CHAPTER 24

PHILOSOPHICAL METHODS IN HAPPINESS RESEARCH

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Introduction

Philosophers do not typically run experiments, conduct surveys, or analyze data. So what do we do? To the outsider, it may seem as if "philosophical method" is just a term for glorifying what really amounts to sitting in one's armchair thinking about something. There is some truth to this stereotype of the philosopher, but it is also true that we employ methods in our armchairs, methods that are well suited to answering particular kinds of questions. In this essay I distinguish the kinds of questions that philosophical methods are designed to answer from the kinds of questions that the methods of empirical psychology are designed to answer, I give an overview of what philosophical methods are used in happiness research, and, finally, I say something about why this matters.

Psychological science is paradigmatically concerned with questions about cause and effect, questions like: What causes people to be happy? How does happiness affect individuals and communities? What are the effects of unhappiness on individuals and the communities to which they belong? These questions cannot be answered without conducting carefully controlled studies that allow us to quantify and interpret our observations of the world objectively. Philosophers and philosophical methods have no special privilege here.

But before we investigate how happiness is caused and what effects it has, we need to know what it *is*. When it comes to questions about the definition or the *nature* of happiness, philosophers have something to contribute. To see this, we need to distinguish different questions one might have about what happiness is. First, there are some questions about what happiness is that can be answered by scientific methods. For instance, "What do people mean when they use the word 'happiness'?" is a question that is best answered by interviewing subjects and conducting surveys. Questions about what people, in fact, want in their lives are also empirical questions. But there is another kind of question about the nature of happiness that cannot be answered purely by observation and investigation of the world.

This is the question "What is *happiness* such that it is a good thing to aim at in one's own life or to try to procure for others?" This is what philosophers call a *normative question*, that is, a question about what ought to be rather than what is. This is a question that we can't answer by surveying people, because it might be that what people think happiness is, what they want, and what they in fact aim at in their lives, do not track something worthwhile.

Of course, one might reject normative questions. One might think that there are no standards (or no good standards) for assessing whether something is worthwhile or good to aim at. One might think, in other words, that there are no methods for addressing normative questions and that the best we can do is to answer the empirical questions about how people use the concept of "happiness" and what they, in fact, aim at in their lives. This would be to reject ethics—a field whose business it is to employ philosophical methods to address normative questions. The rejection of ethics and, along with it, the assumption that at least some normative questions are tractable, seems an extreme and undesirable position to take. Moreover, this extreme position doesn't seem to be the one that most psychologists interested in happiness are inclined to take; indeed, questions about construct validity in happiness research seem to be questions about whether the way happiness gets operationalized really captures an important, normative notion. So, it is worth taking a look at the methods philosophy has to offer (see Tiberius and Hall (2010) for elaboration of the argument in this paragraph).

Before we turn to the main subject of this essay, a note about terminology is in order. "Happiness" has at least two different senses. It can refer to a positive psychological state as it seems to when we ask whether someone is "feeling happy". Or it can refer to a broader goal of life as it seems to when we talk about "the pursuit of happiness" or when we ask whether someone has had "a happy life". In this essay, I use "happiness" in the second sense (though the same points about philosophical methods could be made about "happiness" in the psychological sense). This is a deviation from some philosophers' usage (Haybron, 2008; Sumner, 1996), but it makes sense in this context because the peculiarly philosophical questions arise more clearly for happiness in the second sense. Because of the double meaning of "happiness", philosophers interested in the goal of life or what is good for a person often use the term "well-being" instead of "happiness". Therefore, I will sometimes discuss philosophers' views about well-being. The subtle differences between these concepts should not matter for the purposes of discussing philosophical methods.

WHAT DO WE WANT FROM A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS?

I have said that the question about the nature of happiness is, at least in part, a normative question and that this means we cannot employ purely empirical methods to answer it. Having said that, it must also be acknowledged that the nature of happiness isn't something that floats free from our ordinary ideas about what it is. An analysis of happiness that identified it with a bizarre kind of life that no one actually has any interest in could not be correct. Happiness is something ordinary people have an interest in and this interest explains why research into happiness is so important. Therefore, even a philosophical analysis of happiness must pay attention to the ordinary concept and to actual human experiences of it.

Notice, though, that this makes things tricky. If ordinary views about happiness are numerous and conflicting, then paying attention to the ordinary concept and related experiences is not going to lead us to a univocal answer to the question "What is happiness?" Given this, according to most philosophers who work on this topic, what we need to do is to construct a theory of happiness that fits well with *some* ordinary uses of the concept and *some* experiences. Which parts of the ordinary concept and which ordinary experiences should be accommodated by our theory of happiness will be determined by the normative dimension of happiness. Dan Haybron (2008) calls this kind of analysis a "reconstructive analysis", the purpose of which "is not to explicate but to reconstruct: reworking rough-and-ready folk concepts to get something better suited to thinking clearly about the matters that concern us" (p. 47).

There are, then, two criteria for an adequate theory of happiness. L. W. Sumner (1996) has referred to these as *the criterion of descriptive adequacy* and *the criterion of normative adequacy*. Though different philosophers may interpret these criteria as demanding somewhat different things, the current consensus is that both are important. The former is typically taken to require that the theory fit our ordinary experiences and uses of the concept. Sometimes it has been taken to require, further, that the theory makes happiness something amenable to empirical investigation and measurement (Griffin, 1986; Tiberius & Plakias, 2010). The criterion of normative adequacy requires that a theory of happiness should justify claims about the value of happiness and explain why we have good reason to pursue it; it may also require that the resulting theory is adequate to playing a particular role in moral theory. For example, for Utilitarians, according to whom happiness is the central notion in moral theory, normative adequacy will mean that the theory of happiness should make happiness something that is up to this important job (Griffin, 1986).

GENERAL METHODOLOGY

To construct a theory that meets the above two criteria, moral philosophers tend to employ the method of reflective equilibrium (Daniels, 1979). (My focus is on the method that predominates in contemporary analytic philosophy. Different methods are used in other philosophical traditions, some of which are discussed in other entries in this volume.) According to this method, we construct normative theories by bringing into equilibrium ordinary judgments about particular cases (e.g., "Mary led a happy life, even though she didn't get everything she wanted"), putative normative principles (e.g., happiness is that which is to be promoted by beneficent action), and background theories (e.g., psychological theories about hedonic adaptation). We may not be able to save all of our intuitive judgments, and some of our principles may need to be modified or thrown out altogether, but the goal is to construct a theory that explains and systematizes as much of this large body of information as possible within the relevant theoretical constraints. We can see theoretical constraints as included in the forgoing list of things that must be brought into equilibrium. (For example, they might be theoretical principles, like simplicity and consistency, which are supported by a background conception of what counts as a good theory.) This methodology has obvious similarities to the scientific method: empirical theories are based on and aim to explain our observations, but sometimes a theory is well confirmed enough that a conflicting observation must be explained away and discounted. Similarly, when we use reflective equilibrium to defend a normative theory such as a theory of happiness we aim to systematize our intuitions, but there can be many reasons to discount intuitions when not all of them can be saved.

To see how the process goes it will be helpful to work through an example. Consider hedonism, the view that happiness is just pleasure and the absence of pain. (According to the philosopher Fred Feldman (2004), the process he uses to defend hedonism "is to attempt to get myself (and my patient and sympathetic reader) into reflective equilibrium with some form of hedonism" (p. 6).) Hedonism makes sense of many of our intuitions about cases: I think that my dog is happy when he gets his dinner because food is one of his major pleasures in life, I notice that my mother is happy when I telephone because it gives her pleasure to talk to me, I think that chemotherapy makes people unhappy because it is very unpleasant, and so on. Pleasure and happiness do seem to be closely related. But there are other intuitions about cases that conflict with hedonism. For example, imagine a life in which pleasure is the only thing it is possible to achieve. Do we think that a person living such a life—say, someone hooked up to a reliably pleasure-producing virtual reality machine—is living a happy life? Not everyone thinks so. (Robert Nozick's "experience machine" is a now infamous version of this argument against hedonism (Nozick, 1974, pp. 42–45).) Some people think a happy life, a life that is worth living, is one in which we actually achieve things, not just one in which we feel good.

What do we do about these conflicting intuitions? Guided by the method of reflective equilibrium, we could look to background theories or normative principles to help us. For example, consideration of the psychological theory of hedonic adaptation might lead us to think that pleasure can't be the goal of life, because it doesn't make sense to structure our lives around a goal that always eludes us. (Elijah Millgram (2000) makes an argument like this.) Further, the principle that happiness is that which ought to be promoted by beneficent action could lead us to think that hedonism is missing something on the grounds of additional intuitions about what benefits a person. When we start thinking about harming and benefiting others and we bring these thoughts to bear on the discussion of happiness, hedonism may begin to look like a theory that focuses too narrowly on one aspect of a person's life.

Philosophers in the Aristotelian tradition also use the method of reflective equilibrium to define *eudaimonia*, which they translate as happiness or (sometimes) flourishing. According to Richard Kraut (2006), Aristotle's method comprises five stages: (1) consult expert opinion about happiness and also opinions that are widely shared; (2) consider the puzzles that arise when opinions conflict; (3) discover the theory of happiness that best explains the puzzles and preserves as many opinions as possible; (4) with this theory in hand, return to the opinions to achieve a better understanding of them; and (5) subject the theory to the test of experience. We can see how this process is a form of reflective equilibrium insofar as it begins with intuitions or opinions and justifies taking some intuitions more seriously than others by trying to fit them into a coherent whole.[1] We can also see how this method leads to a theory that has normative significance, because the point of ethical inquiry according to

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[1] Kraut (2006) suggests that Aristotle's method is foundational (as opposed to coherentist) because the theory of happiness that results from the process is a "foundational starting-point" (p. 89) that supports lower order opinions. I would argue that the theory is also, in part, justified by opinion (what other source of justification is there, after all?), which does make it a variety of reflective equilibrium.

Aristotle is to arrive at an understanding about how to live that provides a compelling answer to one's practical questions.

Aristotle's method has been adapted by his followers. For example, Martha Nussbaum (2001) uses a methodology that incorporates contemporary ideas about how reflective equilibrium should work. According to Nussbaum, happiness or flourishing is to be understood in terms of "human functional capabilities", which include: life; bodily health; bodily integrity; senses, imagination, and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; other species; play; and control over one's environment (Nussbaum, 2001, pp. 78–80). A flourishing person is one who develops these capabilities well. Nussbaum (2001) argues that her list of capabilities is in part justified by the "*overlapping consensus* [about the list] on the part of people with otherwise very different views of human life" (p. 76). Nussbaum adds a dimension of cross cultural empirical inquiry to her method. Instead of relying entirely on her own intuitions or the intuitions of her students in her application of reflective equilibrium, she attempts to test the theory against the opinions of people across the world. In doing so, she is following Aristotle's advice to begin with opinions that are widely shared (as well as the opinions of experts).

It must be pointed out that Nussbaum does not think the opinions of the many—even opinions shared across cultures—*determine* the right view about human flourishing. She says "the primary weight of justification remains with the intuitive conception of truly human functioning and what that entails" (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 76). Here she is acknowledging the point I have been emphasizing that what people happen to think does not automatically answer normative questions about how we ought to live. More work must be done to construct a theory that makes sense of the various intuitions, to draw out the implications of this theory, and to evaluate the whole package in the light of principles, background theories and experience.

The method of reflective equilibrium functions to achieve both descriptive and normative adequacy. This back-and-forth process is not easy, but it is unclear how we would make progress in addressing questions that have a normative dimension without it. We would either be stuck with our pre-reflective, often conflicting opinions about happiness, or we would be forced to decide arbitrarily on a conception of happiness. Neither of these options supplies a satisfactory foundation for empirical study. I do not at all mean to suggest that current psychological research on happiness proceeds on confused or arbitrary assumptions. The point is that insofar as it doesn't this is because some reasonable method for deciding what to count as happiness or well-being has already been employed, either by the researchers themselves or by the philosophers on whom they rely. The method described here is one respectable method to which empirical researchers are likely to be sympathetic.

One might wonder, though, how respectable this method really is. Does what results from the reflective equilibrium process really counts as progress? Can reflective equilibrium *prove* that we ought to think of happiness in one way or another? Can it demonstrate that one theory is correct and the alternatives false? Why isn't this process arbitrary in just the way we hoped to avoid? These are deep questions that go beyond the scope of this chapter, but the basic strategy for defending the methodology is to insist that the demand for an incontrovertible proof about happiness is an illegitimate demand.

As Kraut (2006) puts it:

> Ethical inquiry is an attempt to become wiser about practical matters, not to convince a real or hypothetical opponent. It is part of one's own intellectual and moral development, not an

> attempt to convince a hypothetical skeptic or to bring it about that more people think and act as one does. (p. 77)

We might say about the philosophical project of defending normative theories in general that the task is to construct a theory that makes the best sense of all the various ideas we have about happiness and that is compelling to those of us whose interests it is made to address. What we need, then, is not standards of *proof*, but criteria for making progress or for judging that one theoretical solution is better than another. These criteria are easiest to grasp by thinking about the dialectical method philosophers rely on in general. Philosophers typically proceed by generating hypotheses, considering objections, and rejecting or reformulating the original hypothesis. This general schema describes what happens when we use the method of reflective equilibrium: (1) we start with a theory that purports to make sense of all the relevant considerations (the various intuitions, principles and background theories, i.e., the data); (2) considerations that conflict with this theory are presented as objections to the theory; and (3) we modify the theory to meet the objections, explain why the objections needn't be heeded in the first place, or reject the theory entirely and start over. This process is repeated until we have answered all the objections and any further modification to the theory would result in conflict with other, more weighty considerations.

Notice that this process is not mechanical; what counts as a good objection, which considerations have the most weight, and what counts as a coherent solution are matters for discernment and cannot be decided by the numbers (it's not the case that *more* intuitions win). Relevant to these judgments are questions that are philosophical rather than empirical: What are the implications of accepting a particular intuition for other cases? How do the principles apply in different contexts? What other concepts might be disentangled from the target concept? Thus engaging in the three-stage process of reflective equilibrium requires reflection on principles, cases, concepts and the inferential relations between them in addition to attention to the empirical facts.

Though there is no deductive proof of a theory of happiness, then, there is evidence for and against different theories and a standard for what counts as better. The best theory is the one that is favored by the preponderance of evidence from our intuitions about happiness, background theories about what human beings are like, reasonable principles, theoretical needs, and real-life experience. It is worth noting that the best conclusion to draw about happiness might turn out to be that there is no single theory that is suited for all of our purposes (Alexandrova, 2009; Nyholm, 2008).

SPECIFIC METHODS

As philosophers employ reflective equilibrium to arrive at a descriptively and normatively adequate theory of happiness, they also use some specific methods such as *thought experiments*. Psychologists also use these methods to support their normative assumptions (and for other purposes), though they may not conceive of themselves as using them to construct a normative theory. In this section I discuss some of the tools in the philosopher's toolbox and explain why these tools are particularly suited to the task of defending normative theories in reflective equilibrium.

In the context of reflective equilibrium, the overarching purpose of philosophical tools is to justify decisions about what to preserve and what to jettison in the construction of a theory of happiness. These tools are (in the terms familiar to psychologists) *methods* for gathering data that will add to the case for or against a particular hypothesis about the nature of happiness. For example, the claim that pleasure is the only thing good in itself is incompatible with the claim that there are other intrinsic goods; a coherent theory of happiness can't accept them both. Nozick's (1974) experience machine example (discussed in the following paragraph) is a method for generating more data (stronger and more numerous intuitions) on the side of rejecting the former.

Thought experiments, common tools in philosophy and the sciences, are "devices of the imagination used to investigate the nature of things" (Brown, 2007). In normative theory they are often used to investigate intuitions about specific features of a concept. For example, Nozick's (1974) thought experiment, which presents us a case in which you have to decide whether to hook up to a machine that some trustworthy super duper neuroscientists will program to give you a very pleasant illusion of a life, is designed to ascertain intuitions about whether pleasure is the only thing we desire. The way Nozick sets up the case, all other factors are supposed to be eliminated by hypothesis. If this were real life, of course, one would wonder about the reliability of the machine, the trustworthiness of the scientists, and so on, but Nozick asks us to put these worries aside so that we can focus on whether pleasure is the only desirable thing.

People sometimes complain about philosophers' use of "crazy" science fiction cases, but these complaints ignore the difficulty in isolating intuitions. A more realistic example than Nozick's would be the case of someone who has the option of spending several hours each evening in a blissful, drug-induced state. But this example does not pit the value of pleasure against other possible values, because in real life drug use has seriously unpleasant long-term consequences and this fact clouds the issue.

Philosophers also use *intuition pumps* in order to argue for a particular theory or against alternative views that may conflict with it. For example, Amartya Sen's (1987) brief description of the lives of oppressed people evokes or "pumps" the intuition that subjective satisfaction with life cannot be all there is to living well:

> The hopeless beggar, the precarious landless labourer, the dominated housewife, the hardened unemployed or the over-exhausted coolie may all take pleasures in small mercies, and manage to suppress intense suffering for the necessity of continuing survival, but it would be ethically deeply mistaken to attach a correspondingly small value to the loss of their well-being because of this survival strategy. (pp. 45–46)

Sen's brief description of these four characters leads us to think that there is something unfortunate about their lives, despite the fact that they are satisfied. Drawing our attention to problem cases for a theory that takes happiness to consist solely in positive subjective attitudes stimulates intuitions on the other side and can lead us to change our view about what must be discarded in reflective equilibrium.

These two methods are related because thought experiments can serve as intuition pumps. For example, Nozick's thought experiment is meant to pump the intuition that being in touch with reality is valuable for its own sake. However, not all intuition pumps are thought experiments. One can pump an intuition by drawing the audience's attention to certain facts without asking them to engage in the imaginative exercise of considering a thought experiment.

Another method philosophers use to attack competing theories is *counter-exampling*. Counter-examples to a theory can be real-life examples or thought experiments and they are meant to pump intuitions against a particular theory, but what's special about this method is that it is a method of critique. Typically, it is used against theories that provide necessary and sufficient conditions for the application of a concept. To counter-example an analysis, one devises an example that meets all the necessary and sufficient conditions, yet intuitively seems not to be an example to which the concept in question applies. For example, according to one analysis, what is good for a person is what her fully informed self would want her actual self to want. This analysis, which has been quite popular in philosophy (Griffin, 1986; Railton, 1986), has been subject to numerous counter-examples. Here is one, aimed at a theory of practical reason according to which we have reason to do what we would want to do after vivid, informed, dispassionate reflection:

> Suppose an enthusiastic fan wants the Lakers to win the NBA championship and, largely because of her partisanship, she enjoys watching their games. But suppose further, what seems possible, that she would lose her partisanship and much of her enjoyment, if she vividly and dispassionately reflected on the facts about opposing players, their families, their desire to win, et cetera. She does not so reflect because she knows what would happen. (Hill, 1986, pp. 610–611)

The Lakers fan meets the theory's necessary conditions for someone who has a reason not to enjoy watching her team, because she would not desire to do so after reflection. Nevertheless, intuitively, Hill thinks we will be inclined to believe that there is nothing wrong with the Lakers fan enjoying the game. She has no reason not to watch and enjoy it. Hill's example is a counter-example to the informed desire theory.

One of the advantages of interdisciplinary study of happiness is that sometimes important counter-examples to a philosophical theory may come from the empirical literature. For example, the claim that people's overall life satisfaction varies with trivial factors such as the weather (Schwarz & Strack, 1999) presents a counter-example to the theory that identifies happiness with life-satisfaction on the assumption that happiness has greater stability. To defend a theory against counter-examples one either explains away the example so that it is revealed not to run counter to the theory, or one modifies the theory.[2] Tiberius and Plakias (2010) have argued that the life-satisfaction theory of well-being can be saved if we modify the theory to count only experiences of life-satisfaction that are responsive to what one values. Thus, they defend the Value-Based Life-Satisfaction theory of well-being in response to counter-examples that arise from psychology.

Whether pumping intuitions in favor of their own theory or critiquing a rival, it is clear from the foregoing discussion that philosophers often rely on examples or cases. Good examples focus the mind and make vivid the reasons to go this way rather than that in coming to an equilibrium. One might accept this strategy and yet wonder why philosophers are not more concerned to take examples from "real life". Of course, the fact that philosophers' examples are not from controlled experiments does not mean they aren't from real life. The examples we have discussed earlier—Sen's hopeless beggar, Hill's Lakers fan—come from the real life experiences of the authors. But philosophical examples are not (not typically anyway) case study reports of actual people. Moreover, they are often written in a literary style or, indeed, come from literary works. For example, Alexandrova (2009) uses a fictionalized case study in order to argue for well-being "variantism," according to which what counts as well-being varies with the context. Haybron (2008) uses the character of Santiago from Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea* as a paradigm case of happiness in order to lend support to his own emotional state theory of happiness: "… Santiago is not the image of happiness in the 'smiley-face' sense … Yet he is a model of what the ancients called *ataraxia*– tranquility, imperturbability – and Hemingway's exemplar, I suspect, of genuine happiness" (p. 110).

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[2] In defense of hedonism against the experience machine thought experiment, Crisp (2006) uses the former strategy and Feldman (2004) the latter.

Haybron (2008) defends the use of literary examples and literary style by arguing that the complexity of happiness makes it difficult to describe analytically:

> The phenomenology of well-being is enormously rich, to put it mildly, leaving even poets at a loss to convey anything more than a hint of it … The process of verbal articulation distills the "blooming, buzzing confusions"[3] of lived experience down to the common currency of shared ideas, using as little of that currency as possible. Most of the information is, of necessity, lost in the transformation. Scientific language is more lossy still, since it trades only in the very narrow coinage of ideas that can be precisely defined, quantified and measured. (pp. 55–56)

The idea is that literary examples allow us to see something about human experience that would be very difficult to convey in precise philosophical or scientific language. In particular, literary examples can convey the attractiveness of a kind of life or the horror of another. Good literature can do this by causing us to identify or empathize with a character whose experience might be quite far from our own: a stark scientific description of Santiago the Cuban fisherman may not have the same effect as Hemingway's prose. So, the point of using literary style is not only that happiness is too complex to describe without it, but also that beautifully described examples can provide the reader a different kind of knowledge: knowledge of what it would be like to live a certain kind of life rather than just information about what happens to the person who lives it. This is important if we take our project in reflective equilibrium to be to survey all the relevant information and devise the theory that best fits it together. Surely, what it is like to live in different ways is relevant to the project of understanding happiness, and literature is particularly well suited to conveying information about what it is like to live a certain kind of life. Literary examples, then, give us more information but also information of a qualitatively different kind.

Finally, philosophers are beginning to use methods familiar to psychologists in the form of surveys designed to ascertain the conditions under which people will apply such concepts as "happiness" and "well-being". Sven Nyholm (2008), for example, has argued that the folk concept of happiness is moralized, because subjects are more likely to say that a person is happy if he is living a morally good life than if he is living a morally bad life. Building on this work, Phillips *et al.* (forthcoming) show that evaluative judgments play a role in the application of the concept of "happiness", though not for the concept of "unhappiness". We can understand the point of these forays into what has come to be called "experimental philosophy" by seeing them in the context of the overall methodology of reflective equilibrium. Folk usage of the relevant concepts in the form of judgments (or intuitions) about particular cases is one source of information that must be brought into equilibrium. Of course, folk usage needn't carry the day: to arrive at a theory of happiness that is adequate to the role it must play in a moral theory, for example, we may need to conclude that sometimes people are mistaken about what happiness really is. (There may also be non-philosophical reasons for discounting the information we get about folk concepts from survey research. In particular, as psychologists are keenly aware, measurement problems such as misleading or confusing survey questions embedded in the methods can give us reason to reject the data.) But what people think about happiness is relevant, and experimental philosophers have realized that we don't know what people think unless we ask them.

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[3] This three-word quote is from James, W. (1890/1981) *The Principles of Psychology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, p. 462.

Working Together

Some of the methods I have described can be employed from the armchair. One can devise thought experiments and come up with explanations for why counter-examples aren't really counter-examples from the comfort of one's office. But the overall methodology of reflective equilibrium and many of the particular methods employed to serve this methodology are best employed by being engaged with the world and with the sciences. Psychological research can show us counter-examples we may not otherwise have thought of, studies of people's actual use of concepts can give us new data points in our attempt to find equilibrium, and background information about human psychology in general is relevant to the construction of the best justified theory of happiness. Further, articulating a theory of happiness is only part of the important work that needs to be done. Theories need to be interpreted and applied and these steps demand empirical research.

That said, it is important to remember that reflective equilibrium is a philosophical methodology suited to constructing normative theories. If happiness is a normative notion that describes what it makes most sense to aim for in life, then how people happen to use the concept is not going to determine its nature, and information about the empirical study of happiness will be relevant as one strand in the mass of material that we must knit together. Other strands will come from reflection about what matters when we're seeing things clearly, what it means to see things clearly, and on the role that happiness plays in life and in our moral practice.

Philosophical work that aims to reach reflective equilibrium about happiness helps empirical investigators start from sound assumptions, and the results of the empirical investigations can help inform and deepen reflective equilibrium. Putting theories into practice requires empirical study, but philosophical reflection can be helpful here too when practice uncovers new questions about the nature of happiness. If these claims are correct, then we have reason to think that the best results in happiness research will be achieved if psychologists and philosophers work collaboratively. Perhaps it should come as no surprise that such a complex topic would require putting our heads together.

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