

# Happiness, Luck and Satisfaction

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## *Abstract*

In some of its many forms, happiness is no emotion. But there is also an emotion of happiness which, like other emotions, has correctness conditions. The correctness conditions of happiness differ in several respects, formal and non-formal, from those of emotions such as admiration, fear and indignation. The account given here of the correctness conditions of happiness suggests an account of happiness as a species of satisfaction and an account of the relation between happiness and affective rationality or reason.

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## 1. Dimensions and Objects of Happiness

Happiness has been the object of an enormous amount of philosophical reflection for a very long time. More recently, it has also been the object of a great deal of empirical work. Some of the philosophical or conceptual questions which have been raised are: What sort of an affective episode is happiness, the sort of thing which may but need not be felt at a time? What is the relation between happiness as an affective episode, and happiness as an enduring state or disposition? Is happiness, understood as an affective episode, ever an emotion? If so, what is its object, what is it about? Is happiness invariably a good thing?

In what follows, I shall put forward and argue for some answers to these questions. I shall consider the last three questions in greater detail than the others since it seems to me that they have been neglected in the philosophy and science of happiness. My answers to these three questions rely on a number of assumptions which I shall make explicit but which must here remain mere assumptions.

Is happiness always a positive emotion? Consider two fairly clear cases of happiness. Sam, who has just fallen in love, is blissfully happy. Roger, a religious believer who loves his God and takes himself to be loved in return, is blissfully happy. The first case is sometimes described as a state of felicity, the second as a state of beatitude. And both may be described in German as examples of *Glückseligkeit*. Bliss is positive, if anything is. But are the two examples of bliss examples of positive emotions?

Suppose that an emotion is a mental or psychological episode which is *about* or *of* something, a person, an action, a situation. Fear of a dog, admiration of a picture, being ashamed of a past deed are then examples of emotions. Is bliss about anything? The question is not a question about the reasons one has, if any, for being in a state of bliss or about the causes of such a state. One is afraid of the dog because it is or seems to be dangerous, admires the picture because it is or seems to be beautiful or interesting. But what one is afraid of is the dog, what one admires is the picture. If we distinguish in this way between what an emotion is about and one's reasons for feeling the way one does, then the happiness of bliss is not about anything, and so not an emotion.

But the happiness of bliss is not the only form happiness takes. Happiness *is* sometimes an emotion. Maria is happy about her impending promotion, Roger about the fact that he has passed an exam. Some of us at some time have been happy about aspects of our lives or situations. Sometimes such happiness takes the form of joy and rejoicing. One particularly important type of happiness or joy has as its object goods and situations which we are lucky to have or be in. These include lovers, spouses, children, power, wealth and many abilities. We may not always be aware of just how lucky we are as lovers, spouses, parents, children, citizens of functioning states and so on. But the quality of our happiness about these aspects of our lives emerges with startling clarity when we lose these goods, when a happy or lucky situation comes to an end. The unhappiness of loss is perhaps the most central type of sadness and grief is one of the most intense forms it may take.<sup>1</sup> Happiness about one's good fortune, like its opposite, the unhappiness of sadness over the loss of such good fortune or over one's bad or indifferent luck are emotions. Bliss, like its opposite, despair, is not.

The two forms of happiness identified so far are easily confused with cases which are sometimes described, more or less loosely, as cases of happiness or as cases of what makes us happy:

- Sam is happy because he is experiencing many pleasurable sensations or feelings on the back of his neck
- Sam is happy because he is pleased that he has passed his exams
- Sam is happy because he got what he wanted
- Sam is happy because he is enjoying the film
- Sam is happy because he is enjoying watching the film/skiing/reading a novel...
- Sam is happy because he is having fun
- Sam's joy about the news he has received makes him happy
- Sam is happy because he is moved by Maria's generosity
- Sam is happy because he is very interested in, fascinated by, the film

The fauna of happiness are very varied. Amusement, being care-free, comfort, content, delight, elation, enthusiasm, exhilaration, affective fusion and ecstasy, fun, gaiety, gladness, interest, mirth, satisfaction, serenity, tranquillity, feeling well, felt well-being are all sometimes described as forms of happiness or as happiness-makers.

One fundamental type of happiness, then, has an object. In order to understand just what precise form its objects take I shall rely on an assumption about

<sup>1</sup> On sadness, grief and loss, cf. Roberts 2003: 234-36.

emotions in general. The assumption is that emotions may be correct or incorrect. Consider, first of all, an analogy. Our beliefs, convictions, opinions and judgments are often incorrect. If you believe that  $p$  and it is false that  $p$ , then your belief is incorrect. May emotions also be incorrect? Consider the following examples. Sam is afraid of a dog which is not in fact dangerous. Russell is indignant about some situation which is not in fact unjust. Roger is ashamed of some past deed which was not in fact shameful. Hans despises someone who is not in fact contemptible. Paddy is angry with someone who has not in fact offended him. How should the distinction between fear of a dog which is dangerous and fear of a dog which is not dangerous, between contempt for someone who is contemptible and contempt for someone who is not contemptible be characterized? We very often make such distinctions. Indeed the concept of *phobia* presupposes something like this distinction. Plato and Aristotle sometimes characterize non-intellectual and non-perceptual states and acts as correct and incorrect. They refer to correct and incorrect love (*eros*), desire and choice. Following their example, many philosophers have distinguished in passing between correct and incorrect emotions, although the distinction is rarely exploited in any detail except by Brentano and some of his students. Related assessments, also to be found in Plato and Aristotle and, for example, in the writings of Wolfgang Köhler and C.D. Broad, characterize some emotions as more or less (*in*)appropriate or (*un*)reasonable, *fitting*, *required* or *permitted*. We do not nowadays, in my experience, often call emotions correct or incorrect outside philosophy seminars. But we do describe some emotions as appropriate or inappropriate. We also say that someone has absolutely no reason, or no good reason, to be afraid or to be ashamed of this or that. Reasons which speak for or against something are typically defeasible reasons; they are reasons which can be trumped or defeated by better reasons. But there are perhaps non-defeasible reasons for or against something, reasons which cannot be defeated. Thus one may think that if Christian is really contemptible, then that is a non-defeasible reason for despising him. One way of understanding the correctness of emotions is in terms of non-defeasible reasons: to say that fear of a dog is correct is to say that there is a non-defeasible reason for being afraid of it, its danger. The fact that the dog is dangerous makes fear of the dog correct.<sup>2</sup>

Since the terms “incorrect emotion” and “correct emotion” are unusual and irritate many, particularly the politically correct, I shall employ them here in order to focus attention on an important and neglected distinction, one which may however be expressed in other terms.

Emotions, as we have seen, are not the only affective phenomena. Bliss, we said, is no emotion, because it is not about anything. Preference is not an emotion either but on some views it is an affective phenomenon or supervenes on or is determined by emotions.<sup>3</sup> The concept of preference is one of the most important concepts in the study of human behaviour. And preference, like fear, shame and admiration, may be correct or incorrect. If Susie prefers  $x$  to  $y$ , her

<sup>2</sup> If the distinction between non-defeasible and defeasible reasons is accepted, it is tempting to understand the latter in terms of the former and even to understand *being a reason for* in terms of *correct making*. But this is not the path taken by most contemporary philosophies of reasons.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Mulligan 2015.

preference is correct only if *x* is better (for her) than *y*. Love of a person, unlike falling in love, is not an episode and so not an emotion, as we have defined the term. But it is love *of* a person. May it be correct? On one influential view, the Romantic or troubadour view, it cannot be correct or incorrect. In Shakespeare's words, "Love is not love/Which alters when it alteration finds" (Sonnet 116). For suppose Sally loves Sam because he possesses some valuable quality. Then her love would cease to be correct when he loses this quality. The non-Romantic view is formulated by an Irish aristocrat:

I loved thee, beautiful and kind,  
And plighted an eternal vow.  
So altered are thy face and mind  
'Twere perjury to love thee now  
(Robert Nugent)<sup>4</sup>

Are all emotions correct or incorrect? Consider sympathy. Sam has the impression that Maria is suffering or that she is unhappy and reacts sympathetically. He suffers *with* her (*sympathy, compassion*) or is unhappy *with* her. Might his sympathy be incorrect? His reaction might be inappropriate because, although he has the impression that Maria is suffering, she is not in fact suffering. But suppose she really is suffering or is unhappy. There is no obvious candidate for the role of a value the exemplification of which by Maria's suffering or unhappiness would make Sam's sympathy correct and the non-exemplification of which would make Sam's sympathy incorrect. Sympathy, it seems, is an emotion which is neither correct nor incorrect. If this suggestion is correct, it suggests that sympathy, whatever useful functions it may have, for example in reducing the amount of what Max Scheler called "practical solipsism"—behaving *as though* (as opposed to believing *that*) other people are zombies—in the world, does not belong, as do other emotions and preference, to the sphere of affective rationality.

The distinction between correctness and incorrectness, as applied to beliefs, emotions and preferences, raises many philosophical questions. Are there beliefs which are neither correct nor incorrect? Are there emotions other than sympathy which are neither correct nor incorrect? Does correctness, like appropriateness, admit of degrees? Is the concept of correctness a normative concept? What is the relation between the *correct-incorrect* couple and the *right-wrong* couple which plays such an important role in (Anglophone) ethics? In what follows I shall not attempt to answer these questions. I shall assume that there are clear cases in which an emotion may be—correctly—said to be correct and other equally clear cases in which an emotion may be—correctly—described as incorrect. But I shall consider one worry about the distinction since my reply to the worry will play a role in what follows.

Is the distinction between correct and incorrect emotions not a piece of intolerable moralism? No—"correct" and "incorrect" are not obviously moral or ethical terms. This is clearly the case if the concepts of correctness and incor-

<sup>4</sup> What I have here called the troubadour view of love was expounded and forcefully defended by Scheler and McTaggart almost a century ago. Cf. Ronnow-Rasmussen 2011, ch. 6.

rectness are not normative concepts. But even if they are normative concepts they are not obviously ethical or moral concepts. After all, there are many non-ethical values—such as the value of health, pleasure or happiness and aesthetic values such as beauty, prettiness and the sublime. And there are many non-ethical norms, such as traffic rules and the normative principles of prudential rationality. So even if correctness and incorrectness are normative properties, they are not obviously moral or ethical properties.

The distinction between correct and incorrect emotions points to an ambiguity in the notion employed so far of the object of an emotion. Shame about a past deed seems to have two objects, to be about two things, the deed and its shamefulness. Similarly, indignation about some situation, for example the way Hans has treated Maria, is about two things, the situation or action and its injustice. Following Husserl, we may call the past deed *the proper object* of shame and its shamefulness the *improper object* of shame. Similarly, the way Hans has treated Maria is the proper object of indignation and injustice its improper object. The improper objects of shame and indignation are values, more exactly, value-properties or qualities. But the proper objects of shame and indignation are characterized without any reference to values. Within the philosophy of emotions two rival accounts of what I have called the improper objects of emotions can be distinguished. There is the view that emotions reveal or disclose their improper objects, value-properties. And there is the view that emotions are reactions to prior awareness of such value-properties.<sup>5</sup> Since I favour the second view, I employ it here, although what I say can be easily formulated in terms of the first view.

We are now almost ready to answer the question: what is happiness about when it is about something? The answer will rely on the assumption that emotions may be correct or incorrect and the assumption that emotions have both a proper and an improper object.

What are the proper and improper objects of happiness? Many ascriptions of happiness are of the form:  $x$  is happy about the fact that  $p$ . Sam is happy about the fact that he has many friends, is successful, is admired by his children, that he has children, this or that ability. These, it seems, are the proper objects of Sam's happiness. But is this answer correct? If Sam takes himself to have many friends, the appropriate emotional reaction will, for example, be gratitude towards his friends for their affection, or simply being pleased that he has so many friends. If Sam takes himself to be admired by his children, the appropriate emotional reaction is relief or pride or, again, being pleased by this fact. There is a possible view of happiness according to which it is a constellation of positive emotions such as being pleased, satisfied, pride, relief and so on.<sup>6</sup> On this view, the objects of happiness would be the objects of emotions other than happiness

<sup>5</sup> For the first view, cf. Tappolet 2000, Johnston 2001, Deonna and Teroni 2012. For the second view, cf. Mulligan 2009, 2010. The two views correspond to two alternatives within the framework of appraisal theories of emotions in psychology, cf. Mulligan & Scherer 2012.

<sup>6</sup> It is an analogue of the view of emotions put forward by the Genevese psychologist Claparède, in a discussion of James' view of emotions: an emotion is a *Gestalt* consisting of a variety of bodily sensations and feelings, rather than an unstructured sum of such feelings.

and the (in)correctness of happiness would be a function of the (in)correctness of emotions other than happiness.

If the proper object of Sam's gratitude is his friends and their affection for him, the improper object of his gratitude is the positive value to him of their friendship. If Sam's happiness is to be distinguished from such positive emotions as gratitude, pride or being pleased, it must have its own distinctive proper and improper objects. What might these be? My answer will make use of a further assumption. The two main assumptions introduced so far, the distinctions between correct and incorrect emotions and between the proper and improper objects of emotions, belong to the philosophy of mind. The assumption to be introduced now comes from the philosophy and logic of value.

Suppose something exemplifies some particular, positive value: an ornament is beautiful, an action is just, a face is pretty, a person is healthy, a landscape sublime, a gait or a handbag elegant, a wine pleasant, a novel interesting. Then, so the assumption, it is positively valuable, good, that each of these particular, positive values is exemplified. If something is beautiful, then it is good that that thing is beautiful. If an act is just, then it is good that that act exemplifies justice. (An alternative, weaker and in many ways more plausible claim is that if something exemplifies a positive value, then it is better that this is the case than not. I do not employ the weaker claim here simply because it requires formulations more complicated than those needed for the stronger claim.) Goodness, badness and betterness are sometimes called *thin* values, as opposed to *thick* values such as evil, justice, elegance, and pleasantness. Using this terminology, the principle may be formulated as follows: if some thick value is exemplified, that fact has thin value, it is good that this is the case. The principle might be called the principle of *axiological ascent*.

The proper object of happiness, I suggest, is the goodness of the exemplification of certain types of thick, positive value. Happiness differs in this respect from many other positive emotions. Emotions such as gratitude, being pleased, interest, respect and admiration have, in the simplest cases, persons and objects as their proper objects and a variety of thick values as their improper objects. But the proper object of Sam's happiness is not merely his children, their admiration, his abilities and success in life, nor the values of these. It is the positive value of the exemplification of different positive values by his children, their admiration and his abilities. One attractive feature of this view is that it allows for the fact that many different types of objects, creatures, relations and situations as well as many different thick values may go to make up the proper object of happiness.<sup>7</sup> Another attractive feature of the view is that it assigns a distinctive and invariable proper object to happiness. Unlike many other emotions, happiness has value as part of its proper object. A third feature of the view is that it does justice to the fact that happiness and unhappiness are reflective emotions, the result of standing back from one's life or aspects of it.

Are there emotions other than happiness the proper object of which is the thin, positive value of the exemplification of thick, positive values? One candidate is an emotion already mentioned as an emotion which is often said to make us happy, in a loose sense of the word—being moved.<sup>8</sup> What are we moved by?

<sup>7</sup> On this variety, cf. Kenny and Kenny 2006, Kazez 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Cova and Deonna 2014.

By the positive value of the exemplification of different thick positive values of, for example, the birth of a child, generosity, heroism, the affection of an ageing couple, weddings, flags—and a variety of kitsch objects, scenes and displays. The reaction to the birth of a child may be wonder, to a display of the flag patriotic stirrings, to the fidelity of an ageing couple, heroism or generosity admiration. But what moves us is the positive value of the exemplification of the different thick, positive values by these items.

If the proper object of happiness is the thin, positive value of the exemplification of certain types of thick, positive value, what is its improper object? To ask this question is, as we have seen, to ask what condition must hold if happiness is to be correct.<sup>9</sup> The assumptions introduced so far require that there be an answer to this question. I suggest that a person's happiness is correct only if its proper object really constitutes good luck for her. Good luck is always someone's good luck, the "objective" happiness or flourishing of a person, and it is the improper object of happiness. Happiness about this or that, whether the happiness is an episodic emotion or an enduring state, may be correct or incorrect because it has an improper object. Suppose Sam is happy about his abilities, his financial position or his relationships. His happiness is correct only if he is in fact lucky. The link between good luck or fortune in life and happiness as an emotion or state is marked in many languages. (*Glück*, like *heureux*, may refer to a psychological state or to good luck or fortune.) In English, a person's situation or prospects may be described as happy; Australia is the happy country and Austria-Hungary was *Felix Austria*. The relation between "subjective" happiness and "objective" happiness, as I have presented it, resembles the relations we have already considered between fear and danger, indignation and injustice, being ashamed and shamefulness. Just as one may be indignant about a situation which is not in fact unjust, so too one may be happy about the positive value of abilities and relationships and situations which are not in fact examples of one's good luck. For the proper object of one's happiness may hide great deceptions, ill-fortune and unluckiness: one's abilities may be tragically incompatible, children, friends and lovers may turn out to be treacherous, and ex-students and colleagues to be ungrateful or malevolent wretches. Indubitably good things may turn out to be *bad for one* or neither good nor bad for one, but *indifferent for one*. Novels provide an inexhaustible panorama of the ways in which apparent good luck may turn out to be merely apparent. If it is true that no one should be called happy until she is dead, it is precisely because apparent good luck may turn out to be no such thing or even very bad luck.<sup>10</sup> And if it is true that one may be un-

<sup>9</sup> Utilitarian accounts of the ethical rightness of actions traditionally understand the latter in terms of happiness or of happiness and its value. An utilitarian account of ethical rightness in terms of correct happiness or of correct happiness and its value would lead to a drastic modification of traditional utilitarianism. Similarly, some accounts of well-being in terms of the satisfaction of desires or preferences distinguish between such satisfaction and the satisfaction of informed desires or ideal preferences, cf. de Sousa 1987: 167-69, Skorupski 1999: 130-133, Rodogno 2015.

<sup>10</sup> What is the difference between happiness and being moved? The value which is the proper object of being moved—for example, the positive value of the exemplification of courage—is an impersonal value. And being moved is correct only if the positive value is a high or important impersonal value. Being moved by kitsch is an example of incorrect emotion because the kitsch object or scene is good *for* the consumer of kitsch. Happiness,

lucky after death (slander, the destruction of a reputation), a person's death is not the right time for ascriptions of luck either.

Relying on four by no means uncontroversial assumptions, I have provided an account of the objects, proper and improper, of happiness. As far as I can see, the account given of the improper object of happiness, good luck, remains an attractive option even if the account given of the proper object of happiness is rejected. One virtue of the account presented above is that it does justice to the not uncommon view that happiness differs in several respects from most other positive emotions. That happiness differs from other positive emotions, that it is indeed is more important than other positive emotions, is perhaps one reason why it has enjoyed so much philosophical attention since Antiquity.

But philosophers and psychologists are rightly never very impressed by common views. Two important recent attempts to understand happiness in terms of pleasure are due to Kahneman and Feldman.<sup>11</sup> According to Feldman's carefully argued "reductive account of happiness",

a person's momentary happiness level at a time is the amount of ... attitudinal pleasure he takes in things at [a] time, minus the amount of attitudinal displeasure he takes in things at that time. On my account, to be happy is to be on balance attitudinally pleased about things.<sup>12</sup>

I implicitly rejected such an account when I suggested that being pleased may be said to make us happy in a loose sense of the word, but no more. But is Feldman really wrong? Is being happy not just being pleased? If we assume that each type of emotion has a distinctive value-property as its improper object, then it is plausible to think that being pleased stands to the value of pleasantness or agreeableness as happiness to the positive value of good luck. But this consideration will not move anyone who wants to understand emotions in abstraction from any account of values. Are there any reasons for thinking that happiness cannot be reduced to being pleased which are independent of our assumptions about the relations between emotions and values?

Being pleased and being displeased, unlike happiness, come in three distinct varieties:

Sam pleases Maria  
The fact that she has passed her exam pleases Maria  
Maria is pleased that she has passed her exam

The third example is an example of what Feldman calls attitudinal pleasure and a propositional attitude. The pleasure to which Feldman wants to reduce happiness is pleasure as a propositional attitude. The first example is not an example

on the other hand, is correct only if its proper object is a form of high value *for* the happy subject, personal rather than impersonal value. On personal value, being good *for* someone the seminal work is Ronnow-Rasmussen 2011.

<sup>11</sup> Kahneman 1999, Feldman 2010. For criticisms of such "hedonic" accounts of happiness, see Haybron 2008, Massin 2011. Feldman presents a number of criticisms of Kahneman's views. Kubovy 2015 presents an alternative to Kahneman's view that the value of a life is just the sum of the value of its moments, an alternative which in several respects is congenial to the view sketched here.

<sup>12</sup> Feldman 2010, 110.

of propositional pleasure. It is an example of the simplest form of intentionality. It resembles seeing someone and remembering someone rather than seeing that  $p$  or remembering that  $p$ . It is an example of what is sometimes called non-propositional intentionality. On some views, this simplest form of intentionality need not involve any exercise of thought or concepts. The second example has some of the features of the first example and some of the features of the third example. Like the first example, it has the form of a relation. Like the third example, it may be held to involve the attribution of some thought or conceptual representation. And “the fact that she has passed her exam” is clearly a nominalisation of “she has passed her exam”. Happiness, then, does not display the same multiplicity as being pleased. One may be happy that  $p$  or happy about the fact that  $p$ . But happiness does not display the simplest form of intentionality. (If Sally is happy with Sam, then she is satisfied with him, perhaps by his performance in the office, or she is happy while she is with him.) And that is just what we would expect if the above account of the objects of happiness is correct.

The main reason for rejecting the reduction of happiness to being pleased which is independent of claims about the relation between emotions and values is that happiness, unlike being pleased, is always beyond our control. In the figurative formulations employed across the centuries to capture this point, happiness is said to be a gift, something which falls from heaven, something we stumble upon. It is, it is often said, non-figuratively, a *by-product*, something we should not aim at or cannot aim at or should not aim at because we cannot aim at it. Whatever the correct view about such claims is, it seems very plausible to say that correct happiness is much less easy to bring about than incorrect happiness. For good luck is by nature not something we can manipulate.<sup>13</sup>

## 2. Satisfaction and its Determinates

Happiness and being moved, I have argued, differ from many other positive emotions in that their proper object is the thin value of the exemplification of thick values. This is not surprising if we bear in mind that happiness and being moved are two ways of being satisfied.<sup>14</sup> Satisfaction, in this Rolling Stones sense, is not to be confused with the satisfaction of mental states and acts which figures prominently in the accounts of intentionality given by Husserl and Searle. The former has a polar opposite, dissatisfaction, the latter has no polar opposite. The former is personal and may be felt, the latter is impersonal. But the impression that one’s desires, for example, have been satisfied or fulfilled (realized, *erfüllt*) is often the basis of the reaction of satisfaction (*Befriedigung*), in particular of felt satisfaction. Personal satisfaction may be based on the impersonal satisfaction not only of desires but also of drives, strivings, needs, intentions and projects, just as impersonal non-satisfaction of these may trigger personal dissatisfaction.

But other determinates of satisfaction do not depend on realizations. Thus there is the satisfaction of the vital state of well-being (as opposed to being ill, cf.

<sup>13</sup> Luck has been much discussed recently in ethics and epistemology. For a pioneering comparison of what philosophers and psychologists have said about luck and an attempt to pin down the notion, see Pritchard and Smith 2004.

<sup>14</sup> For the view that happiness is a species of satisfaction, see Tatarkiewicz 1976.

*wohlsein* vs *unwohlsein*) or vigour, the satisfaction of comfort and the satisfaction of bliss, of subjective non-intentional happiness.

Satisfaction and dissatisfaction can often be classified in terms of their proper objects. Consider, for example, self-directed dissatisfaction and its opposite. Self-dissatisfaction, the state based on the impression of one's worthlessness or disvalue, and often described in terms of the operations of conscience or of a super-ego, comprehends cases ranging from the non-realisation of projects and desires in which what dissatisfies is the fact that *I* have not realised this desire or that project, to states of affairs well beyond the subject's control, such as dissatisfaction rooted in the negative value properties one exemplifies. Self-satisfaction covers a similar range of cases. Some of the abilities which are the objects of self-satisfaction are innate, others are not. There is, for example, the satisfaction of the miser who is aware of his ability to buy anything he likes.

Suppose Sam feels worthless. He is a fool, a coward, mean and ugly and knows this. He is unhappy and so dissatisfied. What exactly is the proper object of his unhappiness? We may appeal to the type of consideration already employed. Sam's awareness of his foolishness, we may suppose, triggers self-contempt. His awareness of his cowardice triggers self-hatred. He is merely annoyed and angry and sometimes displeased by his meanness, and this only occasionally. His awareness of his ugliness is the source of recurrent bouts of self-pity. Finally, he bitterly regrets that he has rarely seized any opportunity to modify the traits he exemplifies.

Self-directed contempt, hate, pity, displeasure and anger, like regret, are not species of dissatisfaction or of unhappiness. If Sam is dissatisfied with himself, the proper object of his dissatisfaction is in part the various disvalues he takes himself to exemplify. But the full proper object of his dissatisfaction is the disvalue of his exemplification of the disvalues of foolishness, ugliness, meanness and cowardice. Sam might well be subject to reactions of self-contempt, self-hatred, self-pity without ever being dissatisfied with himself. Such dissatisfaction involves taking a step-backwards, reflection. Instead of simply hating himself, despising himself because he a useless, mean, coward, Sam forms the thought or has the impression that his exemplification of these various disvalues is itself a bad thing. Dissatisfaction with oneself is a cool emotion compared to the heat of self-hatred, self-contempt and self-pity. The latter are more exhausting than the former.

This brief account of satisfaction and dissatisfaction suggests the following diagnosis of some popular accounts of happiness. Happiness and satisfaction are not the same thing; happiness is a determinate of satisfaction.<sup>15</sup> The satisfaction due to the realisation of desires, projects and preferences is not happiness either, although such realisations may be an ingredient of happiness. Finally, as already indicated, if "well-being" has the meaning it has in ordinary language, then it is not the same thing as happiness either. It is a distinct species of satisfaction and at best an ingredient of happiness.

<sup>15</sup> On determinates, determinables, species and emotions, cf. Johansson 2001.

### 3. The Dangers of Happiness

Can happiness or its pursuit be harmful? Are positive emotions dangerous? Are they always a good thing? Recent discussion of happiness often seems to ignore the possibility that happiness might sometimes be, on balance, a bad thing. But economics tells us that the inability to defer gratification or “present happiness” will make one worse off. Are there other ways in which happiness or positive emotions in general may be harmful?

Incorrect beliefs can certainly be harmful. If someone knows that you believe what is not the case, she may be able to bankrupt you. Incorrect emotions and preferences are also harmful:

- they are a waste of psychic energy;
- they make you vulnerable;
- they waste your time and that of others;
- they motivate projects which are doomed to failure and lead to disappointment.

All incorrect emotions, preferences and beliefs may be harmful. But incorrect happiness is perhaps more harmful than any other sort of incorrect emotion. In order to make this claim plausible, let us begin by considering Agathe:

Agathe prefers her beliefs to be correct rather than incorrect and prefers her emotions and preferences to be correct rather than incorrect.

Agathe’s actions and mental life are guided by these two preferences.

So Agathe is intellectually virtuous, an epistemic heroine or saint.

It is easy to *imagine* someone like Agathe. She is clearly an admirable person (although she is probably not very happy). But why call her *intellectually* virtuous? Because of the similarity between preferring correct to incorrect beliefs, on the one hand, and preferring correct emotions and preferences to their incorrect counterparts, on the other hand. The similarity consists in the fact that just as Agathe prefers her beliefs to track the way the world really is, so too, she prefers her emotions and preferences to track the way the world of values and of what has value, positive or negative, really is. She prefers fear of dangerous dogs to fear of non-dangerous dogs, indignation about unjust situations to indignation about situations which are not unjust. And so on. To care about tracking the way the world is, the world of fact and of values, is a central component of intellectual or cognitive, as opposed to ethical, virtue. Care of this kind and preferences like those of Agathe are consistent with stupidity, with being slow. But when they successfully guide a person’s actions and mental lives they are inconsistent with foolishness. Stupidity is not foolishness. The opposite of stupidity is intelligence, of foolishness wisdom.<sup>16</sup> If a philosopher loves wisdom, she should perhaps also hate foolishness.

Some people, everyone will admit, are not like Agathe. They often prefer incorrect beliefs and emotions. In particular, they prefer incorrect, self-flattering beliefs. And they often seem to prefer incorrect, self-flattering beliefs because this allows them to revel in the emotional reactions which would be appropriate to these beliefs, were they correct. People who can believe what they want, says Lichtenberg, are happy creatures. Of course, those of us who do not resemble

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Mulligan 2014.

Agathe do not typically prefer incorrect beliefs, preferences and emotions *under this description*; we do not typically set out to form incorrect beliefs and preferences. As Aquinas put it, no one wants to be a fool, but everyone wants the consequences of foolishness (*stultitia*). Many accounts of many varieties of foolishness—vanity, sour grapes and sweet lemons (sloes)—rely on the attractiveness of incorrect beliefs and impressions and of the incorrect emotions and preferences to which they give rise. Thus the vain man wants to be applauded and praised whether or not the applause and praise are justified. Just how the relation between incorrect beliefs, emotions and preferences and self-deception should be understood is a very controversial matter in both philosophy and psychology.<sup>17</sup> But if we assume that some of us differ from Agathe in the ways described, then it becomes plausible to think that incorrect happiness can be more harmful than all other incorrect emotions. Insofar as one prefers that one be lucky in life rather than unfortunate one is tempted to form incorrect beliefs about one's situation, life, relations and capacities, about matters well beyond one's control. For such beliefs are constituents of felt or subjective happiness. The illusion that one is lucky in life, that Fortuna is on one's side, is one of the worst illusions, one of the *worst things for* a person, just because being lucky in life is the highest form which positive personal value, being good for a person, can take.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Trivers 2011 (4, 68 ff., 135 ff.) thinks there is not much truth in the idea that self-deception makes us happy. Its function is to make us better at deceiving others.

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