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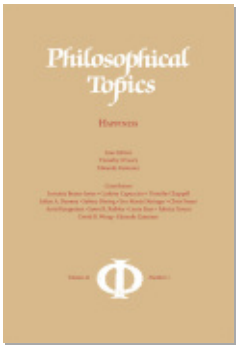

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What Role for Emotions in Well-being?

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ABSTRACT. In this article, we ask whether and in what way emotions are in themselves good for the well-being of the individuals who experience them. Our overall argument aims at showing that an objectivist list theory of well-being suitably anchored within a value-based theory of the emotions provides the best framework for answering these questions. Emotions so conceived, we claim, provide for the sort of first-person perspective understanding of values that is required in order to pursue them. This conclusion we reach only after having brought to light in the first part of the article the limitations of rival hedonist and desire-based theories of well-being. We conclude that at least part of the insights fueling these theories, i.e., good feelings and getting what one wants are a measure of how well our lives go, can happily be accounted for within the approach we recommend.

I. OVERVIEW

'Well-being' refers to a specific kind of value that is often characterized as prudential or personal. In a nutshell, it comprises what makes a life good for the individual

whose life it is.[1] The issue of the relations between emotions and well-being then regards whether or not and in what way emotions contribute to the life of an individual being valuable for her. Of course, a compelling and often-heard thought is that a life devoid of any sort of emotional engagement is not worth living; or, conversely, that a life replete with positive emotions must be good for the individual living it. Still, despite being compelling, these thoughts are admittedly quite inchoate and the question arises as to how we should pursue them. A tempting reply is that this can be done only if we know what emotions and well-being are. As people working in the field know too well, however, there are as many different theories of the emotions as there are theories of well-being. Unless we are ready to embark on the challenging task of uncovering for each theory of the emotions the role they would play in each existing theory of well-being, some other approach must be found. This article will use a less painstaking approach as a springboard, in the hope that it will turn out to be more profitable.

The fact is that comparing existing accounts of well-being and of emotions reveals notable parallels. For each major account of well-being, there exists a companion account of the emotions. Classical hedonic views of well-being (e.g., Bentham 1996/1789; see Feldman 2004, 2012; Haybron 2001 for discussion) correspond to classical pure feeling views of the emotions (e.g., Locke 1975/1695 and, for recent variants, Goldstein 2003; Kriegel 2011; Whiting 2011). Desire views that conceive of well-being in terms of desire satisfaction (e.g., Brandt 1966; Heathwood 2006; Rawls 1971) correspond to accounts of the emotions in terms of the satisfaction/frustration of desires (Reisenzein 2009; Schroeder 2004; Wollheim 2000). Finally, to so-called objective list accounts of well-being (e.g., Aristotle 2000; Hurka 1993; Parfit 1984), there corresponds a variety of accounts of the emotions that conceive of them as evaluations (e.g., Aristotle 2000; De Sousa 1987; Deonna and Teroni 2012; Solomon 1993; Tappolet 2000).

Exploring these parallels will clarify the intuitive appeal of the aforementioned thoughts that a life without emotions is not worth living and that having plenty of positive emotions must be good.

In the first part of our discussion, we review the key insights that are developed within two different 'mental state' accounts of well-being[2] and their companion accounts of the emotions. The first insight is developed within hedonism and the feeling account of emotions; the second within desire satisfactionism and the account of emotions in terms of the representation of desire satisfaction/frustration. We explain how emotions end up being *good as ends* for the individual if one endorses one or the other of these combinations of views. However, we shall see that these accounts of well-being and of the emotions are equally problematic. This does not imply that we should forgo the task of accounting for the insights on which they are built, but rather that these insights do not provide reasons to adopt such accounts. As we shall see, this appears to militate for a third combination of views: an objective list account of well-being and a companion value-based account of the emotions. Yet, this latter combination of views faces significant worries of its own: it appears to force upon us the deflationary conclusion that

emotions are only *instrumentally good* and to promote an understanding of the emotions that makes them incapable of accounting for the insights fueling hedonism and desire satisfactionism.

The task of the second part of our discussion is to dissipate these worries and more generally to show how considering objective list theories from the perspective of value-based accounts of the emotions provides them with the necessary psychological anchor that they often seem to lack. We do that by explaining why an emphasis on the relation between emotions and values enables us to revisit the insights underpinning the three accounts of well-being and promotes a rich understanding of why emotions are valuable as ends for objective, hedonic, and desire-based reasons. As we shall see, these reasons respectively trace back to the importance of emotions for evaluative knowledge (objective list account), to the relation between attitudinal pleasures and evaluations (hedonism), as well as to the motivational aspects of emotions (desire satisfactionism). We shall discover in this way why a life devoid of emotional engagement with the world might not allow for any form of well-being as well as why a life with plenty of positive emotions is good for the person living it.

II. EXPLORING THE PARALLELS

2.1 FIRST PARALLEL: FEELING ACCOUNTS

The first parallel that we will take up is that between hedonism and some variants of the feeling theory of emotions.

Hedonism is a straightforward account of well-being that owes its appeal to the insight that what is good as an end for an agent must consist in how it feels for that agent to live her life. This leads quite directly to the idea that her well-being consists in the greatest balance of pleasures over displeasures. According to a classical form of hedonism, these pleasures come down to the occurrence of a specific kind of feeling or sensation in the stream of consciousness. The companion account of the emotions is a once popular version of the feeling theory that appeals to the same sensations: according to it, emotions just are sensations of pleasure (positive emotions) and displeasure (negative emotions).[3]

Combining these two accounts obviously means that the emotions are *good or bad as ends* for the agent, and this leads one to wonder if well-being is not simply the greatest balance of positive over negative emotions. At the very least, this would be a sensible way of cashing out the thought that a good life is a life with plenty of positive emotions.

Intuitive as this may sound, the truth is that hedonism and feeling theories of the emotions face similar difficulties, because they both appeal to a questionable concept of pleasure. First, it may be argued that a pleasant state is not pleasant in virtue of being accompanied by pleasant feelings or sensations (e.g., Clark 2000; Feldman 2004, 2012). The claim is that hedonism fails to acknowledge that

pleasantness comes in many different guises, and that what is already apparent in bodily pleasures (compare a pleasurable massage to the pleasure of removing one's boots after a long walk) is even more so if we take other pleasures into consideration (compare these bodily pleasures to the pleasures of realizing that one has won the lottery, of climbing mountains, or of helping someone in need). These various pleasures appear to differ radically as experiences, and not only in the kinds of events that cause them.

If one agrees with these observations, this means that what we can call the 'unity problem' for pleasures has not been solved. The unity problem consists in identifying what all pleasant experiences have in common that makes them pleasures, and we have just realized that their variety seems to go against the idea that they share a distinctive feeling.[4]

From the perspective of an account of well-being, this has the consequence that the nature of the feelings that are finally good for the agent and which should be maximized becomes quite elusive. From the perspective of emotion theory, similar observations have been made to the effect that positive emotions cannot be pleasant sensations (e.g., Bedford 1957; Kenny 1963). The worry here is not only that, from the first-person perspective, episodes of various types of emotions appear to differ from one another. It is also that it appears wrong-headed to claim, with advocates of sophisticated versions of the theory (e.g., Goldstein 2003; Whiting 2011), that this difference is due to the fact that one and the same (un) pleasant sensation can latch onto a variety of thoughts. This appears indeed difficult to reconcile with the phenomena. Wonder, amusement, admiration, and joy do not involve qualitatively identical sensations and their difference is not exclusively due to the fact that distinct thoughts elicit them—if they are all pleasant experiences, this is not because they involve the same feeling (see e.g., Deonna and Teroni 2012, 56–58, for discussion).

All in all, then, feeling accounts are thought to raise serious worries insofar as they fail to pinpoint what pleasant experiences have in common. We shall see below whether alternative ways of solving the unity problem are more attractive.

A second and related worry raised by these accounts is that the proposed conception of pleasure lacks the kind of depth we should expect from an explanation of well-being. One way to pursue this thought consists in stressing that the conception of pleasure in question is so disconnected from the outside world that it cannot be reconciled with our intuitions regarding well-being and the emotions.[5]

Focusing on hedonism first, the idea is that pleasures contribute differently to well-being—this is the idea Mill famously tried to articulate in distinguishing higher from lower pleasures (Mill 1863, ch. 2). Many have followed in his path and insisted that some aspects of some pleasures lessen or even cancel their goodness for the agent. One may think here of those pleasures based on false beliefs (this is one possible lesson of Nozick's "Pleasure Machine" thought experiment; see Nozick 1974, 1990), of those that we may want to describe as

corrupt or 'base' (e.g., Moore 1903, sect. 56) or as 'undeserved' (e.g., Chisholm 1986), and so on. Not surprisingly, the question of which pleasures contribute to well-being has mainly focused on the good things that might be told about their sources. These distinctions seem difficult to sustain if one subscribes to a purely 'mental state' account according to which well-being consists in the accumulation of pleasant feelings.

Focusing now on emotions, the idea is that no satisfactory account can ignore the systematic relations they have to the worldly objects that trigger them (e.g., Bedford 1957; Kenny 1963; Thalberg 1964). An account that insists exclusively on the positive or negative feelings an agent undergoes in emotion just misses the role emotions play in revealing to her some crucial information with regard to her environment.

All this suggests that, while the hedonist insight—the thought that well-being is a function of how many positive emotions we manage to accumulate—is very appealing, pursuing it in the form of feeling approaches to well-being and emotions is a move we should resist.

2.2 SECOND PARALLEL: DESIRE-BASED ACCOUNTS

The second notable parallel is that between desire satisfactionism about well-being (e.g., Brandt 1966; Heathwood 2006; Rawls 1971) and approaches to the emotions in terms of the satisfaction or frustration of desires (e.g., Lazarus 1991; Roberts 2003). The insight that each of these companion accounts pursue is that well-being and emotions have something to do with getting or failing to get what one wants.[6] The vast majority of those who have pursued this insight has claimed that well-being is conditioned on the subject's *realizing* that her desires are satisfied, which qualifies as a desire-based 'mental state' account. What is finally good for an agent is, it is claimed, that she appreciates that her desires are satisfied.

Companion accounts of the emotions are easy to find: they consist in identifying emotions with these alleged units of well-being. The sort of desire satisfaction/frustration approach we have in mind claims that undergoing a positive emotion consists in apprehending a desire as being satisfied or a concern as being met, while undergoing a negative emotion consists in apprehending a desire as being frustrated or a concern as being thwarted.[7] So we reach for different reasons a conclusion we already have reached in the light of our first parallel: emotions can qualify *as good or bad as ends* for the agent. However, this time we have avoided the central problems afflicting the first combination of views. Here is why.

First, the accounts of well-being and the emotions under discussion do not posit elusive (un)pleasant sensations. Desire-based accounts of well-being and emotion allow us to give a much more satisfactory response to the unity problem than feeling-based accounts did. The worry was that the experiences we regard as pleasant are too variegated to support the idea that we do so because we encounter the same sensation in each of these experiences. Desire-based accounts solve the

unity problem by claiming that pleasant experiences are pleasant not in virtue of containing a particular sensation, but in virtue of being represented as satisfying a desire.

Second, reference to desires helps dispel the other worry raised by hedonism and the feeling theory, which relates to their failing to connect an agent's well-being and emotions to what happens outside her. On the side of well-being, what must be maximized is now embedded within the agent's desires, preferences, aspirations, and life projects—what is good as an end for her is (apparent or real) success at a life she is trying to steer in definite directions. It then appears that reference to the world beyond her own sensations is inevitable. On the side of emotions, we witness a parallel improvement. Desire-based accounts embed emotions within the life of agents in a much more compelling way than the feeling theory. It seems, after all, correct to emphasize that emotions tell something about how we fare in relation to what we expect of the world or want to accomplish in it. Far from being mere sensations, emotions are now conceived as elements in the basic psychological equipment with which we appreciate how our lives follow or stray from our goals.

It is unclear that we have in fact made much headway, however. One first worry is that desire-based accounts are as appealing as the resolution of the unity problem that equates pleasant experiences with the experiences that are represented as satisfying a desire. And this is arguably not very appealing. Many complaints have been voiced against the idea that pleasantness can be understood in terms of desires. There are, for instance, completely unexpected pleasures, i.e., pleasures for which it appears implausible to posit the relevant desires. In addition, it seems that an agent can represent the satisfaction of a desire of hers without this being in any way pleasant—this may even be positively unpleasant. If this is the case, this reflects negatively on the accounts under discussion.

From the perspective of well-being, this suggests that the advocate of desire satisfactionism is bound to conceive of unexpected pleasures as not being finally good for the agent, as well as to conceive of all representations of satisfied desires as being good in this way. From the perspective of emotion theory, the worry is in substance the same, but with an additional twist. It is indeed difficult to find convincing candidates for the desires that allegedly get frustrated or satisfied in each and every emotional episode, and it seems that one can represent a desire as being satisfied or frustrated without feeling any emotion whatsoever. The additional twist is this. One may, it is true, insist with some plausibility on the fact that the agent must be aware of the satisfaction of her desire in order for this satisfaction to contribute to her well-being. However, claiming that emotions represent desires as being satisfied or frustrated seems just wrong and at the very least in sharp conflict with how things look like from the first-person perspective. When undergoing an emotion, we are not focused on the fate of our desires, but on a given worldly situation (e.g., Tappolet 2011). It is certainly an improvement on feeling theories to emphasize that emotions represent, but desire-based theories nonetheless get the representation wrong, so they too are not the right way to go.[8]

This leads us to a second and related worry. Recall that, in reviewing some of the problems faced by hedonism, we mentioned the idea that all pleasures do not seem to contribute equally to well-being. Now, corrupt, base, or undeserved pleasures are not incriminated because they are based on factually wrong beliefs, but because they are held to be evaluatively wrong. This is a verdict with which desire satisfactionism about well-being is not in a position to agree. Like its hedonist rival, it is a purely 'mental state' account in the sense that it builds well-being out of the perspective of agents realizing which of their desires are satisfied—what these desires are about is immaterial. Do we really want to end up claiming that the life of, say, a couch potato with satisfied desires is going as well as that of someone whose life is informed by the desires to gain knowledge, to contribute to societal projects, and to explore some art forms?[9]

For all these reasons, the desire-based accounts under discussion do not appear to be much more faithful to the nature of well-being than to the nature of emotions. The insight they pursue—the idea that well-being is a function of the way the agent fares with respect to her desires—should not lead us to embrace it. If having plenty of positive emotions is good for one, this cannot just mean that it is good to have plenty of occasions to realize that one gets what one wants.

2.3 THIRD PARALLEL: OBJECTIVE VALUES ACCOUNTS

The observations that we have just made allude to the idea that there are things that are simply worthy of pursuit or, in a different idiom, things that are of value and others that are not worthy of pursuit or not of any value. Given that this idea expresses what might be described as the objectivist insight that lays behind objective list theories of well-being, it leads directly to the last parallel that interests us: that between objective list approaches to well-being[10] and value-based theories of the emotions.

What is finally good for an agent would depend on her life being aligned with activities and projects that are worthy of pursuit or valuable irrespective of whether she wants and values them (e.g., Parfit 1984). In short, and this is one traditional way of formulating the insight, good lives are those in which agents flourish because their lives are aligned or in accord with the valuable pursuits all good lives are made of (friendship, knowledge, love, and so on). Only this makes room for the kind of connection with the world we are looking for. Being driven by goals is good, but an account of well-being should capture a more substantial reference to the world outside the agent: some goals and activities are more valuable than others.

This is all fine and well, but the immediate and in fact traditional worry with such an approach to well-being is that the items on the list appear to be completely disconnected from the agent's own perspective. The worry is forcefully expressed by Railton, who writes in reference to such conceptions that "it would be an intolerably alienated conception of someone's good to imagine that it might fail in any way to engage him" (1986/2003, 47). Now, it is natural to think of the needed

engagement with what is of value or disvalue for us in terms of the ways we emotionally respond to the world. This is precisely the idea emphasized within value-based theories of the emotions.

These theories originate—like their companion theory of well-being—in ancient philosophy and emphasize the idea that an emotion is a sort of evaluation of a given object or event in the subject's environment. Fearing a dog, say, would be to experience it as *dangerous* and being angry at someone for her remark would be to experience the remark as *offensive*. Next, observing that emotions are commonly blamed (praised) for failing (succeeding) to evaluate the world correctly, philosophers have encouraged the idea that they have, like beliefs for example, correctness conditions.[11] Fearing gentle little dogs (experiencing them as dangerous) or getting angry at innocuous remarks (experiencing them as offensive) would constitute, by contrast with fear of battle or anger at an attempted humiliation, incorrect responses. This is why the nature of emotion is profitably understood in terms of this intimate relation to values.[12] Since the set of values that make up the objectivist's list is now anchored within the agent's perspective through the various ways in which she can engage emotionally with the world, reference to emotions holds the promise of avoiding the kind of alienated conception of the good that Railton warns us against. If that is the case, it appears that our narrative regarding the parallels of well-being and emotion theories can go on.

This is perhaps no more than an appearance, however. Remember that the first two combinations of views helped us make sense of the idea that a life good for the agent whose life it is must involve the emotions in such a way that emotions qualify as *being finally good for her*. Because they are claimed to be sensations or representations of desire satisfaction, they constitute the very units that determine well-being. This is what proves difficult to accept once we understand emotions as evaluations. Let us see why.

From the perspective that is perhaps most congenial to the objective list theorist, emotions may be said to *reveal* values relevant to well-being, but certainly not to be themselves *bearers* of the values they reveal. Pride may make us aware of some sort of success, yet is not itself a success of this sort. Similarly, admiration is not itself admirable despite the fact that it acquaints us with the admirable character of an artwork. This may tempt us into concluding that emotions cannot be cast as constitutive elements of well-being understood along objectivist lines. Perhaps they are needed to access the values that feature on the list, but this seems at best a reason to regard them as *instrumentally good*. Suppose for instance that health is on the list, and that disgust enables us to identify unhealthful substances. This may be a reason to conclude that disgust has instrumental value, but not that it is valuable for its own sake. This is the deflationary conclusion that seems to be forced upon us.

In addition, value-based approaches to the emotions are in a delicate position regarding the insights fueling hedonist and satisfactionist approaches. As regards

the former, we have discounted two ways of understanding the pleasantness from which hedonism derives much of its appeal; it is difficult to see how speaking of the emotions as evaluations will help achieve progress in this area. Realizing that an object has a given value need not feel anything, positive or negative. As regards the latter, the worry is that value-based approaches fail to illuminate the relation between well-being and the way agents fare with respect to their desires. If emotions represent evaluative facts, then it is not obvious how they can help explaining why the agent's desires matter to her well-being. Again, realizing that an object has a given value does not seem to entail anything apropos the agent's desires.

As advertised at the onset of our discussion, we shall argue that, while some value-based approaches may justify this pessimism, this is not the case for all of them. The claim that emotions are evaluations can actually support a rich understanding of why emotions are finally good for hedonic, satisfactionist, and objectivist reasons. In the process, we shall reveal the senses in which it is true that a life devoid of emotions is not worth living and that having many positive emotions makes for a better life.

III. THE INSIGHTS WITHIN VALUE-BASED APPROACHES

3.1 ACCOUNTING FOR THE OBJECTIVIST INSIGHT

We have just seen how easily the idea that emotions are evaluations can lead one to the conclusion that they play an exclusively epistemic role within an objective list theory: they reveal a domain of values that must govern one's life so as to contribute to well-being. As we have observed, one may be tempted to conceive this role in purely instrumental terms. This is a temptation we should resist, however, since two lines of thought suggest that, as evaluations, emotions can be finally valuable for objectivist reasons.

The first relates to the fact that we value knowledge *for its own sake* and that a type of knowledge we care a great deal about, i.e., evaluative knowledge, takes its roots in emotions. The fact that we value knowledge for its own sake is mirrored in the fact that it makes an appearance on most objective lists. Many recent discussions have been concerned with the question of how we should understand knowledge so as to explain its distinctive value (see Pritchard and Turri 2012 for an overview). It has been regularly emphasized that a successful approach should heed the fact that this value originates in a praiseworthy feature of the agent that plays a part in the genesis of particular claims to know. Some have made reference to epistemic virtues, others to stable aspects of the agent's character (see e.g., Greco 1999; Pritchard 2010, ch. 3; Zagzebski 2003). Generally speaking, these approaches hone in on something distinctive of knowledge and suitable for explaining why it is valued as an end: it is a cognitive achievement of the agent that manifests some

ability on her part. Now, the often-heard idea that we are patients rather than agents of our emotions should not make us oblivious to the fact that emotions often manifest abilities.

It is indeed often said that we are endowed with emotional 'abilities' or 'competences'. This suggests that considering the emotions that guide our evaluative verdicts as the product of abilities is not so far off the mark. More specifically, an emotion is often if not always the manifestation of an 'affective disposition'. By 'affective dispositions' we mean the large stretch of psychological territory that covers character traits, sentiments, dispositions to feel more generally, and obviously also desires. A brief look at ordinary psychological explanations shows that these are regarded as key determinants of emotional responses, and we have no serious reason to question the validity of these explanations.[13] Thus, Joséphine's sadness that Napoleon lost the battle is explained by her love for him, and Michel's embarrassment manifests his acute sense of socially awkward situations. Once this is realized, it is much easier to take the emotions and the evaluative judgments to which they give rise as manifestations of abilities or as verdicts reached by the exercise of more or less stable aspects of our character.

Furthermore, while much besides is required for a judgment to qualify as a piece of evaluative knowledge—e.g., one should keep an eye on evidence that may go against our emotional response—nothing militates against the idea that forming an evaluative judgment because of an emotion can be an achievement manifesting an ability.[14] Emotions sometimes contribute to explaining why knowledge is finally good for the agent. For that reason, they can lay claim to the kind of goodness as an end fostered by objective list approaches.

This result is not limited in the way it may seem to be. The relation between emotions and affective dispositions reverberates along additional central elements featuring on objective lists besides knowledge: virtues. Indeed, virtues are valuable as ends—and not simply as instruments to promote the good—for reasons very similar to those that apply to knowledge. We praise an agent's response to her circumstances not only if it is the right one but also and especially if it manifests a virtue. Regarding the object of this praise as an achievement anchored in the agent's abilities leads to a very attractive explanation of why this is the case.

Many virtues—honesty, kindness, compassion—are fairly stable traits structured around a given value that manifest themselves in a variety of ways depending on the circumstances (Deonna and Teroni 2009; Flanagan 1991, ch. 13; Goldie 2000, ch. 6). Honesty is for instance a sensitivity to issues of equity that manifests itself in feelings of outrage (when others behave inequitably), of shame (if one does so oneself), of satisfaction (when an equitable outcome is unexpectedly reached), and so on. It may even be maintained with some plausibility that, barring special explanations, the recurrent incapacity to undergo such emotions is incompatible with the presence of the virtue. Emotions count among virtues' most fundamental manifestations. For that reason, if virtues feature on the objective list, it is difficult to dispute the conclusion that emotions can be finally valuable.[15]

This brings the first line of thought according to which emotions are finally good for objectivist reasons to a close. If some cognitions and responses are distinctively valuable because they constitute achievements manifesting the agent's abilities, then emotions qualify insofar as they manifest evaluative abilities.

A second line of thought that supports the same conclusion makes likewise reference to affective dispositions. We can profitably approach it by considering a worry that might be raised by what we have just said. We have seen that the way emotions relate to virtues may support the conclusion that emotions are finally valuable thanks to their epistemic role. Still, one may concede that emotions sometimes are constitutive of well-being—namely, when they underline a piece of knowledge or manifest a virtue—but insist that they are not essential aspects of well-being. This is because one maintains that any item on the list may but *need not* manifest itself in emotions. In substance, this is to suggest that emotions constitute at best one among the various ways in which evaluative knowledge may be generated and virtues be manifested.

In fact, one may reach the conclusion that, say, a city poses a threat to one's health without that conclusion being prefaced by an episode of fear. The same is basically right in many if not all the cases in which evaluative knowledge is actually underpinned by an emotion with the right standing—this is not to say that the subject or somebody else in comparable circumstances could not have reached knowledge by another route. As regards virtues, it seems that honesty may manifest itself in, for example, coldly giving correct change to a foreigner who could easily be cheated. And if it so happens that an emotion manifests honesty, we should agree that it could have been manifested otherwise in the circumstances.

That being granted, we should turn our attention to the idea that is likely to underscore the present worry, namely, that emotions are no more than dispensable routes to the relevant end-points. This idea can be challenged in the light of the kind of *understanding* of value that will be available to a subject deprived of the relevant emotional abilities. It is important at this juncture to insist again that objective list theorists will certainly want—and if they do not, they should—their conception of well-being to make sense from the first-person point of view. After all, an account of well-being is an account of what is good *for an agent* to pursue for her own sake. This strongly suggests that items can feature on the list only if they can make sense from the perspective of an agent pursuing her well-being, which in turn requires that the agent should be able to understand the nature of these items and to see what point there would be in pursuing them.

These observations should make us realize that the worry under discussion fails to pay sufficient attention to the importance of emotions. To take one very simple case, consider equity. What sort of understanding of equity and of why well-being includes the ability to rightly respond to this value, i.e., the virtue of honesty, would be attainable by an agent deprived of any capacity to feel emotions in circumstances affecting her and fellow human beings? There is much to be said in favor of the idea that emotions provide the materials in terms of which we understand values and

in particular the values that are included in any reasonable objective list. The sort of understanding at stake is hardly detachable from an appreciation of the fact that we have reasons for welcoming some objects and events, and for disfavoring others. Emotions constitute the fundamental source of this understanding.[16]

The foregoing observations suggest that value-based approaches to the emotions support the conclusion that they can be finally good for objectivist reasons. In particular, they allow us to sharpen one of the inchoate thoughts with which we started our discussion, namely, that the capacity to feel emotions is a precondition of well-being.[17] This is because emotions provide for the sort of understanding of one's own good from the first-person perspective that is required for pursuing it.

Still, the other inchoate thought, viz., well-being requires a life replete with positive emotions, is not obviously taken into account. After all, the conclusion we have reached applies in the same way to positive *and* negative emotions, given that both play an equally fundamental role within the required perspective. Since the avowed aim of hedonism and desire satisfactionism is precisely to focus on those purely *mental* aspects of our lives that seem to be finally valuable, let us see whether a value-based approach may account for the insights fueling them.

3.2 ACCOUNTING FOR THE HEDONIST INSIGHT

As a matter of fact, approaches to well-being and emotions in terms of values are ideally suited to account for the idea that well-being is somehow a function of how it feels for the agent to live her life. To realize why, let us trace our steps back to the unity problem for pleasures.

This unity, we have seen, can neither be a matter of each pleasure being or instantiating a specific feeling, nor a matter of the subject's desires being satisfied. In our opinion, the only remaining way of accounting for that unity is to claim that a pleasure always involves a *specific attitude* taken toward something (e.g., Feldman 2004). The unity of the various pleasures is not to be found in specific sensations that are typically pleasant, but in the sort of attitude that we typically take toward them and toward much more besides.[18] That attitude can be characterized, perhaps not very informatively, as one of 'welcoming' the relevant object or sensation. When one tries to be more informative, one can only illustrate the phenomenon by mentioning emotions we intuitively consider as being positive: being pleased, of course, but also joy, admiration, wonder, being moved, amusement, delight, and so on.

If we understand the hedonist insight in terms of such attitudes, we can detach it from a feeling theory of the emotions: what is good as an end for the agent are not feelings of a given type, but rather positive attitudes. Of course, the question arises as to whether we face the problem of unity anew. We now have to account for what makes all these attitudes positive attitudes or, to put the point differently, attitudes of the welcoming type. This is hopefully not the case.

Insisting that there is a unity at the level of the relevant emotional attitudes means that we can draw on the fundamental claim governing both objective list

theories of well-being and value-based accounts of the emotions. A sensation, object, or situation is pleasant if it is the object of a positive response, where the positive character of a response is in turn cashed out in terms of the relevant evaluative property. Being pleased, then, is not a particular sensation, but a certain attitude that is positive in virtue of the fact that its object instantiates a positive value. Or, to go further than the habitual reference to what is in fact a determinable attitude, viz., that of being pleased, it is to take one of many possible determinate positive attitudes toward it. This will be, for instance, admiration or amusement, emotions that evaluate their objects in terms of two distinct values: say, excellence and the comical.

At this juncture, there are two options regarding the exact nature of the emotional responses in question. The first consists in defending the claim in the same terms we have used to introduce it, i.e., that a response qualifies as positive if it represents a positive value. This is the approach favored by the immense majority of philosophers subscribing to value-based accounts of emotions. Alternatively, one may take the above mention of attitudes of welcoming more literally and claim that an emotion does not qualify as positive because it represents a positive value, but because it is a positive response to it.[19] That is, the difference between a positive and a negative emotion will not be modeled on that between, say, desiring that p and desiring that not p, but rather on that between desiring that p and being averse to p. While we shall delve a bit further into this debate later on, we have already covered sufficient ground to reach the following conclusion.

The fact that positive emotions are determinates of the determinable 'taking pleasure in' or 'welcoming' the relevant object or event speaks to the hedonist insight. Claiming that a positive emotion is part of well-being is claiming that well-being is a function of the pleasures taken by the agent in doing or experiencing something. And while we have considered reasons to think that some pleasures fail to qualify,[20] we have realized that objective list approaches to well-being should regard a substantial number of emotions as finally good. We can now add that positive emotions contribute to well-being for additional, hedonist reasons and that it will take an austere objective list theorist to deny that pleasures understood in this way contribute to well-being.

3.3 ACCOUNTING FOR THE SATISFACTIONIST INSIGHT

Let us finally turn our attention to the relation between value-based accounts of the emotions and the insight underlying desire satisfactionism about well-being. Recall that the idea consists here in understanding pleasures in terms of representations of satisfied desires, which are claimed to be finally good. For this reason, the resulting accounts are 'world-oriented': well-being is constituted by representations of the object of a desire—typically something external to the agent—as being the case.

As we have seen, the claim that emotions feature representations of this nature has nothing to recommend itself. This means that the motto—"make sure you get

what you want"—fueling desire satisfactionism does not relate straightforwardly to the emotions. However, this is not to say that emphasizing the essential connections between emotions and values has nothing to contribute to our understanding of the satisfactionist insight. Quite the reverse, in fact, and this for two distinct reasons.

The first relates to an aspect of the emotions we have already emphasized: an agent's affective dispositions influence most if not all of her emotional responses. Remember that this label refers to a large psychological territory that comprises desires, sentiments, and character traits. Sentiments like love, character traits like generosity, and general desires like wanting to become a trader operate on our emotional life in the following manner. An agent's emotions express her affective dispositions, without this requiring that they represent the satisfaction or frustration of a desire. Disappointment, joy, shame, and *Schadenfreude* are often evaluations grounded in the subject's affective dispositions. Yet, the relation to an affective disposition need not appear in these evaluations; and it certainly need not be transparent to the subject.

We have reviewed some reasons why one might challenge the claim that all satisfied desires are relevant for well-being, and these will carry over to the emotions that result from problematic affective dispositions, such as vices for example. Still, the foregoing observations mean that any emotion—conceived of as an evaluation—that is finally good enables us to do justice to the satisfactionist insight that well-being is a function of how the agent fares with respect to her desires: this is because it manifests the agent's affective dispositions.

It would be a mistake to stop here, since insisting on the motivational aspect of emotions is apt to meet the satisfactionist insight in a perhaps deeper way. We have just emphasized the fact that emotions manifest affective dispositions and the consequence this has on well-being. Another intimate relation between emotion and motivation does not concern 'upstream' affective dispositions, so to say, but the impact of the emotions on 'downstream' motivation. It is because Michelle is so afraid of a mean-looking bull that she tries to put as much distance as possible between her and it, jumping a barbed-wire fence and abandoning her picnic in the process. Similarly, it is because he admires her work that Adam attempts to meet a famous writer and have an interview with her. Insofar as we are interested in the role of emotions in well-being, we should certainly pay attention to their downstream motivational aspect. This is required in order to assess how the evaluative dimension of emotions contributes to well-being understood not only along satisfactionist, but also along objectivist lines.

The idea is the following: insofar as emotions such as wonder, joy, gratitude, or admiration motivate the agent to foster their objects, and to promote paying attention to them, dealing with them, interacting with them, and protecting them, they partake in the positive value of these objects.[21] These various ways of promoting, interacting with, and protecting what is valuable are not only instrumentally good. It is natural to think—in fact, this is customary in value theory—that a

positive attitude toward what is finally good is in itself finally good, and that a negative attitude toward it is in itself finally bad (see e.g., Chisholm 1986, ch. 7; Zimmerman 2001, ch. 6). If this is along the right track, there is no reason why this idea should not apply to what is finally good *for a subject*, i.e., to claim that a positive attitude of hers toward what is valuable for her is in itself good for her.

In the present context, one attractive way to go is to suggest that such a relation between the value of the object and the value of the subject's attitude toward it is due to the kind of promoting and protecting characteristic of this attitude.[22] This is why exploring the motivational aspect of the emotions may have significant consequences for satisfactionist as well as objectivist accounts. This being said, measuring them requires that we take a stance on what this motivational aspect amounts to.

According to the suggestion we have just made, it is only if emotions are themselves motivations to act in the direction indicated by the value to which they respond that they will partake in this value. Yet, as we have already observed, whether this is the case is a much-debated question. Obviously, we cannot say much of substance on this issue here. We shall rest content with referring back to the two distinct approaches to the emotions we have alluded to in our discussion of the hedonic insight and go after their diverging consequences regarding the connection between emotions and well-being.

Consider first the approach favored by accounts according to which emotions represent values. In this context, emotions motivate us to act in various ways, but their relation to motivation is indirect and consists in providing us with reasons to act. This is what the analogy with judgment, thought, or perception would lead us to expect.[23] Now, if emotions are value representations that relate indirectly to action, the conclusion should be that they do not qualify as finally good from a satisfactionist perspective. An emotion may provide a reason for an agent to form a given attitude toward an object, but it is only this attitude that can be, depending on the value of its object, finally good for her—not the emotion. This is a direct consequence of the idea that the relation between the value of the object and the value of the attitude is due to the fact that the attitude is one of promoting a given type of interaction with the object.

This consequence is avoided if one connects emotions and motivation in a more intimate way, which is precisely what lies at the center of the second approach. According to this approach, which is susceptible to be developed in a variety of different guises, emotions are themselves motivational attitudes. This may be because they feature a relevant desire—as they do in the belief-desire theories of the emotions (e.g., Gordon 1987; Marks 1982)—or because they are understood in terms of specific types of action-tendencies (e.g., Frijda 1986) or feelings of them (Deonna and Teroni 2012, ch. 7).

However one wishes to pursue this second approach, emphasizing the motivational nature of emotions would in any case only strengthen a conclusion we have already seen reasons to reach. Thanks to their relations to affective dispositions

as well as their impact on subsequent motivation, a value-based account of the emotions can make room for a rich understanding of the satisfactionist insight that well-being relates to the subject's desires.

IV. CONCLUSION

We have started our discussion with two inchoate thoughts: a life without emotional engagement is not worth living and having plenty of positive emotions makes for a better life. We have realized that a value-based approach can make sense of the first thought via the claim that well-being is conditional upon the capacity to feel emotions, since emotions provide for the sort of first-person perspective understanding of what is valuable for one that is required to pursue it. The same approach illuminates the second thought in conceiving of positive emotions as attitudinal pleasures that manifest the satisfaction of desires, aspirations, and life projects. It speaks in this way also to the insights at the core of 'mental states theories' of well-being. All in all, this leads us back to an Aristotelian thought particularly well synthesized by Parfit in the following: "Pleasure with many other kinds of object has no value. And, if they are entirely devoid of pleasure, there is no value in knowledge, rational activity, love, or awareness of beauty. What is of value, or is good for someone, is to have both; to be engaged in these activities, and to strongly wanting to be so engaged" (1984, 502). Having appropriate inclinations toward the good and being in favorable circumstances for the exercise of these inclinations allows us to be at the receiving end of three fundamental sources of prudential goodness.

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NOTES

1. This understanding of well-being is, for instance, salient in Crisp's (2013) illuminating overview of the main approaches to it. Like him, we classify these approaches in line with Parfit's (1984) tripartite classification in his seminal discussion (but see Fletcher 2013, who offers an interesting alternative). We therefore assume, as is customary, that the approaches we discuss are on a par as answers to one and the same question regarding the nature of well-being so understood (see

Haybron 2011; Kagan 1992, 1994 for important criticism of this way of proceeding). We avoid the term 'happiness' as it tends nowadays to be associated with purely psychological conceptions of well-being.

2. It is customary to distinguish 'mental state' theories from 'state of the world' or, as we shall say, 'objectivist', theories of well-being (see e.g., Heathwood 2006). The former claim, while the latter deny, that how well-off a person is depends solely upon her mental states.
3. See Bentham 1789; Locke 1695; Mill 1863 and, for recent adoptions of the same view, Goldstein 2003; Kriegel 2011; and Whiting 2011. Other variants of the feeling theory, like the view championed by James and, more recently, by Prinz, give pride of place to bodily feelings. Since such feelings need not be pleasant or unpleasant, the relation between emotions and hedonistic well-being is less straightforward. See Prinz 2004 for an overview of feeling theories.
4. One option here is to consider that pleasantness is a determin*able* sensation that has a lot of different determinates, in exactly the same way as being colored is a determinable that has being red, blue, and green as determinates. While we shall appeal to the determinable vs. determinate distinction in a similar context below, to apply it to sensations has the unsatisfactory consequence that it is simply a brute psychological fact that different types of sensations are pleasures. We unfortunately cannot pursue this issue in the present article.
5. Haybron 2001, 2008 is well known for a criticism of hedonism that also starts from the complaint that it lacks depth. Yet his diagnosis of why hedonistic pleasure conceived as simple feelings is not sufficiently "deep, far-reaching, and causally productive" (2001, 510) differs significantly from ours as it does not seem to make any appeal to the role played by affective states in connecting us to our environment and its significance. As will become apparent, Haybron's "affective-based approach" in terms of moods and mood bases is quite alien to the project we pursue here in relation to the emotions. In line with traditional philosophical thinking on the issue, we tend to think of moods and mood bases as quite "superficial" given that their fate seems to a large extent independent from any epistemically relevant connection with the environment.
6. Whether the satisfied or frustrated desire is instrumental or final is of course relevant for measuring its contribution to well-being. Similarly, a careful approach should distinguish the *pro-tanto* contribution of the satisfaction of a desire to well-being from its *pro-toto* contribution, which is measured in the light of its consequences on the satisfaction of all the other desires of the agent. On these issues, see e.g., Heathwood 2006.
7. In addition to Lazarus 1991 and Roberts 2003, see the subtly different approaches to the emotions that emphasize the fundamental role of representations of desires as satisfied or frustrated, defended in Reisenzein 2009; Schroeder 2004; and Wollheim 2000.
8. See Deonna and Teroni 2012, ch. 3, for a detailed criticism of these accounts of emotions.
9. There are many attempts to avoid this consequence while remaining faithful to the central tenets of desire satisfactionism. A prominent one is to make reference to the agent's ideal desires (e.g., Brandt 1979). We shall not go in this direction, however, because it is difficult to see how the resulting account of well-being could fruitfully interact with emotion theory. After all, emotions do not represent the desires one should ideally have. Critical discussions of ideal desires accounts of well-being can be found in Heathwood (2006, 545), who argues that the strategy is ineffectual to remove defective desires, and in Feldman (2004, 1.5), according to whom unwanted satisfactions of ideal desires are not good for the agent.
10. The discussions to come do not require that we identify the items that should go on the list. As will become apparent, however, we see no reasons why it should not include some of the items pushed by hedonism and desire satisfactionism.
11. The classical discussion on correctness conditions is Searle 1983. While it is perhaps natural to speak of emotions as appropriate, we do not ordinarily speak of them as correct. The latter is a term of art that corresponds to the epistemic assessment of the emotions, as opposed to the other ways (prudential, moral, etc.) of assessing them. See de Sousa 1987; D'Arms and Jacobson 2000; Deonna and Teroni 2012.
12. The fact that emotions are evaluations is a recurring idea from Plato and Aristotle onward and receives extended treatments in De Sousa 1987; Roberts 2003; and Tappolet 2000. In recent times, the idea has tended to come in two main varieties, one according to which emotions are value judgments (Nussbaum 2004; Solomon 1993), a second according to which they are more

like perceptual experiences of value (Döring 2007; Tappolet 2000). We shall contrast below this family of representationalist approaches to attitudinal approaches (Deonna and Teroni 2012; Frijda 1986).

13. An account that emphasizes the variety of affective dispositions, describes their distinctive role in affective explanations, and questions skepticism about them is offered in Deonna and Teroni 2009.
14. For an illuminating exploration of the constraints that affective dispositions should satisfy in order to constitute abilities of the sort needed, see D'Arms 2013.
15. According to the objective-list account recently put forward by Fletcher 2013, similar observations apply to all items on the list—and the author emphasizes that this is an attractive way of anchoring an agent's well-being in her own perspective.
16. This conclusion will be obvious to advocates of so-called fitting attitudes analyses of values (see, e.g., D'Arms and Jacobson 2000). If something is valuable in virtue of being a fitting occasion to feel a given emotion, then emotions will surely play a fundamental role in our understanding of value. Yet, as we argue elsewhere (2012, ch. 10), the conclusion does not require that one adopt such a framework.
17. If the objective list contains only one value and that this value is, say, tranquillity of the soul, then what we say here may start to look doubtful. It seems to us, however, that even the value pursued by stoic or Buddhist like characters must be elected on the background of an emotional understanding of the other values they try to steer away from. Stoicism and Buddhism do not make much sense in the absence of a prior emotional engagement with the world.
18. Observe that we are referring here to emotional episodes that typically target specific events and objects. We are not concerned with the sort of more global and more dispositional attitude one may take toward one's life 'as a whole' that is emphasized within life satisfaction accounts of well-being (e.g., Carson 1981).
19. See De Sousa 1987, 156, who forcefully makes the point that emotions are attitudes, something he claims is illustrated by their anhypothetical character. For further discussion, see Deonna and Teroni 2012, ch. 7.
20. Observe that the approach under discussion is compatible with at least two sorts of views regarding 'false', base, or inappropriate pleasures. According to the first, a pleasure has prudential value only if it is correct. According to the second, problematic pleasures are still prudentially good because they are positive attitudes, but their inappropriateness diminishes their value.
21. Shand 1919 puts forward a particularly rich framework to pursue this line of thought.
22. Nozick 1990, ch. 9 offers an intriguing alternative explanation of the reason why emotions themselves are finally good that refers to the fact that emotion and value constitute an 'organic unity'.
23. It is difficult to assess the various positions on this issue. There is a widespread agreement that emotions motivate. But the fact that emotions are often understood as beliefs or perceptual experiences seems to imply that, as moral psychologists like to put it, they are not motivating but action-guiding. Tappolet 2009 and Rossi and Tappolet forthcoming explicitly endorse this consequence.

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