



# Why Universities Should Seek Happiness and Contentment

Paul Gibbs



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*To Zoe, Leo and Maggie*





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# Preface

## Raising a Heideggerian smile

What is happiness, and what is its relationship to contentment and higher education? These two questions are the foci of this book. These are big questions, and throughout history they have been addressed in some form or another. Philosophers have concerned themselves with happiness for at least 2,500 years. Some have argued that happiness is pleasure, others that it is a virtue and still others that it is the fulfilment of human nature, but they all have fundamentally disagreed on what happiness actually is. My position, developed in this book, is that happiness is episodic, an emotional eruption (more likely from someone who is content, but not restricted to them) from what we perceive at a moment in time to bring us joy in many physical and mental forms. Happiness as an entitlement does not make sense, because you cannot give happiness, as it is not embedded in entities or events.

Although the work contained in this book is not a Heideggerian study of higher education and happiness, in many key theoretical developments it is to Heidegger that I turn. I am particularly dependent on his work in my construction of the notions of happiness and contentment. This is achieved through utilizing his notion of attunement,<sup>1</sup> or disposition reviewed in moods and emotions or temporary feelings. Heidegger's notion of attunement holds the power to put us in touch with our authentic potentiality-for-Being, and as such, our propensity for happiness and contentment, in all their phenomenological manifestations, is a part of who we are: the self as a being-for-itself.

I have in mind an aspirational contentment, one where we are contented as a fundamental attunement to the stance that we take on our being. This is not a desire to become what other might want one to be, but a thought-through, reflective notion of how one might realize what is one's potential and in what ways and then aspire to achieve this. In this it differs from any sense of neo-liberal imposed image of the successful consumer of things and people. It is anything but tranquil. Such a stance requires active engagement with others and is the homeostatic state of one's being. It can be disrupted by emotions, but it tempers such emotion to levels of appropriateness. It is resistant to extremes, although

it can tolerate them for short periods of time. So, for me, contentment is being, and it is also temporality. It is an alternative to anxiety, although both states can have eruptions of positive or negative emotion. I would suggest that a fundamental attunement of contentment sees the management of anxiety, whereas a fundamental attunement of anxiety is less tolerant and, at the extreme, sees maladaptive behaviours that are conveniently diagnosed as manic depression. I see a pedagogy of contentment dealing with self-understanding and taking a stance on what one feasibly can become. In doing so, one is able to make choices about one's possibilities and strive to achieve the feasible, not the impossible.

### Raising a historic smile

Political debate on whether happiness should be a goal of public policy reached its post-Enlightenment zenith in the eighteenth century, with a series of perspectives from the Italian Baccaria, the French philosopher Helvetius and the Scot Hutcheson, among others. Following these were others who might be held responsible for the 'British Happiness Enlightenment', led by Bentham and J. S. Mill. They forged the link between education and happiness. Bentham recognized the link, but Mill provided a more sustainable rationale. Mill provided a more subtle approach to Bentham's proposed homogeneity of pleasure. However, this linkage was lost, as it merged into the agreement that education was no more than an instrumental factor in the realization of happiness, which was mainly the result of increased income and prosperity. So compelling became these self-defeating arguments that the World Bank recommended privatized higher education to developing countries, which infused into the core of higher education the business capitalist notion of being, where extrinsic value overrides intrinsic value.

This led to increased concerns over happiness amongst economists after a paper by Easterlin (1974) suggested that happiness, rather than economic growth, income or consumption, should be a policy priority. In fact, he showed that average self-reported happiness appeared to be the same across rich and poor countries, and that economic growth does not increase well-being. Castriota (2006) proposed that the positive effects of education on happiness result from a variety of intermediary processes and, as a consequence, 'the quantity of material goods a person can buy becomes less important. It is reasonable to believe that a low education level reduces the chances of achieving a high level of job satisfaction and the probability to have a stimulating cultural life, and makes the purchase of material goods a more important determinant of the life-satisfaction' (3).

This echoes Seneca's retort to his detractors in 'On a Happy Life', justifying his riches as enabling him to enact his virtues, and defending such a life by his claim that 'I own my riches, you own you' ([54–62] 2008: 157). This is a nuanced rendering by Seneca of stoicism principles that value the simple life, reducing one's needs in order that one might be fulfilled and achieve happiness. It was subsequently tested after his break with Nero. Of course, while educational institutions could support the desirability of education for economic, ideological and spiritual reasons, the questioning of the institutional structure – let alone the desirability of what they packaged – assumed a certain worth.

## One 'i' in happiness

With the continued rise of individualism in the developed world, the decline of collectivist ideologies and the neglect of others, happiness is arguably becoming our supreme value. Happiness is also acquiring unprecedented economic importance. Consumerist economies are increasingly geared to supply happiness rather than subsistence or even affluence, and a chorus of voices is now calling for a replacement of gross domestic product (GDP) measurements by happiness statistics as the basic economic yardstick.

These statistics might have relevance in the developed world where there is a market for almost everything one needs: food, shelter, education, health and security. We can work from home, shop from home and then post selfies of ourselves consuming at home. We survive in a world where virtual reality becomes the real reality for many young people (and adults), and where addictions to a whole range of social substances relieve us from thinking. Sales of alcohol are generally on the rise, online betting hooks a wider range of consumers through adept marketing, and the developed world's addiction to cheap food is aesthetically evident. We are encouraged to run away – psychologically, sociologically and in our imaginations – from the world of others' sufferings, anxieties, hopes and joys intermingled, and the richness of human endeavour, to construct a special time/space cocoon where happiness dominates and where striving, despair and anxiety are dispelled. Indeed, happiness of this shallow form, always in need of repletion, is strongly influenced by expectations that are catered for by an unquestioning consumerism, fuelled by the mass media. Indeed, we are often caught in the double bind of being guilty for having not been happy enough in a culture that demands happiness! This is ever more pressing given the emergence of the idea of 'post-truth'<sup>2</sup> of our realities foreseen by Baudrillard in his work

*Simulacra and Simulation* and the urgency of the kinds of issues for higher education and our being that I have discussed in the contemporary educational climate.

Perhaps Adorno's striking and pessimistic passage on 'compulsory happiness' in *Minima Moralia* offers a resonance, albeit originally written nearly seventy years ago.

The admonitions to be happy, voiced in concert by the scientifically hedonist sanatorium-director and the highly-strung propaganda chiefs of the entertainment industry, have about them the fury of the father berating his children for not rushing joyously downstairs when he comes home irritable from his office. It is part of the mechanism of domination to forbid recognition of the suffering it produces. (Adorno, 2005: 63)

### What this book isn't

In a book of this size, it is impossible to cover the range of approaches to happiness and contentment that are now available, nor is it wise to attempt to do so while keeping the reader's attention. So here is a swift summary of what the book does not do.

It does not promote a way to be happy, although one might decide to be. For the main part, it avoids the positive psychology that has rapidly become associated with such approaches. There are no quick fixes offered, and I assume none are desired. There are no lesson plans or proprietary programmes licensed by universities (perhaps like the Penn Resiliency Program or Acceptance and Commitment therapy). For the most part, it does not deal with the exciting developments in neuroscience or in mindfulness.<sup>3</sup> That is not to say that the insights, especially from this field of scientific endeavour, cannot add weight and evidence to the discussion, just that what it adds is still unclear. What is clear is that we learn in all circumstances when emotions affect our learning, even if they are unhappiness or distress, although we might learn better without them. Indeed, their presence does enhance our overall educational experience, if not the amount prescribed for learning.

### What this book is

What the book does try to do is develop with the reader a shared understanding of some of the problems that are engaging the studies of happiness, clarify that

the real higher educational issue concerns the disposition of contentment, and that higher education ought to help to create rationalized and willed contentment among its students.

This book is not about adding to the growing number of books on self-help and the passion of positive psychology to make you happy. That readership is already catered for in many ways by other books, from television psychotherapists and online courses to mindfulness retreats. Most of these are packaged to satisfy our consumer needs. Indeed, back on 12 September 2014, an edition of the seminal medium of capitalism and consumerism, the *Financial Times*, offered a book review on happiness. Opening the article with the assurance that books abound that promise to tell you how you might achieve such a state, it concluded, using the insights of Laycock and Clark, that the much more important problem was overcoming *unhappiness*. Cave, in that review, acknowledges that the majority of books on how to be happy only seem to reinforce the message that we are not yet as elated as we ought to be, a message that only makes us feel inadequate and miserable. He suggests a turn towards understanding suffering – not inflicting it, but finding out how to reduce it. More beneficial, he continues, would be a focus on the task of ‘relieving suffering, which could at least make some kind of wellbeing possible for millions for whom it is currently unimaginable. Acknowledging the extent of anguish in our society might also help us to appreciate the blessing of feeling merely fair-to-middling, as you probably are right now while reading this article I tend to agree, and the function of this book is to advocate contentment (within which happiness and its forms can flourish) with being in the world passively, but in a willed contentment based on an educated notion of what one can be and what one wants to be, and aligning them together as an agent in the world in which we live.

## Happiness and (higher) education

The notion that education is desirable for happiness has become lost in institutionalized education within the consumerist epoch and, although reignited by Noddings’s (2003) claim that happiness ought to be an aim of compulsory education, it has yet to fan the flames of higher education pedagogy. There are few contributions that address such issues in higher education. One such is the *Inaugural Address* by Mill, where his insistence that general education supports the formation of willed choices is evidence of how he understood higher education. He described

the function of a university: ‘not a place of professional education. Universities are not intended to teach the knowledge required to fit men for some special mode of gaining their livelihood’ (Mill, [1867] 2000: 5). He accepted that professionals need training, yet not that this was a function of the university. He claimed:

The proper business of a university is different: not to tell us from authority what we ought to believe, and make us accept the belief as a duty, but to give us information and training, and help us to form our own belief in a manner worthy of intelligent beings, who seek for truth at all hazards, and demand to know all the difficulties, in order that they may be better qualified to find, or recognize, the most satisfactory mode of resolving them. (ibid.: 81)

Mill argued compellingly, I think, that ‘professional men should carry away with them from an University, not professional knowledge, but that which should direct the use of their professional knowledge or capabilities, and bring the light of general culture to illuminate the technicalities of a special pursuit’ (7). This argument concerns the quality of the rounded person who understands their cultural and moral responsibilities prior to undertaking employment, leading to a more conscientious and wise use. Indeed, he saw no place for the university directly to teach the professions (although he allowed for associated schools). In his ideal of higher education, it could be argued that Mill set out that those trained in skills without the interest to contextualize them in culture do not further their higher faculties, or hence their happiness. Rather than a skills acquisition agenda, I would suggest that the mission of a university is a search to develop the capabilities to optimize its students’ potential to make responsible choices as to what they will be, willed as a fusion of the intellectual and emotional. The use of capability here refers to ‘being able.’ In Sen’s (1985) work, this is typically by being able to improve one’s situation or compete for resources by participating in a market, and in Nussbaum’s (2000) by being able to live a truly human life. ‘Being able’ requires both freedom from external restraints and personal skills. For both, capability is obviously required to make a viable life plan that evokes contentment when lived, though not all capabilities are equally functional.

## Potentiality for becoming

Capabilities spring from what Aristotle<sup>4</sup> called *dunamis*, and drew two meanings. The distinction is between causal powers and potentiality as a way of



being.<sup>5</sup> According to Witt, causal power ‘is a dispositional property of a substance to change (or be changed by) another substance. In contrast, potentiality is a way of being and be given a dispositional analysis’ (2003: 7). The distinction is important, for potentiality determines the extent to which dispositional capabilities can be activated: what it is able to do and thus what it is possible to do. For instance, you will either grow tall or not, male or female. If you are male and tall, then you have the potential to play rugby for the British Lion rugby team as a second row forward, provided you have the dispositional capabilities such as strength, skills and a desire for physical violence! The development of dispositional causal powers is a job for training, and education, as Dewey<sup>6</sup> might have argued, offers us insights into our own personal way of being and warns against seeing it as efficiency. Education ought to provide an arena for the development of our potential and a place to be unsettled – unhappy, if you will – and to discuss the choices one is able to make. These choices, to be plausible, need to be adapted to personal circumstances, not to predetermine or to truncate options, but to allow the development of feasible ways to plan to be. They need not be coherent for well-being, for we may be ‘mistaken in our attitudes, commitments, and values, or we might be mistaken in the relative importance we suppose them to have’ (Kekes, 2010: 81). Notwithstanding this, they are reasonable, given that we may not possess the intellectual, emotional, gender or ethnic requirements to become the president of the United States or a female bishop in the Church of England. Commenting on studies of workplace learning, Dall’Alba suggests that they can ‘demonstrate that failure to achieve an unrealistic ideal (perpetuated by organizations, professional associations and/or professionals themselves) can result in feelings of impostership; of never being good enough or as accomplished as others’ (2009: 41).

How, then, can higher education provide the capabilities so that students can feel, will and grasp their potential? Of course, this raises issues of fairness and social justice that would need to be addressed from an institutional perspective, but assuming that these have been plausibly resolved so that resources are, in the main, equitably allocated, what does a capability agenda mean for a higher education pedagogy of happiness? It begins with a notion of freedom that allocates resources in ways that enable functionality, not solely on the basis of outcomes. Indeed, Robbins offers what seems to be a valuable mission for profound happiness in higher education when she writes that, according to the capability approach, it ‘should be conceptualized in terms of people’s capabilities to function; that is, their effective opportunities to undertake the actions and

activities that they want to engage in, and be whom they want to be' (2005: 95). This requires a pedagogy for university teachers, who Walker advocates should be 'concerned with educational, processes and valued achievements. Selected capabilities would shape and inform conditions, practices and the evaluation of outcomes of university education which is for rationality and freedom, higher learning and agency of students' (2010: 915), and thus reveal their potential for profound happiness.

## Where to start and finish

The book has three sections. In the first, I start the exploration in the state of higher education, for it is here that I want to harness contentment and see its influences in the pedagogy of such institutions. I then offer a historic and mainly philosophical history of happiness (for there is little to be said on contentment). I close the section with a discussion of the contemporary meaning of happiness and how it is used in UK higher education policy documents.

The second section considers how happiness and higher education have been researched (for, still, contentment has no leverage). My research shows that enduring happiness looms surprisingly large in both potential and existing students.

The third section develops the notion of happiness and contentment as a way of being, and then develops this into a discussion of a pedagogy of contentment in higher education. The penultimate chapter offers a comparison between Eastern and Western notions of contentment. The coda attempts to bring coherence to the ideas and the potential for action.

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## Part One

# What Are We Talking About?



# Happiness and Education: Recognizing Their Importance

*The government presents its White Paper on the future of higher education as a radical new policy direction. Yet the paper is designed to serve the same two objectives that have governed higher education policy for the past quarter of a century. One is to strengthen the role of students as consumers whose preferences determine the course of higher education provision. The other is to increase the focus of higher education on preparing students for graduate employment.*

*The contradiction should be obvious. Employers do not treat employees as consumers. Spending three years as a consumer will not prepare you for the world of employment. It is not the content of our degree programmes that we should be changing in order to improve our students' employability. It is the role we expect our students to play within our institutions of higher education. (New Statesman, 11 June 2011, <http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/cultural-capital/2011/07/students-work-education>)*

## One among a few or the only aim of education?

According to Noddings, happiness is both the means and end of education (2003: 261); that is, happiness should be an aim of education, and a good education should contribute significantly to personal and collective happiness (2003: 1). Her view is primarily inspired by the utilitarian philosophical tradition, which includes Hume and Mill. Hume includes humour, recreation, enjoyment and fun in the definition of happiness (Noddings 2003: 19), whereas Mill regards happiness as the absence of pain and the attainment of desired pleasures. Noddings's view is inspired by the American pragmatist tradition of Dewey,

according to whom the object and reward of learning are the continuing capacity for growth (2003: 83) but also the multiplicity of aims, which change according to the needs and beliefs of a society. In a pragmatist and utilitarian fashion, Dearden held that 'in education, as in life, there is a number of final ends constitutive of the good of man, and on some occasions we may judge some of them properly and rightly to overrule personal happiness, even if for a time the result is that we are less pleased with ourselves or with our lives' (1968: 28).

For Barrow, happiness is an end of life, but not the sole end (1980: 114), since at times people freely choose to make sacrifices. However, happiness is 'the supreme end or value in the sense that no other end can coherently be regarded as equally or more important in the long term' (Barrow, 1980: 115). In this sense, Barrows criticizes the idea of happiness as short-term enjoyment and considers happiness in education not only in the present but also in the long term (this implies that there are things that are more important than current enjoyment). Education is concerned not only with the happiness of the individual but with getting people to find their own happiness while contributing to or, at the very least, allowing the happiness of others (Barrow, 1980: 123).

Barrow does not hold that happiness is an aim of education, since, for him, the essence of education is understanding, and 'education in itself is not about happiness' (1980: 123). However, since happiness is of value to everybody, he argues that we should be concerned with the happiness of pupils, both long term and short term, where pupils are considered as individuals and as citizens. As he holds, 'in itself, enjoyable education is preferable to unenjoyable education, and an education that incidentally contributes to happiness is superior in itself to one that does not' (Barrow, 1980: 124). So, in the end, promoting happiness is a proper aim of education that is concerned with socializing and training, in addition to education, even granting that it cannot be, strictly speaking, an aim of education in general (Barrow, 1980: 124). However, interestingly, he points out that the role of education (and its contribution to happiness) changes according to the age of the children involved. In this respect he states that where young children are concerned, education is not the priority: happiness, instead, is the aim at this stage; learning to read is subsidiary (Barrow, 1980: 124).

This view is not shared in White's *The Aims of Education Restated*, where he argues that one of the intrinsic goods that education contributes to a pupil's well-being is happiness. He suggests that 'one's well-being might consist in leading a morally virtuous life' (White, 1982: 98). This would depend on whether or not he happened to want to do so and equally it might not consist if the patterning of his preferences were different. However, he concludes that an educated person



is not one in whom knowledge is the central characteristic, but one in whom virtues are more centrally explicit. He says that the 'educated man is a man disposed to act in certain ways rather than other. He possesses the general virtues of prudence or care for his own good . . . this being an extended rather than narrow sense, includes within it the more specifically moral virtues like benevolence, justice, truthfulness, relevance and reliability' (White, 1982: 121).

However, Noddings criticizes the Greek philosophy approach to happiness, and especially Aristotle's view of happiness expressed in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, as being 'intellectualist', for it locates happiness in rationality. Noddings also criticizes the Christian emphasis on suffering as a precondition for an elevated spiritual life, since, according to her, this view defers happiness to the afterlife. Instead, Noddings's utilitarian and pragmatist take on happiness in education conceives happiness as pleasure obtained during one's lifespan, derived from satisfying children's needs, whether these are openly expressed or inferred (attributed to them by an adult, e.g. the need to eat green vegetables). She identifies five sources of happiness: making a home; love towards places and nature; parenting; character and spirituality; and interpersonal growth. Also, Noddings sees interpersonal relationships such as friendships and companionships as crucial in promoting happiness, thus emphasizing the role of 'caring' relationships.

However, since Noddings's own caring theory holds that seeking happiness implies the avoidance of suffering (2005: 397), it also downplays effort and difficulty (which inevitably imply suffering). As she states, 'the caring perspective implies that educators should avoid coercion as much as possible because it undermines caring relationships. Yet it is through coercion, in the form of compulsory education, that liberal democracies attempt to make sure that children from all socioeconomic backgrounds receive a minimum standard of education' (Noddings, 2005: 399). In other words, by advocating the utilitarian notion of happiness as the absence of pain, Noddings downplays the role of suffering in education.

Suffering, or at least a struggle, is implicit in the work of Whitehead who, while arguing that the function of education is the acquisition and unitization of knowledge, acknowledges that this ought to be difficult (or at least the teaching of dialectic) for, in education, 'as elsewhere, the broad primrose path leads to a nasty place' (1967: 4). Struggle or suffering as part of education is a view shared by Roberts (2013), who argues that the aim of life (or the realization of one's potential) is not just happiness but despair. Advocating existentialism, rather than utilitarianism or pragmatism, Roberts holds that 'despair needs not be seen an aberrant state from which we should seek to escape; rather, it is a key

element of any well lived human life. Education, I maintain, is meant to create a state of discomfort, and to this extent may also make us unhappy' (2013: 464). Advocating Dostoevsky's existentialist literary work, as well as Kierkegaard's idea that 'in the possibility of despair we find what is most deeply human about us' (cited in Roberts, 2013: 470), Roberts argues that despair, as a distinctively human quality, is not a condition to be avoided. Rather, it is one to be actively sought and promoted through education. In this respect, the purpose of education should not be to induce happiness (simply conceived as the avoidance of suffering), but to teach us to recognize our own despair, as well as the suffering of others, and be 'able to work productively with it' (Roberts, 2013: 464). This educational process would enable students to develop a critical (despaired) consciousness. In this sense, education is 'an unsettling, uncomfortable process' (Roberts, 2013: 473), which, unlike Noddings's claim, does not provide an escape from suffering (happiness) but a growing awareness of it.

### In pursuit of a happy edifying experience

The attainment of personal contentment, happiness and education, and the avoidance of despair, anxiety and ignorance seem to create two clusters of emotions: dispositions and activities. These seem to be central to any question of what might count as the good life. Bauman's position on consumerism – 'to earn money, they work longer hours. Being away from home so many hours, they make up for their absence at home with gifts that cost money. They materialize love. And so the cycle continues' (2007: 28) – seems to shine a different light on the reality of this clustering within our contemporary society. This is one where desire satisfaction leads to more ambiguous desires, the satisfaction of which becomes ever more difficult and distressing. Bauman is not alone in recognizing the link between consumer society and the existential anxiety created for consumption. This builds upon inequalities and encourages the moral hazards that it perpetuates. In *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (1998), Jean Baudrillard characterizes modern social-structural processes and forces as 'a dialectic of penury and unlimited need' (1998: 69). In such a society, where anxiety dominates categorized insatiable and reproductive needs, there is a constant sense that one does not have enough of consumer goods, academic qualifications, fame or security. Further, Frank (2007) observes that insecurity and anxiety cause us to work too much, save too little and buy too much of those things that add little to our overall satisfaction.

The literature, however, is not clear when it discusses consumer anxiety as a specific way of being. This is the way whereby, at birth, one is thrown into such a society, created by consumer culture, and the anxiety within that society when one purchases certain goods, such as health anxieties over certain foods. The thrown-ness of societal anxiety is the fundamental mood of that society and is rooted in the practices of everyday life. It is a different form of ontological anxiety and borders on despair. It is of a different, more primordial form than the anxiety that is made manifest in the anxiety over buying decisions, concerned with this or that kind of purchase. Such anxiety is a derivative of the core forces of capitalist power that shape our human condition and our way of being.

Woodward states that the 'irony of a consumerist society is that it does not satisfy needs, but actually multiplies scarcities and as a result it also multiplies anxieties, through the stimulation of desire' (2006: 279). Under such conditions, we can never settle for what is. We must progress in certain ways, continuing to strive to be better, never resting to reflect and critically appraise ourselves and others. We must always be busy.

## What price happiness

Different traditions within philosophy have offered very different arguments about happiness, from classical Greek models of *eudaimonia* as a good and virtuous life to utilitarian models of happiness as the greatest good. Indeed, as Ahmed has insightfully suggested in the introduction to her book *The Promise of Happiness*, the 'very promise that happiness is what you get for having the right association might be how we are directed towards certain things' (2010: 2). Davies goes further in a discussion of the happiness industry. In his book *The Happiness Industry* (2015), Davies points out the economic resources that are being challenged in the quest for happiness, to find not only a measurable way to inform the owners of these resource but also how to engender happiness in the others. This is not for any empathic notion of universal bliss, but to inform skills and techniques to get us things, explicitly to buy more, to overreach ourselves financially, to increase our vulnerability and so to be more politically compliant. Happiness has become an important element of many governments' policies, with happiness indices reviewed alongside economic activities to judge capitalistic interventions. Happiness thus becomes a measure of progress as well as a criterion for decision-making. In this way, we are seeing an awakening of a neo-utilitarianism (Laycock, 2011) and a field of positive psychology intent on

investigating, as well as improving, the way we act, led by Seligman (2011) and a growing number of researchers. Moreover, happiness studies have developed as a specific, if somewhat fragmented, field of studies,<sup>1</sup> which feeds the notion of scientism. This has turned happiness into a consumer industry and applies when expectation, hope and anticipation can be harnessed to the external evocation of emotions

This gives more resonance to the open questions of Ahmed when she asks, ‘what does happiness do?’ (2007: 7) This is one of the many questions that this book addresses and, more pertinently, in which way should higher education institutions answer this question and what are the contingencies it raises for the institutions’ own stake, and for the stake of those who are engaging within them. Moreover, there is a socio-political concern in the claim that happiness is an aim for higher education, for I make no claim that it should be an aim for those who do not attend. This is not the same as willing unhappiness to those non-attendees; rather, it is about discussing notions of happiness and power within a certain form of defined institution. The threat that happiness becomes anything other than a consumerist tool might be an exaggeration. We ought, I suggest, have a higher education system where we learn to be able to appraise critically how the happiness industry attempts to make us act, and this can be facilitated within a critical university education.

### Any evidence?

Yet, the findings concerning happiness and higher education attainment have not shown any clear association with life satisfaction (for this is the proxy measure used, not happiness). However, education attainment does actually affect life satisfaction indirectly, through income, health, perceived trust and social participation. It is also likely to shape or induce changes in individuals’ range and preferences of their consumer choices. Indeed, a recent study examined socioeconomic factors related to high mental well-being, such as level of education and personal finances (Stewart-Brown et al., 2015). Low educational attainment is strongly associated with mental illness, but the research team wanted to find out if higher educational attainment is linked with mental well-being. The team found that all levels of educational attainment had similar odds of high mental well-being. So, what is the point of being happy, when all that matters is the money?

The university sector itself is undergoing significant change. The mode of expressing unhappiness has changed from silent absorption to explicit

complaint. Staff have seen changes that have upset the dominant position of academics within the institutions, and employers remain evermore unhappy about the quality of the graduates that they receive. Students have found a voice<sup>2</sup> to express their unhappiness about the mode of delivery of their programmes, online course, lecturer notes, the quality of lectures and the ability of the academics themselves (see Rank My Professor, <https://www.ratemyprofessors.com>), the difficulty of assignments, the turnaround times and the fees that they pay for the contact hours that they enjoy (or, at least, receive). The rational basis for such unhappiness might be debated, but unhappy. Not all students are unhappy, and many are not unhappy with their unhappiness and the struggle to engage with their subject and the new opportunities that a university life might bring. As Barnett notes, an effective higher education pedagogy will challenge a student's existential being: 'she wills herself to go forward into those spaces which may challenge her being herself' (2007: 155).

Neither are all academics, for it tends to be those who have had their privileges confronted the most, the older ones, who see their present stake of engagement made changed and their values compromised by the new focus on fee income, research and teaching assessment, and more restraint on their working lives (real or imagined). In an interesting finding of the 2015 *Times Higher Education University Workplace Survey*, of those academics contributing more to the survey, two-thirds agreed that they 'spend too much time working', and less than a third believe that their 'work responsibilities allow for a healthy work-life balance'. Pence, writing from an American perspective in a later but still-related recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* on how to be happy in academe, is more direct in offering his advice on becoming a happy academic.

To be happy as a professor, you don't need to teach in buildings that win architectural awards. You don't need a two-course-a-semester load to publish (I published during my first years in Birmingham, despite teaching nine or 10 courses a year). You don't need your university to give you a dedicated blog site or I personnel to support your home computer. You need a tenure-track job, and then you need to work hard at the three things we are expected to do: teach students who want to learn, publish about things you care about, and be a good academic citizen through service to your institution and field. (2009)

As D. Watson puts it so well, there is the need for a university to avoid unhappiness by having a sense of efficacy, of purposive engagement, of satisfaction and of feeling valued (2011). A similar level of unhappiness might also be attributed to

employers who manage to employ graduates while bemoaning how ill-prepared these graduates are for the function of work.

## The marketization and marketingization of higher education

Much has been written on the marketization of higher education, which, it seems, is most prolific in the UK and the USA. Some of it is positive and in equal measure negative. I do not deny that widening access to skills that can fuel growth is a logical extension of a consumerist ideology. It is about the consequences of these changes on being happy and contented, settled with oneself and with institutions of higher education. These structural changes, however, do bring noneducational forces to bear on the institution when envisioned in a marketplace. In such a market, a student becomes, by default, a consumer and institutional management practice tends to increase the focus on how marketing, as a consequence and reinforcement of such structural change, can help the sustainability of the organization. Indeed, there is a substantial literature that addresses it (e.g. Molesworth et al., 2011; Brown & Carasso, 2013; Palfreyman & Tapper, 2014) and, more nuanced, Ek et al. (2013) on a shift of power from academics to the market in a Swedish context. Nor does it support that marketization has brought no, or only limited, contributions to higher education. The expansion of the privileges of higher education to the many from the few, the great governance and transparency of the process and practices of higher education institutions in terms of their compact to society and a clear way to evaluate them have, to varying degrees, enhanced higher education. It is, however, strange in this context that those improvements are consequences of market intervention by government in the UK in forms such as the Research and Teaching Excellence exercises, by academic publishers in terms of league tables and by employers in terms of preferred skill sets. Indeed, in the new English Higher Education and Research Bill, it is the second condition for the new institution to oversee higher education – the Office for Students – ‘to encourage competition between English higher education providers’ (HERB, 2016: 1). These interventions have opened the market, placed ill-informed students at the core of decision-making and facilitated the influx of new suppliers. A key and emergent practice from such structural change is marketing; not marketing that seeks to help the sector to find its own identity and its members’ societal well-being, but one intent on socializing the sector’s membership into endless and Sisyphean striving, devoid

of any ultimate worthy end, but one which is an inevitable consequence of managing rapidly increasing competition and shifting demands effectively, not educative priorities.

One consequence of this move to the market has been a marketization of higher education (Gibbs, 2002, 2011; Molesworth et al., 2009; Hemsley-Brown, 2011). This is an increasing emphasis by universities on how they promote themselves to potential students. The approaches have not honoured the nature of education as a distinctive, transformative process of the human condition, but have treated it (for the most part) as undifferentiated consumption. They have adopted marketing from consumer markets, albeit highly sophisticated and technical, that are best suited to selling chocolate, aspirin and supermarket discounts. As Molesworth et al. suggest, 'many HEIs prepare the student for a life of consumption by obtaining a well-paid job: a mission of confirmation rather than transformation' (2009: 278). Moreover, they suggest that this is manifest through a consumer desire of having, rather than being. The anxiety of consumer society was revealed in a study by Nixon and Gabriel (2015). They described those who sought not to buy as consisting of two types: 'moral anxiety, caused by the fear of being compromised or tempted to act contrary to their values, and neurotic, an anxiety that arises from being overwhelmed by their own unconscious desires, emotions and fantasies' (48).

The notion that education is the provision of intellectual and emotional desire satisfaction has tended to become a driver of university strategy, reflecting how institutionalized education (in some, but by no means all cases) has been interpreted in this consumerist epoch. Roberts writes that education now seems actually to be about promoting desire satisfaction, often in ways that are not implicitly edifying but that create satisfactory, pleasurable and measurable experiences (2013). Satisfaction indicators are used to build reputation, inform educational policy and create conformity. Moreover, they make the university more marketable and tend to represent an agenda for desire satisfaction that is an extravagant, imagined sea of opportunity (favoured by advocates of education for jobs and strong authenticity), not one where a tempered desire for settling oneself is achieved through balancing capabilities, potentiality and despair. Indeed, the current context of education seems to emphasize anxiety and fear for one's future. This suggests commitments that form sympathies and commitments to people, principles and projects. It does this through the need to optimize one's investment, to strive always to know enough to make the right decisions and to avoid any idea of sub-optimization. This, of course, is an impossible task, in the same category class as achieving excellence.

The case for settling within our university experience has two central arguments. The first is that settling is often, although not exclusively, based on principles and values. We might settle for less than others because it is the right and fair thing to do. We might conclude that we do not need so much emotionally, as well as materialistically, or that a contribution to the sustainability of our community or to humanity itself (in the present and future) is worth more to us than endlessly striving to have more. This is absent from many models of consumerism. The second is more prudential, in that settling creates stability: finding some fixed points around which to plan our life; and settling<sup>3</sup> on who we are going to be by intending to operate our agency. We are temporally extended beings who want to access agency over time by forming, implementing and sticking to our plans.

### The market is a means not an end

In the UK, the recent document that set out the government plans for higher education – ‘Success as a knowledge economy’ (Department of Business and Innovation: 2016) – could not be more clear. Early in the document, the government states, ‘Competition between providers in any market incentivizes them to raise their game, offering consumers a greater choice of more innovative and better quality products and services at lower cost. Higher education is no exception’ (8). The claim is that the student is at the core of the consumerized notion of education, and its analytics of performance are indicators of desire satisfaction. However, it is the consumer who is able to decide what is best for his or her future in terms of employment in a world of complexity, where all that is guaranteed is that his or her fees will be taken and his or her employment left to an unregulated, uncontrolled marketplace. Under such conditions, education is an expensive gamble where different odds reflect privilege. The bookies (employers) hardly ever lose, because they continually change the conditions of the bet. Further, they encourage those who can ill afford the debt to bet outside their financial competence, with claims that they will not have to pay if the gamble does not come off and they fail to secure employment. Somehow, this moral corruption is seen as opportunity, emancipation and liberating democratic principles. Such a purpose is disturbing; troubling; uncertain. It is designed to create anxiety within the uncertainty. It is not a resolvable anxiety that leads to a dwelling within the world, but one that is fuelled by the cruel optimism of the UK’s education system (De



Paolantonio, 2016: 147). It is cruel, for it 'self-encloses education in the fears and the delimitations of the present' (151). Such cruel optimism sees the striving for qualifications as a needs of identity in our influx self-enterprise in what Biesta (2005) has called 'leanification'. This, among other things, locks ourselves into a presence of immediate learnification (more on temporality concerns later).

Under this regime, the student is not a scholar, but a consumer. Such a position has led, wrongly, to a policy of educational consumerism that seeks to satisfy tangible, identifiable external manifestations of a satisfying consumption experience. This is an experience that can be readily, and often immediately, evaluated by consumers. The outcomes from the annual National Student Survey (NSS) do not equate to an enhanced learning experience for the students and will not contribute further to the ongoing experience.

Through the normalizing notion of consumerism, what is taken for good education is converted into what satisfies the desires of stakeholders, as consumers. These, in turn, are identified not as internal goods of civic responsibility – *phronesis*, *dumanis* and *parrhesia* – but as 'value for money', cost efficiencies, counts of academic papers per scholar, contact hours, turnaround times and the like. These notions drive, rather than follow, national educational higher education policy and cascade into institutional strategic directions. They are transitory and anxiety inducing, through creating voids to be filled. They create an ethos of striving – not in the form of settling, but in the sense of Sisyphus.

### Settled, but not passive

The emotional experience of the forms of happiness and the aspirational dispositional of contentment based on a settledness on one's being have a role for higher education to play in enabling that to happen. It is not about the economic consequence of a qualification or the relative increase in social capital due to what is known and with whom one associates, but it is about how an institution can help its members to flourish. This is hard enough in a marketplace of commodities and commoditized sellers of labour, but it is about how higher education can help one enjoy who one might become and manage the struggle to achieve a feasible and contented self, when we live in a world of consumerized anxiety. For instance, Reading University confirms the anxiety of higher education applications, in that it sees a very aggressive, competitive

undergraduate market (as reported by the BBC, 2016). The university makes stress-reducing offers to attract students by providing 'safety net' offers to those applying for places for the following year. These guarantee admission, even if students miss entry by an A-level grade. The university sees this as a more 'honest' approach to applications, yet this is not a case of settling for something in the sense just developed, but another form of sub-optimization. It is an anxiety-reducing mechanism along the lines proposed by Warde, perhaps even a gimmick. Marketing can, and should, be harnessed for promoting the good that universities can bring to a society, not just in terms of economic growth but in integration with others in the struggle for a better way of being. As Chen suggests, struggling 'can become vehicles through which a self realizes itself. Accordingly, the absence of struggles may mean an absence of those testing means of affirming the self' (2013: 271).

For sure, this requires not just to reflect upon the main narratives of wealth accumulation, business and hedonism, but to seek alternatives in leading aspirations and possibilities. Higher education marketing needs to remain a friend of the educationalist, to promote and enhance a *Bildung* of personal growth. In a market that is becoming more commodified, marketing can help sustain diversity and choice by not enforcing a single narrative and then facilitating its totalization of all aspects of education. This would require marketers to work *with* the educative mission of higher education, not to determine it. Finally, if the university is concerned with advanced learning and the development of intellectual independence, it seems almost contradictory that its membership should be attracted by persuasively constructed social media, television promotion campaigns and market research solely determining the course provision. Marketing should offer a critical appraisal of the university, and the premise might be a starting point for the development of new approaches to the marketing of higher education (see Ng, 2016). I might go so far as to say that such an appraisal ought to be based on some form of emergent practice based on contentment, striving, anxiety, transformation, gratitude and compassion.

The future for marketing higher education is not to turn education into a marketable entity, but to contribute to accessing education as an edifying and transformative experience. It is, I suggest, its greatest challenge. It is one that, from my reading of the literature, is not being faced. The edifying experience is being changed, if not downgraded, by marketing. Moreover, it is harming our students by inducing anxiety. We are teaching our students not to be resiliently critical, but to cope with the anxiety of the market through short-term palliatives. Ultimately, these just contribute to the reproduction of anxiety as the

core of consumer culture. In so doing, they create a generation whose anxiety is founded on the guilt of not having been, or being, good enough.

### Striving the impossible task

According to Goodin, the source of discontent under late capitalism is the constant avocation to strive: striving to be; striving to have; and striving to consume (2012). Thomas Hobbes suggested that one is lost when one ceases to strive. The tradition has a long history. Hobbes argued that there is 'a general inclination of all mankind... . A perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only until death' (1976: 70). The purpose of such striving is evidently to satisfy desires that, once satiated, lead to more. He suggested that man cannot 'any more live whose Desires are at an end, than he whose Senses and imaginations are at a stand. Felicity is a continuall progresse of the desire, from one object to another; the attaining of the former being still but the way to the latter' (ibid.). He went on to say that the satisfaction of desire is a function of ever-increasing power, which I assume is both personal and invested in the powers of society. Yet this constant striving, rather than fixing one's position, has been a concern that was revealed as early as Plato's time. In *Gorgias* (Plato uses the metaphor of full and leaking jars. One character is in perpetual anxiety, striving for more because her jars are always leaking (using resources), whereas the prudent owner of full and stable jars is by far the happier and more contented. More contemporary narratives along these lines can be found, for example in Scitovsky's (1976) joyless society and Offer's (2006) discussion of how affluence induces anxiety, if manifested in materialism. Notwithstanding this literature, Goodin concludes that, without a settled and contented stance, the 'satisfaction of one desire leads to the arousal of another, leaving people constantly dissatisfied and questing for more' (2012: 3).

Yet anxiety need not be denied, nor need it become debilitating. It can be purposeful and revealing, an appropriate emotional state to work with rather than a dispositional impediment. Indeed, education should not be to hide the uncomfortable or the despair of unrealizable goals behind a neoliberal imperative of consumerism. Breaking away from this enframement of anxiety supports and embraces an openness to the world. Transformation can lead to despair, but a supportive educative environment recognizes this and helps students see new insights through this despair. Failure to do this leads to disengagement with a notion of transformation or, at worst, depression.

## Thrown into consumerism and blocked from critical appraisal?

We live in a world where what we are to be is often dictated by what others will have us be. This is anxiety inducing. The resilience to see beyond the wants of others to our own needs is allowed to atrophy through lack of nurture in the contemporary university. This leads to a fall from anxiety into despair, and a fear that is located in the specific, rather than the general. A student is anxious about his or her ability to reach the goals that he or she sets herself. He or she despairs that these goals are not those that are stated for him or her – by parents, the university or government narratives. Being good enough in choosing what one wants to be, and using the university to help to refine this, is significantly different from seeking an excellent internship, having a high salary and being satisfied with the service provided along the way. These are the narratives of government and universities, whose goals are increased university participation, increased tax revenues and high-league table positions. This is not to say that these narratives are in themselves totally inappropriate, since the market determines educational values based on reputation of the university and the family background of the student. The narratives encourage constant striving, since the force of society is set against the realization of these goals, for many, as is the case in defining entry to elite employment. Such goals are used as core communication platforms for young people's attainment, and are marketed aggressively. They work when recipients respond as consumer literate; that is, literate in an unquestioning, ready-to-consume way. In so doing, the goals fail to allow students the time to reflect and question themselves. They present a busyness of action, not reflection.

Heidegger's contribution to the book begins now, for he talked damningly and directly about how consumerism is abandoning Being, through letting one's 'will be unconditionally equated with the process [consumerism] and thus becomes at the same time the "object" of the abandonment of Being' (1973: 107, brackets inserted). The real danger, suggested by Dreyfus and Spinoza, is not 'self-indulgent consumerism but [it as] a new totalizing style of practices that would restrict our openness to people and things by driving out all other styles of practice that enable us to be receptive to reality' (2003: 341, brackets inserted). For example, if learning is consumption and consuming is a never-ending requirement of consumerism, then failing to learn fast is a failure of consumption, and to be feared. However, if failure to learn and understand quickly reveals issues about oneself that can be explored over time, this might bring

deeper understanding or even acceptance that something is personally not able to be learned. Either way, one is content with the educational struggle when one accepts its reality. In *The Essence of Truth*, Heidegger distinguished between two kinds of striving: inauthentic and authentic. The former is 'chasing after what is striven for' (2013: 153). It is about striving for a passion (156). Authentic striving, however, does not try to take possession, but strives for 'comportment to being' (ibid.). Heidegger offered a notion of striving that is educative, in that one needs to decide on what one can be, and strive authentically to become that. It is a 'having that is at the same time a not-having' (169). Central to the idea is possession, but, unlike the possession of a desired object, the striving to have oneself offers a kind of 'freedom in having'. This is not a striving for external other, an inauthenticity of social acceptance, but more a striving to authentically be one self.

Education ought to provide an arena for the development of such a striving to find our potential for being (I will suggest that such striving is within my notion of contentment, which is aspirational) within the flux of society, and thus, paradoxically, a place where anxiety allows for us to be unsettled – unhappy, if you will. However, the institution has an obligation – an intent, I suggest – that this existential anxiety is not a threat to one's very being, but a process of settling on the being that is worthy of one's striving: to aspire to. The university (among other cultural and societal institutions) is an enabler and provider of the care to shape and resolve what one wills one to be. This is through a critical assessment, bracketed from the historicity of the context of one's being. This does not mean that aspiration is thwarted, nor does it assume some Nietzschean passive contentment. Neither is it driven by calculative and instrument thinking, where consumerism and employability serve to foreground all notions of the future. It assumes a secure place from which to challenge oneself through meditative thinking and being. It is in the realization that one has yet more to learn, but not to consume. In this way, it discusses realistic potential rather than any ungrounded, imaginary choices about which one might fantasize and endlessly strive for, in a pointless and futile attempt to achieve the unachievable and to risk falling into despair and a destruction of value.

Moreover, if we crudely follow Rorty, in that higher education's duty is to encourage irony from the socialization of compulsory education (1999), then higher education and its institutions represent a space for this questioning to take place. Further, it might be claimed that higher education has a duty to offer such a space, and not to close it out with the business of service delivery based on pleasure, entertainment and job grooming. It is in the Heideggerian sense of

a fundamental attunement to the world through a mood of contentment<sup>4</sup> that we find ourselves disposed to be in the world with others, open to them and not constrained by the consumerism entrapment of a notion of belonging by consuming.

Such contentment does not seek an end to learning. It is a moving and ceaseless state of learning, ready to face the unanticipated future resolutely as oneself. It is a mode of practice wherein the opposite poles of action and holding back form a way to disclose and affirm to one's self the understanding of what needs to be practised. Such disclosing is through our attunement to a mood. When one is settled, it brings a sense of hope, when not a sense of despair (Rorty, 1999). To manage this issue requires thinking about what education is intent in doing, for 'true happiness consists in decreasing the difference between our desires and our powers, in establishing a perfect equilibrium between power and the will' (Rousseau, 2013: 39).

Rather than an economic acquisition agenda for higher education, with continued striving that denies students the potentially valuable educational experiences at its core, a university should challenge students to develop capabilities to optimize their potential to make responsible, or at least informed, choices as privileged civic partners. This may often be achieved by having more space in the curriculum for students to 'potter about', to follow the byways of their curiosity and not to worry about learning outcomes or assessment criteria. These are designed to fill up time, to create the urgency of immediate demands and to induce a fear of forgetting who you are. Such adventures may often be painfully uncomfortable yet, in and of itself, this does not diminish the mood of contentment, but strengthens students' resolve and resilience to create a personal identity within the context of being a member of society. As Heidegger claimed, 'real education lays hold of the soul itself and transforms it in its entirety by first of all leading us to the place of our essential being and accustoming us to it' (1998a: 167).

This laying hold of the soul requires the development of sustainable commitments to a bundle of beliefs and desires. These specify what a person cares about and, in so doing, define both the person and the narrative identity of that Being. This connects to settling, which consumerism seeks to avoid, because the narrative identity is temporally extended identity. As Korsgaard writes, 'some of the things we do are intelligible only in the context of projects that extend over long periods. . . . In choosing our careers, and pursuing our friendships and family lives we both presuppose and construct a continuity of identity and of agency' (1989: 113). Of course, one's principles, values and projects can compete and

change over time. However, they need to be tolerably coherent and to persist for a good length of time if they are to form the basis of what is commonly regarded as a remotely satisfactory life.

## Keeping the customer satisfied

Forms of coherence and endurance suggested here are also central to the role of optimizing or 'satisficing'. They are central, just not to being a citizen, but to being a good citizen. There are professors, still committed to teaching, who speak out for what they see as right and risk condemnation for not publishing or seeking higher scores on teaching metrics, regardless of the actual impact that this might have on transformative learning. These scholars retain a passion for scholarship and compassion, and a joy in students' learning. They are concerned with the students' transformation through an educative experience, and not as technicians of knowledge provision. They care in ways that the commodification of teaching through metrics cannot achieve. Such dispositions can create an ethos of professional as well as academic curriculum that could form a compelling marketing proposition and enhance the 'worthwhileness' of the institutions.

Yet, rather than this edifying reason to join a university, consumerist fear is embedded in the sell to potential students that courses offer an illusory sense of certainty, promoted through an instrumental and linear trajectory of students as highly paid professionals, in a world hewn from the busyness of others. In this *Weltanschauung*, the fetishism of desire satisfaction replaces an existential ontology. In this view, one seeks to find a place in the world of 'others' in which one achieves satisfaction from how others see, and demand, one to be. This does not lead to a sense of contentment in the form that I develop, one willed by personal agency and roused from beneath the dormant cover of desire satisfaction – potentially – by the transformation of higher education. To cope with the anxiety that consumer society develops, Baudrillard suggested that institutions have two alternatives. One is a proliferation of caring agencies, and these are now central to most university student engagement policies. The other is a confronting of such anxiety that is socialized, itself, as a cultural commodification that Baudrillard claimed 'leads more deeply into anxiety' (1998: 178).

Given the market conditions in the UK, university authorities and policy makers have accepted that the dominant force in education is consumer marketing of desire satisfaction, which is not in favour of students'

(or academics') well-being in terms of a settled-ness within a disposition of contentment. Marketing goals are not essentially about either personal aspiration or individual income growth, but on market share, codification and supply line management. Without a willed direction of being, the student risks being consumed by the utilitarianism of a market orientation, intent on mass production, where this critical thinking is problematic. This is because it is conspicuous, alienating and unwelcome, as it reveals the hypocrisy of many institutes that claim to be life changing yet are life funnelling, channelling students into more effective and aspiring customers with ever-increasing new desires to strive for. Surely, this is the opposite of what education ought to be in a free society. Indeed, Heidegger suggested that, if we are not strong in the ground of our essence and we 'concern ourselves only with learned competencies that can be instilled as at present, our education is "full of pedagogical problems and questions"' (1995: 165).



## Finding a Pursuit: Is Higher Education for Students or Is It Its Students?

*It might seem to these masses that education for the greatest number of men was only a means to the earthly bliss of the few: the 'greatest possible expansion of education' so enfeebles education that it can no longer confer privileges or inspire respect. (Nietzsche, On the Future of our Educational Institutions, 1972: 3)*

### What is it all for?

The world-preeminent scholar on higher education, Ronald Barnett, has much to say on higher education. His works are not critiqued here, but I want to draw insight from two of his works, 12 years apart, to investigate the role of educating the student. The first is from 2004, in which he explores the purpose of higher education. The second is his 2016 paper addressing a philosophy of higher education. In the first of these two papers, he identifies the following influences that are shaping the contemporary notion. These include:

- globalization;
- the revolution brought by the arrival of digital technologies;
- the interpenetration of higher education with the wider host society;
- agendas of participation, access and equal opportunities;
- marketization of higher education, with institutions identifying their knowledge services for potential customers;
- competition;
- the development of systematic and nationwide state-sponsored quality evaluation mechanisms. (Barnett, 2004: 62)

Barnett sees the university and higher education institutions face up to and engage with these dynamic and complex challenges. Interestingly, in listing the changing role of the student and how he or she might change in engaging within the institution, student voice is not apparent, although clearly present. This is rectified in the second work, where, reflecting on the literature, the importance of students and their needs becomes more central. I suggest that this shift is central to our understanding of the purpose of the university as it moved from a community of learners and researchers to being a producer of employable human capital. This theme, the role of studentship with the university, is developed in this chapter.

### Evolution to revolution, Newman and Humboldt to Johnson<sup>1</sup>

It is worth considering a systematic evaluation of the way we have moved, from the views of John Henry Newman and Alexander von Humboldt towards what has been called the corporate university or academic capitalism. The pursuit of a university education seems to be questioned and regularly discussed, but hardly opened up to real integration in a discussion of higher education. It seems that much of the rhetoric of the economic value of higher education, its economic value and necessity is better framed in terms of higher education and not the notion of a specific form of higher education that is offered by universities. Moreover, the debate seems linked to the legacy of the views of those pillars of liberal education, Newman and von Humboldt, and the journey that we seem to have progressed upon. This is towards what has been called the corporate university or academic capitalism.

Alajoutsijärvi et al. suggest that the shift in the role of the university might be explored from the changes envisioned by Kant: the notion that medieval universities intending to serve the goals of the church changed to serve the needs of emerging nation states (2013). For Kant, universities

would have a certain autonomy (since only scholars can pass judgment on scholars as such), and accordingly it would be authorized to perform certain functions through its *faculties* (smaller societies, each comprising the university specialists in one main branch of learning): to admit to the university students seeking entrance from the lower schools and, having conducted examinations, by its own authority to grant degrees. (1996: 247)

Kant's idea was that the university was intended to serve two main goals: first, it was intended to produce educated bureaucrats and businessmen for the benefit

of society; and second, it was intended to conduct independent research with the goal of producing new knowledge under conditions of academic freedom. The created intelligentsia would be separated into those who remained within the university as scholars of various types and the 'businesspeople or technicians of learning' who acted as tools of government (Kant, 1996: 248). Under von Humboldt, German higher education was financed by the state, which was responsible for research and played a key role in defining the ideology of new German society.

This framework for the modern university is often contrasted with the pursuit of Newman's university teaching model. Here, Newman, in the nine discourses of his significant 1852 book *The Idea of the University*, seemingly took it for granted that research was a task for institutions other than universities. Universities were for the development of the mind through universal knowledge. MacIntyre considers Newman's position to be problematic, and argues that it puts Newman in opposition to the research university, for he notes Newman's claim 'that intensive specialization and narrowness of intellectual focus deform the mind, that means the qualities characteristic of the minds of successful researchers are qualities incompatible with those of an educated mind' (2009: 348). Such an institution (the university), therefore, would need to be broad in terms of the different disciplines of thinking that it offers, and thereby 'as to the range of university teaching, certainly the very name university is inconsistent with restrictions of any kind' (Newman, 1996: 25), and that 'liberal education which viewed in itself, is simply the cultivation of the intellect, as such, and its object is nothing more or less than intellectual excellence' (90).

It seems that Newman's concept is that the curriculum and an educated secular person is one thing, and 'what it is to have professional skills something else, even if it is important for the exercise of professional skills that those who exercise them have educated minds' (MacIntyre, 2009: 360). Newman himself directed his attention to the notion of the political economy and its desire for wealth generation as an end that causes happiness and enjoyment. Towards the end of Discourse IV, he challenged the purpose of teaching economics; if it is to be anything other than an abstract science. It is not to advocate wealth accumulation and certainly not to suggest 'that the pursuit of wealth, that is, the endeavour to accumulate the means of future subsistence and enjoyment, is, to the mass of mankind, the great source of moral improvement' (Newman, 1996: 71), a comment attributed to Senior<sup>2</sup> in his augural University of Oxford lecture.<sup>3</sup> The benefit of such an education means that we can question and evaluate the scientism of the powerful others and act, not as compliant members of aligned collectives, but as active members of a democratic citizenry.

The poor contemporary quality of political debate in English-speaking work is surely evidence of this, as these societies have never been so highly credentialized. As MacIntyre argues, such an education can ‘recognise when those who exercise power over their lives no longer know what they are doing’ (2009: 260).

I want to suggest that one of the most significant differences between Kant, via Humboldt, and Newman is not just the issue of research, specialism and personal development, but the purpose of the institution. In the contemporary university, the structure entity is designed for education to be a means to an external end. This may be economic self-interest, national unity or subservience to powerful others. For Newman, it was a space for self-development and engagement, a process of intrinsic awakening that served society, in that it was to develop a notion of common good, and able to question those who wished to totalize debate and discussion. Concepts such as ‘the entrepreneurial university’ (Clark, 1998), ‘academic capitalism’ (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997) and ‘cognitive capitalism’ (Boutang, 2011) are testimony, in part, to a narrowing of the university as a space for thought. This change of ethos in higher education has been critically discussed by Ron Barnett (1994) and Bill Readings (1996). To this critique is added a concern that society’s and the university’s interest in knowledge has become focused on science and technology and, as a result, the position of the humanities has become precarious.

### The educated person – *ecco economius* or *ecco faber*?

So, what of the educated person? Has such a personal intently been lost in the shift towards universities in the service of the state and corporations? In Kant, Newman and von Humboldt, little is expressly said of the notion of student development. As Bignold points out, for Newman, it was the engagement in study and the process of learning, supported by strong relationships, which were the key to a university education. In the *Idea of a University*, he wrote:

I protest to you, Gentlemen, that if I had to choose between a so-called University, which dispensed with residence and tutorial superintendence, and gave its degrees to any person who passed an examination in a wide range of subjects, and a University which had no professors or examinations at all, but merely brought a number of young men together for three or four years ... if I must determine which of the two courses was the most successful in training, moulding, enlarging the mind ... which produced better public men, men of the

world ... I have no hesitation in giving the preference to the university which did nothing, over that which exacted of its members an acquaintance with every science under the sun. (Newman, 1996: 105)

Newman was clearly seeking intellectual growth awareness and moral sensitivity in his notion of higher education, rather than the institution of a university. It seems to me clear that higher education can be constrained by a university, for it can flourish outside, as has been the case for many who have been less privileged than the student who Newman spoke to. The early work from Kant and von Humboldt considers the structuring of the academic endeavour, the blending of research and teaching in a *Bildung*.

Bruford opened his book on *The German Tradition of Self-Cultivation: 'Bildung' from Humboldt to Thomas Mann*, with these words: '(T)he importance of his [Humboldt's] personal influence on university and school education on Prussia and in Germany as a whole is beyond all questions' (1975: 1). *Bildung* became the central Humboldtian principle, and was the 'union of teaching and research' in the work of the individual scholar or scientist. The function of the university was to advance knowledge by original and critical investigation, not just to transmit the legacy of the past or to teach skills. It is based on neo-humanist principles, and the aim is a general education without practical implications. For the first time, highly autonomous academic research became an integral part of the university. Humboldt recognized the dialectical nature of the relationship between research and teaching, and expressed it succinctly in *On the Internal and External Organization of the Higher Scientific Institutions in Berlin* (1810). Within this document, Humboldt set out his vision for a scholarly community with knowledge creation and academic freedom at its core. He also saw the relationship of student to tutor as different from what it had previously been. For him, the university instructor did not exist for the sake of the students, but rather both teacher and student have their justification in the common pursuit of knowledge. Moreover, he talked about the transition from school to university as a process that 'places the pupil so purely that he can be physically, morally and instinctually left to freedom and independence, and, freed from coercion, will not pass into idleness or a practical life' (4). Furthermore, the school prepares the student so that 'understanding, knowledge, and intellectual work become attractive not through external circumstance, but through inner precision, harmony and beauty' (ibid.).

The notion of *Bildung* has a history that stretches beyond the contribution made by Humboldt. Indeed, von Humboldt's contribution has a number of

criticisms, not the least that it refrained from dealing with political and economic issues. Siljander & Sutinen conclude that the flexible notion of *Bildung* might be considered under two complementary general traits: ‘1) *Bildung* is a creative process in which a person, through his or her own actions, shapes and “develops” himself or herself and his or her cultural being; 2) *Bildung* contains the idea of a person’s “improvement” or “consummation”; in other words, in the processes of *Bildung*, a person seeks a more advanced form of life’ (2012: 3). These traits offer functionality to *Bildung*, as the relationship between the paradigm of the self-development of a rational subject and that of external pedagogical influence.

According to Humboldt’s notion of *Bildung*, freedom and a variety of other situations are its main conditions as multidimensional developments of scholar. He wrote: ‘(W)e demand that *Bildung*, wisdom and virtue, as powerfully and universally propagated as possible, should prevail under its aegis, that it augments its inner worth to such an extent the concept of humanity, if taken from its example alone, would be of a rich and worthy substance’ (2012: 59). Yet, this approach does not fulfil its purpose for all going to German universities. In terms that are familiar to contemporary commentators on higher education, Nietzsche, writing in 1810, was forced to remark, after an ironic discussion of education for culture, that expansion of higher education was based on a dogma of modern political economy. This was as

much knowledge and education as possible; therefore the greatest possible supply and demand – hence as much happiness as possible; – that is the formula. In this case utility is made the object and goal of education, – utility in the sense of gain – the greatest possible pecuniary gain... . The purpose of education, according to this scheme, would be to rear the most ‘current’ men possible, – ‘current’ being used here in the sense in which it is applied to the coins for the realm. (2016: 21)

Here, Nietzsche saw higher education not through the lens of liberal education, but as a process that he claimed has a desire ‘to minimise and weaken education as a cultural mission and reduce the university to a specialist factory’ (23).

## **In conversation**

Finally, before turning to becoming oneself and being a student with the emergence of the contemporary university (from Robbins, 1963, onwards), we should consider Michael Oakeshott’s notion of the university as a place of conversation

between those who have been initiated into the forms of discourse in a learning community – between scholars, teaching scholars and undergraduates (2001: 108). Oakeshott's university is clearly in the vein of von Humboldt. It is a physical place where a student

has the opportunity of education in conversations with his teachers, his fellows and himself, and where he is not encouraged to confuse education with training for a profession, with learning the tricks of a trade, with preparation for a future particular service in society or with the acquisition of a kind of moral and intellectual outfit to see him through life. (113)

University education is for itself, not for alternative purposes, but this does not extend to the notion of higher education. (He is rather disparaging on this point with regards to polytechnics!)

For Oakeshott, the graduating student would have 'acquired some knowledge, and, more important, a certain discipline of mind, as grasp of consequences, a greater command over his power' (2001: 115). He would have moved beyond the 'intellectual hooligan' and be 'expected to be able to look for some meaning in the things that have greatly moved mankind' (*ibid.*). He wrote in Britain when only a small proportion of young people went to fewer than thirty universities, and most were middle-class males. Indeed, his words have a similar tone to those of Heidegger, not in his much criticized inaugural speech but in his own defence at his de-Nazification disposition, where he spoke of 'reduction of education to the instrumental, by analogy with *téchne*, that is the source of everything awry with the university today' (2002a: 35, *italics* in original).

The contemporary university is in flux. It is trying to find a place in society where it might be trusted to act to educate its citizens. In the UK, the marketization of the sector and the manifestation of higher fees remain, in contrast to much of the rest of Europe. The pessimism in academia at the continued threat to the ethos of creative thought and free speech for academic and students is particularly dangerous in the UK in ways that are not replicated across Europe. Massification of higher education has occurred in the provision without the accompanying intrusive managerialism that has occurred in Finland

### **What should graduates be able to do?**

In university education, as Barnett stated, it has 'long been understood that a genuine higher education is a process of personal development' (2007: 52) I agree, but draw two Aristotelian distinctions here. The first concerns one's desire and

ability to be, and the second one's capacities for being and for becoming. In the first, Aristotle was not assuming that one can be whatever one wants to be; rather, that one has a disposition to become what one is able to be – an ability or talent that is limiting.<sup>4</sup> The second is nurtured throughout life and is influenced by all our educative experiences, including higher education. The two are obviously linked. Witt (2003) explains the difference between the non-rational, natural potential for being that is biologically triggered – child to man – and the rational potential caused by agency towards others and ourselves. Witt proposes that 'what exists potentially is ontologically dependent on what exists actually, but what exists actually is not ontologically dependent on what exists potentially' (2003: 13). This capability is an ontological driver of the actuality of becoming what we desire to be. It is made manifest by questioning the reality of our everyday experience with the knowledge that we have, and with a preparedness to create new knowledge. This might be insightful for new possibilities to shine through.

It is through the Aristotelian notions of *dunamis* (potential based on capacity to change other entities and ourselves) and *energeia* that the questions about our being and becoming are addressed (see commentaries by Heidegger, 1995; Weiss, 1987; Dunne, 1993). It follows that our very being is constituted by our choices and our actions, and is thereby contingent upon our willed agency. The temporal stability of our practical identity is about how, through deliberation, we decide the form of our being in the process of becoming the entity that we seek to become. For Aristotle, action is normative:

(T)he man who is without qualification good at deliberating is the man who is capable to aim, in accordance with calculation, at the best for many of the things attainable by action. Nor is practical wisdom concerned only with universals – it must also recognize the particulars; for it is practical, and practice is concerned with particulars. (1141b: 12–15).

Moreover, as Ide pointed out, 'capacity is necessary for potentiality although capability is divorced from possibility' (1992: 25). That is, we might have the potential but not actualize the possibilities that this may confer.

We engage with new activities, supporting this notion of our reconstituted self, and avoid others as a process of becoming, giving a consistency to our identity through the choices that we make and the actions that we engage in when our practical identities clash. This creates dilemmas to be solved in ways that best protect the form of identity that we use to guide our actions. However, how do we make the judgement of knowing even whether to act, and what capability



is required to deliberate on the actions undertaken; and how do we develop the skills and practices (*téchne*) to act? This raises a key issue. How does the practice of acquired skills become powerful enough to shape new circumstances when their use differs from the original to be ready-at-hand in new and novel situations? This awareness of oneself and one's actions, and any consequential capability to change, comes from our understanding of the world in which we exist, our familiarity with it and our will to move towards becoming a person as we take a stance on being. Thus, our potential to be – the power to change what and who we are – is linked to our actuality, and our judgements and values.

The role of the university, then, is not to influence the biological development of the student, but to help him or her realize that their potentiality has cognizance of their capabilities.<sup>5</sup> Barnett was right in highlighting that this is a becoming process, not one where there is a finite answer. Indeed, Heidegger might argue that one cannot know what one is until death and reflection on one's history. This is a strange notion, but one that we recognize in our everyday dealings with people. For example, people sometimes obviously overstate what they are, in place of what they want to be. They may disguise their true identity, but are often 'outed' as frauds, as their actions show they do not have the skills required of such a position. Indeed, we make an existential mistake in thinking that we are ever something, for in doing so we stop learning to become it and, more often than not, stop being it. This is the existential notion of being that I propose ought to be fostered by higher education institutions. It will not require the denial of other forms of being and times, but will seek to use them purposefully to take a stand on what it might be. Studenthood is, therefore, a way of being in one world as one engages in a wider world.

### **Transdisciplinary goals for education**

The goals of education are found in realizing our fates, by resolutely grasping our potential and recognizing our heritage and what it might involve. This balance enables people to take a stand on the practitioner that they want to be, engage in the actual issues of the destiny of society and learn the conditions that will support or disrupt the dwelling place that they find. It can be attained in higher educational institutions designed for this purpose, but not those in which machination dominates.

The former institutions, those with a heritage drawn from the Newman and Humboldt ideas and not those questioned by Oakeshott, will be communities where resoluteness 'brings the Self right into its current concerned

Being-alongside what is ready-to-hand, and pushes it into solicitous Being with Others' (Heidegger, 1962: 344). Such concern requires resoluteness to deal with the situation as it presents itself, not one that knows only the general situation, loses itself in those opportunities closest to it and pays *Dasein's* way by reckoning up accidents it fails to recognize, deems its own achievement and passes it off as such. Resoluteness brings 'the being of the "there"' into the existence of its Situation. Indeed, it delimits the existential structure of the authentic potentiality-for-Being' (Heidegger, 1962: 346–7).

As Carman suggests, to be resolute 'is to remain sensitive to the unique demands of a concrete situation' (2009: 234). Such resoluteness enables situations to be dealt with intelligently, skilfully and with finesse; indeed, as one might expect of a *phronimos*. But how? A distinction made by Heidegger (1962), and critical to a discussion of education, is between Being-in-the-world and our everydayness. The former is our authenticity, projecting on one's possibilities; 'that is to say, it signifies existing as this possibilities' (1962: 439), and reflects *Dasein's* historicity. This is connected as self-consistency; as 'essentially the historicity of the world, which, on the basis of the ecstatico-horizontal temporality, belongs to the temporalizing of that temporality' (440). This is in contrast to the everyday dispersion of inauthentic *Dasein* and, as Heidegger advocated, to become oneself, one must first resolve who that is for this dispersion and the disconnectedness this has created.; Because of this, it is only then that an understanding of self emerges that belongs to inauthentic historicity. The question is how it is to establish a 'connectedness' of *Dasein* ( 441–2).

Thus, the task for education is the development of a connectedness of *Dasein*, which requires steadfast resoluteness to create "loyalty" of existence to its own self' (Heidegger, 1962: 443). This resoluteness is not an act-dependent attribute of activities. Rather, it is a disposition that is already in our way of responding to the connectedness of our being. It enables the acceptance and rejection of possibilities in terms of being steadfast in our authentic historicity, revealing and accepting our fate. This dispositional acceptance is hidden in inauthentic historicity and is especially relevant for the education of adults in the workplace as well as institutions of education. The recovery of this unity, as Mulhall suggested, must be based 'on an understanding of that unity as the articulated unity of the care-structure, which must itself be grasped in terms of inherently ecstatic temporalizing' (1996: 109).

In a formal sense, this education may take place in universities. Education should blend modes of being to recognize and respond sensitively to issues where empathy is needed to analyse situations with resoluteness, and find their potential to enhance communities and lead their own community's destiny, not

to seek to manipulate others. Like Aristotle's *phronesis*, Heidegger's resoluteness may be learned. It requires a reflective and thinking environment where independence and risk are developed in response to problems. It requires an understanding of the history of ideas and worldly issues. It needs an education contextualized in its time, but which can learn from past worlds. It needs existential experience with academics and students engaging in communities, seeking a more primordial understanding and a recovery of the historical basis of our current understanding of being. As Shepherd notes, for Heidegger methodologies 'would still be understood as "affairs and their horizons" among a situational context in which questions were posed' (2016: 760–1), but that, within education, being is too often concealed by methodology. Such a stance differs from the disciplinary hegemonies of current UK practice, although acknowledged in policy statements for the future. It requires a transdisciplinary approach to see scientific disciplines merge and focus on specific problems in holistic ways; that is, seeing the ethical as well as the financial, the practical as well as the theoretical, and the humane as well as the instrumental. This will require new pedagogies and a rediscovery of the vocations of educator, student, worker and citizen.

This is not a nostalgic cry for yesterday's values and practice, real or imagined, but a desire that those valuable practices from the past are saved, then radically transformed and integrated into a new understanding of reality. Moreover, we need to appreciate marginal activities that are unrelated to the technological understanding of being. The degree to which the university embraces and focuses notions of democracy, dignity and care determines how feasible such an appreciation is, and it is this that helps us understand what it is to live good lives and avoid bad ones. Higher education's challenge is answered through thinking, rather than being swayed by the technological way of being. By its teaching, higher education must encourage its community to think about the hidden nature of will to power, machination and consumerism, and then to respond. In seeking authenticity as an educative experience, one reveals truths in the way that one is engaged in the world through the form of dispositional attunement one has towards its reality. Such a position sees one questioning what others deem is the right way to feel and be; not necessarily rejecting what one finds for oneself, but having the resoluteness and resilience to hold to one's choices.

### **Forging an ontological pedagogy**

Such a stance leads to an ontological pedagogy of challenge in the form of Socrates, championed by Heidegger. Heidegger saw higher education as

contained, but with a number of distinctions. One of these is the distinction between a teacher and a student, a distinction he argued gave priority to the former and is unhelpful. It manifests a learning engagement where exchange value dominates. He suggested, 'What is to be avoided is the negative determination: for example, the student defined only in relation to the prior notion of the teacher as what the teacher is not' (2002a: 40). Moreover, Heidegger saw the normalizing of studenthood in a large class as students abandoning their idiosyncratic expression and adopting a generic way of thinking to appease the teacher. Thomson suggests that such pedagogical 'approaches evaluate students according to how well they approximate an anonymized educational template, downgrading them for any deviations from this uniform and thus homogenising standard' (2016: 852). This is evident in the move to provide extensive support for lectures and where students object to assessment of subjects that have not been clearly covered in the teaching of the class, although within the field of study. As Heidegger concludes, education is 'a passing on of knowledge and the skills either in the medieval paradigm of master/apprentice or in the modern of seller/consumer. Rather call it a withholding, a delaying of articulation, in order that the student may answer... The teacher's silence is finally what has to be heard' (2002a: 41).

### **A resting thought**

At the core of the consumerized notion of quality and its analytics of performance indicators of desire satisfaction is the student: not as a Newman scholar, learner or inquirer, but as a consumer, a theme that Eagle and Brennan have identified as being increasingly accepted in higher education, partly due to the tuition fees (2007: 44). Williams and Cappuccini-Ansfield (2007) believe that the introduction of tuition fees will force universities to act as 'service providers' and thus become responsive to students as consumer requirements (see also McArthur, 2011). Watson (2003) and Narasimhan (2001) assert that fee-paying students may expect 'value for money', and thus behave more like consumers. The concept of customer orientation has been gaining traction in higher education (Douglas et al., 2006). This approach views students as the primary consumers of higher education (see Sander et al., 2000; Gremler & McCollough, 2002; Kotzé & Plessis, 2003). Such a position has led, wrongly, I suggest, to a policy of educational consumerism seeking to satisfy tangible, identifiable external manifestations of a satisfying consumption experience that places education entirely within the frame of market forces, just as refashioning the citizen as a

consumer does for participation in a democracy. This is an experience that can be readily and often immediately evaluated by the consumer using their prior experience or, in terms they are quickly taught to appropriate, of education's entertainment value, potential employment benefits and the ambient quality of the university lecture theatre. The outcomes from the annual NSS have shown that these 'hygiene factors' demonstrate that results improve annually, yet they do not equate to an enhanced learning experience for students and, once over a certain threshold, will not contribute to the ongoing experience. There is little research to support that students feel that they are consumers (Williams, 2013; Tomlinson, 2016) (yet this is certain to change if they are continually told by their institutions and government that they are).

Through the normalizing notion of consumerism, what is taken for good education is converted into what satisfies the desires of stakeholders as consumers. These, in turn, are identified not as internal goods of civic responsibility – *phronesis* or *parrhesia* – but as value for money, cost efficiencies, counts of academic papers per scholar, contact hours, turnaround times and the like. These notions drive, rather than follow, national educational higher-education policy and cascade into institutional strategic directions. These economic mechanisms of control of performance can be seen in the metrics at the core of:

- The Research Assessment Exercise;
- Review by the Quality Assurance Agency; and
- The NSS.

Cullen et al. assert that these initiatives have a significant impact on how senior management identifies key success factors and prioritizes activities, especially because the findings of the external audits are used to establish the league table ranking of universities that become the focus of poorly informed consumer choice (2003: 6). Indeed, Filippakou suggests that 'quality regimes in higher education, one might say, influence the ways in which the meaning of higher education is interpreted, and perhaps defined, by limiting other interested parties' power to influence the debate' (2011: 17). Moreover, Beaumont, O'Doherty and Shannon (2011) argue that the concept of quality is often misrepresented and/or misunderstood by many academics. Furthermore, Tsinidou et al. highlight that the factors of quality are intrinsically linked to the subject of satisfaction; thus, education becomes 'being satisfied' (2010: 228). This is a dangerous assumption, if correct, for there are ways of being that might have different objects, such as a common good, personal well-being and the seeking of a moral way of being (Bauman, 2008).



## A Short Epochal Contextualization of Happiness as Self-Fulfilment

*Pursuing happiness, and I did, and still do, is not at all the same as being happy – which I think is fleeting, dependent on circumstances, and a bit bovine. (Winterson, Why Be Happy When You Can Be Normal, 2011: 24)*

Notions of bliss, joy, elation, contentment, pleasure, euphoria and happiness abound in the literature in symbols of the symbiotic nature of our being with others in our human history. I have sought to describe and harness the nature of what might be called (for the moment, at least) the notion of happiness. Happiness, as a mood or disposition or as the consequence of virtuous behaviour, has dominated the human condition even when circumstances of hate, evil and despair dominate the context of being.<sup>1</sup> The understanding of happiness is one of its perennial questions. This short, periodic historic illustrates what I consider some of the more interesting ideas that have been considered. It is not extensive, and there are a number of other more-detailed accounts that might be worth consulting (e.g. Bok, 2010; Bortolotti, 2009; Feldman, 2012; D. McMahon, 2007; Sumner, 1999; Zevnik, 2014), although this personal selection has the merit of brevity! Indeed, others in the social and behavioural sciences have also written more extensively on happiness, particularly in more modern times. There are contributions from positive psychology, sociology and economics, all of which have added interesting literature, normally of an empirical form. I address some of this in the next chapter, where I argue for a Heideggerian, phenomenological form of investigation, but this is grounded in the historic context that follows.

## Aristotle, Augustine and Seneca

Plato and Aristotle grounded the notion of well-being in terms of a moral agent and, importantly, Aristotle mapped out the intellectual, practical and moral components of well-being in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Book 1), where he argued that a contemplative life informed by education allows one to be happy through adult life. The happy man is the morally wise man; not one identified with pleasure, but acting through an understanding of knowledge and good judgement. This notion of an education – and rationality-defined excellence – is the foundation of our notion of finding a way of being as Aristotle's *eudaimonia*, and is rehearsed in many subsequent writings.

Two of the greatest early essays specifically on happiness were written by the Stoic, Seneca, and the early Christian theologian, Augustine of Hippo (2010). They shared a focus on the distinctive human attributes of rationality and desire, maintaining that this distinguishing feature should be used to the full and that only by doing so would we be happy. Seneca was to explore and exhort that happiness is the life of the virtuous person, where sensual pleasure – which is not a goal in itself – is but a pleasurable by-product, like pretty flowers in a field of wheat, in the existential reality of a virtuous life. This life is uncorrupted by externally induced desires, and people stand firm on their stance to their own being. Indeed, in Seneca's essay, 'On the Happy Life', much foreshadows the Christian notion of happiness in knowing God and Mill's doctrine of happiness through the obligation of exercising the higher human faculties ([54–62] 2008).

For Augustine, deductive dialectic logic, presented in the form of conversations with his family and friends, reveals that only in knowing God can one be happy. *The Happy Life* is a document of Cartesian importance, for first it establishes a difference between body and soul and then investigates that true happiness does not come from pleasures of the flesh, but from those designed to improve the soul (2010). As Augustine's mother is quoted as saying, 'I believe that the soul is nourished by nothing other than the intellectual grasp and knowledge of things' (ibid.: 33). Augustine again foreshadowed Mill's position that intellectual striving makes the man when he responded, 'thus we are correct in saying that the minds of those who are trained in no area of learning and have absorbed nothing of the fine arts are human and starved' (ibid.). Those who seek happiness seek to find the good that one can be and, by extension, this can only be found in the seeking and finding of God. The link is reinforced in Book X of the *Confessions* when St Augustine confirms that happiness resides in good, when he states that happiness is to 'rejoice in you [God] and because of you. This is the true happiness and there is no other' (2002: 228).



As do Kesebir and Diener (2008) in their short history of happiness, Pascal offered a similar position. In a passage that centralizes the notion of happiness, albeit with the need of God to realize it, Pascal wrote:

All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves. (1669/2008: 51)

This linking of one's being with a realization of happiness that involves reason, emotion and faith foreshadows, in a way that is neither frivolous nor momentary, the position taken by the interpretation developed in a later stage of the phenomena of happiness. He offers a clue to what happiness might be, claiming that 'man's condition is inconstancy, boredom and anxiety' (6), and that what causes inconstancy is that 'present pleasure is false' (19).

Although Seneca also makes reference to God freeing us from desire, he advocated (rather ironically) that securing happiness may be easier if we reduce the number and intensity of our desires, and both have and expect less. This led Seneca to argue what makes for a happy life in the third section of his essay, 'On the Happy Life'. Specifically, this life is one in harmony with and respectful of nature and is achieved in three ways: through a sound mind; a brave, flexible and critical approach to how one conducts oneself in one's own environment; and taking care of oneself and the advantage life and one's efforts can bring without being seduced by them – 'without becoming their slave' ([54–62] 2008: 87). He then indulged in an elaborate discussion on a happy life, defending his own lifestyle!<sup>2</sup> He argues that 'the wise man regards wealth as a slave, the fool as a master' (108) and, 'if anyone steals his wealth will still leave to him all that he truly possesses; for he lives happy in the present and untroubled by what the future holds' (109). This spirit of optimism about the individual pursuit of happiness based on the powers of reason forms a strong theme of the nature of happiness that will be further developed. However, its dependence on a reasoning-based approach, as I hope to show, needs moderation in the face of reality.

### Boethius and Aquinas – *Summun bonum*

Happiness, as Boethius attempted to reveal in his dialogue with Madame Philipson, can be discretely considered as perfect, as embodied in God, and imperfect in the sense of seeking earthly benefits. His major work, which is

contained in Book 3, is a detailed and poetic discussion of the material. The divine is contained in the *Consolation of Philosophy* as a form of self-examination designed to help him come to terms with his change of fortune, from holding an honoured position to his execution. In this remarkably positive text for a man doomed for speaking out for acting as a parishist, he examines in both prose and poetry, in Socratic style, the nature of and pursuit of being, and within that, happiness. By constructing activities and achievements that might be considered those in which the holder would be happy, Boethius deconstructs them to reveal that earthly pleasure, achievement and status are but an imperfect happiness that can bring anxiety as well as good. Perfect happiness can only be achieved in knowing God for God, and perfect happiness is the same thing. So, true happiness is placed in the realm of the divine. St Thomas Aquinas took up Boethius's position and develops it in a more rational and forensic way.

The *Summa Theologiae* ranks among the most important documents of the Christian church, and is a landmark of medieval Western thought. St Thomas's Aristotelian discussion of the purpose of life and happiness was written in 1269, while he was professor at the University of Paris, and can be found in Questions 1 to 5 of the *Prima Secundae, Summa Theologiae*. It is written in his style of question, response, refutation and conclusion, and regularly uses Boethius as a source of authority for his arguments, alongside Aristotle and Augustine. It is clear from the question of what happiness is that St Thomas struggled with any definitive response, for it is a divine, godly aspect of being and thus one that mortals struggle to recreate in the image of God. St Thomas asked five pertinent questions:

- Q1 Purpose of life
- Q2 Objective beatitude
- Q3 What happiness is
- Q4 The condition of happiness
- Q5 Gaining happiness

In Q2, we are led to the conclusion that happiness for human beings does not consist of wealth, honour, fame, glory of power, any good of the body of pleasure or of any created good, but it consists of the good of the soul. The final end is the good, and happiness means gaining the perfect good (ibid.: 117).

Q3 to Q5 are concerned directly with happiness. However, as its core is a state of bliss, which is considered the ultimate happiness, this is achievable only in the eternal life after death; a true knowing of God. It is a settled-ness of which I will say more in another chapter. In this sense, happiness is not the sensual desire of

the hedonist, but the coming to know. As St Thomas would say, it is 'an activity of the mind' (Aquinas, 2006: 71).

Q3's response is important to our study, as it is the distinction that St Thomas drew between complete and incomplete happiness, and our theoretical ability to understand the latter. He says, 'By its nature complete happiness cannot consist in dwelling on the theoretical sciences. For remember, their study does not extend beyond the premise upon which they are based that for the body of a science is virtually contained in its principles' (Aquinas, 2006: 79). Indeed, he argued that the notion of happiness can only be known in the action of it, for it is only God who can comprehend it. Q4 establishes the importance of the will and of the intellectual to happiness. It requires a willingness that is set right, to comprehend the nature of true happiness. Given that happiness is in the Divine, there remains a particular happiness in the practice of our everyday lives. Q5 asserts that particular happiness can be lost, but, having known the happiness of God, this cannot be. We can seek and find this particular happiness in our virtuous behaviour. As we come to know ourselves within the image of God, we move towards a fuller, deeper happiness, one found in the revelation of knowing God.

## Locke, Hobbes and Hume – the British enlightenment

### **Locke**

There is a dramatic change in the writing of Locke, who placed happiness in the realm of the real and a continuum to the Divine, and accepted that happiness can be achieved, albeit imperfect happiness without an understanding of the divine happiness. He, like Aquinas, proposed that perfect happiness is found in God, but suggests that wrong judgement upon this can lead to happiness without concern for joy in a future state. These ideas can be found in Locke's 'An Essay in Human Understanding', indicating that the pursuit of happiness through the intellect is the true form of happiness, for it frees us from attachment to any particular desire that we might have at a given moment. The pursuit of happiness is the foundation of morality and civilization. He argued that we 'are by the necessity of preferring and pursuing true happiness as our greatest good, obliged to suspend the satisfaction of our desire in particular cases' (Locke, Essay 11, xxi: 51). Locke acknowledged the obvious fact that different people derive pleasure and pain from different things, and that the choice of this is willed by ourselves. Thus, happiness is moral, found in what we choose

to do and not eternal, albeit we should seek goodness in what we do to secure happiness after our death. While he reiterated that happiness is no more than the possession of those things that give the most pleasure and the absence of those things that cause the most pain, and that the objects in these two categories can vary widely among people, he left the choice to us, provided it is made rationally:

If therefore Men in this Life only have hope; if in this Life they can only enjoy, 'tis not strange, nor unreasonable, that they should seek their Happiness by avoiding all things, that disease them here, and by pursuing all that delight them; wherein it will be no wonder to find variety and difference. For if there be no Prospect beyond the Grave, the inference is certainly right, *Let us eat and drink, let us enjoy what we delight in, for tomorrow we shall die.* (55)

Locke's insistence on choice reveals happiness as an educative process, a development of which it is to make the right decision to do good. This is partially evident in xxi: 60, where Locke discussed the temporally locked presence of those who do not understand the consequence of negating the future states of bliss or misery of eternity, but seek only pleasure of the immediate. Locke created word images that Pieter Bruegel illustrated in the extreme. The writing of Hobbes and Kant show that they were unable to accept the contradictory bifunctionary notion of happiness upon which St Thomas's analysis depended. Indeed, Renaissance philosophers accepted and further elaborated the two-fold Thomist approach to happiness of perfect and imperfect beatitude. The temporal and knowable idea of happiness in terms of its settlement of one's being does, however, have a resonance, if not in the eternal then in a complex temporality for the proposal for happiness in another chapter.

## Hobbes

This settled-ness in the eternal that formed the central tenet of happiness and theology were confronted by Hobbes through his concern and belief that natural bodies are the basic objects of scientific investigation. This is seen explicitly in *Leviathan*. Specifically, happiness is the idea that it depends on our objective evaluation or judgement of things as good or bad. That is, things are good or bad for us depending on whether we desire or avoid them. There is no need (or indeed point) in discussing happiness in terms of divine embodiment. Kitanov goes so far as suggesting that Hobbes held the view that Christ's promise of salvation and everlasting happiness refers to the material world, not to some otherworldly realm beyond the bounds of space and time (2011: 35).

Hobbes first discusses happiness in an extended way in chapter XXXVIII of Thomas White's *de Mundo Examine*. Here, according to Kitanov, Hobbes identifies the things that increase our 'earthly' happiness are the things that lie within the reach of our faculties and power, 'for happiness is secured through the choice of the ways leading to it; we deliberate over the ways to be chosen; deliberation exists only with reference to the things that lie within the power and the choice of those deliberating; therefore the yearning for things which there seems no means of attaining is not happiness: it is torment' (Hobbes, 1976: 464). Happiness, therefore, consists of a kind of advance from one good to another, which makes it easier for us to hold on to the old things that we have already acquired by means of the new things that we have attained.<sup>3</sup> To be truly happy, then, is to be able to increase continually and at the same time preserve one's goods, for there 'is no happiness in the desire for, or in the securing of benefits, if the desire and hope of acquiring them be ceaselessly accompanied by a greater, or an equal, fear of losing them; for the pleasure in the hope is offset by the anxiety in the fear' (ibid.: 465).

Yet, Hobbes's suggestion is that happiness is to be understood not so much as a progress of desire, but as joy or mental pleasure derived by advancing from one fulfilled desire to another. A happy life is one where one reflects on one's achievement, based on a truthful and justified assessment of one's own power. This must have a firm, evidential basis, and not be vainglory attributed to us by ourselves or by others through flattery.

This earlier work is echoed in his more familiar work, the *Leviathan*. Hobbes's philosophy of motion and the changing causality of emotion have to deny some ultimate end of *Summun bonum*, and break with the tradition so far proposed. Hobbes wrote directly about felicity in the *Leviathan*. He defined felicity at the end of chapter 6 as this:

*Continual success* in obtaining those things which a man from time to time desireth, that is to say, continual prospering, is that man call FELICITY; I mean the felicity of this life. For there is no such thing as perpetual tranquillity of mind while we live here; because life itself is but motion, and can never be without desire, nor without fear, no more without sense. (1991: 46)

Hobbes explained what he meant in the remainder of the paragraph: 'What kind of felicity god hath ordained to them that devoutly honour him, a man shall no sooner know than enjoy, being joys that now are as incomprehensible as the word of schoolmen's beatifical vision is unintelligible' (ibid.). This seems to be taking aim at Aquinas's supernatural blessedness achieved, as Rutherford

suggests, through the beatification vision of God (2003). Hobbes argued that we are only able to reason philosophically about the natural condition of humanity, and this is reinforced in the title of chapter 13 of *Leviathan* – ‘Of the Natural condition of Mankind, as concerning their Felicity, and Misery’.

Hobbes’s view is explicitly stated in the opening of *Leviathan*, chapter 11:

For there is no such *finis ultimus* (utmost ayme) not *summum bonum* (greatest Good) as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers. Nor can a man any more live whose desires are to an end than he whose Senses and Imaginations are at a stand. (2011: 70)

Happiness (felicity), he then continues, is ‘a continuall progresse of the desire, from one object to another; the attaining of the former, being still but the way to the later’ (ibid.). What is more, Hobbes assumed that satisfying desire as the basis of happiness is not a one-off thing, but one engaged in continually, to ‘the assuring of a contented life’ (ibid.).

Hobbes suggested in *Thomas White’s de Mundo Examined* that this tranquillity should not be understood as a state of rest, inactivity or absence of desire, but a calm movement from one acquired good to another. This fits the characterization of the acquisitive consumers suggested in Chapter 1, in the anxiety of consumerism context of contemporary society. Hobbes was clear that this has chilling consequences on which he was not afraid to call. The chain of unending desires means that we need always to be concerned with how we will satisfy subsequent desire. And Hobbes saw this as what motivates individuals to prefer civil co-existence to anarchy, where happiness is dialectical in nature, a continual process involving moments of movement and rest. As Martinich suggests, the only way Hobbes saw for us doing that was to strive for power (2005). For Hobbes, this meant ‘a perpetuall and restless desire of Power after power that ceaseth only in Death’ (1991: 70).

Hobbes’s work has clear links with Aristotle, whom he did not criticize directly, and who seemed to support a notion of *eudaimonia* as a lifetime’s accumulated notion of well-being, a well-being determined by access of desire satisfaction over avoidance. In this, Hobbes clearly opened the modern empirical examination of happiness, revealed especially through happiness studies and positive psychology.

## Hume

To open this section, I want to discuss Hume’s contribution to the notion of happiness. Hume used the word ‘happiness’ often in his work, but without an

analytical analysis. Hume did deal with virtue at some length, yet there is very little discussion of happiness in the *Treatise of Human Nature*. Although Hume insisted that ‘the [virtuous] system may help us to form a just notion of happiness, as well as of the dignity of virtue. . . . (s)uch reflexion requires a work a-part very diffident from the genius of the present’ (1990b: 620). He went on to identify that such an investigation was different from the forensic approach of the *Treatise*. He discriminated between the atomist and the painter, arguing that the atomist can assist the painter but is subservient to her. Following Santos-Castro (2011), I believe these discussions can be found in the conclusion, section IX, to *The Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, and the second of the four essays on happiness, ‘The Epicurean’, ‘The Stoic’, ‘The Platonist’ and ‘The Sceptic’.

In the *Enquiry*, Hume did not address happiness as the central topic, but developed the advantages of virtue by showing that being a virtuous person fosters one’s own happiness. Towards the end of the conclusions, Hume wrote, ‘inward peace of mind, conscious of integrity, a satisfactory review of our own conduct; these are circumstances, very requisite to happiness, and will be cherished and cultivated by every honest man’ (1990a: 67). Here, Hume suggested that the passions determine how we perceive happiness and, in acting well, we are happy.

Turning to the four essays, there is some dispute whether any of these contains Hume’s own position, with Fogelin suggesting that ‘The Sceptic’ is indeed Hume talking (1985), and Immerwahr disputing this (1989). Fogelin’s interpretation is that ‘The Sceptic’ can be profitably read in isolation from the first three; whereas, for Immerwahr, the ‘purpose of these essays is therapeutic rather than analytic; they are designed to change rather than to inform the reader’ (1989: 308). I tend towards Fogelin and explore ‘The Sceptic’ as if it were Hume’s words on happiness, for it offers a distinctiveness that warrants consideration. Hume was insightful and fanciful in the examples that he used to attribute the passions to the notion of happiness, although still wedded to the notion of desire satisfaction to the individual interpretation of objects in terms of the passions. Indeed, pre-grounding Heidegger by nearly two hundred years, he displayed in this essay a view that the world is interpreted through the passions (moods, emotions and more permanent dispositions). Hume wrote, ‘but it is not from the value or worth of the object, which the person pursues, that we can determine his enjoyment, but merely from the passion with which he pursues it’ (1994: 166). Hume offered an emotional framework for happiness, in that the passion ‘must neither be too violent not too remiss . . . (but) benign and social: not rough or fierce . . . (and) cheerful and gay, not gloomy and melancholy’ (176, parentheses added).

## Those Europeans – Rousseau and Kant

### Rousseau

Perhaps the most important book that directly links happiness to education is Rousseau's *Emile*. Variouslly interpreted as a soft, permissive doctrine of education (see Mintz, 2012), of compassion (Jonas, 2010), as a fable for moral interdependence (Lewis, 2013), as a justification for education as an economic imperative (Gilead, 2012) and as a critique of post-Enlightenment modernity, it remains an important text. Certainly, in the central measure of balance of desire and power, of self-determination and of the need for education to prepare one for the knocks of life in order to be happy, Rousseau is very clear in the notes of *A Discourse on Inequality* (1984: 167) of the importance of the entrapment of self-determination by *amour propre*. This is the need to be recognized by others as having value and to be treated with respect – and the damage that this can do for willed self-determination. For Heidegger, this issue was embedded in *Das Man*; in our need to conform (at least, in the development of an understanding) to the traditions and practices that make our world intelligible to us. However, the need for conformity can also deprive us of an originality of purpose, if conformity becomes conformism. Often, it is only when we are forced to question what we take as the way to be – when, for instance, the inconspicuous acts reveal themselves in failure – that our conformity is revealed and we might question our own stance and that of others.

I suggest here that formal higher education ought to be a context in which *amour propre* can be recognized for what it is, and to relate it to what one might be for oneself and how one might best uncover the stability that this provides as fundamental happiness. Such happiness is not transient, but is dependent on taking a willed stance on what, how and with what values one's being can be realized within a social context. It does not require an ascribed notion of well-being, nor is it unbridled desire. It is the blend of passion (Rousseau) or attunement (Heidegger) with the rationality of self-appreciation in co-existence and collaboration with others. It is not, I suggest, that which is recorded in satisfaction surveys, which, at best, measure<sup>4</sup> what is pleasing and pleasurable, but is a contentment that pervades both one's willed and well-being.

Rousseau talked at length about how we so easily live our lives through the approval of others and how ruinous this may be. For instance, at the end of part 2 of the discourse, he stated, 'as a result of always asking others what we are and never daring to put the question to ourselves ... we have only façades,



deceptive and frivolous(ness), honour without virtue, reason without wisdom, and pleasure without happiness' (1984: 136). Rousseau also paid full regard to our passions and emotions, claiming that 'human understanding owes much to the passions' (ibid.: 89). This forms a conceptual link with Heidegger, as does disquiet about the nature of civilized being.

Rousseau's *Emile*, notably his two-stream education, has resonance with Heidegger's famous pronouncement to teachers to let students learn.<sup>5</sup> As Todorov identifies in Rousseau's works, man has a contradictory ideal; that of individual and then of citizen; his unhappiness is caused by plunging into (his fallen-ness, in Heideggerian terms) the social state. This fall can create a state of despair (see Roberts, 2013, 2014; Suissa, 2016) from which we cannot find our happiness, either through solitude or as immersed citizenship. Instead, we engage in the pain of that despair itself. Not to do this denies profound happiness and, de facto, assumes a transient, superficial happiness that is lost when confronted by difficulties of being-in-the-world-with others (2001). To repair the rupture between nature and society, Rousseau proposed in *Emile* a method of reconciliation through domestic education, which becomes a preparation for social life. He suggests a two-stream approach of moderation: the laying down of personal-willed and primordial happiness that foster what I have called profound happiness, when realized in social (and moral) relatedness.

In Rousseau's *Emile*, book II, we find a detailed discussion of how primordial happiness is more than pleasure and can be nurtured within a societal context. In this book, Rousseau helped to show Emile how to face the task of retaining his nurtured being in the potentially self-crushing world into which he is propelled. For Rousseau, the nurturing of such happiness is not to the exclusion of pain and, indeed, he stated when talking of Emile that 'to bear pain is his first and most useful lesson' (2013: 37). Rousseau offered the view that 'a man who knew nothing of suffering would be incapable of tenderness towards his fellow-creatures and ignorant of the joys of pity; he would be hard-hearted, unsocial, a very monster among men' (44).

Mintz offers three reasons why suffering is introduced by Rousseau:

First, and most importantly, he must learn to bear the arbitrary blows of nature and endure the inevitable turmoil associated with social attachments. Second, Emile suffers because it is instrumentally useful in facilitating learning. Third, Emile must experience compassion, which involves suffering at the suffering of another, because compassion provides a positive and stable foundation for social relations. (2012: 255)

Of course, these are intended to apply to pre-university studentship, yet they might equally hold sway as reasons for ensuring that students are troubled at higher levels of education.

To this end, Roberts's suggestion that 'to be educated is, in part, to be aware of one's despair, accepting of it, and able to work productively with it' (2013: 464) is well made. The discourse of codified happiness as pleasure or satisfaction is manifest in the metrics of well-being and student satisfaction, turning profound happiness into episodic events of importance for others to judge their own efforts.

## Kant

Learning, as a way of revealing one's potentiality through the development of capabilities to allow the revelation of ways to be, is central to Heidegger's ideas of authenticity in the world. However, before the discussion of education in the second part of the chapter, I wish to consider happiness in a sense that might resonate with Kant's non-a priori use of happiness and Mill's justification for higher-order functionality being the realization of our humanness, in the form of Heidegger's fundamental attunements. These two philosophers, most commonly associated with differing notions of moral principles, offer rich views on happiness, which share an ontic judgemental rationality but, as I will show, differ on determinacy.

Kant's writings on happiness are most developed in his discussion in *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1993), *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals* (2009) and, to a lesser extent, *Transcendental Doctrine of Method* (1929b). Mill's are in *Utilitarianism* (2008a) and *On Liberty* (2008b). For Kant, the motive for happiness was the 'satisfaction of all our desires' and its resolution is through pragmatic means (1929b: 636). The reason for doing so is one of personal duty. This duty arises indirectly, for discontent 'with one's condition, under a pressure of many anxieties and amidst unsatisfied wants, might easily become a great temptation to transgression of duty' (2009: 16). This desire satisfaction is of a determinate form, directed or responding to something and is a form of happiness separate from a more ontological notion of the worthiness of being happy, which is an indeterminate state and a moral imperative. This happiness, for Kant, is not a philosophical concept containing any intrinsic moral relevance, but rather an empirical, psychological phenomena related to his natural inclinations.<sup>6</sup> This is evident when Kant discusses the adoption of being for the purpose of life. Arguing that if happiness were,

following this premise, the real end of nature, then 'nature would have hit upon a very poor arrangement in having the reason of the creature carrying out this purpose' (1993: 8).

Although Kant has been critiqued for this ambiguity (Marshall, 2003), criticism seems only valid if Kant assumed that both states of happiness are the same. Yet, it seems plausible that he talked about two different forms, one more fundamental than the other. This complexity is illustrated well in this extended passage:

Yet the precept of happiness is for the most part so constituted that it greatly infringes on some inclinations and yet the human being cannot make any determinate and secure concept of the sum of satisfaction of them all, under the name of 'happiness'; hence it is not to be wondered at that a single inclination, which is determinate in regard to what it promises and the time in which its satisfaction can be obtained, can outweigh a wavering idea; and the human being, e.g., a person with gout, could choose to enjoy what tastes good and to suffer what he must, because in accordance with his reckoning, here at least he has not sacrificed the enjoyment of the present moment through expectations, perhaps groundless, of a happiness that is supposed to lie in health. But also in this case, if the general inclination to happiness does not determine his will, if for him, at least, health does not count as so necessary in his reckoning, then here, as in all other cases, there still remains a law, namely to promote his happiness not from inclination but from duty, and then his conduct has for the first time its authentic moral worth. (Kant, 1993: 12)

Furthermore, Kant continues:

In short, he is not capable of determining with complete certainty, in accordance with any principle, that will make him truly happy, because omniscience would be required for that. Thus one cannot act in accordance with determinate principles in order to be happy, but only in accordance with empirical counsels, e.g., of diet, frugality, politeness, restraint, etc., of which experience teaches that they most promote welfare on the average. (ibid.: 27)

These two abstracts begin to draw together the distinction evident in the approach followed by Heidegger. By linking the temporality of being with the desire satisfaction of the immediate, Kant was able to distinguish between events that supposedly add good and those that ought to bring sustained happiness, for example the good health that we have an imperative towards others to maintain, so as not to be a burden to society. The goals of happiness for Kant are difficult to understand in a determinate way. He argued that happiness is indeterminate,

and so is able neither to categorize it nor to quantify it; for Kant, happiness was prudential and pragmatic in one sense, and a priori in another.

### A very British and Utilitarian response

The notion of ideas of indeterminacy, albeit rationally, not emotionally, defined by Kant seems to find no home in the works of Bentham and Mill, who found determinate pleasures are known through experience of the cause and the ends of happiness. Mill's view of happiness is more refined than Bentham's Utilitarianism, and by introducing notions of higher-order pleasures, has resonance with the nature of our realizing what our being may be, rather than the beings we are, that reflects the world in which we appear. The distinguishing feature of Mill's notion of happiness, manifest as pleasure, is revealed in chapter 2 of his work, *Utilitarianism* (2008a). Like most dispositions, happiness is neither wholly intense nor without disruptions. For Mill, happiness had moments of ecstatic pleasure and moments where it is derived from a lack of pain, from base pleasures and of the realization of the authenticity of self's higher stance in revealing one's being. This realization is in the being of one among others, through the necessary human condition of virtuous co-existence through mutual respect and restraint.

It is Mill's doctrine of higher and lower pleasures that distinguishes it from Bentham's homogeneity, clustering incommensurable entities together such as public houses, ball games and poetry. In calculating sums of happiness, Mill implicitly recognized that, for man, there are more desirable pleasures than mere sensations and that an abundance of sensual pleasure is qualitatively different from those more difficult to obtain and retain. Thus, pleasures are not homogeneously valued, but are separated into higher and lower pleasures. As Mill wrote, 'it is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognize the fact that some kinds of pleasure are more desirable and more valuable than others. It would be absurd that while, in estimating all other things, quality is considered as well as quantity, the estimation of pleasures should be supposed to depend on quantity alone' (2008a: 138–89). This is to say that certain actions are not always higher than others, but might be intrinsically preferable; that we live in an environment beyond our control, and are born into a particular set of circumstances. As I commented, 'Mill declares, that persons who are familiar with the pleasures of the higher faculties – the intellect, the feelings and imagination, the moral sentiments – prefer these pleasures markedly to the lower purely physical

pleasures' (1986). Furthermore, they would not be willing to relinquish these higher pleasures for any amount of the lower, even though they know the higher pleasures to be 'attended with a greater amount of discontent' (31). So, there is a price attached to these high-quality pleasures and the happiness that they may bring. Price is existential; angst cannot be measured by the wisdom of others, but through the dispositions of the person. The greater the natural gifts, the greater one's capacity for both happiness and unhappiness, and, if practised, is it enhanced by learning.

There is a difference between the quantity and quality of these pleasures, and how the selection may be judged. The purpose of this judgement in what is alternatively termed 'utility' or the 'greatest happiness principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness' (Rawls, 1999: 137). Moreover, given that our purpose, our being, is to fulfil the contingencies of the human condition, we should search the specific pleasures and grant them status above those shared with other species: these are the higher pleasures, for the intellectual. Mill's work cannot go uncontested, nor without consideration of its ambiguities as well as recognition of its merits. Its originality has distinctive overtones of Plato's tripartite soul (*The Republic*, 1997a: 580d–583a), Aristotle's *eudaimonia* (*Nicomachean Ethics*; 1177a10–17) and the *Politics*, where he argued that the happiness of the individual is the same, regardless of its form, as the happiness of the state (134a6–21). However, its originality is less problematic than the inherent constrictions, and lacks the worldliness of how Mill's notion applies to the real world. His self-reflection might be the core of higher-level happiness and, taken with situational context, helps his proposal to gain credibility. But this, again, has problems. Although Mill's appeal is to competent judges, his appeal to experience externalizes the judgement of quality. This seems strange, given that the justification for his pleasure principle was based on the Epicurean comparison that

the life of beasts is felt as degrading, precisely because a beast's pleasures do not satisfy a human being's conceptions of happiness. Human beings have faculties more elevated than the animal appetites, and when once made conscious of them, do not regard anything as happiness which does not include their gratification: Is he not discounting those very faculties that distinguish us and collectivise them? (Mill, 2008a: 138)

In this, Mill was mirroring the defence of Epicurus made by Seneca in his essay on happiness. However, there is a stronger concern about Mill and utilitarianism, and that is its failure to come to terms with unhappiness. As Hyland observes,

‘although officially concerned with its avoidance or diminution, utilitarians have generally been content to state this formal principle then go on to concentrate almost exclusively on the pursuit or maximization of its opposite number, happiness’ (1985: 220). This stance does not need to be articulated in a life plan, as Rawls may have maintained in his *A Theory of Justice*. Rawls discussed higher- and lower-level pleasures (1999).

There is little doubt that such an autobiographical plan may facilitate happiness, but, as Bok (2010) proposed, it can be rather restrictive. (The ontological relationship between agency and structure is not considered further here, but is discussed in detail by Scott, 2010.) A happy life is not merely a matter of context and prescribed content worthy of satisfying one’s well-being, for we often do not pursue that which would, in these terms, foster our long-term well-being, as Kant suggests. We all too often make the wrong decisions about what is best to achieve well-being. Indeed, this is to the extent that Haybron argues that we might be best described as pursuing our own unhappiness! Our willingness to condense (buoyed by societal pressures) our temporal horizons and our detachment from our primordial temporality leads us to take happiness as a fetish of having and consuming. This assertion would find favour with Simmel, whose writing on the culture of consumption suggests that *means* actually become perceived as *ends*, and that ‘in the practical life of our mature cultures, our pursuits take on the characteristics of chains, the coils of which cannot be grasped in a single vision’ (1991: 3).

The moderation is through emotion – attunement, or ‘emotional condition’ (Haybron 2009: 128), or Ratcliffe’s ‘existential feeling’ (2005: 46). To be happy, according to Haybron, is for ‘*one’s emotional condition to be broadly positive – involving stances of attunement, engagement, and endorsement – with negative central affective states and mood propensities only to a minor extent*’ (2009: 147; emphasis in original). The attunement to personal profound happiness is a multifaceted notion, revealed not in moments of pleasure or joy, but in the trajectory and feeling of accomplishment of becoming the being one wills through our temporal awareness (Gibbs, 2010a).

The next chapter develops these ideas through the contemporary literature on happiness. This is followed by a consideration of what happiness might mean as an educative principle.

## Contemporary Literature on Happiness

*There are many good reasons not to write a book on happiness. Not least of these is the inherently paradoxical nature of the enterprise. (Haybron, The Pursuit of Unhappiness, 2009: vii)*

### An explosion in world writing if not happiness

For the most part, the previous chapter has considered the normative. This chapter will tend to be, as is the nature of contemporary work on happiness, more descriptive. However, it would be wrong to consider that a full account can be given without intermingling both approaches. Moreover, it would be wrong to consider human happiness to be a life of comfort, contentment and self-satisfaction. Nietzsche is more direct, questioning ‘What is happiness?’ and concludes, somewhat like Hobbes, that it is power: as ‘power increases, that a resistance is overcome, not contentment but more power’ (2003: 217). It is to happiness that Nietzsche addresses his analysis, based on the freedom of reasoning encapsulated in his revaluation of values. In so doing he ruptures a line of thinking that see happiness as a necessary good; a view that pertains through much of the literature on happiness. In *Twilight of the Idols and the Anti-Christ*, Nietzsche states:

The first example of my ‘revaluation of all values.’ An admirable human being, a ‘happy one,’ instinctively must perform certain actions and avoid other actions; he carries these impulses in his body, and they determine his relations with the world and other human beings. In a formula: his virtue is the effect of his happiness. A long life, many descendants – these are not the rewards of virtue: instead,

virtue itself is that slowing down of the metabolism which leads, among other things, to a long life, many descendants – in short, to Cornaro's<sup>1</sup> virtue. (2003: 59)

He is even more disparaging about contentment (although not always consistent) because contentment prevents people from achieving their highest potential. This is illustrated in this passage from *Ecco Homo*: 'I walk among this people and they are becoming smaller and smaller; but this is due to their doctrine of happiness and virtue. For they are modest in virtue too – because they want contentment. But only a modest virtue gets along with contentment' (2008: 146). So, for Nietzsche, being content with one's life is incompatible with having a strong desire to change or improve. Yet, elsewhere in his writing, he suggests that contentment is an essential feature of the good life, so one would want nothing to be different. Yet, contentment, I will contend, is not a final resting point but a positive appraisal of one being. It is more like what R. Belliotti suggests is an 'acknowledgement that we are on the proper course, a savouring of the past seasoned with hope for the future, as satisfaction with the self we are creating' (2003: 60).

These ideas have resonance with existential phenomenological ontology literature, especially work by Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre. Sufficient for now, however, is that there is psychological evidence to support an ontological notion of happiness as fulfilment that has both philosophical and psychological support (Şimşek, 2012). But how do we go about being in this world? Raibley offers a way into this problem through his notion of the flourishing agent, able to bring capabilities and values to bear successfully on the stance taken on their being. Given that this is plausible, then one may ask how to enable the agent to flourish. One source of such enabling is education. To take such a stance presumes that we have abilities and capabilities that are empowered by opportunities for them to function in our willed way of being. These capabilities are decisions of potentiality that can be revealed and investigated through, among other experiences, formal higher education.

Heffernan (2014) has argued that there are two basic approaches to the phenomenon of human happiness: the normative approach, where human happiness requires moral qualities in act; and characterized in terms of virtues and the descriptive approaches to an extra-moral phenomenon that involves satisfaction or fulfilment. The phenomena central to all these theories are almost certainly closely related, and is the episodic feeling or experience of happiness, the feeling that we attribute to people who are in high spirits, a good mood, feeling good and smiling (cf. W. Davis 1981: 305). Many contemporary philosophers hold that this expresses a psychological property: the property



of feeling happy at a time, or episodic happiness (Feldman, 2012: 127–36). This property is sometimes also called ‘the feeling of happiness,’ ‘momentary happiness’ or ‘the occurrent sense of happiness’ (Feldman, 2012; Davis, 1981; Sumner, 1999; Kahneman, 1999).

## Happiness and well-being

Within modern philosophy, what Zevnik calls ‘the art-of-living’ (2014: 4), which depends on ways of achieving individual happiness, has tended to give way to the philosophy of communal happiness. This culminated in the utilitarian philosophy that directly connects oneself as a part of a community in the way that resources could be utilized to maximize pleasure. This is still relevant to the philosophy of happiness, as is illustrated by the work of leading philosophers of the twenty-first century such as Bloomfield, Russell, LeBar, Martin and Feldman. Russell’s happiness is grounded in an Aristotelian notion of well-being in a solution to the problem of having, or giving oneself, a good life. He argues that happiness is a life of activity with three main features: it is acting for the sake of ends we can live for, and living for them wisely; it is fulfilling in use; and it is inextricable from who we are (2012). Indeed, there have been a number of books that attempt to seek to develop *eudaimonia*’s bearing on contemporary problems in philosophy. Notable among them are LeBar (2013) and Bloomfield (2014). Among the most interesting is Martin’s *Happiness and the Good Life* (2012). There has been a strong move towards the collective use of happiness as a policy instrument. Others that have contributed to the well-being literature include Feldman’s hedonic approach (2012, Kraut’s developmentalism and Sen’s (2010) and Nussbaum’s (2011) capabilities approaches. These different approaches are accounts of the same concept, where one’s life is going well for one, and benefits are considered in excess, compared with harm or potential harm. Raibley writes compellingly about the difference and concludes that philosophical arguments verify that these forms of happiness (episodic and personal attribute) are ‘conceptually, metaphysically and extensionally distinct from welfare: they are compatible with seriously impaired agency and dysfunctional emotional and motivational systems while well-being is not’ (2012: 1129).

We need to be clear, I think, that happiness ought not to be conflated with the notion of well-being. Contemporary philosophers tend to see happiness as a feeling notion, one that exists in response to something at a particular time and

over a specific duration. He calls this ‘episodic happiness’. These positions reflect the emotional states theories of Feldman (2012), W.Davis (1981), Sumner (1999) and Kahneman (1999). They have at their core an episodic feeling or experience of happiness. However, perhaps the most important contribution in this context is that of Haybron, who holds that happiness is a more deeply and robust way of being. This is a view that I explore by developing a Heideggerian perspective, but, for now, is on what I call contentment as a fundamental way of being, and restricts the use of happiness as the episodic notion favoured by Feldman (2012: 127–36).

### Codification and scientism – the psychology of happiness

This route identified through Bentham and Mills still retains a strong discourse of government and the economy in maximizing happiness. The introduction of a number of happiness indices is evidence of this and, with this codification of happiness, has given what remains an indistinct notion in the science of happiness. The World Happiness Report<sup>2</sup> (WHR) seems to have a considerable impact on world economy, rather than on social life. Clearly, the main objections to subjective well-being indices are that they are always determined by others as to what is good for society, and that there may be those who are so deprived by society that they have lost all aspirations (for a review and possible solution, see Becchetti et al., 2013).

The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) appreciates a ‘subjective’ happiness, seen from a global point of view, and thus is becoming a useful instrument for determining which countries bear minimum risks for investors (Table 4.1). The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) was designed to detect the relationship between personality and affects: positive and negative, spontaneous or faded. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) measures general satisfaction and contentment. Apart from the PANAS scale, which classifies emotions, these scales underline language change and the loss of initial meaning. Thus, happiness becomes a standard notion (with its adjective of ‘happy’), embodying all synonyms as well as satisfaction, and plays an increasingly important part in everyday discourse by revealing precious information about prosperity, economy and politics (Radcliff, 2013).

Theories of determinants of happiness miss the point on happiness and contentment. One wills one’s fundamental attunement as contentment; it is not a composite of determinants, as some would have it be. For me, contentment is a state of being. What the measures of subjective well-being achieve

**Table 4.1** Selection of happiness indices and scales

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Gross National Happiness Index	<a href="http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com/articles/">http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com/articles/</a>
Happy Planet index	<a href="http://www.happyplanetindex.org/about/">http://www.happyplanetindex.org/about/</a>
Oxford Happiness Index	<a href="https://hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/WES_KeepCalmOxfordHappinessQuest.pdf">https://hee.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/WES_KeepCalmOxfordHappinessQuest.pdf</a>
Contentment with Life Assessment Scale	<a href="http://www.midss.org/content/contentment-life-assessment-scale-clas">http://www.midss.org/content/contentment-life-assessment-scale-clas</a>
World Database of Happiness	<a href="http://www1.eur.nl/fsw/happiness/">http://www1.eur.nl/fsw/happiness/</a>
Subjective Happiness Scale	<a href="http://sonjalyubomirsky.com/subjective-happiness-scale-shs/">http://sonjalyubomirsky.com/subjective-happiness-scale-shs/</a>
Positive and Negative Affect Schedule	<a href="http://www.statisticssolutions.com/positive-and-negative-affect-schedule-panas/">http://www.statisticssolutions.com/positive-and-negative-affect-schedule-panas/</a>
Satisfaction with Life Scale	<a href="http://internal.psychology.illinois.edu/~ediener/SWLS.html">http://internal.psychology.illinois.edu/~ediener/SWLS.html</a>
Child well-being in rich countries	<a href="https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/683/">https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/683/</a>
Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)	<a href="http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs/">http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/research/platform/wemwbs/</a>

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is a measurement of the elements that are measured. There seems to be a category mistake in having measured them, then aggregated them, and given that aggregated statistical description a name, as if it were a real mood, emotion or feeling. Such measurements enframe us into what we are supposed to be and how others would use us as such. They strip being of all substantive content.

### The epoch of scientism

The evolution of the study of happiness has accelerated over the current epoch of scientism. In doing so, the nature of happiness has sought to be defined as if it has a form that is universal and can be characterized, identified and manipulated. Evidence to support the temporal and emotional structures of happiness are somewhat supported by more recent works (e.g., Diener, 1984;

Shmotkin, 2005), from a newly established agenda of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and from a narrative psychological perspective. Notwithstanding this, Zimbardo and Boyd (1999), Drake et al. (2008) and Şimşek (2009), in particular, have proposed a construct of subjective well-being as 'one's evaluation of life in both past and future time perspectives in addition to the present' (Şimşek, 2009: 505), a life project created and maintained in a temporal perspective (Şimşek & Kocayörük, 2012). Moreover, evoking Heidegger and his own notion of ontological category, he argues that time, 'when considered as a basic ontological category', transforms the concept of 'life as a personal project' into one more abstract: 'life as a project of becoming', which is the chief good as the indicator of a happy life (Şimşek, 2009: 511). Indeed, as Ratcliffe rightly argues in a series of publications (e.g. 2005, 2007), there is sufficient neuroscientific and psychopathological evidence to support such a position.

As suggested by Deci and Ryan (2008), current research on well-being is derived from two general perspectives: the hedonic approach, which focuses on happiness and defines well-being in terms of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance; and the eudaimonic approach, which focuses on meaning and self-realization, and defines well-being in terms of the degree to which a person is fully functioning. Hedonic happiness may be the natural result of a eudaimonic well-being (an irruption), and they therefore share a common genesis. Citing the works of Boniwell and Zimbardo (2004), among others, to support his case that an ontological construct of happiness has value, Şimşek's research suggests that its temporal-emotional form can be conceptualized as nothingness, hope, regret and activation, yet of a well-being (albeit a composite) interchangeable with happiness. Indeed, Raibley (2012), who might be sympathetic to Şimşek's blending of the intentional and emotional, draws a distinction between episodic happiness – intense as joy, disinterested as cheeriness – as subjective well-being.

To feel this happiness, which is not a consequence of positive outcomes but the cause of them (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005), requires taking a stance on one's being, seeking and then making a choice as to the possibilities that one can achieve. In so doing, it requires breaking from the view that human nature, 'embodied most plainly in mainstream economic thought has helped to create a set of very strong and persuasive presumptions about the value of certain freedoms for human welfare, and, in turn, about the kinds of policies and social forms that tend to promote well-being' (Haybron, 2009: 250).

## Haybron and a preliminary understanding of deep happiness – contentment

Before moving from the philosophical to the communal and the psychological, finishing this short contemporary introduction, it is worth lingering longer on the work of Haybron, for it has direct impact on the proposal for happiness developed in the next chapter. Haybron presents his emotional state theory as an alternative to hedonism and life-satisfaction accounts of happiness. He argues that happiness consists not of a positive overall balance of pleasure over pain, as hedonists would have it, nor in life satisfaction, but in a positive emotional condition (Haybron, 2009). It is a state that, though not immutable, is robust and typically enduring, since it is keyed to the general conditions of a person's life rather than the details (*ibid.*: 125). Haybron holds that at least some uses of 'is happy' conventionally express a different psychological property, the property of being deeply or robustly happy (147). This proposal is motivated, in part, by the great importance that ordinary people attach to happiness as a life goal. This form of deep or robust happiness is conceived as an 'emotional condition' (128). Emotional conditions are hypothesized by Haybron to be more stable than states, emotions or moods. They are also more central and broad, because they involve dispositions to respond to the events of one's life in certain characteristic ways.

Happiness is the freedom of self-determination within the context of a chosen world view. Fundamental happiness, as distinct from irruptions of trivial pleasure or scrutinized notions of what is good for one, is not restricted to what others think and try to determine, but by what one's own stance is. It is not the satisfaction of exciting preferences but the securing of one's action into a life plan of one's being. This position allows for happiness to be cross-cultural and embraces faith as well as pragmatism, all in a non-economic, Stoic form of willed intention. It is about one's fit within one's being, to flourish in the world of, but not be resolved by, others.

Haybron has made an important contribution to the philosophy of well-being and happiness research by highlighting the importance of moods and emotions. Haybron characterizes the emotional condition of deep or robust happiness as a 'mood propensity', by virtue of which one is prone to take greater pleasure in things, to see things in a more positive light, to take greater notice of good things, to be more optimistic, to be more outgoing and friendly and to take chances more. One is also slower and less likely to become anxious or fearful, or to be angered or saddened by events. One confronts the world in a different way from the unhappy (2009: 139).

This complex theory of happiness has three emotional responses: broadly positive; appropriate; and involving stances of attunement, engagement and endorsement. It is dispositional, and the three modes are well articulated and contextualized by Raibley (2012). I therefore quote at length:

Attunement involves peace of mind or tranquillity and confidence. It also involves ‘uncompression’, which occurs when a person is not harried or anxious, not striking a defensive posture, but emotionally open and feeling at home in the world. Engagement involves taking an active interest in the events of one’s own life, being energized, and being attentive. The ‘flow’ experiences described by Csikszentmihalyi (1993), for example, are forms of engagement. Finally, endorsement involves positive emotions, especially joy and cheerfulness. When these stances define one’s emotional condition, so that they are the norm for one, they count as central affective states. The more persistent (i.e. stable and robust), pervasive (i.e., diffused throughout the whole of consciousness), profound (i.e. characterized by a visceral phenomenal feel), and causally dispositive these states are, the happier one is. (1109)

Mood propensities are characterized by Haybron as being emotionally based and generalized: that is, they are dispositions to experience positive or negative moods in a wide range of circumstances, not just in response to specific kinds of objects (2009: 137). This is a state that, although not immutable, is robust and enduring. It is more than a facet of our lives, but ‘plausibly tends to be keyed to the general conditions of our lives, not the details’ (125). However, Haybron continues, this is a disposition that is active through externalities – things that make us happy. He continues that ‘the difficulty of pursuing happiness is no reason to think happiness is a mainly biological or temperamental affair, unchangeable and unconnected with the considerations of our lives’ (126).

## Emotions and dispositions

Haybron has been criticized earlier – by Hill (2009) and more briefly by Feldman (2012: 29) – for including mood propensities in his theory and thus conceiving of happiness in dispositional terms. Klausen’s criticism of Haybron has an obvious affinity to that of both Hill and Feldman, especially to their putative counterexamples. It goes beyond by considering more general ontological questions about dispositionality and the self, as well as our practices of psychological explanation. As Klausen (2016) points out, these mood propensities might be

primordial, but are subject to acculturation and are not always manifested in happiness or joy. We might be content or anxious, yet still laugh at a joke and smile at a baby gurgling. One could be in a state of contentment and not feel very happy! Klausen's concern with Haybron's work is based on the difference between categorical or occurrent psychological states and disposition. Klausen claims that happiness cannot be dispositional, for the hidden disposition personal contest of how we experience happiness is not available for investigation. This view, elegantly argued in Klausen's critique, does seem problematic on at least two fronts. The first is dependent on a notion of being that is evidential and along the line of Wittgenstein's personal languages, and that the experience and feeling of happiness are externally triggered and of limited duration. By this reasoning, we are never predisposed to take happiness from anything but a response to it; that is, things evoke happiness, albeit different things and different circumstances. Those that regularly evoke happiness might tend to be more attractive to us and their appearance evoke a form of emotional hedonism, similar to a Pavlovian dog (*ibid.*).

This critique is problematic for Haybron's work, for he struggles to reveal how the dispositions allow one to feel and act happier in the present of other entities, and, I believe, follow the basic theme of those who critique him. The solution seems to rest on the notion that happiness can be both occurrent and dispositional, and this is evoked by external events. A simpler explanation is that happiness and its varied level of intensity are indeed episodic, but that a deeper, more enduring deposition of contentment is to see an emotional context that is more conducive to such eruptions of joy. Moreover, like Heidegger, one can assume that our very being is emotional and that things are revealed to us through those emotions, not the other way around. We need to be counterintuitive and consider that happiness and unhappiness are not features or properties in the world, but emerge through the appropriation of the world – through a subject who simultaneously wills and acts in the world.

Contentment is an integral part of what it is to be human, yet its significance for education has not been widely noted. We conceptualize contentment as arising from the convergence of the differing selves (actual, ought and ideal), with emotions such as happiness, frustration, compassion and despair being functions of self-discrepancy and convergence. We believe that this framework offers particular insight into the higher-education experience, as students grow both intellectually and personally. Too often, the notion of contentment has been captured within the rubric of student satisfaction. This is a different, more instrumental and shallower concept, but one that has had major impact on university

missions. A pedagogy of contentment should be radical, at the centre of higher education as a social good, and should enable and facilitate students to take a stance on their being and agency with others. It will develop both happiness within themselves and the resilience to engage with the world of work and civic responsibility, and to face despair positively. A pedagogy of contentment is not about passivity, but about awareness and engagement with others to seek a better place to live. It is more than resilience training,<sup>3</sup> seeking fundamental ways of being within the world.

Currently, higher-education strategies focus largely on developing skills that secure employment in the world of work. This may have immediate advantages, but in totalizing pedagogic practice it may restrict our openness to people and our own contentment. Valuable as current practice may be a way to satisfy politico-economic policy imperatives, it strays from education as an edifying process, for it fails to face the emotional personal development that is involved in facing up to the distress, despair, hope and happiness of higher education. European higher-education pedagogy should embrace these issues. This research project takes a multidisciplinary approach to investigating and developing educational approaches by the fostering of student well-being; the dissemination of evaluative instruments; case studies; and pedagogical innovations to enable students to take a stance on their own contentment. This is an under-researched area and we will develop an understanding of a notion of contentment that can be implemented as a curriculum enhancement. This will be distinctive and have impact for individual institutions and European higher education more widely.

This challenges the premise of contemporary higher education by placing happiness, joy, despair, subjective well-being and hope within the rubric of contentment as the central purpose of a higher-education institution's mission. The contentment motive asks education to challenge what it is to be a member of society: what moral and ontological stance one will seek to take in developing one's future. Satisfied students perpetuate the current life-world in which they find themselves, seeking to improve the quality of the services provided. It is proposed that an overly emphasized desire-satisfaction culture – where students are customers and their desire for needs, such as enjoyable lectures, detailed learning routes and resources – inhibits the edifying non-intellectual mission of universities and students' innovative self-development. This is not to argue against high-quality service provisions, but to differentiate it from the edifying role of personal challenge, determination and social responsibility, conceptualized here as profound happiness and the university's role in its development. It calls for a different and more refreshing approach to higher education, which



is losing its shape and ‘morphing’ into socially experienced training provision. Further, there is growing evidence that there is a link between contentment and success later in life. The implications of happiness affect numerous fields and should be considered more often in research. In this line, a recent study has described a relationship between happiness and longevity.

The problem with contentment is that it is complex and needs a multidisciplinary approach to investigate it, and the literature is drawn from the philosophical, psychological, educational and economic disciplines to illuminate the problem. The central problem is one of definition and conception; that is, why should higher education encourage contentment as one of its purposes? In response, there is evidence that people who are happy are more successful; they are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and less likely to drop out (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). The subjective feeling of well-being can be fostered in people. Therefore, its chronicity will increase contentment levels (Ouyang et al., 2015). Hence, we can derive that, if contentment can be improved and modified, it can be trained and taught.

Moreover, happiness is contagious (Fowler & Christakis, 2009), so content people affect others in their network. Yet the notion of contentment remains problematic, for it assumes that the overriding purpose of higher education is a common good. Moreover, is this common good something that can be articulated as a process of self-development, where seeking contentment might counter the economic, globalized discourse of higher education (although not the nature of the university) or the common good of humanity? Either way, what are the requirements of teachers, students, curricula, accreditation, institutional structures and governance, as well as governmental educational and economic policy, in which contentment can flourish?

In practice, problems emerge in the form of the contribution to be made structurally in order to enable institutions to align it strategically, with resources to fulfil this purpose, and socio-politically in confronting the current neoliberal consumerist-defined reality of the university’s activities. How do we challenge students to confront what they are and the conditions that support that, and to seek what they might be in order to be happy with who they will become?



## The Language of Happiness and UK Higher Education

*If the good or bad exercise of the will does alter the world, it can alter only the limits of the world, not the facts – not what can be expressed by means of language. In short, the effect must be that it becomes an altogether different world, it must, so to speak, wax and wane as a whole. The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man. (Wittgenstein, 1961, 6: 43, 72)*

### Words do mean something, but we can't be bothered

Despite the enormous growth in happiness research in recent decades, there remains a lack of consistency in the use of the term 'happiness', its episodic derivatives and 'contentment'. This chapter explores a number of sources of what happiness might mean. Apparently, the distinction between happiness, and indeed contentment, is semantically insignificant when compared to subjective well-being, the life satisfaction of happiness. Certainly, Radcliff argues that they are synonymous. His arguments are two-fold: first, 'the theoretical distinctions between cognition and emotion when evaluating how one's life is a precarious one, and in any event (b) the correlations between the two questions (and ... other measures of well-being) tend to be very high' (2013: 78). This has to be contestable, although I accept that it is common practice in sociology and political science (Radcliffe's assertion, not mine).

Apart from this academic context, it also seems clear that 'happiness', as a word, has lost much of its defining and nuanced value. We use the term for enduring happiness, momentary happiness and as a disposition. Iona Duță (2016) argues that we can observe a mutation in the paradigm – 'happiness', as a distinct term,

can be scarcely found in public discourse, as it has been replaced with its synonyms such as ‘quality of life’, ‘satisfaction’, ‘contentment’ and ‘well-being’. The word ‘happiness’ is now but a generality, devoid of meaning (Duță,2016). An interesting and developing study was undertaken by Duță on happiness, and the synonyms used to describe first happiness and then the synonym itself. Searching the *Oxford English Dictionary* online, thesaurus.com and the *Collins French–English Dictionary*, she was able to reveal first an intriguing finding that there was no uniformity of reciprocity in synonyms, and then, by looking at the highest number of reciprocal relations, devised a way to cluster those synonyms that were more associated with a notion of very happy; happy; and not so happy. However, many of the synonyms are not of what happiness is, but what it is claimed makes us happy. Table 5.1 provides examples of this analysis.

Happy are those who find the suitable words to say they are happy! Duță also points out that, besides common language, it is worth mentioning the numerous other ways of depicting happiness. Art would be one of them; an amalgam of emotions can be traced with the help of a brush, for instance. In such a case, one is tempted to paint a splash of intense, vivid colours (an ‘explosion’ of joy) or characters (figuring tenderness, love, friendship) or objects (reflecting a certain nostalgic absence or perhaps jogging one’s memory of a past happiness) or even other abstractions (suggesting passion, the intimate irrational). This form of symbolization of a feeling can have a therapeutic role, the assuagement and the release of self-abandonment to the precipitation and delights of happiness, while, on the other side of the easel, one who perceives the painting yet is not sure of being able to decipher the ‘imagined’ sentiment.

Resuming, art stages several actors, going beyond the idea of representation, having seen that in this case happiness expects an answer (a bilateral expression), whereas enunciation does not imply an echo. On the other hand, it is desirable that an interlocutor is present; a man can accomplish the manifestation of joy if someone can hear him. Even if happiness exists, whether or not it is expressed, individuals demonstrate the need to *share* their happiness, to model it and give it a shape and to evaluate it in its rough form.

**Table 5.1** Words do mean something, but we can’t be bothered

<b>Synonymy intensity</b>	<b>Indicative synonymies</b>
Very happy	Overjoyed, ecstatic, elated, rapturous
Happy	Satisfied, enchanted, delighted, pleased
Less happy	Can’t complain, warm, comfortable, nonchalant

## Category mismatch?

Expressed as words, meaning is not assigned by some transcendent power but by words' use in accordance with social norms. For instance, in a huge analysis of blogs, Mogilner et al. (2011) found evidence that there is a tendency for meanings of happiness, cross-culturally, to have common components and that these tend to change over life. Younger people are more likely to associate happiness with excitement. As they get older, they become more likely to associate happiness with peacefulness. More explicitly, they state: 'the current research suggests that the meaning of happiness is neither idiosyncratic nor singular and stable. Rather, happiness exhibits a predictable regularity, its meaning is dynamic over the life course, and the different meanings of happiness are malleable and drive behaviour' (2011: 401). The meaning of happiness and its use in common language and educational policy is discussed in this chapter.

To interpret Wittgenstein's comments in the above quote, we need to appreciate that his meaning required neither representational nor propositional relationships, but could be a contents notion that retained its meaning in language and action. For Wittgenstein, a *proposition* is the expression of a thought, so that the incompatibility in question is taken to be an incompatibility between the nature of something that is said and the nature of the context in which it is said.

Thus, happiness and unhappiness involve a web of propositional contexts rather than some particular propositional content or a referential relation between a name and an object. The negation of happiness reveals both the opposite to happiness, thus contributing to our understanding of happiness, and more – that which is distinct about unhappiness. This recognition of the negative impulses inside linguistic structure helps reveal meaning. Indeed, the use of the negative is often used in an evaluative way to describe phenomena that make us unhappy, and also what we do not like or understand. We use it to dismiss an object as a way of dealing with it. As Balaska (2014)<sup>1</sup> has shown, it is the within our universe of everyday language that the need for clarity and recovery of meaning emerges. If we understand meaning as the recovery of contexts of significant use, it is easier to decouple meaning from particular propositional content and understand it in a more holistic way (Balaska, 2014: 409). So, in this quote, the good exercise of the will involves life and the world as a whole: my whole world has significance and this makes it a happy world. The ill-advised exercise of the will results only in the world of facts, a world without any other delimitation.

Ryle, influenced by Wittgenstein, helps frame the following discussion. Happiness and happy seem to designate a number of different things. They cover both the temporally short notions of emotions, feelings and inclinations, as well as indicating an enduring disposition. In the analysis that follows it is difficult to be clear on the categories in which happiness is used. Is happiness ‘the fleeting moments of delight, rapture, exultation and joy’ or the enduring nature of one being; she is a happy person. I distinguish the notions as forms of emotion and mood, and that the latter is a disposition of contentment, not the episodic emotion of happiness, as I argue in this chapter. At this stage, it is important to recognize that the differences are significant to the meaning of the concept. I use ‘someone who is contented’ not to say that at any particular moment he is contented, but rather that she is ‘prone to do and feel certain things in situations of certain sorts’ (Ryle, [1949] 2009: 100).<sup>2</sup> For Ryle, to understand the sense of a proposition regarding a thing or an event, one has to know the category in which the concept of the entity fits. This requires that one knows which questions may appropriately be asked with regard to the entity or event. In this sense, the category and questions are related to each other in the meaning given to the entity or event. As Ryle puts it in his introduction to *The Concept of Mind*:

To determine the logical geography of concepts is to reveal the logic of the propositions in which they are wielded, that is to say, to show with what other propositions they are consistent and inconsistent, what propositions follow from them and from what propositions they follow. The logical type or category to which a concept belongs is the set of ways in which it is logically legitimate to operate with it. ([1949] 2009: ix)

In what sense can we derive a categorical meaning of happiness?

### Considering contentment

The etymology of the terms shows a closeness and interrelationship between all three terms: being contented, satisfied and happy. Indeed, it seems that the dominant term is happiness, for it can act as meaning giving in a number of ways. The literature often uses happiness as a prefix to discussing desire satisfaction and contentment. However, in this chapter I want deliberately to hold them apart, albeit for the time, being under the rubric of happiness. I do this not for the reason as McKenzie (2016), who argues articulately that happiness is an emotion along with, or manifested as, pleasure and joy, and that contains

physiological stimuli within the subject. There is a different notion, one of social experience that consists of a satisfying relationship with society, that I will call contentment. This is a cognitive and reflective notion of contentment and although rich and nuanced in that McKenzie does not want to exclude contentment from positive affect and, in this sense, the lived experience of happiness and contentment, can be difficult to separate. But it is in reflection that contentment comes into its own. Contentment is a positive feeling that results from reflection that is itself fulfilling. He is right that 'contentment involves work and leisure, pleasure and pain, reward and sacrifice. It is long lasting and involves a form of selfhood or self-understanding that becomes a source of satisfaction or fulfilment' (McKenzie, 2016: 3). In what follows, contentment is dispositional not cognitive. The degree to which an individual perceives his wants to be met is called 'contentment' by Veenhoven, and this concept equals the above-previously mentioned 'cognitive' definitions of happiness. This concept presupposes that the individual has developed some conscious wants and has formed an idea about their realization. Rojas and Veenhoven (2013) explore both a cognitive and affective notion of happiness and are equivocal in the results that they produced.

The same might be true of the position taken by Carson (1981), who considered contentment in two ways. The first is where we might consider ourselves contending with the situation; that is, not dissatisfied, but of course open to the improvement of our lot. It is an evaluation of the extent of our feeling about something and the degree to which we might will ourselves to act to change the circumstances of ourselves or others. According to Carson, this form of contentment was 'not sufficient for happiness' (1981: 380). The second form of contentment is being pleased with something for itself. Although this form of contentment might be susceptible to deceit, while we are only concerned with what we perceive, then we might remain contented. Carson was right to raise concerns of deceit and worked on the notion of contentment as being an extended notion of an assessment of one's life, both in the way one reacts to the world and how it reacts to one. Her work clearly implies that things that happen outside of one's control can affect one's satisfaction with one's life. Yet, Carson seemed to conflate contentment as a precondition of happiness, and this seems to be empirically and logically incorrect. To feel contentment about one's life and one's sense of self means more than just having what one wants and being satisfied by it. It is more a matter of how we appreciate and value what we have (relationships, status, autonomy, etc.), rather than the perceived quality of what we have.

It might well be informed by the social, not in its emergence but in its shaping as a way of being. My reading of Mackenzie and of Carson is that contentment is some form of self-reflective well-being, a social *eudaimonia* well-being constructed from social engagement –not, as I see it, honed from social engagement and not emergent from Being of being.

## Language of UK higher-education policy

The use of language in policy documents can reveal much about the intent of legalization. In this next section, I have considered the occurrence of words referring to positive emotions within three specific policy documents, namely the *Robbins Report* (1963), *Dearing Report* (1997) and the higher-education White Paper *Higher Education: Success as a Knowledge Economy* (2016).<sup>3</sup> The analysis that follows highlights the shift in how the education endeavour is framed and described over the fifty-plus years covered by the documents. All the documents were scanned for the frequency of words, and headings were developed to capture the core themes pertaining to these words.

## Method – a qualitative content analysis

The methodology used is content analysis. Because the aim of the research was to track a change in discourse, an effort that requires a qualitative overlook not provided by typical quantitative content analysis, it was not the frequency of words that was taken into account, but the linguistic context in which these words occurred. Hence, the content analysis was qualitative and consisted of two stages: a top-down stage where a priori devised key terms for the search were looked for in the text; and a bottom-up stage where qualitative associations of the key words to other words within the same paragraph were identified. The shift in the discourse surrounding higher-education discourse was then inferred, based on the variations in such associations.

It was hypothesized that the content analysis would reveal a switch in the discourse surrounding higher education taking place from the 1960s to 2016. Hence, all policy papers regarding higher education that were published within this period were identified (based on lists from Coron, 2016; Gillard, 2011; Foster, 1997; Pring, unpublished). From this list, five policy papers were selected for inclusion in the sample, based on historical importance and contemporary



relevance. These include the *Robbins Report* (1963), *Dearing Report* (1997), 2015–2016 TEF Green Paper, 2016 White Paper *Higher Education: Success as a Knowledge Economy* and 2016 Research Bill. The Green Paper and the Research Bill did not yield sufficient data after being subjected to analysis, so they were eliminated from the sample.

These three documents were searched for discourse that included words pertaining to the themes of flourishing and excellence. These themes were chosen because they represent the binary opposition of two philosophical standpoints taken on happiness: development for personal value's sake; and utilitarian development for the sake of fitting into society, including for the sake of optimal functioning of the market. After a pilot reading of the data, focus was placed on four key words: 'happiness' (including contentment and its opposite, unhappiness); 'flourish'; and, from a more consumeristic perspective, 'market' and 'efficiency'.

To perform a discursive reading, the words were looked at in relation to the linguistic context in which they were embedded, specifically in relation to other key words (formal relevance) or concepts that they were juxtaposed to (semantic relevance). Speculations were made on the meaning of the words within the context of use of similar or opposite words and concepts (pragmatic relevance). These three types of relevance are based on the three levels of analysis that can be found associated with language; that is, syntactics, semantics and pragmatics (Morris, 1938). The unit of analysis devised to identify the key words and look at their linguistic context was the paragraph. The three documents are briefly outlined before an analysis is conducted.

### **The Robbins Report**

The *Robbins Report on Higher Education*, published in October 1963, underpinned many of the changes in British higher education that have taken place since then, notably the great expansion of the system – but not an expansion, simply of more of the same. The title, *Robbins Report on Higher Education*, is significant, as the 1944 Act had been for schools. It questioned the assumed 'restricted pool of ability' that had limited the number of universities (and thereby access to them). Based on Calhoun's 2014 analysis, the effect of the *Robbins Report* was higher education being transformed in form and structure, as well as enlarged by the addition of new subjects, the adoption of new approaches to teaching and changes in the structure of degrees. It encouraged thinking of higher education as a national system, one that incorporated a diverse range of institutions in a

common – and ambitious – effort to create new knowledge and make knowledge effective for economic opportunities and growth.

In Robbins's view, higher education was clearly a good, one that would benefit society if available in greater quantity. The report laid out a number of purposes for higher education and functions it served. Higher education would advance the economy by increasing the skills of the labour force. It would promote general powers of the mind. Through research, it would increase the overall store of knowledge. And not least, higher education would transmit 'a common culture and common standards of citizenship'. Further, based on these premises, all 'courses of higher education should be available for all those who wish to do so' (Robbins, 1963: 8).

### **The Dearing Report**

The *Dearing Report on Higher Education*, published in 1997, was the first officially sponsored examination of the higher education system in the UK since the *Robbins Report* of 1963. Dearing was asked to solve immediate problems and to look ahead to the future. His vision was that higher education should contribute to the development of a learning society:

Over the next twenty years, the United Kingdom must create a society committed to learning throughout life. That commitment will be required from individuals, the state, employers and providers of education and training. Education is life enriching and desirable in its own right. It is fundamental to the achievement of an improved quality of life in the UK. (*Dearing Report*, 1997a: 1)

However, it was the financial crisis in higher education of the 1990s, brought about by the combined effects of underfunding and expansion, which Dearing addressed and resolved with the introduction of student fees. As Bathmaker records, 'Dearing proposed that the block grant to universities should be replaced by a system of funding which follows the student, and put forward proposals for how students should finance their study' (2003: 177).

### **The 2016 White Paper – Success as a knowledge economy**

The rationale for this White Paper is set out by the Minister for Universities and Science:

Our universities rank among our most valuable national assets, underpinning both a strong economy and a flourishing society. Powerhouses of intellectual

and social capital, they create the knowledge, capability and expertise that drive competitiveness and nurture the values that sustain our open democracy. Access to higher education can be life changing for individuals and, by ending student number controls, we have made the possibility of participation in it a reality for more people than ever before. The skills that great higher education provides – the ability to think critically and to assess and present evidence – last a lifetime and will be increasingly in demand as the number and proportion of high-skilled jobs rises. (2016: 5)

It is too early to suggest the outcomes of the claims that it contains: the expansion of private provision; the market mechanisms it strongly advocates; the reshaping of the central agencies of administration of quality, research and student interest; and the teaching interventions it proposes.

## Analysis

### **Happiness and contentment**

The language of policy in the *Robbins Report* (1963) includes ‘happy’ and ‘contentment’, both in their negative and positive value. For example, happiness is used in reference to the autonomy of PhD students:

Apart from the general lack of formal training and seminars, there is also the problem of the negligent supervisor. It may be that many able people require very little formal supervision and are happiest left alone. For the scientist the frequent informal contact in the laboratory may be the most valuable element in his training. (103)

Because autonomous PhD students are represented as valuable in science, happiness – referring to autonomy – appears to be a value of higher education in this report.

Happiness is also used in relation to the happiness of the institution:

there remains, however, a large residue of matters, ranging from broad questions of policy and general methods of instruction to questions of syllabuses, on which there is no special reason to assume that the holders of chairs have a monopoly of wisdom, on which indeed junior staff are quite as likely to make a valuable contribution. This field includes a large proportion of the questions on whose proper solution the progress and happiness of an academic institution depends. (*Robbins Report*, 1963: 673)

Because the happiness of the institution includes the collaboration of junior staff, it transpires that the discourse on higher education that Robbins drew on takes happiness to be settled in, and ultimately linked to, equality.

It is interesting how, in this report, there is also reference to unhappiness and discontentment: a break in the continuity of responsibility for education here 'at its most sensitive point' would be most unhappy. Or, it is not necessary to enlarge at length on the unhappiness and frustration bred in the applicants by this state of affairs. The apprehension among the more gifted boys and girls as they approach eighteen is coming to be as serious as the tension and anxieties caused by the 'eleven-plus' examination.<sup>4</sup>

Contentment in its negative form (discontent) also occurs: while there is a perceptible discontent in Scotland, as there is in England and Wales, it must be recognized that it has different causes and takes different forms. And, the current discontent in the Training Colleges is not just a matter of wanting degrees (*Robbins Report*, 1963: 362).

The presence of notions of unhappiness and discontent in the *Robbins Report* implies that the discourse on higher education includes the idea that one way to achieve happiness is reduce unhappiness, or pain. On the other hand, in the *Dearing Report* (1997), contentment relates mainly to being content with services. For instance: 8.54 in our survey of students, young students were generally content with the services available to them from institutions and students' unions, but part-time students were much less satisfied, often regarding services as irrelevant to their needs.

It is also understood that the essence of contentment may be satisfaction. Hence, the discourse of education draws on a philosophical take on happiness that conflates contentment with satisfaction. Also, it is of note that contentment is mentioned only once in this report. This scarcity is significant when it is compared to the much higher frequency of the occurrence of the word 'market' in this very same report (see below), suggesting that contentment as satisfaction bears a utilitarian overtone, as it is to be conceived in relation to a market, not an individual's flourishing.

Lastly, in the White Paper (2016), happiness refers to satisfaction from services received, not from happiness about learning: switching between institutions is possible in theory, but rare in practice: if students are unhappy with the quality of provision, they are unlikely to take their funding to an alternative institution (2016: 53).

The discourse of higher education present here is one that conceives of happiness as a discrete element that can be received, like a service or commodity. It is episodic.

## Flourishing

In the *Robbins Report*, the word 'flourishing' is used twice. The frequency is low, but the way in which it is used is significant. First, 'flourishing' refers to the flourishing of departments: moreover, the Regional Colleges are not so heavily orientated towards science and technology and they include flourishing departments of business studies, architecture and many other specialisms (*Robbins Report*, 1963: 137).

Also, it refers to the flourishing of research and teaching. These activities are juxtaposed with ideas of 'fullest development' and 'academic autonomy', so are clearly directed at the well-being of the academic community:

The question is by what means government participation in promoting and co-ordinating higher education can most effectively be organised so as to ensure that the fullest development is secured, while maintaining and, indeed, strengthening the academic autonomy which, it is agreed, is not only a treasured heritage but a necessity if teaching and research at all levels are to flourish. (*Robbins Report*, 1963: 293)

This use of 'flourish' in the *Robbins Report* marks a strong difference in relation to that used in other reports, for example compared to the *Dearing Report*, where 'flourish' relates to management strategies. In fact, in the *Dearing Report*, 'flourish' refers only to the flourishing of an abstract organization. Higher education institutions may need to learn from the changes in organisational structure, decision-making and the approach to lifelong learning made by other organisations in order to flourish in a fast-changing global economy.

Hence, 'flourish' relates to management strategies. Also, the linguistic context of 'flourishing' includes notions of fast-changing global economy and organizational structure, decision-making and the lifelong learning of organizations. In the White Paper, 'flourishing' is a key term, but the context in which it occurs shows that it is detached from the personal flourishing of students: in 2015, we removed the artificial cap on student numbers to allow greater choice and to help competition to flourish (7). Or, excellent teaching needs to flourish across the sector (13).

In the White Paper, the key concern is with the flourishing of competition, choice and teaching (for the sake of improved competition). At this point, the discourse around 'flourishing' in higher education has made a strong switch from the student to the organization that is hosting the students. This switch, in turn, suggests that the value of education implicit in this report lies in the power

of education to sustain market-based systems, rather than its power to develop students as happy human beings.

## Market

In the *Robbins Report*, the use of the term ‘market’ (mentioned just once, and as a general expression, i.e. marketplace), is significant because it is related to excellence through exclusion: Excellence is not something that can be bought any day in the market (1963: 79).

In the discourse of higher education grounding this report, excellence excludes general notions of market or marketplace, because it is not something that can be bought. As shown below, this value stands in total opposition to the contemporary discourse of excellence, which appears instead as something that *can* indeed be bought at the market, specifically the higher-education market.

In the *Dearing Report*, both the frequent mention of the word ‘market’ and the linguistic context in which it occurs strongly suggest the link of education to the needs of the economy, to goods and services, and to the global corporation: one phenomenon is the emergence of the global corporation locating and relocating its operations to wherever there is greatest relative advantage, whether in accessing markets or in accessing the factors affecting production, including in particular the quality of the labour force.

In the discourse grounding the *Dearing Report*, education is now tailored to labour market needs, the national economy, the world economy and competitive challenges (the context of 1997 was that there was more awareness of globalization):

The future demand for those with higher education qualifications will be shaped by the changing structure of the national economy and the labour market, which in turn will be responding to changes in the world economy and the associated competitive challenges.

Up to the year 2000, labour market requirements will largely be met by the current level of higher education participation. (6.11)

Also, within the linguistic context of market and labour market priority, students are considered a general stock of graduates: however, the stock of graduates in the labour market compares well with many European countries, in part because of high graduation rates (6.13).

This is much like range of products to stock a supermarket’s shelf, ready to be picked and sold to buyers. Also, in this discourse, students are ‘absorbed’ by the labour market or ‘supplied’, like elements devoid of human agency: there is room for debate as to whether ... there is need in the immediate future for further

expansion and whether the labour market could absorb further increases in the numbers of conventional graduates (6.11).

It would, indeed, be surprising if the labour market did not need time to respond fully to the increased supply of those with higher level qualifications (6.13).

Lastly, students are considered as (skilled) workers, not learners: a study of the likely future labour market needs for highly skilled workers (89).

This conception subsumes a specific utilitarian value that is attached to higher education, one where a learner is a worker; hence, where the purpose of higher education is related to the labour market only. Therefore, in this discourse, educational function does not encompass the flourishing of the student, but serves to make students 'right' for the market: a survey of graduates by the University of Central England points to strong demand from employers for graduates with the *right* qualities, notwithstanding recent increases in the flow of graduates to the labour market (11, my emphasis).

In the White Paper, the centrality of market-related terms persist. 'Market' appears in relation to (1) choice and competition: Competition between providers in any market incentivises them to raise their game, offering consumers a greater choice of more innovative and better quality products and services at lower cost (8); in relation to (2) risk: We are committed to monitoring the market using a risk-based approach, treating all providers with parity, and focusing intervention where risks arise (33); and, finally, in relation to (3) regulation:

We will establish a new market regulator, the Office for Students (OfS) that operates on behalf of students and tax payers to support a competitive environment and promote choice, quality and value for money.

In creating the OfS, the regulation of higher education will be restructured, shifting from an outdated, top-down model of a funding agency to a market regulator clearly focused on the student interest. (63)

In this discourse, the idea of a formal *higher education market* is prominent: but we have not yet made a decisive enough move to open the higher education market (9). The semantic implication of transforming education into a market is that, in a similar way to how a market includes market failure, so a university, like a business, can exit the market: but we must accept that there may be some providers who do not rise to the challenge, and who therefore need or choose to close some or all of their courses, or to exit the market completely (20).

The discourse on higher education surrounding the White Paper, then, is one in which education is considered as a structure that can fail, because its economic structure can fail.

## Efficiency

Efficiency is very significantly used in the *Robbins Report*. In its linguistic context, it is associated with words and phrases such as ‘good sense’, ‘academic freedom’, ‘liberty to experiment’ and ‘discovery’, that is, abstract principles or philosophical values; hence, efficiency eschews a utilitarian framework on education. In general, in this report, ‘efficiency’ is academic efficiency. Its linguistic context links to ‘experimentation’:

But if some of the predictive load could be shifted from examinations, the pressure upon candidates to cram for them would be less: and selection is likely to be more efficient if based on performance in more than one type of test. We recommend experiment and investigation here, rather than a frontal attack on the present system of selection. (84)

Also, efficiency occurs with restraint, good sense and democracy: we must add that, like any other machinery, the machinery for the academic government of a university can only work efficiently if it is not overloaded. In common with all ‘democratic’ arrangements, its efficiency depends upon restraint and good sense (674).

So, ‘efficiency’ is associated with philosophical educational values, not market value:

Freedom is an essential constituent of a free society and the tradition of academic freedom in this country has deep roots in the whole history of our people. We are convinced also that such freedom is a necessary condition of the highest efficiency and the proper progress of academic institutions, and that encroachments upon their liberty, in the supposed interests of greater efficiency, would in fact diminish their efficiency and stultify their development. (229)

‘Efficiency’ significantly occurs in a linguistic context alongside ‘discovery’ and ‘liberty to experiment’: liberty to experiment with content and method is one of the surest guarantees of efficiency and discovery (231). Ultimately, ‘efficiency’ is academic efficiency: it is the special virtue of administration by independent committees like the University Grants Committee that it makes possible the tendering of advice that has not the flavour of authoritative coercion, yet brings expert competence to the appraisal of academic efficiency (232).

Hence, in the *Robbins Report* discourse, efficiency refers to academic and intellectual efficiency, not market efficiency, institution efficiency or the labour market, as in the *Dearing Report* and the White Paper.



In the *Dearing Report*, efficiency occurs alongside words and phrases such as ‘competition’, ‘market forces’, ‘standards’, ‘accountability’, ‘quality assurance’, ‘consumer vs provider’, and ‘economy’. For example:

Competition between institutions has led to improvements in efficiency, sometimes at the expense of collaboration and co-operation.

There have been moves towards the stronger interplay of market forces, in order to increase competition between providers and thereby encourage efficiency, and an emphasis on standards and accountability. These general trends have been reflected in higher education through the introduction of new funding methodologies, new approaches to quality assurance and an emerging focus on the ‘consumer’ rather than the ‘provider’. Although the emphasis and the mechanisms may change over time, we expect there to be a continuing concern to promote efficiency, informed choice, quality and accountability over the next twenty years. (50)

Hence, the discourse of higher education is, again, one in which the key agent in education is the (market) structure, not the learner.

In a similar fashion, ‘efficiency’ in the White Paper 2016 refers also to structure, by presenting associations with monitoring and oversight:

The OfS<sup>5</sup> will be responsible for allocating teaching grant funding and for monitoring the financial sustainability, efficiency and overall health of the sector.

The OfS will have oversight of the sustainability, efficiency and health of the higher education sector, and as part of its role will monitor the sustainability of individual institutions. (2016: 20)

Hence, in the White Paper there is a switch from efficiency as accountability (*Dearing Report*) and even more from efficiency as liberty to experiment, discovery and academic freedom (*Robbins Report*). So, between the *Robbins Report* and the White Paper 2016 there is an evident change in discourse surrounding efficiency. The discourse changes from being based on philosophical values of higher education of intellectual autonomy, liberty and experimentation to being based on utilitarian market values to being based on ideas of open market and monitoring.

The analysis is revealing, and within the *Robbins Report* ‘happiness’ (including contentment) occurs in its positive and negative forms, with ‘flourish’ and ‘efficiency’. The first two terms are significant, because they relate to concrete objects in this discourse (staff and students, not market strategies), whereas the

last is striking because it relates to abstract principle such as philosophical value. Thirty-four years later, the focus has shifted. We have a more economic discourse, so in the *Dearing Report* 'flourishing' relates to management strategies. Moreover, concern for the market becomes a priority, in comparison with the *Robbins Report*.

Specifically, the emphasis on the labour market marks the switch of the varied purpose of higher education (which relates to both values and needs) to a generalized, applied purpose (which relates only to needs, specifically of the market). It seems that there has been a shift in the discourse from the *Robbins Report* to the *Dearing Report*: education is not for the flourishing of the student, but it is to make it 'right' for the labour market. In light of these findings, the White Paper is no more than a charter for the marketization of the higher education sector. The framework for the Higher Education Bill that it set out in the 2016 White Paper is one of market entry and the existence of consumer choice, and of external standards of delivery. A model of industrial production, without overriding national interest, comes to mind both in the content and a hermeneutic reading of this final document. Table 5.2 offers a comparison of the *Robbins Report* and the *Dearing Report*.

**Table 5.2** Contrasting discourses of contentment and market

<b>Discourse of contentment, flourishing, happiness</b>	<b>Discourse of market, efficiency, cost effectiveness</b>
<b><i>Robbins Report</i></b>	<b><i>Dearing Report</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development</li> <li>• Experiment</li> <li>• Provide (which express idea of national service and duty vs idea of offer, which is market driven and choice)</li> <li>• Efficiency as good sense</li> <li>• Efficiency through academic freedom and liberty</li> <li>• Efficiency – discovery and liberty to experiment</li> <li>• Academic efficiency</li> <li>• Nourish</li> <li>• <i>Dearing Report</i></li> <li>• Well-being</li> <li>• Flourishing relates to quality of life (but cf other list)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficiency &gt; market forces, standards, accountability, quality assurance, consumer vs provider, economy</li> <li>• Flourishing relates to economic success</li> <li>• Flourishing relates to fast-changing global economy and organizational structure, decision making, lifelong learning of organizations (basically management strategies)</li> <li>• Labour market &gt; needs, national economy, world economy, competitive challenges (context – more awareness of globalization?)</li> <li>• Market &gt; need of economy, goods and services, global corporation, international</li> <li>• (students as) skilled workers, conventional graduates, stock of graduates (like range of products), (possessing) the right qualities, those with higher-education qualifications</li> <li>• They are ‘absorbed’ by the labour market, or ‘supplied’</li> <li>• Efficiency &gt; maximum, and effectiveness, educational effectiveness, efficiency gain</li> <li>• Cost effectiveness – relating to achievement and alongside value for money</li> <li>• 2016 Research Bill</li> <li>• Efficiency occurs with &gt; economy, effectiveness, management of operations, financial support</li> <li>• 2016 White Paper</li> <li>• Flourish &gt; competition, choice, teaching</li> <li>• market &gt; choice, consumers, performing, competitive, risk, regulator, value for money, quality</li> <li>• higher-education market</li> <li>• efficiency &gt; monitoring, oversight</li> <li>• consumer &gt; satisfaction, value for money, consumer law</li> </ul>



## Part Two

# Voices of Happiness, Satisfaction or Contentment



## What Has Been Written on Happiness and Higher Education?

*In higher education, we often encourage students to develop self-discipline in their studies. This involves, in part, a strengthening of the will – a mustering of intellectual energy in a determined effort to complete a task. (Roberts, Happiness, Hope and Despair, 2016: 43)*

It is not all fun – ever!

In Roberts's provocative and compelling book, he explores education as an activity where one often has to struggle to achieve what one might be to fulfil one's potential. The process to achieve is motivated by a desire to become one where one has a goal. The quote above comes in a section on Simone Weil, where Roberts focuses on how humility and suffering also contribute to educational growth. The inclusion of humility and suffering do not feature highly in the literature on higher education and student engagement (exceptions are Roberts, 2013, 2016; Gibbs, 2016), but happiness does. The remainder of this chapter considers what has been written in the higher-education literature.

### The literature<sup>1</sup>

This review will address the literature relating to happiness in higher education, primarily in the UK. It will focus on a concept of profound happiness, *eudaimonic* happiness, concerned with fulfilling one's life aims (Telfer, 1980). The role of happiness in higher education is particularly relevant because participation in education can be seen as a means to achieve life happiness – Lee

(2008) notes that to learn and practice knowledge and wisdom may be a valuable means to enhance the quality of life and an effective way to obtain happiness. In addition to happiness in higher education, the review will consider two related concepts – well-being and flourishing – in order to understand how commentators and researchers have conceptualized the purpose of higher education (HE), particularly moving beyond an understanding that is purely concerned with economic outcomes. In this context, well-being is a broader framing of happiness which can include emotional or psychological angles (Geddes, 2006; Huebner et al., 2005). Wilson-Strydom and Walker describe flourishing as about more than just happiness or satisfaction, instead encapsulating the opportunities, competence and confidence ‘needed to be able to participate equally in HE’; flourishing requires consideration of the well-being and agency of students (2015: 317). While these three terms are related, they are nonetheless distinct and are included here to attempt to show the totality of outcomes that are discussed within the literature. The review will concentrate on happiness chiefly, but where appropriate, will include references to these other concepts.

The concept of ‘happiness’ in higher education is often conflated with ‘satisfaction’, in part driven by a move towards consumerism within the sector and the marketization of higher education. Much of the literature around happiness in higher education reflects this conflation, often using the two terms interchangeably, as if one were tantamount to the other. Chan et al.’s 2005 study on student satisfaction is one such example: it purports to investigate ‘happiness in university education’, while focusing entirely on factors that affect satisfaction (e.g. environment, teaching, resources, etc.). Unsurprisingly, subsequent studies that have built on this 2005 piece of research do much the same, for instance that by Mangelaja and Hirvonen (2007) and Kek and Stow (2009). The latter asks ‘what makes students happy?’ as its broad research question, but goes on to state that ‘we asked if the students’ course satisfaction could be affected by factors such as personal characteristics, motivation, structural and learning environments’ (Kek & Stow, 2009: 7).

### Conflation breeds confusion

The confusion between happiness and satisfaction has been explored extensively by Dean and Gibbs, who considered the distinction between the two in their empirical work with students from UK universities:



Our premise that satisfaction and happiness are different traits is supported by our ordinal regression results. These revealed a number of common and different factors influencing student satisfaction and happiness, the key difference being the loci of control. In other words, 'happier' students were more content with how they engaged with the edifying experiences, while those who were 'more satisfied' seemed to be more concerned with external loci, that is, on how things done to and for them were delivered, rather than in their engagement with the process. (2015: 16)

This clear distinction between satisfaction and happiness draws a line between the studies of satisfaction that dominate much of the literature and the thinner body of work that is concerned with happiness derived from engagement in an edifying experience. Those studies mentioned previously, which seem to conflate happiness with satisfaction, do not address students directly, but instead seem to be predominantly aimed at university management and policy makers. They highlight the practical steps that such figures of authority can take towards improving student satisfaction: 'university policy makers may be able to use the results to further identify the major determinants of student satisfaction, and thus be better positioned to develop a learning environment that will enhance students' experience of university' (Mangeloja & Hirvonen, 2007: 37). That is not to say that university policy-makers might not gain some insight from a greater understanding of happiness. As Gibbs and Dean point out, the current preoccupation of 'concentrating on satisfaction, or rather desire satisfaction, publishing results and ranking on these attributes' ultimately leads to the loss of 'the benefits for an edifying experience' for students (2014: 417). A further danger of using satisfaction and happiness as like-for-like terms was explored by Collini, who argued that this 'comes perilously close to reducing important human experiences to a set of "preferences", as reported on a tick-box questionnaire' (2012: 185). The National Student Survey in the UK is, it could be contended, just such a tick-box exercise. As Gibbs notes, it is not 'that which is recorded in student satisfaction surveys which is best at measuring the "pleasing and pleasurable" elements of education' (2014: 6).

This conflation of the terms 'satisfaction' and 'happiness' is not merely an issue of semantics, however. It has genuine consequences for the sector, particularly in the UK. The *Guardian University Guide* uses satisfaction (derived from the NSS) as three of its key indicators when ranking UK institutions (overall course satisfaction, teaching satisfaction and feedback satisfaction), creating their overall rank by carefully combining scores for the aspects of university life

that matter most to students (2016). Meanwhile, the *Complete University Guide* uses 'student satisfaction' as its highest-weighted criterion (again, based upon the NSS), although it notes that 'the survey is a measure of student opinion, not a direct measure of quality so it may be influenced by a variety of biases' (2016). Student satisfaction has become an all-important arbiter of university choice by which institutions are judged, acting as a proxy not only for happiness but for quality (of courses, teaching, feedback, etc.).

Given the widespread nature of this confusion in the literature, it begs the question of what has driven this pursuit of satisfaction, particularly within higher education institutions (HEIs) but also within the literature itself? In the UK, the introduction of tuition fees has been described as forcing universities to act as 'service providers' and treat their students as 'consumers' (Williams & Cappuccini-Ansfield, 2007). Lee suggests that universities have headed towards 'academic capitalism, commercialization, the entrepreneurial university, and higher education Inc. in order to fulfil labour market demand in a knowledge driven economy and society' (2011: 73). However, his conception of the future university – a 'cyber/satellite' university – is one where 'the functions and accountabilities of universities will be extended to the development of teaching and research for self-actualization of individuals' happy lives... adding to the traditional and current functions' (76).

By contrast, Hensley et al. examined the ways that higher education's 'public good' is often conceptualized purely in terms of economic benefits: 'much of the contemporary paradigm connects education with a narrower sense of good: the economic good of the individuals who benefit from learning, and the fiscal vitality of the communities in which those individuals are housed' (2013: 553). They imply that this understanding was driven through the need for funding; that is, the need for higher-education institutions to obtain funding individually, but also for larger bodies/representatives to obtain funding on their behalf. In their case study, this was contextualized for Arizona, but something very similar can certainly be seen in the UK (see e.g. Bates & Kaye, 2014). It could also be suggested that the tangibility of economic outcomes is much easier to grasp than either cultural benefits or concepts such as happiness and well-being (Hensley et al. 2013: 565). Measuring whether a student states that they are satisfied with an aspect of provision is much more straightforward than assessing whether they have ever had an edifying experience leading to genuine happiness. This measurability makes satisfaction a more desirable pursuit for those who need to demonstrate impact – either to prospective students or to those funding their operation. Nonetheless, Dean and Gibbs argue that the 'idea of quality in higher

education should extend beyond satisfaction and develop a notion of student happiness as one of the attributes by which educational provision should be judged, if not measured' (2015: 7).

### **It is the market, stupid**

Palfreyman talks of education provision as an apparent contest between 'being a process of liberal education ... and delivering vocational education' (2013: 107), contrasting independent or creative thinking with 'employability'. This focus on skills for the 'real world' is heavily criticized by Collini, who suggests that the imagined ideal of a 'real world', to which all students should supposedly aspire, does not actually exist (2012). Instead, there is a body of work that suggests that universities and HEIs should instead be more focused on students' personal development – routes that will ultimately lead to greater fulfilment and happiness. As long ago as 1988, Kale wrote about the 'lack of a well-rounded curriculum' stopping students from being happy: 'while we overload students with techniques and theories ... little effort is undertaken towards the integration of personality' (84). His research with a thousand graduating students suggested that they were dissatisfied with an education that gave them 'at best – a ticket to the job market, and little else' (85). Ironically, that was the lowest common denominator at many institutions for students but one they now seem to aim, to the exclusion of all else (many university league tables use graduate or career 'prospects' as one of their key ranking factors). The realization and fulfilment of one's talents and possibilities could be seen as the ultimate goal of personal development. It can be argued that knowledge and education that lead to self-actualization are necessary conditions and determinants to pursue and to obtain happiness, drawing a connection between higher education; personal development leading to self-actualization; and, ultimately, happiness.

According to Gibbs, higher-education institutions should provide a space in which one can strive for contentment – not the happiness associated with consumerism, but instead a 'state of being content with oneself'; not closing out such possibilities with 'the business of service delivery based on pleasure, entertainment and job grooming' (2014: 3–4). Collini describes the 'misleading analogy between a university and a commercial company' as driving much of the economic focus within the sector (2012: 134), claiming that the two are not like-for-like and should not be treated as such. He goes on to argue for the intrinsic value of education, characterizing a focus on supposedly employment-related outcomes, or 'skills-talk', as 'a failure of nerve ... an attempt to justify an

activity not in its own appropriate terms, but in terms derived from another set of categories altogether, categories drawn from the instrumental worlds of commerce and industry' (144); 'if we say that the goal of a given activity is "to enable human beings to flourish and to exercise their capacities," it doesn't make much sense to press on and say, "yes, but what is that good for?"' (138). Ultimately, although knowledge and skills might be necessary. As Dall'Alba notes, this is a limiting conception of what a university education can provide a student with, including an 'enriched social and cultural life' (2012: 113). Lee considers happiness to be the eventual goal of education, while education 'is seen as a necessary condition or a significant variable to pursue and possess happiness'. He proceeds to state that the 'importance of higher education is to promote individual happiness' (2011: 72).

Gibbs and Dean make the point that this is not a zero-sum game: the two outcomes are both achievable for higher education institutions: 'consumer satisfaction can be made tangible and it is worth measuring and competing upon', but this is not enough in and of itself. There remains a 'role for the university in helping students grasp their potential and their happiness' (2014: 428). Equally, Wilson-Strydom and Walker argue for 'an education which is instrumental in enabling wider economic opportunities but also intrinsic in valuing learning for its own sake' (2015: 314). However, the desire-satisfaction culture of a university should not prevent it from delivering its 'edifying mission' (Gibbs, 2016:1), enabling students to achieve profound happiness or contentment.

One of the issues with this approach towards modern higher-education provision is that it may be that the students themselves do not (at least, consciously) desire such outcomes. Koskina's 2011 research, linked to the psychological contract students create with the university, suggests that students no longer value the requirement for happiness from their studies (beyond simple desire satisfaction). It should be noted that her study only used a small sample size; nonetheless, it paints a worrying picture for those that believe higher education should prioritize the delivery of a more meaningful experience for students. Rousseau described the psychological contract as 'individual beliefs in a reciprocal obligation between the individual and the organisation' (1989: 121). Koskina's study shows that, although the psychological contract students made with their higher-education institutions involves both intrinsic and extrinsic outcomes (learning and a degree as certified knowledge), at no point did any of those interviewed suggest that profound happiness was part of their contract (2011: 1032).

Furthermore, one of the inherent problems in measuring the satisfaction of students is that there are a number of studies that show that students express

satisfaction with those teachers who challenge them the least (see Emery et al., 2003). This runs against the argument that well-being, flourishing and a more meaningful understanding of happiness can only be garnered through some level of unhappiness or discontent (as a result of greater challenge and difficulty, which actually stretches students and pushes their potential (e.g. a Vygotskian notion of needing to take students out their comfort zone)). Indeed, Bedgood and Donovan suggest that learning itself is not necessarily conflated with satisfaction, and yet teaching and educational quality are often measured through these satisfaction surveys (2012: 837). The consumerization of HE has led, according to Mark, to the acceptance of the philosophy that 'the customer is always right' and that the short-term demands of students should be 'pandered to' (2013: 3). Once again, we come to a tension between superficial happiness (satisfaction) and the profound happiness that is associated with the longer-term intrinsic process of learning. As Bay and Daniel note, students' own expectations here fall short of the latter, being more often focused on meeting short-term goals (2001).

This tension undoubtedly revolves around the questions 'what are universities for?' as Collini (2012) asks, or as Barker and Martin even more broadly ask, 'what is education for?' (2009). In the latter's discussion on actually teaching happiness, they highlight the disparity between 'aiming to impart knowledge and skills, and a different purpose in the study of happiness, learning how to be happy' (Barker & Martin, 2009: 1–2). They note that 'the formal goals of a university education and the pursuit of personal happiness are not necessarily in conflict, but there are tensions' (9). Cooke et al. reason that it is not surprising that students take such a view, describing students' lives as 'increasingly pressurised due to changes such as the abolition of student grants in favour of student loans and the introduction of tuition fees' (2006: 505).

### **It is more than hedonism**

Moving beyond the view that a *potential* mission of universities should be to promote contentment, Keeling argues that universities actually have a duty of care to look after students' well-being and happiness (2014). He states that 'institutions that understand students primarily as consumers may claim no responsibility beyond delivering what students paid for according to the terms and conditions of enrolment', but such institutions cannot justifiably claim to espouse a mission of learning (ibid.: 143). Instead, he argues that 'colleges and universities that want students to succeed must share responsibility for their

achievement of success and must take account of students as people who are learning' (144), railing against the simplistic measures of success, which only take into account completion or graduation rates. He proposes that readiness to learn – 'understood within the broad formulation of well-being, which is a quality of health, wholeness, resiliency, and flourishing' – should instead be judged as a success measure (145). Meanwhile, Cooke et al.'s research shows that a greater strain is placed on students' well-being throughout their university career (when compared with their psychological state before entry) (2006: 513). Given that the transition to university itself is particularly stressful (Denovan & Macaskill, 2016), universities should be acutely aware of their responsibility towards students' well-being and happiness, as a matter of course.

Although the benefits of pursuing student satisfaction might be more obviously evident for a university administration, there are nonetheless wide-ranging rewards relating to the pursuit of happiness. McMahon includes outcomes such as 'better health', 'greater educational opportunities' and 'the creation of life-long learners', along with increased levels of happiness for HE students (2009). Meanwhile, Flynn and Macleod argue that 'the individual benefits can pale in comparison to the potential societal gains of having a population comprised of such happy, and therefore "successful", individuals' (2015: 453). This comparison between a happy population and a successful one is interesting. Durgin's practical guide to 'achieving success and happiness in college' (referring to the American definition of college) explicitly links the two. It is aimed at students themselves, and very much places emphasis on students taking control of their own success, well-being and happiness. Durgin suggests that 'if you study what you love, pursue what you do well, and follow your passions and interests, you will most likely be heading in the right direction' (2010: 59). Dean's research with university students suggests that they often define success through personal indicators such as happiness (1998: 54). Lee also theorizes about students' own views on deriving success through study: 'from the viewpoint of an individual, the main purpose of higher education is to achieve self-actualisation and social success, mentally and materially' (2011: 72).

The literature dealing with happiness in higher education is limited, at best, comprising in no small part of a number of pieces that are actually more concerned with the shallower (though not unimportant) concept of student satisfaction. What literature exists that actually deals with student well-being, profound happiness and flourishing in higher education generally argues that institutions (in the UK, at least) do not currently do enough to develop these crucial outcomes. Gibbs summarizes neatly the position of this body of work:

I am not, of course, proposing that higher education ought not to have an economic purpose, amongst others, but that this has become an overpowering discourse. Nor am I suggesting that happiness is not evident in higher education alongside satisfaction ... rather, contentment should be considered as a goal for higher education alongside other goals, to be set against the needs of the institution in measuring student satisfaction. (2014: 7)

As he notes, there is certainly a role for understanding, measuring and catering to student satisfaction with the UK's higher-education sector. However, this should not be at the expense of enabling students to seek profound happiness from their studies. Lee goes further in his vision of a utopian academia, suggesting that a future higher-education institution should be a 'happiness pursuit university' and should 'have missions and functions not only for pursuing individual's self-actualisation, social welfare, and national prosperity, but also for all humankind, as cosmopolitans, peacefully and happily together' (2011: 77).





## Happiness and the Student Experience

*Power, riches, honour, even health, and the general well-being and contentment with one's condition which is called happiness, inspire pride, and often presumption, if there is not a good will to correct the influence of these on the mind, and with this also to rectify the whole principle of acting and adapt it to its end. The sight of a being who is not adorned with a single feature of a pure and good will, enjoying unbroken prosperity, can never give pleasure to an impartial rational spectator. Thus a good will appears to constitute the indispensable condition even of being worthy of happiness. (Kant, Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals, 2009: 11)*

### Episodes and duration

In the above passage, taken from the opening of *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*, Kant first suggested not an episodic notion of happiness, for other adjectives can do that, but one that links to duration within what he calls happiness. Second, Kant seemed sure that happiness (as used) is more than the satisfaction of a desire; indeed, one might argue, following Kant, that to encourage happiness one does not seek the artefacts of a societal notion of happiness, but the emotion disposition that, for him, involved a notion of a good will. Given the discussion in earlier chapters that one of the aims of higher education should be citizenship, it seems feasible that an educated person can only be happy when positively considering the social impact of their academic achievement.

Yet, the aim of many universities is the realization of satisfied consumers. Consumers who can be shown to be satisfied also exhibit other tendencies,

such as loyalty, which leads to repurchasing, referring other consumers and less switching behaviour. All these seem to be consequences for institutional behaviour, following the UK's new Higher Education and Research Bill. In this scenario, the aim for the well-being of students is not a final goal or aim of education, but an attribute of a financially driven business model. Moreover, an aim for student contentment and happiness is different from one of securing a degree or having increased contact hours, for the university cannot make individuals contented as readily as they can make the building clean and secure. What they are able to do is to create an ethos where personal decisions can be made that then, through the will of the student (and staff), can be realized. It can show how potentiality can be recognized how effort can be direct and the contingent passion, joy and contentment it brings those who create the student experience. Such engagement creates the nature of the event and how it is physically and emotionally perceived.

This is what makes happiness an aim for education. We can measure changes in desire satisfaction fairly easily (if not always compellingly), but how do we know whether an institution's members are content? Certainly, we could ask them, and the reports of research provided here contribute to such an investigation. The overriding theme of the research is that young people about to enter university and those who are already there want the experience to enhance their future happiness; not their immediate episodic happiness, but an enduring form of contentment as proposed in previous pages of this book.

### Something empirical

Two studies<sup>1</sup> by myself and Aftab Dean, supported by Debbie Scott, show that the notion of happiness and contentment are really on the agenda of UK's aspiring, nascent and established students. An investigation of the notion of happiness in UK university students is presented. Two of the works are abridged from those published, yet provide an overview of the developing empirical evidence that contentment is an educational objective that is significant for an important number of students. The driver for these research projects was a concern that happiness is not the same as satisfaction. The investigation is into whether the dominant discourse of customer satisfaction used to describe student engagement with higher education hides a more nuanced and relevant notion of student happiness, and what that might mean for university education. Certainly,

there seems to be conflation of the terms of satisfaction and happiness in the UK specialist press. For example, in reporting findings from the UK's NSS in a special supplement, the *Times Educational Supplement* led with the headline 'For happy students, listen and then action.' This illustrates how the two notions of satisfaction and happiness are taken as substitutes, even when addressing an informed audience. Other examples include 'Happiest university and college students revealed', from *Which* in 2103, and a plethora of university websites claiming that students are 'happier than ever'. The fact is that the NSS is aimed at current students and, in the survey, undergraduates are asked to provide honest feedback about their satisfaction with their study on their course at their institution: it does not refer to 'happiness' at all. To investigate aspects of how they conceived of their happiness and satisfaction of their student experience, students were asked about what made them satisfied and what made them happy, and what the university could do about increasing both.

The first of these studies looks at the desires of pre-university students and how a future of happiness figures significantly in their future desires.

## School leavers to go to university and be happy

### Background

The current context of austerity policies, welfare reforms, social and political crises, and the shifting configurations of public and private lives across Europe are challenging young people's aspirations for prosperity, growth and stability. There have been dramatic changes in occupational structures, working conditions, high levels of underemployment, and a growing mismatch both between educational attainments and job outcomes, and satisfaction in the transition to the labour market. These have resulted in a general sense of rising anxiety in young people's lives. Such wider societal transformations have questioned the 'traditional way of life' of previous generations and created new intergenerational dynamics. At the same time, new schemes of social organization are being undertaken by the young generation in a context of rising uncertainty, flexibility and fluidity. These are particularly difficult for those who are vulnerable (Berzin, 2010). Indeed, Bullen et al. (2006) suggest a need to rethink how we prepare our young people for their future. This may be in terms of the information that we offer, its forms and from whom they receive this information.

This would argue that the dominant discourses on defining success in terms of educational attainment as accreditation and salary are too limited, and that they should include the multifaceted ways that individuals may seek meaning in life and contribute to the world (Nagaoka et al., 2015). In the UK, the future is nearly always bright if one attends university, for this increases income and more profitable employment. This has shaped the narratives offered by the universities, from 'Students at the Heart of the System' (2011) to Teaching Excellence Framework, 'Teaching Excellence; Social mobility; and Student Choice' (2015). There are so many more things that young people might see for themselves, and we wonder if these are being presented to them adequately.

Trajectories based on cultural platforms are drawn from the realities of being in particular communities. They reflect these community values, rituals and belief systems, and temporal horizons. Moreover, the roles adopted or ascribed within these communities have certain responsibilities – duties that lend a certain prestige and privilege. It is, therefore, within these structural, community and family constraints that young people 'envision paths into the future' (Langevang & Gough, 2009: 752) and make lifetime choices (Abebe, 2007). To help understand this, Stokes et al. (2004) assert that the notion of social economic and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000) is a framing of the structures that maintain it. These structures are those such as institutions, authorities and activities through which individuals transact. They create the opportunities through which goals and career paths can be created and achieved (Stokes et al., 2004).

The opportunities presented by the culmination of this social capital and how they are recognized by youth, both in terms of their existence and their attainment, are central to this study. The trajectories are operationalized within the habitus of the participants in this study, revealed through the choices perceived to be available to the participants and the careers that they might follow. The trajectories of those in formal education are important because, according to Claussen and Osborne (2013), they can be 'viewed as an academic market for the distribution of cultural capital' (59). Access to information and how this shapes notions of personal aspiration regarding the development of future personal life plans will influence the cultural, social and economic capital engagement considered in this project.

The research was conducted in 2014 by survey and was emailed to 4,649 respondents, of which 34.48 per cent opened the link and 6 per cent clicked through. Initially, 198 responses were collected and, after data verification for

accuracy and full completion of the questionnaire, a final total of 177 responses was accepted for analysis.

### **Future aspirations**

Respondents were asked to rate each option on a scale of one to ten. The findings reveal that being happy with yourself is the most important factor, and being popular is the least important to respondents aged 16 and 17 years for their future.

The importance of happiness in oneself is a most significant contribution in both sections. There were, however, significant difference in age and gender when tested using the Mann Whitney test. The results reveal that younger respondents (16 year olds) are significantly more focused on relationships for their future, whereas 17 year olds are now focusing on making their mark on society. It is interesting to note the gender difference, as males are significantly more focused on being wealthy and females more on being able to express themselves.

The results showed that being able to express yourself yields the highest happiness, followed by having a partner/family. It is interesting to note that being wealthy is divided on the happiness scale; some respondents believe it will result in happiness, whereas for others it does not equate to happiness. The significant results revealed that it was male students who were more inclined to equate being wealthy with being happy.

### **How respondents define success**

Content analysis of open-ended questions relating to how respondents define success shows the results in Table 7.1.

#### **Content analysis of an open-ended question – happiness is what counts**

The 146 statements were coded by their most predominant sentiment into 31 statement types. These were further grouped into 23 key sentiments and group coded into 18 groups. These 18 groups were looked at by variables of age, gender and future career aspirations. Finally, the words and sentence structures were

**Table 7.1** How respondents defined success

<b>Success to you is:</b>		
<b>Theme</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Associated themes</b>
Being happy	45	Security, stability, contributing to society, achieving goals, being healthy, having enough money, gaining recognition, good career
Achieving goals	14	Being happy
Helping others	8	Achieving personal goals
Doing something I love	7	Enjoying what I do
Achieving your career	6	Being happy with my job
Contributing to society	5	Positively changing the world
Being comfortable with who I am	3	
Good salary	3	
Professional and personal achievement	3	
Being wealthy	2	
Supporting my family	2	

analysed and examined as word clouds. Males were more likely to answer the question ‘What is success to you?’ with statements that included wealth, independence and freedom, and family, compared to females. Females were more likely to answer the question with statements that included stability, happiness and following a passion for a career. Many of the main 23 statements had too little data when spread across the two age categories. Happiness emerged as the most frequent response for all age categories, but appeared to increase with age, as did words relating to contentment. Wealth and family were proportionally more frequently mentioned by the youngest category, and declined with age.

### Comparisons with job expectations

Due to the large number of cells for future career aspirations, it was necessary to group careers together. Science and engineering were merged, as were medicine and veterinary science. Film, fashion, design, music and performing arts were merged into an art and design category. Journalism and politics were merged. These career sectors were merged in a similar style to Joint Academic *Coding* System (JASC) course code classifications. Hairdressing and construction were merged under a vocational header.

**Table 7.2** Future desired professions that had a 10 per cent positive variance from the mean

Happiness	Social impact	Expertise	Material wealth
Art and design	Caring	Armed services	Architecture and engineering
Psychology and consulting	IT and technology	Law	Law
Business and finance			

**Table 7.3** Future desired professions that had a 10 per cent negative variance from the mean

Happiness	Social impact	Expertise	Material wealth
Vocational	Nil	Vocation	Nil
Scientist		IT and technology	
Caring		Journalism and politics	
Journalism and politics			
IT and technology			

Those who indicated that they were ‘not sure’ about their future career were more likely than average to indicate ‘happiness’ in a statement than those who indicated a specific career. Those in caring professions were more likely to mention ‘contribution’ in a statement on what success meant to them. ‘Contribution’, in this sense, could include either contributing to wider society, improving the world or contributing to a partner or family life.

We took only the four strongest clusters from the above and compared them to the professions mentioned by respondents. The results in Tables 7.2 and 7.3 illustrate a strong association between: creative professions and happiness; caring professions and social impact; expertise and explicit skills; and material wealth and construction. Clearly, these are not perfect matches, but they help reveal how a professional aspiration is shaped by and, indeed, shapes emotional future life desires.

## Discussion

The data presented here are rich in possibilities. They reveal that just one year’s difference, from 16 to 17 years, can change how a potential student views their future. This is important for higher-education curricula and for the form of trajectory that schools provide for these young people. Indeed, there seems to be

considerable support, as Gibbs and Garnett point out, 'for Bourdieu's positioning, that educational accreditation is within the notion of cultural capital for it may take its authority from the perceived value of the functionality of the award' (2007: 411). The social capital of higher education accreditation and the linkages with the cultural capital of employment dominate the intentions of the students. Other routes to achieving career goals are little used. Indeed, as the recent House of Lords Select Committee found, the options for social mobility are restricted by the lack of understanding of the options available to students in school-work transitions and the overemphasis on academic qualifications. Waters et al. suggest that 'over the last twenty years, a societal shift has occurred around education, so that obtaining a university degree has become a normal expectation for many young people' (2011: 455). It is not, then, surprising that the search for cultural capital happiness might have receded from the priorities of policy-makers.

Indeed, regarding future opportunities, there seems to be a significant mismatch between the economic policy rhetoric of building an entrepreneurial society and the amount of information of which this sample of young people were aware. Although the respondents seem informed about the range of options before them, with little gender difference between them, the overwhelming desire is for university (78 per cent). This may be caused by the overpowering national discourse of higher education leading to better jobs, and social capital issues around not being in university. As the House of Lords Select Committee commented on the focus on higher education, it has 'made worse a significant inequality in how vocational and academic routes are compared to one another' (2016: 48). The appeal of apprenticeships also seems to have no significant impact on reaching the decision frames of this sample, other than seemingly being the only alternative to university. It seems clear that the respondents know of the options, but they just do not want to take them up: it is university or nothing. This collective thought is to be expected, as a consequence of an educational policy that has few anchors to help secure critical thinking of different opportunities in a sea of vocational indifference. A major contextual communication strategy needs to be developed if we are to change the potential identities of the students away from graduates and into economic drivers of change. We believe that it is storing up problems for any economic argument if graduate jobs do not match expectations, yet universities continue to shape their curriculum offerings based on this premise.

What we found really interesting is the importance of happiness to the desires of participants. This particularly relates to finding a role within



society and having the ability to express oneself. It also directly correlates to the type of career that one wishes to follow. This has important consequences for higher education as well, and for schooling, not only in terms of curriculum issues but in the development of well-being. The self-efficacy of being able to express oneself clearly is linked, we would argue, to critical reason and the confidence that comes from developing both social and cultural capital. But the high level of expressed desire for a happy life raises key issues for the pedagogical principles of higher and further education, if student needs are central to their missions.

The importance attributed to happiness in the definition of success is interesting for the associated themes. Having a good career and gaining recognition were not regularly associated with happiness. More significant were security, stability, being healthy and contributing to society. These are not the goals of the measurements of student satisfaction surveys in the UK. These are about input, not the emotional output of happiness as identified in this project. Typical responses were, for instance, 'be happy with what I am doing, while doing something good for society and myself' and 'being content with where I am and the people around me'.

The second research project looked at the conflation of student satisfaction and happiness and how this differed from the reality of students. This investigation was into the actual experience of students within universities' own practices of quality assurance.

## Happiness at the centre of a quality student experience

### **Background**

As we have seen, at the core of the consumerized notion of quality and its analytics of performance indicators of desire satisfaction is the student as a consumer (Eagle & Brennan, 2007: 44). Indeed, because of the conflation of the terms 'happiness' and the more measurable and explicit term 'satisfaction', the idea of happiness has become hidden and used as a convenient yet inaccurate substitute for satisfaction. Even in the dedicated quality-assurance academic literature such conflation is common (see Wiers-Jenssen et al., 2002, on well-being and happiness, and, more recently, Edwards et al., 2009, on everyday happiness and satisfaction). Consequently, this research proposes a more complete understanding of the key influences of the student learning experience on both satisfaction and

happiness that, the authors advocate, will yield a more detailed insight into the student experience in higher education.

### **The student voices**

In the investigation conducted in 2015, students were from two universities in the north of England with different mission groupings: post-92 (65 per cent) and Russell Group (35 per cent). Questionnaires were distributed opportunistically, regardless of students' year of attendance and their subject area. Questionnaires were not distributed in class, to avoid bias, but over two weeks in commonly used areas such as the library, computer laboratories and university cafes. Responses were collected immediately after completion by the students. After reviewing them, a total of 308 responses were accepted for analysis, comprising 128 from males (43.2 per cent) and 168 (56.8 per cent) from females; this difference is reflective of greater and increasing numbers of female students in higher education. The age distribution was 87.6 per cent between 18 and 22 years and 12.4 per cent mature students, ranging from 23 to 32, mirroring the distribution within the general university population in the UK.

This preliminary research had identified 41 variables that were highlighted as important to academic experience in higher education. The results clearly reveal that female students were happier with their university experience than male colleagues, and how the students ranked the ten most important and the ten least important factors is shown in Table 7.

The results reveal a number of social factors (having good friends and feeling safe at university) as highly important, followed by recognizing that higher education is a worthwhile investment. It seems that issues relating to academic tutors ('there is sufficient contact with tutors', 'enjoy teaching by tutors' and 'find seminars engaging') rated low in the experience of students. This is of major concern, as the NSS results on student satisfaction have continually maintained that issues relating to teaching have the most impact on student satisfaction (Dean, 2011). This is surprising, if education is an edifying experience, not a taught service experience. Moreover, if teaching is conceived as a service, students have referential points against which to judge service, albeit in different context. When policy then responds to these referential models of education as a service provider, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. In allowing this to happen, issues of accountability for public money, moral leadership and integrity come under consideration. Certainly, the frame for inspection is different from the value for money lens, but the issues are equally important.

**Table 7.4** Significant differences in the mean rating of variables influencing student experience in higher education by gender

<b>Key Issues influencing student experience</b>	<b>Gender</b>
I enjoy the modules on my course	Female
I know what I want to achieve in a career after university	Female
The range of assessments (exam / report) helps me with my learning	Female
The course is managed well by the course leader	Female
I am confident with my intelligence	Male
I am happy with the reputation of the university	Female
I am aware of the benefits of a university education	Female
Education is a worthwhile investment	Female

To investigate the preliminary descriptive results, the authors undertook non-parametric analysis to reveal significant differences by gender (see Table 7.4).

Among the differences were contrasting levels of confidence by gender of students. Female students significantly lacked confidence in their abilities. This may lead to differences in happiness between the groups, but as a finding it suggests that student experience must not be taken as a homogeneous set and that policy should be addressed to specific groups. This is currently undertaken for ethnic groups and foreign students, but perhaps needs to be extended more generally to gender.

Students were asked to offer their own definitions of happiness. The most frequent responses revealed a number of common themes, by gender and type of university. These centred on being content, having a supportive family, being positive, avoiding stress and maintaining a balanced life. Moreover, happiness is associated with an ontological issue, one that concerns their enduring notion of becoming happy – not external institutional structural influences such as quality housing, campuses or sport facilities, all offerings made by the university. The definitions provided by students are shown in Table 7.5.

Having identified a cluster of issues that students relate to in their description of enduring happiness, we turn to consider this form of happiness with the level of student satisfaction with their student experience. The correlation results showed a significant association with satisfaction. The results from the post-92 students are that the level of happiness exceeds that of their overall satisfaction. Russell Group students were less happy than satisfied, but with a smaller divergence than the post-92 students. Generally, female students were happier than male students at university, regardless of their type of institution. This might reflect their lack of confidence in the expectations of satisfaction, yet great assurance that the experience will lead to their contentment.

**Table 7.5** Definitions of happiness

Category	Number of responses	%
Being content	49	17.50
Enjoying life	25	8.93
Supportive friends and family	24	8.57
Having a positive state of mind	20	7.14
Having a stress-free life	13	4.64
Achieving a balanced life	10	3.57
Having confidence	6	2.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>52.50</b>

Indeed, the results indicate that females at both Russell Group and post-92 universities have a higher median value in their optimism about their future careers, which might be taken as a proxy for future happiness.

The findings from this research also suggest differences between variables associated with the student learning experience, and with student satisfaction and happiness. Basically, those students who rated their own happiness as high in their overall student experience were also more optimistic about their future, females especially. Female students spent more time in private study and considered that a university education would help them make better lifetime decisions. Our premise that satisfaction and happiness are different traits is supported by our ordinal regression results. These revealed a number of common and different factors influencing student satisfaction and happiness, the key difference being the loci of control. In other words, ‘happier’ students were more content with how they engaged with the edifying experiences, while those who were ‘more satisfied’ seemed to be more concerned with external loci; that is, on how things done to and for them were delivered, rather than in their engagement with the process.

### So what?

This finding has consequences for how we attempt to build an education system with students at the centre. Indeed, in previous work, Gibbs and Dean (2014) have suggested that universities should trouble the notion of satisfied student, for what satisfies them does not always enable learning, nor happiness in the terms provided by participants in this study

There seems to be support, albeit from a limited number of studies, to suggest that a desire for enduring happiness and contentment should be part of student engagement in universities, not the result of aggregated satisfaction metrics. It needs to enable students to flourish in professions that are afforded equal importance, from a reputational perspective. Moreover, the density of the requirement for future happiness recalls and supports the notion of happiness in the Aristotelian concept of *eudaimonia*. Translated as happiness, it also means 'human flourishing' or 'well-being'. This concept reminds us of a different kind of happiness, in the sense of fulfilling our nature. When we have *eudaimonia*, we take pleasure in life. Aristotle paid attention to discussing the content of this concept in his book, *Nicomachean Ethics*, even then:

verbally there is very general agreement; for both the general run of men and people of superior refinement say that it is happiness, and identify living well and doing well with being happy; but with regard to what happiness is they differ, and the many do not give the same account as the wise. For the former think it is some plain and obvious thing, like pleasure, wealth, or honour; they differ, however, from one another – and often even the same man identifies it with different things, with health when he is ill, with wealth when he is poor. (1984b, 1095a: 16–25)

The complexity of Aristotle's notion of flourishing is practical, not theoretical. It is about enabling students to be happy by their own actions, both within themselves and within society. It is a multifaceted notion. It is not one that is satisfied nor measured in simple 'student desire satisfaction' surveys, but one that is at the core of students' future trajectories, for it is both dispositional and occurrent. The development of happiness is dependent not upon the possession of virtues, but putting them into practice.

There is limited research on the links between the capitals of Bourdieu, and the desire for future well-being and happiness among young people (although there is some evidence of it among economically active adults) (Rodríguez-Pose & von Berlepsch, 2013). This preliminary research reveals that such an association is worthy of further investigation, for it has wide-ranging implications for student choice and the way in which these choices are realized. It was observed that young people's scaffold for this activity is viewed in a biased and lopsided fashion, favouring university education over all other options. This is a warning against the overzealous promotion of universities and university education. Education ought to be seen as an end in itself, not as a means to increase income, nor obtaining jobs as making profits for others. It is a direct challenge to convert

the rhetoric of promotion into the behaviour of choice for young people. The alternative of entrepreneurialism is barely on these students' radar.

Critical to these findings is the desire for happiness in our (albeit small) sample. This finding is worthy of more research and exploration, for it might be indicative of a shift from the materialism of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, providing education policy-makers with an alternative narrative to the self-centred self-focus of today. For universities, as well, especially in the age of digital transparency through social media and student reviews, their actions are under scrutiny, and inauthentic attempts on what Ahmed calls 'the promise of happiness' will not be affective (2010). We are not suggesting that a chief happiness officer joins the vice-chancery, but a balancing ethos in the mission of universities.

The UK government's *What Works Centre for Wellbeing* has yet to tackle educational policy (although it has undertaken a small study of Welsh primary schooling). However, our research might suggest that it could capitalize on the hidden desire for deriving happiness from higher education, rather than just income. Evidence for this need is that there is no mention of happiness or well-being in the two pillars of higher-education policy mentioned earlier, 'Students at the Heart of the System' (2011) or Teaching Excellence Framework (2015).

The findings might also have serious implications for how universities manage the quality of the student experience and how their resources are used to enrich it. We contend that identifying contentment as a goal for student development, rather than just satisfying their needs (the two are not exclusive), help focus the edifying mission of the university and keep its distinction. Higher-education institutions should not underestimate the competition from others who might offer learning or training consumption experiences on terms that the university cannot match. Indeed, that might be the goal of the new profit providers encouraged by government policy to enter the market. One distinctive mission that the universities themselves can foster is an environment where the students are allowed to learn. We recognize the real world in which the universities operate, but advocate that they take a stance themselves on what they want to offer the society that cherishes them and demands of them not just employees but well-rounded citizens, willing to act on their own accord. This is central to a notion of autonomous, educated people, regardless of what actions they embark upon.

The policy issues that flow from this research can only be indicative, given the limitations of the research. However, the findings point towards two distinct educative areas for higher education. The first is that the university, like any

other provider of products and services, needs to educate customers in what is reasonable to expect for their money and how to assess that as part of the student body, as consumers. This consumer satisfaction can be made tangible, and it is worth measuring and competing upon. However, it is not enough. There remains an expectation for happiness, and there is an edifying role for the university in helping students grasp their potential and happiness. Roybens offers what seems to be a valuable mission for happiness in higher education when she writes that it 'should be conceptualized in terms of people's capabilities to function; that is, their effective opportunities to undertake the actions and activities that they want to engage in, and be whom they want to be' (Roybens, 2005: 95). This requires a pedagogy for university teachers that Walker advocates should be 'concerned with educational, processes and valued achievements. Selected capabilities would shape and inform conditions, practices and the evaluation of outcomes of university education which is for rationality and freedom, higher learning and agency of students' (2010: 915), thus to reveal the potential for contentment.

Should these results have resonance with policy makers or managers, it is not argued that they should ignore the legitimate needs of consumers. What they pay for may be adequate timekeeping, marking within reasonable times, sufficient feedback, clean lecture theatres and sports areas, but these are not the only, or indeed the most important, attributes that need to be nurtured in an edifying environment. Some of these can be seen in our use of the contentment construct, and so we argue for more appreciation of what contributes to the student experience and how this might be understood and nurtured, even if it is not currently measured or tracked.





## Part Three

# Happiness and the Disposition of Contentment



## Contentment Explored

*And, in fact we find that the more cultivated reason devotes itself to the aim of enjoying life and happiness, the further does man get away from true contentment. (Kant, 1993: 9)*

### Passivity aspiration or control – female or superfemale?

The above quote is an important divergence by Kant from the happiness notions of Mill's higher pleasure and, indeed, any notion of happiness being calculative. I find Kant's position here revealing, for Kant argued that reason is subrogated to happiness (of a certain instinctual, popular, pleasurable kind), whereas its true purpose – reason, that is – is to produce a 'will which is not merely good as a means to a further end, but good in itself' (1993: 9).

As I attempt an understanding of contentment, Kant's work offers a distinction between reason aligned to contentment, and emotional eruptions of instinctive origins, as manifestations of happiness and joy. The latter are beyond rational control, thus, one can only learn to curb them, not create them.

My use of these Kantian insights is distinctively Heideggerian in tone, reflecting Levinas more than Husserl, and represents an interpretation of Levinas's primordial notion of happiness as nourishing being. The point of departure from Husserl (and to some extent from Heidegger) is the phenomenological reality of contentment as a non-directed, intentional consciousness in the flux of worldliness among various entities. Contentment does not hold – indeed, it rejects – that representations of the world are necessary to the phenomenon of contentment. It does not require a conscious agentic ego, but rather a primordial, affective notion of being's being; it is being as a fundamental attunement to

being in the world, as a separate entity. I recognize Levinas's critique of the limitations of Heidegger's application of the notion of an initial fundamental attunement to anxiety and then boredom (however, see 1962: 340, 358, for example), but in his works Heidegger did suggest a number of alternative fundamental attunements, including joy and hope (1995: 59).<sup>1</sup>

### Emotions are not dispositions, but they might lead to them

Nussbaum offers a plausible rationale for the difference in emotional judgement that leads to joy, happiness and the disposition of contentment, starting from the premise that the emotions have value that is 'perceived in the object appears to be of a particular sort. It appears to make reference to the person's own flourishing. The object of the emotion is seen as important for some role it plays in the person's life' (2001: 30–31). She is suggesting that the emotion judgement has a localized character, its own intensity and its imaginative dwelling on objects of happiness. This would explain the intensity of the form of happiness, but she goes further. She suggests that there are also differences between general and concrete, and background and situational judgements.

The first distinction recognizes that the emotional response to an event is multilayered, and a mixture of interconnected emotions, based on the emotional positioning of the event in one's historical being. Within these, there are more specific clusters relevant to the specific event. It is the second distinction that helps more in my distinction between emotion and disposition, for it is the distinction between ongoing disposition emotional states and episodic emotions. Although Nussbaum avoids the use of the term 'disposition' for her notion of an enduring state, she does attribute explanatory powers of patterns of action to it. Suffice is the distinction; the resistance to calling these states disposition seem based on a notion of emotional continuum.<sup>2</sup> Personally, I do not find this sufficient to disqualify the use of disposition because, as Heidegger would support, dispositions are our attunement to the world view that we hold.

### The rational

The educational philosopher Dearden pointed out that 'education may be broadly defined as the process of learning through which we come to an understanding

and appreciation of what is valuable or worth pursuing in life, and happiness is no more than one among several final ends worthy of pursuit' (1968: 27). However, what is meant by happiness? Briefly, Dearden's contribution followed the Aristotelian prescription of well-being (1984) that shares the focus on the distinctive human attributes of rationality and desire found in Augustine (2010), Epicurus (2013) and, more recently, Mill (2008a), Russell (2006), Dewey (1966, 2012), Noddings (2003), Standish et al. (2006), Haybron, 2009), White (1982) and Greve (2012). These ideas assume the socially good person to be a happy person, as no rational person would make choices that were against their own happiness and this, of course, is contestable. It is countered by Kant's argument that happiness cannot be a final end in itself, hinging on the observation that, although we are naturally drawn to our own happiness, such a drive is not necessarily mediated through reason (and, through reason, to duty). What might the other mediating forces be? For argument's sake, I have considered them as forces that satisfy desire preferences, and moods and emotions.

### Not so positive, positive psychology

I intend to consider higher education from an alternative perspective of contentment, and to try to develop a clarity between that and happiness and desire satisfaction. Such clarity is needed, as the terms are often conflated, leading to confusion in practice. I seek to do this by reference to Heidegger and especially to his distinction between emotions (in my terms; happiness, joy), which are brief and transitory, and moods (contentment, anxiety), which are fundamental and reveal the world to us. These, of course, intermingle. However, they are distinctive in their temporal relevance. This perspective is in direct opposition to the position taken by the positive psychologist Martin Seligman. To quote from his book, *Flourishing*, my 'reason for denying mood a privileged place is not snobbishness, but liberation. A mood view of happiness consigns the 50 percent of the world's population who are the "low-positive affectives" to the hell of unhappiness' (2011: 14). Such a damning indictment of positive psychology, made by one of its founders (of course, not meant by Seligman himself), is one of the reasons that positive psychology's presence in this book is limited.<sup>3</sup> It clearly has some impact on agency, and on emotion and mood (but not in reducing happiness to cheeriness and merriment). Also, Seligman's work has received validation by a number of studies, but these are mainly for his work on resilience. However, his notion of flourishing has much in common with *eudaimonia*,

which itself has concerns as to what each of these value-laden terms mean. So, far from being liberation, it seems liberation in the context of middle-class America. As his attribute of flourishing reveals, the increase in positive emotion, engagement and meaning (the original triad for authentic happiness), plus positive relations and accomplishments, seems to offer a goal that many might reflect on as a flourishing life, if not a happy or a non-globalized, worthwhile life.

I interpret a notion of contentment honed from a range of perspectives: those of Confucius, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Levinas. It settles on a pre-intentional primordial mood that facilitates personal emotions of happiness. Based on this concept, it considers contentment's application to education.

### Our earliest enjoyment; consuming to sustain ourselves

Philosophical uses of the term 'contentment' share an indistinct version of its common usage. In general, one considers that one is content when one is either not dissatisfied (the weaker interpretation) or is pleased with one's situation (Carson, 1981). These states of evaluation are an intentional, revealing way one intellectually assesses how one ordinarily feels in a situation, often defined in terms of how one evaluates one's life and one's agency, yet this Husserlian interpretation assumes a conscious intention. For instance, one might be content with how one's life is, but still strive to change the situation or that of others – or one might be discontent, but be unable or unwilling to do anything about it.

I am suggesting a 'contentment that simmers over assimilated content, an enjoyment in an immersion of the elemental medium' (Levinas, 1969: 134). This is a more primordial notion of contentment than above, exemplified by being content, yet currently unhappy about one's own situation or that of others, or being discontent with one's own situation, yet happy for others. In this context, contentment seems to be linked to a deeper emotional awareness of one's being, and has a temporal duration exceeding that of happiness or satisfaction from desire satiation. However, it does not seem to be a mood precondition for emotions of joy, hope and happiness, because although it might enable events to be perceived to render them in such a way, it is neither necessary nor sufficient to the experience of those emotions.

This mood of contentment is neither a state of rest nor anxiety. It is a state of flow, of an emotional underpinning of being that seeks change in one's personal

notion of being, with ebbs and flows of intensity responding to reflection and reaction. It is a disposition, but only one of several that are available and, as such, phenomenologically problematic. This is because it is an affective state and struggles to satisfy the criteria of Husserl's intentional and directive consciousness. It is how we are in the world and how we feel about realizing our potential to be.

## Contentment, equanimity and tranquillity

On this point, there is a need to distinguish between contentment, equanimity and tranquillity. The notion of equanimity that I have in mind is a Confucian phenomenological ethical praxis. This associates equanimity with connotations of a calmness of mind, maintaining one's balance in the face of trying circumstances and being unperturbed. This is not the emotional passivity or indifference associated with the notion of contentment commonly associated with Nietzsche. My notion of equanimity is closer to contentment than that of tranquillity, which I take as the passing over of worldly things with a sense of serenity and disengagement. Tranquillity is a passivity, a state of fundamental emptiness (Heidegger, 1995: 162), while equanimity is a form of limbo. Moreover, the extension of satisfaction as equanimity has more appeal for the concept of equinity than an influx of self-trust.

In contrast to tranquillity and equanimity, I would argue that, when contented, one is attuned to the world, neither isolated from it as one might be in a state of tranquillity, nor indifferent to it as a state of equanimity. Contentment is the fundamental attunement in which a person exists in achieving the stance they take on themselves, while mood or disposition is disrupted by emotions, but is part of the nature of that being. It is not the only way of being. It is a predisposing mood for positive emotions to emerge, and anxiety is another, unlike contentment and yet not its reverse, as Heidegger suggested in *Being and Time*. One is more likely to see enjoyment when one is content than not, but contentment is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for enjoyment, fun or ecstasy. These disruptions change what it means to be-in-the-world and, unless one is deluded, change enables one to make one's way in the world through realizing one's potential to be. It is a way of sensing oneself. For example, a group of young men in hooded overcoats might be just a group of friends chatting joyously when returning from a party in good spirits, but to see them as such if they are a crowd of drunken and brute racists can put oneself in danger: one needs

to identify the difference quickly and respond accordingly. Contentment is disrupted by danger, and fear is appropriate. The recognition of danger is an awareness, based on experience of being in the world and of one's own historicity.

Contentment might be best considered, as did Carson, as a 'function of how one is disposed to act and how one is disposed to fall about various things. One's happiness or unhappiness, on the other hand, is more a function of how one actually feels' (1981: 383). This distinction makes it clear, I think, that one does not need to be content to have episodic irruptions of happiness, joy, even bliss; although one is more likely to experience these, all things being equal, if one is content rather than discontent or anxious, for instance. Contentment or discontentment is a more enduring state than anxiety; it is a state or temperament that forms a way of being in the world, and is how the world shows itself not just for us but for realizing our potential to be. It is not a cognitive engagement with the world, and it is not some utilitarian or hedonist calculative resolution of pleasure over pain. It is more fundamental than that. Contentment is a way of becoming. Importantly, it is the ontic rather than the ontological, so that it is expressed in our doing – our agency – and not caused by our contentment but guided by it. The form that contentment takes cannot be defined prior to being manifested in action, and is not being satisfied with one's lot or, conversely, discounting it, but rather a way of being that accepts being-in-the-world with others as oneself among others. This acceptance is neither in the form of Nietzsche's will to power nor Heidegger's authenticity, but is about seeking to explore and self-reveal one's potentialities. It is not the self-revelation of one's prescribed well-being that is assessed in a state of contentment, but a way in which the world reveals itself to us in our prejudice.

### Nothing cowardly or herd-like in aspirational contentment

What, then, is this notion of contentment that I speak of, and how is it related (or is it) to happiness and thus to education? Is the relationship that of the harshly attacked concept of Nietzsche's, observed through Zarathustran oratory as a superman (*Übermensch*), to reveal the real purpose of our existence? Is this the case, given that Nietzsche claimed in *Gay Science* that 'the secret for harvesting from existence the great fruitfulness and the greater enjoyment is – *to live dangerously!*' (2001: 163). It is perhaps not surprising that when Zarathustra demands that we question our existence and what good our happiness is, we receive the



answer, 'it is poverty and filth and wretched contentment' (2011: 6) – to conceive of contentment is incompatible with a good life. Confronting such contentment in *Untimely Mediations* certainly seems the advocacy of those whose creativity strives to change and create, so they should be 'opposed to a certain easy complacency, as self-contentment in one's own limitations, one's own placidity, even one's own narrow mindedness'<sup>4</sup> (1983: 10), rejecting honour and power, and the offer of 'peace and contentment but only in the shape in which they are known to modern man and in which to the honest artist they must become choking foul air' (ibid.: 204). This is rendered in *Zarathustra's*, 'I walk among these people and they are becoming smaller and smaller; but this is due to their doctrine of happiness and virtue. For they are modest in virtue too – because they want contentment. But only a modest virtue gets along with contentment' (2011: 134). Clearly, here, Nietzsche had in mind the Stoic *ataraxia*, found in the work of Sextus Empiricus and Marcus Aurelius: this is equanimity, as distinct from contentment, in opposition to the activity-driven *eudaimonia* of Aristotle and the 'felicitousness' of Hobbes.

Or can this notion of contentment be found in the Nietzschean argument for the calmness that he wrote of in *Human, All Too Human*, that 'if man has not drawn firm, restful lines along the horizon of his life. Like the lines drawn in mountain and forest, his innermost will itself grows restless, distracted and covetous ... he has no happiness and bestows none on others' (1986a: 134). This is where one might 'discover much more happiness in the world than clouded eyes can see' and, Nietzsche continued, 'one can do so if one calculates correctly and does not overlook all those moments of pleasure in which every day of even the most afflicted human life is rich' (ibid.). In these lines, I interpret a distinction between his previous use of the term 'contentment' as inactive tranquillity, which differs from our concept of contentment, and an active flow of engagement of self with the world rather than a detachment from it. In this sense, contentment with oneself allows aspirations, a stretching as well as failure, and a suffering without shifting one's attunement fundamentally to one of anxiety, where short-term distress leads to more generalized depression.

Nietzsche's position on happiness is scattered throughout many of his writings, and is also not always clear. Happiness might be joyful and nonsensical, or hedonistic pleasure (in the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche himself expresses his admiration for Epicures (2001: 59)) and its superficiality (150), yet it retains a central place in his writings. However, he was perhaps at his clearest in *The Antichrist* when he defined happiness: it is 'the feeling that power is *growing* and that a resistance is overcome. *Not* contentment but more power, *not* peace but war'

(2011: 2). Indeed, it could be argued that, for Nietzsche, it is those who abandon the quest for happiness who are the greatest humans, not in the sense of external distress but personal distress at what is taken as acceptable, and for their appreciation of intellectual and personal development through their suffering. In this line of thinking, contentment removes the need to explore ourselves and life critically. Nietzsche's position on contentment as acceptance is one that Southgate (2012) contrasts with aspiration. It is with aspiration that education should be associated and not the mere passivity that was the concern of Nietzsche.<sup>5</sup> My conception of contentment is not passivity nor comfort by contentment at the achievement one is marking towards one's informed, feasible future. To aspire to something that is feasible is anything but comfortable.

Heidegger's and Nietzsche's use of contentment was closer to the concept of tranquillity developed above. It was a restful contentment that they seized upon as failing to engage in everyday interpretation, especially 'authentic' action in the world, and it is this inactivity that formed the object of their scorn. Such tranquillity, according to Heidegger, is a refusal to understand the oppression under which we all exist. It is not necessarily one of physical violence, but an economic and cultural oppression; the oppression of consumerist desires to make everything fine, dandy and happy. Heidegger warned that whatever 'makes no demand upon themselves can never know the refusal or being refused, but sways in a contentment that has what it wants and wants only what it can have' (1995: 164). Such contentment saps our strength and power, which we replace with a need to concern ourselves with 'learned competencies that can be instilled' (ibid.). As Heidegger asks, how is 'temporal meaning to be found in the pallid lack of mood which dominates the "grey everyday" through and through? And how about the temporality of such moods and affects as hope, joy, enthusiasm, gaiety?' (1962: 395).

Heidegger's focus on the individual and the moods that release the being of that person in the world provided a grounding for Levinas. Through Levinas's phenomenological analysis of contentment in section 2 of *Totality and Infinity* (Inferiority and Economy), he traces the notion of enjoyment as enduring (contentment), not generated externally to the individual but through the act of finding oneself in separation from others. Enjoyment is the cause of sustainability. Objects form the contentment of this finitude, without appearing to be on a ground of infinity. The finite as contentment is sensibility (1969: 135), for it is sensibility that is the primordial essence of being. It is a sensibility that is temporal but dissolved into the imminent as the expression of happiness and joy in the presence of others. Moreover, in reference to Aristotelian gnology,

sensibility is 'not an inferior theoretical knowledge bound however intimately to affective states: in its very gnosis sensibility is enjoyment; it is satisfied with the given, it is contented'. Yet this contentment is achieved (accomplished, for Levinas) by taking a stance on one's being in the world in ways that reflect Heidegger's notion of authenticity. Levinas emphasized sensation prior to perception and that the closed realm of enjoyment and contentment is contested by the other. This disruption prevents the return of an elemental status in our enjoyment through the contented engagement with things that satisfy our bodily needs. In short, Heidegger's analysis of the ready-to-hand, of the telos of the tool, is led astray by missing the fundamentality of sheer enjoyment. Levinas suggested that what

seems to have escaped Heidegger ... is that prior to being a system of tools, the world is an ensemble of nourishments. Human life in the world does not go beyond the objects that fulfil it [*des objets qui le remplissent*]... . When one smells a flower, it is the smell that limits the finality of the act. To stroll is to enjoy the fresh air, not for health but for the air. (1987: 63)

## Nourishment and hunger

My love of life is fed and nourished by the sensibility of my engagement and consumption of things: food, music and the environment. Each of these enables my enjoyment to flourish as happiness for the duration of the experience and then, when satiated, to await the next desire episode and the enjoyment that comes from its satiation. I am thus content with the contentment of my enjoyment; an enjoyment that is an immersion in the elemental medium from which this emerges. This dynamic notion of being always in flux is certainly unlike the form of contentment condemned by Nietzsche. Indeed, for Levinas, it is an accomplishment that happiness is achieved. For Levinas, life without happiness dissolves into a shadow. We are not happy because we have no needs. We are happy because we have needs and we enjoy fulfilling them. The very personality of the I, the very self of the I, is the accomplishment of this happiness. This is the concrete accomplishment of being a self: 'the life that is life from something is happiness. Life is affectivity and sentiment; to live is to enjoy life. To despair of life makes sense only because originally life is happiness. Suffering is a failing of happiness; it is not correct to say that happiness is an absence of suffering' (Levinas, 1969: 115). For Levinas, at the centre of being is not my ultimate death that I have to work my way towards, but the joy and love of life. A joy that

is primordial is not reflective, from which I fall into, disappear and suffer not, from which my joy emerges. It is sensibility and is not reducible to a representation – not even an inarticulate representation – that is the province of reason; it belongs to sensibility, which is the mode of enjoyment. Like Heidegger, ‘we are describing starting with enjoyment of the element does not belong to the order of thought but to that of sentiment, that is, the affectivity wherein the egoism of the I pulsates’ (1969: 135).

In Levinas, we have a discussion where happiness, contentment and enjoyment are the central essence of being. Indeed, for Levinas, pure existence is ataraxic, whereas happiness is sourced through accomplishment and enjoyment is the memory of an experience of desire satisfaction. Both are forms of nourishment of the self, and provide the reason that we retain our existence, why we overcome struggle and why we ought to be happy in life. Moreover, happiness provides the platform from which our engagement with others can begin. We gift to others what is demanded of us by them. In order to give, we must value, enjoy, that which we give. This is the Levinasian position on radical alterity. It was based on and aligned to a degree with the Heideggerian notion of being in the world, through authentically knowing oneself before others. The basis of the separation of one from the other is a complex notion of enjoyment, happiness and contentment.

Although Levinas was keen not to describe the feeling of enjoyment as a fundamental attunement (he went so far as to say that it is not a Heideggerian disposition), it is hard to envision a notion of happiness and enjoyment without an enduring nature. However, Levinas insisted that the potency of enjoyment lies in its duration, built on the temporality of satiation that is immanent rather than transcendental. Indeed, his claim that the essence of being is happiness seems difficult to accept if it is in an endless series of need-satisfaction episodes that are vulnerable at the point of satiation to an absence, conceived of by Levinas as suffering. I base this on the notion that in enjoyment I am absolute, and that this absoluteness enables me to be absolute myself.

Whitehead, predating Levinas, put it clearly: ‘now as a first approximation the notion of life implies a certain absoluteness of self-enjoyment. This must mean a certain immediate individuality. . . . Life implies the absolute, individual self-enjoyment arising out of the process of appropriation’ (1966: 150). His similarity here to Levinas, and his enjoyment of nourishment, is clear, but it should be noted that Whitehead, like Heidegger, envisioned a range of essential characteristics of life (fundamental attunement), while Levinas regarded enjoyment as the only primordial cause of our being.

This totalization of self by obligation to others within the unified whole needs a form of separation, which in Levinas is provided by the prudence of enjoyment. It does not, of course, assume a totality of being only of my being. This is critical to Levinas's notion of relationship with others. I am a totality of myself and, as a consequence, the rest of the world is other than me.

It is in this context that the primordial notion of pre-intentional phenomenology of being that is contentment forms an emergent nature, joy and happiness of being in the world: happiness. These joyful emotions are not the consequence of a temperamental catharsis or a response to a representation of the word in some intentional and intellectual force of agency, but an authentic response to the wonder of being in the world. It is more wonderment of being. The awakening to the nature of our being realizes the idea that we can be content, and that this, in Heidegger's terms, is a fundamental attunement; a comportment, rather than Husserlian intention. I suggest it is in the form of attunement that Levinas differed from Heidegger when he claimed that the latter never mentioned satisfaction, but, as I have shown, it is more true to say that Heidegger never developed the phenomenology of this attunement. Certainly, he did not attribute the same importance to self-derived happiness as Levinas, taking being as more traumatic in nature.

## Contentment is enduring happiness episodic

Contentment is not the happiness that we might associate with consumerism, sensual-desire satisfaction or, as Ahmed has illustrated, a happiness that we are obliged to embrace, but following Rousseau and Heidegger, a state of being content with oneself. Profound happiness is contentment in becoming what one wills one's being to be, in the knowledge of one's capabilities. The approach involves an educative process of developing potential capabilities and a realistic appreciation of what this means for one, being in the world with others. It is not fanciful and it denies that one can be whatever one fantasizes, replacing this with a notion of contentment with what one might feasibly be (see Gibbs, 2014).

To find our potential to be and to will its realization requires disruption to this tranquillity, and a heightened awareness and realization of Nussbaum's core structural capabilities of critical thinking, confidence and citizenship that underpin ten central capabilities (2011: 33–35). Securing these capabilities is emotionally unsettling, distressing and creates temporary negations to contentment, but in doing so, provided we experience them as part of our understanding of

ourselves through attunement to mood of contentment rather than anxiety, they bring benefits for individual growth.

This approach differs from the two main thrusts of literature concerned with happiness studies: well-being and hedonism. It differs from judgements of well-being made retrospectively about an accumulation of satisfied lifelong desires, and to the explicit and normative directives of what is prudently good for one. In this sense, contentment is not strictly Aristotelian *eudaimonia*, which prioritizes well-being based on moral, wealth or health imperatives, although it does retain notions of agentic directed growth, meaning and purpose informed by societal norms, while not being restricted to them. I can be content and virtuous, but I don't need to be virtuous to be content.<sup>6</sup>

Hedonism also differs from the emotions of desire and pleasure satisfaction as the sustainable notion of happiness. Although it certainly finds a place for the presence of joy and momentary outbreaks of expression of delight and pleasure, it is not reliant on extrinsic directed and generated pleasures, and is an intrinsic state of awareness. Contentment, then, is a blend of both these traditional forms of happiness theory, realized through one's temporal being, and interpreted and understood from a mood of contentment with the living of a willed life plan. It is one's mood that becomes attuned to one's being within the consequences of one's agentic capabilities. It is being able to strive realistically to know the best one can be, and not the best anyone else might want one to be. Moreover, if we crudely follow Rorty (1999) in that higher education's duty is to encourage irony from the socialization of compulsory education, then higher education and its institutions represent a space for this questioning to take place. Further, it might be claimed that higher education has a duty to offer such a space and not to close it out with the business of service delivery based on pleasure, entertainment and job grooming. It is in the Heideggerian sense of a fundamental attunement<sup>7</sup> to the world through the mood of contentment that we find ourselves disposed to be in the world with others; open to them and not constrained by the consumerism entrapment of a notion of belonging by consuming. Heidegger talked damn-ingly and directly about how consumerism is abandoning Being through letting one's 'will be unconditionally equated with the process [consumerism] and thus becomes at the same time the "object" of the abandonment of Being' (1973: 107, author's brackets). He continued in a prophetic attack on consumerism as the totalizing power held by a few globalized leaders to negate our understanding of our being: the 'circularity of consumption for the sake of consumption is the sole procedure which distinctively characterizes the history of a world which has become an unworld' (ibid.: 107).

The form of consumerism that Heidegger envisioned had its roots in Rousseau, especially when he spoke at length about how we can so easily live our lives through the approval of others and how ruinous this may be. D. Rousseau also considered emotions, claiming that human understanding owed much to the passions (1989). This forms a conceptual link with Heidegger in the importance of emotion as the manifestation of fundamental moods and how taming these should be disquieting about the nature of a technological way of civilized being.

Significantly, for Heidegger, the affectiveness of our being 'has already disclosed, in every case, Being-in-the-world as a whole, and makes it possible first of all to direct oneself towards something' (1962: 176). These fundamental attunements shape how we experience the world and things within it, and together with discourse and understanding, determine how we make ourselves meaningful and grasp our world (Heidegger called this 'care'). The objects that joy, happiness or sadness trigger are revealed because of a mood that determines the way of making one's way in the world. These outbursts last for the duration of the stimulus and, once gone, depending on our fundamental attunement, leave us somewhere between distress and contentment. These eruptions are moments of insight into our fundamental way of being and offer a view of how we want to be for ourselves.<sup>8</sup> Applying an edifying exploration of these moments of vision provides the potential for us to seek and create our life project. The life project is an existential location of self within the flux of others, and taken seriously, it determines the person who one wants oneself to be and is realized through our actions. Nurturing such an informed stance is enhanced by moments of vision, but if they are ignored or counted as events in themselves in order to favour the sameness of others, their value is no more than immediate desire gratification.

Importantly, I am not supposing that these insights reveal what might be prescribed as aspects of well-being – virtue, health and wisdom – ideal though these might be, as they are too restrictive in their universal meaningfulness. The contentment envisioned here requires personal awareness, but neither virtuous living (although it might be aided by it) nor dependency on a joyous life after death, although it may include both. As we have seen, a contented life is not merely a matter of context and prescribed content worthy of satisfying well-being. The attunement to personal contentment is a multifaceted notion, revealed not in moments of pleasure or joy but in the trajectory and feeling of accomplishment in becoming the being one wills through one's temporal awareness (Gibbs, 2010a).

## Willing your own stance is not easier than to comply for others

It is no easy task to will one's being, to take a stance on one's being, which is existentially sustainable and brings contentment. It is a role that higher education should facilitate through bringing an awareness of attunement to moods to its presentation of emotional as well as propositional knowledge. Understanding and interpreting one's potential to be within one's world requires education, vision, courage and tenacity. These are necessary if one is to ascertain how one's being fits best alongside others, without compromising one's being for the sake of fitting in merely for the fleeting benefit of others' comfort. Rousseau was clear on the dangers of this. In the notes of *Discourse on Inequality* he wrote of entrapment of self-determination by *amour propre*, our need to be recognized by others as having value and to be treated with respect, and the damage to willed self-determination if it is not provided (1984: 167).

For Heidegger, this issue is embedded in '*das Man*': our need to conform (at least in the development of a discourse) to the traditions and practices that make our world intelligible to us. If conformity becomes conformism, however, the need for conformity may also deprive us of an originality of purpose. Often, it is only when we are forced to question what we take as the way to be – when, for instance, inconspicuous acts reveal themselves in failure – that our conformity is revealed and we question our own stance and that of others.

I suggest here that education, and especially formal higher education, ought to be an environment in which *amour propre* can be recognized for what it is, relating to what one might be for oneself. Such contentment is neither transient happiness nor desire satisfaction, and is achieved by taking a willed stance on what, how and with what values one's being can be realized in a social context. It does not require an ascribed notion of well-being, neither is it unbridled desire. It is a blend of passion (Rousseau) and attunement (Heidegger) with the rationality of self-appreciation. It is mediated by co-existence and collaboration with others. It is not what is recorded in student satisfaction surveys, which at best measure what is pleasing about the context of education, not a search for contentment that pervades one's willed being.

Contentment, then, is necessarily neither a consequence of well-being nor the suffering for some sense of eternal contentment after mortal life. It is about finding and knowing one's place in the world; fitting in through self-meaningful ways. It comes about by engagement and questioning, and requires the development of capabilities upon which these questions might be based and responses



interpreted. Higher education, I propose, ought to give one the privileged space to pursue what one wants oneself to be. By making this proposal, I am asserting that a purpose of higher education must surely be the development of one's criticality, both of the circumstances in which one finds oneself and of one's own actions within these circumstances. Providing such a context for reflection ought to be a responsibility of higher-education institutions, and taking such time to step aside from the totalizing consumerism of our everydayness is the obligation of students to this gifted time. To misuse the privilege by busying oneself with what is rather than what might be, I would suggest, is an abuse of privilege (see Gibbs, 2009). Indeed, many students strive for this, with some achieving it, but it is not something higher education can gift. It requires personal engagement from students. I am not, of course, proposing that higher education ought not to have an economic purpose, among others, but that this has become an overpowering discourse. Nor am I suggesting that happiness is not evident in higher education alongside satisfaction (although they are not the same thing) (Gibbs & Dean, 2014). Rather, contentment should be considered a goal for higher education, alongside other goals, to be set against the needs of the institution in measuring student satisfaction.

It is interesting to compare Levinas's notion of enjoyment with Rousseau's notion of self-love. Rousseau preferred *amour de soi*, self-love based on awareness of what one might be, to reliance on *amour propre*, or what others find worthy in you. As noted, he spoke at length about how we so easily live our lives through the approval of others and how ruinous this may be.

### Temporality of contentment

Moods, according to Heidegger, along with the other aspects of care, were to be analysed in terms of temporality: 'the primordial unity of the structure of care lies in temporality' (Heidegger 1962: 375). The tripartite structure of time (Gibbs, 2010b) identifies the temporality of being in the world in three senses. In the first, ordinary time – the time of emotion – time is calculative or experienced as a present extended in time, in external measurable time. In this state of temporal isolation, our past and our future operate with 'in-the-moment' of joy or despair. We risk violating our being if we do not reconnect with the primordial temporary of care, the temporal form of contentment. The second form of temporality, world time, is spatial time. Here, events are located with respect to other events, not by their duration as measured in clock time but in terms of their temporal

juxtaposition. Past, present and future all play a role in the location, but not the experience, of present time. Last, the temporality of mood (originary temporality) is that of the integration of past, present and future in the moment of being. As Gibbs suggests, 'all three modes of time are bound together degeneratively and dependently; ordinary time is a degenerative form of world time, and world time is a degenerative form of originary temporality' (2010b: 392).

Like Heidegger's profound boredom, the phenomenon of contentment may take three distinctive forms, I suggest, reflecting their temporality. The first is emotional eruptions of joy, pleasure, gratification, bliss, lust or ecstasy, when there is a specific focus for an explicit show of happiness in an episodic fashion; a happiness directed towards something. The second manifestation of an underlying happiness is a feeling akin to a shallow cheeriness without substance; a cheeriness or musing that is empty, not evoked by any specific external event but by a state of limbo, a temporal standing (Heidegger, 1995: 122). This might be called 'whatever' happiness. It is a satisfying state that is a reproduction of exciting norms of society and specific to each epoch, consumerism being the current epoch.

The third is ontological and is an attunement to our own being's happiness, the fundamental happiness of willing and then enacting one's being. The contentment that this represents is revealed in one's engagement with one's being by taking a stance on fitting into that being, so that 'I am happily me'. This sentiment is fundamental in that, once a stance is taken, its engagement and action are essential to one's being. In willing such a being, successful accomplishment is not constant and stable, but does endure. This notion can be found in the fifth work in Rousseau's *Reveries* (1979, where he discussed that the *sentiment de l'existence* and happiness' source is 'nothing external to use, nothing apart from ourselves and our own existence' (1979: 89). It is clear that if any attunements fix one's world view in a semi-permanent and dominant way, one's ability to deal with the world is inhibited and leaves one dysfunctional. Normally, when one is frustrated or fearful, these transitory moods (attunements) are appropriate to the changes in the environment that disrupt our contentment towards willed becoming. Attunement may also create an engagement with others and, in this sense, it is a 'kinesthetic and emotional sensing of others knowing their rhythm, affect and experience' (Erskine, 1998). As Heidegger observed, the effect is to create an atmosphere that can change the disposition of everyone in the vicinity. Compassion, as advocated by Rousseau, is one such attunement, and unguarded by prudence, can lead to unsubstantiated promised futures.

Each of these three realizations of happiness has a dominant notion of temporality accompanying it (see Table 8.1).

**Table 8.1** Contrasting forms of happiness

	<b>Directed happiness</b>	<b>‘Whatever’ happiness</b>	<b>Contentment</b>
General distinction	Conspicuous expression of a happy emotional state of joy, bliss or ecstasy. A loss in the moment, anticipated present and then gone.	Inconspicuous occurrence of passing time, hidden from oneself and taken as a disposition: he is a cheery soul. Directed at the publicness of others.	An attunement to one’s existential being. A feeling of fitting with oneself regardless of others around one; informed contentment.
Notion of time	Datable time; that is, events located in relation to others. It is the shaping of separated notions of past, present and future.	Time is linear and progressive. It is the shaping of separated notions of past, present and future.	Originary or primordial time; the time in which we make sense of ourselves, temporality temporalized in the present.
The range of resonance	Being forced between particularly happy events.	Dissipation of happiness as a cheeriness throughout the whole situation.	Contentment with agentic being.
Happiness in relation to a situation	Bounded in a situation, limited by extrinsic circumstances.	Not bound to a particular situation, but a way of acting for others in their world.	All-embracing.

To feel content demands taking a stance on one's being, seeking and then making a choice as to what one can achieve. In so doing, one breaks from the view of human nature that 'embodied most plainly in mainstream economic thought, has helped to create a set of very strong and persuasive presumptions about the value of certain freedoms for human welfare, and, in turn, about the kinds of policies and social forms that tend to promote well-being' (Haybron, 2009: 250).

Happiness is the freedom of self-determination within the context of a chosen world view. Fundamental happiness, as distinct from episodic happiness – whether intense joy, eruptions of trivial pleasure or scrutinized notions of what is good for one – is not restricted to what others think and attempt to determine, but to one's own stance. It is not the satisfaction of exciting preferences, but the securing of one's action in a life plan of one's being. This position allows for happiness to be cross-cultural and embraces faith as well as pragmatism, all in a non-economic, Stoic form of willed intention. It is about one's fit within one's being, to flourish in the world of, but not resolved by, others.

### An existential resonance

These ideas have resonance with existential phenomenological ontology literature, especially works by Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre. Sufficient for now, however, is that there is psychological evidence to support an ontological notion of happiness as fulfilment that has both philosophical and psychological support (Şimşek & Kocayörük, 2012). But how do we go about being in this world? Raibley offers a way into this problem through his notion of the flourishing agent, able to bring capabilities and values to bear successfully on the stance taken on their being (2012). Given that this is plausible, then one may ask how to enable the agent to flourish. One source of such enabling is education. To take such a stance presumes that we have abilities and capabilities, and are empowered by opportunities for them to function in our willed way of being. These capabilities are decisions of potentiality that can be revealed and investigated through, among other experiences, formal higher education.

## Contentment, Despair and Resilience

*Accordingly, resilience can be defined as reduced vulnerability to environmental risk experiences, the overcoming of a stress or adversity, or a relatively good outcome despite risk experiences. (Rutter, 2012: 336)*

### Optimism needs hope (or God)

Discussing despair in a book on happiness and contentment might seem out of place if the premise of despair is considered entirely foreign to our well-being. As Scott-Baumann has suggested, the world for the richer world is one of instant gratification where we are less able to deal with ‘not having what we want, with not being someone different or not understanding what’s happening to us’ (2013: 2). Ricœur, according to Scott-Baumann, embraces such negation and shows how we might use it to live a more companionable life. Scott-Baumann sees this as a consequence of the dominant bipolarity of Western logical systems, which is used to define the subject by what it is not. Thus, happiness is not being sad, worried or upset. The risk is clear that the importance of the negative to the positive is lost, and they are seen only as antagonistic. Clearly, things are messier than this stark distinction would suggest, but it holds as a warning of such an approach. We will discuss the benefits of facing negation at the end of the chapter, but to get there we will travel through the optimism, some might say the blind optimism, of Leibniz and then move to Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche.

Leibniz’s theodicy and most famous and optimistic claim is that we live in the best of all possible worlds, based on the fact that God made it. As McHarry

formulated the basic problem, which stems from theodicy as one of evil and God:

- (1) God exists and is all good, all knowing, and all powerful.
- (2) If God exists, the world must be in accord with His wishes, i.e., the best of all possible worlds.
- (3) Therefore, this *is* the best of all possible worlds.
- (4) This is *not* the best of all possible worlds; it contains too much evil.
- (5) Therefore, (1) is false; there is no God. (1978: 132)

He went so far as to say that Leibniz's doctrine of optimism has undoubtedly been one of the most vilified in the history of Western philosophy. Perhaps the most obvious objection to optimism is that this world contains far too much evil to be plausibly identified as the best yet. Strickland (2010) argues that this doctrine is not threatened by the very existence of evil in this world, as he does not deny its reality, nor does his philosophy require him to do so. Important as this support is, not just for Leibniz's work but for theories of optimism, I doubt that such could be shared by the three pessimists who I will discuss or, indeed, in a more contemporary terms, Voltaire, whose satire, *Candide*, relentlessly parodied Leibniz's position, pushing the acceptance of such a state to the very limits of credibility.

But the book is more than just this. It is about resilience and hope tempered, by the realization of the limited value of temporary good fortune. Candice, whose experiences are as extraordinary as the satire demands, does return to a state of settlement and contentment where, after all his adventures, he and the cluster of aliens, friends and a wife who follow him realize that doing what one is best able results in the success for which they all yearn. When faced with Pangloss's desire to engage in more abstract discussion, Candice's final response and statement is 'but we must cultivate our garden' (2005: 94) – not as an act of passivity or for abdication from life, but as an act to sustain themselves.

Leibniz also related the nature of happiness and virtue as those attributes given by God as the supreme creator. The best of all possible worlds allows for our poor decision making, which is somehow fixed by God in the way in which the option that we all have could have taken our being, and Being in general, in even worse directions than those that we create. Our failure to enjoy being, which is naturally happiness, is the way in which we use our free will. It is in the city of God, only, where all is virtuous and happiness. Leibniz did, however, make an interesting distinction from tranquillity when he wrote: 'do your duty and be content with that which shall come of it, not only because you cannot resist divine providence, or the nature of things (that may be suffice for tranquillity,

but not for contentment), but also because you have a good master' (2015: 34). Of this, we can understand that contentment is born from an understanding of one's being, rather than engagement of that being in the world.

### It is not going to get worse; it already is

Not finding any certainty of optimism in Leibniz, it is perhaps Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche who are the philosophers most associated with the notion of unhappiness and despair. As, for instance, is Nietzsche, sarcastically pointing at the English utilitarian philosophers when he suggested that 'man does not strive for happiness, only the Englishman does that' (2003: 33). His views, seem to reflect the notion of a happiness as one of personal uniqueness and not those of the herd, and as such, the proclamation that the happiness of the majority is the appropriate determinant of collective action has no ontological grounding. This is seen in the first half of the above aphorism, which is often not included: 'if we possess our *why* of life we can put up with almost any *how*' (ibid., italics in the original). He is directly confronting the essence of happiness as the ultimate universal good, achievable through a virtuous life. In so doing he attacks both ancient Greeks and the established theological doctrines in one powerful sentence.

Schopenhauer was highly sceptical that attaining happiness was ever possible. For him, the blind striving of the will is without aim and, once we have observed and understood this, we will be convinced that all life is suffering. For him, the reoccurring theme in *The World as Will* was that we are always getting ready to live, and this is why our happiness is projected into the future. There is no solid, enduring happiness in this life, because there is no positive good or purpose in the substance of this world. It is essentially just endless will, greedy desire for more and greater life. Nothing can satisfy desire, because it is only desire. For Schopenhauer, life consisted of desire, some satisfaction and then boredom, which led back to desire, for 'no man is happy but strives his whole life long after a supposed happiness which he seldom attains, and even if he does it is only to be disappointed with it; as a rule, however, he finally enters harbour shipwrecked and dismasked' (1970: 52). He continued, if 'he has been happy or not in a life which has consisted merely of a succession of transient present moment and is now at an end' (ibid.).

For Schopenhauer, 'happiness is only of a negative, not a positive nature, that for this very reason happiness cannot be lasting satisfaction and gratification,

but always merely releases us from some pain or want which must be followed either by a new pain or by languor, empty longing, and boredom' (1995: 202–3). He held that our world is a place of despair. This comment might well typify his approach: 'as a reliable compass for orientating yourself in life, nothing is more useful than to accustom yourself to regarding this world as a place of atonement, a sort of penal colony' (1970: 48). At the core of his work is the striving of the will; however, it appears to be blind and irrational. Without any definite aim or object, it constantly struggles to survive and assert its own nature, but since that nature is itself only a striving, the whole enterprise seems incapable of any final satisfaction. This conception of the will, as used by Schopenhauer, is a basis for an elaborate metaphysical system of the world in which we suffer and survive until death. For 'evil is precisely that which is positive, that which makes itself palpable; and good, on the other hand, i.e. all happiness and all gratification, is that which is negative, the mere abolition and extinction of a pain' (42). Moreover, the 'life of the individual is a constant struggle, and not merely a metaphorical one against want or boredom, but also an actual struggle against people. He discovers adversaries everywhere, lives in continue conflict and dies with sword in hand' (ibid.) Thus, for Schopenhauer, the world was 'Hell, and men are on the one hand the tormented souls and on the other the devils in it' (ibid.: 48). For Schopenhauer, the happiness of a given life was not to be measured according to joys and pleasure, but the absence of suffering. Unlike Kierkegaard, in Schopenhauer we see a denunciation of aspirations that, when achieved, only masquerade as the ultimate purpose of our willing, and once attained, vanish as illusions. We consider ourselves fairly fortunate if there is still something to wish for, and to strive after, to 'keep up the game whereby desire constantly passes into satisfaction, and satisfaction into desire – if the pace of this is swift, it is called happiness, and if it is slow, sorrow – and does not falter and come to the standstill that shows in dreadful, stultifying boredom, in lifeless yearning without a definite object, a deadening languor' (1995: 85).

Schopenhauer proposed three ways in which we can offer a response to the predicament that he described:

- The way of asceticism, derived from Hindu and Buddhist literature, which is similar in many important respects to the practical ethics of the Greek Stoics and Cynics;
- The disinterested pursuit of philosophical understanding leading to genuine knowledge of the world and mastery over our circumstances, the



more we move from self-consciousness to consciousness of others and the objective world;

- The contemplation of works of art.

Thus, for Schopenhauer, to free ourselves from the unquenchable flow of desires we need to minimise our attachment to this world. This can be achieved through philosophical contemplation, music and art, which offer us a spectator's role on life.<sup>1</sup> However, this is not a panacea for all, but only to those most able to undertake these activities, and the risk to their being is more acute than those who do not try.

### Anxiety can be positive, but can be below despair

Indeed, through Kierkegaard, I take despair as the opportunities through its revelation of imbalance and disharmony of self to allow us to take action; thus, it has an educative benefit. As Kierkegaard wrote in *The Sickness unto Death*, despair has both merit and defect and, dialectically, it is both, for if 'one were to think of despair only in the abstract, without reference to some particular despairer, one would have to say it is an enormous merit' (1989: 44). Kierkegaard is helpful in allowing us to see that our capacity for despair is a distinguishing feature of human life, and his temporally based answer in the difficulty of finding a way of being where the divine and eternity can prevail is clearly offering a faith solution. Yet Kierkegaard's analysis and his engagement with hope, as perceived by Bernier (2015), offers insights into a morality of contentment.

In *The Sickness unto Death*, Kierkegaard first identified the notion of self, stating that the human being is spirit and 'a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity' (1989: 43). Accordingly, we are concrete self. Insofar as we have synthesized the infinite and the finite, it is a dialect between ourselves and others, and how we imagine ourselves to be. The finite is our endowments, our potentiality and our capabilities to deliver them. The infinite is what we might imagine things to be. Mastery of the imagination is a feasible way of becoming, taking a stance on ourselves so that we can seek balance. Kierkegaard considered the synthesis of the necessary and possible, for this dialect pertains to freedom. Clearly, that possibilities are directed towards the future is relational on the imagination. Kierkegaard suggested that 'just as finitude in the constraining factor in relation to infinitude, so necessary is the constraining factor in relation to possibility'. Further, in order to become itself,

it reflects itself in the medium of imagination (65). The tension, then, is the self that we are (necessary) and the self we want to be (the possible). Through these two syntheses, the self becomes conscious of itself and is then, according to Kierkegaard, aware of being a synthesis between the temporal and the eternal. This is a self that, he maintained, is always in a process of becoming, for the self 'is not present actually, it is merely what is to come into existence' (60). There are clearly more optimums in Kierkegaard than in the earlier work of Schopenhauer.

In *The Sickness unto Death*, Kierkegaard identifies three forms of despair: 'being unconscious in despair of having a self (inauthentic despair), not wanting in despair to be oneself, and wanting in despair to be oneself'. To not be conscious of despair is itself a form of despair. The possibility of despair is what distinguishes human beings from all other living creatures, and those who are aware of their despair have an advantage over those who do not. Yet, the actual experience of despair can bring great misfortune and misery, even ruin. With despair, then, we witness a reversal of the usual relation between possibility and actuality. Generally, if it is considered meritorious to be able to be something, actually being that is all the more meritorious. In the case of despair, this is, in one sense at least, not so: in the possibility of despair one ascends, while in the actuality of despair one descends.

Despair is the condition that fails to negotiate the tension in the dialects, as outlined above. It is the inability to have an integrated life. For instance, in the dialect of finite or infinite we might become too concerned about others and our role in society and lose the spiritless of the infinite, which can lead to a reductionism and narrowness of our notion of self. Clearly, the opposite removes from the reality of our being in the world and might lead to form of fanaticism and losing a meaningful life in the present. Despair of the possible and the necessary also lead to chase possibilities without grounding them in the feasibility of our present. If we chase possibilities one after the other without actualizing (a unification of necessity and possibility) them, there is a point where the 'individual himself becomes an atmospheric illusion' (Kierkegaard, 1989: 66).

There is little evidence that Kierkegaard was initially much influenced by Schopenhauer, but according to Stokes and Wyn (2007), there is evidence in Kierkegaard's papers and journals that their views were similar. However, Kierkegaard disagreed with how Schopenhauer saw the way to happiness (as indicated above, for he considered this elitist and intellectually arrogant).

Finally, to complete the triad, I mention Nietzsche only briefly.<sup>2</sup> He saw happiness as the reliance on any form of happiness that is not ineffectual. Nietzsche is not generally regarded as an advocate of happiness or indeed hope, and

happiness is not systematically worked out into a single, positive argument. His views on happiness mainly consisted of a series of critical observations that he elaborated throughout his works, as in the *Will to Power*: ‘to those human beings who are of any concern to me, I wish suffering, desolation, sickness, ill treatment, indignities, profound self-contempt, the torture of self-mistrust, and the wretchedness of the vanquished: I have no pity for them because I wish them the only thing that can prove today whether one is worth anything or not – that one endures’ (1986: 481). Yet happiness is a recurring theme in his work. For Nietzsche, happiness was the expression of one’s affirming attitude towards life. As such, it was specially one’s own and not a reward for virtuous and good actions or intent. Nietzsche recognized a plurality of types of happiness, as he explicitly wrote in Book 2 of *Daybreak*. It is here that Nietzsche suggested that there ‘is a particular and incomparable happiness to be attained at every stage of our development, one that is neither high nor low, but quite an individual happiness. Evolution does not make happiness its goal; it aims merely at evolution, and nothing else’ (1997: 108). Nietzsche thus avoided the Kierkegaard criticism of intellectual elitism levelled at Schopenhauer and that is still prevalent in large swathes of the literature, that there is a good and bad form of happiness. The social and well as moral distinction revolves around the idea that a good is intellectual, clean transcendent, whereas others are more sensual, easier to obtain and somehow might be misdirected happiness. Wienand goes so far as to suggest that Nietzsche used the concept of happiness in a ‘quasi-tautological sense, not because he wants to underline its explanatory weakness, but in order to emphasize and defend the uniqueness and the value of each individual conception of happiness against (utilitarian) attempts to subsume the individual under the hegemony of the well-being of the majority’ (2014: 402).

### It is the pleasure principle that is to blame

But to prolong the angst, I offer one more view. Who offers a real-world solution to our suffering in this unpleasant world, but Freud. In chapter 2 of *Civilization and Its Discontents* (2010), Freud addressed the purpose of life and introduced the pleasure principle. However, in this chapter Freud is all too keen to tell us that our world is one of suffering, a life ‘too hard for us; it brings us too many pains, disappointments and impossible tasks’ (41). Yet, in this world of pain, our non-theological purpose of life is happiness, either as pleasure or as avoidance of unhappiness. Freud suggested three ways in which we can face, if not deal, with

the dilemma of seeking happiness in a world of suffering. These are: 'powerful deflections, which cause us to make light of our misery; substitute satisfy actions, which diminish it; and intoxicating substances, which make us insensitive to it' (ibid.). There is one more that he offered, and that is 'a flight into neurotic illness – a flight which he usually accomplishes when he is still young' (55–6). So, in a similar vein to Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard, Freud acknowledged that life is suffering. There are episodic moments of happiness, which are unsustainable, but that is all we get. The tension between our desire for pleasure and the reality of our world is the nature of our being. In more realist terms, he offered advice on coping in ways that need to be balanced, and gave us an understanding of the consequence of not doing so.

In a way, Freud's openness to the tension with our world in which we seek to strive to gain happiness is linked to Ricœur's avocation of recognizing and dealing with the negatives that beset our being – the hiddenness of the negative in the overt display of happiness was not for Ricœur. As Scott-Baumann so skilfully put it, the negative that we create does 'enable us to set the limits to who we are, what we believe in and what makes us happy. We want to think that if we reject, negate certain phenomena, we will be happier than if we accept them as part of our lives and thought' (2013: 136). To do this is to create a being unable to function in the world, as it presents itself moving in a world of fiction. Although this is possible, the tension and, indeed, discontent that this is likely to arouse are much worse than the act of confrontation, even if we find our abilities wanting.

As Hyland suggested, educators ought to show more interest in areas of human life and experience that have been traditionally neglected – the roots and consequences of the misery, pain and suffering in the world – if they are to achieve that most general of educational aims, what Whitehead called the only subject matter of education: 'life in all its manifestations' (1932: 10). Hyland made a very strong argument when he suggested that our vision of education and our world

will remain distorted and confused until we have learned to recognize the forces which shape our thoughts and actions, and are able to apply this knowledge to practical living. If clarity of vision sometimes renders experience unpalatable, so be it. Although such knowledge may not always help us to change the world in any concrete way, the refinement of our powers of reflection and deliberation leads to the attainment of that self-knowledge. (1985: 228)

As I hope is clear from this section, there is no avocation to inflict suffering on anyone (period) or that somehow there is something embedded in the suffering

that is good and needs to be released. In this, I clearly support Noddings, that there is nothing within personal suffering that somehow 'contains meaning somehow necessary for human flourishing' when imposed to induce pain (2003: 40). However, there are three ways in which suffering in terms of pain and anxiety do have important contributions to one's contented place in the world. The first concerns the suffering of others. People should learn the ways that some have imposed suffering on others. This is a moral responsibility to keep alive the atrocities that we have done to others, in whoever's name. We need to remember, in order never to accept it. Second, we need to know of ways in which people have looked at suffering and the nobility of humanity that can be shown,<sup>3</sup> and, third, one should not shy away from the effort, discomfort and anxiety that might be attributed to suffering in the challenge of realizing feasible potentialities. All three enrich our understanding of ourselves and humanity, and none justify harmful practice to others. As Wittgenstein questioned and answered, it is to education that we must look, 'how can man be happy at all, since he cannot ward off the misery of this world? Through the life of knowledge. The good conscience is the happiness that the life of knowledge preserves. The life of knowledge is the life that is happy in spite of the misery of the world' (1958: 81).

## Resilience<sup>4</sup>

University students face a range of stressors in their university life; for example, academic pressures, financial problems and employment concerns. In response to so many challenges of our current social engagement, much has been made about recognizing and developing resilience in students to cope with the unknown. In this sense, it is a different form of engagement than despair, but might be considered as a counter to anxiety. Resilience is not solely the capacity to recover from trauma and adversity, but also a resistance to psychological stress and hardship (Cabanyes Truffino, 2010). It is essential to differentiate resilience from other similar concepts, including stress resistance, mental toughness and invulnerability.

Mental toughness is a similar concept, related more to stress resistance and the way of coping with stress. Invulnerability, on the other hand, refers to the absolute resistance to adversity (Cabanyes Truffino, 2010). Resilience is a complex, multidimensional construct that may not be defined by a single indicator (Rutter, 2000). In summary, resilience could be understood as a state, a condition

and/or a practice (Knight, 2007). Resilience as a state refers to the personal characteristics relating to withstanding adversity. This may include emotional competence, social competence and a future-oriented mindset. Cognitive features such as optimism, intelligence, creativity and humour are important ingredients of resilience. On the other hand, resilience is also determined by external/environmental factors. Thus, as a condition, resilience may be referred to as the families, schools or communities that provide protective factors (Henderson & Milstein, 1996). Resilience as a practice refers to the application of knowledge to develop one's personal capacity and build a protective external environment that enhances resilience. Indeed, the Penn Resilience Program claims to have extensive experience over the last 25 years of teaching a resilience program. These educators include more than 40,000 individuals, including K-12 school teachers, university faculty, school mental health professionals, college counsellors, US Army soldiers, senior leaders, marketing and sales teams, police officers and a professional sports organization. These educators have taught the resilience curriculum to more than 100,000 students. The evidence-based programmes have demonstrated effectiveness in large-scale, longitudinal, controlled studies. The skills that they teach seek to prevent and reduce stress-related problems such as anxiety and depression, and improve physical health, well-being and optimism. The programme strengthens an individual's ability to bounce back from adversity, manage stress, and thrive in their personal and professional life. The typical way that their train-the-trainer model works is:

- Train a group of educators over about eight intensive days, so they are equipped to deliver the resilience lesson plans to students;
- These educators deliver the resilience curriculum to students for one or two hours per week over the course of a semester, for a total of roughly 25 hours of course time. This can also be delivered in a more compressed time frame, if needed. The materials are modularized by skill, so you can pick and choose which skills you would like to teach your students.

There are a number of such programmes developed to enhance student resilience, but these are mainly focused on the compulsory school population, not the university (although the University of Texas System is undertaking the Penn Scheme, currently). These initiatives have a history in the USA, Australia and the UK, and those who promote them see real positive outcomes. Indeed, a meta-analysis of school-based intervention data for social-emotional learning shows that participants in these programmes had significant improvement against controls on emotional skills, attitudes, behaviour and academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011).

## The Time and Space of the University: A Fit with Contentment?

*To see ourselves as beings capable of happiness, and to see happiness as the goal at which we aim, is ultimately to see ourselves as on a journey, a journey of self-awareness and self-improvement. (Cottingham, Happiness, Temporality, Meaning, 2009: 28)*

### The temporality of the university

There are some key distinctions that can immediately help us understand time. Time has an objective character: clock time, a powerful human invention, is real and bears on life – including academic life – in a serious way. Research deadlines and teaching timetables impose themselves on both staff and students. Rather than a unified temporality, higher education has diverse times and timings, and social inequalities are significant in understanding the experiences of students in time present, past and future. But time also has a subjective character, rooted in felt experiences: qualifiers such as ‘fast’ and ‘slow’ are testimony, in part, to this felt nature of time. Time may also be felt collectively, whether in informal groups or organizations: one academic institution may have quite a different pace and rhythm from another. And it may also be sensed individually, with individuals varying in the way in which they experience the same temporal situation: one member of academic staff may relish the dynamism of the email-laden day, while another may feel it to be oppressive. And time is intimately implied in the idea of history, with its intertwined dimensions of past, present and future. Universities have their own time profiles, with their pasts, presents and futures, a time horizon that is always moving, pressuring students to undertake paid work and engage in other activities outside the curriculum. Epistemic and social

access to curricula and powerful knowledge, therefore, involves paying attention to these different time frames.

The tempo of the university has changed, and so has the temporality of the university. The practices of consumerist time are already evident in a higher-education context. For example, Ylijoki and Mäntylä suggest that there is a reduction of 'timeless time' (time not controlled by external constraints; time for reflective thought) and an increase in 'scheduled time', with its external imposition and accelerating pace (2003). Ylijoki and Mäntylä (2003), Clegg (2003) and Ylijoki (2004) claim that it affects research by accelerating the pace of work; decreasing autonomy over time management; causing a higher proportion of work on short-term projects; and increasing time pressures. Creation 'takes time'. The contemporary university instead colonizes time: it seizes, snatches, grasps and clutches it. However, the relation of higher education to the present and the future is more ambivalent and complex than it looks at first sight, from the very moment that academic practice reduces the future to present concerns. Academic and administrative rhetoric often employ a glorification of future time. This rhetoric disregards the present (either in the sense of a lived present demanding our critique or attentive care or in the sense of a present that sets restrictions and preconditions to future promises). Just as it is true that in current academic realities we come across a fascination with the present, it is equally true that a modernist 'navigation toward the future' (a cliché expression, by now) that neglects the past and present is still quite fashionable. Clegg pertinently sums up and criticizes this development as follows: 'the dominant modality of pedagogical discourses in higher education involves an *orientation towards the future*; temporality is coded as future time for the person, their achievements, and their employability' (2010: 345).

In short, the complex originary temporality of our authentic being flourishes in an educational system that resists and questions the temporality of consumerism. It confronts the comfortable and secure world created for us through consumerism's letting us forget our responsibility to ourselves to accept the choices we make and letting us forget the past we have been given. In this consumerist world, the responsibility for our own future possibilities and attunement to our past is covered over in the present desire to own and have. We forgo our responsibility and control by allowing ourselves to be forced to 'fit in'. We forget, or are persuaded by advertising to ignore, what Heidegger took as our existence: '[as] an entity which has to be as it is and as it can be' (1962: 276).



## You never step into the same time twice

The difficulties of taking a stance on happiness and contentment is that, given that they are part of our being, they are in flux, in movement, as we develop the potentials that identify us in way we will to be. By putting the notion of contentment as a disposition to reveal the world to oneself in appropriate terms (I see no advantage in rose-coloured glasses or suffering free existence, as both distort the way we are in the world), we need to consider the temporal relationship of the emotion that erupts from our fundamental attunement, our dispositions to act in this world. I do need to just rest upon the notion of appropriate use. I do not consider that, given that we are disposed to will our actions in ways that sustain our existence, we should blindly misinterpret the world as it presents itself. What I am suggesting is that a disposition to contentment provides a dwelling for oneself best to achieve ecstasy, enjoyment, joy and happiness from our engagement with the world and with the others in it. I go further and suggest that such engagement offers the best opportunity to live both a worthwhile life, according to one's own stance on this, and in doing so live a life that one considers good. I will go further in this chapter and consider that a place of learning can facilitate the growth and resilience of such a disposition, for it offers time to think, reflect and will a future grounded in the past and enacted in the present. Such a place is where imagination can fly, feasibility be established and the rational determine the basis of one's contented dispositions. In the university, this emerges in interactions, conversations, free time, and transformative curriculum and support.

There is very little in the literature on the temporality of happiness, and even less on contentment, but the senior philosopher John Cottingham has ventured into this realm with an insightful chapter entitled 'Happiness, Temporality, Meaning' (2009: 21–36). Cottingham points out in this chapter, with reference to the film of C. S. Lewis's marriage, *Shadowlands*, that happiness within any life, but especially one where death is an early and expected horizon, contradicts any simplistic attempt to equate happiness with pleasure and the absence of pain. As Cottingham suggests, it is such that it risks making all enjoyable pursuits, however banal or squalid, equally valid ingredients of happiness. This seems true, notwithstanding Mill's own well-known stipulation that there is a priority for the pleasures judged to be of superior 'quality' by 'competent judges.' Such an externality of evaluation is clearly helpful in an instrumental notion of being, but clearly nonsense when the intensity and density of the emotion is self-referral and such reference is '*hermeneusis*: the job is to discern how the subject is to

*interpret* what they are now experiencing, and how this connects up with their understanding of who they are, how they reached their present position, and where they are heading' (ibid.: 24).

In this, we need to consider both how the episodic emotion is judged as a dimension of the holistic disposition of contentment with life – and thus with one's being– and in such a context, the temporal meaning of the event for the subject, the regret of happiness in the thought of a future loss, the happiness of the ecstatic moment or guilt of a fond memory of one lost to oneself. This suggests, I think, that the temporality of both contentment and the emotional state that erupts from it (and of course, eruptions from other dispositions, as well) are forms of an originary temporality (Blattner, 2005). This is equally true of notions of pain and suffering. It is difficult to see how a life full of pain could be a joyous life, which brings pleasure to oneself. However, should this suffering be conceived as a prelude to eternal ecstasy, then a rationality can be asserted. This is perhaps the relationship of being with being in the world that is attributed to a Heideggerian notion of temporal being. It is hard to improve on Cottingham, so I quote at length:

in its more general form, it is simply an awareness that all our plans and projects operate in a time-line: we are dependent on the previous history that shaped us, and we reach towards goals and destinations that are still to be achieved. . . . In moments of existential intensity, to be sure, we may see this in rather grand and general terms: that is, we may see our present actions as part of a narrative that stretches from the moment of our conception or birth, towards the unknown moment of our inevitable eventual death. (ibid.: 23)

In these circumstances, educational institutions will find it difficult to understand themselves and then foster the integrated notion of originary temporality, should they see their mission as developing humanistic values alongside more practical ways of earning a living. This mission would require them to encourage all their stakeholders – students, faculty and donors of funds – to be open to their world, and not permit thoughtless responses to the needs of others, in turn treating both them and themselves as reservoirs of resource. Our individual historicity and our future possibilities need to be disclosed, so that one might truthfully take a stand, and our formal education, among its other functions, should facilitate this. It will require a stringency and resoluteness in educational institutions' activities that will reveal the importance to our being of the originary future. This needs disclosure of a way of being in the present, besides the generalized way of being of others, which, I perceive, is current in ideas such as

performativity. I am looking to the university to revitalize primordial temporality. If educational institutions do not take up the challenge, but dwell in the tranquillity of external directives, always ready-to-hand to shape a future, they will fail their communities and embrace the type of instrumentalism advocated by those they would wish to control and manipulate. Such an education is designed to turn scholars into workers, whose choice of possibilities is crafted by others in the spirit of machination.

## The learning spaces of the university

Lefebvre identified space in dialectical and dynamic terms. Such a conceptualization runs counter to how most intuitively understand space. Lefebvre's analysis sees space and time as essential to the production of society. As they are socially produced, they can only be understood in the context of a specific society. Lefebvre's conception of space is dialectical in its constitution, meaning that space is subject to the same physical and mental forces of experience. So, the university cannot be separated from the political and economic forces integral to its development. As a site of knowledge production, the university functions as a space where a confluence of factors converges towards similar and contradictory aims. 'The university's spaces,' writes Barnett, 'are not given but have, after all, to be constructed ... On this analysis, the phrase "managing one's *time*" has to be seen as an injunction to determine the *spaces* that one is going to inhabit' (2011: 184).

In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre pointed to the origin of this commodification when arguing that 'knowledge becomes a productive force immediately, and no longer through any mediation, as soon as the capitalist mode of production takes over' (1991: 44). Later in the text, Lefebvre discussed these implications: 'capitalism and neocapitalism have produced abstract space, which includes the "world of commodities", its logic and its worldwide strategies, as well as the power of money and that of the political state' (53).

As opposed to material or physical space, Lefebvre argued that there is yet another dimension where space operates at an ideological or abstract level. Packed with the imperatives of capital, abstract manifestations of space – the rules, policies and strategies that govern how the space is utilized – limit spatial possibility to enable more fluidity in money and commodity exchange, which further reinforces capitalist hegemony.

In the university, these forces materialize in a variety of ways. There is a rapid commodification of knowledge, manifested in partnerships between college

researchers and corporations that seek to capitalize on intellectual production. Additionally, college courses themselves become commodified modes of knowledge, as students conceptualize their educational experiences from the perspective of a consumer instead of a learner. Credits and credentials populate the discourse of navigating the college experience, moving into a realm contrary to the epistemological and ontological relations of learning.

### A place to learn

This might be compared to how Oakeshott, in his essay 'A Place for Learning,' argues that the distinct feature of formal spaces for learning is it allows those within it to recognize themselves predominantly as learners. Second, the space is one where learning something is the intent. As he says:

those who occupy such a space are not merely 'growing up,' and they are not there merely to 'improve their minds' or to think; such unspecified activities are as impossible as an orchestra that plays no music in particular ... the learner being aware of what he is doing. Finally it is a space where learning is not a limited undertaking in which what is learned merely up to the point where it can be put to some extrinsic use; learning itself is the engagement' (2001: 10/11).

In short, it is a place where a learner is initiated into what there is to be learned; that is, not only to be educated, but to be initiated.

Lefebvre's notion of such initiation is contained in his concept of *Rhythmanalytcs*, a methodology after which one of his final books is named. In this book, rhythms are used as a mode of analysis. The work at the end of the *Production of Space* is important, as Elden claims it completes the production of spaces that are historical. He explains that the 'key difference between a spatial history and a history of space is that in the former the concept of space – neglected in much social and political theory – becomes not simply an object of analysis, but a constituent part of that analysis' (2004: 194). Elden explains in his introduction to *Rhythmanalytcs* that in the 'analysis of rhythms – biological, psychosocial and social – Lefebvre shows the interrelation of understanding of space and time in the comprehension of everyday life. This issue of space and time is important, for here, perhaps above all, Lefebvre shows how these issues need to be thought together rather than separately' (ibid.: vii).

Within this exciting text, Lefebvre introduces specifically useful educational concepts, especially in chapter 4, entitled 'Dressage'. He states early on in this chapter that one can and 'must distinguish between education, learning and dressage or training' (2013: 39). For Lefebvre, 'dressage' of man or beast occurs in various places of the world, through rites and traditions, where 'space and time thus laid out make room for humans, for education and initiative: for liberty' (ibid.: 40). However, he warns, 'a little room. More of an illusion: dressage does not disappear' (ibid.). It is dressage, Heidegger's inauthenticity, that determines the majority of the rhythms in our life, our repetitive movements in time and space together. In this sense, it attempts to allow the world, which normally hides itself in its very obviousness, to show itself. It shows itself in ways that 'put us in the picture' (*The Age of the World Picture*, Heidegger, 2002b: 69); that is, the representativeness of being.

In *Being a University*, Ronald Barnett (2011) discusses how these processes influence the shape of the university system and its faculty. Barnett, building on Lefebvre's theory, identifies four sets of spaces in the university: 'intellectual and discursive; epistemological and scholarly; curricula and pedagogical; and ontological' (1994: 77). In particular, Barnett sees a widening of ontological space within university settings, as what it means to be an academic expands and takes on new roles (such as being an entrepreneur, a manager and a quality assessor) to the point that the designation becomes diluted. Barnett's reflection is of crucial significance in that not only are university spaces continually being reconfigured and repurposed (frequently for the demands of profit motive), but roles within those spaces shift, as well. To be an educator or a student, these hold different meanings in light of a consumerist university. As Spencer suggests, 'Barnett's contribution to this intellectual cross-fertilization is to demonstrate that Lefebvre can also provide a "conceptual lens" to examine the relationship between work and time on the part of academic' (2013: 488–9). Barnett's final work of his trilogy of the contemporary university, *Understanding the University*, again lingers in places on spaces, revealing his conceptual founding in Lefebvre. He is clear on the dialectical relationship that the space of the institution has with its external space and within itself. Barnett says the 'spatiality of the university is itself mobbing. Especially in a digital age, the university flows dynamically across the world' (2016: 77). More specifically, Barnett sees a number of spaces into which the possibilities exist for universities to flourish or at least imagine a future place built upon its historic location. Barnett suggests four areas of intellectual activity that, together, constitute the landscape of academic practice.

## Intellectual and discursive space

Intellectual and discursive space is space accorded to the academics to make a contribution to social discourse and wider public sphere:

*Epistemological space:* By ‘epistemological space’, I refer to the space available to academics to pursue their own research interests.

*Pedagogical and curricular space:* ... what space do tutors and course teams have to attempt new pedagogies, with alternative kinds of pedagogical relationships?

*Ontological space:* I refer to the space in which academics have their being as academics’. (Lefebvre, 1991: 76–7)

Such places are the epistemological space for knowledge development, implementation and revelation, pedagogical space that becomes more readily shared and constructed between student and lecturer, Lefebvre suggests ‘amid multimodality, new spaces open, in which iconic representations gain favour even ahead of conceptual representations’ (ibid.: 107–8). There are also the conceptual, cognitive space, communicative, economic and intellectual spaces, all spaces for learning and being but no spaces for happiness, contentment and settling? I wonder why?

Temple’s comprehensive study of space in university for the Higher Education Academy, *Learning Spaces for the 21st Century: A Review of the Literature*, reveals the ignorance of universities’ understanding of these issues of space. Commenting on the literature, Temple suggests:

Space, learning and the effectiveness of the university more widely, are intimately connected. Untangling them completely is perhaps impossible, as well as unprofitable. Nevertheless, greater sensitivity to their interactions should be worthwhile: relatively small improvements in space design are likely to be amply rewarded in learning and other institutional benefits. (2007: 8).

His main message is clear: more research is required.

In *Lefebvre in Education*, Middleton (2014) points to an extension of these processes, namely the production of information and the consumerist tendencies therein: ‘research assessment exercises produce information: about systems, institutions and individuals. This information is fed into databases with which national and international league tables of “rankings” are compiled and according to which “consumers” of higher education are encouraged to make “informed market choices”’ (5). Above all else, the students’ role in the college experience has shifted the most with the rise of the neo-liberal university and its policies

towards consumption. Because other facets of the university and its space have acquired a kind of one-dimensionality, the students' role has expanded. No longer focused on the prior foundational elements of the college experience, such as learning, forming friendships and developing an active social consciousness, universities are seeking more from their students other (and the other way around) than social and intellectual development.

Ultimately, the spatial production of consumer spaces in the university operates as a form of control; spaces are produced to produce individuals who are complicit with the current economic system. When educational spaces are fitted out with commodities or commodified processes, the distinct processes of learning and consuming can become undifferentiated.

What this process can lead to is a rote experience in which students 'perform' their purchased roles in these spaces, instead of critically engaging with bodies of knowledge. Although, as Elden points out, Lefebvre was critical of the imprecision of Heidegger's ideas, it is worth considering, albeit briefly, how these might fit (2004). In *Building Dwelling Thinking*, Heidegger claimed that 'to dwell, to be set at peace, means to remain at peace within the free sphere that cares-for each thing in its own nature. The fundamental character of dwelling is this caring-for' (1975a: 149). 'To dwell' is 'to be at peace within one's abode and to care for all things within it; it is being at home within one's dwelling place, abiding as the ground of all that we care for, all that is important to us, manifesting in and as the ethos of the total human being fulfilled in being itself' (Heidegger, 2000: 147).

Furthermore, Heidegger claimed that 'the fundamental character of dwelling is this caring-for' (1975a: 149). This dwelling, we would suggest, involves the acculturation of rituals and practices that are central to learning in practice, but is reflective, questioning where identity is not confined to re-enactments of the past as the present in representation, but the reconstitution of self throughout a lifetime. The tension is between finding a home, a habitus, in society through an occupation in which one can be contented (see Bonnett, 2003), and one forced upon students as a predetermined function of their social standing.

### Let us dwell and potter

Dwelling adds value to learning, particularly when compared with the disjointed preparation of students in theorized environments such as the classroom, laboratory or college workshop, where the actuality of the experience of doing and

the responsibility thus rendered is less conducive to the development of the whole person. It might also be boring or incomprehensible, when stripped of its situatedness. It might, however, be seen in contradiction to the virtue of curiosity, which would seemingly be an issue that the university would encourage. It is suggested by Malpas (2006) that Heidegger had a notion of two being-ins. The first, that of one being contained by space, is the one most associated with dwelling, yet there is another, more significant, meaning that can be revealed. That is the notion of involvement. In the first, we inhabit somewhere; in the second, we feel at home in it, we fit in and we are content. Heidegger's notion of uprooting curiosity applies to the former and not the latter, thus one can be involved with curiosity in the world, while still not dwelling in it. In *Building Dwelling Thinking*, Heidegger claims that 'to dwell, to be set at peace, means to remain at peace within the free sphere that cares-for each thing in its own nature. *The fundamental character of dwelling is this caring-for*' (1975a: 149). 'To dwell' is to be at peace within one's abode and to care for all things within it; it is being-at-home within one's dwelling place, abiding as the ground of all that we care-for, all that is important to us, manifesting in and as the *ethos* of the total human being fulfilled in being-itself (Heidegger, 2000).

Middleton summarizes the four pedagogical principles that can be revealed within Lefebvre's work (this is investigative work on behalf of Middleton, as Lefebvre made no explicit statement on education). These are:

- A pedagogy of appropriation requires self-management of learning;
- Both students and teachers must be involved in a critique of everyday life;
- Pedagogy must centre on contradictions and moments that render critique possible; and
- Engagement with the arts and through spatial histories. (2014: 179)

They amount to a willingness to confront what might be considered an elitist curriculum that fails minority students, rather than minority students who fail educationally, and supports a curriculum that touches the everyday-lives of students. This needs teaching and learning encounters to be realized in the dressage of educational bureaucracies, where learning is dominated by the significance of the conceived curriculum, and where learning is a mediation between dressage and education. Students would ask their own questions, chose their resources and deal with real and complex problems and issues, for here would be the development of self-management that enabled an understanding of the poetics of being and, one assumes, happiness. Indeed, Lefebvre has this, and



the notion of happiness as a negative, in common with Schopenhauer. Lefebvre wrote, when talking about social space, that it is in 'this world that their quest for enjoyment takes place, a quest whose object once found, is destroyed by the act of taking pleasure itself' (1991: 211). This puts into context the role of space in the development of contentment. Universities should seek to become bland and anodyne spaces in which the difficulty and challenges of worthwhile endeavour are devalued or reduced. They should look to reflect our everyday challenges, but help us from a disposition to cope, hope and be content in a feasible notion of ourselves. This does not mean spaces that are designed either to be centres for therapy, counselling or psychiatric support, as suggested by Baudrillard. To do this we need to imagine what that might be, but in spaces where richer and deeper learning experiences can be created. In this, there is a time and a space for therapy, although not as a treatment, for the ills of consumer anxiety in the struggle to find oneself within one's world.

The notion of formal learning in an educational space as therapy was substantially explored by Smeyers et al. (2007) and Barnett (2011). The premise of each is that, where education is perceived as a process of self-edification rather than one of instrumental skills acquisition, the similarity with psychotherapy becomes all too evident and problematic. Barnett takes the university as a work space and discusses what Gibbs and Maguire (2011) interpret as edification as epistemological and ontological uncertainty by 'a kind of epistemological therapy, achieved not least through the powers of their own critical and self-reflection (encouraged through their programme of studies)' (Barnett, 2011: 125). This approach has resonance with Rorty's own notion of the purpose of higher education. Rorty considers that students in educational institutional settings need to 'see that the national narrative around which their socialisation has centred is an open-ended one' (1999: 124). What is needed is edifying learning that reveals in action an understanding of one's location in a structured space, one's responsibilities and one's individual aspirations, as well as one's functional expectations. This is maintained, according to Rorty, by keeping both conversation and space open, and being narrative based. It is edifying in the sense that it is to stand for 'this project of finding new, better, more interesting, more fruitful ways of speaking' (360). Such learning is discovering one's value to oneself and to others in a particular space, and the potency of one's agency within a defined context.<sup>1</sup> These kinds of physical and temporal spaces are those in which we place ourselves, and are important, for these spaces are liminal in effect because they have a different kind of temporality and ways of thinking.

## Imagination, imaginary and hope

Whitehead's essay on universities and their function is both a plea for the intensity of the university not to be diluted in uncontrolled expansion (originally published 1927) and to preserve the 'connection between knowledge and the zest for life, by uniting the young and the old in the imaginative consideration of learning. The university imparts information but it imparts it imaginatively' (1967: 93). Indeed, Whitehead continued that a university that fails to do this fails in its function and has no reason to exist, while one that does creates an atmosphere of excitement where faculty 'wear their learning with imagination' and create within students the ability to see possibilities that their zest for life might satisfy (97). In line with the theme of this book, Whitehead advocates leisure, freedom from restraint and worry and engagement with a wide array of differently thinking peers. Imagination is the zest that makes a learned life a way of living, and is not an article of commerce (*ibid.*).

Barnett's more contemporary and detailed analysis of imagination as a precursor to its use is in his book *Imagining the University* (2013). In this book, Barnett calls upon the work of Sartre (2004) and Taylor (2007) to develop a way of looking at what the university might be. He argues that, to embrace ideas of the imagination ('a power, a potential, a capability, which may or may not be excised' (2013: 15), and imaginary, 'a collective way of understanding a matter ... (it will emerge – in part at least from the exercise of the imagination' (*ibid.*)). One has a chance to leap for freedom from its past and the present losing its current sense of what it is understood to be. Moreover, he contends that an approach offers a potential vision that might be poetic, for it will need to find a new vocabulary and grammar with which to read the conventional, if it is to 'leap out, to leap beyond the familiar and re-describe it in strange terms' (*ibid.*). Such thinking would release the university from its present evolution as an entrepreneurial marketized institution into something that is free from these legacies, albeit held within the imagination process. For Sartre, for us to be able to imagine, we must 'be able to escape from the world by its very nature, it must be able to stand back from the world by its own efforts. In a word it must be free' (2004: 185). Finally, Papastephanou has pointed out that core imagination is a key issue in any utopianizing endeavour and, as Barnett has remarked, utopian thinking about higher education is in such short supply that it concerns the theoretical sway of anti-utopianism, especially in the Anglophone academic imaginary. Such anti-utopianism paves the way for it to become a secret accomplice of the global marketization of the university and the proclamation

of the entrepreneurial (or the corporate) university, and the end point of higher-education development.

In previous chapters, we have touched on hope, in the futural nature of a number of philosophers and their concern for happiness. Hope is a relevant and important notion in the way in which we construe our being. Its meaning is contested. In a recent literature review, Webb (2014) identified 26 theories of hope and 54 definitions.<sup>2</sup> According to Day, the central insight captured in this view is that hope has both a *conative* and a *cognitive* aspect: conative insofar as hope always involves desire for something; cognitive insofar as it also involves some estimation of probability. Day agrees that, from a psychological point of view, hope involves a feeling of pleasure (arising from the idea of proximity to some good), if always mixed to some extent with pain (arising from the awareness that the good hoped for, the satisfaction of the desire, is still out of reach) (1991). Moreover, as Smith suggests when relating hope to expectation and anticipation, ‘whereas the subject who expects stands back, observes and awaits, the subject who anticipates is from the beginning saturated, so to speak, with a *readiness for action*. Anticipation thus involves an active “taking up” of a stance and a projective preparedness that reflect the subject’s immersion in and engagement with the environment’ (2010: 17). Perhaps the most relevant commentator on hope is Paulo Freire. In his book *Pedagogy of Hope*, he discusses the importance of hope for and in the edifying process. He recognizes that hope alone will not change much, and writes that ‘my hope is necessary but it is not enough. Alone it does not win. But without it, my struggle will be weak and wobbly. We need critical hope the way a fish needs unpolluted water’ (2016: 2).

## Contentment in higher education?

Higher education institutions are major concentrations of political, social, economic, intellectual and communicative resources. They reach freely across populations and cultures, and connect to government, professions, industry and the arts. The neoliberal logic of markets has entered the realm of (higher) education. Marketing functions centre on the creation, codification and transmission of knowledge, and the certification of graduates and the nature of education are commercialized, both in provision and in curriculum content. This leads to discourse on the benefits of education being positioned almost exclusively in terms of their effect on income.

The notion that education is the provision of intellectual and emotional desire satisfaction has tended to become a driver of university strategy, reflecting how institutionalized education (in some, but by no means all, cases) has been interpreted in this consumerist epoch. Roberts writes that education seems to be about promoting desire satisfaction, as we have seen in the opening section of this book, often in ways that are not implicit for education but that create pleasurable and measurable experiences (2013). It is this shift of emphasis from the nature of edification that might be pleasurable to where the edifying experiences are required to be pleasures that is a significant change in educational policy. Moreover, the effects of this change are compounded because what is taken as pleasurable is that which satisfies certain desired attributes of the input processes of being educated, not in the more ontologically difficult notion of learning as becoming. These inputs and the level of their satisfactory delivery prove conducive to be measured, and measured they must be, to justify the returns on the investment made in them both by the students and others in the education process. The value for money imperative has led to the fetish of unquestioned metrics, which prompts simple comparisons of the complex that lead to the invasion of pedagogical policy and practice. Satisfaction metrics are used to build reputation, inform educational policy and create conformity. Indeed, there exists a specific risk for the university to ignore such reputation formation because, in the current climate, education seems to emphasize and manage these metrics.

### Trust in higher education a happy consistence supported by litigation?

A recent report by the Intergenerational Foundation entitled *The Graduate Premium: Manna, Myth or Plain Mis-selling?* challenges the £100,000 lifetime graduate earnings premium so often used by politicians to justify increasing fees for university courses, changing the terms and conditions or increasing interest rates. In a more nuanced account of how this premium materialized (and one that is attacked by the government itself), it found that a university education was only of significant benefit to those graduating from certain degree courses at the top universities, and that these graduates were more likely to be privately educated. A wide range of factors influences whether a graduate is likely to receive an earnings premium. These include, among others, pre-university education, the higher-education institution attended, socioeconomic background,

gender, ethnicity, subject choice, degree result, work experience undertaken, the supply of graduates in the labour market, chosen career path and conditions in the employment market at the time.

The report found that, apart from Oxbridge, medical and dentistry graduates, that there is no guaranteed graduate earnings premium for many young people entering higher education. It begs the question as to why the government is encouraging 50 per cent higher education participation rates, if the employment market is not providing graduate-level pay in return for student investment.

The UK now finds itself with more overqualified workers than any OECD country other than Japan, with graduates under increasing pressure to undertake further postgraduate study – MAs/MScs – in order to set themselves further apart from their peers, thereby incurring yet more debt. It seems sensible to conclude that the UK risks creating a self-perpetuating debt-generating engine that serves only those who run it, leaving graduates from poorer backgrounds to pay an extra 9 per cent graduate tax on earnings over £21,000 for the next 30 years.

## Universities are part of the happiness industry

I will suggest that, in education, the dominant idea of happiness is one of rational self-interest and contrast this with a notion of happiness: first, desire preference; second, satisfaction; and third, emotional. I have developed a notion of emotional happiness based on the temporality of emotions and moods found in Heidegger and argue for a distinction between happiness and contentment, and then develop an argument of why contentment ought to be an educational goal, while not dismissing the other forms of happiness.

Watkins (2004) has indicated that gratitude contributes to happiness and suggests that it might be that enjoyment is involved, because being given something for which gratitude is appropriate enhances the enjoyment of the received entity. Moreover, the ability to express appreciation in a way affirms what the gift has given and might also be relevant in reducing stress in the circumstance of a gift that is unexpected or beyond expectations. It certainly might increase the likelihood of future enjoyable moments and reinforce relations, all of which can bring a sense of happiness. Watkins concludes his summary of the literature by arguing that ‘gratitude and happiness feed off each other in an adaptive cycle’ (2001: 184). Such a psychological explanation certainly shows the value to personal relations of the expression of both

gratitude and of happiness as gratitude. In an education context, these gift/gratitude transactions might build a repertoire of student/tutor engagement, but does it really induce contentment? I believe it can when one's identity is perceived to be at stake, and thus the issue of gratitude is not an expression of a gift but an appreciation of what one is. The relationship of gratitude and contentment is thus more ontological and self-generative. What is given is the unknown and incidental stimulus to the researcher's thinking, which enables their ontological growth through academic discourses and successful project completion. For this gift of understanding, revealed through interpretation, gratitude is due; if damage is done, either intentionally or incidentally, reparation may be due. In Heidegger's philological text *What Is Called Thinking*, he considers the links between thinking, thanking and memory. Heidegger draws the circular relationship between thinking and gratitude when he asks the question: 'the supreme thanks then would be thinking? And the profoundest thanklessness, thoughtlessness. Real thanks, then, never consists in that we ourselves come bearing gifts, and merely repay gift with gift. Pure thanks are rather what we simply think – think what is really and solely given, what is there to be thought' (1968: 143).

In thinking about something – reflecting, recalling and communicating – we should be grateful for thought, as it realizes what our being is or might become. According to Heidegger, the real gift is the gift of the unthought-of; the stimulus for the research practice of creative questioning of what is as yet concealed. Such gratitude is the essence of the search for truth in social science; a research to reunite what we have become with our essential being. Any 'method' that engages others and reveals aspects of this reunification is worthy of our gratitude, for it securely grounds us in our being. One may have personal gratitude in learning through thinking and to others (as I am to you, for your notes) to help you think. In academia, you also need to have gratitude for those who enable one to find oneself as a researcher, in that they offer you their vulnerability as research participants.

## Self-Cultivation and Contentment: Thinking East and West

*Discontent, they say, is divine; I am quite sure, anyway, that discontent is human. The monkey was the first morose animal, for I have never seen a truly sad face in animals except in the chimpanzee. And I have often thought such a one a philosopher, because sadness and thoughtfulness are so akin. There is something in such a face which tells me that he is thinking. Cows don't seem to think, at least they don't seem to philosophise, because they look always so contented. (Lin Yutang, The Importance of Living, 1937: 73)*

For Heidegger, education is ontological, to cultivate the student as a learner and human being; yet he was unable to unshackle himself sufficiently from his metaphysical thinking tradition to explore this fully, notwithstanding his valorization of poetry. It is in this context that I think the *Zhongyong* can shed light on Heidegger's concerns for Being, equanimity and releasement – and learning as an ontological self-cultivation.

Before developing this argument, I offer a little on my approach in this chapter. I wish to embrace Kupperman's (2010) approach, in the sense of redefining barriers and seeking an interpretation that is not only rooted epistemologically, but as ontology. Such an approach, which is not empirical, tends to rely on 'ideal' models that do not take into account the diversity and complexity of the contemporary social and cultural situatedness of such practices, nor of how they are played out within individual contexts. Given this caveat, it is in the Chinese philosophical tradition that I see a rooted coherence and worldliness that allow transdisciplinary approaches to flourish and to reveal insights that counteract any reliance on the supposed superiority of philosophical eurocentrism (Jung, 2013). The eurocentric position is typified in Hegel's narratives, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (1892), showing scepticism and even ignorance of the

importance of oriental philosophy. Regarding Chinese philosophy in world philosophy, Hegel summarized the *Analects* (Confucius's major work) as: 'conversations between Confucius and his followers in which there is nothing definite further than a commonplace moral put in the form of good, sound doctrine, which may be found as well expressed and better, in every place and among every people' (1995: 121). This suggests that the work itself 'would have been better had [it] never been translated' (ibid.). He categorized Chinese philosophy in world history as 'elementary' (ibid.: 125); the contribution of the *Zhouyi* (*The Book of Changes*) as 'superficial' (ibid.: 123); and the Chinese composition of five elements of *wu-xing* (fire, water, wood, metal and earth) as 'all in confusion'. He was no more generous with Indian philosophy.

Hegel's discounting of Chinese thought still influences much of the writing on the relationship of East and West thought, where it is interpreted through a Western lens proclaiming the superiority of Western thought in its analysis and processes. In Chinese philosophy, this lens of logical order is not poorly achieved; rather, according to Hall and Ames (1998), it attempts an aesthetic order by creating novel patterns. In this order, variously yin and yang, and the *wu-xing* have to be synthesized in order to generate a harmonious whole.

More contemporary research on culture and happiness has assumed that happiness could be assessed similarly across cultures (Diener et al., 1995, 1988). Recently, cultural psychologists have investigated the concepts and meaning of happiness across culture more rigorously. For instance, the dictionary definitions of happiness include the traditional (Ancient Greek) view of happiness – 'good luck and fortune' – in 24 of the 30 nations studied (e.g. Japan, China, South Korea, Norway, Estonia, Germany, France, Portugal and Israel). In contrast, in the US, Spain, Argentina, Ecuador, India and Kenya, the dictionary definitions of happiness do not include 'good luck and fortune' (Oishi et al., 2013). These findings show that the concepts of happiness can change over time, and that the dominant concept of happiness today in the US ('a pleasurable or enjoyable experience') is quite different from that of other historical periods.

Perhaps the closest we might get to the essential comparability of the East and West forms of thought is provided by Heidegger in his thought experiment, 'A dialogue on language between a Japanese and an inquirer'. At one stage in the Dialogue, the Japanese interlocutor states that while translating Heidegger's *Letters on Humanity* he felt as if he was wandering back and forth in the languages, 'such that at moments a radiance shone on me which let me sense that the wellspring of Being from which these two fundamentally different leagues



arise are the same' (1971a: 24). It is in the spirit of this potential that I seek a basis for comparing the notion of becoming from a Confucian heritage as well as a more contemporary Heidegger perspective. There are dangers in such a project, not least in the notion that Heidegger uses<sup>1</sup> (albeit in exchanges with Japanese tradition). Indeed, in Parkes's *Heidegger and Asian Thought* (1987), there are a number of important contributions that attest to such a link,<sup>2</sup> especially Hsiao, Heidegger's collaborator on the translation of parts of *Tao Te Ching*.

### Authenticity and self-cultivation – a common form of patterning being?

The thrust of discussion concerns questions raised by Heidegger as to how we can think about and understand the being of Being – for metaphysics operates in a reality of the being of being human, not at the more essential understanding of Being as a precondition of being. As Heidegger reported, 'profound change is taking place in a man's relationship to nature and to the world. But the meaning that reigns in this change remains obscure' (1966a: 55). Moreover, Heidegger referred to this comportment as 'openness to the mystery' (ibid.), and that the releasement and the mystery belong together to offer ways to take an autochthonous stand in the contemporary world. This is to think poetically, in a way that overcomes the representational, horizon-bound<sup>3</sup> thinking of the philosophy of our revealed world. Meditative and poetic thinking allow us to grasp the ungraspable (Young, 2002: 19). Such an understanding seems more central to Eastern than traditional Western thought.

I am selective in how I have attempted this short consideration of Heidegger, Confucianism and self-cultivation. Within this warning, I investigate the latter writing of Heidegger and classic texts of Confucius,<sup>4</sup> Zisi,<sup>5</sup> and Zhu Xi.<sup>6</sup> There appears a clear commonality of onto-epistemology that goes beyond binary oppositions of humanity and nature, femininity and masculinity, and East and West. At its core, this has compassion for our being as others within the blending of the realities of the existential and spiritual.

In any historical contextualization, the codification of thought is found in seminal texts, and this holds true in Chinese philosophy. The *Zhouyi*, or *Book of Changes*, is the most important initial discussion of how the way of being in the world is realized, constituting one of the five classics of Chinese thought (with *Classics of Poetry*, *The Book of Rites*, *The Book of Document* and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*).

Confucius's development of the mystical *Zhouyi* through social interaction, rooted in the functionalities of social being based on familial ethics, offers a practical way to be rather than a metaphysics of being. It appears in the *Analects* and, like the *Great Learning*, *Mencius* and the *Using the Centre*, is one of the great works of Chinese philosophy and education. These are guides to living life through practical rituals in which relationships can be developed harmoniously with a relational way of being. The *Zhongyong* (*Using the Centre*)<sup>7</sup> was originally written as part of the *Book of Rites*. From the twelfth century onward, it occupied a place of prominence in neo-Confucianism as the last of the four texts comprising the foundations of the official government examinations, held until 1905. Taken from the *Rites*, *Zhongyong* is a longer, more complex and philosophical book than the *Daxue*. Both deal with self-cultivation,<sup>8</sup> but the *Daxue* is more practical, while the *Zhongyong* is considered the ontological grounding of self-cultivation and the centrality of harmony in the Confucian Way.

What is constant in the development of Chinese thought is learning-to-be as virtuous learning; it is about humanity, love, compassion and benevolence (*Ren*, 仁); about living correctly in line with respect for familial responsibility (*Li*, 义); and, from that core, developing a societal way of being. Correct behaviour, at least for traditional Confucians, is a set of rules governing imperatives, with its ethical roots having resonance with rule utilitarianism. Wisdom (*Zhi*, 志) is relational rather than personal knowing, or knowledge. The relational aspects of *Zhi* are linked to *Ren*, the balanced way of being within a community that defines the role, the being, of the person in a specific position. As the *Daxue* evidences, this is rooted in familial relationships in a model for both community and self. This community, according to the *Daxue*, has 'illustrious virtue; to renovate the people; and to rest in the highest excellence'. The learned are wise and exemplary individuals (*Junzi*, 君子), people of similar intent and action to the Greek *Phronimos*. Their wisdom is evident in their practice and, in this practice, they become teachers.

## Heidegger and the Way

Heidegger focused not on the being of being human, but an exploration of what is the Being of everything. This is clear in *Being and Time*, where he suggested that only an investigation into the fundamental ontology from which all other ontologies must spring, an inquiry into the foundational sense of being, yields

an existential analysis of *Dasein*. He stated that the ‘analytic of *Dasein* remains wholly oriented towards the guiding task of working out the question of Being’ (1962: 38). He thus conferred a special status on humans to review the nature of Being. This theme continued, and in ‘Letter on Humanity’ he wrote that a ‘human being is the shepherd of being’ (1998b: 252).

From the quote from *What Is Metaphysics* that opens this article, it is evident that Heidegger’s view was that formalized and structured scientific<sup>4</sup> investigation does not illuminate but adds opacity to the essence of Being. This is because failure to concern the world in its totality for disciplines can, at best, provide only limited revelations, constrained and shaped by the rituals and truth claims of their collective world views. Heidegger argued that it is not through science but an ontological understanding, revealed through mood, that the totality of Being is unconcealed. He began to offer us a distinction between disciplines: inter- and multi-disciplines and transdisciplinarity, which will be developed later. From a Heideggerian perspective, knowledge organized by discipline leads to a refusal of the totality implicit in the calculative and sanctioned thinking of these disciplines.

It is in Heidegger’s works after *Being and Time* that I will focus this discussion, specifically his extensive explorations into thinking and willing/non-willing in *Conversation on a Country Path*. In this text, Heidegger offers a process on how we train ourselves to think other than metaphysically (1966a). This work is an imaginary triadic conversation between a Scientist (disposed to calculative thinking), a Scholar (a metaphysical thinker) and a teacher (the voice of Heidegger as a thinker of thoughts). The focus becomes the understanding revealed in the act of the dialogue rather than what is actually said, not in a linear manner but through hermeneutic circles. This work has seemingly direct metaphorical links between the ‘way’ of Confucianism and the path. Consider the following extract from the *Conversations*:

**Scholar:** From this it suddenly becomes clearer to me how movement on a way [*Be-wegung*] comes from rest and remains engaged in rest.

**Teacher:** The releasement would not just be the way [*Weg*], but rather the movement (on the way) [*Bewegung*].

**Scholar:** Where does this strange way go, and where does the movement befitting it rest?

Its feel and structure have the appeal of an ancient Chinese philosopher seeking understanding from a discussion with a Teacher, that is, Confucius in the *Analects*.

The dialogues in the *Conversation* have two central themes. The first is the 'open-region', which is both the place of being and where beings can be with one another in a 'topology of being'; the second is a critique of the wilfulness of representational thinking and 'a search for a way of releasement from its grip and into authentic, non-willing manner of thoughtfully dwelling within the open-space of being' (Davis, 2010: xiii\*). This concept, especially the discussion of awaiting rather than awakening thinking, creates a transformative way of thinking that opens a way to understanding transdisciplinary thinking.

Indeed, there is a certain spiritual feel to Heidegger's work that might lead one to consider an ontotheological stance, a requirement for a cosmological entity from whom all is understandable. Heidegger foresaw danger in humanity's reliance on calculative thinking (and its manifestation in machination) that prompted his comment in his 1966 *Der Spiegel* interview: 'only God can save us' (Wolin, 1993: 91).

Heidegger's conversations tried to break from the metaphysical and physical to reveal a way of thinking unlike formal metaphysical questioning, but as onto-epistemological enquiry. For Heidegger, metaphysics's failure was that it enquires into the being of human beings, not into the notion of Being – on which being is contingent. For him, this 'Being' was the fundamental ontology, representing a thread running through much of his early work and leading to his more poetic, even mystical, later contributions (Young, 2002). His struggle is hampered by the use of forms of thinking designed for the understanding of being in its enframement of a technological way of being, especially the calculative thinking that encourages nature, including humans, to be seen as resources in the gift of those in power. His insistence on thinking on Being, at the core of our understanding of human being, began to resolve itself in language that is more poetical and mystical to understand Being.

Allowing understanding to emerge, unshackled, from forms of logical, rational investigation opens up new realities and new truths. Moreover, it allows letting the nature of Being of things come into the context of the present as a totality of Being. Heidegger commented that 'man is obviously a being. As such he belongs to the totality of Being – just like the stone, the tree, or the eagle' (2002a: 31). This thinking is essentially meditative and can be considered metaphorically as

\* Also see Davis's discussion of Heidegger's releasement in *Heidegger and the Will, On the Way to Gelassenheit* (2007).

‘the activity of walking along a path which leads to Being’ (1966b: 25). Further, it requires a releasement (*Gelassenheit*) of that which enframes and defines the characteristic of man’s nature. Releasement seeks the equanimity to allow technology into our lives, yet also resist it. It creates the context of meditative or ‘inceptual’ thinking (Heidegger, 1999), as an alternative to calculative thinking that defines and measures reality.

Releasement is a central theme for the later Heidegger, and is first discussed in his *Memorial Address for Kreuter* (1966a). Its reliance is on the notion of meditative thinking, which Heidegger counterpoints against calculative thinking. He argued that meditative thinking is as difficult as any other and concerns us in ‘what is closest; upon that which concerns us, each one of us, here and now; here, on this patch of home ground; now, in the present hour of history’ (ibid.: 47). It is about contemplating what this might mean to self and humanity. It is not willed thinking that allows an openness to things; it is open-systems thinking across barriers and between ideas.

## Heidegger and Daoism

Heidegger was no defender of Western thinking, and recognized the role of the language of discourse. He noted that if a dialogue was conducted in a European language (German), the ‘languages of the dialogue shifted everything into European’ (1971a: 5) and threatened ‘to become planetary’ (2012: 137). Indeed, Heidegger is careful both to distinguish yet not impute value in Western and other philosophies, and to call guardedly on examples from Lao Tzu to illustrate his notion of thinking, in counterpoint to dialectic thinking (2012: 89). Ma (2008) has claimed that Heidegger cited Lao Tzu in six pieces of his writing and that, in the most extensive of these, suggested that his notion of the Way (*weg*) is synonymous with the Tao (‘Yet the Tao could be the way that gives all ways the very source of our power to think’ (Heidegger, 1971a: 92)).

For Heidegger, education is ontological, to cultivate the student as a learner and human being; yet he was unable to unshackle himself sufficiently from his metaphysical thinking tradition to explore this fully, notwithstanding his valorization of poetry. Even in his early writings, for instance in *The Essence of Truth*, he wrote ‘the genuine comportmental character of having becomes a self-losing of he who has’ (2003: 170). It is in these contexts of his work that I think the

*Zhongyong* can shed light on Heidegger's concerns for Being, equanimity and releasement – and learning as an ontological self-cultivation, which is anything but easy and requires seriousness of effort.

## Zhongyong (中庸)

The *Zhongyong* occupies an essential place in the canons of Confucianism. It was one of the four books that were selected by the neo-Confucian, Zhu Xi, to focus canonical attention on Confucianism, and for which he wrote commentaries. Together, they formed the *Sishu*, published in 1190. When using commentaries of it, it is to those by Xi that I refer. The book itself is concerned with the notion of centrality-harmony through equilibrium. It is about allowing harmony to flourish by personal agency, which is neither necessarily extreme, nor timid, nor passive; it keeps harmony on the right course. It is about knowing when and how to act with long-term harmony of the cosmos as its ultimate goal. Li argued that harmony, with *Zhong* (中) or centrality, 'forms a hermeneutical circle in which the two mutually interpret and illuminate each other' (2014: 71). It is in this sense that the *Zhongyong* and *Country Path* are used. In the following passage from the second chapter, the *Zhongyong* explicitly advocates such a balanced approach: ZY 1<sup>9</sup> 'Zhongni (Confucius) said "the noble man uses the centre. The lesser man does the opposite of using the centre. . . . Using the centre – this is, indeed, perfection! The people are seldom able [to practice it] for long"' (Johnston & Ping, 2012: 413). Yet, for ordinary people, the difficulty of achieving this is not removed even when there is intent, as the Way is only achieved by those who have perfection. This comes from learning and being taught, and concerns sincerity, authenticity, honesty, trustfulness and genuineness emergent in enlightened virtues (ZY 21).

There are three critical chapters on learning and thinking in the *Zhongyong*: ZY 1 and ZY 20, and the resolution in ZY 27. The opening chapter, the most important positioning statement of the book, concerns how one might cultivate oneself, specifically referring to teaching. The first sentence sets the cosmological tone: 'What Heaven decrees is called "nature". Complying with nature is called the 'Way'. Properly practising the Way is called 'teaching'. . . . Harmony is the all-pervading Way of the world. Reach the "centre" and "harmony" and Heaven and Earth are in their proper positions and ten thousand things will be born and grow' (Johnston & Ping, 2012: 407).

Nature is dynamic, in constant change, due to the interaction of its five elements of nature and their spirits in human beings. These spirits are: wood, which is *Ren* (compassion); metal, which is *Yi* (intentionality); fire, which is *Li* (filial responsibility); water, which is *Xin* (trustworthiness, fidelity); and earth, which is *Zhi* (wisdom). How these spirits intermingle in humans is a function of individual human natural endowment. Nature is thus joined to virtue 'like waves are joined to the water'. To act in compliance with nature is called the Way, responding in harmony to the wholeness of one's being in the Being of nature and the natural endowment we are born with and, as Heidegger would argue, are 'thrown' into this world. Confucian harmony is understood not only as a state of affairs, but as a cosmic and moral order. For Xi, the sage, because he acts in a way that is correct for himself within his context, may be taken as a model in this: 'This then is called teaching' (ibid.: 409). Again, there is similarity with Heidegger's notion of the teacher letting the student learn.

As Li suggested, as a state of affairs, 'harmony is a continuous process of adjusting differences and reconciling conflicts ... as a cosmic order harmony evolves out of the interaction of various forces and emerges as a guideline for things to operate' (2014: 9–10). Harmony is not sameness, but a creative construction of tensions of being in the world, and cosmic order is cosmic patterning emerging from the Being in the world.

This was at the core of Heidegger's meditative and poetic thinking,<sup>10</sup> as it is not susceptible to a direct revelation of nature. This is because we live outside nature, as constituted as a whole dynamic system, and inauthentically use it as a resource in our anthropologic way of thinking, in our epoch of technology and its systems manifestation: consumerism. Heidegger did, however, suggest that the essence of Being and beings can be found in *Ereignis*, the appropriating event. This, for Heidegger, was the primordial 'understanding' as the projection of *Dasein*, which is always ahead of thematic cognition. It is in knowing ourselves within the otherness of a presenting world, which is outside the language of the rational. This complex but central theme, to Heidegger's thinking, is quite different from conceptual and epistemological cognition.<sup>11</sup> It is a process of getting rid of representational modes of knowing.

This manner of being may be seen in the embracing of the technological way of being, as recognized by Heidegger, and represents a departure from the Confucian Way, although it is returned to through the teachings of those who achieve the Way: sages or thinkers. The exemplars are teachers and, as we have noted, Heidegger took on this guise in *Conversation*.

Turning to ZY 20.2 of *Zhongyong*, it opens as follows: ‘the Master said “To love learning comes close to *zhi*志; to practice with diligent effort come close to *ren*; to know shame comes close to *yong* 勇 (courage, bravery). To know these three things is, then, to know how to cultivate the self”’ (Johnston & Ping, 2012: 435).

ZY 20.2 discusses how these three attributes of being can be used to cultivate self and to ‘bring good order’ to others. For Xi, the focus in this passage is not the achievement of the three goals but the impact that they have on our everyday life. The three respectively do not offer wisdom, but do alleviate foolishness. To be diligent helps to forget selfishness and to know shame is enough to rid one of weakness.

Admittedly, these might be interpreted as inauthentic, yet if taken as fundamental ontology as Heidegger proposed, meditatively they provide routes into the social structure into which Heidegger suggested we are thrown. They provide a framework for reflection as well as a structuring of the world. His hierarchical structure follows the process discussed in the *Daxue*. Heidegger has little to say directly about political philosophy, yet in a lecture series (‘Nature, History and State’, 2015) in which he developed an ontological understanding of the state and its people, he proposed a relationship much in line with the pragmatism of Confucian thought and suffering the same risk of abuse.

Both passages illustrate an inherent way of realizing potentiality, based on capacity to change other entities and ourselves by actions, where the capability can be taught. This has resonance with the Aristotelian notion of *dynamis*, as both the power and the potential to change. For instance, we need both to want and have the disposition to change the state in which we currently exist, but this is not sufficient. We also need the means to do this, and the two need to be synchronized. To want to be actually better at something is not sufficient to warrant the end that one wants. By mentioning nature and Heaven decrees<sup>12</sup> in ZY 1, there is an implicit reference to a range of realities. In ZY 27, the noble man: ‘Honours a virtuous nature, and follows the path of enquiry and study. He reaches to the broad and great, and exhausts the subtle and the minute. He reaches to the high and bright, penetrates to the central and the constant (undeviating and unchanging). He revives the old and understands the new; he is honest and genuine through respecting *li*’ (Johnston & Ping, 2012: 353). The above makes it clear that to study requires diligence, sincerity and authenticity. Zhu Xi reads this section of ZY 27 as advocating humility brought about by an understanding of what one does not know and to give attention to what you do not attend to. In this sense there is a Heideggerian notion at play of trying to understand the essence of things.



The distinctiveness of the Confucian text, I believe, lies in the centrality of the given Way, a teleology that does not sidestep the notion of being but locates it in the intertwining of force and spirit in an ever-changing cosmos. This centrality is the basis of the cultivated person that is adjusted to fit specific time and situation, so 'he is in harmony with the rest of the world through equilibrium. Or better yet, he contributes to, participates in, and co-generates the grand harmony of the cosmos' (Li, 2014: 80). Nature moves infinitely, in this sense an authentic person cultivates himself/herself ceaselessly. Such an intertwining embraces mystery and, seemingly, the *Zhongyong* sets Being in an onto-cosmological sense. It does this in a form of thinking more akin to the thinking of the meditative and the poetic. It shifts the nature of human being from the individual to the community of others, not in an ontic fashion but as a fundamental way of being, as a fundamental ontology.

Given that Confucius placed learning (學) at the very centre of his teaching, the impact of Confucianism on education remains important. Kwak et al. (2016) suggest that, among others, the following are still relevant in educational practice:

- 'The practice of the Rite' (li, 禮) that is often confounded with 'formalities', but is a sort of body-knowledge;
- The method of memorization that is often seen as 'rote learning' but can have a deeper significance as a method of learning;
- The conformity to norms and authority as a method of self-discipline;
- The broader understanding of the self that goes beyond the individual self of the modern West.

This analysis specifically pertains to school, but for experience in the higher-education systems in Eastern Europe, the same can be said of higher education.

### *Can A Conversation along the Path change our stance on contentment?*

The premise being offered here is that there is sufficient ontological similarity between Confucianism and Heideggerian thinking to warrant meaningful comparison and insight. At first sight, this thesis seems problematic. Confucianism is based on a moral praxis that defines human behaviour; that is, a human being is a moral being and, at the same time, axiological and ontological. Heidegger had no place for morality in his ontological thinking and attributed such

thinking to the ontic. However, both agreed on interpreting the subject as a non-autonomous, culturally bound (or thrown) way of being, that can yet change the field of possibilities in which it acts; further, that it is through human beings that Being can be revealed. Moreover, both rejected the notion of rationality as the defining attribute of human essence, insisting on the inseparability between Being and essence (W.-C. Chan, 1984: 194); rather, they stressed the primacy of praxis, although in different ways.

Certainly, in Heidegger's early work, it is difficult to see how the basic premise of Confucianism can contribute to its reading, yet, especially in his discussion of being as releasement, in his later work there seems room for the development of a teleological process for revelation to the spirit of the mystical. Here are further similarities in the notion of and to the non-willing of open spaces that Heidegger referred to in the *Conversation*, but struggled to make clear. There are two ways of cultivating Being: the first is that human beings are the entity for the revelation of Being, rather than any other being (see *Conversation*, 2010: 91); second, human beings are central to the cosmos, and the dynamic nature of Being is in the being of change, both inherent and cultivated in humans. Perhaps unexpectedly in Heidegger, humans take the central role in noble-mindedness and gratitude. For instance, in response to the comment from the Teacher, the Scholar replied, 'Noble-mindedness would be the essence of thinking and thus of thanking' (97).

Both Heidegger's notion of Being and Confucian *Dao* have a unity in the harmony of our being of Being at their core, with Heidegger suggesting that *Dao* 'could be the way that gives all ways, the very source of our power to think' (1971b: 92). However, unity is fractured when thinking is revealed through methods aligned to different disciplines, themselves 'punched out in the die presses of technical-scientific calculation' (91); it cannot be conceived only in terms of knowledge as separate entities, as in disciplines. Moreover, Heidegger and both Confucians and neo-Confucians see learning as central to personal self-cultivation. Whether it is Heidegger's redesignation of *Bildung* (1998b) or Zhu Xi's<sup>12</sup> neo-Confucian avocation of the struggle to obtain learning, both historical traditions place learning, and especially thought, at the centre of their way of becoming what one might. This reveals what one does not know, in order to reveal what one's possibilities might enable one to be.<sup>13</sup>

\* This idea was taken up in by Heidegger in Part II, chapter 3 of *What Is Called Thinking?*

## Grounding: A Pedagogy of Contentment for Higher Education

*If we fail to summon up enthusiasm for the adventure of human existence, an appetite for the entirely enigmatic nature and fullness of Dasein, and of things, an independence from schools of thought and learned opinions, and yet in all this a deep desire to learn and to listen then our years at university – however much knowledge we amass – are an inner loss. Not only that, but the years and times to come will then assume tortuous and tedious course that will in the end become a smug contentment. (Heidegger, The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics, 1995: 10, emphasis added)*

Currently, higher education strategies focus largely on developing skills that secure employment in the world of work and, if successful, we should be concerned at the smug contentment that Heidegger talked about. This may have immediate advantages, but in totalizing pedagogic practice it may restrict our openness to people and to our own contentment. Valuable as current practice may be as a way to satisfy politico-economic policy imperatives, it strays from education as an edifying process, for it fails to face the emotional personal-development needs involved in facing up to the distress, despair, hope and happiness of higher education. European higher education pedagogy should embrace these issues.

It is difficult to find direct references to desire in the early Heidegger, and although more frequent in the later work, throughout they seem to underpin the notion of seeking our possibilities or of failing to do so. For instance, in *What Is Called Thinking*, Heidegger refers to us not reaching out and turning towards “what desires to be thought” (1968: 6); this is, ‘willing in the sense of desire’ (1975a: 135). This seeking springs from an understanding of the fullness of one’s potential not yet realized, not from an externally induced desire to have now. It is a primordial

temporization of a gap in-between our contented becoming and our current existing for others. The desire to close such a gap is realized in our passion for educated curiosity of what might be possible, and then an informed desire to be enacted<sup>1</sup>. This passion originates in curiosity and emerges to achieve what one might desire to be. This desire and passion can be both authentic and inauthentic

Up to this point, I have tried to establish that being content is different from being happy. One is an enduring sense of being what one wills oneself to be. The other is an eruption of joy, pleasure or bliss. The first is a disposition; the others are emotions. I have implied that being content is not a passive acceptance, but an aspiration to find possibilities for the potential that one has and then capitalizing on those that are feasible. Given these premises, a responsibility of higher education is to help to develop those involved in it, and for those so developed to have an interest in the common good of society (so an economic imperative is important, but not all-embracing) associated with them, and society makes spaces and time for such institutions. This point is important, because society does not need universities, for all that they can be achieved, and can do without their presence, except, I might argue, to give time to explore what one might be in an environment that ought to be conducive for such an important privilege.

In what follows, I will make the argument for an ontological pedagogy for higher education, one where the focus is on using learning to nurture a desire to *be*, not to have. Where contact hours, salary trajectories and satisfaction measures are necessary, but not sufficient, for becoming. I am not suggesting dropping disciplinary knowledge, although its value has become less useful as our complex world unfolds, or a totally negotiated curriculum and mandatory mindfulness sessions to open every day, or happiness sessions as electives. What I am suggesting is a curriculum review of higher education that puts contentment as an aim in the totality of the higher-education learning and becoming experience. To do this, I use the notion of *currere* to frame my concluding thoughts. This reconceptualization of curriculum is placed in our own temporal experience, and especially our educational experience as a way of understanding. As has been suggested, we might then 'grasp again the significance of academic studies and the potential contributions they can make to our lifetime' (Pinar, 1975: 15).

Well, just consider being content for a moment!

The contentment motive I ask of higher education is anything but smug. It is a challenge to what it is to be a member of society; what moral and ontological stance

one will seek to take in developing one's future. Southgate provides a welcome reminder of the passive acceptance of contentment within education. Educational systems that determine to develop communal individuals, fit for working practices and for a social role where conformity is its main purpose, do not allow for questioning of values for change and disruption in systems that are designed to control and sublimate people. Wrongly, I feel, Southgate conflates comfort, conformity and contentment to argue for a curriculum of aspiration. So do I, but not one where aspirations are not feasible, which is destructive to those who so aspire. We need to enable people to make informed, imaginative but feasible discussions on what they might be and to be content with 'good enough' decisions, rather than the Nietzschean advocacy to live dangerously. It is in this way that one can build on compromise and collaborative action when defining educational systems; and, in this sense, the phrase 'good enough' describes what it might achieve for all participants, stripping away the hegemony of government or commerce. As I suggest, good-enough status encourages the integration of creative, productive and growth-seeking 'self' dimensions through a dialogic process' (i2011: 148).

### Revelation from a cave

A pedagogy of contentment is about realizing the essence of one's own being within the context of the phenomena of other entities; it is ontological. It is about establishing one's own being and taking a stance on that. It is about being resilient in the face of others 'who neither recognize such a stance nor seek to negate it. It is about the Platonic term of *paideia* and draws its initial inspiration from the allegorical, especially from the *Republic* and the *Allegory of the Cave*. In particular, I refer to Plato's reference to education as not putting knowledge into souls that lack it ... but that [which] cannot be turned around from darkness to without the whole body. This instrument [the eye of the soul] cannot be turned around from that which is coming into being without turning the whole soul until it is able to study that which is and the brightest thing that is, namely, the one we call the good. (*Republic*, 1997c: 518c) In this sense, education is ontological and requires us to examine what we have come to know as true in the shaping of our being. We do this by ridding ourselves of old views, seen with a habitual eye, and 'look at things most sharply, just as it now does the things it is presently turned toward' (ibid.: 19b). This is central to an understanding of education that can never be just for production, but is independent of, rather than dependent upon, a notion of sequential building of a career.

A pedagogy of contentment then is not predicated on a notion of disciplines, nor does it find a slot alongside others, but is a unifying notion that brings our being into challenge with our learning. A pedagogy of contentment is a revitalizing of *paideia* as an ontological endeavour. For Heidegger, the process of higher education is enframed. This sees it continuing to be increasingly instrumentalized, professionalized, vocationalized, corporatized and technologized. To avoid this, we need to envision a future for higher education in which the nature of education is an uncovering of our being and not that a process of application of methodologies enframing the environment in which we find ourselves, for our use. We need to understand ourselves, others and the world in ways in which we see them in the essential being, not as resources to be used.

The task for education, then, is twofold: to encourage the desire and passion to reveal one's contentment with one's being within the world as it is every day; and to provide the technical, moral and intellectual skills to make sense of this newness of being. Heidegger suggested as much by claiming that education is the 'very foundation of our being as human' (1998b: 167) and that 'real education lays hold of the soul itself and transforms it in its entity by first of all leading us to the place of our essential being and accustoming us to it' (ibid.). Education, in Heidegger's sense, is ontological and requires us to examine and question what we have come to know as true in the shaping of our being. In Heidegger's interpretation of Plato's cave (Heidegger's: Doctrine of Truth 1998b), the movement that Heidegger described is the move to understanding and changing the way one comports to the concealed, in a progressive unconcealing in search of truth and understanding of being. For Heidegger, education is understanding the essential being of our world, of which we are a part. Thomson explains this as Heidegger offering 'ways of restoring meaning to the increasingly formal and empty ideals guiding contemporary education' (2005: 143). Such a restoration, however, is not something that can be packaged for consumption. This ontological approach does not have the linearity of production, but the grasping of meaning in terms of temporality. The difference is that, instead of the being as the objective presence, it is being that can project its own possibility.

This is the edifying process for education that Rorty speaks of. As he puts it, 'edifying discourse is supposed to be abnormal, to take us out of our old selves by the power of strangeness, to aid us in becoming new beings' (1979: 360). This is not to discount objective inquiry, but to place it as one among many ways of knowing oneself. Again, I want to suggest that edification is a revealed learning from, and reacting to, the rupture of the moment of vision that shows our everyday profound boredom. The result is a pedagogy that blends what we take

as known, but stops short of claiming that it should be the determinant of our identity. As such, it is unlike the mass production model of accredited courses in formal educational settings or the accelerated apprenticeships currently on offer, although the former does have a role to play. It requires us to allow the knowledge of being authentically in the world to be made manifest by the learner, using skills and judgement to turn upon the acculturated education that provides these very skills in the first place.

Rorty takes this point seriously both in the *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979), and more publically in his essay 'Education as Socialization and as Individualization' (1999). Here, he makes clear that the role of compulsory education is to acculturate for the development of *das Man*, to provide the education that one is given by society. The role of higher education is critically to question those practices ironically. He accepts the difficulties of implementation, but bases his argument on the need, a prerequisite of normal early education, for the tools and language sufficient to question one's being.

## Ontological pedagogies

Barnett argues that we are 'urgently in need of an ontological turn in our thinking about higher education' (2007: 9), and I fully agree. Ontological pedagogy aims to teach students to 'dwell', to help to attune them to the *being* of entities, whether this is a jug, a piece of marble or themselves. It cannot be fully understood in the ontologically reductive terms of enframing. The teacher's role in the pedagogy exchange is not to represent the general equivalent, administering equivalencies among the students, who participate in his unity by subsuming themselves under his generality. It is not a pedagogy that:

before the teacher, there is formal equality within the collective of students. Instruction is thus modelled on exchange: to teach, the teacher disregards the difference and the distinctions within the concrete student manifold and addresses himself to the faceless, abstract student that is his counterpart. Likewise, to learn, the student abandons the idiosyncratic expressions of his life for a generic way of thinking that raises him to the level of the teacher. (Heidegger, 2002a: 40–1)

Ontological pedagogy is not contemplatively dwelling on what might have been, in a futile attempt to match what I am with the totality of what others might expect me to be. It is a learning exploration and is a process of evaluating one's future possibilities for being, given the reality of one's current existence. It

is the realization of what one is and the diagnostic consideration of the activities necessary to secure what one might be. It is making intelligible the place in which we find ourselves. Without it, our actions risk unquestioned inauthenticity brought about by ritual and tradition. We seek our authenticity through a hermeneutic self-understanding that is achieved essentially through self-interpreting our potential. It is this dialectic process that enables us to function autonomously in a world where being with others is the natural state of affairs and where reflection within our own tradition is how we reveal our identity to ourselves.

### Teaching by letting learn

The role of teaching in this process is critical, but far from straightforward, as Heidegger himself suggested: ‘teaching is even more difficult than learning. We know that; but we rarely think about it. Teaching is more difficult than learning because what teaching calls for is this: to let learn. The real teacher, in fact, lets nothing else be learned than – learning’ (Heidegger, 1968: 15). But what do teachers teach and what is learning? The second part of this question is answered by Heidegger, in that to learn means ‘to make everything we do answer to whatever essential address themselves to us in a given moment’ (8). This is difficult, for we need to unlearn the dominating, enframed way of thinking before we are able to think and learn ontologically. As Thomson proposes, ‘teachers teach students to learn – to respond appropriately to the solicitations of the ontological – by responding appropriately to the solicitation of his or her environment, which is, after all, the students’ environment as well’ (2001: 260).

So it falls upon the teacher to be an exemplary learner and to teach learning, and, as such, all teachers have a common aim. This has direct links with Zhi Xi’s interpretation of the Analects 1.1,<sup>2</sup> as discussed in a previous chapter. For Xi, learning means to emulate, albeit that learning itself is emulation of the good. Given the broader definition of good in practice, Heidegger might also agree.

### What a pedagogy of contentment might not be

There seems little doubt that the direct intervention into compulsory school through ethos, cross-curriculum and specific lessons has had an impact on



students' ability to cope with engagement with their world. As Popovic states, introducing an 'education which expands theoretical, reflective and practical knowledge of ourselves will be beneficial not only for individuals but for society in general', for 'people simply need a better understanding of themselves in order to deal with the challenges of modern life' (2012: 55). Yet such interventions are only able to help if embedded within the curriculum, not as separate parts. Sun and Buys also conclude, having studied a large sample of Chinese students in Beijing, that

resilience has been found significantly related to physical and mental health in university students. It is recommended that university health promotion policies and activities focus on the development programs to enhance resilience of university students to prevent the development of physical and mental health problems and thereby facilitate students' academic work and successful transition to adult life. (2013: 449)

Further, and linked to the previous discussion on resilience, in a feasibility study conducted by Stallman (2011) at the University of Queensland, Australia, a programme consisted of a single seminar entitled 'Staying on Track'. Stallman suggested that her results offer preliminary support for the satisfaction and usefulness of a brief resilience intervention programme within the tertiary curriculum. She concluded that her work has 'implications for students' ability to achieve graduate capabilities articulated by their university and their potential to make a positive contribution to their community' (2011: 132). The University of Cambridge has also begun to investigate the results of a course developed for the 2015/16 academic year that can help students to develop resilience. In a press release, the university said:

Developing resilience and the skills to cope with stress is key so that students can make the most of life in the collegiate university and when they leave. The university counselling service offers many opportunities for students to develop their skills through an extensive programme of workshops, groups and individual counselling. We believe mindfulness could be a powerful tool to help them, in addition to the other counselling services we offer. This research project will help us determine if mindfulness is a good use of resources. (September, 2015).

It is, then, a surprise that there are not more programmes, notwithstanding Harvard and Warwick's medical school for university students. It seems especially strange, given the importance of student well-being and satisfaction, at least in the UK, at both a policy and an institutional level.

## What a pedagogy of contentment might be

Contentment is an integral part of what it is to be human, yet its significance for education has not been widely noted. We conceptualize contentment as arising from the convergence of the differing selves (actual, ought and ideal), with emotions such as happiness, frustration, compassion and despair being functions of self-discovery and convergence. We believe that this framework offers particular insights into the higher-education experience, as students grow both intellectually and personally. Too often, the notion of contentment has been captured within the rubric of student satisfaction. This is a different, more instrumental and shallower concept, but one which has had a major impact on university mission. A pedagogy of contentment should be radical, at the centre of higher education as a social good, and should enable and facilitate students taking a stance on their being and their agency with others. It will develop both happiness within themselves and resilience to engage with the world of work and civic responsibility and face despair positively.

The problem with contentment is that it is complex and needs a multidisciplinary approach to investigate it, and the literature is drawn from the philosophical, psychological, educational and economic disciplines to illuminate the problem. The central problem is one of definition and conception; that is, why should higher education encourage contentment as one of its purposes? In response, there is evidence that people who are happy are more successful; they are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and less likely to drop out (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). The subjective feeling of well-being can be fostered in people. Therefore, its chronicity will increase contentment levels (Ouyanget al., 2015). Hence, we can derive that if contentment can be improved and modified, it can be trained and taught.

How do we challenge students to confront what they are, and the conditions that support that, and to seek what they might be in order to be happy with whom they will be? Collier has suggested that higher education institutions have generally failed to grasp their responsibility. They have failed to provide the opportunities for students to confront their inner motives and real values in a manner in which their personal integrity is safeguarded (1988). Collier suggests that this can only be achieved through deep, authentic understanding developed through 'existential' responses to issues (1993: 290). The implication of this for higher-level learning is pedagogy that inspires students to

depth of honesty or integrity in searching out their motives, a depth of respect for other persons in everyday reality, and a scrupulous concern for matching

their understanding to the evidence, which can transcend the pressures of group loyalties, academic fashions, local cultures, self-justification and so on. And if he accepts the consensus of views and assumes that such qualities cannot be acquired through explicit instruction or overt training, but only delicately elicited by likeminded people in a climate of mutual respect and trust, he will find himself committed to certain educational procedures. (ibid.: 25)

## A two-fold approach to a pedagogy of self-understanding and taking a stance

Thomson notes that early endeavours to create a university that would ‘dissolve the concealments disciplinary education had engendered in order to recover ordinary conditions of learning’ (2001). As Shepherd (2016) claims, Heidegger conceived that a context that promoted student questioning without being too immersed in instrumental conclusions would create certain unity. In such circumstances, a discipline would still be conducted of value, but would be understood in terms of its inherent horizons. It is in this making more conspicuous the constraint of discipline-based knowledge that education could come closer to self-awareness.

Allowing understanding to emerge, unshackled, from forms of logical, rational investigation opens up new realities and new truths. Moreover, it allows letting the nature of Being of things come into the context of the present as a totality of Being. Heidegger commented that ‘man is obviously a being. As such he belongs to the totality of Being – just like the stone, the tree, or the eagle’ (2002a: 31). This thinking is essentially meditative and can be considered metaphorically as ‘the activity of walking along a path which leads to Being’ (1966b: 25).

### **Self-understanding**

In his distinctive terminology, for Heidegger self-understanding related to ways in which I interpret my being from the possibilities that my potentiality allows. This determines what ‘for-the-sake-of-which’ I function as. How I relate to the objects around me is determined by the tasks, but I perform the task for the sake of some more general existential possibility; that is, what defines me to myself and others is not actuality, but possibilities to act for for-the-sake-of-which’ I am a teacher. As Heidegger stated, ‘*Dasein* always assigns itself from a “for-the-sake-of-which” to the “with-which” of an involvement; that is to say, to the extent that it is, it always lets entities be encountered as

ready-to-hand' (1962: 119). Heidegger went further and stated 'that in the "for-the-sake-of-which", existing Being-in-the-world is disclosed as such, and this disclosedness we have called "understanding"' (183). We therefore come to understand our being as it discloses itself; that is, as we act. So, for Heidegger, 'the "for-the-sake-of-which" and significance [of the situations] are both disclosed in *Dasein*, means that *Dasein* is that entity which, as Being-in-the-world, is an issue for itself' (182 brackets added). Finally, and importantly, Heidegger suggests that

if willing is to be possible ontologically, the following items are constitutive for it.: (1) the prior disclosedness of the 'for-the-sake-of-which' in general (Being-ahead-of- itself); (2) the disclosedness of something with which one can concern oneself (the world as the 'wherein' of Being-already); (3) *Dasein*'s projection of itself understandingly upon a potentiality-for-Being towards a possibility of the entity 'willed'. In the phenomenon of willing, the underlying totality of care shows through. (239)

If we briefly try to unpack this with a lens of a pedagogy of contentment, we might interpret it as follows: 1) one needs to take a stance, resolutely, on one's being, as this will shape how our possibilities reveal themselves and the willed agency that we employ. So we need an understanding of the potentiality and capabilities that we have and the knowledge of how to disclose them in our being in the world with others. We should concern ourselves with those that are feasible, not what might be not, as this is an infinite list of possibilities that does not apply to us in a specific situation. That is not to seek complacency, but to be content with those aspects of one agency that can be nurtured. Clearly, the more we know of ourselves, the more we are able to determine how feasible possibilities are for us. Making the right choices of when and where to act specifically as the for-the-sake-of-which one wills oneself to be is often a question of one's competence to do certain things and to engage in certain practices, and knowing the limitations that these pose.

### **Taking a stance**

For Heidegger, the stance that we take on our being is a matter of choice.<sup>3</sup> He stated that '*Dasein* always understands itself in terms of its existence – in terms of a possibility of itself: to be itself or not itself. *Dasein* has either chosen these possibilities itself, or got itself into them, or grown up in them already' (1962: 33). Moreover, it can "choose" itself and win itself; it can also lose itself and never win itself; or only "seem" to do so' (68). In this, we can choose the authentic or

inauthentic way or passively accept the ways others shape our being. To make the choice of being resolutely offers a transformation from indifference to taking a stance on being; that is, making a response that, in coming into being, is the disclosure of the moment of vision. Such a stance reintroduces us into the midst of others, but in an authentic rather than falling, inauthentic manner. It comes to mean explicitly to stand in a new way, between the past and the possible. To do so, one must enter into the ecstasies of originary and, if we are to open ourselves to the opportunity to progress to becoming, we need to be prepared to face resolutely the potential angst of profound boredom, from where we can transcend the one and become what is now possible for oneself. These capabilities need to be learned and their application guided by judgment. Learning needs to be embraced from others so that the stance taken can be grounded in the intelligible practices of one's work world. Learning practices builds the potential and the energy to remain in a ceaseless state of learning, ready to face resolutely the unanticipated future as oneself.

Further resoluteness requires both facing up to the unsettledness of one's being and in the process releasement (as discussed in the previous chapter) of that which enframes and defines the characteristic of man's nature. Releasement seeks the equanimity to allow technology into our lives, yet also resist it. It creates the context of meditative or 'inceptual' thinking (Heidegger, 1999) as an alternative to calculative thinking that defines and measures reality.

Striving in the Heideggerian authentic sense (as previously mentioned) to be authentic is striving, once one has taken a stance on such a stance with the world. Wrathall suggested that we 'strive to establish a particular understanding of ourselves and the world by using the entities we encounter in the world – by projecting ourselves into actions and possibilities consequently comporting ourselves in particular ways and thereby making sense of the objects and situations we encounter' (2011: 91). This form of authentic striving will never be settled in the sense of finitude, but such authentic striving is not that of constant inauthentic, consumerist desire satisfaction. It is about being content – not the smug contentment referred to, but in what one strives for.

### Sketching a curriculum of contentment

Based on the twofold notion of self-understanding and taking a stance to enable one to be content with one's being, the following ideas might structure a curriculum of contentment that does not stand in parallel to a higher education

curriculum, but is the basis upon which it structures a curriculum for being a being who is content. A *currere* is the realization of the multiplicity and the weaving of context that help an understanding and support one's becoming. It is not a curriculum for the development of generic employability skills for students, but a way of becoming and being content with the person one intends to become. The hope is that a *currere*, a lifetime journey, might reconceptualize the higher education curriculum from a course outline to what Pinar calls 'a complicated conversation' (2011: 47). In doing so, it creates 'lucid and legitimate thinking of the ontological potential of humans' (Magrini, 2010: 1). I am not claiming for *currere* the development of epistemological practices to engage with possibilities that one is able to discern within the social reality of being.

Much has been written about the importance of curriculum studies to the realization of the true function of any constructed curriculum. Kelly (2011) provides a good general introduction to the scope of this analysis and what curriculum itself might be. As important as she shows much of this work to be (and often conflated as subject-discipline knowledge in higher education institutions), Kelly's point is metaphysical and an epistemological analysis of curriculum. She notes the evident lack of a sustained and ontological approach in much of what is considered as the content in curriculum studies. There have been others central to this more critical ontological stance on curriculum and pedagogy: Freire (see especially his work on higher education curriculum with Escobar et al., 1994), Giroux and Giroux (2004), Greene (1988) and Pinar (2011), perhaps the most significant.

The complex conversation that is at the core of the *currere* is an understanding of 'the contributions that academic studies makes to one's life' (Pinar, 2011: 43). It is a conversation with oneself and others: running a 'thread through academic knowledge as an ongoing project of self-understanding in which one becomes mobilized for engagement in the world' (47). It thus introduces a temporality to the understanding of our place in society. This is presented through their relation to its history and future, and determines the form of the social practices of the present. It accepts the disciplinarity of knowledge and seeks to understand how its meaning is grasped in the experience of becoming, in our case, a professional. Such an approach may lead to what Thomson has called an 'ontological revolution' (2005: 159) in the way that we approach education.

Dall'Alba and Barnacle summarize the views of both Thomson and Heidegger as, if 'being and knowing are inextricable, then exploring this interdependence provides a means of not only problematizing but also transforming higher education' (2007: 682). Taking an ontological perspective requires a totalizing *currere* that attempts to blend the conceptual needs of caring engagement, reflection

and critical practices with the presenting phenomena of the ways that enable the experience to be understood, and facilitates the agency of the candidate in the being of a social life. To facilitate this, the becoming of being discourse of *currere* involves the integration of 'ways of knowing, acting and being within a broad range of practices' (683), leading to a process of becoming 'an unfolding and transformation of the self over time' (2009: 43). This is not a call for sequencing work and practice as separate but interleaved activities, such as internships and work placements, but a radical rethink of the nature of a higher-education institution's relationship to its host communities.

So what might a *currere* for contentment look like? It would be centred on reflective practices seeking an understanding of what drives our practice autobiographically, either in conversation or through personal narrative. It would create a way, not a map, to becoming. It would not only enrich students' flourishing, but also engage them in an explicit understanding of how and why a personal stance provides a deep understanding of the structural principles upon which they might build a way of being. The power and the justification of society and the employment's professions, rituals, knowledge and principles that support the structures shaping of social practice would be revealed. A *currere* would require discursive engagement of professionals with others about their practice, its boundaries and how these might change the accepted protocol in terms of what is taken as knowledge, the practices themselves and the structure of the employment world.

A contemporary higher-education *currere* is structured around questioning practice, not accepting authorized authority. It requires tutorials, work groups and located learning so that practice, not just the disembodied facts, is conveyed. It will mean that personal values of the student may counter the principles of academia, and that is fine. It will call for change and a more responsive profession, evaluating maturing practice rather than disengaged knowledge. It is where practice-based learning is integrated, informed but not driven by the knowledge of the powerful informing other's practice, not for uniformity but for diversity, within the constraints of what might be identified as a range of feasible opportunities:

- Support the ontological stance of students and university staff during their becoming, through practice and conceptual knowledge, revealed through such practices;
- Question all disciplinary content, for it is the contribution to one's being and that of others that is the relevance to being, not as abstract knowledge.

This is within, not added to, the curriculum. This would require a move from a didactic-dominated conceptual form of provision of context-independent knowledge to a broader understanding of the relationship between conceptual and contextual knowledge, delivered in an integrated (but boundary-clarified) way, to encourage becoming;

- Evaluate personal competences to consider feasible opportunities. This is an openness to being, not a response to the paternalism of employers and government that claims the students are in control but prevents them from being so by imposing external learning outcomes that make a mockery of a jointly negotiated curriculum;
- Pragmatically resolve quality; the responsibility for any formal qualification is jointly determined by the student body with an eye to employability;
- Seek to understand and question the emergent powers of the social, political and personal in seeking an authentic way or being rather than being entrapped by it, which closes possibilities and hope;
- Make the duration of the university experience a function of personal need, not a preset period for university degrees and the economics of cohort teaching;
- Most important, realize that the university role is not now with the singularities of disciplines, but with knowledge for students' own contented becoming. It becomes a place for growth and social engagement where issues relevant to society are dealt with in a place of inspiration, not calculative knowledge accumulation, where taking a stance on one's being is implicit in doing worthy things.

Becoming content with oneself, not in an untroubled way, is the core of the educational endeavour. This involves mixing conceptual and everyday practice in shaping and edifying an experience. It requires a conversation that stretches from the past into the future. Students cease to be students of professions, but become able to understand, for instance what is involved in taking the personal stance of accountancy: what it means in terms of controlling people's lives, directing investment decisions, being guardians of a neoliberal system that is unfair and exploitative, and which manipulates the many for the benefit of the few. It is no excuse to claim that one is just doing one's job when financial analysis renders the vulnerable weaker. Of course, this might be the power that one desires or, indeed, having taken a critical review, one decides to change the profession (or at least to try). A currere of contentment is not an easy curriculum for being, but for becoming and taking responsibility for that.



## Thinking poetically to seek contentment

The more our use of language widens the limits of our mind and thus of our world, the more it is poetic. Poetic comes from *poiesis*, to make/create. In this, disciplines can merge under the rubric of 'disciplines of meaning' if the technological enframement of language is lost and the freedom to speak the truth as it appears is awoken. Poetic thinking brings philosophical and the poetical, enabling poetry not merely to stimulate emotion but moreover to think through it. It allows, as Bonnett suggests, that 'poetic learning is an ever-evolving triadic interplay between teacher, learner and that which calls to be learned' (2002: 239); thus, poetic thinking generates its own context-relative interpretation that expresses a receptive-responsive openness to things.

To poeticise thinking, as *poiesis*, our pedagogy needs to respect the onto-cosmology of our being developed through different modes of thinking. Our pedagogical practice of contentment would be transformative, transdisciplinary and realized as a dynamic semiotic system. These practices need to let students learn about being in the world and, indeed, change what they find. Poetic thinking is thinking, and shifts from concepts that objectify and fall prey to reductionism to those that creatively and connectively point out difference, not to compare against but to celebrate. It is thinking that liberates from the categorical constrains of disciplines, and connects and diversifies as possibilities are produced.

## Make mine 'an examined life'

Socrates is attributed by Plato in *The Apology* for the statement that the 'unexamined life is not worth living' (1997c: 35). Socrates is uncompromising in this statement, and demonstrated such a search for being as much in his own life (and death). Such a seeking of one's authentic being as a contented human can be extremely challenging. In a world of uncertainty, complexity and consumerist anxiety, there is a certain recognition and attraction in not examining too much or for too long! What a currere of higher education intends is to take up Socrates's call. It echoes throughout Heidegger's work (who clearly failed, on a personal level) in taking a stance on what we want to be while considering whether this is a worthwhile life to live. One needs to cultivate oneself to understand oneself, and through such an understanding, come to know others

to develop global citizenship. We can do this by thinking apart and together, in questioning what things are as they are and why they should be that way. Not to accept the premises of tradition and authority, but to think and reason about the world that we have been thrown into, to reveal ourselves and be strong in being aware of our own Being is surely a worthwhile goal for us all? The institutions of higher education risk betraying themselves in the same way as justice failed Socrates. A reconceptualizing of higher education is needed, and a currere of contentment ought (or at least might) make an important contribution.

The institutions and creator of pedagogies and curriculum need to understand their own ignorance before attempting to structure knowledge for others, when that knowledge is revealed through being in the world, not as artefacts of power and privilege. Taking a stance, one is able to purge oneself of what is unquestioned by opening oneself to one's ignorance and seeking to understand afresh. A curriculum crammed full of busyness excludes thought and encourages absorption, and with that, manipulation and compliance. All these are counter to contentment, but are perpetuated without higher-education institutions.

### Bring on the passion and hold on the passivity

Desire to become and the passion to enact change disassociate the contentment I refer to as smugness and passivity in Nietzsche's criticism. Contentment brings with it the notion of struggle and tension. I am advocating that universities have a role in fostering such passion summoned up from the adventure of human existence. Aspirational contentment itself is passionate. It is neither bland nor uniform nor passive. It is being itself. It can be nurtured and be set free through education and higher education. The freedom that it offers provides contentment in our authentic being. It requires a willed engagement with our well-being, not as it appears but as it really is. Universities should help.

## Coda

### I'm content – what about you?

There is always a chance that I have overdone the importance of contentment to individuals and society at large. The focus on universities in this book is not meant to exceed the search for one's contentment in anyone and everyone in which it presents itself. I wanted just to focus on the privileged time and space that a university education can offer. For sure, full-time residential students have a different experience from those growing number of part-time students and full-time workers whose experiences are more instrumental. The university, however, needs to review its resources and build a strategy that does not just talk of the student experience, but has a reason for promoting it, and I think that a worthy cause is to facilitate the aspirational contentment of their communities of staff, scholars and students.

There are some issues with this existential and secular analysis of contentment, and one is clearly the notion of values. What is worth aspiring to? Once the guidance of the good life or well-being is stripped from the idea of contentment, where do we find ourselves? Can we rely on innate nature to ensure that we behave well towards others? Do we need the politics of the social contract to provide room and limitations for our own contentment when it conflicts with that of others? Can we ever be content when the world is divided in such unjust ways?

### It's values, stupid

I don't know the answer to these questions, but I feel that, if the contentment pedagogy finds a fertile academic environment, it will be in places where values

count. Values shared from Eastern and Western traditions include compassion, courage, trust and dignity. The values gander their meaning in action, and the university provides a place where the values of the market need not dominate. It needs leaders who care not for the league tables as an edifying mission, and who have the courage to disengage from policy where it is ill thought out, hypocritical and manipulative. A reading of many university missions will find platitudes to these values, which, if actually present in the institution, would distinguish it from the neoliberal corporation that many prove to be through their actions. As I have suggested, such cooperations exist and perpetrate an ethos of fear and anxiety, manufactured through notions of non-edifying procedures and surveillance of both students and staff. In such places, a currere of contentment cannot easily flourish.

More importantly and unfortunately, human suffering has not been alleviated by universities in any distinctive and collective way. Education ought to take place in contexts that regard and facilitate the achievement of human aspirations and desires. This includes, within Europe, the task of engaging refugees within education to seek to preclude their radicalisation. This will also pay dividends in promoting lifelong learning, because for this motivation is required. An education that takes into account and promotes contentment will likely cultivate this.

### Let's take the time to think and be grateful

A currere of contentment is more than a responsive curriculum, grounded in the ontological rather than the knowledge needs of staff and students. It is a call for a review and reconceptualization of the institutions themselves. This is not a call from despair but from a realization that we need forms of institution that are concerned about our becoming not our purchasing power!

I hope this book has offered some reason for why we need to change – not for the market's sake, but for humanity's.

# Notes

## Preface

- 1 Heidegger refers to the characteristic of finding oneself in a world through a mood as *Befindlichkeit*. Following Ratcliffe, 'attunement' is chosen as a translation of Heidegger's use of *Befindlichkeit*. Alternatives include 'state of mind', as used by Macquarrie and Robinson (Heidegger, 1962), but this implies that moods constitute a sense of being part of a world, rather than being pre-subjective and pre-objective.
- 2 See Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth* (2013), in which he considers truth as the unconcealing of things or *Altheria*.
- 3 An excellent text is *The Mindfulness-Informed Educator*, edited by Block-Lerner and Cardacotto (2015).
- 4 Aristotle discussed *dunamis* and ways of being in chapter IX of his *Metaphysics* (2008a).
- 5 Vetter, in her book, *Potentiality* (2015), refers to 'localised' and 'non-localised'.
- 6 *Democracy and Education* (1915/1966), chapter 8, especially p. 256.

## Chapter 1

- 1 It has its own dedicated journal, published by Springer, called, appropriately and unimaginatively, *Happiness Studies*.
- 2 Student voice is rather cynically referred to by Macfarlane as a catchphrase to impress, rather than the extent to which institutions involve students in academies (2017: 10). A more considered treatment of the student voice is offered by Batchelor (2014).
- 3 Hsiao mentions Heidegger's attachment to two lines from chapter 15 of the *Tao Te Ching*: 'Who can, settling the muddy, gradually make it clear? Who can, stirring the tranquil, gradually bring it to life?' and then Heidegger explains that 'clarifying finally brings something to light and subtle motion in the tranquil and still can bring something into being' (1987: 100).
- 4 Heidegger spoke of contentment as an attunement, which is less noticeable than those we are most affected by, such as extremes of joy and grief (1995: 68).

## Chapter 2

- 1 Jo Johnson, a UK MP and Minister for Universities and Science.
- 2 Newman also quoted Senior, claiming that shortly after his presentation, political economy 'will rank in public estimation among the first of moral sciences in interest and utility' (1996: 70). In this, Senior was more correct than Newman.
- 3 Newman's response is surprisingly in line with Nietzsche who, in his lecture *On the Future of Our Educational Institutions* (1972) said: 'In this case utility is made the object and goal of education, – utility in the sense of gain – the greatest possible pecuniary gain. In the quarter now under consideration culture would be defined as that point of vantage which enables one to 'keep in the van of one's age,' from which one can see all the easiest and best roads to wealth, and with which one controls all the means of communication between men and nations.'
- 4 'Limits are not inherently negative, they are the condition from which we make sense of the world' (Shepherd, 2016: 762).
- 5 This logic is the basis of the capability educational movement championed by Nussbaum and Sen.

## Chapter 3

- 1 I am reminded of Kertész's reflections in the closing of his book, *Fateless*. When freed from his last concentration camp and asked of the hardships that he had endured, he pondered, 'the next time I am asked, I ought to speak about that, the happiness of the concentration camps. If indeed I am asked, and provided I myself don't forget' (2005: 262).
- 2 This has resonance with neo-Confucian writers, as well as such writings as Wang Yang-Ming's *Instructions for a Practical Life* (2012).
- 3 In this, there are shadows of Nietzsche, who wrote, 'what is happiness? That power increases, that a resistance is overcome, not contentment but more power' (*The Antichrist*, 2011).
- 4 Suissa (2008) makes a very strong case that what is measurable becomes what is accepted as happiness, and argues for a richer notion of happiness in education and through teaching.
- 5 In a new and important book, *Freedom to Learn* (2017), Bruce Macfarlane discusses the threat to student academic freedom due to participative, behavioural and emotional expectations that inhibit the development and expression of students' academic freedom.

- 6 Indeed, this might be a response to Descartes' notion of happiness that appears especially in Part III of the discourse. The part I am specially thinking of is found in Maclean's translation (2006: 24/25) and begins 'Finally, as a conclusion to this moral code'. For a fuller discussion, see Wienand (2009).

## Chapter 4

- 1 The famous Cornaro is ridiculed on the page before the quote as a person who embodied the nature of virtue.
- 2 The WHR's key variables explain three-quarters of the variation in annual national average scores over time and among countries. These are real GDP per capita, healthy life expectancy, having someone to count on, perceived freedom to make life choices, freedom from corruption and generosity. The top ten countries in the 2016 report are Denmark, in the top spot, followed closely by Switzerland, Iceland and Norway, Finland, Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand, Australia and Sweden.
- 3 See a fuller discussion in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 5

- 1 Balaska's commentary on Wittgenstein and happiness offers a much deeper analysis, based on the *Tractatus* and *Notebooks*.
- 2 Aristotle's discussion of powers and potentiality in *Metaphysics IX* (1984a) considers latent and manifest agency.
- 3 It was interesting to note that no definitive source could be found of all official documents on higher education supported by the appropriate government departments and agencies.
- 4 An entrance examination to the then three-tier secondary educational system in the UK that was abandoned in 1976.
- 5 The Office for Students replaces a number of government agencies and is intended to support the needs of the student as a buyer of educational services from the sector.

## Chapter 6

- 1 I am grateful for the considerable help given by Dr Alex Elwick with this chapter.

## Chapter 7

- 1 Two of these studies are already published and extracts pre-publication are presented here. These are Gibbs and Dean (2014) and Dean and Gibbs (2015).

## Chapter 8

- 1 He might have only phenomenologically explored a few, yet this may not be a negation of contentment or other attunements but their importance to Heidegger's fundamental ontology on being thrown into the world, and the lack of attention given to the notion of body. This differs from the carnal revelation of being-in-the-world of Levinas (1996), Whitehead (1968) and Merleau-Ponty (2013).
- 2 Wollheim (1999), with whom she takes issue, does indeed suggest that there are interactions between mental states (emotions) and mental dispositions. Mental states can initiate, terminate and reinforce, and mental dispositions can manifest themselves as mental states.
- 3 Miller concludes a critique of positive psychology in education thus: 'the danger is that instead of fostering the true learning that develops self-knowledge and wisdom, and instead of considering the social and political measures that might really improve people's circumstances, positive psychology offers a substitute recipe for success, achievement and happiness that ultimately has no substance at all' (2008: 606).
- 4 The impact of openness has recently been reported upon in a Demos report on happiness and UK schoolchildren: <http://www.demos.co.uk/project/mind-over-matter/>.
- 5 In the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche wrote that the success of education is to ground an individual as a public utility.
- 6 This is opposite to Rousseau who, in his letter to D'Offreville (1997), wrote that you can only be content if you are honest, but you can be honest and not content, and is supported by Tatarkiewicz's (1976) analysis.
- 7 'It is clear that attunements are not something merely at hand. They themselves are precisely a fundamental manner and fundamental way of being, indeed of being-there [*Da-sein*], and this always directly includes being with one another' (Heidegger, 1995: 67).
- 8 King has argued, from a Heideggerian perspective, that this corresponds to a sense of fitting in, in that 'we can ascribe fittingness to our lives (or elements of our lives, such as our careers, our family arrangements, or our desires and aspiration) when our lives are somehow appropriate to us' (2009: 10).



## Chapter 9

- 1 There are comparisons to be drawn here from Schopenhauer's emptiness relationship to society and that of the Dalai Lama. Clearly, the Dalai Lama's evaluation of happiness as equalling compassion + emptiness has a richer, more benevolent approach to Schopenhauer, but both advocate an emptiness linked with inherent existence.
- 2 It is in *On the Genealogy of Morality* that Nietzsche is most ardent in his opposition to the work of Schopenhauer, especially his concern for the ascetic.
- 3 Frankl's *Doctor and Soul* is a reference by Nodding and provides an insightful analysis, based on the need to find meaning in life, epitomised in the suffering of concentration camp prisoners.
- 4 In an interesting divergence from resilience, I recently read the book *Grit*, by Angela Duckworth. In this book, Duckworth proposes that success is not just about potentiality, but how it is realized through the application of passion and perseverance. In a number of case studies, Duckworth shows that talent is a necessary but not sufficient predictor of success. When combined with a strong and enduring passion for certain goals plus perseverance when troubled, then success was more predictable and personal happiness more assured.

## Chapter 10

- 1 Clearly, these spaces mentioned need to be designed, as are the material 'things' within them. An interesting development led by Carlina Escobar-Tello (2016) is a concept of designing for happiness that is being developed with the goal of engendering happiness whilst offering design solutions that are sustainable.
- 2 Webb (2013) outlines five modes of hoping: patient, critical, sound, resolute and transformative, used to delineate a range of pedagogies of hope. These are discussed in relations to a pedagogy of contentment.

## Chapter 11

- 1 See Ma's *Heidegger on East-West Dialogue: Anticipating the Event* (2008).
- 2 Also, see Lewin (2015).
- 3 By this, Heidegger is pointing us towards that which makes sense of our understanding of the world; a shared background and unquestioned reality of our world that allows communication and shared living.

- 4 It is true that, in *The Analects*, Confucius did not give a definition of happiness, but does offer, especially in chapter 8 of the analects, a discussion of self-cultivation.
- 5 It is disputable whether Zisi actually wrote the *Zhongyong*, but there is sufficient evidence presented by Johnston and Ping (2012) to satisfy the author of its authenticity.
- 6 Specifically, *Reflection on Things at Hand*.
- 7 His book title is translated in a number of ways. Traditionally translated as the *Doctrine of the Men*, the version used here is attributed to Zisi (a grandson of Kongzi), with notes by Zheng Xuan and a commentary by Kong Yingda.
- 8 An excellent review of modern versus ancient interpretation of self-cultivation can be found in Cheng (2016).
- 9 ZY is used in place of 'chapter'.
- 10 For a discussion of sameness in Heidegger, see *Identity and Difference* (2002c).
- 11 In his note, Zheng Xuan takes this to be a reference to what heaven decrees for mortals through the spirits of the Wu Xing; the forces of wood, metal, fire, water and earth; their manifestations in being as benevolence, righteousness, rites, trustworthiness and wisdom.
- 12 For instance, in the *Chin-ssu lu* (first in the Song dynasty) collected by Zhu Xi and Lü Zuqian, it is written, 'nowadays students study like people climbing a hill. As long as the path is unobstructed and levelled, they take long steps. When they reach a dangerous point, they stop right away. The thing to do is to be firm and determined and proceed with resolution and courage' *Chin-ssu lu* II, 53, 1967: 62.
- 13 There is a further connection that is not explored here, between the central notion in *Being and Time* of ready-to-hand and the anglicised title of the *Chin-ssu lu*; '*Reflections on Things at Hand*'.

## Chapter 12

- 1 Heidegger's own passion for his teaching is commented on by a number of scholars, e.g., Kisiel (2002).
- 2 The Master said, 'To learn and rehearse it constantly, is this indeed not a pleasure?'
- 3 For Heidegger, this is his notion of 'mineness'.

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