ANALYSIS OF HAPPINESS

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CHAPTER XX

THE ATTAINABILITY OF HAPPINESS

On se demande si en comparant les différentes conditions des hommes, on n'y remarquerait pas un mélange et une espèce de compensation de bien et de mal qui établirait entre elles l'égalité.

La Bruyère.

Three main questions arise in connection with the attainment of happiness. The first is whether we can attain it, the second, whether we want to attain it and the third, whether it is worth attaining. In other words, does happiness exist? Is it an object of human pursuit and is it precious enough to be a justifiable object of pursuit?

First of all let us analyse the first question and the various answers to it, both pessimistic and optimistic.

The Book of Job says: “Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble ... But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn.” The Chorus in Oedipus reiterates: “For mortals there is no way to avoid an unhappy fate – not to be born, man, these are the greatest, most important words. And if you have seen the light of day, it were best to return whence you came.” Herodotus wrote of the Scythians that they considered birth to be an evil, and death a blessing. Sextus Empiricus says of the ancient Thracians that they gathered around every new-born child and bewailed its fate. This pessimistic view on the possibility of attaining happiness was held for many centuries. It was reflected in religion, poetry and customs before it appeared in philosophy. But for an equally long time an optimistic view was also expressed in religion, poetry and customs.

In philosophy, particularly in Europe, the conflict between optimism and pessimism is nearly as old as philosophy itself. Plato was a pessimist, at least at certain periods when he denounced the material world as evil and sought to escape from it into an idealized world. His follower Aristotle was an optimist whose uncontested assumption was that happiness is attainable. The Cyrenaics Hecataeus advised men to choose death, for life was not worth living. But the succession of the Cyrenaics, the Epicureans, extolled the joy and beauty of life. An analogous situation existed in mediaeval Christianity: the world was called ‘a vale of tears’, while at the same time scholastics equated existence with good. On the other hand, this juxtaposition is relatively recent. ‘Optimism’ and ‘pessimism’ are modern terms. Modern, too, is the more precise elucidation of both concepts and the fuller development of both systems. The classical system of optimism was developed by Leibniz, and that of pessimism by Schopenhauer. But the term ‘optimism’ itself was not yet used even by Leibniz. It was employed for the first time to describe this view in a review of his Théodicee, published by the Jesuits in the “Journal de Trévoux”, as late as 1737.

The term might well have been forgotten had it not been popularized by Voltaire in his Candide ou l’optimisme of 1759, a satirical work aimed against Leibniz, although it was directly provoked by Rousseau. In 1756 Voltaire published his Poème sur le Désastre de Lisbonne, in which he depicted, against the background of the terrible earthquake which had destroyed the Portuguese capital, the misery and horror of human existence. Rousseau answered him in the optimistic Lettre sur la Provi­dence. Voltaire, in turn, expressed his pessimism in Candide, in which he takes an ironic view of optimism. This was the first literary and philosophical controversy between the two outlooks.

The term ‘optimism’ gave rise to the antithetical term ‘pessimism’, though not immediately. Voltaire’s pessimistic philosophy did not yet go by the name of ‘pessimism’. However, this term was applied almost simultaneously, and probably quite independently, in Britain and Germany half a century later. In English literature it was introduced by Coleridge in 1815, and in German philosophy by Schopenhauer in 1819. The term ‘optimisme’ was accepted by the Académie Française in 1762, and ‘pessimisme’ as late as 1878.

The word ‘pessimism’ was coined as the antonym of ‘optimism’, to stress the opposition between the two views. It is derived from pessimus – the worst, while the latter stems from optimus – the best. However, there is a triple asymmetry in the form of this opposition, particularly in the case of Leibniz and Schopenhauer. Firstly, for Leibniz this world was “the best of all possible worlds”, though it was not good unequivocally and in every detail; for Schopenhauer it was evil unequivocally and in every detail, although he did not seriously maintain that it was the worst of all possible worlds. Secondly Leibniz spoke of the best world, and Schopenhauer of an unhappy one. The former spoke

1 A. Lalande, Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie, 8th ed., 1960, p. 718 and 763.
of the preponderance of good (even if mixed with suffering) over evil, the latter of the preponderance of suffering over happiness. Thirdly, both views were based on a different foundation: pessimism chiefly on experience, and optimism on reason, a reason which was often at odds with experience.

There is also an outlook which seems to be a synthesis of pessimism and optimism and which maintains that the world is evil, although it is the best of all possible worlds. This is the view held by Edward v. Hartmann. But this synthesis works out entirely in favour of pessimism, and of an extreme and aggressive type at that.

**Optimistic** reasoning in the classical form given it by Leibniz was as follows. The world is the best of all possible worlds, although it is not perfect. It cannot be perfect because evil is unavoidably bound up with existence, and because the world embraces finite and therefore imperfect beings. This accounts for the three types of evil which must exist even in the best of all possible worlds. Thus: (1) metaphysical evil, i.e. the inadequacy and imperfection of all things, is due to the nature of finite existence. All levels of existence must be represented in the world, from the highest to the lowest, which also must not be lacking and are essential to the completeness and perfection of the world, although it may be unpleasant for those who have been allotted the lowest level. (2) Physical evil, i.e. suffering, results from the nature of the body. It is not only essential, but also useful, as a means of education and punishment. Moreover, suffering, according to Leibniz, is less widespread than is generally supposed. In cases where it does exist it becomes bearable if reason and patience are exercised. It is a lesser evil serving a greater good, the price of obtaining higher values. (3) Finally, moral evil is also essential in the world, for if it were eliminated, freedom would cease to exist. It, too, results from the nature of finite existence. It is essential to the perfect unity of the world, for without moral evil there would be no moral good.

Without denying the actual existence of evil, these deductive arguments attempt to prove that evil is either unavoidable, or is the price of a greater good. The problem of happiness is included here as part of a wider range of issues and is dealt with in conjunction with other values, so that the traditional question of optimism takes on a somewhat different form than it would have done, if it had pertained to happiness alone. It is one thing to ask whether the world as a whole has a positive value (even at the cost of the happiness of certain individuals) and quite another to ask whether it makes people happy.

**Pessimism**, in its classical form, appealed to experience rather than to reason, but it also made use of a deduction of a general nature. This deduction – first in Pascal's works, then in Schopenhauer's – had a disjunctive form. Either man has needs and desires, and therefore suffers because they are not satisfied, or if they are satisfied, is assailed by other needs which bring new sufferings, or alternatively he has no needs or desires, and is therefore bored, which in turn is a form of suffering. So in one way or another man must always suffer and has no reason to be satisfied with life.

The classical form of optimism is not an exactly symmetrical inversion of the classical form of pessimism. However, for every form of optimism there can be found a symmetrical form of pessimism and vice versa. Thus for the general tenet of optimism that the world is good and must therefore make people happy there is a corresponding pessimistic tenet that the world is evil and must therefore make people unhappy. This is also the case with the specific form in which optimism and pessimism oppose each other not as theories of good and evil but rather as theories of human happiness and unhappiness.

This form of optimism and pessimism has many variants. Pessimism has at least five. The first is the theory that people must be unhappy, the second that the majority of people are unhappy, the third that, if someone is happy, he is so only through illusion, the fourth that, if someone is happy, he is so only superficially, and the fifth that there are more reasons for being unhappy than for being happy. These five forms of pessimism are opposed by as many forms of optimism, which maintain exactly, or almost exactly the same about happiness as the former do about unhappiness.

A. Extreme pessimists maintain that there are no happy people, that happiness does not exist, because both the nature of the world, and that of human beings make it impossible. Extreme optimists hold that the world is so perfect that man should be happy in it and if he is not this is entirely his own fault since happiness is the natural state of mankind. Neither of these extreme opinions – which, incidentally, are not completely sym-

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metrical since the one speaks of what is impossible and the other of what should be — can be accepted a basis for discussion. The statement that happiness is impossible is undoubtedly false and one cannot possibly determine what a man 'should' feel, or at least cannot define it so that it would be universally applicable.

B. In any approach to the subject that is both less extreme and takes more note of the actual experiences of the majority of people, pessimists maintain that unhappiness predominates, and optimists that happiness predominates in the world. "Suffering is short-lived, joy is eternal" according to Schiller. These statements are equally unsuitable for discussion because they are based on statistics, and there are no statistics of happy and unhappy people and surely never will be. The assumption that this or that particular man is or is not happy may have a certain degree of probability, but not the statement that the majority of people are happy or otherwise.

C. A looser form of pessimism, but nevertheless still pessimism, takes the view that although man is occasionally happy, this is only the result of illusion, bewilderment or misunderstanding, of an error in judgement. The happiest are those who think erroneously, or never think at all. This opinion was often repeated by the Romantics. "God in Heaven", Goethe makes Werther say, "thou hast so ordained human fates that man is happy only until he attains reason, or after he loses it." Many years later Goethe himself heard similar views being aired by Napoleon. In 1806 the Emperor explained to the Germans in Erfurt that the study and knowledge of truth brings no happiness. "Your philosophers", he told them, "rack their brains in vain. They only destroy illusions, yet the age of illusion and fantasy is the happiest, both for nations and individuals."

Another variant of moderate pessimism states that, though happiness does exist in human life, it is only occasional and transient and that in the end inevitably there is only unhappiness. This was the sense in which Rilke described happiness as "the premature profit of imminent loss". Pessimism can also appear in quite a different guise in the view that the world seems to contain a sufficient basis for happiness, but we are incapable of grasping it. "There is nothing to which man is less suited, and of which he wearies sooner than happiness", wrote Claudel. Goethe reversed this statement to form an optimistic one: "Let us but learn how to grasp happiness, for happiness will always be there" ("Lerne nur das Glück erreichen, denn das Glück ist immer da"). Happiness seems to be possible but it is not real. It seems to exist but it is never to be found where we now are. This conviction was expressed in this 18th century French verse:

La peine est aux lieux qu'on habite
Et le bonheur où l'on n'est pas.  

In the early 19th century it was echoed in Schubert's song, The Wanderer: "Where you are not, there, happiness is to be found."

D. Among the many forms of optimism, there is one which makes every possible concession towards pessimism. It admits and confirms all the imperfections, shortcomings, cares and sufferings which are the lot of mankind. Its optimism is rooted in the innermost depths of matter and of the soul. For in spite of all shortcomings and sufferings, there exists in the innermost fibre of things, and there can be felt in the innermost depths of the soul — albeit inexplicable, invisible and elusive — the harmony, perfection and joy of existence. True life gives but few pleasures, but it can give happiness. This is the view characteristic of Christianity, expressed in the works of many Christian writers, a view which has gradually found its way to the masses.

This notion has its pessimistic antithesis in the statement that it is pleasure and not happiness that is found in sufficient measure in life. Pleasures are a thin veneer on the surface of life, while hopelessness and sadness lie in its innermost core. This type of pessimism, which makes superficial concessions towards optimism, can also sometimes be found among the mass of the people.

Paul Janet gave it philosophical expression when he wrote in the conclusion of his Philosophie du bonheur: "There is a false grief, which appears on the surface of life and prevents us from enjoying its fleeting pleasures. The superficial level of life is gay, and so joy and gladness are in concord with it. But just as there is a false grief, there is also a false joy, which reaches the innermost depths of the soul. For those depths are void and so cannot give joy. If we forget this, we can open our hearts to joy, confidence, faith and all the emotions. But there is nothing in the essence of the soul which can give us satisfaction. The craving for infinity in a finite being — that is the contradiction which lies within man. It is a contradiction which indicates that human fate is incomplete, ill-designed and contrary to reason."

It is not the optimism of Leibniz and the pessimism of Schopenhauer,

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* Poem by R. D. de Parny (1753-1814) in Almanach des Muses, 1777.
but profound optimism with superficial concessions towards pessimism, and profound pessimism with superficial concessions towards optimism, that form the most striking antithesis in the entire question. But here also, both antithetical theories may be more a matter of personal feeling and belief than the object of practical discussion.

E. Finally, the antithesis of optimism and pessimism may lead to asking whether there are more reasons for human happiness in the general structure of the world and of the human mind, as is argued by optimists, or whether there are more reasons for unhappiness, as is argued by pessimists. This is probably the only form suitable for discussion and, unless the controversy is solved in this form, it will not be solved at all. In the latter case it would be necessary to abandon the search for a general solution and to restrict ourselves to stating whether this or that man is or is not happy.

It seems, however, that in the general structure of the world and of the human mind there are certain points which optimists can quote in support of their theory:

1. There is in the world a great variety of things which give satisfaction; there are at least as many kinds of satisfaction as there are different kinds of goods.

2. In order to be satisfied, one does not even need pleasant stimuli; the loss of unpleasant stimuli suffices. In certain cases at least, a state devoid of suffering seems pleasant, particularly when it follows suffering.

3. Man's physical and mental structure is such that he adapts himself to circumstances and once he has adapted himself to his circumstances, he feels satisfied. In the words of the song: "If one has not what one likes, one likes what one has."

4. Man has the possibility of changing his circumstances through deliberate action, and of improving them so that they make human life increasingly happier.

Each of these points tells in favour of happiness. Taken together, they seem to indicate that the structure of the world and of the human mind is such that people should be happy rather than unhappy. However, just as many or even more factors in the structure of the world and of the mind, seem to act to the detriment of human happiness. These are the facts which pessimists quote in support of their theory.

1. Even when only one part of the body is hurt or diseased, this is sufficient to make a man feel ill, although the rest of his body is perfectly sound. All his attention is focused on the one painful part of his body, while the parts that are free of pain are not even noticed.

2. We derive no joy from many things when we possess them, but we are distressed when we lose them. We feel their absence painfully, although we did not notice their presence. This is so with such great treasures as health, youth and freedom. We do not notice good health, but we despair at its loss. We do not notice our freedom, but we consider it a great misfortune to be deprived of it. Health and freedom are not felt in a positive way, whereas disease and imprisonment are felt negatively. Thus there exists in this context a marked asymmetry which is to the detriment of happiness.

3. This asymmetry extends still further. As long as we do not possess something, we feel its lack, but when we do possess it, we soon become so accustomed to it that it ceases to arouse any feelings at all. Lack of the thing desired is indubitably a source of distress and habit is a most doubtful source of pleasure. When we are deprived of something to which we have become accustomed, the distress we feel is all the greater. Experiences become a habit, and familiarity dulls their intensity. Even the strongest emotions become blunted and fade away. Sooner or later, the things which once seemed to be an inexhaustible source of joy, cease to give enjoyment. If despite this, we persist in clinging to them, we become bored, and yet their loss would only cause new distress.

4. Time does not pass at an even rate. The more pleasant the hours, the more quickly they fly and the more unpleasant they are, the more snail-like their pace. We are conscious of time only in suffering or boredom. So in this case, too, our mental mechanism acts to the detriment of happiness.

5. Admittedly great joys do exist, like those stemming from art or knowledge, but by their very nature they are not accessible to all, and they occupy relatively infrequent moments in the lives of those to whom they are accessible. The greater part of life is taken up with unpleasant or at best uninteresting everyday affairs, in a struggle for existence which makes demands upon our strength, exhausts, and sometimes exceeds it.

6. There exists in every man an inclination towards emotions which are in essence unpleasant — towards envy, jealousy, aversion or fear. These unpleasant emotions are aroused not only by evil, however, but
8. All through his life he is threatened by thousands of dangers and accidents, both from nature and other people. Above all, his every moment is fraught with the danger of death. All his intentions, all his carefully laid schemes, can be thwarted by an irrational fate.

The various things in the world and the human mind which act in favour of happiness have been enumerated comparatively rarely. Optimistic writers have tended rather to set out the reasons why distress should not be taken to heart, or why it can be turned to one's advantage, and that is quite a different matter. On the other hand everything that is hostile to human happiness was tracked down, collected and pungently expressed by Schopenhauer. His work is the black book of human affliction, of all the sources of suffering and unhappiness. It contains practically everything that has been discussed above as well as many other, perhaps less pertinent matters. It also gives evidence on the predominance of suffering in life, showing that if someone prefers life to death, this is due only to his fear of death, that no one would in all sincerity wish to live his life over again, that in spite of the brevity of life, people must still invent ways of 'killing time'; that even when people detest each other, they still associate in order to avoid boredom, and so on and so forth.

The facts which can be quoted by optimists are incontestable. They need not, however, be interpreted so as to accord with the optimistic argument, and they can be countered by the juxtaposition of opposing, equally incontestable facts:

1. A great variety of things give satisfaction. That is indeed so, but the multiplicity of things which cause distress is no less than that of the things which give satisfaction. Prosperity pleases, but poverty distresses, success gives satisfaction, but failure vexation.

2. As soon as suffering ceases, its very lack seems to be pleasurable. True, but, conversely, when we no longer have the thing we have enjoyed, its lack is distressing.

3. Man adapts himself to his circumstances. True again, but his adaptability to circumstances is limited. It is difficult for him to adapt himself completely to severe physical pain, to infirmity or enslavement. What is more, once he has so adapted himself to distressing conditions that he no longer feels them, new afflictions will rise to the surface of his consciousness.

4. Man can alter and improve his circumstances. But his ability to improve unfavourable circumstances, or even to render them innocuous, is limited. He cannot overcome death, disease or old age and has never been able to bring freedom and justice to all parts of the world, nor to ensure a sufficiency of material goods for all.

Similarly, the facts quoted by pessimists can be interpreted at variance with their ideas, or countered by other, opposing facts:

1. One great distress, one agonizing pain often transfixes the entire consciousness, overwhelming it completely. But intense pleasure can pervade the consciousness as completely as intense suffering.

2. Our enjoyment of many things - health, youth, liberty - is less than the suffering caused by their loss. We give little thought to health, youth and liberty, when we have them. But, even without thinking about them, we benefit from and enjoy them, if only indirectly. True, we do not enjoy them consciously all the time but neither do illness, old age and bondage oppress our consciousness all the time.

3. Our sensitivity to pleasure becomes blunted. But so does our sensitivity to distressing experience. We become indifferent not only to pleasant, but also to unpleasant states. Habit destroys some emotions, but it creates others which can be no less pleasant. Boredom need not be the inevitable result of habit; there can also be attachment. With the onset of old age, both joys and troubles gradually disappear.

4. Pleasant moments appear to be short-lived. But it does not follow that they give less pleasure than they would if they extended over a longer period of time.
5. The great joys derived from art or knowledge do not fill our entire lives. But, even if they fill only a few hours and days, they shed a radiance over our whole lives, giving them meaning and making trouble and distress more bearable.

6. Man is susceptible to unpleasant emotions. But he is equally susceptible to pleasant ones. Unpleasant feelings such as envy and fear can be overcome, at least to a certain extent, and pleasant feelings can be augmented.

7. It is true that lesser afflictions only cease to cause distress when they are overshadowed by greater ones, and that they make themselves felt once more when the greater affliction disappears. But, as everyone surely knows from experience, it is not true that as soon as one affliction vanishes others must necessarily and immediately take their place. The causes of pain, trouble and distress are many, but it is not true that pain, trouble and distress follow each other in unbroken succession, always and for everyone.

8. It is true that man is threatened by thousands of dangers and accidents. But these do not always strike everyone, neither does everyone always know and remember about these dangers and one does not suffer from what one does not know. Moreover, dangers and accidents are often a source not only of distress, but also of pleasure, for instance, lucky accidents and dangers successfully avoided.

Arguments and counter-arguments can be multiplied further. The pessimist may propose the following dilemma. Either a man is dissatisfied with life and therefore suffers, or he is satisfied, in which case suffering also ensues as a result of his awareness that life must come to an end. This is probably the worst suffering of all, so that, paradoxically, the only happiness lies in the fact that life makes us unhappy. "How could we tolerate death," wrote Hebbel, "were not life intolerable?" But an optimist will find the answer to all this. He will retort with another dilemma, which seems to be equally to the point, but is in fact equally questionable. Either a man is satisfied with life, in which case he does not suffer, or he is dissatisfied, in which case he can at any moment put an end to his life and suffer no more.

The pessimist will say, with Shakespeare in Measure for Measure: "Happy thou art not, for what thou hast not, still thou strivest to get, and what thou hast forget'st." But the optimist will reply that the things he has are before his eyes and so he must remember about them, while he does not see the things he does not have, so he will forget about them sooner or later.
a trick of memory, which scrupulously retains every suffering and leaves out the pleasures. "When a man feels well," wrote Holbach, "he considers this to be his rightful due, but he takes every suffering to be an injustice inflicted upon him by nature."

The pessimist may say that the majority of people are more susceptible to pain than to pleasure. Even as unbiased an observer as Bentham admitted that, as a rule, mankind seems to be more sensitive to suffering than to pleasure, when their causes are equivalent. We notice every unpleasant occurrence, underlining it in red, as it were. We complain if we have to walk when we are tired, but the fact of walking without fatigue goes quite unnoticed. The optimist will agree that in many cases we are quicker to notice unpleasant occurrences, but will add that, on the other hand, these occurrences can be avoided. When one has a headache, one swallows a pill and goes to bed. When one is tired, one sits down and rests. We shun suffering, both instinctively and consciously. Thus, unpleasant states do not predominate in the life of an average man, who is not heavily burdened with sickness, serious worry or exhausting work.

The pessimist will quote Bernoulli’s law\(^7\) that happiness increases at

\(^7\) D. Bernoulli, *Specimen theoriae novae de mensura sortis*, 1738. Cf. O. Kraus, *Werttheorien*, 1937. Bernoulli’s law does not constitute an argument in favour of pessimism, nor of optimism, but it revealed the constancy of the relation between emotions and their causes. "Nempe valor non est aeternus ad prex rei, sed ex emolumento quad unusquisque inde capessit. Pretium ex re ipsa aestimatur, omnibusque idem est, emolumentum ex conditione personae. Ia procud debus pauperis magis referit lucrum facere mille ducatorum, quam divisivit, uti pretium utrique idem est." This observation was repeated by P.S. de Laplace in *Théorie analytique des probabilités*, 1812: "On doit distinguer dans le bien épris sa valeur relative de sa valeur absolue: celle-ci indépendante des motifs qui la font désirer, au lieu que la première croît avec les motifs." Laplace distinguished between *fortune physique* (physical goods) and *fortune morale* (the pleasant feelings aroused by those goods). He considered that *fortune physique* has no significance for us, except as a means of gaining *fortune morale*. However, no simple relationship exists between them for we only perceive the increase in the latter in the former. G. T. Fechner returned to these problems in *Psychophysik*, 1860, I, p. 235. He maintained that the constancy observed by Bernoulli and Laplace can be considered as part of the more general law of Weber. J. Bentham, in *Principles of Civil Code, Works*, I, 366, expressed the view that unpleasant events make a stronger impression upon us than pleasant ones. Let us suppose, he wrote, that I have £1000 and gamble with them, with a stake of £500. If I lose my wager, my wealth will be halved, while if I win, I will gain only half as much again. But if I stake £1000, I shall double my fortune if I win, but, if I do not win, I shall lose all I had. "If I gain, my happiness is not doubled with my fortune, if I lose, my happiness is destroyed, I am reduced to poverty... Though the chances, as they respect money, may be equal, the chances as they respect happiness are always unfavourable." Cf. O. Kraus, *Zur Theorie des Wertes, eine Bentham-Studie*, 1901.

a lower rate than the goods which are its source. While the latter increase in geometric proportion, happiness does so only in arithmetical proportion.

The optimist will reply that firstly, this is applicable at most to the proportional increase of pleasures, not of happiness, and happiness is not proportionate to the pleasures experienced, secondly, that it is applicable at most to material goods, and happiness depends also on non-material good, thirdly, that this law is equally applicable to unhappiness, since sufferings increase at a slower rate than the evil which is their source so that the chances of pleasure and suffering counterbalance each other.

Practically every argument put forward in favour of optimism may not only be parried, but even made use of by the pessimist, and, conversely, the arguments of pessimism may be parried or even made use of by optimists. This is natural enough, for within events and experience there exists a parallelism of pleasure and suffering. Many experiences are a combination of pleasure and distress, and, depending on one’s attitude, either the pleasure or the distress gains the upper hand. There is a well-known anecdote which says that the same auditorium that is half full to an optimist is half empty to a pessimist.

*Popular opinion*, ordinary common sense, ordinary human instinct, appear to have rather a pessimistic bent and are characterized by a mistrust of happiness. According to them, even a person who has achieved happiness should not count on keeping it permanently or call himself happy as long as he lives. The celebrated dialogue between Solon and Croesus is only the best known form of this idea which has reappeared in different ages, traditions and societies. "Dicte beatas ante obitum nemo supremaque funera debet", wrote Ovid. This thought was echoed by Montaigne and Pascal. It is expressed in the adage: "call no man happy till he dies", and was voiced by Schiller: "He who possesses should learn to lose; he who is happy should learn to suffer."

Mistrust of happiness is emphatically expressed in a variety of proverbs and adages:\(^8\) "Mischief comes in by the pound and goes out by the ounce."

"No joy without annoy. "It is easier to fall than to rise." "It never rains but it pours. "Sorrow comes unbidden. "Sorrow never comes too late and happiness too swiftly flies. "God send you joy, for sorrow will come fast enough." Polish proverbs are analogous: "Happiness and a glass vessel are most easily shattered. "After joy, sorrow. "Misfortunes come in pairs. "Misfortune and a monk seldom come without a companion."

\(^8\) *Oxford Book of Proverbs and Quotations.*
All this means but one thing. People expect happiness to be followed inevitably by unhappiness, but they expect one unhappiness to be followed by another. This mistrust, however, really concerns happiness understood in a specific way; a happiness which results from a lucky chance or from fate, and is not rooted deeply in man himself. This is, in fact, a mistrust of good fortune, extended to include happiness since according to this view happiness is dependent on good fortune.

On the other hand, the same opinion and ordinary common sense do contain a grain of optimism, which manifests itself in the quite widespread belief in the possibility of altering circumstances so that they become increasingly conducive to happiness, and in progress towards a happier humanity. Although not definitely optimistic, this common opinion is _melioristic_, to use a term which was coined in late 19th century England, probably by George Eliot, and was used by Spencer and popularized by J. Sully. Most people are not convinced that the world is good but they believe that it is becoming, or at least can become, better. This prevalent belief is probably not melioristic in the very questionable sense in which Spencer used the term, namely, that the world is naturally inclined towards improvement. However, in the sense that the world can be and is being improved by man, meliorism is a popular dogma at least in our times. Of course there are those who, observing the lot of mankind, have become shaken in this belief and have come to suspect that man's improvement of the world is deceptive and that every gain has to be paid for by a loss in another sphere.

An analysis of the arguments of optimism and pessimism does not attract one to either view. There seems to be nothing in the structure of the world or in the human mentality that would make probable either man's happiness or his unhappiness. The same events are at the same time causes of joy and of suffering. Joys are interconnected and intertwined with sufferings. The mechanism of the human mind makes joy constantly change into sorrow and sorrow into joy. "Good brings evil, and evil brings good," wrote Diderot, and Renan said: "Good and evil, delight and suffering, beauty and ugliness, wisdom and madness merge one into the other in shades as elusive as the changing hues on the neck of a dove."10

This has given rise to theories which deviate from both optimism and pessimism. These theories, which can be described as _indifferentist_, maintain that the structure of the world and the human mind have tended to make men neither happy nor unhappy. Two of these theories are particularly noteworthy.

A. First of all the curious theory, now almost forgotten, which was expounded over a century ago by the French thinker Pierre Hyacinthe Azais (1776–1845) in his book _Compensations dans les destinées humaines_. It states that in every human life, pleasures and annoyances compensate for each other, i.e. they are equal in effect equivalent. Good qualities of body and soul are compensated for, counterbalanced, neutralized by attendant bad qualities. Fortune's gifts are counterbalanced by the dangers which they bring and by the anxiety and surfeit which they cause so that the final result is always nil.

Azais based this view on reflections of a more general nature. Unhappiness, he maintained, is always the product of destruction and, conversely, happiness results from acts of creation and construction, from building and improving. Construction, however, is invariably bound up with destruction. Every reality is destroyed and, from that destruction, there arises a new reality. Since the world continues to exist and is constantly governed by the same rules, this indicates that in the end the construction and destruction within it will cancel each other out.

The totalities of pleasures and annoyances also remain equal to each other. The aware individual will feel every constructive process as a pleasure, and every destructive process as a distress. So, just as in the material world the sum of construction equals the sum of destruction, so in the individual's consciousness the pleasures are equal in number to the annoyances. Although youth has pleasures which are inaccessible to old age, it also has its specific worries which no longer trouble the old. This applies equally to the life of men and women, to city life and country life. Each sex, each profession and each way of life has its own joys as well as the sorrows which are closely connected with those joys. A commanding officer enjoys pleasures which are beyond the reach of a private soldier, but he also has worries of which the private is quite unaware. This analogy can be applied to other spheres. Therefore, the more possessions and privileges an individual enjoys, the more numerous not only his pleasures, but also his annoyances will be since he will possess more perishable things. His happiness and unhappiness

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balance each other as they do with an individual who is less fortunate and has fewer causes of happiness, but correspondingly fewer causes of unhappiness. Nor everybody has an equal share of pleasures and, similarly, some have a greater share of distress than others. But, if every man's annoyances were to be subtracted from his pleasures, everyone would get the same nil result. This, according to Azais, is the only equality in the world, but it is a universal one. Observations confirm this theory, though not in the radical form given it by Azais. Experience does not indicate that positive and negative experiences compensate for each other completely, but it does indicate that they are subject to certain compensations. It does not show that minuses lie side by side with pluses and pluses with minuses in every situation, but it shows that they do in some. It does not show that sorrow is always equal to joy in human life, but that they have a tendency towards equality. It is not true that every man feels sorrow after every joy, and joy after every sorrow, but it is true that joy is frequently followed by suffering, and suffering by joy. Under no circumstances can it be said that man's joys are exactly equivalent to his sorrows, for neither joy nor sorrow can be exactly measured.

B. There is yet another theory, which maintains that man's lot is as far removed from happiness and from unhappiness but which explains this statement in a different way, not by the equalization of pleasure and distress, but by the fact that the overwhelming majority of human experiences are indifferent in character. As a rule, both pleasures and annoyances have so little intensity that they cannot provide a foundation either for complete satisfaction or for complete dissatisfaction. This theory was formulated by the Serbian philosopher Bronislav Petronievics, according to whom neither great joys nor great sorrows markedly exceed each other in number and who stated that all we can ask is that life may hold a slight majority of joys or sorrows. In this context the appropriate terms for the possible attitudes to life seem to be not pessimism and optimism, but bonism and malism, because life is never best or worst, but simply good or bad. Petronievics not only asserted that the preponderance of indifferent experiences in human life was a fact, but also endeavoured to explain it as a biological necessity. Every organism strives towards equilibrium, but strong emotions, both positive and negative, are the result of process-

12 B. Petronievics, Sur la valeur de la vie, "Revue Philosophique", XCIX, 1925.
characteristic of adolescence. Slightly later, there comes anxiety about the future, lack of faith in oneself, shyness, fear of embarking on an independent life, indecision about what is the best course to take in life. Besides all this there is dissatisfaction with a life which does not measure up to the ‘youthful dreams’ so typical of the young, and pessimism due to ignorance of it. Not everyone undergoes all those trials in youth, but many do.

Old age, too, is plagued by the slow pace of time and by boredom, for there are fewer and fewer things which the old can or want to do. Also, particularly in the case of the sick and infirm, old age brings dependence on other people, need for their aid and helplessness. Even more distressing are the ailments, illnesses and weaknesses, the heavy toll of fatigue which must be paid for every pleasure. There is also dissatisfaction with reality due to the accumulated experience of life, the gradual loss of friends and relatives, the disintegration of everything to which the old are attached. Finally there is pessimism, rooted in knowledge of life.

All this brings us to the conclusion that (1) Youth is not as happy as is generally supposed, while old age is often less unhappy, for it has its compensations. (2) If youth is unhappy, it is so largely for reasons similar to those which make old age unhappy, for the former does not yet have that which the latter has no longer. (3) Youth seems to be happier than it is in reality because it does not yet have the cares of adulthood. Old age seems to be more unhappy, for it lacks that which is the greatest source of happiness in adulthood. This opinion is formed by adults who only take account of their own needs, forgetting that youth has its anxieties and old age its compensations. (4) It seems that neither youth nor old age is the age of happiness but rather middle age or adulthood. It has more strength and fewer ailments, it is less dependent on the good-will of others, more active, freer from expectations, memories and sorrows. It is the time when a man can be to the greatest extent master of his own fate.

The problem of the attainability of happiness is twofold. Is happiness attainable at all and, if so, what is the probability of attaining it?

1. The first problem is a matter of stating whether or not happy people exist. It seems certain that there is no ‘ideal’, complete and uninterrupted happiness. It does not exist because it is opposed not only by the vicissitudes of life, but also by human nature itself, with its tendency to blunt and neutralize the emotions. But this also applies to complete unhappiness. If happiness is unattainable then, by analogy, unhappiness is also unattainable. Therefore, not only are there no grounds for radical optimism, there are none for radical pessimism either. This is patent, although rarely acknowledged, fact.

This state of affairs appears to stem from the very concept of happiness and unhappiness. Happiness is a shifting goal, which gradually retreats from us as we approach it, and for that reason alone we are incapable of grasping it. This property of happiness was noticed by Henry de Man, according to whom we conceive happiness as an ideal state, so that we always imagine it as being above our actual state, and similarly we always imagine unhappiness to be below that which is in reality. These are two opposite poles, one above, one below, in accordance with which we find our way in life. As a rule we imagine ourselves to be midway between the two. These opposite poles – happiness and unhappiness – are a product of our minds and their position can be altered by our minds. Their position remains constant as long as a community lives in relatively unvarying conditions, as in the case of primitive peoples and country folk. But we construct them anew when our circumstances undergo a change, placing us closer to one pole and further away from the other. We regulate the distance between the two poles, placing them so that both are again more or less equidistant from us. We move away the pole towards which we have approached. The poor equate happiness with prosperity, but once they have achieved prosperity their happiness automatically moves further away. New needs arise and only a state in which these needs are fulfilled seems to be a state of happiness. If progress in the happiness of mankind exists, then it is not in the sense that people draw closer to happiness – for it retreats as they approach it – but in the sense that they strive for a happiness of a continually higher order, a happiness which will satisfy an ever greater number of increasingly refined requirements. This analysis is not unsound. People sometimes attain that which they have imagined to be full satisfaction, but, as a rule, do not even then find complete satisfaction. “Complete satisfaction in this life”, said a Polish 18th century writer, “is like the squaring of the circle with the geometers, and the perpetuum mobile of the mechanists, like the Arabs’ herb of immortality, and many other things which can never be found.”

All this, however, applies only to ideal, ‘complete’ and not to real happiness. It is a fact that there are men who are satisfied with the world, with their lot and with life. There are others whose cares are fewer than their joys, or who, even if they do have many cares, still feel that general

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13 H. de Man, Au-delà du Marxisme, 1929, Ch. XVII (Credo).
satisfaction which we call happiness. These people are perhaps even more numerous than those who admit to being among them, for, in accordance with the reasonable, or superstitious view formulated long ago by Ovid, many believe that until the end of his life no man should call himself happy.

2. The other question is what the probability of attaining happiness is? The pessimists' arguments that there is no probability at all are as unconvincing as the opposing arguments of the optimists. Rather more convincing are the indifferentists' arguments that the greatest likelihood is of man being neither happy nor unhappy.

Two characteristics of human nature are indubitable. There is no doubt that joys and sufferings have a tendency to counterbalance each other and that human existence holds many experiences which are indifferent, being neither joys or sufferings. It is because of these characteristics that many people are neither definitely happy nor definitely unhappy and also that, although some are happy and others unhappy, the margin between the happiness of some and the unhappiness of others is not as great as might be supposed on seeing the triumphs of the former and the defeats of the latter. This too is an important, but seldom acknowledged truth.

Compensation, the fact that pleasure tends to bring in its wake distress, is one psychological law. But side by side with it there is the psychological law that pleasure tends to bring other pleasures, because it induces a pleasant mood and a consequent inclination towards pleasant feelings. This law acts in favour of those who are happy. If only we can manage to free ourselves from neutral feelings, from the equilibrium of pleasure and distress, and can achieve a preponderance of pleasure, other pleasures will follow of their own accord. A comparison can be made here with a certain type of scales. Once the weight overbalances to one side, even by a hairsbreadth, it is enough to tip the scale completely to that side. But that same law also works in favour of unhappiness, for suffering tends to bring further sufferings in its wake. A person who emerges from the equilibrium of pleasure and suffering on the side of suffering is in danger of further sufferings, which will tip the scales of his fate towards unhappiness.

Thus, the psychological law of compensation seems to make it probable that people will be neither definitely happy nor definitely unhappy while the law of sequence, on the other hand, seems to make it probable that they will be either definitely happy or definitely unhappy. All in all and taking mankind in general, there is nothing to indicate whether the probability of happiness, of unhappiness or even of a neutral state would be the greater. Probabilities can exist only for the individual, in accordance with his nature and the environment in which he happens to find himself. So it is hardly surprising that such divergent views are held on the possibility of attaining happiness.

We are never certain, and we never shall be, to what extent individual people are happy and of them do in fact achieve happiness. No one knows for certain whether another is happy and the latter in turn is not always inclined to reveal it. Not everybody wants to talk about his happiness and those who do are not always telling the truth. One person does not admit to being happy because he is superstitious and thinks this might change his run of luck, another does not admit to being unhappy because his pride will not allow him, he is ashamed of unhappiness and does not wish to arouse pity. Some people pretend they are happy, while others convince themselves and others that they are unhappy because they like to be shrouded in romantic mists of unhappiness.

Furthermore, a man may be uncertain himself whether or not he is really happy. Not everybody is honest with himself. Some play at being happy or unhappy, even to themselves, and are swayed by suggestion or auto-suggestion. Many a man convinces himself that he is happy, or unhappy as the case may be, and believes in whatever he has persuaded himself that he is. Having convinced himself that he is happy, he tries to adapt his feelings accordingly. Or perhaps he simply misunderstands his own inner self and his attitude to life, in which case he succumbs to the illusion that he is happy or unhappy. Having shaken off the illusion he may say, like Nora in Ibsen's play: "I thought that I was happy, but I was mistaken." This may happen either because the influence of a passing pleasure or sorrow has led him to a false evaluation of his life as a whole, or he may have reached this false evaluation because he has used the wrong yardstick as a measure of happiness and has only later realized that the satisfaction he experienced was neither complete nor lasting enough to be considered as happiness. Alternatively he is forced to admit the reverse - that he had expected too much, and the things he had not appreciated had in fact constituted happiness. Anyone who thinks of happiness as an ideal existence entirely devoid of adversity and suffering or as a succession of delights, may be certain that he will never find it. If, on the other hand, he views it in a realistic light - as it is viewed in this book - there are chances of his attaining it, even though the attainment may be hampered by his own disposition or an unfavourable set of circumstances. Even then he will be able to say with Turgenev: "There is a great deal of good in life, even without happiness."
CHAPTER XXIV

HEDONISM AND EUDAEMONISM

I

Qui a trouvé le bonheur a tout

trouvé.

J. de La Mettrie, Anti-Skégne.

It is a widely accepted opinion that the only thing of value in this world is pleasure, that it is the only true good, and that everything else is good only in so far as it leads towards pleasure. This view has come to be known as hedonism, or, more precisely, ethical hedonism (as opposed to psychological hedonism). We could formulate the content of this view more precisely as follows: pleasure is the only thing which has a positive value in itself (i.e. that it is the only original good). The natural complement to this theory is that the only thing which in itself has a negative value is suffering (i.e. that it is the only original evil). These propositions can also be stated normatively in the form that the only thing worth striving for, and which one should strive for, is pleasure, and the only thing worth avoiding, and which one should avoid, is suffering.

Such is the hedonistic theory. It is reflected in hedonistic practice, which involves leading the kind of life that would result from applying the theory. The two are not inseparable, however, and have not developed pari passu. People have often lived like hedonists without knowing or attempting to formulate the hedonistic theory. The contrary has also been true. Some people who have elaborated that theory have nevertheless been unable or unwilling to apply it in practice. Classical antiquity produced the hedonistic theory, but its general attitude to life was, on the whole, non-hedonistic.

The late Roman Empire, on the other hand, had a hedonistic attitude to life, but did little to develop it as a theory. The era of simultaneous theoretical and practical hedonism did not come until modern times, mainly during the 18th century.

His hedonism was characterized not only by the proposition that pleasure is the sole good, but also that only one's own physical, positive, momentary pleasure is a good, and is so regardless of its cause. It is only one's own because we do not feel other people's pleasure; only physical, because mental pleasure is, at the bottom also physical; only positive, for negative pleasure, i.e. the absence of suffering, is an absence of evil, and does not involve the presence of good; and only momentary, because it cannot be otherwise. What we describe as happiness is but a multitude of momentary pleasures. “Partial pleasure is desirable in itself, while happiness is not desirable in itself, but only become so thanks to the partial pleasures of which it is composed.”

For Aristippus these propositions led to practical directives for living. One should strive for nothing else but to experience as many pleasures as possible and as intensely as possible, for pleasures differ neither in degree nor in quality. None is of a higher or a lower order and “one pleasure differs from another only in that one is more delightful than another”. No considerations should restrain one in the pursuit of pleasure, for everything other than pleasure is unimportant, and virtue is least important of all. Aristippus’ rule of life was thus quite simple. One should enjoy the present moment, grasp every pleasure that offers itself, particularly sensual pleasure, deny oneself nothing, give no thought to the outcome of one’s way of life, and allow no considerations whatsoever to stand in one’s way.

Aristippus was the first—and practically the last—representative of so extreme a form of hedonism. He founded the Cyrenaic school, but his disciples, although in theory faithful to hedonism, did not maintain his extreme tenets. They began gradually to abandon his theories and to give hedonism a more moderate form. From a programme of carpe diem, of enjoying every pleasure and delight, their programme became one of a prudent choice of more durable, superior pleasures, of adhering to the rules of wisdom and virtue, which could reduce suffering and make life more pleasant.

2. The second great hedonistic school of antiquity, the Epicurean, came into being about one hundred years later. It consolidated the position at which the Cyrenaic school had finally arrived after its period of evolution. Epicurus and his disciples already represented a different type of hedonism, far removed from the original hedonism of Aristippus. Their main propositions were:


2 Laertius Diogenes, II, 87.
(a) *Spiritual* pleasures are as pleasant and even deeper than sensual ones, for, whereas the body derives pleasure from the present alone, the spirit does so from the past and the future also.

(b) For every man, not only his own pleasure is delightful. The pleasure of others is as necessary to him as his own, because human pleasures are interdependent. An individual's life cannot be pleasant unless it is safe and peaceful, and it cannot be safe and peaceful unless the lives of other people are pleasant.

(c) Although every pleasure is a good, not every pleasure should be grasped, for "the means by which one acquires certain pleasures often bring about far greater distress". The realization of this state of affairs led to the break with Aristippus' programme and demanded that a choice be made in one's pleasures, instead of every pleasure that offers itself being grasped.

(d) In the theory, everyone can seek pleasure in the way he prefers, but in practice it appears that there is one way better than any other. This is simply the way of a just and virtuous life. "Virtues have coalesced with pleasant life, and pleasant life cannot be separated from them." They are not goods in themselves, they are only a means to a pleasant existence, but an infallible and irreplaceable one. "No life is pleasant unless it is wise, moral and just, neither is there a wise, moral and just life which is not pleasant." Epicurus' conception of the aim of human life was identical with that of Aristippus, but he had an entirely different idea of the means to that end. He believed that, in order to be pleasant, life must be just, sensible, restrained and that is must take into account not only one's own, but also other people's needs.

(e) He also believed that little is needed for a pleasant life, particularly from external circumstances. So long as our external circumstances cause us no physical suffering or mental distress, we shall find a source of pleasure within ourselves, within our own being, for we feel the very process of existence to be a pleasure. It is, indeed, the "beginning and end of a happy life".

3. Thus two different types of hedonism had already evolved in antiquity. The purest form was represented by Aristippus, the other by Epicurus. In later ages, too, these forms remained as two opposite ends of a scale, between which hedonism vacillated throughout its history. They were divided at first by a difference of a practical nature. Given that pleasure is the only good, should one then make use of every opportunity for pleasure, or should one rather be mindful of the consequences and only choose pleasures which do not bring suffering in their wake. Later representatives of this second trend introduced, in an attempt to formulate the theory, the concept of utility, which is narrower than that of pleasure. They understood utility as pleasure also, but a pleasure which is safe from undesirable after-effects, sensibly calculated and, if necessary, postponed until a more opportune time. When they contrasted utility and pleasure, they were really trying to contrast two types of pleasure: the safe, and the immediate. From this conception of utility, the second type of hedonism was later named 'utilitarian hedonism', or 'utilitarianism', while the term 'hedonism' was, as a rule restricted to the Cyrenaic type.

Furthermore there appeared, in the course of time, a second major difference between the two types of hedonism: the difference between the egoistical and non-egoistical conceptions. Hedonism acknowledges pleasure as the sole good, but this pleasure can be either one's own or the pleasure of everyone, whoever experiences it. Representatives of the former view maintained that, after all, everyone feels only his own pleasure, which is therefore the only pleasure he is in a position to value. Advocates of the second view held that if one's own pleasure is a good, then so also must be every other identical pleasure.

Egoistical hedonism itself has two variants. The first holds that, since only one's own pleasure is a good, one should care about it alone. The second states that, since one's own pleasure is interconnected with that of others, one should also care about the pleasure of others. This second variant, although egoistical in theory, ceases to be so in practice. Although the pleasure of each individual is its sole aim, the pleasure of others is a means to that end. All the hedonism of antiquity was egoistical and it was only by the time of Aristippus and Epicurus that it evolved from the one variant to the other, from its extreme to its moderate version. The Cyrenaic type may appear to be a more logical form of hedonism than the utilitarian, which on the one hand places pleasure above everything else and on the other advises us that pleasure should frequently be avoided. When it does advocate the renunciation of pleasure, however, it only does so in order to ensure a greater number of pleasures. Were there to be no conflicts between pleasure and utility, i.e. between immediate pleasure and pleasant consequences; were pleasures never to cause distress, then the Cyrenaic version would be the correct form of hedonism. But this is not acceptable in the world we live in. In fac
it is all the more illogical in stating that it values pleasure, yet demands the sacrifice of greater pleasures, if they are less immediate, for the sake of lesser, more immediate ones. Historians have quite rightly reached the conclusion that “utilitarian theories are perfected forms of hedonistic ones.” True, Cyrenaic hedonism was in evidence only in the early stages of its development, and was never to return in its later stages. People who actually lived according to Aristippus’ precepts were perhaps no less numerous than those who lived according the Epicurean spirit, but those who attempted to build up and defend the Cyrenaic theory of hedonism almost invariably went over to utilitarianism.

Epicureanism was only one of many utilitarian theories. It was distinguished among them by virtue of the kind of pleasures to which it attached most value, namely, those rooted in the very process of living, but which were also spiritual, sublimated, calm and contemplative.

4. The greatest intensification of hedonism, both practical and theoretical, came as late as the 18th century, whose practical hedonism was the most extreme, the most Cyrenaic, ever known. Certain social spheres, at least such as were portrayed in de Laclos Les Liaisons Dangereuses, sought swift pleasures and brooked no restraint in their quest. The ‘Order of Felicity’ (Ordre de Félicité) was founded during the fourth decade of the 18th century in France. Many more such hedonistic organizations arose. One was called the ‘Society of the Moment’ (La Société du Moment). Another, founded in 1739, chose to call itself the ‘League of the Enemies of Ceremony’ (La Coterie des Antifidéalistes), because it commanded its members to allow no considerations to stand in the way of their pursuit of immediate pleasure.

Masonic organizations were also founded under hedonistic slogans. In the ‘Order of the Rose’ (L’Ordre des Chevaliers et Nymphes de la Rose), founded in 1780, the text of the oath ran: “I swear and promise in the name of the Lord of the Universe, whose power is constantly renewed by pleasure, his most delightful creation, that I shall never reveal the mysteries of the Order of the Rose. If I break this oath, let the occult powers vouchsafe me no more delights. May I find, instead of the roses of happiness, only the thorns of sorrow.”

The ethical theories of the 18th century were also, to a large extent, hedonistic. But they were not Cyrenaic in character. Only La Mettrie, in his youthful work, Volupté, recommended the swift enjoyment of life, but even he did not retain that standpoint for long. However, although they were moderate enough, these 18th century hedonistic theories, after the many centuries of the ascendancy of entirely different theories, represented a revolution in ethical views and had an aggressive, revolutionary character. France was their main centre in the times of Encyclopedists. Not only La Mettrie, who is most frequently mentioned in this context, but also Fontenelle, Diderot, d’Alembert, Helvetius and Holbach were all hedonists.

The hedonistic theories of the 18th century did not value only immediate pleasures, but they valued almost exclusively temporal pleasures. La vraie philosophie n’admet qu’une félicité temporelle. In temporal life, they combatted ascetism, whatever its form and despite the teachings not only of Christianity, but also of Stoicism or ‘gloomy Zenonism’, as Helvetius nicknamed it, after the name of its founder, Zeno. They rejected the religious path to happiness and replaced it by a philosophical one. They did not, however, praise every kind of philosophy. They fought against ‘sorrowful philosophy’, which inculcates a predilection for suffering. Fontenelle maintained that “the first step towards happiness would be precisely to rid oneself of the predilection for suffering that is characteristic of mankind”. shaftesbury encouraged people to cultivate a cheerful approach to everything in life.

Moreover, those 18th century hedonists broke away from Cyrenaic exaggerations. They did not understand temporal pleasures solely as sensual ones and, as a rule, they did not combine hedonism with egoism, which they held to be a misguided way of life, because “man by himself cannot ensure his own happiness”. They believed moderation to be, on the whole, the best rule for human behaviour. “Man must enjoy life with moderation, for suffering is the inseparable companion of all excess.” They advocated a prudent enjoyment of pleasures, or, as it was later described, an utilitarian attitude to life. Holbach wrote, “man, who

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6 J. O. de la Mettrie, Oeuvres Philosophiques, II, 1764.
8 B. de Fontenelle, Du bonheur, Oeuvres, III, 1742.
9 M. VII, de Maistre, (The Earl of Shaftesbury), Oeuvres, I, 1769.
10 Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers, XII, Paris 1765, p. 689.
11 Anonyme, traite, Le vrai sens de la nature (originally published with the works of Helvetius, but not written by him).
12 Holbach, Système de la nature: “L'homme qui dans chaque instant de sa durée cherche
seeks happiness at every moment of his life must, if he is prudent, restrict his pleasures, and deny himself those which could turn into suffering”.

5. The complete theory of hedonism—so complete as to be pedantic—appeared as late as the end of the 18th century in England in the work of Jeremy Bentham, who set out to crystallize the ideas of his age. But by thus organizing them he gave them a specific colouring. If the hedonism of 18th century France still retained certain Cyrenaic elements, in Bentham’s version it was stripped of them entirely. There was no more complete, uncompromising hedonism either before or after him, nor was there any more permeated by the spirit of reason, less emotional, with more social awareness, less concerned with direct pleasure and more with utility, having a wider conception of pleasure and giving more prudent advice as to how it should be enjoyed. A stranger to the Cyrenaic motto of making the most of every pleasure available, Bentham went so far as to work out a ‘felicific calculus’, an estimate of the pleasures which are worth enjoying, and those which should be avoided.

The main concept of this form of hedonism— or utilitarianism, as it began to be called— was utility, i.e. the tendency, characteristic of some processes, to produce benefits, advantages, profits, good or happiness (for all these are one and the same thing) or (which again is one and the same thing), to prevent failure, suffering, misfortune or unhappiness for those concerned. Using this concept, he formulated the ‘principle of utility’, which approves or condemns behaviour according to whether it seems to increase or decrease the happiness of those concerned or, in other words, to further or to hinder happiness. The discussion of good, as well as of duty and right, can only be of some value to the extent that these things are combined with utility. “It can be said about an action which is in accordance with the principle of utility, that it is one which should be performed and that it is a right action. In such an interpretation, the words ‘should’, ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ have meaning, whereas they have none when interpreted otherwise.”

Bentham never achieved complete clarity over the problem of the connection between hedonism and egoism. In practice, his use of the term ‘principle of utility’ covered two different principles, one of which

necessairement le bonheur, doit, quand il est raisonnable, ménager les plaisirs, se refuser tous ceux qui pourraient se changer en peine.”


maintained that the only good, the only aim of right behaviour is the greatest possible happiness of ‘those concerned’, while the other held that it is the happiness of the greatest possible number of individuals. The first principle is egoistical in character, while the second is not. Both became successively uppermost in his argument. Egoistical hedonism was Bentham’s point of departure, for he believed it to be an axiom that every individual’s good lies in his own happiness. But the proposition that every individual’s good lies in the happiness of all—i.e. a non-egoistical hedonism—was the point which he finally reached. Bentham attempted to reconcile these two different, irreconcilable principles, by arguing that the happiness of the individual and the happiness of society as a whole are in reality interconnected, that the happiness of all is for every man a means to his own happiness and by inferring that the society is a collective entity and that the aim of right behaviour is the personal happiness of this collective entity. Ultimately, he gave priority in his major work to the non-egoistical reading of the principle of utility. “Nurture in itself is good, and suffering is evil”, he wrote, no longer limiting himself only to a consideration of the individual’s pleasure or suffering. Non-egoistical hedonism was the true expression of his ethical convictions, but he quoted egoistical psychological hedonism in order to substantiate it. He never maintained, however, that one’s personal happiness should be sacrificed for the happiness of all. He was convinced that the two coincide, either naturally or through the policies of lawmakers and politicians.

Twice in the course of its history—once about 300 B.C. and then again about 1800 A.D.—hedonism attained an apogee. After Bentham, John Stuart Mill is still considered to be the great representative of utilitarianism, but his utilitarianism was already coloured by many compromises and concessions. He was a hedonist by tradition, education and reasoning but a moralist by disposition. His ability to compromise gave hedonism wide popularity, but at the same time it weakened its very foundations. Bentham’s work marked the culminating point in the history of hedonism.

6. The objection that still other values—particularly moral values—exist besides pleasure is countered by hedonists in two different ways:

The first, more seldom used, consists in denying the existence of distinctive moral values and the second consists in acknowledging that moral

14 J. S. Mill, Utilitarianism, 1863.
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values are real but of secondary importance. They are values only in that they increase the number of pleasures experienced. In valuing them, we actually value only the pleasure they afford. The world, and we ourselves, are constructed in such a way that it is more pleasant for us to carry out our duties than to neglect them. “Virtue”, said an 18th century hedonist, “is nothing more than the art of being happy oneself through the happiness of others.”

Both of these have different practical consequences. The first enforces the rejection of moral principles, which can be retained by the second. The first is connected with the Cyrenian form of hedonism, the second with the Utilitarian. The second often makes logical hedonists live like anti-hedonists; it is only the motivation of their way of life which differs from the latter.

7. It is a matter of cardinal importance for hedonism whether, and how, its validity can be verified. Some hedonists have considered it to be a self-evident theory, requiring no proof. Bentham, in particular, was one of these. It is as unnecessary—he wrote—to prove the correctness of this principle as it is impossible; for the truth which is used to verify everything else, cannot itself be verified. Others, however, like Mill, believed the verification of hedonism to be both necessary and possible. The proofs they put forward can be reduced to two.

The first is that pleasure is the only good, for it alone is the object of human pursuit. To be more exact, it is the only original good, for it is the only thing that people pursue for its own sake. In other words, ethical hedonism is verified by means of psychological hedonism. This is how it was substantiated by the ancient Cyrenians, and, in more recent times, by J. S. Mill. Bentham, too, although he deprecated the hedonistic argument, made use systematically of precisely such an argument. Mill presented it in the form of a syllogism which, at first glance, may seem to be incontestable: a good is that which is desired—only pleasure is desired in itself—therefore only pleasure is a good in itself.

This syllogism is, however false, for it contains a hidden _quaternio terminorum_: i.e. the term ‘desired’ is ambiguous and is used in each premise in a different sense. In the first it is used to mean ‘being the object of desire’, and in the second in the sense of ‘worthy of being desired’. For a good is by no means everything that is desired but only that which is worthy of being desired. There are many things desired by this or that man which are, in the above sense, undesirable.

The second proof is that whatever we value, we do so proportionally to the degree of pleasure it gives us. Our evaluations are in proportion to the pleasure we experience. This indicates that evaluations are guided solely by pleasure and that pleasure is the only thing we value. This proof was used, above all, by H. Sidgwick: Whatever is not pleasure seemed, in his view, to be commended by reason, roughly “in proportion to the degree of their productiveness of pleasure”.

Just as the former proof is based on a faulty syllogism, so the latter is based on inaccurate observation. Estimations are not in reality proportionate to the pleasure experienced. They are fairly constant, whereas the pleasure which the same thing gives to different people in different circumstances is highly variable. It could at the most be stated that the average man’s estimation of a thing is proportionate to the pleasure it gives him, but even this would only approximate to reality.

Sidgwick himself considered his argument to be rather a confirmation of the hedonistic theory than its actual proof. Like Bentham, he was of the opinion that for the proposition ‘pleasure = good’ there can be no real proof, though he also considered that no proof was necessary. Indeed, we are aware of the validity of the theory and we recognize it instinctively, “by intuitive judgement, after the necessary examination of the problem”. This is the crux of the matter. Even the hedonists themselves believe the verification of hedonism to be unnecessary. or alternatively consider that what they give as proof is only an additional confirmation of the theory. While in reality they base it on an _intuitive_ conviction and on direct awareness of the validity of this theory.

However, in this intuitive defence of hedonism there lies a major misunderstanding. Our intuition does indeed indicate that pleasure is a good, but it does not indicate that only pleasure is a good, which it would have to do in order to bear out the hedonistic theory. On the contrary, it indicates that other things are goods as well.\(^{16}\)

\(^{15}\) H. Sidgwick, _Methods of Ethics_, 1874.

\(^{16}\) A purely intuitive, _a priori_ justification of hedonism was put forward one hundred years ago by Bernard Bolzano, a thinker of quite a different kind from the majority of hedonists. Whereas they were empiricists, he was not. He presented his proof in his _Lehrbuch der Religionswissenschaft_. Just as in theoretical philosophy he sought self-evident, intuitively certain propositions on which to base his arguments, so, in practical philosophy, he sought self-evident, intuitively certain norms. He reasoned that the norm on which hedonism is based is such a one, and that no others exist. He attempted to demonstrate that there are no self-evident norms in cognition, in desire, nor in will. There is only a single norm with regard to emotions, namely, to experience the greatest possible number of pleasant emotions. The course of Bolzano’s reasoning is undoubtedly correct and if hedonism could be justified, it would be in this way.
8. Not only is pleasure a good, but it is also a great good. What would life be if it were devoid of pleasure, if pleasant feelings were unknown? It is useful to imagine such a fictional state in order better to appreciate reality. Pleasant feelings are valuable not only because they give strength and life, because they stimulate people and spur them on to various activities but in themselves. This is something which we feel and which requires no further proof. People differ greatly in what things give them pleasure. Some prefer sensual, others intellectual pleasures, some active, others contemplative, some gay, others serious. All are agreed, however, that pleasure is something precious. The very word 'pleasure' implies a positive assessment, no less than 'precious', 'good', or 'valuable'. Although people renounce pleasures of one kind or another in the course of their lives, they usually do so in order to avoid distress or to achieve other pleasures. Some even renounce pleasures for the peculiar pleasure which they derive from renunciation.

All this is indubitably true, but it does not yet comprise hedonism. It is one thing to maintain that pleasure is a good, and quite another to say that it is the only good, which is precisely what hedonism maintains.

Even in the more circumspect form which hedonism occasionally adopts, maintaining that pleasure is the only, but the greatest, good, it does not appear to be a valid theory. Ordinary human estimations testify also against this form since they treat other things as goods equal, or even superior, to pleasure.

(a) Although we often give pleasure priority over other goods, we do not choose that which we consider to be good but that which causes or promises pleasure. However, we then have scruples about it or, in other words, we suspect that we have made the wrong choice.

(b) We often give pleasure a high place in the scale of goods, but only when it is connected with other goods. We value highly the pleasures we derive from acts of charity, from science or art, whereas we attach quite a different value to the pleasures of the table or of social life, although these may be no less intense and although we may feel more inclined towards them.

(c) We never consider pleasures which stem from evil—from hate, cruelty, or revenge—to be good, i.e. we believe that no amount of pleasure can outweigh evil.

(d) Although we often envy people whose life is one succession of pleasures, we do not value them and may even form an adverse opinion of them if they care about pleasure to the exclusion of everything else. All these current opinions—that we do not value people who care only about pleasure, that we are ashamed of certain pleasures and have scruples about them—have even led some people to the conclusion that not only are pleasures not good, but that they are positively evil. Such a view, however, which is the direct opposite of hedonism, is as erroneous as hedonism itself. In fact it is even further from the truth. As Epicurus put it, pleasure is never evil in itself. Even the severe Plato maintained that pleasure is not evil, but only becomes so when it has been chosen instead of something better.

If the view that pleasure is an evil which should be avoided is described as 'ascetism', then hedonism and ascetism are antithetical views. The theory states that pleasure is a good or that it is an evil; the practice is based on the idea that pleasure should be pursued or that it should be avoided. But the truth, it would seem, lies between the two extremes and is beyond both hedonism and ascetism.

II

Eudaeemonistic views of happiness are the same as hedonistic views of pleasure. The eudaeemonist says that pleasure is the only thing which in itself has value, or (in a more circumspect version) that it is of greater value than anything else. "A great thing in life, and the only one worth having, is to live happily", says Voltaire; and this is the eudaeemonistic formula. Eudaeemonism is related to hedonism, as happiness is to pleasure. But the issue of its essential meaning and validity is less clear than in the case of hedonism, for, although there are different forms of hedonism there is, fundamentally, only one hedonism, while on the other hand many eudaeemonisms exist. Hedonism speaks of 'pleasure' always in more or less the same sense (sometimes with the limitation discussed at the end of Chapter VII), whereas eudaeemonism uses the word 'happi-
ness' in a number of different senses. When eudaemonism maintains that happiness is the greatest good, this may mean that man's greatest good is intense pleasure, or that it is good luck, or his own perfection, or a life with which he feels satisfied. In each case, the theory is different, although expressed in the same terms.

1. In the eudaemonist proposition that 'happiness is the greatest good', the word 'happiness' is often used to mean no more than an abundance of pleasures, the experience of an unbroken succession of pleasures. But in this case eudaemonism is no different from hedonism and only replaces 'pleasure' by the more forceful term: 'happiness'. Admittedly it uses this term to describe not one particular pleasure, but a multitude of pleasures, but the fact that these are numerous does not necessarily make them anything other than pleasures. Therefore, all the criticisms levied against hedonism apply also to eudaemonism and there is no need to discuss them again.

Such a hedonistic conception of eudaemonism was typical of the period of the Enlightenment. Practically all 18th century thinkers maintained that happiness is the greatest good, but practically all explained that happiness should be understood as pleasure. The difference between happiness and pleasure was, for them, only a quantitative one, to be found on their longer or shorter duration. Some described happiness as a lasting pleasure, while others described pleasure as an ephemeral happiness.

2. The statement that 'happiness is the greatest good' and the most important thing in life, has an entirely different significance when 'happiness' is understood not in a psychological sense, but in a practical one, as good fortune. This type of eudaemonism is not a philosophical theory, but a very commonplace, everyday opinion. People probably long most of all for the happiness that comes through a stroke of luck. As an old adage says, an ounce of luck is better than a pound of wisdom. However, people also believe that the happiness which is a gift of fortune can be, and often is, achieved through their own efforts. When fortune smiles upon us so much the better, but when it does not, one can mould one's fate in such a way that it gives no less satisfaction than it would if we were favoured by fortune. Happiness, in this sense, is a free gift which comes with no effort on our part and is therefore particularly desirable. Again, however, this does not mean that it is the most important good. Although good fortune is fervently desired, in reality it is not valued as much as it is desired. Indubitably, nature's gifts have a special place in people's evaluation of life, precisely because they are gratuitous. Pride of place among them is given to happiness, because other favours which have been enjoyed from birth, such as talents, beauty, or social standing, are liable to be thought of not as fortune's gifts, but as their due, and only a happy chance or a stroke of luck is considered to be a true gift of fortune.

The personification of fate - Tyche, Fortune - made what could be described as a meteoric career in mythology. From her original status as

that "a moment of happiness is worth more than a hundred years of life". But this sentiment is not expressed only in songs and the moment of supreme happiness is not always understood quite so frivolously as this. St. Bernard, describing the most exalted form of love in his Treatise on the Love of God, says: "Whoever has had the happiness of experiencing something of this kind in this earthly existence, however seldom, and even if only once and only for a moment, that man, I say, may rightly be called saintly and happy."21

In this version, eudaemonism is a personal confession of faith, the expression of individual needs, or the result of individual experiences. But it is unacceptable as a universal theory. If ordinary hedonistic eudaemonism cannot withstand examination, still less can this variant.

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20 "Si l'impression de ce sentiment est courte", writes La Mettrie, "c'est le plaisir; plus longue, c'est la volupté, permanente, on a le bonheur; c'est toujours la même sensation qui ne diffère que par sa durée et sa vivacité." Similarly Voltaire: "Le plaisir est un sentiment agréable et passager, le bonheur considéré comme sentiment est une suite de plaisirs." The article "Bonheur" in the Grande Encyclopédie explains: "Les hommes se réunissent sur la nature du bonheur. Ils conviennent tous qu'il est le même que le plaisir, ou du moins qu'il doit au plaisir ce qu'il a de plus piquant et de plus délicieux." And Holbach: "Le bonheur passager ou de peu de durée s'appelle plaisir."

minor mythological character she became in time a kind of universal city, the object of particular veneration in the late Graeco-Roman period. At the same time, however, this goddess of chance and luck ad, by a strange chance, a rather unlucky history, as did those who wished to pay her homage. On his victorious return to Rome, Lucullus founded a statue of Fortune, which was to stand in the Forum, but neither he, nor Archelaus, from whom he commissioned the statue, lived to see its completion. Later, Julius Caesar offered to raise a temple of Fortune in the Forum, but he, too, died before putting his plan into effect.

3. Yet another variant of eudaemonism was preached by both ancient and scholastic philosophers. Aristotle, for example, in writing that "both the ignorant and men of a higher culture see the highest good in happiness", understood 'happiness' (eudaemia) as the possession of all the goods attainable by and necessary to man. It was similarly understood by the scholastic philosophers, who maintained that "happiness is the supreme good". Thus, happiness was seen as a complex of all goods, a perfect good, the most complete good leaving nothing to be desired, excluding all evil - in short, ultimate perfection. In such an interpretation, happiness cannot be anything but a supreme good, for it is such by definition. Eudaemonism in this sense is a valid theory, it somewhat tautological.

4. The problem of whether eudaemonism is true or false is made less clear when 'happiness' is understood in its specific, correct sense as a complete satisfaction with one's entire life.

A life which is happy in this sense is valued for the satisfaction it gives; yet not only for that satisfaction itself, but also for all that causes it. Were we to value pleasure alone in a happy life, then eudaemonism would again be nothing more than hedonism. But in fact we value it more, inclusive of everything of which satisfaction is the symptom and result. We value it not only because we feel satisfied with it, but also because we have something with which to feel satisfied. Happiness in this sense is the balance-sheet of life, while satisfaction is but one item in the account, a proof that the balance shows a credit. In exceptional cases, the pleasures experienced in life form a basis for a positive balance, but usually the balance is achieved otherwise.

Happiness, when understood as a positive balance of life, is not a single value but a collection of values and the goods which contribute towards it vary with different individuals. It is impossible, therefore, to speak of a constant value for happiness understood in this sense. Its value is undefined and variable and the happiness of some is based on greater goods than the happiness of others. When it is based on greater goods, it is more precious, although it does not contain a greater number of pleasures or more satisfaction.

One could even maintain, like de Man, that satisfaction in human life cannot be increased beyond a certain limit, whereas the goods which life contains can be increased, because, while human pleasures increase with the progress of humanity, there is also a proportionate increase in distress, just as the more intense the light, the deeper the shadows. The mass of humanity sees happiness in the satisfaction of its lowest material requirements, for no other can be felt until these are satisfied. Sooner or later people satisfy those basic needs, but then they will not feel more satisfied because new needs will have arisen, and the ideal of happiness will still be as distant as it had always been. The ideal will, however, have become higher it will not be a more pleasant happiness, but a more perfect one, a happiness on a higher moral, aesthetic or intellectual plane.

This indicates that, since one happiness is not equivalent to another and the value of happiness is not constant, it is impossible to say, as eudaemonism does, of every happiness that it is the supreme good. A life with which a man feels dissatisfied is not positive, but a life with which one does feel satisfied can be positive to a lesser or greater degree.

Furthermore some people at least value other things more highly than happiness. They set a higher value on the perfection of the individual. For a man to be brave, wise or creative is more important to them than that he should be happy. Alternatively, they set a higher value on the perfection of human creation. For a man to accomplish great things is more important than that he should be happy. Or again, they set the highest value on the perfection of entire societies. For order and justice to prevail and all citizens to be enabled to develop their mental creativity to the full is more important than that they should be happy.

Furthermore certain experiences are valued even more highly than happiness. For people to live through the fullest, deepest experiences can also
be more important than that they should be happy. Nietzsche wrote in this vein in Beyond Good and Evil: 23 "All these ways of thinking which measure the worth of things according to criteria of pleasure and suffering, that is according to external symptoms and marginal properties, only see the surface of things, and even that in a naive fashion. Everyone who is conscious of his creative powers and has the conscience of an artist, cannot look at this otherwise than with disdain, pity and scorn...

You wish to free yourselves from suffering? And we? We would rather experience still greater, more grievous suffering. A sense of well-being, as you understand it, is not a goal; on the contrary, it seems to be the end. How could you be unaware that only the discipline of suffering, of great suffering, has ennobled man... It should be repeated once more: there exist higher issues than all these problems of pleasure, suffering or compassion."

Others, too, have felt like Nietzsche about the matter. Similar feelings are expressed in Flaubert's correspondence, and Carlyle wrote 24 that there is in man a something "higher than love of happiness: he can do without happiness and instead thereof find blessedness". Napoleon said that throughout his life he had sacrificed happiness for the sake of his destiny: "Toute ma vie j'ai tout sacrifié: tranquillité, intérêt, bonheur à ma destinée". He valued happiness, but he valued his destiny more.

According to this extreme view, there are values superior to happiness, and happiness can rightly be sacrificed for their sake. Not only outside man himself, but even within him, inside his own mind, there occur states which are superior — namely states of creativity, spiritual contemplation, enthusiasm. In comparison with these states, satisfaction, even a full and lasting one, seems unimportant, even unnecessary. There are people who prefer to live in a state of tension and creative anguish than in a state of satisfaction. It is incidental that states of creative anguish, tension or anxiety do not preclude happiness. There are even individuals who could never be happy without them and who can only achieve ultimate satisfaction through the dissatisfaction which constantly drives them onward in life.

This low evaluation of happiness, so very far removed from eudaemonism, appears strange and we may well ask how there can be so great a divergence between different evaluations of happiness. It can be explained partly on linguistic grounds. Human speech tends to narrow down

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23 F. Nietzsche, Jenseits von Gut und Böse.
24 T. Carlyle, Sartor resartus.
1. There are many such things, and they are desired either for their own sake or because they serve as a means to the attainment of other goods, in which case they are the conditions, symbols or containers of these goods.

(a) Money is a means to a variety of goods and we value it for what we receive in exchange. The same is true of many other things. We even value science not only for its own sake, i.e. for the sake of the truth it contains, but also because, for instance, it makes it possible to build efficient railway systems and comfortable homes, to cure disease and lengthen human life, because, in short, we value comfort, health, life, and science works in their service.

(b) Certain things are not only the means, but also the irreplaceable conditions of attaining goods. Life, above all, is such a condition, because without it there would be neither moral nor intellectual good, neither beauty nor happiness. Other such conditions are health, abilities, consciousness and liberty. People pray most fervently of all for life, health, talent and liberty. They wish to receive from fate, God or nature the conditions for goods, whereas they feel capable of acquiring, or even want to acquire the actual goods for themselves.

(c) Books or paintings are not goods unless someone reads or looks at them. They only become goods when they reach people who read, look at, understand and appreciate them. Their value is only potential until it is realized, they are containers of goods which may sometime become realized. This applies to works of art, legal enactments, and social amenities. Science or art, the law or the church, the nation or the family do not at any particular moment produce all the goods they are capable of producing, but they are containers in which these goods are stored and can be made available for people to realize at a suitable moment. It is not so much the goods themselves as these containers of goods that are the direct object of man's most earnest efforts, his greatest endeavours and sacrifices.

(d) Yet other things are sometimes included among goods because they symbolize them, they are tokens or symbols of goods. Scientific degrees are valued as tokens and symbols of knowledge, official honours as symbols of merit.

2. All of these cases reveal the fundamental duality of goods between original and secondary goods. The value of secondary goods—means, conditions, containers, and symbols—is derived, not original. They would not exist without original goods, which we must now try to define.

(a) An ancient and tenacious tradition distinguishes three variants: moral good, truth and beauty—i.e. ethical, intellectual and aesthetic values. Each of these three, however, embraces more than one value. In the intellectual sphere, not only truth is of value, but also creativity, in the aesthetic sphere, not only beauty, but also sublimity and, in the ethical sphere, not only qualities of will, but also of emotion.

(b) All this by no means exhausts the number of original goods. Not only truth, good, beauty, creativity, sublimity and goodness are of value, but also the feelings of pleasure experienced by man. The more of such feelings there are, the more pleasant life becomes. Pleasures can also be derived from evil, but in themselves they are always good. Each one, however, is a good of an entirely different kind. That is to say, they are goods, but not the qualities of those who feel them in the way that truth, beauty, creativity or goodness are qualities. But then again, pleasure is the only good of which we have direct experience. 'Qualities' are 'objective' values because they are related to the characteristics of men and objects, whereas pleasure is a 'subjective' value since it only consists in subjective experience. The two constitute opposite poles of goods.

3. Goods, whether virtues or pleasures, appear in different proportions in each human life. But the various goods present in an individual life do not guarantee that it will be good in its entirety, for life can contain evil as well as good, and negative characteristics as well as positive ones. It may hold more faults and sufferings than virtues and pleasures, in which case the balance of life will be negative.

(a) A positive balance of life can be achieved either through a preponderance of qualities or through a preponderance of pleasures. The preponderance of qualities can be one of qualities of a single kind. This is the case in a life full of truth or creativity, where either one or the other of these determines its worth and character. A life of truth will be led by a sage, a life of creativity by a genius. But the preponderance of qualities can be achieved by means of diverse qualities, whose multiplicity or unity give life its fullness or harmony.

If we combine these ideas of the sage and the genius and of the fullness and harmony of life to form a single idea, the result will be the idea of perfection. It integrates human life positively, and does so on an objective basis.

(b) However there is yet another idea, which is also universal and can
integrate life through on a subjective and not an objective basis, and can
provide a positive balance of life, not based on the qualities it contains,
but on the satisfaction it gives. This idea is happiness.
A perfect individual would be one who possessed not just individual
goods, but a complete set of goods. Similarly, a happy individual would
be one who experienced not only satisfactions of one kind or another
in life, but who would be fully, completely satisfied with his life as
a whole. This conception of happiness, like that of perfection, is an
ideal; but it is the criterion by which reality is judged and a life which
comes closest to that ideal is given the same name of happiness.