory of happiness. Happiness, whatever it is, must be worth wanting, play certain explanatory and evaluative roles in our decision-making, and must exhibit sufficient 'causal depth' to explain the profound effects it can have on us. I assume that these are features that *any* happiness theorist would agree are central to our notion of happiness.

III. Good lives or good feelings?

A. Good lives: objective theories of happiness

Objective accounts of happiness identify happiness with the conditions of a life. A happy life is one that is lived well, where 'living well' is understood to require that certain non-psychological states of affairs obtain. While the attitudes and feelings of the subject may contribute *some*thing, they are not determinate of his happiness; indeed the subject may not be in the best position to judge his own happiness since he may not accurately perceive the conditions of his life.

What this implies is that not just *any* life will do. Objective theories of happiness not only identify happiness with the conditions of a life, but with a *good* life—a life that meets some standard of value. I will refer to the claim that happiness requires that some non-psychological states obtain as *ontological objectivity*, and the claim that there is an objective standard dictating which states of affairs are of value as *axiological objectivity*.[8] Some theories of happiness are ontologically objective but allow that the subject's own standards and values provide the criteria for determining whether the life is a good one (in other words they are axiologically subjective[9]). However, many theories are both

[6] An objective account of global happiness would maintain that global happiness just *is* living one's life in a certain way, so the change would be from a life that is not objectively good, to one that is.

[7] Haybron offers the causal depth criterion as a property of what he calls psychological happiness. However, 'causal depth' is also relevant to an objectivist account. Even if happiness is identified with the conditions of a life, it must be the case that these conditions have wide-ranging and productive effects. These can include effects on the events and particulars of the life as well as psychological effects.

[8] Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out the need to maintain this distinction.

[9] Kraut's account is an example of this, although he places some constraints on the standards that are acceptable.

ontologically and axiologically objective. For these theories happiness is identified with something like well-being, a life that is optimal, or at least good for the subject. What creates much of the tension in our intuitions about happiness is the tug and pull between the idea that happiness has to do with how you feel, versus the idea that happiness requires objective well-being (somehow conceived). For most of my discussion I will assume that objective theories of happiness include some conception of objective well-being.

Aristotle's account of *eudaimonia* is the best known example of an account of happiness that is both ontologically objective - it identifies happiness with the objective conditions of a life, and axiologically objective - the happy life is one that most fully expresses and exemplifies the good for our (human) kind. In fact, while *eudaimonia* is usually translated as 'happiness', it connotes 'flourishing' or 'well-being', capturing the idea that happiness has to do with the full development or excellence of our human nature. Aristotle defines happiness as "activity according to virtue" (*Nichomachean Ethics*, Book X, 1177a7), emphasizing the connections between happiness and both the activities and conditions of a life. In addition to the activities that are motivated and directed by an excellent soul, happiness requires modest wealth, health, at least moderate good looks and a certain amount of luck (VII 14 1153b17-21).[10]

In identifying happiness with a good life, these objective accounts capture the intuition that happiness requires more than pleasant thoughts and feelings. To be happy one must be faring well, either by one's own standards or an objective standard of value. Happiness is identified with well-being—a life that is good for you, not just one that feels good. The heroin addict who claims to be happy with her life even though her habit is destroying her career, relationships and health (things she valued before becoming an addict), is simply wrong. Even if the drug gives her pleasure, she cannot be happy because she is not faring well by anyone's standard—even her own.

Objective theories of happiness encounter several criticisms, however. Some criticisms leveled against objectivists about value are that they define a good, happy life too narrowly or rigidly, or make the standard that needs to be met in order to be happy too difficult. While they may describe one sort of ideal life, they do not allow that other, perhaps less-than-perfect lives might also be happy ones. Trying to specify the conditions on a happy life that allow for individual variation and taste,

[10] Darrin McMahon (2006, p. 3) points out that the word, *eudaimonia*, is made up of the Greek *eu* (good) and *daimon* (spirit), reflecting the prevalent belief of the time that happiness was largely a matter of luck, fortune or benevolent spirits.

while screening out lives that by most accounts would be miserable or wasted, is quite difficult (see Kraut, Kekes).

Another criticism that is more relevant to my project here is that objective theories do not assign sufficient importance to individual psychological states, including the judgments that a subject makes about the quality of her own life. These theories allow the objective facts about the conditions of a life to 'trump' the individual's psychological states when the two are in conflict. Because the subject could be wildly wrong about how well her life is *really* going, her feelings about the matter can become largely irrelevant.

By identifying happiness with the conditions of a life, a life that promotes well-being, objective theories end up giving at most a minor role to individual judgments and feelings. If a subject's judgments can be wrong, then those judgments don't tell us much about whether that person is leading a happy life; only the quality of the life itself can do that. If psychological states do play a role, then they only 'count' if they are of the right kind and supervene appropriately on the activities of the good life. This leads many critics to conclude that objective accounts of happiness don't place enough importance on the psychological dimensions of happiness.

B. Good feelings: subjective theories of happiness

Subjective theories of happiness identify happiness with a psychological state or condition. Happiness is a feeling or an emotion, or perhaps is constituted by a set of judgments or attitudes (that one's life is going well, that one's important desires are satisfied). The distinction between ontological and axiological is not so prominent for subjective theories of happiness because most of these theories identify happiness with a subjective psychological state that is held to be obviously and intrinsically valuable. It is because (all) subjects value the state that it is valuable. The axiological move is the claim that the subjective psychological states in question are of ultimate value—that other things are valued as a means to those states. These theories usually recognize that the means of achieving the valued states may differ significantly from individual to individual, so that determining the best path to happiness is a fairly subjective matter.[11]

[11] I thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out one exception. Stoic conceptions of happiness are ontologically subjective and axiologically objective because they identify *eudaimonia* with psychological states of emotional detachment—states that are not obviously (at least not to most modern audiences) valued because subjects value them.

I will briefly discuss two varieties of subjective accounts: those that identify happiness with a feeling or sensation (i.e. pleasure), and those that identify happiness with some set of beliefs or judgments. Both of these are vulnerable to several problems, including the 'Experience Machine' problem. I will take up the view that happiness is an emotion in the next section and will argue that my version of this view can combat the Experience Machine problem.

One variety of subjective theory of happiness is hedonism—the view that happiness is a particular feeling or sensation. For instance Bentham (1781/1988) equated happiness with pleasure and the absence of pain, and argued that a happy life is one where the pleasures outnumber (or outweigh) the pains. Following Feldman (2002) we might want to call this sensory hedonism (SH) to highlight the fact that it is *sensory* pleasure that is being identified with happiness.[12]

Many people find sensory hedonism, and feeling theories of happiness in general, inadequate.[13] Pleasure seems neither necessary nor sufficient for happiness (particularly global happiness). That a string of pleasurable experiences is not sufficient to make one happy is (again) illustrated by the life of a heroin addict. Assuming that his supply of the drug is unending, his life may be a pleasurable one, but surely it is not a happy one. Indeed, his use of the drug, or my weekend of sybaritic fun at the spa, may be a desperate attempt to mask unhappiness, not end it. Furthermore, pleasure may not even be necessary for happiness. We can imagine happy lives that are lacking in pleasure, for instance the life of a Stoic philosopher or monk (Feldman 2002). SH is also viewed as being overly inclusive about what contributes to happiness, allowing even psychologically superficial and fleeting pleasures to make a difference. These pleasures, or even some pattern of pleasures, do not seem capable of playing the important causal and explanatory/evaluative roles we assign happiness (Haybron 2001).

Another kind of subjectivism about happiness identifies happiness with certain beliefs or judgments, for instance, the belief that (the majority of) one's (important) desires have been satisfied or that one's life is going well. These are often referred to as life satisfaction accounts of happiness (e.g. Benditt 1974, Thomas 1968). By identifying happiness with the belief that one's important goals or desires

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[12] Contrast this with a hedonism like Mill's that holds that 'higher' or intellectual, aesthetic and moral pleasures are qualitatively better than sensory pleasures, or Feldman's 'attitudinal hedonism'. Both of these approaches are problematic unless one can make out a coherent notion of non-sensory pleasure. One way to do this is to analyze it in terms of cognitive states such as beliefs and judgments—an approach I will discuss next.

[13] For example, see Feldman (2002), Haybron (2001).

have been met, or the belief that one is satisfied with one's life, these theories can avoid the charges of superficiality leveled against feeling theories.

However, both feeling theories and life satisfaction theories encounter the 'Experience Machine problem', named after Nozick's famous thought experiment.[14] Nozick asks us to consider whether we would give up our current lives to enter a machine that will give us any set of experiences (and beliefs about those experiences) we want. Once we enter the machine, we will no longer remember that we have made this Faustian bargain and so our experience machine (EM) lives will be experientially indistinguishable from 'real' life, except that the EM life is guaranteed to be a very happy one by any subjective standard. If happiness is only a matter of subjective states, Nozick presses, then surely we would line up to enter the EM without reservation. But most people balk at the idea.[15] Nozick uses this to argue that it is not the *belief* or *feeling* that one's desires and goals have been satisfied that matters for happiness, but their actual satisfaction in the real world.[16] Because the psychological states most subjective theories identify with happiness can, in principle, be completely disconnected from the way one's life is *really* going, it is possible for the subject to have all the relevant psychological states but be living in a world (or machine) that does not match up with them. Nozick uses this to argue that a purely subjective account of happiness will not do; the objective facts of a real life must play a role.

And so we come 'round again to the notion that happiness has something to do with the way one's life is really going. Hybrid theories offer a solution by stipulating that both subjective and objective features are components; happiness is a matter of having the appropriate psychological states in response to the real conditions of a life (e.g. Nozick, Kraut). While some sort of hybrid view is probably right, the challenge is to explain how the components are related in a deep, principled way. This is difficult to do in the wake of EM-type worries. It

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[14] Nozick first described it in *Anarchy, State and Utopia* (1974), and again in an essay on Happiness in *The Examined Life* (1989).

[15] Not everyone shares Nozick's intuition. For example see Silverstein (2000). The character Cypher in *The Matrix* is someone who does choose the EM (the matrix), knowing that its experiences are not 'real.' Of course, this character is portrayed as morally weak, suggesting that while audiences may not find his choice implausible, they will find it unlaudable. See Griswold (2002) for a discussion of happiness and *The Matrix*.

[16] More precisely, Nozick argues that happiness is a matter of one's positive emotion responses being a 'fitting' response to actual value. That one's emotions are fitting is, per Nozick, of intrinsic value. As he somewhat enigmatically puts it: "Emotions do not simply feel good; intense and fitting emotions make us more." (1989, p. 95)

seems that any connection between actual states of affairs and our mental states either can in principle be severed by the EM, or seems to be mere stipulation to close a loophole. For instance, Nozick talks about our wanting an 'actual connection with reality' (1989, p.106) But why is this important? If it is because such a connection contributes something to our experience, then his account falls prey to his own thought experiment. In denying this, Nozick does not do much more than stipulate that such a connection is of intrinsic value and a necessary part of happiness. This, however, leads to the uncomfortable conclusion that some fact beyond my experiential reach may make the difference to my happiness, even though it makes no difference to my state of mind.

Clearly both subjective, psychological states and the objective facts of a life play a role in happiness. But how do we work out the relationship between these two features? If we give too much weight to the subjective states, then the objective welfare of the person becomes irrelevant; if objective factors are given more importance, then we not only have the difficulty of specifying those in ways that are not overly rigid or narrow, we downplay the role of psychological states. What we want is a view that shows how subjective and objective factors are related in some deep, principled way such that the subjective aspects cannot become completely dissociated from the objective ones, and the objective ones directly influence and constrain the subjective ones. One kind of psychological state or process that remains a promising candidate is affect. I argue for an affect theory of happiness in the next section.

IV. An affect theory of happiness

The Experience Machine problem illuminates a fundamental flaw in many subjective accounts of happiness. The EM problem is a problem for these theories because the mental states they identify with happiness are thought to be the sorts of states that can retain their identities even when they are disconnected from objective facts about the body and world[17]. This is what some philosophers (Clark 1997; Haugeland 1998, e.g.) have disparagingly called a "Cartesian" view of mental states. It is the view that, even if some form of materialism is true, mental states are relatively distinct and autonomous from the bodies and worlds in which they operate, and can be sufficiently identified and characterized

[17] This also licenses brain-in-a-vat-type worries. One way of thinking about the Experience Machine is as turning its inhabitants into the equivalents of brains-in-vats. Later I will discuss another interpretation of the EM problem.

without reference to the body or external world.[18] But, as Clark, Haugeland, and others have argued, the Cartesian view of mental states is flawed. We cannot and should not understand mental states as disembodied and autonomous of their environments. While there are disagreements about whether this applies to all of our mental states,[19] there is strong evidence that at least some of our mental states are essentially embodied.[20] That is to say, for at least some mental states, it is necessary to understand them as functioning in the context of a physical body and world in order to understand them at all. The neuroscientist, Antonio Damasio, makes a similar point based upon neurological evidence in his book, *Descartes' Error* (1994). There he makes a convincing case that emotions are essentially embodied psychological states. I argue that if happiness is viewed as a species of embodied affective state, it can escape the Experience Machine problem, and we can understand how subjective psychological states and the objective conditions of a life are both essential components of happiness. Indeed, if recent work on embodied cognition is right, then affective states not only escape the EM problem, they reveal some fundamental misconceptions on which it rests. I will discuss this in section V.

A. Happiness as an emotion

Many people (especially non-philosophers) readily classify happiness as an emotion. Psychologists have long treated happiness as an emotion, although little in the psychological literature has focused specifically on happiness.[21] There is evidence that people in many different cultures have an emotion category that corresponds to 'happiness', and recognize similar facial expressions as signaling happiness (Ekman & Friesen 1971; Ekman 1992a). Because of this, happiness or 'joy' is often listed by psychologists as one of the 'basic emotions'. These are emotions that are found universally across cultures, are associated

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18 For example, some forms of functionalism or computationalism characterize mental states in terms of their (narrow) representational content and/or their input-output relations to other mental states. However, Haugeland argues, even when theories do include bodily or world states in their analyses, "they remain theoretical or intellectual in a way that not only does not undermine but actually reinforces an aspect of the Cartesian separation that is still so pervasive as to be invisible." (1998, p.208)

19 See Clark 1999 for overview of the debate.

20 Clark (1997); Haugeland (1998); Hurley (1998); Shapiro (2004); Wilson (2004), among others.

21 While happiness is often included as an emotion in discussions of emotions in general, it is given far less attention than negative emotions such as fear (Fredrickson 1998). This is changing as an interest in positive or hedonic psychology is taking hold.

with distinctive bodily changes and facial expressions, and are thought to have evolved to help us meet pressing adaptive concerns.[22] Other basic emotions include anger, fear, sadness, surprise and disgust. While the concept of 'basic emotions' as a distinct subcategory of emotions is controversial,[23] the idea that happiness is an emotion or some sort of affective phenomenon is widespread. But if we view happiness as an emotion what sort of theory of happiness does this give us?

While there is no one widely accepted theory of emotion, most emotion theories describe emotions as having the following properties. First, emotions are *intentional states*; they are directed towards or about determinate objects, events or states of affairs. Second, emotions involve some sort of *appraisal* of the object in light of our own goals and desires, or it's bearing on our well-being.[24] The appraisal is not necessarily conscious, and may occur very quickly and automatically. Third, emotions involve certain *bodily changes*, for example changes in respiration, heart rate, and fluctuations in neurochemical and hormone levels. Fourth, emotions include some conscious *feeling*, perhaps in part a conscious experience of the bodily changes. Last, emotions play a motivational role—they ready or prepare us to act in certain ways, what Fridja (1986) refers to as '*action tendencies*'. Emotions are processes that involve coordinated feelings, cognitive, bodily and behavioral changes. It is also widely assumed that emotions do all this for a purpose; they help us respond quickly and effectively to objects and events in our environment that are relevant to our personal goals and physical well-being.

Positive emotions such as happiness[25] are characterized by a feeling of pleasure or thrill, ranging from mild to extreme intensity, slight increase in heart rate and skin conductance, characteristic changes in adrenaline and other hormones, and a characteristic facial expression:

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22 See Ekman (1992a) for discussion.

23 See Ekman 1992a, Ortony & Turner 1990, Ekman's reply 1992b; and Prinz 2004.

24 Prinz (2004), for example, defines appraisals as states that "represent an organism-environment relation that bears on well-being" (p.77).

25 There is a terminological difficulty here, as many emotion studies have only one 'positive' emotion category. This is often labeled 'happiness' or 'joy', but because this category is not well defined (for reasons I will discuss in a moment), and because 'happiness' is what I aim to capture using an affect theory, I will use the neutral term 'positive emotions.' This may refer to an emotion, or an emotion family (Ekman 1992a), a superordinate category that includes several more specific but related emotion subtypes such as excitement, contentment, pride and ecstacy. Lazarus (1991) and Prinz (2004) make similar points.

the Duchenne (or sincere) smile.[26] Positive emotion is usually elicited by objects or events that are appraised as beneficial for the subject, or as achieving or making progress towards a goal (Lazarus 1991). Positive emotion is also associated with cognitive changes. We are more outgoing, optimistic and flexible during positive emotion (Fredrickson 1998; Prinz 2004). These effects are often intense but quite short-lived (Ekman 1994).

However, there are several ways in which positive emotions do not fit into the general picture of emotions described above. For one, there seem to be far fewer positive emotions than negative ones (Fredrickson 1998). Too, positive emotions seem to be less differentiated than negative ones (*ibid*). For example, while anger, fear and disgust are each quite different from the others qualitatively, psychologically and physiologically, it is much more difficult to distinguish joy from excitement, contentment or even pride, except with respect to levels of intensity and perhaps, in the case of pride, typical appraisals or formal objects (Levenson, Ekman & Friesen 1990; Ekman 1992a[27]). This in part explains why psychologists have often included only one positive emotion in studies and lists of emotion types.

Another way in which positive emotions differ from negative emotions is that they are not associated with a set of specific behaviors or 'action tendencies' (Fridja 1986; Ekman 1992a; Fredrickson 1998). Positive emotions do not seem to motivate us to do anything in particular in the moment (compare this with the spitting out or turning away tendencies associated with disgust or the flight-or-flight tendencies associated with fear). Fridja has described the action tendencies of joy as "free activation," or a nonspecific readiness to approach and engage (1986, p.36). One could argue, however, that positive emotion motivates us to continue doing whatever we are doing, and therefore the action tendency is not distinguishable from prior behavior. Too, positive emotions affect future behavior by encouraging us to seek out and repeat similar situations and actions (Oatley & Johnson-Laird 1987).

If one accepts the claim that positive emotions are evolved traits, is not surprising that they have no specific action tendencies associated

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[26] The Duchenne smile is the 'true' smile that involves not only raised corners of the lips, but also contraction of the muscles around the eyes. False or insincere smiles tend not to include the contraction of muscles around the eyes. According to Ekman (1992a), all positive emotions have the Duchenne smile as the characteristic facial expression, and any subtypes are not further differentiated with respect to facial expression.

[27] However, more recently Ekman (2003) has suggested that there may be more than a dozen positive ('enjoyable') emotions, and has speculated that these might be more differentiable than previously thought. The evidence based upon physiological measures and facial expression has yet to bear that out, however.

with them. Unlike other basic emotions, positive emotions are not responses to significant threats, so there was no adaptive pressure to evolve a fast threat-specific response system. In fact, positive emotions arise in situations where there is no perceived threat or where there is perceived benefit. Perhaps positive emotions have the function of signaling organism-environment interactions that are perceived to be good or welfare-enhancing, and of motivating us to prolong the interaction or seek out similar interactions in the future. Ekman makes a similar suggestion, stating that positive emotions "…cause us to do things that by and large are good for us" (2003, p. 199).

Another possibility, suggested by Fredrickson (1998, 2000) is that positive emotions "…broaden an individual's momentary thought-action repertoire, which can in turn build that person's enduring personal resources, resources that also serve the ancestral function of promoting survival" (p. 1, 2000). Fredrickson's 'broaden-and-build model' of positive emotions pinpoints ways in which positive emotions differ from negative emotions in both form and function. While negative emotions narrow and focus a person's thoughts and actions in service of reacting to a problem or threat, positive emotions do the opposite. This suggests that in some ways positive emotions are fundamentally different from negative emotions. Because general emotion theories have been modeled around negative emotions, they do not accommodate positive emotions as well as negative ones. Fredrickson (1998) argues that, instead of trying to shoe-horn positive emotions into these theories, we need to rethink our general emotions theories so that they better accommodate positive emotions.

An emotion account of happiness that incorporates Fredrickson's broaden-and-build model, does a good job of capturing what I have called local happiness. Positive emotions have the phenomenal feel we associate with local happiness: a slight (or intense) rush, a thrill, a feeling of pleasure. Too, they are directed towards objects or events that we have appraised as beneficial to us and our goals. This is consistent with the association some objectivists and life satisfaction theorists make between happiness and the satisfaction of personal goals. Happiness about x requires that we *care* about getting or accomplishing x; if we did not care about winning the race or did not desire an ice cream sundae, our getting these things would not make us happy[28]. Our experiences of local happiness are related to our goals and desires, including unconscious goals and desires that stem from our nature as human

[28] We need to care about getting x under some description or another. If I care about impressing my friends, and believe that winning the race will do that, then I will be happy that I won the race.

beings, but local happiness is more than simply the belief that those desires are satisfied. Furthermore, while the effects are fairly short-lived, positive emotions exhibit significant causal depth.[29] They broaden our attention and perspective, and motivate us to approach and explore. Indirectly, this can strengthen our personal ties and social support networks. Positive emotion is worth wanting because it has effects we value: it feels good, is associated with goal satisfaction, and strengthens our ties with others. Because it feels good and is associated with goal satisfaction, it plays an important role in our deliberations.

A significant virtue of an emotions theory of local happiness is that such an account goes a long way towards reconciling subjective and objective intuitions about happiness. Emotions are essentially embodied states. They not only have bodily states as components, the entire character of the emotion involves feedback loops between 'bodily' and 'mental' states.[30] Furthermore, because emotions function to help us respond to objects and events out in the world,[31] they involve even more complex feedback relationships coordinating body, mind and environment. The embodied nature of emotions illustrates how subjective and objective features interact and constrain each other. The objective facts of the world and our bodies not only cause, but shape and become reflected in the subjective components of the emotion. In turn, the subjective aspects of emotion directly influence our bodily and behavioral states. Not only does local happiness signal perceived well-being, it remains tethered to and constrained by objective features of our lives and welfare.

This does not mean that local happiness is always 'right' and consistently correlated with our welfare. Because our emotions are influenced by our beliefs, the emotion system can, in a sense, be 'fooled' by false beliefs. I can come to have false beliefs about what is good for me (what goals I should pursue) and so be happy when those goals are achieved. Nonetheless, I in some sense believe that the object of my

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[29] Rosenberg (1998) has described positive emotion in particular as exhibiting significant 'distributive breadth', which she defines as "the range of different psychological and physiological processes that [the state] can [influence]" (p. 7).

[30] Indeed the body is involved in every aspect of the emotion process, including appraisal. Prinz describes emotions as 'embodied appraisals,' they are bodily perceptions that "appraise by registering bodily changes" (2004, p. 78). In his later work Solomon (2003) made a similar move, and neuroscientists such as Damasio (1994) argue that occurent emotions and emotion memories ('somatic markers') are embodied states.

[31] We can also have emotional responses to thoughts. One could argue, however, that the evolutionary *function* of emotions is to help us respond to environmental conditions. Our ability to internalize and then react to our thoughts about the world is perhaps a later development.

happiness is a good, and so my happiness is functioning to indicate and promote that perceived good. However, there are limits to how deluded we can become. We cannot be radically and consistently wrong about what is good for us, otherwise we would quickly perish (Dennett 1987; Stephens 2001).[32] The objective facts of the world, which include our bodily states, have a way of quickly correcting any misconceptions. An emotions theory portrays local happiness as an emotion state that is embodied and 'embedded'[33] in the real world, and functions to mediate our interactions with that world. In this sense, local happiness tends to reflect and promote our well-being, and cannot be completely untethered from objective facts about our welfare.

However, even if an emotions account does a good job of capturing what I've called local happiness: the more transient, object- or event-specific happy states, it does not go very far in explaining global happiness. Emotions are too short-lived and object-dependent to account for the pervasive, persistent nature of global happiness. Emotions tend to overcome us, and become prominent in our conscious experience of the moment. But global happiness is more subtle, acting as background to our ongoing activities. Global happiness has more to do with the way one approaches life as a whole than with reactions to particular objects or events.

One could argue that global happiness is nothing more than the propensity or disposition to experience local happiness. This suggests that when we strive for (global) happiness and wish it for our loved ones, what we end up attaining, if successful, is an increase in the number, and perhaps intensity, of instances of local happiness. A happy life, in other words, can be understood in terms of a life that is sufficiently full of local happiness (Bentham). This strikes me as wrong. There is a sense in which one can be happy without being happy *about* anything in particular. This sort of objectless generalized happiness is neither rare or peculiar; it is what we experience when we get out of bed on the 'right' side, what the first warm spring day can cause, and what living 'happily ever after' refers to. Furthermore, this sort of happiness is not only distinct from more localized happiness episodes, it seems to have properties that make such episodes more likely. In other words, there is some occurent (and not merely dispositional) state that has cognitive, behavioral and phenomenological properties of its own, and

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[32] This is not always true for beliefs about what is bad for us. 'False positives' for fear and disgust are probably survival-enhancing. This may explain why fear and disgust conditioning to novel stimuli are easy to establish and hard to extinguish (Ohman 1986).

[33] The 'embedded mind' is Haugeland's phrase, but is now widely used, along with 'extended mind' or 'wide mind'.

that among its effects, disposes us to experience things in a way that makes local happiness more probable. Therefore, while it is true that global happiness disposes us towards local happiness, global happiness cannot be analyzed solely in terms of this disposition.

B. Happiness as a mood

A promising way to capture the notion of global happiness, while keeping it in the same affective ballpark as local happiness is to view global happiness as a mood.[34] Moods are like emotions in that they are related to changes in both bodily and feeling states, and they affect our thoughts and behaviors in significant ways. They are distinguished from emotions by being objectless, and more diffuse and pervasive in their effects. Moods saturate our entire experience, not by adding specific content, but by modulating our interactions with the world. Moods affect how we think and behave in characteristic, but nonspecific ways. Moods are also causally connected with emotions. Our mood disposes us to experience mood congruent emotions, and repeated or intense emotions can contribute to the onset of a mood. Therefore moods and emotions are linked both causally and conceptually. All of these characteristics of mood make it an ideal candidate for global happiness.

To flesh this out I will draw on the account of moods I developed previously (Sizer 2000a, 2000b). There I argued that moods are modulations in the operations of basic cognitive processes such as memory, attention, perception and cognitive flexibility. Such states have the function of both representing and mediating the interactions between our selves (our 'total state') and the general environment (Morris 1999). While I previously emphasized the cognitive dimensions of mood, I think they are as much embodied states as emotions. Moods both reflect and affect our bodily states to such an extent that our health and well-being directly influence, and are influenced by our moods. Being in a happy or melancholic mood is a matter of perceiving and interacting with the world in a characteristic, but general, way. This is why metaphors of colour—feeling blue, things look rosy—are so appropriate for moods; whatever comes our way will be seen through the lens of the mood.

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[34] This has previously been suggested by Solomon (1977), and argued for more extensively by Dan Haybron (2005). While Haybron does a good job of arguing for the plausibility of viewing happiness as a mood (or what he refers to as a 'central affective state'), he does not explicate the notion of a mood in detail and what this implies about happiness. In fact Haybron references my previous work on moods as one way such an account could be fleshed out.

Positive moods[35] are characterized by global biases or priming for positively valenced items,[36] and exhibit the broaden-and-build characteristics of positive emotions, though in moods these properties are much more persistent and pervasive. People in positive moods recall positively valenced ideas, concepts and memories more quickly and easily than negative ones (Clark & Teasdale 1982; Mineka & Nugent 1995). It is likely that such a bias influences judgment, explaining why people in positive moods tend to evaluate objects and events positively, think positive thoughts, and are more optimistic. Positive moods are also associated with attentional differences. Subjects in positive moods take in more information, and focus more on the 'big picture' than on details (Isen 1984; Isen & Daubman 1984). Too, their attention tends to be directed outward—towards other people, in contrast with the self-focused attention of people in negative moods (Ingram 1990). This outward-directed feature has been linked to happy people's tendencies to be more friendly, outgoing, helpful and considerate of others. (Isen 1970). People in positive moods not only take in more information than those in negative moods, they also tend to process it differently. They process information more quickly and less deliberately. They rely more heavily on past experiences, heuristics and stereotypes, whereas those in negative moods, tend to focus on details, and rely more exclusively on the information before them. Positive mood also seems to enhance cognitive flexibility and creativity. People in positive moods make more creative (diverse) and unusual associations between ideas, and are better able to solve problems in interesting and novel ways (Isen, Daubman & Nowicki 1987; Isen 1993).

Our moods are also manifested in our bodily states, and have distinctive bodily components. Depression is marked by sleep disturbances, extreme fatigue and sometimes agitation, in addition to the characteristic cognitive biases. Likewise positive moods are associated with what Robert Thayer (1989) calls 'energetic arousal', a state in

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[35] There are again vexing terminological issues with moods, as the scant literature on moods tends to use pathological terms such as 'depression', or simply differentiates positive from negative moods. As with emotions, I will use 'positive mood' to talk about the state that I think best captures the notion of global happiness. Mood terms such as 'melancholy', 'depression', 'irritability', 'contentment' or 'ebullience' probably indicate variations in energy or tension levels, or convey degrees of intrusiveness or pathology, but do not each pick out distinct moods.

[36] Valence refers to the positivity or negativity of a state. It is difficult to define without becoming circular, perhaps because valence is a primitive. Positively valenced states tend to feel good, and negatively valenced states tend to feel bad, but valence is not essentially a feeling. It can be thought of as an internal marker of the goodness or badness of something, signaling whether it should be pursued/continued or avoided/ceased. See Prinz 2004 for a more extended discussion of valence.

which levels of arousal or patterns of general activation and energy are high, but tension is low. The feeling of energetic arousal is associated with feelings of being awake, having energy, being ready to go. Low tension is associated with an absence of jitteryness or tension, and a feeling of calm and placidity. So the combination of high arousal and low tension describes a state in which "nothing bothers you greatly and you aren't hurried; yet you are ready to do things: to work, to play, to run errands, to sit and talk to someone with undivided interest and enthusiasm….[energetic arousal] is patient and attentive, productive and pleasant." (Thayer 2001, p. 93)

The bodily dimensions of moods have been studied in relation to the connections between chronic illness and anxiety and depression, and the effects of mood on immune system response and wound healing. People suffering from heart disease experience depression at much higher rates than healthy people, and depression seems to put people at higher risk for chronic illnesses (Leventhal & Patrick-Miller 2000). Recent studies show that even mild depression has an effect on the immune system and slows down wound healing. Even moderate poor health, fatigue or stress can influence mood, particularly if these conditions persist (Thayer 1989, 2001; Stone et al 1998). Thayer argues that adequate (but not too much) nutrition, sleep and good health are all positively correlated with increases in energetic arousal. Furthermore, if we feel that we have the resources (psychological, physical and social) to handle what life throws at us, we experience less stress. Stress in the form of increased cortisol levels has been implicated as a major cause of serious health problems (and psychological distress), therefore, if positive mood reduces stress, then it helps us stay healthy (Leventhal & Patrick-Miller 2000).

Above I suggested that moods function to indicate and influence the relationship between the self and the environment. Moods operate as self-monitors, but also modulate cognitive, bodily and behavioral processes in response to both environmental demands and personal resources. In this way, moods involve the external world as well. Moods can be understood as properties of a dynamic system that includes feedback loops between body, mind and environment. While negative moods are responses to imbalance, or a perceived inability to meet environmental demands given resources, positive mood may play a unique role. I suggest that positive moods represent homeostasis or balance within this system.[37] In other words, positive moods, like

[37] I am not the first to make this suggestion. Morris (1999) gives moods the function of "maintaining homeostatic balance between perceived resources and demands" (1999, p. 169), and Averill & More (2000) make a similar suggestion about happiness in particular. Haybron (2005) also uses a dynamic system metaphor to characterize moods.

positive emotions, are a result of things going well, of a body and mind that are functioning well in a given environment. Positive moods represent a dynamic equilibrium between organismic resources and needs (both physical and psychological) and environmental demands and stressors.

Equating positive mood with homeostasis does not imply that positive mood involves optimal functioning in an Aristotelian sense of optimal-for-our-kind. Nor does it imply that positive mood is a state of complacency or passivity. If positive moods required optimal functioning in the strict objectivist sense, then few of us would ever experience them. People with significant disabilities would simply be out of luck (something Aristotle would agree with). But studies show that the disabled are no more happy or unhappy than the non-disabled. While people do experience sadness and depression directly after a permanently debilitating accident, their mood tends to return to within their previous normal range within a year (Brickman et al 1978; Frederick & Loewenstein 1999). Positive mood represents a balance given certain fairly stable properties of both the individual and the environment.

Neither is positive mood a state of stagnation or passivity. People in positive moods do not have any difficult and pressing problems to solve, but they are relatively energetic and curious, eager to explore and experiment. This is consistent with Fredrickson's claim that positive affect is associated with a broadening of our repertoires of thought and action. We are quickly habituated to the status quo, and like to seek new challenges and set new goals. Successes renew our confidence and encourage us to continue striving. This is another reason why positive mood is best understood as a property of a complex dynamic system—one that incorporates an ever-changing environment *and* changing sets of personal goals and desires.

Why think that positive mood represents a homeostasis or attractor state for this dynamic system? One of the distinctive properties of positive mood is that the cognitive biases I've described are much more robust for positive moods than negative ones (Parkinson et al 1996). That is, the data are stronger and more consistent for positive moods than negative ones. The most popular explanation for this is that negative moods trigger *mood repair strategies* aimed at getting rid of the negative mood, and positive moods trigger *mood maintenance strategies* (Isen 1984; Parkinson et al 1996). Mood repair strategies interfere with and attempt to exterminate our negative moods, but not our positive ones.[38]

[38] Chronic depression may be an exception. Mood repair strategies may be malfunctioning or insufficient to alter the mood.

Many mood repair and maintenance strategies are conscious. For example, when I feel depressed I may decide to call a friend or go for a walk in order to try to snap out of my bad mood. However, many mood regulation and maintenance strategies are automatic and unconscious. For example, changes or interference at the level of processing modes for memory, attention, information processing are largely automatic; we cannot consciously choose to recall positively valenced items, or to modulate attention. In addition, Frederickson argues that positive moods 'undo' the harmful physical effects of negative moods, as well as counteract the cognitive ones. For example, studies show that positive moods help us recover more quickly from the physical effects that negative moods and emotions have on our cardiovascular system (Fredrickson 2000; Fredrickson & Levenson 1998). The fact that positive mood elicits mood maintenance strategies and negative mood elicits mood repair strategies suggests that we have strong conscious inclinations and unconscious mechanisms designed to maintain our positive moods. In a sense, we both consciously and unconsciously strive to be in a positive mood. Why might this be?

One obvious answer to why we might consciously strive to maintain positive moods is that they *feel* good. But I maintain that we naturally, unconsciously strive to maintain them because they are also *good for* us in several ways. First of all, the set of cognitive modulations associated with positive moods are ideal for an organism that has no pressing concerns or problems to solve, but must still be vigilant in scanning the environment, to take notice of any potential problems. It is advantageous to take in a lot of information about what's out there and process it quickly—to see if there is anything that requires more careful attention. Furthermore, one can imagine that an organism that has the energy and inquisitiveness to explore its environment during stress-free times is poised to make better use of that environment in the future, either through discovery of novel food sources, good places to take shelter or meeting potential mates. In addition, the outwardly focused nature of positive moods facilitates social interactions and the strengthening of social bonds—things that are crucial for the survival, reproductive success and future happiness of social creatures like us. This is the 'build' component of positive affect that Fredrickson (1998) describes. Positive moods have properties that help prolong the mood, both by affecting how we think and feel and, perhaps more significantly, by encouraging us to build the social and psychological resources that ensure that our lives will go better. In short positive mood is *good for* us in a number of ways. This might explain why we both consciously and unconsciously strive for it. This also supports my claim that positive mood can be viewed as a pattern of activity that is

homeostasis for the dynamic system involving body, mind and environment. We are, in a sense, built to strive for positive mood.

This account of positive mood I have offered captures many of our intuitions about global happiness. A positive mood account of global happiness explains why it is worth wanting: it is both good feeling and good for us. It is persistent and productive; positive moods increase the probability that we will experience local happiness and most importantly, help insure that our lives will go better. A mood account of global happiness explains why and how happiness has such profound effects on us; positive mood influences how we think, behave and interact with our environment in wide-spread, but profound ways. Lastly, as with emotions, moods are embodied states. Even more than emotions (which can be directly influenced by faulty beliefs) moods reflect and affect our objective welfare. The objective facts of our lives influence our moods, and vice versa. Our moods can be seen as barometers of our well-being[39] in both subjective and objective senses.

V. Lingering ghosts in the machine

I have argued that an affect theory of happiness can explain both local and global types happiness, and can reconcile the subjective and objective features of our intuitions about happiness. The theory identifies local happiness with positive emotions, and global happiness with positive mood. This allows us to respect the differences between local and global happiness, without having to insist that they are different things altogether. Local and global happiness both function to indicate that things are going well for us, and causally interact with each other; local happiness events can lead to global happiness and global happiness makes local happiness more likely.

An affect theory of happiness brings the objective and subjective strands of our intuitions together in several ways. First, positive affective states are embodied and embedded; they are complex dynamic processes that involve both subjective psychological states and objective states of the body and environment. This reflects the adaptive and occurent functions of these states to indicate and encourage certain beneficial organism/environment transactions. What follows from this is that happiness has value not simply because the objective and subjective features are each independently of value, but because these features are causally related to each other. The subjective and objective features interact and constrain each other, so that happiness can be seen as shaped by and reflective of the objective conditions of our lives. This is

[39] This is a modification of Jacobsen's (1957) description of moods as 'barometers of the ego' (p.75).

particularly true of global happiness, which can be thought of as both a barometer of well-being, and a means of cultivating it.

A critic might charge that my account is like other subjective theories in falling prey to the Experience Machine problem. The EM can give someone positive emotions and moods, yet these states will be completely disconnected from the way that person's life is really going. The person may be faring (objectively) very badly, but she will have all of the affective states associated with happiness. There are two ways to interpret the EM thought experiment. One, which I discussed in section IV, is that the EM is a version of the brain-in-a-vat thought experiment. As I argued previously, one of the virtues of an affective theory of happiness is that it avoids the "Cartesian" view of mental states as distinct and autonomous from bodily states. Affective states are essentially embodied states, and therefore brains-in-vats cannot have affective states. In particular, brains-in-vats cannot be 'happy' on my account. But one can also read the EM thought experiment as proposing that one's entire body is manipulated, *Matrix*-style, by the EM. The machine can stimulate the appropriate mental *and* bodily states, defeating my response above. Here again, however, I would argue that the initial plausibility of the *Matrix* version of the EM thought experiment (hereafter, 'MEM') is predicated on a particular conception of mental states, and that this conception can be challenged.

According to this version of the thought experiment, the MEM *stimulates* the relevant body and brain states of the individual and *simulates* the external environment such that the subject realizes everything necessary for happiness, even though he is literally disconnected from reality. An objectivist about happiness would conclude that the MEM dweller is not really happy because the objective facts necessary for happiness are merely simulated, not realized. Even if one isn't an objectivist about happiness, one might worry that even if the MEM dweller is happy, she is certainly not leading a good life, showing that it is possible to disconnect happiness and well-being. I am not convinced that the thought experiment supports either of those conclusions. The plausibility of a MEM rests on being able to make a principled distinction between organism and environment, but such a distinction is difficult to make without either begging the question against my account or making somewhat arbitrary decisions about what goes on 'inside', and what gets relegated to 'outside.'

Works by Clark & Chalmers (1998), Wilson (2004), Hurley (1998, 2001) and others suggest that mind is not only embodied, it is embedded in an environment such that aspects of the environment are integral parts of cognitive processes. Cognition does not necessarily operate over an internal re-presentation of the environment, but by

interacting with the environment itself in ways that incorporate the environment as components of 'mental' processes. Hurley makes a strong case for embedded or 'extended' minds by considering the interplay between perception and action. The traditional view of perception and action (what Hurley calls the 'classical sandwich' view) sees them as linked in a linear causal sequence with cognition in the middle: one perceives the external environment, then subjects the percept to higher order cognitive processing, forms intentions to act, and then acts—changing the external environment and starting the cycle over. In this scenario, the barrier between inside and outside is drawn at the skin, with the external environment providing inputs that are processed 'inside' the organism, and cognition giving rise to (among other things) intentional actions that take place 'outside'.

Hurley challenges this traditional view, arguing instead that perception and action are part of a dynamic cycle with complex feedback loops that extend out into the environment and back to the body and brain of the organism. Perceptual information is constantly interacting with, and recalibrating, cognition and action, at the same time that action is changing the perceptual field and with it, perceptual information and cognition. Hurley goes on to argue that our sense of self arises out of a complex feedback between information about self and environment such that the self is determined in part by how it affects and is affected by the environment. The environment, likewise, becomes understood and defined through our interactions with it. Wilson succinctly makes a similar point: "No environment, no bodily action; no bodily action, no agency; no agency, no temporally extended processes or awareness" (2004, p. 220).

This is consistent with my account of happiness as both reflecting and affecting our subjective states and objective welfare. A positive mood affects my environment by bringing certain aspects of it to my attention, and imbuing them with a sort of possibility (of success, of reciprocation, of pleasure). This leads me to act and to experience my self and my actions in certain ways. At the same time my actions further change the environment, as well as my goals and perceptions, and so on. When one tries to describe how a MEM would realize such an interaction, some puzzles arise: which pieces of this are 'real' and which are simulated by the MEM? If the environment is simulated, which one is it—the one full of possibility or some affectively neutral environment that I re-present positively? Which one do I act on? There seems to be no principled way of drawing the line between organism and environment without making arbitrary decisions about the nature of the processes involved.

What the EM and MEM thought experiments invite us to do is to imagine a happy scenario and then, using our pre-theoretical intuitions

as a guide, perform surgery on it to separate the truly instantiated from the simulated. If one is of a Cartesian bent, one cleaves off the 'purely mental' from everything else. For others perhaps the dividing line is at the skin. Whatever is judged to be real (stimulated, not just simulated) gets to contribute to the subject's happiness; everything else is mere simulation. But for the MEM to provide an effective counter-argument to my position, it requires more than an ability to conceive of retroactive surgery on an oversimplified imagined scenario; the MEM must realize principled distinctions between inside/outside, stimulation/simulation. Otherwise the objection begs the question by simply stipulating that *whatever* it is that is 'outside' gets simulated, without altering what is 'inside'. However, the complexity of the dynamic systems involved in the perception-action cycle, never mind the sense of self and happiness, challenge the possibility of making these distinctions principled and before the fact. If the boundaries between organism and environment are unprincipled, variable and, as Clark puts it, at best 'leaky', then a basic assumption of the MEM thought experiment is undermined[40]. The distinction between inside and outside the machine is neither principled nor specifiable before the fact, creating real difficulties for making the counter-argument out in a non-question-begging way.

So let us consider yet another version of the EM that avoids the problems of making inside/outside distinctions. Consider the problem posed by Nagel's (1979) deceived businessman or what I will call (in keeping with the movie theme) the *Truman Show* problem. Truman has lived his entire life as the unwitting subject of the ultimate reality show. The stuff of his entire life: his wife, his friends, are fabrications for the show—paid actors who are merely pretending to love him, be his friends, and so on. Putting aside the qualms that the Hollywood Truman experiences, let us assume that he is completely unaware of the deception and blissfully content with his life. Furthermore, let us assume that Truman is in no danger of having the deception revealed. Here is a case where both the subjective and objective facts of a life are consistent with what I am calling happiness. But surely, a critic might prompt, the facts of Truman's life are not the right sorts of facts. As with the MEM, I need to consider two worries: whether Truman is happy, and whether Truman is leading a good life.

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[40] Hurley and Wilson make similar arguments about brain-in-vat and Inverted Earth scenarios. Both make the point that the plausibility of any of these thought experiments is due to the use of 'toy' or extremely underdescribed scenarios. Hurley works through several realistic and complex examples to show that complex dynamic feedback cycles reduce the plausibility of duplication (of experience in a different environmental context) to almost nothing.

I must begin by noting that such a deception would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to pull off—and not simply for all the logistical reasons portrayed in the movie. We have evolved sophisticated emotion detection systems that are exquisitely attuned to subtleties in the actions and affects of others. Even though we are not consciously aware of them, we are sensitive to automatic emotion microexpressions that can betray deception or insincerity (Ekman 2003). We perceive and react to these subtleties largely unconsciously, so their effects can be magnified and ramify throughout our interactions and relationships. The actors in this deception would have to be so good as to be practically convinced of the deception themselves. (And if this were the case, how insincere could they be?)

But let's assume that the actors *are* that good and are able to keep up the elaborate deception over time so that Truman is thoroughly convinced that his life is just wonderful. Here we have a man who has all of the subjective states necessary for happiness, and these are hooked up appropriately with reality, even though this reality is really a sham. On my account Truman is happy; the life he is living includes all of the subjective and objective features we associate with happiness: positive psychological states and attitudes about his health, a good home, a satisfying job, meaningful relationships, and so on. It is only when we take another step back and assume the 'producer's eye view' that we see that aspects of his life are not what he thinks they are.

This is a disturbing view, even though these wider facts are by stipulation out of the reach of his thoughts and actions. Interestingly, there is a narrow sense in which Truman is leading an objectively good life; his attitudes and affects are reflective of and promote states of affairs in the world that conform with many reasonable accounts of an objectively good life. But in a wider sense he is not leading a good life; even if he never finds out about the deception, the fact is that significant aspects of life are affected by unseen (and, if known, unwelcome) forces and motivations. To use L.W. Sumner's (1996) terminology, Truman's happiness is not thoroughly *authentic* because while Truman has a positive response to the real conditions of his life as he sees them, his response is not appropriately well informed. Consistent with this, I would argue that Truman is happy but that in these extraordinary circumstances happiness has failed to track well-being—not because it has become unhooked from reality, but because the normal causal chains that run between facts about the environment, body and mind have been systematically broken.[41]

[41] Thanks to Jay Garfield for helpful discussion on this point

However, I see this as further evidence of the strong connections that normally hold between facts of the world and subjective feelings. It is because subjective aspects of happiness are so closely intertwined with and attuned to objective facts about the world that pulling off such a deceit is practically impossible. Normally, because of these relations, happiness is a reliable barometer of well-being. It takes Hollywood and a healthy suspension of disbelief to sever them.

Even if I have satisfied the ontological objectivist by showing that happiness requires non-psychological states, I have not satisfied the axiological objectivist by giving an account of what sorts of objective facts are of value. I admit that my account falls short of recommending a particular view of what kinds of objective facts about a life are of value. However, my account does not simply establish that objective states *simpliciter* matter for happiness; it is *particular* sorts of objective facts of a life that matter—namely those that contribute to or are constitutive of welfare or well-being. This claim is not viciously circular if there are independent grounds for establishing that certain states of affairs, lifestyles, activities, contribute to objective welfare, where 'objective welfare' is taken to mean something above and beyond subjective feelings. I take it that the fields of medicine and psychology are concerned with establishing such facts, as are, plausibly, certain areas of behavioral economics and political science.[42] The point is that our biologies, psychologies and social structures impose real constraints on what can be considered good for us, and therefore what can plausibly be said to contribute to or be constitutive of our welfare.

Furthermore, thinking of happiness and, by extension, well-being in terms of dynamic organism/environment relationships has a number of interesting implications for conceptions of well-being. For one thing, the environment that we operate within and through is an intensely social one. Therefore our well-being is intertwined with and depends in all sorts of complex ways on those around us. The moral virtues are arguably crucial for building strong relationships with others and sustaining social harmony—things that are strongly correlated with happiness. Living virtuously in something like the Aristotelian sense is therefore plausibly an important—if not necessary—component of happiness.

However, some traditional claims about what is objectively good for us may be tempered by consideration of happiness as a product of certain organism/environment interactions. For example the psychologist

[42] Some *caveats* attend this last claim. The research needs to be concerned with what makes us better off, where this is measured in some way other than subjective feeling. While much of the research in behavioral economics, for example, uses subjective measures of well-being, others incorporate more objective measures.

Barry Schwartz (2004) has argued that, contrary to conventional wisdom, having too many choices in life can decrease happiness and well-being. Choice is usually associated with increased freedom and exercise of autonomy, and rightly thought to be a good thing. But Schwartz argues, too *many* choices can overload us and make us feel out of control and unable to choose. Loss of a sense of control has been associated with depression and suppressed immune system functioning—clearly threats to objective well-being. Furthermore, if we do manage to choose, we will be less satisfied with the choices we have made. My point is that viewing happiness and well-being in terms of organism/environment interactions, instead of as what happens inside an organism when placed in different environments, or as objectively good states of affairs, allows us to make sense of findings like Schwartz's. Choice is good for us because it gives us freedom (which is itself both good for us and feels good), but too much choice makes the environment and one's own attitudes and judgments too difficult to successfully navigate. What is of value is the right amount of choice—and that has to be determined by looking at the organism/environment interaction. The account of happiness I present offers another lens through which to examine and evaluate claims about what is good, and good for us.

VI. Happy ending

I have tried to show that an affect theory of happiness provides the best means of reconciling intuitions and fulfilling our desiderata for an account of happiness. The account preserves the differences between local and global types of happiness, but brings them together as closely related and interacting types of affective states. It also provides a means of reconciling our intuitions that happiness involves both subjective, psychological states and objective facts about our lives. While 'good feelings' are important components of happiness, these feelings must be connected to real states of affairs that are 'good for' us. Happiness is a way of interacting with the world that helps secure and promote our well-being. The states of our bodies and minds both reflect this world, and help shape it.

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