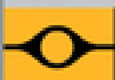

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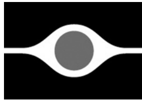
The Oxford Handbook *of* THE POSITIVE HUMANITIES

The Oxford Handbook of the Positive Humanities



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For Hannah, Zoe, Liam, and all the children of the world.

May the Positive Humanities help you flourish.

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FOREWORD

Despite the issues that divide us and fragment our politics, human beings have deep commonalities. We all want to live life well. We all want to have positive emotions, engagement, healthy relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (what I call PERMA). We all want to be part of communities in which we matter. In the struggles of life, however, it is all too easy to focus on what is not going well: on sadness, anxiety, boredom, broken relationships, violence, meaninglessness, failure, the fear that we do not matter, and the sense that our society is unraveling. In psychology, this focus has led to a disease model of human functioning that studies pathology and tries to repair damage. In the late 1990s, my colleagues and I launched the field of Positive Psychology to better balance our discipline by studying and building what makes life worth living. Our contention was that living life well requires more than an understanding of what cripples life: psychological illness, discord, and communal disintegration. It also demands the scientific study of what makes individuals and communities thrive.

One part of what makes us thrive individually and collectively is engagement in the arts and humanities. I am curious how music, movies, theatre, art, literature, religion, history, and philosophy have contributed to your well-being. As for me, I am very much a creature of the humanities and the arts. I majored in philosophy as an undergraduate and almost became a professional philosopher. Philosophy taught me the value of thinking carefully about the most basic premises and doing so in the company of others. Music is a daily part of my life, frequently sending chills up and down my spine. (I am listening to Ralph Vaughan-Williams as I write this.) I am inspired by literature and often moved to tears by poetry. I am a voracious reader of history and have learned much from studying biography. I draw hope from figures like Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill, who overcame despair and rose to the occasion of leadership in times of extreme difficulty, waging wars while fighting excruciating battles within. One of my favorite ways of engaging with the arts is by hosting movie nights in the Master of Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) Program at the University of Pennsylvania.

Watching movies—*Field of Dreams*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Close Encounters*, *Brooklyn*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and many more—with my students and then discussing them together deepens our appreciation for the movies, increases our understanding of human flourishing, and forges emotional connection to each other.

The arts and humanities help us weather the storms of life, but more than that, they can help guide us to new possibilities as we imagine and create more fulfilling lives and thriving communities. From a scientific standpoint, however, we know little about how these forms of culture support individual well-being and collective flourishing. We know even less about how to enhance the positive effects of engagement with the arts and humanities.

One of the early figures in Positive Psychology was a young, irrepressible, pony-tailed philosopher with a vision for what he called the Positive Humanities. I met James Pawelski at the first public meeting on Positive Psychology in the fall of 2000. Impressed with his vision, I invited him to join me at the University of Pennsylvania when I started the Positive Psychology Center a few years later. Together we developed MAPP, the world's first Master's program in Positive Psychology, and he has been directing and teaching in it ever since. For sixteen years, at this writing, he has been the glue that holds it all together. Each year, he teaches a course on the Humanities and Human Flourishing, exploring the theoretical, empirical, and practical ways in which the arts and humanities support well-being. James has a lifelong passion for the Positive Humanities and has dedicated himself to their establishment as an interdisciplinary field of research and practice. To realize his vision, he founded the Humanities and Human Flourishing Project (www.humanitiesandhumanflourishing.org) in 2014 and is advancing the Positive Humanities through his scholarship, research, and collaborative leadership. He invites scholars and practitioners in the arts and humanities, scientific researchers, educators, and other thought leaders to come together to study, develop, and apply ways in which the arts and humanities can increase human flourishing. Early on, he invited Louis Tay, a brilliant organizational psychologist and methodologist, to join him as the research director of this project. Within Positive Psychology and beyond, Louis is well known for his rigorous research on well-being. His ability to engage in cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural lines of inquiry is vital to this emerging interdisciplinary field. The partnership between a philosopher and a psychologist has worked beautifully, leveraging James's conceptual strengths and Louis's empirical expertise.

The Humanities and Human Flourishing Project, which now involves a growing multinational network of more than one hundred fifty collaborators, has already accomplished much to establish the new field of the Positive Humanities. James, Louis, and the Project team have published theoretical papers, developed a conceptual model to guide empirical research, conducted literature reviews of current work, created a toolkit of scientific measures, and established a book series with Oxford University Press (with a remarkable nine books already underway) to provide an opportunity for humanities scholars and

practitioners to explore how their work informs human flourishing. The present volume, *The Oxford Handbook of the Positive Humanities*, brings together a stellar group of some seventy international researchers and thought leaders to present a broad introduction to the current state of this new field. This *Handbook* covers a wide range of topics, from subjective well-being to character strengths and virtues, from flow to meaning and purpose, from philosophy to film, and from neuroscience to public policy. It provides a solid foundation for empirical work in the Positive Humanities and sets out an ambitious program to guide further investigation.

As Positive Psychology was twenty years ago, so the Positive Humanities are now: a new field poised to become a worldwide movement. Whether you are a scientific researcher, humanities scholar, creative artist, teacher, student, policy expert, philanthropist, or a sheer lover of the arts and humanities like me, I hope you will be a part of this momentous turning. Imagine what we can accomplish together! Working collaboratively, we can develop a deep and testable understanding of various ways the arts and humanities support individual and collective flourishing, and we can apply this knowledge broadly. All too often the humanities and arts are leaden with unrelieved human tragedy. This is a one-sided, distorted, and ideological portrait of the human condition. Imagine if the connections between the humanities and human flourishing were taught to the millions of students around the world who take courses in the arts and humanities each year. Imagine if musicians, artists, writers, movie and theatre directors and producers, and other makers of culture intentionally focused on exploring new ways of experiencing well-being. Imagine if the multi-billion-dollar creative and entertainment industries (in music, movies, publishing, and other domains) adopted human flourishing as a conscious goal and were guided by Positive Humanities research in its realization. Imagine if museums, performing arts centers, and other cultural institutions established evidence-based practices for supporting the well-being of their visitors and audiences. Imagine if all of us who participate in the arts and humanities in our daily lives could learn how best to improve our personal well-being as we engage with them. Imagine if we had a better understanding of how the arts and humanities can knit societies together, giving them cohesion and common purpose, while at the same time allowing for the individual expression of its diverse members.

This is a historic moment of possibility, and I yearn to see how the Positive Humanities will help us build a better future, not only by providing a buffer against our troubles, but also by promoting the flourishing of individuals, relationships, and societies.

Martin E. P. Seligman
Wynnewood, Pennsylvania
November 2020

PREFACE

Imagine for a moment that the humanities did not exist. Imagine there were no arts and culture—no philosophy, history, or religion; no art, music, or dance; no literature, theatre, or film. What would life be like in such a world? These and similar domains are such integral parts of our lives that it is hard to say what we would be like without them. One thing we can say with confidence, however, is that without the humanities we would not flourish. Infancies without nursery rhymes, picture books, or lullabies; childhoods without stories, songs, playacting, or accounts of the past; adulthoods without the critical thinking, creativity, meaning, and community afforded by the humanities—all of these are unthinkable. If we could survive at all in such conditions, our lives would be dismal, and we would languish.

The humanities are indispensable in our lives. They render us human, allowing us to develop as individuals, connect deeply with others, and live together in communities and societies. Yet they do not always lead to flourishing. When driven by political, economic, or vocational interests, they can lead to strife, exploitation, and injustice. For this reason, it is important to study the relationship between the humanities and human flourishing and to do all we can to strengthen it. This is the domain of the new field of the Positive Humanities.

We believe this field has considerable promise and is all the more important given the problems and possibilities in our world today. James Pawelski first conceived of this approach more than twenty years ago and has been working in this area in various ways ever since. He invited Louis Tay to join him in 2014 when he created the Humanities and Human Flourishing Project at the University of Pennsylvania. Since then, we have assembled a core team and created a growing international network of humanities scholars, scientific researchers, creative practitioners, college and university educators, wellness officers, policy experts, members of government, and leaders of cultural organizations to advance this work. Together we have published foundational papers, developed conceptual models to guide research, conducted extensive literature reviews, validated a toolkit of measures to assess the well-being effects

of engagement in the humanities, held ten collaborative meetings across eight different humanities disciplines, and created a Humanities and Human Flourishing book series with Oxford University Press. (For the latest information on the work of the Humanities and Human Flourishing network, please visit www.humanitiesandhumanflourishing.org.)

This *Handbook* is one of the key initiatives of the Humanities and Human Flourishing Project. Comprising thirty-eight chapters written by nearly seventy contributors, it provides a broad overview of the current state of research in the Positive Humanities. It begins with a foundational chapter establishing the contours of this new field, then continues with a section on historical and contemporary views of the humanities and their relation to human flourishing, with chapters in both the humanities and the social sciences. Next is a section on the different types of flourishing outcomes that can emerge from engaging in the humanities, followed by a section exploring various psychological and behavioral pathways from the humanities to human flourishing. It then turns to a consideration of how specific humanities disciplines can lead to human flourishing and concludes with a section on how the humanities can be integrated into public life and public policy and what the effects of this integration might be on human flourishing. We are pleased with the remarkable range of work in the Positive Humanities we have been able to bring together in this *Handbook*, yet we are keenly aware that more work needs to be done in each of these areas, and we cordially invite scholars, researchers, practitioners, and students to join these efforts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A volume like this can come to fruition only through the dedication, creativity, and hard work of many collaborators and contributors. We would like to thank all the individuals and organizations whose efforts and good will have made this endeavor possible, taking this opportunity to express our special gratitude to the supporters and colleagues who have worked most directly with us on this project.

Foremost, we wish to acknowledge the Templeton Religion Trust for underwriting this *Handbook* through a grant on "The Humanities and Human Flourishing: A Multi-Disciplinary Collaboration for Understanding, Assessing, and Cultivating Well-Being (Phase I)." This generous grant provided us with the necessary resources to bring together the work of a broad range of exceptional scholars, researchers, and practitioners for this volume. We have tremendous respect for the foresight of Sir John Templeton in setting up this Trust and for the work of Mike Rota, Chris Brewer, Kara Ingraham, and their colleagues in carrying out his vision. Most especially, we would like to thank Chris Stewart, Vice President of Grant Programs and Chief Grants Officer, for his support of this *Handbook* and his championing of the Humanities and Human Flourishing Project from the beginning. (The opinions expressed in this volume, of course, are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Templeton Religion Trust.)

We are also grateful to the University of Pennsylvania for its significant institutional and financial investment in this work. In particular, we would like to thank President Amy Gutmann, Provost Wendell Pritchett, and Associate Provost and Chief Wellness Officer Benoit Dubé, as well as the deans of the School of Arts and Sciences—including Dean Steven Fluharty, Associate Deans David Brainard, Larry Gladney, and Jeffrey Kallberg, and Vice Deans Matthew Lane and Nora Lewis—who have been extraordinarily supportive of our efforts. Additionally, we would like to thank Purdue University for its strong support and encouragement throughout this process; specifically, we

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We would also like to thank Sunil Iyengar for helping us develop a partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, and Sasha Lewis Heinz for the moral and material support she is providing the Humanities and Human Flourishing Project. Sunil and Sasha are making it possible for us to continue our work into the future.

We are indebted to Marty Seligman, founding director of the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania, for believing in this vision of the Positive Humanities and providing the Foreword for this *Handbook*. His creativity, courage, and leadership have been deeply inspiring to us. We are also beholden to the late Ed Diener, the foremost pioneer in well-being research, for his fantastic mentorship, support, and encouragement from the inception of this work. Marty and Ed are the tallest of the giants on whose shoulders we stand. We are thankful for the broader community of scholars, practitioners, and policymakers who recognize the need for more work on understanding and enhancing the relationship between the arts and humanities and human flourishing. Many of these individuals are authors included in this volume, and we deeply appreciate their contributions. There are many others whose work we were unable to include because of space limitations, but we are nonetheless thankful for their research, feedback, and support, which have greatly sharpened our vision for the Positive Humanities and strengthened this *Handbook*.

We are incredibly grateful to Michaela Ward, our indefatigable *Handbook* coordinator, for her logistical genius in keeping track of the myriad details involved with compiling a handbook, sending timely reminders to all the volume contributors, and just generally being wonderfully organized. We would not have wanted to enter into such a complex undertaking without her. Another key person we are immensely grateful to is Sarah Sidoti, Assistant Director of the Humanities and Human Flourishing Project. Her experience, oversight, and input on the *Handbook* coordination, along with her optimism and buoyant spirit, have been invaluable and are deeply appreciated. We also wish to thank our other administrative colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania whose work has helped bring this volume to completion, including Karina Czoka and Dawn Sabella. Peter Schulman, Executive Director of the Positive Psychology Center, is the steady force that keeps our world in orbit. Further, we are thankful to Abby Gross for her long-term partnership and for the excellent support she, Nadina Persaud, Katharine Pratt, and all the folks at Oxford University Press have provided throughout the process of preparing and publishing this volume.

Finally, we are deeply grateful to our dear spouses Sang Woo and Suzie Pileggi Pawelski. We owe so much to their loving support, not only in this work but also in our lives. They bring both culture and flourishing to all that we do and are.

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James O. Pawelski, Ph.D., is Professor of Practice and Director of Education in the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania, where he also serves as adjunct professor of Religious Studies. A Fulbright Scholar with a doctorate in philosophy, he is the founding director of the Humanities and Human Flourishing Project, which has been designated a National Endowment for the Arts Research Lab. He is the author of *The Dynamic Individualism of William James* (2007), editor of the philosophy section of *The Oxford Handbook of Happiness* (2013), co-editor of *The Eudaimonic Turn: Well-Being in Literary Studies* (2013), co-editor of *On Human Flourishing: A Poetry Anthology* (2015), co-author (with his wife Suzann Pileggi Pawelski) of *Happy Together: Using the Science of Positive Psychology to Build Love That Lasts* (2018), and editor of the Humanities and Human Flourishing book series with Oxford University Press. An award-winning teacher, he is the founding director of Penn's Master of Applied Positive Psychology Program, the founding executive

director of the International Positive Psychology Association, and a member of the executive committee of the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies, and has served as a member of the Steering Committee of the International Positive Education Network and as President of the William James Society. He is an international keynote speaker who has given talks in both English and Spanish in more than twenty countries on six continents and is the recipient of a Practice Excellence Award from the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China and of the Humanitarian Innovation Award for the Humanities, Arts, and Culture from the Humanities Innovation Forum at the United Nations.

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PART I

Overview of the Positive Humanities

Part I provides the conceptual foundation for the essays in the rest of the volume. It includes an introductory chapter on the role of the arts and humanities in human flourishing and a foundational chapter on the Positive Humanities that clarifies the conceptual contours of this new field, situating it within the context of historical and contemporary approaches to the humanities, describing its connections to the science of well-being and to various domains of practice, and suggesting important future directions for research and application.

CHAPTER

1

Introduction: The Role of the Arts and Humanities in Human Flourishing

Louis Tay *and* James O. Pawelski

Abstract

The Positive Humanities are an emerging new field of inquiry and practice concerned with the relationship between the arts and humanities and human flourishing. The first half of this chapter introduces the work of the Humanities and Human Flourishing Project (HHF), a growing international and multidisciplinary network of scholars, researchers, and creators that the editors of this volume have led since 2014 with the aim of establishing the Positive Humanities as a robust field. Among other endeavors, HHF has conducted literature reviews, developed and refined a conceptual model, created and validated a toolkit of measures, and identified five key psychological mechanisms connecting the arts and humanities to human flourishing: reflection, acquisition, immersion, socialization, and expression (RAISE). The second half of this chapter introduces the six parts of this *Handbook*: overview of the Positive Humanities, historical and current trends, flourishing outcomes, pathways from arts and humanities engagement to human flourishing, disciplinary considerations, and public engagement and policy. The aim of the various parts of this *Handbook* is to bring together theoretical, empirical, and applied work to advance the understanding of the range of effects that engagement in the arts and humanities can have on human flourishing. The editors hope this seminal volume will encourage continued cross-cultural and multidisciplinary work in the Positive Humanities.

Key Words: Positive Humanities, arts, humanities, culture, well-being, flourishing, positive psychology, conceptual model, mechanism, policy

The arts and humanities play a vital and manifold role in human flourishing. Stories, songs, pictures, and videos are used to soothe, stimulate, and delight infants and children. More formally, literature, history, philosophy, music, film, and the visual and performing arts play a crucial role in education. These pursuits are also a significant part of the everyday life of adults, offering personal enjoyment and enrichment as well as opportunities for connection with others. At the societal level, the arts and humanities can provide large groups of people with the shared meaning and common purpose necessary for collective thriving. In the words of *The Heart of the Matter*, a report issued by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (2013), the arts and humanities are "critical to our pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness" (p. 13).

The Positive Humanities are an emerging new field of inquiry and practice concerned with the relationship between the arts and humanities—collectively referred to as *culture*—and human flourishing (Pawelski, Chapter 2 in this volume). Both *culture* and *flourishing*, of course, are botanical terms. Etymologically, culture refers to the cultivation of plants, with the flourishing of those plants as its goal. Metaphorically, culture refers to the cultivation of human beings, and by extension, to the artistic and intellectual fruits of that cultivation. As implied by this metaphor, human culture should result in human flourishing.

Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Important as culture is for human flourishing, it can also diminish or destroy it. In societies across time and around the world, flourishing has often been considered a privilege of the elite, and many of the elements of culture have been withheld from the average citizen. In authoritarian societies, culture is often manipulated to diminish the flourishing, and even destroy the lives, of particular individuals and members of targeted groups. But even in more open and inclusive societies, it is clear that the role culture plays is complex, in some ways supporting human flourishing and in other ways suppressing it. In no society is culture fully optimized for individual and collective flourishing.

Because the relationship between culture and human flourishing is complex, its effective assessment is as difficult as it is vital. This assessment has traditionally taken place within the arts and humanities, with much of the work of cultural critique carried out by scholars and creators in areas such as philosophy, literature, history, religious studies, music, art, and theatre. In the last few decades, this work has frequently focused on ways in which culture has fallen short of the ideal of flourishing and has instead given rise to various sorts of pathologies, injustices, and other forms of human languishing. Identifying the shortcomings of culture is clearly of great importance. A danger of these efforts, however, is that they can fixate on the search for failure, minimizing or even ignoring the contribution that culture does and can make to human flourishing. This work can also become quite theoretical, requiring years of training to access and lacking clear avenues of application.

With science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields in the ascendancy, declining enrollments in many arts and humanities departments, and students increasingly viewing higher education as vocational preparation, the arts and humanities are often called upon to justify themselves and their role in our contemporary world. Many times these justifications are made in economic terms, citing the impact of museums, performing arts centers, and other cultural organizations on the economies of the cities and regions in which they are located. Sometimes these justifications are made in academic terms, as when philosophy departments point out the high scores their graduates achieve on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). Other times, they are made in vocational terms, with educators tracking

the job prospects and income levels of arts and humanities graduates. Increasingly, justifications. Economic, academic, and vocational outcomes are undoubtedly important. Nevertheless, they are instrumental effects of culture, and an overemphasis on them can tie the arts and humanities too strongly to external interests, with the risk of distorting their aims and practices. Although the Positive Humanities acknowledge the various instrumental benefits of culture, they emphasize the intrinsic benefits, such as personal enjoyment, individual and societal growth, and meaning-making, that more directly cause or constitute human flourishing (McCarthy, Ondaatje, Zakaras, & Brooks, 2004; Shim, Tay, Ward, & Pawelski, 2019).

These intrinsic benefits of culture are at the center of our work in the Humanities and Human Flourishing (HHF) Project. HHF is located at the University of Pennsylvania, with one of us (Pawelski) serving as its founding director and the other (Tay) as its founding research director. Understanding the humanities in a broad way that includes the arts, we propose that they have a central role in human flourishing and that this role leads to a variety of outcomes, many of which are definable and measurable. Since receiving our first grant in 2014, and with support from the Templeton Religion Trust, the University of Pennsylvania, and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) (which has designated HHF an NEA Research Lab), HHF has developed into a growing international and multidisciplinary network of over one hundred fifty humanities scholars, scientific researchers, creative practitioners, college and university educators, wellness officers, policy experts, members of government, and leaders of cultural organizations.

At the beginning of our work, we conducted several literature reviews of scientific research on the relationship between the arts and humanities and well-being. Our systematic review of empirical research on the well-being effects of engagement with history, literature, and philosophy revealed limited work in this area, although the work that has been done (mostly in pedagogical settings) provides initial evidence that engagement in the humanities can have a positive effect on individual well-being (Vaziri, Tay, Keith, & Pawelski, 2019). The results from a mixed studies systematic review we completed of arts and humanities interventions with healthy adults again showed both limited work in this area and initial evidence for the effectiveness of these interventions across a range of human flourishing outcomes, including, for example, increased positive affect, decreased negative affect, higher levels of relaxation and relief from stress, and a greater sense of community and belonging (Shim, Jebb, Tay, & Pawelski, 2020). We conducted the largest meta-analysis to date investigating the relationship between religion/spirituality and well-being, covering more than 250 studies and including well over half a million participants. We found a small but robust correlation between religion/spirituality and life satisfaction, with the strongest results occurring in older individuals, in more religious countries, and in developing nations (Yaden et al., 2021).

Aside from religion/spirituality, these literature reviews revealed surprisingly little robust research examining the role of the arts and humanities in human flourishing. We believe this paucity of research is due, in part, to the lack of theoretical clarity and the absence of a conceptual model. Consequently, we have written several theoretical papers (Pawelski, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c; Pawelski & Tay, 2018), including an introduction to the Positive Humanities (Pawelski, Chapter 2 in this volume), and have developed and refined a conceptual model (Tay, Pawelski, & Keith, 2018; Shim et al., 2019) operationalizing arts and humanities engagement, articulating a broad range of relevant human flourishing outcomes, and identifying a set of psychological mechanisms. We have also developed and validated a toolkit of measures for assessing the role of these psychological mechanisms in different types of arts and humanities engagement (Thapa, Vaziri, Shim, Tay, & Pawelski, 2021). Believing this work needs to be deeply and broadly collaborative, we have brought together empirical researchers and arts and humanities scholars and practitioners across eight different disciplines (philosophy, history, religious studies and theology, literary studies, music, art, theatre, and film) to discuss what each of these disciplines can contribute to the conceptualization and cultivation of human flourishing. To communicate the results of these discussions—and invite others to join the conversation—we have established a book series on The Humanities and Human Flourishing with Oxford University Press. As a complement to this work in the various arts and humanities disciplines, we have developed and edited this *Handbook* to bring together a broad range of scientific approaches and relevant research to advance the empirical assessment of the well-being effects of engagement in the arts and humanities.[1]

A Conceptual Model

The conceptual model we have developed includes an operationalization of engagement in the arts and humanities, a broad definition of human flourishing in terms of a wide range of constituent factors, and a set of psychological mechanisms through which these factors may be facilitated (Tay et al., 2018). A brief description of each of these elements of the conceptual model will help contextualize our approach to the empirical assessment of the role of the arts and humanities in human flourishing.

It is notoriously difficult to provide a single, comprehensive definition of the arts and humanities. Instead, we chose to create an integrated conceptual framework, using qualitative analysis to accommodate the wide range of definitions that have been proposed in various contexts (Tay et al., 2018; Shim et al., 2019). This framework focuses on engagement with the arts and humanities and includes three frames. First is the extensional frame, which addresses the *what* of arts and humanities engagement. This *what* focuses on the forms and content of the arts and humanities domain and is variously described

[1] For more information on the work of HHF, visit www.humanitiesandhumanflourishing.org.

as fields (including academic disciplines, creative industries, and public sectors), subject matter, practices, artifacts, and phenomenological experiences. Second is the functional frame, which addresses the *how* of arts and humanities engagement. This *how* focuses on the behavioral and attitudinal aspects of such engagement and is described in terms of activities (e.g., reading, writing, drawing, and dancing), modes (e.g., creating, performing, critiquing, studying, and appreciating), and approaches (e.g., idiographic, interpretive, evaluative, expressive, communicative, and historic). Third is the normative frame, which addresses the *why* of arts and humanities engagement. This *why* focuses on the ends and purposes of the engagement and is described in terms of aesthetic experience, individual and societal growth, and meaning-making. In our integrative model, these three frames are not mutually exclusive, and clarity about which frame or frames are being used is important for assessing the human flourishing outcomes of arts and humanities engagement.

Our model includes a wide variety of human flourishing outcomes, ranging from the physiological and psychological to the ethical and social. We are interested in neurological, physiological, and psychological reactions to the direct experience of the arts and humanities; the well-being effects of short- and long-term engagement in the arts and humanities; the enduring psychological competencies to which such engagement can lead; and the impact it can have on character development, ethical attitudes and behaviors, civic engagement, and the advancement of social justice. It is important to note that although our model generally hypothesizes positive effects of the arts and humanities on human flourishing, the actual effects experienced will vary across different contexts. We believe engagement with the arts and humanities is likely to have mostly positive effects, but we understand that some of its effects will be neutral or even negative. And any specific experience, of course, may have a mixture of positive, neutral, and negative effects on various outcomes. For this reason, a *eudaimonic profile* can be helpful for tracking the full range of actual effects in and across different contexts (Pawelski, 2016c). Understanding these context-dependent nuances is important in its own right and is also useful for learning how to optimize the positive effects and minimize any negative effects of arts and humanities engagement.

We further propose that human flourishing outcomes are facilitated through five psychological mechanisms: Reflection, Acquisition, Immersion, Socialization, and Expression, which we refer to via the acronym RAISE.

1. *Reflection*: An intentional, cognitive-emotional process for developing, reinforcing, or discarding one's habits, character, values, or worldview. The essence of reflection is captured in the Socratic aphorism, "The unexamined life is not worth living."
2. *Acquisition* (formerly labeled "embeddedness"): The set of socio-cognitive psychological processes—such as experiences of mastery, vicarious experiences, direct encouragement, and positive physiological responses—that underlie the

development of particular perspectives, habits, or skills, including self-efficacy, self-regulation, and integrative complexity, among others. The arts and humanities serve to build new positive skills, competencies, and perspectives.

3. *Immersion*: This is the immediacy that often attends engagement with the arts and humanities. One's attention is captured, resulting in the experiencing of various levels of sensory and emotional states and first-order cognitions, often leading to a feeling of being carried away and disconnected from the worries of everyday life.
4. *Socialization*: The degree to which individuals experience or take on various roles and identities within communities and cultures. The arts and humanities socialize us to new ways of being as we look through different cultural lenses. Socialization also includes the sharing of experiences and the building of community through activities such as singing in a choir, joining a book club, and attending the theater.
5. *Expression*: A process of externalizing one's thoughts and feelings that may (but need not) involve others. The arts and humanities are a deep and rich way for people to bring out their ideas, feelings, and perspectives. This can occur in private or public settings and through individual or collective effort.

The outcomes and psychological mechanisms in our model serve as consolidative categories for scientific findings on the empirical effects of engagement in the arts and humanities. Importantly, they point to new ways of measuring the impact of the arts and humanities that harness scientific assessments established in psychology, and especially in the field of positive psychology. We realize this conceptual model presents a challenge to those who argue that the intrinsic benefits of engagement in the arts and humanities cannot be scientifically studied. The authors of the report *Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate about the Benefits of the Arts*, for example, hold that the intrinsic benefits of the arts are more important than their instrumental benefits, but argue that unlike the latter, the former cannot be measured using social scientific methods. They write, "To discuss these intrinsic effects, we need to abandon the more objective view of the social scientist and focus on the personal, subjective response of the individual" (McCarthy et al., 2004, p. 37). We believe that this view presents a false dichotomy. Many social scientists are interested in the individual's personal, subjective response and are developing ever more effective ways of studying it scientifically. Indeed, in the initial articulation of positive psychology, its cofounders, Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2000), indicated that the scientific study of "positive subjective experience" is a central focus of this field (p. 5). Psychology researchers are continuing to develop new instruments (e.g., the Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving [Su, Tay, & Diener, 2014] and the PERMA-Profiler [Butler & Kern, 2016]) and to invent and refine methods (e.g., questionnaires, experience sampling methodologies, and Big Data) for the quantitative and qualitative social scientific study of the subjective experience of human flourishing (Scollon, Kim-Prieto, & Diener, 2003; Woo, Tay, & Proctor, 2020).

Although we do not believe social science must be abandoned when assessing personal, subjective aspects of human flourishing, we do believe it is only one part of what is needed. When research focuses on the intrinsic benefits of culture, it is crucial to see this work as a collaborative enterprise that involves arts and humanities scholars and practitioners, since they have invaluable insights into the nature of human flourishing and the role of the arts and humanities for its cultivation. To be valid, psychological measures in this domain must be guided by the experience and reflection of those who dedicate their lives to the creation and study of culture. It is also important to keep in mind that flourishing involves personal, subjective experience but is not limited to it. Psychology has traditionally focused on the study of individuals, and its perspectives are important for studying well-being. A comprehensive approach to assessing the role of the arts and humanities in human flourishing, however, must also include other human sciences that focus on ways in which communities and societies function.

We offer our conceptual model in the belief that empirical assessment of the role of the arts and humanities in human flourishing should complement but not replace the more traditional ways scholars have thought and written about culture. The relationship between the arts and humanities and human flourishing is too complex to be understood by using a single approach. We also want to make clear that exploring this relationship is not the same as assessing the worth of the arts and humanities. We believe the full value of the arts and humanities will forever remain beyond the reach of scientific measurement, even though many of their effects are not. It is important not to conflate intrinsic benefits with intrinsic worth, and we repudiate any attempts to use this work to create a hierarchy of cultures, disciplines, or forms of engagement. We do believe, however, that collaborative empirical assessment can be uniquely valuable for measuring a range of definable and observable effects of the arts and humanities on specific aspects of individual and collective human flourishing. This assessment can be informed and supported by the theoretical and conceptual work we have undertaken, by the growing number of reports that are beginning to explore some of these topics,[2] and by the chapters in this *Handbook*. The great promise of collaborative empirical assessment is not only the creation of new knowledge about the relationship between the arts and humanities and human flourishing, but also the development of evidence-based practices for optimizing the positive effects that engagement in the arts and humanities can have on human flourishing across a variety of cultural contexts.

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[2] See, for example, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2013; Holm, Jarrick, & Scott, 2015; Daykin et al., 2016; All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Arts, Health and Wellbeing, 2017; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018; Fancourt & Finn, 2019; Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) and International Council of Museums (ICOM), 2019; Ryff, 2019; Sonke et al., 2019.

We are at the outset of the field of the Positive Humanities, where theoretical and empirical questions abound. The overarching goal of this *Handbook* is to review and synthesize theory, research, and empirical evidence on how the arts and humanities can contribute to human flourishing. We turn now to an introduction of the six parts that constitute this volume.

Part I: Overview of the Positive Humanities

In addition to the present chapter, Part I includes a foundational chapter (Pawelski, Chapter 2) that provides a general introduction to the Positive Humanities, clarifying the conceptual contours of this new field, situating it within the context of historical and contemporary approaches to the humanities, describing its connections to the science of well-being and to various domains of practice, and suggesting important future directions for research and application. Together, the introductory chapters in Part I provide the conceptual foundation for the essays in the rest of the volume, which are written by scholars, researchers, practitioners, and other experts addressing key themes and topics in the Positive Humanities.

Part II: Historical and Current Trends

Part II covers historical and contemporary views of the arts and humanities and their relation to human flourishing. We begin with McMahon's Chapter 3, which addresses the question: What is the historical role of the arts and humanities in human flourishing? A historical analysis reveals that human flourishing is at the root of the arts and humanities, and there is a growing recognition of the need to return to this initial interest. Shim's Chapter 4 goes on to describe the conceptual and operational definitions of engaging in the arts and humanities, providing clarity on how we can assess behavioral engagement. Importantly, she proposes that engagement with the arts and humanities can be seen in multiple life domains, such as education, work, leisure, and health—but acknowledges that not all instances of engagement necessarily lead to flourishing. Finally, given that arts and humanities outcomes are often contrasted with STEM outcomes (e.g., Vaziri et al., 2019), Vaziri and Bradburn, in Chapter 5, discuss the importance of STEAM, in which the arts (A) are integrated with STEM. The authors provide a systematic review of the literature examining STEAM outcomes and call for more research on this topic.

Part III: Flourishing Outcomes

In Part III, we have chapters discussing the different types of flourishing outcomes that can emerge from engaging in the arts and humanities. In psychology, the concept of human flourishing has prominent ties to subjective well-being (Diener, 1984) and psychological well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995), both of which are touched on in several chapters. In Chapter 6, Westgate and Oishi review empirical evidence showing that art, music, and literature can generate rich, enjoyable, and meaningful experiences. In reviewing the

scientific literature on meaning in life, Wilkinson and King, in Chapter 7, similarly note the meaning that can come through the enjoyment of the arts and humanities. More specifically, they observe that meaning can be derived through familiarity with works of art and literature, identification with cultural narratives, and broadened perspectives resulting from grappling with difficult art and texts. These positive effects on psychological well-being can also have ameliorative functions. In the area of creative arts therapies and arts-based interventions, Darewych, in Chapter 8, uses case studies to illustrate how such interventions can promote different dimensions of psychological well-being. While these chapters discuss self-reported subjective well-being and psychological well-being, Kenett and Chatterjee propose in Chapter 9 a general, testable neuroscientific framework in which these subjective states may be realized objectively in the brain.

Human flourishing can also take the form of psychological competencies, in which the arts and humanities can build skills and abilities. One barrier to engaging in the arts and humanities is a lack of self-efficacy. In Chapter 10, Maddux and Kleiman use self-efficacy theory to provide practical suggestions to help consumers of the arts and humanities become students and producers of culture. Ciarrochi, Hayes, and Sahdra propose in Chapter 11 that the study of the arts and humanities can build emotion regulation skills, including the identification and affirmation of values, effective use of language, emotional awareness, adjustment of emotion regulation strategies, and perspective-taking.

Human flourishing goes beyond an interest in promoting one's own well-being and competencies. It also involves positive normative outcomes. This includes the development of character, as reviewed by Ruch and Gander in Chapter 12, where they discuss the relevance of the arts and humanities in developing the Values in Action (VIA) Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues. Further, participation in the arts and humanities may uniquely contribute to the character strength of appreciation of beauty and excellence. This theme of excellence is emphasized in Chapter 13 by Jacobs, Berenbaum, and Niemiec, who describe the creation of the first-ever Holocaust and Humanity Museum, which promotes positive behaviors and strengths among visitors.

Part IV: Pathways from Arts and Humanities Engagement to Human Flourishing

Part IV contains chapters that discuss different psychological and behavioral pathways from engagement in the arts and humanities to human flourishing. These are the mechanisms that bring about flourishing through participation in culture. Because of the enjoyable nature of the arts and humanities, it does not come as a surprise that many people are passionate about art, music, theatre, movies, literature, history, philosophy, religion, and other forms of culture. Vallerand, Sverdik, and Bonneville-Roussy document in Chapter 14 how passion—specifically harmonious passion—can give rise to many adaptive outcomes, such as positive emotions, creativity, performance, and identity.

An analysis of the types of positive experiences that sustain longer-term participation and flourishing are presented in several chapters. Vrooman, Finley, Nakamura, and Csikszentmihalyi, in Chapter 15, review how flow states experienced in the arts and humanities are intrinsically rewarding. Flow in the context of the arts and humanities is a vehicle for flourishing and can aid in the cultivation of mastery and wisdom. Along similar lines, Fitzgerald and Green, in Chapter 16, review research on narrative transportation in which readers "lose themselves" in a story. Stories provide both perspective and meaning. Reading literature appears to be associated with better social skills, and restorative narratives may promote recovery and resilience. The arts and humanities can also inspire elevated positive states. In Chapter 17, Valdesolo provides a conceptual framework showing how experiences such as awe, wonder, and inspiration are closely linked both to engagement in the arts and humanities and to human flourishing.

Participation in the arts and humanities also engenders deeper and broader thinking that supports flourishing. Howson and Weller, in Chapter 18, provide three case studies from these domains that use innovative pedagogical practices to enhance critical thinking and reflection. They show how such practices can lead to transformations through which university students develop a greater sense of agency, emotional growth, and flourishing. In Chapter 19, Runco underscores the centrality of creative thinking in the making of art and also reviews the importance of creative thinking for problem-solving and human flourishing.

The arts and humanities can promote positive engagement at levels beyond oneself. Hershberg, Niemiec, and Kula present in Chapter 20 qualitative research findings from their "Flourishing Congregation Projects," in which rabbis modified High Holiday services to promote character strengths and well-being among congregation members. In Chapter 21, Wright-Bevans and Lamont provide a thorough review of research evidence on how the arts and humanities can promote well-being through community building and social support. Chand O'Neal presents in Chapter 22 case studies in Creative Youth Development, which uses a holistic approach and employs the arts and humanities to promote flourishing in youth. These programs teach social skills and facilitate deep connections to help youth from diverse backgrounds build safe and caring communities. Schneider and Fredrickson, in Chapter 23, provide examples of artists who seek to promote a more connected world through their work. Employing Positive Resonance Theory, they highlight how art can generate the co-experience of positive emotions that undergirds community well-being.

Part V: Disciplinary Considerations

In Part V, we turn to specific disciplines within the arts and humanities and consider how each can lead to human flourishing. Chapters in this part provide depth and nuance. They highlight how features of a discipline need to be understood from different perspectives (e.g., performer vs. observer) and describe specific mechanisms in greater detail

as they pertain to a particular discipline. We begin in the realm of the arts. Lamont, in Chapter 24, describes how two aspects of music engagement—listening to music and making music—can lead to human flourishing. In Chapter 25, Hetland and Kelley review research showing how the visual arts can promote human flourishing in families, neighborhoods, and municipalities through psychological mechanisms such as immersion, embeddedness (now called acquisition), reflection, and socialization. Chapter 26, by Oatley, highlights how film can evoke emotions that enhance empathy and theory of mind. By demonstrating that projected mental models of others may turn out to be inaccurate, film can invite positive reflection in the viewer. Goldstein and Hayes propose in Chapter 27 that participating in theatre enables embodiment (i.e., physicalization of experience apart from one's own) and containment (i.e., safe space to explore and express novel experiences), both of which can lead to higher well-being.

Disciplines in the humanities can play a fundamental role in human flourishing by providing a deeper conceptual understanding of the nature of well-being. Ivory and Tiberius, in Chapter 28, review philosophical theories of well-being that underpin psychological research. They describe two primary categories of well-being theories: enumerative theories (which things are good?) and explanatory theories (why are those things good?). They then helpfully detail the specific theories belonging to each category. In Chapter 29, Stearns makes a strong case for the importance of a historical analysis of well-being in order to understand better the key themes that emerge in well-being research and to bring to the attention of researchers other vital ideas that are currently neglected.

In addition to informing the understanding of well-being, disciplines in the humanities can also promote its practice. In Chapter 30, Schwartz considers the concept of practical wisdom. He reasons that philosophy and literary studies are central for practical wisdom because making wise decisions requires both clear thinking about the telos of human activities and the ability to apply this thinking in particular contexts. Philosophy, he argues, can help with the former, and literary studies with the latter. Kidd, in Chapter 31, explores research examining the effects of reading fiction on mental, personal, and social well-being. He notes the possible positive, negative, and ambiguous effects of reading fiction and calls for more research to address gaps in the findings. Religion, too, has an important place in the humanities, and Pargament, Wong, and Exline propose in Chapter 32 that it is uniquely concerned with enhancing human wholeness. They argue that this wholeness is vital to human flourishing because it provides breadth and depth to life, is life-affirming, and organizes the life journey into a cohesive whole.

Another set of chapters focuses on the interplay between the humanities and disciplines or contexts outside the humanities. In Chapter 33, Greenhalgh, Allen, and Nesteruk describe the interplay between the humanities and business education and show how both promote reflection and creative thinking among students. Reiff-Pasarew reviews in Chapter 34 the history and development of the medical humanities and shows how the

field builds meaning and connection for medical providers while also enhancing patient experience and well-being.

Part VI: Public Engagement and Policy

The final part of the volume discusses how the arts and humanities can be integrated into public life and public policy and considers the effects of this integration on human flourishing. Kidd reviews in Chapter 35 the importance of the public humanities, focusing on adult education programs and museums to show how public programs can benefit from humanistic engagement. Continuing with the theme of museums, Bondil and Legari, in Chapter 36, present the pioneering concept of "museotherapy," which explicitly seeks to promote flourishing in individuals, groups, and communities by reframing the role of art museums. In their view, art museums should go beyond a traditional focus on the presentation of art history, the conservation of art objects, and the support of artists. They argue that art museums should embrace the role of advancing public flourishing by connecting people to aesthetic experiences and to each other.

In Chapter 37, Fisher, Gurwitz, Hill, Kidd, and Muir present a historical analysis of how policies in the United States have sought to promote engagement with the humanities from the early republic to the present. They insightfully note that policy has focused on bringing citizens together through a common understanding of their American experience, but that over time the demographics of those citizens and their understanding of what the American experience is have shifted significantly. In Chapter 38, Gordon-Nesbitt and Howarth describe landmark policy proposals in the United Kingdom. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing was tasked to examine the health and well-being impact of attending cultural events and participating in creative activities. This work led to *Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing*, a report presented to the UK Parliament in 2017. The authors describe the specific evidence in the report that is aligned with the mechanisms of immersion, embeddedness (or acquisition), socialization, and reflectiveness.

Conclusion

As we observed at the outset of this introduction, the arts and humanities play a vital and manifold role in human flourishing. The Positive Humanities seek to understand, assess, and advance this role, supporting the sustained interdisciplinary efforts required to do so. Our goal in this *Handbook* is to present an overview of the current theory, research, and practice in this field to further its establishment as a valued area of inquiry and application. We note that this overview has to be selective, as there is much more relevant work than can be included in a single volume, and that a range of new research is just beginning to emerge. We also note that the content of the chapters we have included, substantial and varied as it is, places us solidly at the beginning of this field, with much more work needed in all directions, especially across a wider diversity of racial and ethnic groups and world

cultures. With this in mind, we hope this volume will provide information, direction, and encouragement to arts and humanities scholars and practitioners, scientific researchers, educators, leaders of cultural institutions, philanthropists, policymakers, and others who will help this field grow and thrive. In particular, we look with hope and anticipation to the students who will be inspired by this volume to focus their efforts in this field. We trust we will be able to include their work in future editions of this *Handbook*.

We are excited about the prospects of the Positive Humanities. This dynamic field stands to discover much new knowledge about how the arts and humanities are related to human flourishing. Furthermore, collaborative research in this area will provide a basis for optimizing the well-being effects of engagement in culture for individuals throughout the life span and for communities across the globe. It will enable educators to introduce students to perspectives and practices of human flourishing through cultural engagement; adults to use leisure time in ways that are not merely entertaining but deeply restorative and meaningful; creative industries and cultural organizations to orient themselves toward the cultivation of individual and collective flourishing; the social fabric to be rewoven in inclusive ways that support individual expression, social justice, and community cohesion; and connections to be made across societal divides and between cultures. Drawing from the wealth of past and present cultural experience will make it possible to work together to improve the human experience of the future. Progress toward these transformative aims will require deep and broad collaborations, and we welcome all who would like to be a part of this worthy endeavor.

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CHAPTER

2 The Positive Humanities: Culture and Human Flourishing

James O. Pawelski

Abstract

The Positive Humanities are a new field of inquiry and practice concerned with the relationship between culture and human flourishing. They seek to understand the conceptual nuances of this relationship in a variety of contexts in different societies across time. They also investigate the practical effects of cultural engagement on human flourishing, with a particular emphasis on how such engagement can be intentionally optimized to help individuals and communities thrive. Grounded in the wisdom, narrative, aesthetic, and performance traditions of cultures across time and around the world (and thus always inclusive of the arts), they seek insights into the nature and development of human flourishing from this vast storehouse of human experience. The Positive Humanities are also informed by more recent efforts in the sciences to bring empirical methodologies to bear in the investigation of well-being, and their practical emphasis connects them to the educational institutions, creative industries, and cultural organizations through which the humanities are often studied and experienced. This chapter provides an introduction to the Positive Humanities, examining their complex relationship to historical and contemporary approaches to the humanities; exploring their connections to the science of well-being (especially positive psychology); identifying their domains of practical influence; clarifying their definition, aims, and commitments; and suggesting important future directions for the field.

Key Words: Positive Humanities, humanities, arts, culture, creative industries, cultural sector, human flourishing, well-being, positive psychology, sustainable preference

When I was a little girl, my father would frequently take me to the Art Institute of Chicago on Saturdays. During one of these visits, I happened upon a painting that changed my life. To this day, more than sixty years later, I remember looking up at Jules Breton's *The Song of the Lark*, taking in the picture of a girl with a bandana in a field looking up at a bird that was barely visible in the distance. Something happened to me in that moment. I understood something profound about human longing and how it can fuel our dreams and actions, transforming our

lives. When I walked away from my encounter with the painting that day, I knew I could do anything.

—Selma Holo

As a high school student, I got a summer job and began considering how my life as an adult would unfold. As I thought about the path I was on, it did not seem satisfying to me. That is when I came across the essay "The American Scholar," in which Ralph Waldo Emerson writes about how each one of us individually can have an original relation to the universe, how we can make meaning and have valuable lives. I found this essay transformative, making me think about success not just in materialistic terms, but in terms of what it is to lead a flourishing life, to live life well.

—John Stuhr

After a pretty bad first year in college, I dropped out and joined the US Army. Two years later, I was in Vietnam, where I spent a year as a combat infantry advisor in the Mekong Delta. I returned to the US in the summer of 1969, at a time when the country was literally blowing up because of the war. I went back to school, to the same place I had been before. I had the great fortune to meet a prominent member of the philosophy department, J. Glenn Gray, who was himself a veteran of World War II. He had written an extraordinary book called *The Warriors*, which was very much a reflective work on his experience in combat. Reading that book changed my life because it gave me a way of situating and understanding my own experience and coming to terms with it.

—William Adams

I entered college planning on a career as a performer, playing classical music on the cello. An injury my junior year made it impossible for me to continue my performance career, so I became a musicologist. Two years ago, I decided to take up a new hobby and began taking jazz piano lessons and playing in ensembles with students and other musicians. I have been thoroughly enjoying the freedom to create something new for the pure joy of it—not to be a professional, not to earn money, just for the joy of being with others and making music.

—Anna Celenza

> Despite having visited Philadelphia many, many times, I had never been to Independence Hall. So the last time I was in town I got up early one morning and headed over. All kinds of people from all across America were there—and also from all around the world. The guide from the National Park Service was wonderful. And there I was in this magical place where America happened. I'm not an American historian, but I still felt that juice. It was like a workout, and it made me feel great.
>
> —*Darrin McMahon*

> I remember attending a student production of Anna Deavere Smith's *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*, which presented the pain of police violence, anti-Black prejudice, and exploding racial tensions in a major American city. I heard amateur voices breathe life into the words of Rodney King. I recall being profoundly affected by the way theatre not only mirrors society but also offers insights into how to actively engage in it. It seemed possible that the plague of racism could be whittled away—and perhaps eliminated—through the arts.
>
> —*Harvey Young*

Engagement with art, literature, philosophy, music, history, theatre, and other forms of culture can greatly enrich our lives. As indicated by these firsthand accounts, it can help us expand our inner worlds as children, choose rewarding life paths as adolescents, come to terms with difficult life experiences as adults, feel the joy of creativity in collaboration with others, connect more deeply to our civic identities as members of a society, and rekindle hope to continue the ongoing work of social justice.[1] A careful consideration of these kinds of vital experiences can reveal how engagement with the humanities can help individuals and communities thrive.[2] This is the domain of the new field of the Positive Humanities.

The Positive Humanities are fundamentally concerned with the connection between culture and human flourishing. Human flourishing, of course, is a botanical metaphor. Derived from the Latin word for flower (*flos*), to flourish is "to blossom," or more generally "to thrive." Moving from plants to persons, *human* flourishing is a condition of

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[1] These firsthand accounts were taken from interviews conducted as part of the Humanities and Human Flourishing Project. For the full interviews and more information about the Project, visit www.humanitiesandhumanflourishing.org.

[2] Although distinctions of various sorts are sometimes made in the meanings of words like *flourishing*, *thriving*, and *well-being*, these terms are used in a general way and function synonymously in this chapter.

prospering or doing well (*Oxford English Dictionary* [OED]). As with human flourishing, culture, too, is a metaphor. Derived from the Latin *cultura*, meaning "cultivation," culture refers to a process of raising plants. When successful, culture results in the flourishing of those plants. Applied to human beings, culture has come to mean "the cultivation of the mind, faculties, manners, etc.; improvement by education and training," and more generally, "the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively" (OED). As indicated by these botanical metaphors, just as the culture of plants, when successful, results in their flourishing, so *human* culture, when successful, results in *human* flourishing.

It is important to articulate clearly what is—and is not—meant by the Positive Humanities, since this term may initially conjure up a range of unrelated associations, from positivism to positive thinking. The humanities can be broadly defined as the "branch of learning concerned with human culture" (OED). The Positive Humanities are the branch of learning concerned with human culture *in its relation to human flourishing*. They seek to understand the conceptual nuances of this relationship in a variety of contexts in different societies across time. They also investigate the practical effects of cultural engagement on human flourishing, with a particular emphasis on how such engagement can be intentionally optimized to help individuals and communities thrive. Grounded in the wisdom, narrative, aesthetic, and performance traditions of cultures across time and around the world (and thus always inclusive of the arts), they seek insights into the nature and development of human flourishing from this vast storehouse of human experience. The Positive Humanities are also informed by more recent efforts in the sciences to bring empirical methodologies to bear in the investigation of well-being, and their practical emphasis connects them to the educational institutions, creative industries, and cultural organizations through which the humanities are often studied and experienced. This chapter provides an introduction to the Positive Humanities, examining their complex relationship to historical and contemporary approaches to the humanities; exploring their connections to the science of well-being (especially positive psychology); identifying their domains of practical influence; clarifying their definition, aims, and commitments; and suggesting important future directions for the field.

The Humanities and Human Flourishing: Past, Present, and Future

Human flourishing is a central and perennial concern of the humanities. The historical roots of the humanities stretch back to ancient Greece and Rome and the development of programs of study designed to teach citizens the knowledge and skills needed to flourish. The Greek paideia (*παιδεία*) and the Roman liberal arts (*artes liberales*) emphasized the study of language, philosophy, mathematics, science, and the arts as requisites for free individuals to live life well and to participate successfully and wisely in civic life. These became codified as the trivium (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) and the quadrivium

(arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy) and served as the core of the curriculum in medieval European universities.

Growing out of these historical roots, the humanities were first defined as a distinct domain and program of study during the Renaissance. In a very real sense, the humanities are the gift of a pandemic. The Black Death, the most deadly pandemic on record, is estimated to have killed up to 200 million people as it ravaged Europe, Asia, and North Africa in the 14th century. The Italian scholar and poet Petrarch lived during this time and wrote movingly about the devastating effects of the plague on those it struck, on those it spared, and on the societies in which they lived. To cope in these horrific times, Petrarch turned to the study of the Greek and especially the Roman classics for guidance on how to think, write, and live. Petrarch's approach, focusing both on what to read and on how to read it, was taken up and further developed by his followers, who came to be called "humanists," after Cicero's phrase *studia humanitatis*. Humanists were dissatisfied with the contemporary scholastic approaches to learning that had been adopted in the universities. They argued that these approaches had come to overemphasize logic and linguistic analysis, focusing on techniques of abstract thinking and resolution of textual contradictions instead of the improvement of students' lives (Proctor, 1998; Celenza, 2017). They advocated a return to the Greek and Roman classics in a way that would renew the ancient project of education for the purpose of living life well, promoting a particular approach to classical learning. They turned away from the mathematical and scientific subjects of the liberal arts contained in the quadrivium and focused on redesigning the trivium. Removing logic from the trivium, they supplemented the remaining subjects of grammar and rhetoric with history, moral philosophy, and poetry (Kristeller, 1965). They saw the humanities as a course of study that would lead them toward wisdom and virtue, clarify the nature of happiness and its relation to virtue, and provide sound guidance for their lives (Proctor, 1998). Thus, human flourishing is not only a central concern of the humanities but was a key catalyst for their initial development.

In our contemporary world, the humanities tend to be thought of less as a comprehensive program of study and more as a collection of disciplines pursued in our academic institutions, particularly in our colleges and universities. Even a brief look at these various disciplines reveals that a concern with human flourishing is at their roots as well. In philosophy, for example, Socrates argued that "the unexamined life is not worth living" and urged his fellow Athenians to cultivate virtue as that which leads to all public and private goods (Plato, 1920a). Plato wrote dialogues about the nature of virtue, justice, courage, piety, truth, pleasure, creativity, beauty, and love. In his most famous dialogue, *The Republic*, Plato (1920b) explored the just state and suggested ways politics can best support human flourishing. Plato's student Aristotle (1926) wrote extensively about ethics and politics. He argued that human flourishing (*eudaimonia*) is the goal of all human activity and that its achievement requires the cultivation of virtue, which he understood as the relative mean between vices of excess and deficiency. From this perspective, he

analyzed a range of particular virtues, including courage, temperance, and modesty, noting that the study of ethics has a practical goal: not simply to know what virtue is, but actually to become good. An emphasis on human flourishing is at the root of non-Western philosophies as well. In the case of Chinese philosophy, for instance, Confucius (2014) explored questions of human flourishing, emphasizing the importance of personal virtue, correct social relationships, and shared culture for individual and societal well-being. Although Zhuangzi (2020) focused more on a connection to Nature to promote flourishing, his Daoist teachings had much in common with Confucianism. Both philosophical traditions critiqued the individualistic and materialistic methods many people followed in the quest for happiness and advocated instead a connection to something higher and larger than any individual life or momentary pleasure (Ivanhoe, 2013).

What is true of ancient philosophy is true across the religious traditions developed during this time. Hinduism, Buddhism, and Judaism, along with the later Christianity and Islam, for example, centered on questions of human flourishing. Like ancient philosophy, these religious traditions held that the typical pathways for seeking happiness (pleasure, wealth, power, fame, and the like) are not effective and actually lead to more suffering. Instead, they advocated a cultivation of virtue to attain a higher sort of happiness, a transcending of narrow, individual concerns in favor of an identification with the broader universe or a connection to the divine. Literature, music, art, architecture, theatre, history, and similar pursuits were seen as ways of supporting this cultivation of virtue and this broader connection in the quest for human flourishing.[3]

The Positive Humanities are interested in understanding more deeply the nuances of the connections between culture and human flourishing as they have developed historically, as they exist presently, and especially as they can be intentionally optimized for the future. When considering the historical development of these connections, there are a number of salient questions to be asked. What conception of human flourishing was espoused in each of these cultural traditions? What were the means these traditions adopted for cultivating flourishing? How successful were these means in achieving the flourishing they envisioned? Which individuals and groups were deemed candidates for flourishing, and which were excluded? How did the relationship between culture and human flourishing develop and change in these various traditions? With regard to this last question, for example, we have already noted that the inception of the humanities as a program of study arose from a concern that the study of culture had drifted too far into abstraction, distancing itself from questions of human life. The return to the study of certain Greek and Roman classics, as advocated by the early humanists, spread throughout European universities, displacing the scholasticism it had initially critiqued. Eventually, however, this return to Greek and Roman classics began to feel too narrow to many scholars, and

[3] For a more detailed account of the development of the humanities and their focus on human flourishing, see McMahon, Chapter 3 in this volume.

they advocated the study of modern languages and contemporary works written in those languages. More recently, as we will soon see, the humanities have moved away from a prioritizing of human flourishing.[4]

Turning from the past to the present, a look at current conceptions of the humanities can shed light on the connections between culture and human flourishing that hold today (Shim, Tay, Ward & Pawelski, 2019). As mentioned earlier, the humanities presently tend to be thought of as a collection of academic disciplines pursued chiefly in our colleges and universities. The Positive Humanities raise a number of questions specifically relevant to educational institutions. How do the various humanities disciplines conceptualize, understand, and define human flourishing? What do these disciplines say about how human flourishing can be increased? In what ways do these disciplines actually support and encourage the cultivation of human flourishing? Are some approaches within these disciplines more effective than others? Do particular disciplines make unique contributions to human flourishing that other endeavors do not? Are there ways in which humanities disciplines can obstruct human flourishing?

Because humanities disciplines are largely housed within institutions of higher education, they are influenced by changes within these institutions and are shaped by their values, norms, and systems of recruitment, retention, and reward. In the United States, for example, early institutions of higher learning considered the moral formation of their students to be one of their chief missions. With the rise of research universities, priorities in higher education shifted to the creation of new knowledge. These new priorities have led to significant breakthroughs in research, but they have also shifted the focus of faculty away from questions of living life well and toward narrow points of scholarship. In this context, humanities scholars have become professional academics, whose success depends on the selection of a particular area of specialization within their discipline, with most of their time and energy focused on writing books and articles whose primary audience is other scholars with the same or a similar specialization. Secondarily, these professionals have responsibilities for teaching their discipline and specialization to their students and for supporting their institution and their discipline by taking on various roles and duties of service. For the most part, however, they are not required to link their scholarship, teaching, or service to human flourishing.

The practical aims that initially inspired humanistic study are thus often eclipsed by the theoretical and methodological demands of the kind of disciplinary scholarship currently required for professional success in academia. Particularly troubling is the case of graduate students as they study to become professionals in their field. As Graham Burnett (in press) argues, this process of "professionalization" can often actually undermine the well-being of individuals who are initially attracted to the humanities because of their eudaimonic value

[4] See also McMahon, Chapter 3 in this volume.

but find they need to leave these interests aside to learn the demanding skills of "hyperspecialized 'technical' scholarship" (p. 15). Indeed, contemporary research aims more at the analysis of texts than the practice of wisdom. Helen Small (2013) has presented a general definition of the humanities as the study of "the meaning-making practices of human cultures, past and present, focusing on interpretation and critical evaluation, primarily in terms of the individual response and with an ineliminable element of subjectivity" (p. 23). Studying the meaning-making practices of human cultures does not, of course, entail an ability to make meaning effectively oneself, and the current focus of the humanities is more on the analysis of meaning-making than on the creation of meaning. To be sure, the close study of texts, a mastery of methods of interpretation and evaluation, and an understanding of meaning-making practices are a source of flourishing for many humanities scholars. This scholarship, which requires virtues such as self-discipline, steadfastness, and an openness to different ways of understanding the world, can be thought of as a "way of life" that nurtures certain forms of well-being (Hadot, 1995; Eskilden, 2016). Nonetheless, this approach to flourishing is quite specialized, available to those individuals who have the personality, dedication, training, and opportunity to engage in this sort of scholarship. For this reason, it is important to acknowledge the many other, less restricted ways in which the humanities can support human flourishing for a broader range of individuals and communities.

Another common feature of current approaches to the humanities that can also limit the work of human flourishing is the form the analysis of meaning-making often takes. Such analysis frequently follows the methodology of critical theory, using what Paul Ricoeur (1970) called a "hermeneutics of suspicion," reading texts against the grain to discover hidden meanings, latent psychopathologies, and corrosive ideologies (Moores, 2013). This theoretical dismantling of texts can suggest not only that the humanities today are not about meaning-making (and are only about the academic *study* of meaning-making), but also that any meaning-making endeavor is not worth undertaking, as it is bound to fail. Although it is valuable to have an awareness of the difficulties of meaning-making and of the undesirable consequences that can arise from even good-faith efforts, it is important to balance this awareness with what Ricoeur called in a less remarked phrase a "hermeneutics of affirmation." Understanding various pitfalls in meaning-making is not the same as knowing how to make meaning effectively, and a growing number of scholars are pointing out the need for a more balanced approach (Moores, 2013). Just to take two examples, Eve Sedgwick (1997) was an early and influential voice calling for complementing suspicious readings with what she called "reparative" interpretations, and more recently Rita Felski (2008, 2015) has argued extensively that a hegemonic focus on suspicion has resulted in an overbearing emphasis on the negative that needs to be balanced by a "positive aesthetics."

From the standpoint of students in higher education, there are a number of priorities and pressures that make it difficult to cultivate flourishing through the humanities.

Given the priorities that typify the implementation of the academic mission of contemporary colleges and universities, humanities courses offered by these institutions are likely to emphasize theory over practice, suspicion over affirmation, and academic credit over eudaimonic outcome. This approach can make it difficult for students to discern how the humanities are connected to their lives in any vital way, even though so many of them are struggling with issues of anxiety and depression related to questions of meaning and identity—just the kinds of matters the humanities were initially developed to address. When the increased emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and the pressures students are under to use their studies as vocational preparation are added to the picture, it is no wonder that fewer students are choosing to study the humanities. When students do end up in humanities classes, it is all too often for merely academic reasons: to satisfy course requirements to obtain their degrees, considering these courses as necessary evils or as a means of developing various academic skills (e.g., reading comprehension and writing ability). Thus, the professional interests of scholars and the academic interests of students are often quite different from the eudaimonic interests at the root of the humanities.

The Positive Humanities are also concerned with examining the relationship between culture and human flourishing outside of academia. They ask questions about the creative industries and the for-profit companies that drive so much of the development and distribution of the music, movies, and books that are made each year. To what extent is the content in these multi-billion-dollar industries created to maximize profits, and to what extent is it intended to support the flourishing of their customers? What examples might be identified and studied of works that are both financially successful and supportive of human flourishing? The Positive Humanities are also interested in the nonprofit public sector of the arts and humanities. In what ways are organizations in this domain oriented toward human flourishing? How do conservatories of music, orchestras, ensembles, choirs, dance troupes, theatre companies, art schools, and artist cooperatives, as well as museums, galleries, libraries, theaters, and performing arts centers, support or obstruct the well-being of professionals and their audiences? How do programs in the public humanities and the priorities of government organizations (like the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts in the United States) influence the flourishing of individuals, communities, and societies in general? Finally, the Positive Humanities concern themselves with the experience of the general public. To what degree and in what manner do individuals and groups within society engage with the humanities, and what are the short- and long-term well-being effects of such engagement?

The study of the relationship between culture and human flourishing as it developed historically in various societies and as it exists currently in different contexts across the world is important in its own right, with significant contributions to make to the understanding of the nature and outcomes of so much of human experience. This study is also important as a way of informing cultural development and engagement so they can be

intentionally optimized to help individuals and communities thrive. Built on a knowledge of the past and the present, the Positive Humanities, in their future orientation, focus on ways of bringing about greater human flourishing across societies and around the world. They are part of a *eudaimonic turn* that is influencing a growing number of domains as varied as psychology, economics, neuroscience, psychiatry, medicine, sociology, law, political science, education, organizational studies, and government. This eudaimonic turn is characterized by a commitment to human flourishing as a core interest and goal of endeavors in these domains. In the humanities, the eudaimonic turn emphasizes the centrality of human flourishing as a theme of study and as a practical goal of culture. Given the fact that human flourishing is at the root of the humanities, there is a real sense in which this is a eudaimonic *re*turn—not to some imagined golden age, but to the questions and concerns that gave rise to the humanities in the first place and that have been at their core for most of their history. In the contemporary context, this return must be informed by new knowledge, new perspectives, and new cultural realities that can help generate new approaches, fitting for our times, to these perennial concerns (Pawelski, 2013a).

The Science of Human Flourishing

Although human flourishing has traditionally been a concern of the humanities, the sciences have increasingly become interested in this area. In fact, the eudaimonic turn is perhaps nowhere more advanced than in psychology, where it has led to the founding of a new branch of the discipline. Here, too, the eudaimonic turn is a kind of *re*turn, since human flourishing is at the root of psychology as well. William James (1985), the father of American psychology, observed at the beginning of the twentieth century that happiness is one of human life's chief concerns and noted, "How to gain, how to keep, how to recover happiness, is . . . for most men at all times the secret motive of all they do, and of all they are willing to endure" (p. 71). James (1982) went so far as to call for the founding of a new branch of empirical psychology to study optimal human functioning (Pawelski, 2018). This call went largely unheeded, however, as psychologists turned to Freud's psychoanalytic theories and to the behaviorism of John Watson, B. F. Skinner, and others. Abraham Maslow (1968) and Carl Rogers (1961) worked to refocus psychology on human flourishing, publishing groundbreaking work on what they respectively called "self-actualization" and the "fully-functioning person." In spite of these efforts, however, mainstream psychology at the end of the twentieth century was firmly focused on obstacles to human flourishing, on understanding and treating psychopathology and other human weaknesses.

The present eudaimonic turn in psychology was catalyzed in 1998 by Martin Seligman when he was president of the American Psychological Association. In his presidential address (Seligman, 1999), he noted that, since World War II, psychology had focused largely on healing. The results were remarkable, with some fourteen mental disorders rendered curable or at least effectively treatable. Seligman argued, however, that healing

disease is only part of the mission of psychology, which should also concern itself more broadly with making the lives of all people better. Exclusive focus on pathology, he noted, leaves out the study of flourishing individuals and thriving communities. He contended that an understanding of optimal human functioning can help both increase well-being and decrease pathology, since one of the most effective ways of buffering against mental illness is cultivating human strengths. To support psychology's broader mission, he proposed the founding of the new field of positive psychology.

Two years later, Seligman, along with Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, co-edited a special issue of the American Psychological Association's flagship journal *American Psychologist* on the topic of positive psychology. In their introduction to the issue, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) argued that an overemphasis on the study of pathology had left psychologists largely ignorant of things like hope, wisdom, creativity, future mindedness, courage, spirituality, responsibility, and perseverance, all of which make life worth living. They defined positive psychology as a "science of positive subjective experience, positive individual traits, and positive institutions" and stated that the aim of this science "is to begin to catalyze a change in the focus of psychology from preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities" (p. 5). They claimed that such a science would "improve quality of life and prevent the pathologies that arise when life is barren and meaningless" (p. 5). Positive psychology brought together the efforts of a relatively small but growing number of psychological researchers working in areas such as self-efficacy, self-determination theory, subjective and psychological well-being, optimism, flow, passion, hope theory, and positive emotions. Building on these perspectives, Seligman (2011) later developed a multi-component theory of human flourishing, which includes positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment and is known by its acronym PERMA.

Positive psychology has particular metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical commitments. Csikszentmihalyi (2002) has argued that positive psychology is chiefly a "metaphysical orientation." This metaphysical orientation holds that the positive things in life are just as real—and thus just as worthy of study—as the negative things. It holds that positive emotions are just as real as negative emotions (and not just the relief from or transformation of negative emotions), that mental health is just as real as mental illness (and not just the absence of psychopathology), that strengths are just as real as weaknesses, and that optimal psychological states like flow are just as real as states of anxiety and depression. This metaphysical orientation does not imply, however, that the negative things in life do not exist. Although positive psychology orients itself toward the positive, it is not dismissive of the negative (Pawelski, 2013a). Epistemologically, positive psychology is committed to the best modes of inquiry in empirical psychology. Understanding that science is an ongoing, fallibilistic, self-corrective process, positive psychology seeks to advance investigative techniques and to employ multiple methods in the creation of new knowledge. Finally, positive psychology is committed to an ethical vision of well-being

for all and to the realization of this vision, in part, through the investigation, development, and dissemination of evidence-based practices to help individuals and communities thrive.

It is important to note that positive psychology is proceeding in both a complementary and a comprehensive mode (Pawelski, 2016a). In its complementary mode, it defines itself as different in orientation from a mainstream psychology that is largely focused on the identification and treatment of psychopathology as well as on the biases, irrationalities, and aggressions that stand in the way of individual mental health and optimal social functioning. That is, mainstream psychology seeks to advance well-being indirectly, through the mitigation of what impedes or destroys it. Positive psychology, on the other hand, seeks to advance well-being directly, through the promotion of what causes or constitutes it. Instead of focusing on cures for depression, anxiety, and schizophrenia, for example, positive psychology investigates ways of cultivating optimism, gratitude, and positive relationships. It contends that a direct approach to well-being can be effective both for promoting human flourishing and for mitigating psychopathology. In its comprehensive mode, on the other hand, positive psychology seeks to establish an empirically based approach to living life well. As Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) wrote, "the social and behavioral sciences . . . can articulate a vision of the good life that is empirically sound while being understandable and attractive. They can show what actions lead to well-being, to positive individuals, and to thriving communities" (p. 5). In this comprehensive mode, positive psychology relies on a balance between indirect, mitigative approaches and direct, promotional approaches. The ideal of the comprehensive mode is *sustainable preference*, where the short- and long-term well-being interests of each individual and of all groups in a society are respected and supported (Pawelski, 2016b).

Positive psychology has been summed up as "the scientific study of what makes individuals and communities thrive," and this work itself has thrived. Positive psychologists have been awarded hundreds of millions of dollars for their research; have founded academic journals to publish the results; have established national, regional, and global organizations, including the International Positive Psychology Association; and are centrally involved in the proliferation of efforts in support of well-being at the personal, academic, professional, and global levels. There is now an abundance of evidence-based books, apps, and online programs aimed at helping people increase their levels of well-being. Colleges and universities are appointing Chief Wellness Officers and are offering courses on the science of happiness. Positive psychology has influenced work in domains such as economics, neuroscience, political science, sociology, and organizational development. Sectors such as medicine, business, education, law, and law enforcement are applying research from positive psychology to help professionals experience greater well-being while also being more effective in their work. At the global level, the United Nations has, since 2012, published an annual *World Happiness Report*, detailing levels of happiness in nations around the world, and in 2018 the Global Happiness Council began publishing a complementary

annual *Global Happiness and Well-Being Policy Report*, describing steps that countries can take to increase their levels of happiness and well-being. Dozens of nations use well-being measures to supplement economic indicators as benchmarks of growth, and more and more countries are explicitly adopting increased well-being as a governmental goal.

The Importance of Collaboration

The humanities and the sciences both have a deep interest in human flourishing, yet their methods of investigation, social practices, goals, and values differ widely. Although it is notoriously difficult to provide adequate descriptions of the approaches of these domains and the differences between them, various scholars have proposed a number of key characteristics for each domain. They have argued that the humanities emphasize meaning-making through interpretation, critical analysis, creativity, and imagination, valuing individual response and subjectivity and exploring possibilities and ideals, often by playing on ambiguity. They have held that the sciences, on the other hand, emphasize verifiability by developing and employing empirical methods involving measurement, testing, and falsifiability; by valuing universalism, collaboration, objectivity, and skepticism; and by seeking to understand what actually is the case, often by eliminating ambiguity (Shim et al., 2019).

Rough and contested as these distinctions are, they are sufficient to underscore some of the considerable differences that generally hold between the humanities and the sciences. Although both of these domains have always been included in the liberal arts, epistemological and methodological differences between them are long-standing and deep-seated, going back to ancient times and often becoming acrimonious (Small, 2013). In the Renaissance, as we have seen, humanists intentionally excluded mathematics and science from their program of study. More recently, C. P. Snow (1959) described the humanities and the sciences as belonging to "two cultures," each of which tends to be ignorant of and dismissive of the other. Indeed, academic practices of selection, training, and placement encourage increasing specialization within one's own area of study, so that scholars and researchers are often quite uninformed of work in other specializations, let alone in other domains of inquiry. In spite of the significant overlap in subject matter between the study of human flourishing in the humanities and the investigation of well-being in the sciences, these domains employ very different approaches. When humanities scholars and scientists do notice each other's work, deep understanding and effective collaboration can be difficult.

In a domain as crucial and complex as human flourishing, however, it is vitally important to find ways to collaborate across these methodological divides. Both the humanities and the sciences stand to gain much from such a collaboration. The humanities can benefit in several ways from working with the science of well-being. First, simply focusing on questions of human flourishing more directly can be of great value. Louis Menand (2001) has argued that there is a "crisis of rationale" in the humanities, with

scholars themselves not agreeing on the fundamental nature and purpose of the humanities and thus not able to make a clear case for their importance to the general public. A eudaimonic turn in the humanities could be of considerable help with these problems. A recognition of human flourishing as a central concern of the humanities could provide them with a unifying rationale, giving scholars a common language to describe some of the ultimate motivations and aims of their work. It could help revitalize the humanities by encouraging scholars to understand more clearly the eudaimonic hopes that gave rise to each of its disciplines and to connect their own work more clearly to these hopes. It could invite scholars to join together across disciplines in a vitally important project: an examination of questions of human flourishing relevant for our times. This project would not require absolute agreement among scholars or the establishment of an orthodoxy. In fact, divergences of opinion could lead to important new insights on the nature of human flourishing and how it can be achieved, with each discipline and each scholar having something to contribute. It could, for example, open up new possibilities of human flourishing that are more equitable and widespread and that support the flourishing of the nonhuman world as well. Furthermore, this project could enable scholars to make a clear case for the importance of the humanities to the general public, since well-being is a widely shared human value. The science of well-being has been embraced by the general public because of the knowledge it has created about human flourishing and how to increase it. By learning from and collaborating with these scientific endeavors, humanities scholars could more effectively communicate their perspectives on human flourishing and its cultivation to a receptive public.

Second, scientific evaluative methods can help provide further information on the effects of the humanities on well-being. Currently, measurements of the effects of the humanities tend to focus on their instrumental impact on economic, vocational, or academic outcomes. In humanities classrooms, these measurements are typically limited to grades and course evaluations. Scientific collaboration can support the development and implementation of assessment methods that focus on the intrinsic effects of eudaimonic engagement in the humanities across a variety of contexts. Although much more work needs to be done, it is heartening to see some of this collaboration beginning to take place.[5]

Third, collaboration with the science of well-being could allow humanities scholars to make deeper and more informed contributions to contemporary policy debates about the role of human flourishing in a variety of domains. As the eudaimonic turn takes greater hold in areas as diverse as education, healthcare, and government, thought leaders

[5] For examples of these efforts, see Daykin et al., 2016; All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Arts, Health and Wellbeing, 2017; Tay, Pawelski, & Keith, 2018; Ryff, 2019; Fancourt & Finn, 2019; Sonke et al., 2019; Shim, Jebb, Tay, & Pawelski, in press; as well as the chapters in Part V of this volume on the use of scientific evaluative methods to assess the well-being effects of engagement in particular domains in the humanities.

are turning to scientists for strategic advice. Collaborative efforts could allow important perspectives, insights, and practices from the humanities to inform this work, with the possibility of more robust and culturally sensitive outcomes.[6]

Similarly, the science of well-being can benefit from a collaboration with the humanities, resulting in a strengthening of scientific theory, research, and practice. On the theoretical level, the humanities are a rich repository of information and wisdom about human flourishing across time and cultures. They contain a plethora of ideas about the nature of well-being and myriad accounts of what follows from implementing them. Ideas and information from the humanities can provide powerful foundations on which to ground scientific work. This is precisely what happened with the Values in Action Classification of Strengths and Virtues, one of the first large-scale projects undertaken in positive psychology. In the execution of this project, Christopher Peterson, Martin Seligman, and their colleagues looked to cultures across time and around the world to find strengths and virtues that seemed to be ubiquitously valued. And they grounded their classification in virtue ethics. Peterson and Seligman (2004) wrote, "Long before there was positive psychology, or even psychology, philosophers grappled with issues of morality and ethics. In our endeavor to describe good character, we have learned much from these efforts. . . . In sum, we can describe our classification as the social science equivalent of virtue ethics . . . " (pp. 85, 89).

On the level of research, the humanities can help guide scientific inquiry. Humanities scholars are able to provide deep analysis of the fundamental concepts on which positive psychology is based, bringing to bear a cultural richness that allows for the creation of more robust and nuanced constructs. To cite just one illustrative example, the *Journal of Positive Psychology* has recently published a special issue on "Joy and Positive Psychology." The purpose of this issue is to provide a foundation and encouragement for more scientific research on the nature and practice of joy. In his introduction, Robert Emmons (2020), the editor of the special issue, stated, "Our initial research (Watkins et al., 2018) took seriously scholarship on joy as it emanates from the disciplines of theology and philosophy, indeed the empirical investigations we conducted and the measures we developed were highly influenced by recent thought emerging within these fields" (p. 2).

Finally, on the practical level, the humanities are replete with approaches, activities, rituals, practices, and traditions that can open up whole new domains of positive psychology interventions. One recent effort in this direction is *Rituals and Practices in World Religions: Cross-Cultural Scholarship to Inform Research and Clinical Contexts* (2020), a volume that draws from world religions to identify specific rituals and practices that can be scientifically studied, tested, refined, and promulgated. More broadly, many of the chapters in this *Handbook* provide further examples of ways in which the humanities can inspire positive psychology interventions.

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[6] See Part VI of this volume for chapters exploring these points in more detail.

To be effective, collaborations between the humanities and the sciences must be robust, going beyond merely cursory reading and polite quotation. These collaborations must bring humanities scholars, creative practitioners, and scientific researchers together to undertake significant, sustained projects. This will encourage the integration of complementary ways of querying human experience, a process of vital importance since no single approach to these questions is sufficient to yield a deep understanding of human flourishing and enable its effective and equitable cultivation.[7]

Defining the Positive Humanities

The good news is that these collaborations have already begun and are becoming more frequent. In fact, it is not too soon to speak of an emerging field of the Positive Humanities, which lies at the intersection of the humanities, the sciences, and human flourishing.[8] As would be the case with any new field, it is important to clarify what is meant by the Positive Humanities. It is also important to indicate what is *not* meant by them, so as to avoid misunderstandings of their aims and misapplications of their results. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the Positive Humanities are the branch of learning concerned with human culture in its relation to human flourishing. As suggested in subsequent sections and as will be developed in more detail now, the Positive Humanities involve particular interests, aims, and approaches in their focus on the connection between culture and human flourishing.

The Positive Humanities consider the varied interests that guide engagement with culture. They note the numerous instrumental uses of culture, including its appropriation for professional, academic, vocational, and economic ends, and examine their implications for human flourishing. They focus more, however, on the intrinsic benefits of culture, such as personal enjoyment, individual and societal growth, and meaning-making (; McCarthy, Ondaatje, Zakaras, & Brooks, 2004; Shim et al., 2019), to understand what effects they have on human flourishing and how these effects can be optimized.

Thus the Positive Humanities have both theoretical and practical aims. They seek to understand the relationship between culture and human flourishing and to develop that relationship in ways that can enable culture to support human flourishing more effectively. Just as Aristotle argued that the purpose of the study of ethics is not merely to know

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[7] For more details on how these collaborations can work, see Tay & Pawelski, Chapter 1 in this volume, and Schneider & Fredrickson, Chapter 23 in this volume.

[8] An important source of support for this emerging field is the Humanities and Human Flourishing Project, which I direct at the University of Pennsylvania. Since its founding in 2014, the Humanities and Human Flourishing Project has developed into a growing international and multidisciplinary network of more than one hundred fifty humanities scholars, scientific researchers, creative practitioners, college and university educators, wellness officers, policy experts, members of government, and leaders of cultural organizations. For more information on the Humanities and Human Flourishing Project, see Chapter 1 in this volume and visit www.humanitiesandhumanflourishing.org.

what virtue is, but to become good, so the practical purpose of the Positive Humanities is not merely to know what human flourishing is, but to advance it on an individual and collective level.

In carrying out their theoretical and practical aims, the Positive Humanities understand the need for varied approaches, given the complexity of the relationship between culture and human flourishing. In some contexts and in some ways, culture can strongly support human flourishing; in other contexts and in other ways, it can undermine it. For this reason, a comprehensive *eudaimonic profile* (Pawelski, 2016c), delineating areas of possible positive and negative impact, can be useful in raising awareness of the full range of effects that culture can have on human flourishing. It is important to note, however, that the Positive Humanities reject the separation of the humanities into categories of good and bad (and strongly repudiate the censorship that can sometimes follow); instead, they seek to understand as much as possible about the various well-being effects of engagement in the humanities across different contexts.

As with positive psychology, the Positive Humanities proceed in both a complementary mode and a comprehensive mode. In their complementary mode, they aim to understand and advance well-being directly, through the analysis and promotion of what causes or constitutes it. This includes, for example, McMahon's (2006) work on the history of happiness, Felski's (2015) "positive aesthetics" in literature, and Miroslav Volf's (2015) theology of joy. In their comprehensive mode, the Positive Humanities explore ways of living life well, both individually and collectively. In this mode, the Positive Humanities take into account both what impedes or destroys human flourishing and what causes or constitutes it, relying on a balance between in direct, mitigative approaches and direct, promotional approaches for optimizing well-being. The Positive Humanities value critique, for example, as an important function of the humanities that can support human flourishing by identifying ways in which culture sometimes obstructs well-being, and they understand that this critical function of the humanities must be balanced by reparative and constructive work. In both their complementary and comprehensive modes, the Positive Humanities *posit* things. They make claims about the nature of human flourishing, its presence or absence in certain contexts, and methods for advancing it. But they posit these claims fallibilistically, with intellectual humility, and without being *positive* that they have the final word on any of these matters.

These considerations make possible an expanded definition of the Positive Humanities that includes more details about the domains, collaborations, and commitments of the field: The Positive Humanities are the interdisciplinary, multi-industry, and cross-sector examination and optimization of the relationship between the experience, creation, and study of human culture and the understanding, assessment, and cultivation of human flourishing. Unpacking this definition will help further clarify the contours of the Positive Humanities.

The examination of the relationship between culture and human flourishing cuts across academic disciplines, creative industries, and public sectors. Within academia, the scope of this examination includes the traditional humanities disciplines, such as classical languages and literature, history, and philosophy; as well as newer additions to the humanities, such as modern languages, jurisprudence, comparative religion, and criticism, theory, and practice of the arts; and even contemporary additions, such as the digital, environmental, and health humanities (Shim et al., 2019). This examination also ranges over scientific disciplines, outside of the humanities, that have a particular interest in human flourishing, including psychology (especially positive psychology), economics, and political science. Outside of academia, the Positive Humanities examine the work of the creative industries, such as the music, movie, and publishing industries, to understand the complex ways in which they may support or obstruct human flourishing. Also in focus are the nonprofit organizations in the public sector (music and art schools and groups, museums, libraries, performing arts centers, and the like), the public humanities insofar as they intersect with questions of human flourishing, and the experience of the general public as it engages with the humanities.

Given its broad scope, work in the Positive Humanities requires deep and broad collaborations. These collaborations must be interdisciplinary, taking place across the various humanities disciplines and across different methods of scientific investigation. Furthermore, they must bring together the study of culture with its creation, including both scholars and makers. The emphasis within academia on the intellectual understanding of culture can benefit from a more creative, experiential engagement with it. And the experience and creation of culture that largely take place outside of academia can benefit from a closer connection to scholarship and research. This applies both to the well-established industries and sectors and to the amateur creation, performance, and appreciation of the arts and humanities. In sum, the Positive Humanities value the experience, creation, and study of culture in its relation to human flourishing, and they emphasize that each of these modalities can be enriched by the others. The experience of culture can be greatly enhanced by involvement in its creation and training in its study, the creation of culture can be empowered by broad experience with and intensive study of it, and the study of culture can be much more insightful when integrated with experiential engagement and creative practices.

The Positive Humanities have particular metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical commitments. Exploring the approach of the Positive Humanities to the understanding, assessment, and cultivation of human flourishing will help make clear some of the fundamental points of inquiry in each of these areas of commitment. In seeking to understand human flourishing, the Positive Humanities are informed by the eudaimonic turn. They have a metaphysical orientation toward the positive, inquiring into what human flourishing really is and exploring its constituents and the various forms it can take across different contexts. Important here is distinguishing actual human flourishing from problematic or

incomplete claims of what it is. It is also crucial to note that the Positive Humanities are not dismissive of the negative or blind to obstacles to human flourishing; rather, they hold that the positive is just as real as the negative and is worth studying in its own right. They recognize that human flourishing requires a balanced attention to both direct and indirect approaches to well-being. This includes an appreciation for both opportunities and adversities—and to the interplay between them, mindful that opportunities sometimes lead to unexpected adversities and that so many of life's most meaningful and formative moments occur when adversities open up new opportunities.

Given that human flourishing is a botanical metaphor, there are some things that must be kept in mind when using this term in the Positive Humanities.[9] First, flourishing might call most immediately to mind scenes of springtime when, say, a tree is putting out shoots and blooms. These sorts of seasonal changes are key to thriving, but so are the seasonal changes that occur in the fall, when a tree may be losing its leaves in preparation for winter. With persons, as with trees, it is important to consider flourishing both in the moment and from a seasonal or life-course perspective. Second, it is important to recognize that flourishing can be used to describe both individual plants and entire ecosystems. Psychology has traditionally focused largely on individuals. Human flourishing certainly involves the well-being of particular persons, but it also involves the well-being of communities and of society in general. This underscores the need for a whole range of humanistic and social scientific approaches in the service of human flourishing. Third, just as plants and ecosystems flourish in their own ways, so too do individuals and communities. The Positive Humanities recognize and celebrate that although flourishing has some commonalities wherever it is found, it also involves differences across various individuals, groups, and communities. It is important to consider carefully what counts as a human flourishing outcome in a specific context and who is authorized to make this determination. Fourth, human flourishing is not privilege by another name. Although from an individual perspective, privilege makes certain types of flourishing easier, it does not guarantee the flourishing of those who have it, and it tends to work against the flourishing of those who lack it. To the extent that privilege undermines social justice, it undermines the flourishing of a community or society. If only one portion of a garden receives the sunlight and water necessary to thrive, and other portions of the garden are systemically deprived of them, that garden is not flourishing. Fifth, the relationship between flourishing and its opposite of languishing is complex. These states are not binary opposites, but rather bivariate, and they can co-occur (Pawelski, 2013b). It is typical, in fact, for individuals and communities to flourish

[9] I am grateful to the participants in the disciplinary consultations held by the Humanities and Human Flourishing Project for many discussions that helped clarify the points in this paragraph—and other ideas in this chapter. Many of the participants have written about these matters themselves in chapters they have contributed to the volumes in the Oxford University Press book series on The Humanities and Human Flourishing. For further thoughts on human flourishing as a botanical metaphor, see especially Stuhr, in press.

in some ways and languish in others. Relatedly, flourishing does not require freedom of conflict or lack of adversity; indeed, it sometimes increases as a result of them. It is therefore possible to flourish, at least to some degree, in adverse conditions, yet it is also important for such flourishing not to result in an inappropriate settling for those conditions. Some levels of flourishing, for example, may be possible in the face of social injustice, but this should not lead to an acceptance of that injustice. Finally, human flourishing is not only about humans. Both because we care about the nonhuman world and because we cannot flourish without it, the nonhuman world is implicated in human flourishing.

The assessment of the role of culture in human flourishing involves a range of epistemological questions. How do we know when flourishing occurs? To what extent does it occur in any given context? What elements of culture are implicated? When do flourishing and languishing co-occur, and how do they interact? What are the modalities, mechanisms, and moderators of human flourishing? These questions are too complex to be answered by any single method of investigation. Thus, although the Positive Humanities are metaphysically oriented toward the *positive*, they are not epistemologically oriented toward *positivism*. Instead of relying on a single, exclusivist methodological approach, the Positive Humanities embrace epistemological pluralism in the belief that a range of methods of inquiry are necessary to understand something as complex as human flourishing. Needed here is the full panoply of methods for querying human experience that have been developed—and are being developed—both in the humanities and in the sciences.

It is important to note that assessing the role of culture in human flourishing is not the same as assessing culture. The Positive Humanities seek to measure various well-being effects of engagement in the humanities across different contexts. This does not mean measuring the humanities (whatever that might actually mean), and it does not mean measuring the value of the humanities. It may well be that the most important value of the humanities cannot be measured. Yet engagement in the humanities often produces well-being effects, at least some of which are measurable. Scientific studies have shown, for example, that arts education can increase social and emotional well-being in children (Vaughan, Harris, & Caldwell, 2011), arts interventions can provide a sense of community and belonging among adults (Shim et al., in press), and regular group singing can enhance the quality of life and reduce the loneliness, anxiety, and depression of the elderly (Daykin et al., 2016). It would be a misuse of these findings to try to create a hierarchy of cultural worth based on them, but studies like these can be quite helpful for understanding how engagement in the humanities can support or undermine well-being and how the effects of these experiences on human flourishing can be optimized.

In addition to their metaphysical and epistemological commitments, the Positive Humanities have an ethical commitment to the cultivation of human flourishing. This commitment raises a number of key questions. Under what conditions and in what ways has culture increased human flourishing in the past? How does culture increase human flourishing in various contexts in the present? And how can culture increase human

flourishing more effectively in the future? This last question is particularly important, given the commitment of the Positive Humanities to optimizing the relationship between culture and human flourishing. Building on the knowledge of how this relationship has developed in the past and holds in the present, the Positive Humanities look for ways in which it can be advanced in the future. How might the understanding of human flourishing be deepened? How might its assessment be made more effective? How might culture be developed and engaged with in such a way that it most strongly supports the flourishing of individuals, groups, and society as a whole?

The Positive Humanities are committed to practical outcomes through the implementation of effective ways of increasing well-being. One important place for realizing these practical outcomes is the classroom. The Positive Humanities seek to ensure that matters of human flourishing are not eclipsed by professional, academic, or vocational interests and that they are addressed not just through theoretical study but also through practical experience. Menus are rich in mouth-watering information about food but poor in actual nutritional value. Studying a menu can yield important knowledge about dining options, but it is only through the practical processes of ordering and ingesting the food that we acquire the nutrition needed to sustain life (James, 1985). An important goal of courses in the Positive Humanities is to go beyond merely providing information about flourishing and to include practical processes for its actual cultivation. Where appropriate, these courses may be informed by scientific research, including work on how ways of reading, writing, moving, focusing, thinking critically, and taking action can support well-being (Pawelski & Tay, 2018). Scientific methods may also be used to assess the actual effects of such courses on students' lives (Pawelski, 2004; Pawelski, in press). The Positive Humanities, however, are not limited to humanities classrooms. They can, for example, also inform the education of students in science (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018), business (Greenhalgh, Allen, & Nesteruk, Chapter 33 in this volume), and medicine (Reiff-Pasarew, Chapter 34 in this volume).

The practical work of the Positive Humanities also extends beyond the classroom. It involves the foregrounding of human flourishing in the various arts and humanities industries and sectors and in the everyday appreciation of cultural experiences. This emphasis can encourage the creation and curation of movies, music, art, novels, poetry, and other cultural artifacts that intentionally explore different aspects of human flourishing, and it can support an engagement with these artifacts in ways that increase the well-being of individuals and communities.

In keeping with the ethical commitments of the Positive Humanities, it is crucial that this practical work be done in the best interests of those who are affected by it and not be used by special interests to exploit or manipulate others. This practical work must also resist pressure to become a crass and shallow instrumentalism, where humanities engagement is valued only as a quick means to achieving specific short-term effects. Instead, this work must take into consideration the importance both of promoting well-being directly

in the moment and of cultivating long-term, comprehensive approaches to human flourishing that integrate both mitigation and promotion. As in the case of positive psychology, this practical work should aim toward *sustainable preference*, where the short- and long-term well-being interests of not just certain privileged individuals or communities, but of all persons and of each group within society, are respected, valued, and advanced (Pawelski, 2016b).

Conclusion

The Positive Humanities are an emerging new field of inquiry and practice concerned with culture in its relation to human flourishing. This field offers new approaches to some very old questions about living life well. The goal of these new approaches is to address these questions in fruitful ways fitting for our times and thus to make important contributions to human flourishing. Through sustained scholarship on connections between culture and human flourishing across time and place, the Positive Humanities aim to discover important insights into creative ways in which culture has improved the human experience. Mindful of the enormous role the humanities play in education and leisure, the Positive Humanities seek to increase human flourishing by augmenting the well-being effects of engagement with the humanities. For example, they support an emphasis on human flourishing in humanities courses so students can both learn about and cultivate conditions for thriving; they argue for a focus on eudaimonic interests in the creative industries as a way of increasing the well-being effects of music, movies, literature, art, theatre, and other forms of culture; and they partner with the science of well-being in its growing global influence so that information, ideas, and perspectives from the humanities can strengthen the effectiveness of programs and policies for supporting human flourishing around the world.

Much more work is needed in all these areas. If these efforts are successful, the Positive Humanities will help bring much-needed change to cultural norms about what it means to live well, both individually and collectively. By providing a deeper and more extensive understanding of human flourishing and by enabling more nuanced and accurate methods for assessing its presence, they will make it possible to cultivate human flourishing more effectively. The Positive Humanities will help us move beyond the well-being effects that engagement in the humanities currently has, to the effects it *can* have when informed and shaped by the eudaimonic turn. A sustained and collaborative emphasis on human flourishing in the work of humanities scholars, creative practitioners, empirical researchers, classroom teachers, and other professionals across academic disciplines, creative industries, and cultural sectors carries the fair promise of contributing significantly to well-being in our society. Given the central role the humanities play in helping people connect deeply with each other, this work can be effective in combating the sharp increase in loneliness, anxiety, and depression plaguing many areas of the world. Given the way the humanities help bring individuals and groups together in a society, this work can

support efforts to create greater social justice and reweave the social fabric. In addition to mitigating these individual and social ills, the Positive Humanities can promote thriving by opening up new levels of optimal human functioning. In these and other ways, the Positive Humanities can lead to the acquisition and application of new knowledge that clarifies and strengthens the relationship between culture and human flourishing. The practical aim of this work is not the building of an imaginary royal road to the Good Life, but rather the clearing of real and promising pathways toward greater flourishing for individuals, communities, and societies around the world.

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PART II

Historical and Current Trends

Part II covers historical and contemporary views of the arts and humanities and their relation to human flourishing. Historical analysis reveals that human flourishing is at the root of the arts and humanities, and there is a growing recognition of the need to return to this initial interest. These chapters also describe the conceptual and operational definitions of engaging in the arts and humanities, providing clarity on how we can assess behavioral engagement and exploring how such engagement works in multiple life domains, such as education, work, leisure, and health. Finally, given that arts and humanities outcomes authors discuss are often contrasted with STEM outcomes, authors discuss the importance of STEAM, in which the arts (A) are integrated with STEM.

CHAPTER

3

The History of the Humanities and Human Flourishing

Darrin M. McMahon

Abstract
The effort to encourage a eudaimonic turn in the humanities marks less a turn, than a return, to the emphasis on human flourishing that was once a central feature of the liberal arts and the humanities as they developed in the West. Though eclipsed for much of the twentieth century, this long-standing emphasis is currently being rediscovered and revived for the conditions of the twenty-first century. Just as psychologists and other social scientists have taken a positive turn in recent decades, humanists and practitioners of the liberal arts are now poised to reconnect their discipline to their foundational interest in human well-being.

Key Words: humanities, human flourishing, happiness, liberal arts, eudaimonia, eudaimonic turn, negative turn, negative bias, history

The effort to encourage a eudaimonic turn in the humanities marks less a turn, than a return, to the emphasis on human flourishing that was once a central feature of the liberal arts and the humanities as they developed in the West. Though eclipsed for much of the twentieth century, this long-standing emphasis is currently being rediscovered and revived for the conditions of the twenty-first century. Just as psychologists and other social scientists have taken a positive turn in recent decades, humanists and practitioners of the liberal arts are now poised to reconnect their disciplines to their foundational interest in well-being (Pawelski & Moores, 2013; Pawelski, Chapter 2 in this volume).

The Origins of the Liberal Arts and the Humanities and the Art of Living Well

The liberal arts, as they were conceived and developed in the Western tradition, were devoted explicitly to the goal of enhancing human flourishing. This was true of the Greeks, who thought of education as education for life, and who defined the "circle of wisdom" (*enkuklios paideia*; εγκυκλιος παιδεια) as encompassing those subjects that cultivated virtue, freedom, and happiness. It was equally true of their Roman successors, who imbedded the connection to freedom explicitly in the Latin terms they used to replace the Greek, and

that we have since adopted as our own. The *artes liberales* or *studia liberales* were those, in short, that befitted the free man (*homo liber*) and they helped in turn to uphold his liberty, seen as the essential precondition of genuine human flourishing. As such, they were concerned in the first instance with matters of public speaking, argument, and presentation that enabled free male subjects to participate actively in public affairs in the agora and in the assemblies. Hence the centrality of grammar, logic, and rhetoric as primary foundations for the education of those who were for the most part free of the obligation to work for survival and so did not generally concern themselves with the "illiberal arts," whose primary function was to earn money, or the manual or "mechanical arts" (*artes mechanicae*) that required work with the hands. Along with the three subjects of grammar, logic, and rhetoric, geometry, mathematics, and astronomy also featured in early accounts of the areas deemed appropriate to the education of the free, giving one the tools to measure and situate oneself in the world, along with music to instill harmony and balance. Over the centuries, these studies congealed into the core of the secular educational programs offered at the first European universities, where the *trivium*, the essential introductory three subjects of grammar, logic, and rhetoric, were complimented by the remaining four of the *quadrivium* (geometry, mathematics, astronomy, and music) to comprise the seven liberal arts. These were thought of collectively as comprising the essential preliminary course of study prior to advanced training in the "practical arts," such as law or medicine, or the highest study of all, theology.

Developing alongside, and in tandem with, these liberal arts was a program of study that the Roman statesman Cicero described in the first century BCE as the *studia humanitatis*. Cicero used that expression loosely in an oration given in defense of his Greek mentor and teacher, Archias, entitled *Pro Archia Poeta*. But when a manuscript version of the oration was recovered in a monastery in Liège by Petrarch in 1333, the term was gradually picked up and developed in circles that, fittingly, acquired the name "humanist." Humanistic studies—what we would now call the "humanities"—were rarely as precisely defined as the *trivium* and *quadrivium*, but they tended to expand on the core of liberal studies by including poetry and the literary arts, moral philosophy, and history. Deemed further "ennobling" and "improving," these subjects were thought to impart wisdom and virtue to guide one throughout life from youth to old age. As one early theorist of humanistic education, Pier Paolo Vergerio, observed in the early fifteenth century, still employing the older medieval term:

> We call those studies liberal, then, which are worthy of a free [liber] man; they are those through which virtue and wisdom are either practiced or sought, and by which the body or mind is disposed towards all the best things. (Vergerio, 2002, p. 25)

Vergerio included literature, moral philosophy, and history among the subjects worthy of a free man, and he contrasted their pursuit with the dissipation wrought by a hedonistic life of pleasure. For his part, Tommaso Parentucelli, the future Pope Nicholas V,

could explicitly define the *studia humanitatis* in 1438 as the study of grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and philosophy. Others might include music, drawing, or the plastic arts. And history was invariably considered central to the *studia humanitatis* from the fifteenth century onward, understood as a kind of practical illustration of the moral and ethical virtues taught by philosophy. In the oft-invoked phrase of Cicero, history was "magistra vitae," the teacher of life, the witness to the times, the light of truth, and a font of ethical examples that could be used to illustrate the moral triumphs and failings of humanity (*De Oratore*, II, 36). What it taught was how to live. For although history, strictly speaking, was the record of the dead, it was the record of the dead as they had lived in flesh and blood, and so was an examination of the fortunes and trajectories of lives, whether happy or ill-starred. For ancient historians, and then for their Renaissance imitators and admirers, history was a kind of ethics in action and so very often biographical, a record of the exemplary and illustrious lives that served to impart the virtues of character by example, or caution against the sins and dissipations that spelled the downfall of the corrupt (Grafton, 2012). Generations of elite young men learned about courage or forbearance, magnanimity or friendship from the pages of Plutarch, whose celebrated *Lives* served as a primer of good living, just as the lives of the saints or *viris illustribus* of illustrious men provided paragons of Christian and pagan virtue. This was history as lived experience, philosophy by example, and as such it was invariably eudaimonistic, teaching that the good life entailed a life well lived in accordance with virtue.

Living life well in accordance with virtue was of course the explicit goal of another of the central liberal arts, philosophy, as it had been practiced in the West since at least the time of Socrates. "What being is there who does not desire to live well (*eu pratein*)," Socrates asks his companions in Plato's early dialogue, the *Euthydemus*. "Well, then, . . . since we all of us desire to live well, how can we do so? That is the next question" (Euthydemus, 278 E, 279 A). For Plato, as even more explicitly for his greatest student, Aristotle, living well—flourishing over the course of a lifetime—was the very definition of happiness (*eudaimonia*), which Aristotle memorably defined as a "life lived in accordance with virtue." Philosophy's aim was the cultivation of *eudaimonia*, and it would be brought about not only by the cultivation of reason, but even more importantly by extensive practice. Achieving happiness, Aristotle insisted, was an "activity," and like all activities that one hoped to master, living well required constant training, so that good choices and habits became second nature. Happiness, we might say, was habit-forming, or at least the consequence of habitual behavior learned and instilled from a young age. Education, with philosophy and the liberal arts at its heart, was crucial to the formation of flourishing lives.

What was true for Aristotle was true for the other major schools of ancient philosophy—from Epicureanism to Stoicism—which alike conceived of their offerings as education—or in stronger metaphors that were widely received, as "medicine" or "athletic training"—for the soul (Nussbaum, 1984; Pawelski, 2021). To excise sickness and suffering, like a doctor,

and to promote flourishing and health, like an athlete in training, were philosophy's overriding aims. Ancient philosophers sought at once to remove impediments to human flourishing and to optimize flourishing's pursuit.

That general focus of philosophy, the core subject of the ancient *studia humanitatis*, was also the focus of many other wisdom traditions of the so-called Axial Age, that prolific period in human history corresponding roughly to the first millennium BCE that saw the simultaneous emergence, on several continents, of the world's major religious and philosophical traditions (Jaspers, 2010; Bellah & Joas, 2012). Encompassing classical Judaism, Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and the teachings of the Upanishads, among others these traditions explicitly set out to address the root causes of human suffering and to offer remedies that would promote human flourishing (McMahon, 2018). Their prescriptions varied tremendously, though all tended to call into question "received understandings of human flourishing" associated with wealth, fame, power, or worldly prosperity, positing a "higher happiness" in their place (Taylor, 2012). To be won by superior virtue, along with wisdom, piety, and divine favor, this higher happiness was invariably imagined as a rare and special achievement, the product of supreme devotion and cultivation. The Buddhist case is instructive in this respect. All might have the capacity for enlightenment and happiness, Buddhists believe. But the great majority of human beings live, nonetheless, lives of ignorance and suffering out of failure to apply themselves. The wisdom traditions of classical Greece and Rome were no different. Stoics might posit that all had access to universal reason (Logos) and thus the capacity to cultivate virtue. One of their greatest teachers, Epictetus, was a former slave. But the rigorous program that he and others offered to cultivate virtue was only ever the preserve of a rarified elite. The happy, in this respect, were the "happy few."

Although the current chapter focuses primarily on the liberal arts and the humanities as they developed in a Western setting, the example of the Axial traditions highlights the straightforward point that the religious and philosophical movements of other regions of the world also concerned themselves centrally with questions of human flourishing. This is undoubtedly the case, as well, for the traditions of art, poetry, music, literature, and history that flowed from them. The Asian philosophical tradition, to take one broad example of many, is clearly a rich repository of reflection on human flourishing (Ivanhoe, 2013), and much the same could be said of indigenous analogues to the humanities and liberal arts as developed in Africa, the Near East, and other parts of the world. Those traditions, too, will need to be examined closely by specialists with an eye to seeing how their content connects to questions of human flourishing both in relation to, and in departure from, Western varieties.

If the example of the Axial traditions, then, highlights the basic point that many parts of the world have contributed richly to the patrimony of knowledge about human flourishing, it also calls attention to the originally restricted nature of much of the knowledge and practice that flowed from these same traditions. To achieve "enlightenment," that

is—whether in a strictly Buddhist sense or more broadly—was conceived as the achievement of those whom Max Weber famously called "virtuosi," elite practitioners (monks, sadhus, sages, and holy men) who were able to devote themselves completely to the cultivation of the highest flourishing, both in theory and in practice. In a similar way, the traditions of higher learning that flowed from these traditions were often restricted, if not in theory then in practice, to the cultivated few. This was certainly the case in the West, where the liberal education of free men (always, in itself, a highly restrictive category) that was conceived as the basis of the *studia humanitatis* in classical Greece and Rome continued long thereafter to serve as the essential program of education for elites. Indeed, as the *studia humanitatis* cohered in the Renaissance, and gradually began to carve out a quasi-secular space independent from religious studies and theology, the study of its core subjects—including philosophy, history, rhetoric, literary studies, and also music and art—was explicitly designed as a program of study for young aristocrats and gentleman (Grafton & Jardine, 1986; Grafton & Rice, 1994). Count Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (1528) provides a case in point. Among other things, the work was a breviary of the ideal education to be sought by those who would navigate the halls of power with *sprezzatura* and grace. Deep training in the humanities, the work makes clear, is part of the requisite polish of men and women of court—for women, too, might be included in these rarefied circles. Leonardo Bruni's celebrated essay on the benefits of the study of literature and the liberal arts is addressed to a woman, Lady Battista Malatesta, the daughter of the Count of Urbino, before whom Castiglione's courtiers did their courting. Recommending the study of poetry, literature, history, and rhetoric for the lady, Bruni (2002) sang the virtues of philosophy, too, which were vital to human flourishing and happiness:

> Let her broaden her interest in secular studies as well. Let her know what the most excellent minds among the philosophers have taught about moral philosophy, what their doctrines are concerning continence, temperance, modesty, justice, courage, and liberality. She should understand their beliefs about happiness: whether virtue in itself is sufficient for happiness, or whether torture, poverty, exile, or prison can impede our progress toward it. Whether, when such misfortunes befall the blessed, they are made miserable thereby, or whether they simply take away happiness without inducing actual misery. Whether human felicity consists in pleasure and the absence of pain, as Epicurus would have it, or in the moral worth, as Zeno believed, or in the exercise of virtue, which was Aristotle's view. Believe me, such subjects as these are beautiful and intellectually rewarding. They are valuable . . . for the guidance they give in life. (p. 107)

Bruni was more "liberal" than most. Well into the nineteenth century, the majority of commentators sought to restrict the program of female education considerably, emphasizing music, poetry, and art over history, philosophy, and ancient languages. To be sure, the former subjects were believed to contribute to human flourishing as well. Why else would one learn to refine the ear and the eye but to enhance the quality of experience? The

answer seemed self-evident, in need of little elaboration. A woman who could improvise on the harpsichord or recite verse or adorn the drawing room with beautiful objects was thought to contribute to the happiness both of herself and her family. But with respect to those subjects requiring a full measure of reason and rationality, such as history and philosophy—women, even elite women, were less often encouraged to do more than dabble. The "free" arts, in short, for much of their history, were not really free and open to all.

That remained broadly true into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when the opening up of access to general education and, in the United States, the expansion of university enrollments in the aftermath of World War II meant that greater numbers of people than ever before were exposed to the riches of the liberal arts as efforts were made to bestow the humanities on their rightful owner, humanity itself. But by that point, ironically, the humanities and the liberal arts' original mission as an explicit conduit of human flourishing had been largely set aside, forgotten for the most part in favor of other goals that subsumed it.

The Displacement of Happiness in the Humanities and the Liberal Arts

The story of how that happened is a complicated one, and the details differ from discipline to discipline. But the broad trajectory is clear. Gradually, over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the humanities and the liberal arts moved away from their foundational focus on human flourishing.

This is perhaps clearest in the case of philosophy, a discipline whose foundational question and point of departure—what is the good life?—continued to occupy practitioners well into the nineteenth century. In late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, for example, St. Augustine, Boethius, and St. Thomas Aquinas wrestled with the question of true happiness and how best to obtain it, as did Erasmus, Thomas Moore, and many others during the Renaissance. In the eighteenth century, the great *philosophes* of the Enlightenment tended to agree with Voltaire, who opined in a letter in 1729 that "the great and only concern is to be happy" (Voltaire cited in Craver, 2005, p. 258). They devoted considerable energy to exploring new ways to further that end. And even in the nineteenth century, leading lights such as John Stuart Mill, Henry Sidgwick, and William James continued to grapple with philosophy's long-standing concern.

But then something happened. Already by the end of the nineteenth century, Friedrich Nietzsche could declare that power, not pleasure, was human beings' ultimate end. Happiness, he felt, was tepid water on the tongue—the goal of English merchants, perhaps, but not of questors of truth and lovers of fate. In the twentieth century, philosophers for the most part followed him in turning their backs on the good life. They analyzed language; they worried about alienation; they probed hegemony, oppression, and nothingness—but with the end result that centuries of thinking about happiness were largely set aside in favor of a more intense focus on the panoply of human ills.

Accounting for the causes of this "negative turn" in philosophy, as in other disciplines, is beyond the scope of the present inquiry, although elsewhere I have called attention to the issue (McMahon, 2013). In part, the turn reflects a broad disenchantment with the explicit focus on human happiness that was a central feature of the Enlightenment, and a recovery and reinvention of the preoccupation with human suffering that has deep roots in Jewish and Christian culture. Without question, suffering had particular resonance in the Age of Catastrophe that was the first half of the twentieth century and its painful aftermath. But it is also the case that the issue is to some extent one of semantics (Pawelski, 2016a, 2016b). A concern with slavery, say, or oppression, alienation, or power can of course readily be construed as a means of coming at the good life from the other way around. And there is no question that professional philosophers in the twentieth century took up a number of such questions—from being to becoming to liberation—that ultimately have a crucial bearing on questions of human flourishing. And yet as a broad generalization—one that, like all generalizations, certainly admits of exceptions—there is truth to the assertion that the focus of philosophy for much of the twentieth century was less on the positive than on the negative, less on enhancing human flourishing than on removing the many impediments (from racism to oppression to alienation) that might stand in the way of its emergence. Just as Marx famously devoted the bulk of his energies to analyzing and understanding human oppression while paying relatively short shrift to what would ensue once the struggle was complete, the philosophers who came after him tended to focus, like surgeons, on the causes of our ills rather than working to imagine and improve the causes of our health.

Something of that same "negative bias," along with the forgetting or rejection of an earlier focus on human flourishing, has attended other disciplines in the humanities and the liberal arts as they developed and expanded since the nineteenth century, extending well beyond the original seven subjects that once comprised the *trivium* and *quadrivium*. Consider history, which, like philosophy, had been bound up with questions of happiness from the start. The subject features centrally in what is generally considered the first major work of history in the West, *The History* of Herodotus, set down sometime in the fifth century BCE. There, Herodotus reflects at length on the elusive nature of human happiness and the qualities and conditions necessary to secure it (McMahon, 2006). And although it is true that the world the work describes is one of war and ubiquitous suffering, the virtues that Herodotus extolls aim to equip human beings with the ability to flourish in such harsh environments. In this respect, it is a model of the kind of didactic work that would follow, providing, through the illustration of exemplary lives, models of how to live as best as one could. History aimed for many centuries thereafter to be life's teacher, even if the conditions of life itself were assumed to be bleak, as they very often were. Both Christians and reborn classicists shared that sentiment, treating the world as a place of struggle or pilgrimage, whose outrageous fortunes, slings, and arrows needed to be assumed and then borne.

Addressing those conditions themselves with an eye to critical improvement was not taken up in earnest until the long eighteenth century, when fledgling attempts were made to use history to understand not just the conditions of individual flourishing in a hostile world, but to think about how the world itself could be transformed for the betterment of the greatest number. As part of the general will to happiness that attended the European Enlightenment, historians of the age undertook the task of examining the social, economic, and political conditions that might make it possible. In 1772, for example, the French marquis and man of letters Francois-Jean de Chastellux published in two volumes his *De la Félicité publique, ou Considérations sur le sort des hommes, dans les différentes époques de l'histoire*, which purported to be, and arguably was, the world's first history of happiness. "After so many centuries of light," the work begins, "in which human beings have followed one another in the most ingenious and painstaking forms of [historical] research," it was time to "fix their attention on a new subject" (Chastellux, 1772, I, p. i). Public felicity or well-being was that subject, and so history was made to furnish insight beyond simply the examples of virtuous men nobly tolerating the intolerable. Chastellux proposed to focus, instead, on those practices and institutions that best served public happiness, providing the necessary context and conditions in which human beings could flourish.

It was a novel undertaking. But, though others joined him in his quest, Chastellux's example proved short-lived. For in fact the same critical eye that went in search of the impediments to the pursuit of human happiness in the past could easily fixate on the roadblocks and deviations. Already in the eighteenth century, many chose to survey history not for the paths to be pursued, but for those to be avoided, finding in the dark landscape of the past the detritus of superstition, barbarism, injustice, and prejudice. And by the nineteenth century, that view was widely confirmed. Happiness, if it could be found anywhere, it seemed, lay on the horizon—in the future, not behind us. Happiness was something to be made in with a better world. Hegel spoke for many when he observed, in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, that "[h]istory is not the soil in which happiness grows. The periods of happiness in it are the blank pages of history" (Hegel, 1975, p. 79).

For Hegel, as for his student and critic Marx, history had a purpose, and what Marx called (without describing) "real happiness" (*wirklichen Glücks*) might well be its final outcome. But the working out of that purpose was a painful and bloody affair. History was the history of class struggle in Marxist terms. Hegel was even more graphic. History, in his view, was a "slaughter-bench"—a long unfolding of conflict, violence, and destruction—on which the happiness of peoples had been repeatedly sacrificed in the service of the final freedom to come.

Although few professional historians today share the teleological assumptions that such views of history entail, they do tend to share the critical imperative that both Hegel and Marx developed as an extension of Enlightenment critique. That is to say that they often survey the past as a place of oppression—the site of racism, intolerance, slavery, injustice, misogyny, and exploitation—as, of course, it very often was. And although critique in

this instance, as in philosophy or other disciplines, might well be considered the necessary prerequisite of future flourishing, and thus an attempt to liberate our own and ages to come from the demons that continue to haunt us, in practice the emphasis on human flourishing often gets lost in the relentless focus on the dark record of man's inhumanity to woman, man, and child. For historians of the twentieth century, in particular, with its horrendous wars, genocides, racial conquests, and totalitarian oppressions, it is easy to understand why talk of happiness might have gotten lost. But whether that justifies the oft-repeated adage, first voiced by Walter Benjamin (1968), that "[t]here is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism" is another matter (p. 256). From that vantage point, if history is "magistra vitae," its lessons are resoundingly bleak.

Literary studies provide another case in point. Surely, one of the central purposes of literature has always been to provide pleasure through entertainment and the deepening of our sense of the human experience. At various points in literary history that fact has been explicitly acknowledged (Kavanaugh, 2010). And yet the intuition runs in counterpoint to the long-standing judgment, first voiced by Aristotle in the *Poetics*, that tragedy is a higher form of art than comedy. Indeed, the view that tragedy is "in some significant sense superior to comedy" has long been the "received view" in critical circles, and arguably it tracks with a wider predilection in favor not just of tragedy as an art form and literary genre, but with the "tragic" more generally—that is to say, with those aspects of the human experience that encompass the broad register of negative emotions, from sadness to loss to pain (Kieran, 2013, p. 1). It is revealing that the study of emotions in literature, like the study of emotions in history, has displayed a marked preference for the study of negative emotions—and much the same can be said of the powerful movement in literary studies devoted to the critical study of affect, known as affect theory. When the American writer Rachel Kadish (2007) chose to satirize an English department at a fictitious Manhattan college in the 1980s in her novel *Tolstoy Lied*, she had her main protagonist, a young literature professor, observe that she struggles every semester to find just one book on the approved syllabus of American fiction "that doesn't make you want to jump off a bridge" (p. 4). And she worries that talking about happiness in her academic circles is "career suicide." The novel is satire, but it is funny for a reason. As other commentators have pointed out, a commensurate predilection for criticism and critique, often reinforced by theoretical writings intent on exposing and unmasking hidden oppression, made for a culture among literary critics characterized by the "hermeneutics of suspicion" (Felski, 2015; Pawelski & Moores, 2013; Pawelski, 2016c). At their best, such hermeneutical frames are critically revealing. At their worst, they are revealingly critical—fault-finding and crabbed—and the suspicions they fostered tended to crowd out space in the classroom for the consideration of more uplifting topics or even just the simple love of literature.

Similar reflections could be extended to other fields in the humanities and liberal arts, which also experienced the consequences of negative bias. In this respect, they were no

different from the social sciences. Economics, for example, despite its eighteenth-century origins among political economists who were deeply interested in questions of well-being and happiness, became by the mid-nineteenth century "the dismal science," more concerned with the maximization of profits than of pleasure. Likewise, the study of politics: whereas, in the eighteenth century, an Enlightened individual such as John Adams could confidently declare that "[u]pon this point all speculative politicians will agree, that the happiness of society is the end of government," a century later no such consensus was guaranteed (Adams, 1776). Political scientists studied many things. But the pursuit of happiness did not figure centrally. Still less could sociologists be counted upon to consider happiness for much of the twentieth century, whereas psychology, founded in the nineteenth century on the medical model of pathology, devoted itself first and foremost to combating illness and addressing disease.

Of course, in the social sciences, all that has changed dramatically in recent years. The much-vaunted rise of Positive Psychology, along with kindred efforts in behavioral economics, sociology, and political science, among other fields, has ensured that human flourishing and well-being are now central objects of inquiry in these disciplines, and many others besides (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Proponents of the Positive Humanities counsel a similar reorientation and focus, working where possible with their colleagues in the sciences and social sciences on the assumption that they are "better together," better able, that is, to contribute to the common goal of understanding human flourishing by drawing and sharing on their respective strengths (Pawelski and Tay, 2018; Pawelski, Chapter 2 in this volume). Future prospects are exciting, and they hold out the possibility, among other benefits, that psychologists can help measure and quantify the experiential effects of engagement with work in the arts and humanities (Shim, Tay, Ward, & Pawelski, 2019). Yet as the chapters in this volume testify, there are already encouraging signs that such reorientation and collaboration is underway. Humanists and practitioners of the liberal arts are rediscovering that their own disciplines are full of insights about how to live well. For indeed, as this chapter has sought to argue, the liberal arts and the humanities were once explicitly devoted to the cultivation of human flourishing and long served, self-consciously, in that capacity. In this respect, today's positive turn is in some sense a return (Pawelski & Moores, 2013; Pawelski, Chapter 2 in this volume), although one that seeks to broaden the original audience, appeal, and extent of the humanities and the liberal arts well beyond the circles of the privileged few among which they began. Clearly, all human beings have a stake in human flourishing. And so there is every reason to resist attempts to limit the range of its inquiries in ways that would only privilege certain constituencies or confine its scope to certain areas of the globe. Both in their subject matter and in the forms that they take to reach their audiences, the humanities and the liberal arts must be broad.

But at the same time, it is vital to resist specious claims that the humanities and liberal arts are somehow luxuries we cannot afford. What a shame it would be if, after having

prised the liberal arts from their restricted circles, we should restrict those circles once again. The Positive Humanities offer a way to broaden the appeal of the humanities and the liberal arts—reaching out to students and constituencies who have neglected them, or who have been put off by what they regard as the overly arcane or negative focus of its concerns. At the same time, they provide a crucial "unifying rationale" for their existence, making an explicit case to administrators, funders, and politicians for why the humanities matter (Pawelski, 2016c). That said, it is important to insist that a positive orientation in the humanities and the liberal arts does not, by any means, entail a rejection of the negative—still less, its denial. To attend fully to human flourishing necessarily means to attend to those forces—at once individual and social, personal and structural—that would impede it. But it also means to recall and cultivate those dimensions of the human experience—from hope and happiness, to kindness, humor, and joy—that humanists and practitioners of the liberal arts have for too long been inclined to overlook.

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CHAPTER

4

Toward a Contextual Model of Arts and Humanities Engagement and Human Flourishing

Yerin Shim

Abstract

Whether engagement with the arts and humanities leads to human flourishing remains a compelling yet undertested question in the extant literature. This chapter argues that people commonly engage with the arts and humanities across various life domains, such as education, work, leisure, and health; and that there are multiple moderated pathways through which these engagements with the arts and humanities may or may not lead to flourishing outcomes in individuals, based on a variety of individual and sociocultural contextual factors. Thus, this chapter makes a case for the need of a contextual model of arts and humanities engagement and human flourishing that considers the impact of personal characteristics, as well as immediate and broader sociocultural contexts. Relevant existing empirical research, current gaps in the literature, and avenues for future research are explored.

Key Words: arts, humanities, human flourishing, well-being, contextual model, ecological systems theory

Does engagement with the arts and humanities make people flourish? This simple question, as it appears, is far more complex to answer. In addition to the breadth and depth of the topic of interest, the many variables of the humans involved make this question intricate. Indeed, human flourishing through the engagement with the arts and humanities does not happen in a vacuum. People of diverse backgrounds and contexts engage with the arts and humanities in various ways throughout their lifetime, which can lead to differential flourishing outcomes. These diverse trajectories between arts and humanities engagement and human flourishing, however, have yet to be fully explored.

Recently, a group of researchers suggested that many potential factors could moderate the pathway between arts and humanities engagement and human flourishing outcomes (Tay, Pawelski, & Keith, 2018). Specifically, they hypothesized that these moderators may exist at individual, institutional, and societal levels (Tay et al., 2018). Considering the role of these moderators is critical in a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship

between arts and humanities engagement and human flourishing. Accordingly, this chapter attempts to present a working contextual model of arts and humanities engagement and human flourishing that integrates these possible moderating factors on multiple levels, based on prior research, to facilitate future research in this area. Prior to discussing the model, we will first briefly explore common life domains where people engage with the arts and humanities and how this may relate to their flourishing.

Life Domains of Arts and Humanities Engagement

People engage with the arts and humanities in a variety of ways based on their unique contexts, yet it appears that there are several common life domains in which these engagements tend to occur. In this section, I describe four of these life domains—education, work, leisure, and health—and briefly discuss how engaging with the arts and humanities within these domains may relate to human flourishing.

Arts and Humanities Engagement in Education

Education is the entryway to arts and humanities engagement for most people. Either formally or privately, we learn how to engage in the arts and humanities from an early age through education. Children are exposed to different types of books, music, and art activities at home and at school. Among these children, some will pursue more specialized education in the arts and humanities through higher education. Despite the widespread concern over the decline of arts and humanities majors, a recent report from Columbia University suggests contradictory evidence indicating that college students remain interested in learning about this field (Pippins, Belfield, & Bailey, 2019). Other disciplines, such as medicine and health sciences, are also recognizing the value of arts and humanities education, applying it to their professional training curriculum (Bleakley, 2015; Crawford, Brown, Baker, Tischler, & Abrams, 2015). Furthermore, adults in later life often re-engage with the arts and humanities through continuing education, suggesting that arts and humanities education can be a lifelong form of engagement.

Previous research on arts and humanities education has shown mixed results on its instrumental effect on academic outcomes (Hetland & Winner, 2001); however, there is emerging causal evidence on its non-academic flourishing effects. A recent randomized controlled trial with a large sample of upper grade level students from over forty schools indicated that arts education increases a host of socioemotional outcomes, such as school engagement, empathy, compassion, and perceived value for the arts (Bowen & Kisda, 2019). Moreover, psychologist Carol Ryff, who is known for her research on psychological well-being, recently suggested that higher education in the arts and humanities can play a critical role on lifelong well-being and health, particularly in aspects such as meaning and purpose in life, and building good societies (Ryff, 2019). Future longitudinal studies

could further examine the role of arts and humanities education in cultivating these flourishing outcomes.

Arts and Humanities Engagement in Work

As people become embedded in the arts and humanities through education, some choose to engage with them as part of their professional life. Arts and humanities professions include a wide range of occupations, including teachers, researchers, artists, and other related jobs that require artistic and humanistic skills (U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, 2021).

Findings from an empirical study with undergraduate and prospective students indicate that the choice of arts and humanities degrees are mostly driven by interest in the subject (Skatova & Ferguson, 2014). However, not all of them pursue the arts and humanities as a career. Part of this may stem from a concern with obtaining stable employment, which is partially supported by survey data on the arts and humanities workforce. This data suggests that arts and humanities professionals have more education, but less stable employment, such as higher rate of unemployment and part-time employment, compared to other professions (American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2018; National Endowment for the Arts, 2011). On the other hand, people with arts and humanities careers have the potential to have more psychologically flourishing experiences in their work, such as creativity and flow, than those in other fields (Delle Fave & Kocjan, 2016).

Engaging in the arts and humanities as a profession may function as a double-edged sword in flourishing—by satisfying the intrinsic interests and providing meaning for those who pursue them, but not without costs in working conditions. Accordingly, this area of research requires keen attention to structural-level supports that would enable one's work experience in the arts and humanities to be more fully flourishing.

Arts and Humanities Engagement in Leisure

One of the most common ways people engage with the arts and humanities is through leisure. Both arts and humanities professionals and non-professionals enjoy the arts and humanities as part of their time outside of work. In the extant literature, the arts and humanities have been conceptualized as both casual and serious leisure activities (McCarthy, Ondaatje, & Zakaras, 2001; Stebbins, 2017).

Arts and humanities engagement as leisure appears to be the most intuitive way to think about its association with flourishing. Recognizing the importance of leisure in people's lives, several theoretical and empirical perspectives have suggested leisure as a pathway to well-being. For example, leisure has been suggested as an important target for enhancing the subjective well-being of individuals through psychological mechanisms such as detachment-recovery, autonomy, mastery, meaning, and affiliation (Newman, Tay, & Diener, 2014). Moreover, scholars in Positive Leisure Science argue that leisure can promote positive development in adolescents and can be an important source of well-being

for older adults (Freiere, 2018). Hence, engagement in arts and humanities leisure activities during these specific developmental stages will be important areas of focus in future research.

Arts and Humanities Engagement in Health

In difficult times, people often turn to the arts and humanities. Engaging with the arts and humanities can be a way of coping and a healthy practice for individuals. For instance, research indicates that people engage with music to relieve stress (Labbé, Schmidt, Babin, & Pharr, 2007) and turn to religion to make meaning out of their lives in the aftermath of trauma (Park, 2005). Furthermore, in a recent longitudinal study with a nationally representative sample, reading a book has been found to predict longevity with a 20 percent survival advantage over reading periodicals, indicating that arts and humanities engagement can potentially extend our lives (Bavishi, Slade, & Levy, 2016). The therapeutic effect of the arts, particularly with clinical populations, has also been well documented in the literature with an array of arts-based interventions (Leckey, 2011). Thus, engaging with the arts and humanities as a way to induce health-related flourishing outcomes is an exciting area of research which will have practical implications on improving the lives of people across diverse contexts.

Summary

Engagement with the arts and humanities commonly occurs in life domains such as education, work, leisure, and health, which could potentially lead to the flourishing of individuals and societies when certain conditions are met. Now we turn our attention to the variety of possible moderating factors in different contexts that could determine this pathway.

A Working Contextual Model of Arts and Humanities and Human Flourishing

Life domains are only part of the picture when considering the multiple contexts that impact the flourishing of individuals in engagement with the arts and humanities. In the following sections, key personal, immediate, and broader contextual factors that can potentially moderate the pathway between arts and humanities engagement and flourishing are suggested in the form of a working contextual model (see Figure 4.1 for a visual representation, and Table 4.1 for a list of factors by level of context). It is of note that the model does not include the detailed conceptual components of arts and humanities engagement and human flourishing, as these are beyond the scope of this chapter, and I refer readers to other references (see Shim, Tay, Ward, & Pawelski, 2019; Tay et al., 2018).

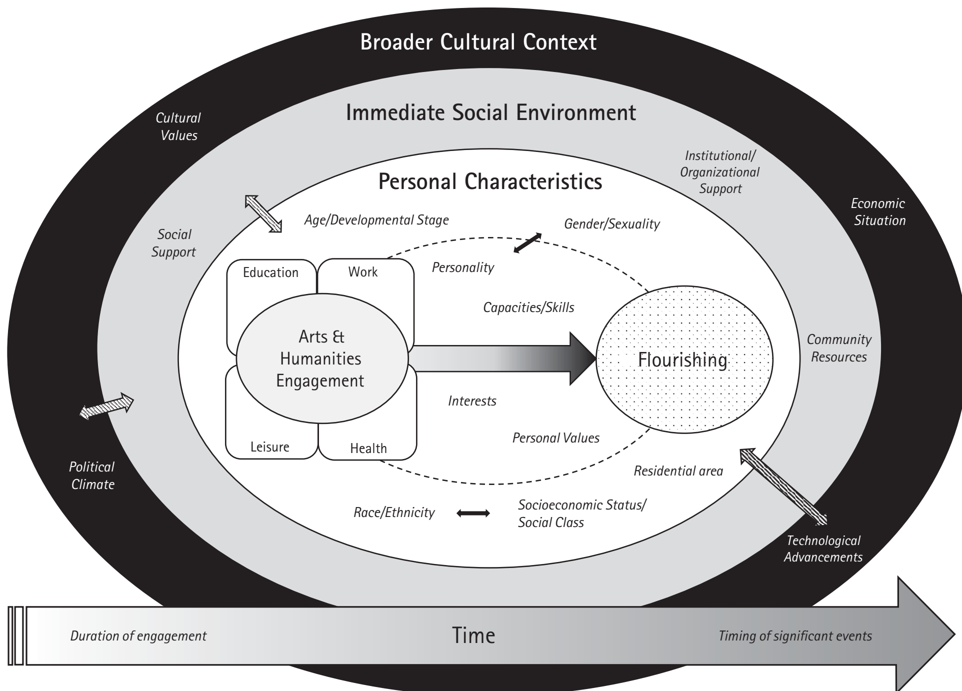

Figure 4.1. A working contextual model of arts and humanities engagement and human flourishing.

Table 4.1 Possible Moderating Factors in Arts and Humanities Engagement and Human Flourishing by Level of Context

Level of Context	Possible Moderating Factors
Personal characteristics	Personality Interests Capacities/skills Personal values Age/development stage Gender/sexuality Race/ethnicity Socioeconomic status/social class Residential area
Immediate social environment	Social support Institutional/organizational support Community resources
Broader cultural context	Cultural values Economic situation Political climate Technical advancements
Time	Duration of engagement Timing of significant events

Theoretical Framework

Inspired by the multicultural perspective from counseling psychology (Neville & Mobley, 2001), the working contextual model is largely informed by Bronfenbrenner's Process-Person-Context-Time (PPCT) model of his ecological systems theory. This theoretical model views a person's development through the complex, reciprocal interaction between a person's characteristics and their immediate and remote contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). Applying this perspective to the phenomenon of an individual's flourishing through the engagement with the arts and humanities can shed light on the complex processes of how diverse individuals interact with their immediate and broader sociocultural environments across time.

Three Level of Contexts and Possible Moderating Factors

In this section, the three levels of contexts outlined in the model (i.e., personal characteristics, immediate social environment, and broader cultural contexts) and affiliated moderating factors will be explored based on existing empirical research and the gaps in the literature.

Personal characteristics

Who flourishes through engagement with the arts and humanities? The first layer of the model, *personal characteristics*, reflects the individual qualities that likely generate systematic variance across people who engage with the arts and humanities in various life domains. The personal characteristics in the working contextual model currently include demographics and social identities such as age/developmental stage, gender/sexuality, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status/social class, and individual differences such as personality, capacities/skills, interests, and personal values.

Age/developmental stage. Age is one of the most examined demographic factors in arts and humanities engagement. Arts participation is known to typically rise through the twenties and thirties, peaks during the forties, declines gradually as people age, and significantly drops in the seventies (Stern, 2011). This trend of decline in older adulthood has been attributed to the lack of time and/or opportunity, and constraints in mobility (McManus & Furnham, 2006). A cross-sectional empirical study with a large data set showed that young people listen to music significantly more and in a wider variety of contexts than their older counterparts; and musical preferences correspond with developmental changes such as psychosocial development and auditory perception (Bonneville-Roussy, Rentfrow, Xu, & Potter, 2013). While arts and humanities engagement decreases with age in general, for those who do engage in later life, there appears to be significant cognitive and health benefits (Castora-Binkley, Noelker, Prohaska, & Satariano, 2010; Marshall, 2015). While previous research demonstrates that age has a statistically significant relationship with arts and humanities engagement, it is also known that this relationship is fairly weak when compared to other demographic factors such as gender and educational attainment (Stern, 2011). On that account, we now turn our attention to

other demographic factors that may more strongly moderate the relationship between arts and humanities engagement and flourishing.

Gender/sexuality. Previous research suggests that there may be some gender differences in the degree and forms of the arts and humanities in which people engage. In a population-based study in the United Kingdom, females were significantly more likely to engage in the arts than males (Davies, Knuiman, & Rosenberg, 2016). In another study from the UK, while biological sex and gender had no relationship to engagement in aesthetic activity, women were reported to be more interested in literature and performing arts, while men were more likely to have interest in cinema (McManus & Furnham, 2006). Beyond these descriptive differences, a significant gender gap also exists in arts and humanities employment conditions. Tenured male faculty in the arts consistently outweigh tenured female faculty (Garber et al., 2007), and male humanities graduates tend to earn more than their female counterparts (American Academy of Arts & Sciences, 2018). Areas for future research include how gender nonconforming individuals and other sexual minorities may experience flourishing through arts and humanities engagement. It would be critical to consider how implicit and explicit gendered stereotypes in representations of arts and humanities (e.g., Keifer-Boyd, 2003) may impact the flourishing of those who do not conform with traditional gender and sexual categories.

Race/ethnicity. Differences across racial and ethnic groups in arts and humanities engagement have been mostly investigated through national survey data. According to a national survey in the United States, Whites and Asians reported having more arts learning experiences than Blacks and Hispanics, and while race/ethnicity was not a strong predictor in attending arts events, it significantly predicted differences in arts creation activities (Welch Jr. & Kim, 2010). Cross-cultural research has also been conducted on topics such as creativity (Lubart, 2010) and artistic development (Toku, 2001). How these differences in arts and humanities engagement impact the flourishing of these various racial and ethnic groups, however, is largely unknown. Furthermore, issues of racial inequality in powerful forms of arts and humanities engagement such as cultural production have been raised by other scholars (e.g., Hesmondhalgh & Saha, 2013). Empirical evidence on this topic, however, remains sparse. Therefore, research that investigates the role race and ethnicity plays in individuals' flourishing through the engagement with the arts and humanities is much needed.

Socioeconomic status/social class. Socioeconomic status (SES) and social class are regarded as one of the most impactful determinants of discrepancies in arts and humanities engagement. National survey data indicate that receiving childhood or adult arts education is a significant predictor of attendance at arts events, and that people who have a history of taking arts lessons are 32 percent more likely to participate in arts creation activities (Novak-Leonard, & Brown, 2011). On the flipside, individuals with low income and educational attainment were more likely to engage in the arts and humanities via broadcasts and recordings than attendance at arts events (Novak-Leonard & Brown, 2011).

Furthermore, parental social status was also associated with the degree of engagement with aesthetic activity, but not with aesthetic attitudes (McManus & Furnham, 2006). Together, these findings reflect that these differences are based on available resources, regardless of interest or attitudes toward the arts and humanities. In order for individuals of lower SES to thrive through the arts and humanities, it will be important to enhance access to diverse forms of arts and humanities, which will allow more room for flourishing.

Residential area. Closely linked with socioeconomic status and social class, the area where an individual resides may also have an influence on their flourishing through arts and humanities engagement. People in metropolitan areas are generally more likely to participate in the arts than those in suburban and rural areas (Novak-Leonard & Brown, 2011), as metropolitan areas may provide more opportunities for individuals to be exposed to a variety of arts and humanities engagements.

Personality. Are certain personality characteristics more associated with arts and humanities engagement? In a recent systematic review which examined Big Five personality traits among students of different academic majors, students of arts and humanities consistently scored high on Neuroticism, Openness, Agreeableness, and low on Conscientiousness (Vedel, 2016). In addition, Vedel (2016) concluded that these personality traits are likely to be preexisting rather than a result from socialization of the major. Supporting this interpretation, an empirical study which examined the degree of aesthetic activity in general undergraduate students showed that students who engaged in more aesthetic activities have similar personality patterns to those of students of arts and humanities described in the preceding study (McManus & Furnham, 2006). These findings indicate that certain personality traits, such as high Openness to Experience and low Conscientiousness, predict engagement with the arts and humanities in both professional and nonprofessional domains. In addition, research on the association between these personality traits and general well-being outcomes may provide further indication of who might flourish through arts and humanities engagement.

Capacities and skills. Whether one has a certain level of capacity and skill in the arts and humanities may also impact the link between arts and humanities engagement and flourishing. According to Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences, individuals differ on the types and combination of intelligences they exhibit (Gardner, 2011). Among these multiple intelligences are linguistic, musical, spatial, and bodily-kinesthetic capacities, which are relevant to the arts and humanities (Gardner & Hatch, 1989). Individuals with higher capacities in these areas may have higher creative self-efficacy (Tierney & Farmer, 2011), which may lead to other flourishing outcomes. On the other hand, people who have lower capacities and skills in the arts and humanities may feel overwhelmed with complex forms of arts and humanities engagement and may flourish in simpler forms. For instance, an experimental study with experts and novices found that experts found abstract images interesting, while novices found them confusing (Silvia, 2013).

Accordingly, individuals may choose to engage in certain modes of engagement depending on their capacity and skill level to flourish.

Interests. An individual difference that has been widely studied predicting arts and humanities majors and professions are interests. In Holland's (1959) theory of vocational choice, the Artistic type indicates vocational preferences in arts-related occupations. Recently, a more nuanced empirical model of vocational interest dimensions found that vocational interests in the arts tend to group under the Creative Expression dimension, and the humanities with the People dimension (Su, Tay, Liao, Zhang, & Rounds, 2019). People who have an interest in these dimensions may be more inclined to choose to pursue arts and humanities–related careers and to enjoy them more intrinsically. Having an intrinsic motivation in engaging in a certain goal or activity is a hallmark indicator of well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000) consequently, the level of intrinsic interest in arts and humanities could potentially differentiate the flourishing outcomes of individuals who engage in the arts and humanities.

Personal values. An individual difference that has not received much attention yet, but has the potential to moderate the pathway between arts and humanities engagement and flourishing, is a personal value toward the arts and humanities. Prior research indicates that people differ significantly in types of activities they value (Oishi, Diener, Suh & Lucas, 1999), and the degree to which people are able to participate in valued activities influences their well-being (Cantor & Sanderson, 2003). Therefore, how significant the arts and humanities are to an individual may influence their engagement and the subsequent flourishing outcomes. These personal values may be further cultivated and shaped by parental influence, education, and broader societal values, which will be described in the next two levels of contexts.

Immediate social environments

Individuals operate within their immediate social environments when engaging in the arts and humanities. Although there is less empirical evidence available regarding the direct effect of these contexts on arts and humanities engagement, several environmental factors may be worth investigating.

Social support. Receiving support from others is one of the strongest predictors of engagement in life domains of arts and humanities such as education (Wang & Eccles, 2012), work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008), leisure (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993), and coping with stress (Thoits, 1995). Moreover, social support has also been found to be a significant predictor and moderator of health and well-being outcomes in various populations across many studies (e.g., Chu, Saucier, & Hafner, 2010; Siedlecki, Salthouse, Oishi, & Jeswani, 2014). Initial evidence that social support can enhance one's well-being in arts and humanities engagement across diverse populations is emerging. In a cross-cultural study on the impact of social music listening on young people's social and emotional well-being, it was found that music rituals with peer groups had an impact on youth's emotional well-being across cultures, while those with family were linked with better emotional well-being in collectivist cultures

(Boer & Abubakar, 2014). In addition to the sources of social support, different types of social support, such as emotional, instrumental, and informational support (Östberg & Lennartsson, 2007), should also be considered in how these may further support the experience of flourishing through arts and humanities engagement.

Institutional/organizational support and community resources. The institution, organization, and community to which the individual belongs also matter in the experience of flourishing through arts and humanities engagement. Structural support from schools, universities, workplaces, and community resources will likely increase the likelihood of flourishing. On the contrary, when these support and resources are insufficient, the individual may experience barriers in flourishing despite their high motivation in engaging with the arts and humanities. As an example, a project investigating the impact of cultural engagement on social well-being found that cultural resources are distributed unequally across neighborhoods (University of Pennsylvania Social Impact of the Arts Project and Reinvestment Fund, 2017). The support from institutions, organizations, and communities may also impact group-level flourishing beyond individual-level flourishing through arts and humanities engagement, which is an area for future research.

Broader cultural contexts

The immediate social environments of the individual are embedded in larger cultural contexts such as cultural values, economic situation, political climate, and technological advancements. While the arts and humanities are ubiquitous in all cultures, the value posed on the arts and humanities may differ across cultures. In a culture where the arts and humanities are undervalued, the individual might experience more barriers in receiving structural support that may be required for them to fully flourish in their engagement with the arts and humanities. In addition, the economic situation and political climate of the broader society may further impact people's engagement with the arts and humanities by either restraining or facilitating public engagement with the arts and humanities. Finally, the development of technology may offer new ways to engage with the arts and humanities. Digital media-based production and consumption of the arts and humanities are already widespread in our society, and future advancements in technology such as virtual reality may open up new opportunities for flourishing through the engagement with the arts and humanities that were not accessible traditionally. These broader contexts may be invisible but strong forces that impact the flourishing of individuals and societies in their engagement with arts and humanities.

Time

In addition to the multiple layers of spatial contexts, time is a critical moderating factor that should not be neglected. While a single encounter with a painting or book may not change a person's life, a lifelong engagement may have enduring flourishing effects on an individual's life (Ryff, 2019). Thus, the *duration* of engagement with a specific domain of arts and humanities may not only enhance development in the area but also offer more opportunities for flourishing. Another dimension of time that should be considered is the

timing of an arts and humanities–related event in people's lives. When experienced at the right moment, even a single interaction with the arts and humanities could be transformative in one's flourishing. Therefore, the role of time should be accounted for in assessing how differential flourishing outcomes may be derived from momentary experience and long-term engagement, and the timing of engagement with the arts and humanities.

Summary and Some Caveats for Future Research

The *working contextual model of arts and humanities and human flourishing* draws from ecological and multicultural perspectives and empirical studies in the literature to show how the study of arts and humanities engagement and flourishing could be put into context. The individuals engaging in the arts and humanities will vary in their experience of flourishing by the interaction between their personal characteristics, immediate social environment, and the broader cultural context. There are a number of areas for future research that researchers could consider for a more sophisticated understanding of the pathways between arts and humanities and human flourishing.

There are a few caveats for using this working contextual model for future research. First, it is important to know that the possible moderating factors included in this contextual model are *suggestive* factors based on previous research and theory, and not those that are fully supported by empirical research. Thus, researchers may use this list (see Table 4.1) to generate new research questions and hypotheses to be tested through empirical investigation. Second, it is important for the researcher to keep in mind that these various factors and contexts possibly interact with each other (as indicated through the arrows in Figure 4.1) and may not independently affect the relationship between arts and humanities engagement and flourishing. Third, different factors may more significantly impact certain populations in particular settings; thus researchers are encouraged to selectively consider these factors in their examination based on theory and observation. Finally, the factors listed here are not an exhaustive list of possible moderating factors, and other contextual factors such as (dis)ability status, language, and religiosity/spirituality should be further examined as a moderator.

Conclusion

As noted in its title, the contextual model presented here is a work in progress. The significance of this contextual model may only be enlivened by researchers who utilize this model to guide their empirical research to assess the suggested hypothetical links. A contextual view on the arts and humanities engagement as a pathway to flourishing can work against a simplistic view that engaging with the arts and humanities leads to human flourishing in all circumstances. People of diverse backgrounds engage in the arts and humanities in various ways in their unique contexts, with some leading to flourishing outcomes and some unfortunately not. Researchers can contribute to uncovering the specific conditions that enable the pathway to human flourishing through arts and

humanities engagement by actively considering the various contextual factors in their research.

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CHAPTER

5

Flourishing Effects of Integrating the Arts and Humanities in STEM Education: A Review of Past Studies and an Agenda for Future Research

Hoda Vaziri *and* Norman M. Bradburn

Abstract

With growing interest and emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) within society, scholars and educators have proposed the inclusion of the arts and humanities into STEM education (i.e., STEAM) with the premise that such an interdisciplinary approach to education would further enhance students' retention, learning, and flourishing. While the literature on student retention and learning outcomes is fruitful, less attention has been paid to the flourishing effects of STEAM education. Accordingly, the purpose of this chapter is to provide a systematic review of the literature on STEAM education and flourishing outcomes (i.e., subjective and psychological well-being, character and virtue, and creativity). The authors find that the research on the topic is scarce and more research is needed to further understanding of the topic. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

Key Words: STEAM, well-being, education, review, arts and humanities, STEM

With rapid technological and a growing demand for innovation, a stronger emphasis has been placed on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The term was officially coined by the National Science Foundation about two decades ago, emphasizing the need for a more technologically savvy workforce to maintain global competitiveness. Such a focus has led the jobs within STEM to grow three times as fast as other occupations (McDougall, 2012). Recently, education scholars and practitioners have called for incorporation of arts and design in STEM courses and curricula, turning STEM into STEAM (i.e., science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics; Kim et al., 2019). Others have called for the integration of reading and writing, in addition to the arts, into STEM education, turning it into STREAM (i.e., science, technology, reading and writing, engineering, arts, and mathematics). More recently, scholars have called for the integration of humanities in general into STEM education (Skorton, 2019). Regardless of the term used, the basic premise of such an integration is that while we need

specialists in each discipline, an interdisciplinary education would provide students with the opportunity to acquire a variety of skills, which subsequently results in more desirable outcomes, including "higher order thinking, creative problem solving, content mastery of complex concepts, enhanced communication and teamwork skills, and increased motivation and enjoyment of learning" (Bear & Skorton, 2018, p. 111). Such skills and competencies are necessary in the twenty-first century and are important for personal and professional success in the long run (Ee, Zhou, & Wong, 2014; Elias, 2009; Greenberg et al., 2003).

Despite the growing interest in the incorporation of arts and humanities into STEM education, our understanding of the current state of the literature on the flourishing effects of such an integration is limited from an empirical standpoint. Accordingly, the purpose of this chapter is first to briefly theorize about why such an integration enhances students' flourishing, and second, to review existing evidence supporting the theory. The majority of past studies on the topic have focused on pedagogical approaches and tools to ST(R)EAM courses and curricula (e.g., Jeon & Park, 2016), have explored outcomes such as student engagement and content mastery (e.g., James, 2017; Magloire & Aly, 2013), or have examined ST(R)EAM education as a way to attract and retain individuals who are historically underrepresented in STEM (e.g., Bass, Hu Dahl, & Panahandeh, 2016; Kwon, 2017). While all are worthy endeavors, this chapter mainly focuses on flourishing outcomes of the integration that have received limited attention. We specifically focus on how integration of the arts and humanities in STEM education can enhance individuals' subjective and psychological well-being, character and virtue (e.g., wisdom, courage, transcendence), creativity, and civic engagement, among others.

ST(R)EAM Education and Flourishing

There are two main approaches to ST(R)EAM education: (1) integrating activities related to the arts and humanities within a single STEM-related course (i.e., in-course integration); and (2) integrating various arts and humanities courses into STEM curricula (i.e., within-curriculum integration and co-curricular integration; Bear & Skorton, 2018). Accordingly, to develop our theoretical framework about flourishing effects of ST(R)EAM education (i.e., engagement with the arts and humanities while studying STEM majors and courses), we rely on recent conceptualizations that define engagement with the arts and humanities based on three conceptual frames, namely extensional (what), functional (how), and normative (why) frames (Shim, Tay, Ward, & Pawelski, 2019; Tay, Pawelski, & Keith, 2018). From an extensional perspective, engagement with the arts and humanities consists of conducting various activities related to disciplines such as music, theatre, design, philosophy, history, literary studies, and religious studies, among others, that are typically organized within the same academic unit. From a functional perspective, any of these disciplines can be approached through a variety of modes (e.g., consuming, performing, creating, studying). Of particular interest is the normative frame that captures

the primary goals of the arts and humanities (i.e., why they exist; Shim et al., 2019). Shim and colleagues (2019) identified three main themes of normative purposes of the arts and humanities: aesthetic experience, individual and societal growth, and meaning-making. That is, while there is a range of content and forms within the arts and humanities, their normative purpose is to either facilitate aesthetic experience, promote individual and societal development, or create and express meaning. In other words, what unites activities related to the arts and humanities is not their traditional organization within the same academic unit (i.e., liberal arts), but their common focus on human experience (Shim et al., 2019; Vaziri, Tay, Keith, & Pawelski, 2018).

Recent conceptual works suggest that engagement with the arts and humanities in general would have positive effects on individual flourishing and well-being. For instance, Tay and colleagues (2018) developed a conceptual model, suggesting that such engagement would result in enhanced subjective and psychological well-being, improved psychological competencies such as integrative complexity and creativity, and strengthened positive normative outcomes such as character and ethical and moral decision-making. Research comparing graduates of liberal arts colleges (LACs), which are heavily focused on courses related to the arts and humanities, with graduates of other types of institutions provides some evidence for this argument. For instance, research suggests that graduates of LACs reported higher learning, self-efficacy, leadership skills, and citizenship behaviors compared to graduates of public universities (Pascarella, Wolniak, Seifert, Cruce, & Blaich, 2005). Similarly, research suggests that leisure reading helps develop individuals' social-cognitive abilities such as perspective thinking and empathy (Mumper & Gerrig, 2017). Accordingly, we argue that integrating elements of the arts and humanities into STEM curricula and courses would also provide similar positive effects for students' flourishing and well-being.

We further argue that such enhanced well-being and flourishing are realized through the *acquisition* and *reflectiveness* mechanisms. *Acquisition* refers to "the set of socio-cognitive psychological processes that underlie the development of particular perspectives, habits, or skills" (Tay et al., 2018, p. 3), including experiences of mastery, vicarious experiences, direct encouragement, and positive physiological responses. That is, engagement with activities related to the arts and humanities would provide STEM students with the opportunity to acquire skills, abilities, and habits that would further promote their success in their careers and other aspects of life. Through the acquisition process, STEM students engaging in the arts and humanities can cultivate higher self-efficacy and self-esteem, form a strong sense of identity, and develop better psychological and subjective well-being.

Reflectiveness refers to "an intentional, cognitive-emotional process for developing, reinforcing, or discarding one's habits, character, values, or worldview" (Tay et al., 2018, p. 4). That is, engagement with the arts and humanities provides an opportunity to gain insights about aspects of the self and facilitates the change process. Reflecting on the knowledge expressed through the arts and humanities promotes empathic feeling, enhances awareness

of situational nuances, and provides fresh perspective (Eisner, 2008). Through reflectiveness, individuals can develop critical-thinking and perspective-thinking skills, which then results in an enhanced sense of meaning and purpose, moral compass, and civic engagement, among others (Batson et al., 1991; Catterall, Dumais, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012; Nussbaum, 2010). Recent studies also suggest that integrating the humanities within business courses encourages student reflection (Greenhalgh, Allen, & Nesteruk, 2020). Given the strong emphasis within the arts and humanities on reflectiveness and these "soft skills," we argue that STEAM education would provide STEM students with more opportunities for reflection, which in turn leads to enhanced flourishing outcomes.

Empirical Evidence

In this section we provide a review of empirical evidence examining the influence of incorporating the arts and humanities into STEM courses and program. To this end, we searched *Web of Science*, *Education Full Text*, *Education Source*, and *Educational Administration Abstracts* using the search terms of STEM AND (STEAM OR Art OR Humanities) in the title or abstract. This resulted in 1,794 potentially relevant articles. An initial screening of the articles resulted in the exclusion of 1,355 articles. The remaining articles were further examined, and they were included if they (1) were empirical (either quantitative or qualitative); (2) examined STEM courses or programs integrated with arts and/or humanities; and (3) examined one or more flourishing outcomes. This resulted in eleven relevant studies. An overview of these studies is reported in Table 5.1.

The studies found in our review, though limited in number, generally support the hypothesis that integration of the arts and humanities into STEM education enhances a variety of flourishing outcomes for students. These studies suggest that the arts and humanities can be incorporated into a variety of STEM courses or programs, including microbiology, programing, and mechanical engineering, across different age groups from kindergarten (Garner, Gabitova, Gupta, & Wood, 2018) and teenagers (Ngamkajornwiwat, Pataranutaporn, Surareungchai, Ngamarunchot, & Suwinyattichaiporn, 2017) to college students (Adkins, Rock, & Morris, 2018). These studies also suggest that various activities and forms of arts and humanities activities can be used to develop a STEAM program, including visual arts (e.g., music and photography; Ghanbari, 2015), dance (Payton, White, & Mullins, 2017), animation (Liao, Motter, & Patton, 2016), and history (West, Cross, Kellogg, & Boysen, 2011), among others.

These studies also explored a variety of flourishing outcomes as a result of the integration of the arts and humanities into STEM. The most common outcome was enhancement in communication, cooperation, and teamwork among students, as well as improvement in critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. For instance, Ngamkajornwiwat and colleagues (2017) reported on a week-long workshop for designing social robots, which included a trip to a theatre, an acting lesson, a lesson on visual-musical relations, and a presentation on human anthropology and evolution. Participating students reported

Table 5.1 Summary of Studies Exploring STEAM and Flourishing Outcomes

Article	Sample	Design	STEAM Method Summary	Outcomes	Results
(Adkins et al., 2018)	33 undergraduate students in treatment group and 15 students in control group	Quant.	Agar art was incorporated into an introductory microbiology laboratory course. Students in the treatment group participated in an art inquiry curriculum, while students in control group went through the traditional cookbook lab.	Confidence; Belonging and Identity	Students in the STEAM group, reported higher personal efficacy as scientist. No difference was found on belongingness to scientist community and scientist identity between the treatment and control group
(Gallagher & Grimm, 2018)	53 college students (all women)	Quant.	Participants in the game-making group created levels in Portal 2, a three-dimensional physics puzzler in which players use sets of portals to overcome obstacles and reach an exit.	Creativity; Spatial abilities; Divergent thinking	Game makers scored higher on creativity and spatial ability than control group; no difference was found for convergent thinking
(Garner et al., 2018)	Students from kindergarten through 8th grade	Qual.	Three themed sessions incorporated into STEM courses: (1) Science Magic to teach biology and chemistry in a fun, science-based "magic tricks" context; (2) Innovation Lab to design new inventions as students learned about physics and materials science; and (3) Amazing Race around the world to explore the music, food, costumes, language, and art around the world as students learned about environmental science, civics, and technologies.		57% and 90% of students completing the program in 2014 and 2015, respectively, identified at least one twenty-forst century life skill during their interviews, including empathy, perseverance, and teamwork.

Table 5.1 Continued

Article	Sample	Design	STEAM Method Summary	Outcomes	Results
(Ghanbari, 2015)	Students and alumni of ArtTechnology (N = 9) and ArtScience (N = 18) programs	Qual.	ArtTechnology and ArtScience programs at two universities. ArtScience program included three general courses including art- and science-focused photography course, an entomology/visual arts course, and a music/science course. All courses included lectures and collaborative project-based assignments. ArtTechnology program included three sequential courses (e.g., Music, Technology, and Society; Remix: Authoring the "Found" in Public Space; and Are We Alone?) as well as an internship/practicum based on what was learned in the courses.	Perspective taking	Alumni reported that the program help them broaden their perspective and look at matters from different viewpoints
(Liao et al., 2016)	Girls who attended Penn State's Tech Savvy Girl's camp in 2010–2011 (N not reported)	Qual.	STEAM Digital Media Making: A course to develop digital arts through digital technologies. Students designed animated narratives to convey their personal experience.	Collaboration and teamwork	Student narratives suggested that students gained "collaboration skills and realized teamwork can enhance their projects" (p. 33)
(Ngamkajornwiwat et al., 2017)	60 Thai students between 12 and 19 years old	Qual.	A weeklong workshop for designing social robot, which was integrated with arts and humanities components. These components included (1) a field trip to visit the traditional shadow puppet theatre where students watched multiple shows, (2) an acting lesson, which included a basic acting activity named "four walls of emotion," (3) a workshop on visual-musical relations, and (4) a presentation on human anthropology and evolution.	Communication; Critical thinking; Reflection	Students reported that the workshop allowed them to learn a variety of skills, including conflict solving, friends making, reflection process, and ability to think critically

(Payton et al., 2017)	15 STEM students in NC State dance program	Qual.	STEM students who also participated in dance programs at NC State	Creativity; Problem solving; Identity	Students reported that the dance program provided a space for self-expression and creativity and promoted problem solving; Students, however, reported some stigma associated with dance among their peers
(Presley, Carroll, & Gorbet, 2016)	7th and 8th grade students across three schools in US and Canada	Qual.	A hands-on science, engineering, design, and art thinking workshop, in which students learned arts and science behind sculptures, and problem solving by connecting science and design principles. Students created kinetic devices, using shape memory alloy, found objects, and craft supplies.	Problem solving	Students reported higher levels of problem solving after the program
(Vuksanovich & Wallace, 2011)	Seven students who enrolled in the Co-Lab program	Qual.	Co-Lab: a program that pairs students across disciplines (i.e., arts and mechanical engineer) to work alongside each other and build a project for mass production.	Communication and collaboration; Self-reliance and self-direction	Students reported that they can better communication and collaborate with diverse coworkers; Students' confidence in their in their abilities has also increased
(West et al., 2011)	Students who enrolled in the program in 2009 and 2010	Quant.	"Back to the Future" program at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, which is an engineering research program with emphasis on art and history.	Communication and collaboration	Students reported that they are more comfortable collaborating with others and that they developed better communication skills after the program
(Yee-King et al., 2017)	11 undergrad, arts computing students at a summer school	Quant.	Two-week workshop, which included six STEAM and six non-STEAM programming lessons. STEAM components included engaging with an aesthetic concept (e.g., motion) and developing a simple program related to the concept.	Creativity	Students reported higher levels of creativity after completing STEAM-related lessons

Note: Quant. = Quantitative design; Qual. = Qualitative design.

that the workshop allowed them to learn a variety of skills, including conflict resolution, friendship formation, and the ability to think critically. Similarly, in the "Back to the Future" program at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, which is an engineering research program with an emphasis on art and history, students reported that they are more comfortable collaborating with others and that they developed better communication skills after the program (West et al., 2011).

Creativity was another outcome that was commonly examined and was boosted as a result of the STEAM programs. For instance, in a game-making STEAM program, in which students developed a game using a three-dimensional physics puzzler, students were rated higher on creativity and spatial abilities compared to a control group who only worked on a three-hour test session (Gallagher & Grimm, 2018). Similarly, creativity increased for students who participated in a two-week workshop, which included six STEAM and six non-STEAM programming lessons (Yee-King, Grierson, & D'Inverno, 2017). Furthermore, North Carolina State STEM students who participated in the school's dance program reported that the program provided them with a space for self-expression and creativity (Payton et al., 2017).

Studies also reported that student's self-efficacy (Adkins et al., 2018; Vuksanovich & Wallace, 2011), and perspective taking and reflection (Ghanbari, 2015; Ngamkajornwiwat et al., 2017) were enhanced following the STEAM course/program. However, no change in perception of belongingness was found (Adkins et al., 2018). In addition, some students reported having some challenges with their identity navigating a STEM and dance program simultaneously because of the stigma among their peers with regard to the dance program (Payton et al., 2017).

Avenues for Future Research

This chapter has provided a systematic review of empirical studies exploring whether and how the integration of the arts and humanities in STEM education enhances individual flourishing. Our review of the literature suggests that such an integration would enhance a variety of flourishing outcomes, including communication and cooperation, critical thinking, creativity, self-efficacy, perspective taking, and reflection. While the studies reviewed here generally support our theorizing about the flourishing effects of STEAM education through reflectiveness and acquisition processes, these studies are scarce and lack methodological rigor to develop a causal relationship between STEAM education and outcomes. For instance, many of the studies qualitatively report on students' reflections and narratives after the program without any measurement prior to the course, or inclusion of a control group. In the following, we discuss ways through which future research can enhance our understanding of STEAM education.

Research examining the influence of STEAM education on individuals' flourishing outcomes can benefit from a more rigorous study design. The studies reviewed here rarely measured these outcomes quantitatively and rigorously. While qualitative student narratives would provide a rich understanding of students' experiences, they cannot determine

a causal relationship between STEAM education and flourishing outcomes. Accordingly, future research should examine the relationship using an experimental design. Measuring the outcomes of interest before and after the STEAM program and incorporating a control group that go through a similar STEM course without an arts or humanities component would be helpful in causally demonstrating the beneficial effects of the integration of the arts and humanities and making sure that the positive effects are not attributed to any other factor (e.g., teacher attributes). Similarly, research should adopt a longitudinal design to explore the role of STEAM education in the long term. Longitudinal design would be helpful in disentangling the longevity and durability of STEAM education's flourishing influence.

Future research should also examine an expanded set of flourishing outcomes. Communication and problem-solving were the two most common outcomes, followed by creativity, that were examined in the studies reviewed here. However, flourishing outcomes would also include subjective and psychological well-being, along with individuals' character and virtue, which were seldom examined. Accordingly, exploring an expanded set of outcomes would enhance our understanding of the most applicable outcomes of STEAM education. Future research should also seek to examine how different arts and humanities components within the STEAM course would influence the flourishing outcomes. It is likely that certain course plans (e.g., arts and design) are more suitable to enhance specific aspects of individuals' flourishing (e.g., creativity). For example, incorporating arts and design elements might be more relevant to creativity, whereas incorporating history might be more relevant to individuals' character and perspective taking. In this review, we did not focus on the structure and pedagogical methods of integrating the arts and humanities into STEM education, as such a synthesis is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, we believe that STEAM education can considerably benefit from a better understanding of effective pedagogical methods to integrate the arts and humanities into STEM education as well.

Future research should also examine potential pitfalls of integrating the arts and humanities into STEM education. While the studies reviewed here do not suggest any discernible pattern of potential problems of STEAM education on individuals' flourishing, one study found that STEM students participating in a dance program had difficulty managing their identity through their peers' eyes because of the stigma associated with a dance identity among their peers (Payton et al., 2017). Accordingly, more research is needed to further understand potential pitfalls of STEAM education and how to avoid or address them.

Finally, while we only focused on integration of the arts and humanities into STEM education, there is growing discussion about the inclusion of STEM components into the arts and humanities programs. For instance, Guyotte, Sochacka, Costantino, Kellam, and Walther (2015) found that art education students who participated in a STEAM course reported reflecting on and challenging the notion of the "lone artist" and expanded their

notion of creative thinking through a multidisciplinary lens. This stream of research is in its infancy, and future research is needed to further explore how arts and humanities students can benefit from STEAM education so that they can flourish.

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PART III

Flourishing Outcomes

Part III discusses different types of flourishing outcomes that can emerge from engaging in the arts and humanities. It reviews empirical evidence showing that art, music, and literature can generate meaningful experiences. More specifically, meaning can be derived from familiarity with works of art and literature, identification with cultural narratives, and broadened perspectives resulting from grappling with difficult art and texts. Authors present, case studies to illustrate how interventions can promote well-being and a neuroscientific framework to help assess well-being objectively. Authors also explore ways engagement in the arts and humanities can help build psychological competencies like self-efficacy and emotion regulation and can lead to normative outcomes like the cultivation of character and the encouragement of prosocial behavior. The Holocaust and Humanity Museum, described here, provides one practical and powerful example of how this can work.

CHAPTER 6

Art, Music, and Literature: Do the Humanities Make Our Lives Richer, Happier, and More Meaningful?

Erin C. Westgate *and* Shigehiro Oishi

Abstract

For many, there is little more rewarding than the feeling of curling up with a good book, wandering a famous art gallery, or listening to a favorite musician perform live in front of an audience. But do the arts, music, and literature actually make our lives happier, richer, and more meaningful? The authors suggest they do. In this chapter, they review empirical evidence for the psychological benefits of the humanities, including art, music, and literature, and find that across a wide variety of samples, exposure and engagement are consistently linked to greater well-being. In particular, they suggest that the humanities may increase well-being directly by providing people with enjoyable, rich, and meaningful experiences, as well as indirectly by fostering skills and abilities that contribute to psychological well-being in the long term. These approaches map onto two mechanisms: (1) direct affective benefits that create enjoyable, rich, and interesting experiences, and (2) indirect cognitive benefits, including social abilities and motivations that promote subjective well-being via interpersonal connection and self- and emotion-regulation. Art, music, and literature may not only provide temporary nourishment for a good life, but also teach people lasting skills they can capitalize on to increase long-term well-being.

Key Words: happiness, psychological richness, subjective well-being, arts, music, humanities, literature, theatre, dance, novel

In an iconic moment in the second half of Handel's *Messiah*, the audience—until this moment politely seated and attentive—traditionally rises to its feet in a surge of rustling suits and fabric, as the first four notes sound the start of the "Hallelujah Chorus." As the triumphant notes ring out from the chorus, the audience joins them silently, standing together in solidarity in a moment that for many audiences is both exciting and profoundly moving. Certainly it seems plausible that such transcendent moments enrich our lives, and make them happier, richer, and more meaningful. In this chapter, we explore empirical evidence for the psychological benefits of the humanities, including art, music, and literature.

Why the Humanities?

Why might literature and the performing and visual arts increase subjective well-being? We suggest that the humanities can increase well-being directly, as well as indirectly foster skills and abilities that contribute to psychological well-being in the long term. Art, music, and literature may not only provide temporary nourishment for a good life, but may teach people lasting skills they can capitalize on to increase long-term well-being.

These approaches map onto two mechanisms: (1) direct affective benefits that create enjoyable, rich, and interesting experiences, and (2) indirect cognitive benefits, including social abilities and motivations that promote subjective well-being via interpersonal connection and self- and emotion-regulation (e.g., Shim et al., 2019).

Do Art, Music, and Literature Make Our Lives Better?

Before turning to the question of *why* the humanities might improve our lives, what is the empirical evidence that art, music, and literature improve our lives in the first place?

Happiness and Life Satisfaction

The arts and humanities are associated with greater life satisfaction and happiness in a wide variety of cross-sectional samples. In data from over 48,000 people in thirty-three countries, reading, listening to music, and attending cultural events are all positively associated with greater happiness (Wang & Wong, 2014). Similar results are found in individual countries. Cultural activities (e.g., reading, theater, concerts, etc.) are positively associated with subjective well-being among 20,000+ adults in the German Socio-Economic panel (Frey, 2019) as well as in a nationally representative sample of Croatians (at least for those over age thirty; Brajša-Žganec et al., 2011). Likewise, literature, music, and the arts are all modestly associated with greater well-being among Italians (Blessi et al., 2014).

Even small doses of the humanities may be beneficial. Whereas only regular engagement in the arts (i.e., at least weekly) predicted life satisfaction in 30,000 British residents, attending arts *events* and cultural sites (e.g., museums, monuments) was positively related to happiness and life satisfaction, even among people who rarely went (Wheatley & Bickerton, 2017). And while concerts and the cinema predicted greater life satisfaction among 10,000 British individuals, effects were *stronger* for people who attended *less* often (Marsh & Bertranou, 2012).

Different activities may be beneficial in different doses. For instance, more frequent attendance of musical cultural activities (e.g., jazz, opera/ballet, classical concerts) was associated with greater well-being among Italians (up to 100 times a year); but attending too often *blunted* the positive effects of poetry reading and art cinema (Grossi et al., 2011). Likewise, in longitudinal studies, people who upped their attendance at arts events and historical sites over a three-year period reported corresponding increases in life satisfaction; yet the same increases in arts activities had no effect (and increased library visits a negative effect) on life satisfaction (Wheatley & Bickerton, 2019). One alternative

is that quantity may matter less than type and variety of experience; for instance, more frequent and more *diverse* cultural experiences (including literature, painting, art, theatre, and dance) predicted happiness and life satisfaction in Korea (Kim & Kim, 2009).

Although the preceding studies are correlational, experimental evidence suggests that such effects may be causal. For instance, expressive writing increases people's subjective well-being (Pennebaker, 1997), and older adults randomly assigned to a theatre arts intervention reported greater psychological well-being, relative to a visual arts appreciation intervention or wait-list control (Noice, Noice, & Staines, 2004). Likewise, students randomly assigned to take personally meaningful photographs reported increases in global life satisfaction, as well as meaning (Steger et al., 2013), and nursing staff assigned to a ten-week silk-painting class reported greater emotional well-being (Karpavičiūtė & Macijauskienė, 2016). Music appears likewise beneficial—older adults randomly assigned to sing in a choir reported higher quality of life, and reduced depression and anxiety, three months later (Clift et al., 2012), and those randomly assigned to a six-month dance intervention experienced higher psychological well-being (Kattenstroth et al., 2013). Although fewer studies have examined the visual arts, art therapy appears effective. For instance, older adults randomly assigned to an art therapy class with painting and clay art reported less depression and anxiety (Kim, 2013), and, in a meta-analysis, creative art therapy was found to effectively reduce anxiety and depression in cancer patients, and improve their quality of life (Puetz et al., 2013).

Psychological Richness

Even when the humanities don't make lives happier, they may transform them in other ways—for instance, by making lives *psychologically richer*. Psychological richness stems from novel complex experiences that change people's view of the world and their place within it; while not always positive, such experiences can form an integral part of what it means to lead a good life (Oishi et al., 2019).

The arts, music, and literature may offer one such path. For instance, Germans assigned to read *Der Vorleser* [The Reader] about a man struggling to make sense of his adolescent love affair in post–World War II Germany with a much older woman (who he, and the reader, later discover to have been a Nazi concentration camp guard) reported declining happiness, but greater "delight" in reading over the course of the novel (van Peer et al., 2007). Such emotional shifts may be typical of complex perspective-changing experiences that, while not always comfortable, are psychologically rich for those immersed in them. For example, consider the visual arts. Some pieces of art are more complex and evoke more change in perspective than others. Figure-ground drawings offer one such literal example. The same illustration can portray an image of the crescent moon or of an upward-tilted face (see Figure 6.1, Panel B), depending on whether you focus on the figure versus ground element of the drawing. In a series of experiments, such figure-ground drawings (Panel B of Figure 6.1) evoked greater psychological richness than the same drawings modified to

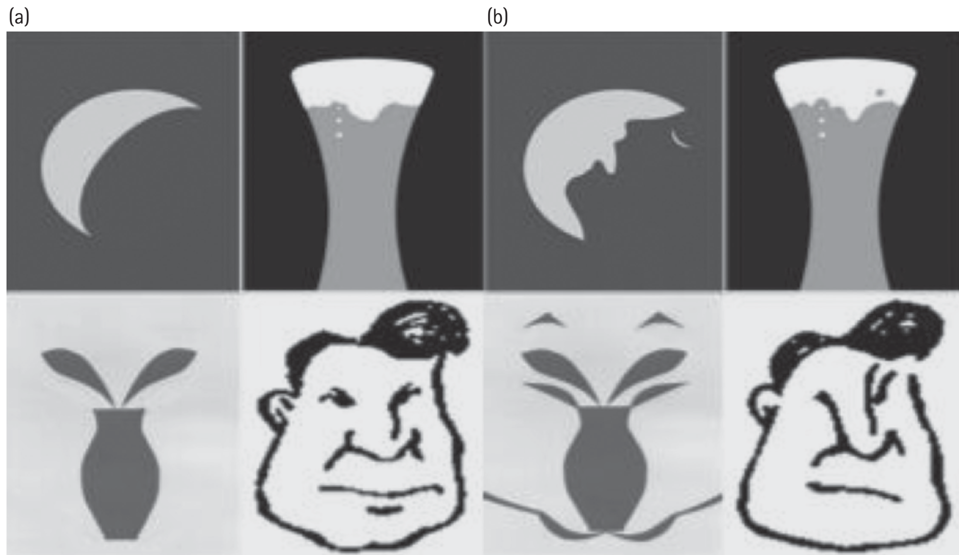

Figure 6.1. Panel A shows 4 drawings that evoke only a single image (e.g., a moon), whereas Panel B shows 4 figure-ground drawings that evoke two different images (e.g., either a moon or a face); used in Oishi & Choi (2019, Experiments 1 & 2). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two image sets.

remove the element that made such dual perspectives possible (Panel A of Figure 6.1; Oishi & Choi, 2019). Some art makes the familiar unfamiliar, and the unfamiliar familiar; such shifts in perspective may be key to enriching our daily experiences.

Why Do Art, Music, and Literature Make Our Lives Better?

We suggest that the humanities lead to greater well-being both directly and indirectly, by providing both affectively rich positive experiences, as well as cognitive skills and social strengths that contribute indirectly to psychological richness and happiness. In their theoretical framework, Tay et al. (2018) likewise divide the humanities' positive outcomes into two distinct sets: (1) positive neurological, physiological, and affective changes, and (2) positive effects on psychological competencies, respectively. What is the evidence for such benefits?

Affective (Direct) Benefits of the Humanities

Perhaps the simplest question is whether the arts, music, and literature make us happier in the *moment*, setting aside the question temporarily of whether such affective gains translate into richer or happier lives. To be sure, they likely do—rich and happy lives are built on the building blocks of rich and happy experiences. But what is the evidence that the humanities contribute to those experiences?

In a UK experience sampling study, attending "theatre, dance, concert" was the second-happiest activity people reported, followed by visits to an "exhibition, museum, library"; only love-making made people happier (Bryson & MacKerron, 2017). Likewise, highly

educated Germans reported that they were most likely to experience flow—an enjoyable immersive state (Czikszentmihalyi, 2000)—while reading, compared to all other activities (including sex; van Peer, Mentjes, & Auracher, 2007; see, however, the null effect among American teenagers; Csikszentmihalyi & Hunter, 2003).

Are these effects causal, or are people simply more likely to turn to the humanities when they feel good? Experimental mood inductions suggest that such activities do change how people feel. Music, film, visual images, and written imagery are widely used in the experimental study of emotion, to deliberately induce positive and negative mood states. And they do so quite effectively (Siedlecka & Denson, 2018; Zhang et al., 2014).

The humanities may also offer a pathway to psychologically rich experiences. For instance, while listening to sad music or filming a depressing documentary may not be pleasant, per se, they offer exactly the psychologically rich worldview-shifting moments that change the way people understand themselves and the world. In a weekly diary study of college students studying abroad, study-abroad students engaged in artistic activities (e.g., concerts, museum) more often during a thirteen-week period than those who stayed on campus (d = 1.105); the same study-abroad students also reported their lives were psychologically richer at the end of the semester (d = .518 vs. students on campus; cf. d = .039 beginning of semester; Oishi, Choi, Liu, & Kurtz, in press). The increase in psychological richness was explained in part by study-abroad students' increased engagement in artistic activities during that time. Studying abroad in an unfamiliar environment may be stressful and may challenge one's values and meaning system; thus, it may not make lives happier or meaningful. Notably, the two groups' life satisfaction did not differ at the beginning or end of the semester. Yet, such a world-changing experience seems to increase richness, in part because it entails substantial cultural artistic engagement and shifts in perspective.

Cognitive (Indirect) Benefits of the Humanities

In addition to directly increasing positive mood or psychological richness, the humanities might indirectly foster increases in subjective well-being by bolstering abilities and skill sets conducive to well-being more broadly.

Work in older adults suggests that the humanities may increase overall cognitive functioning; for instance, retirement home residents randomly assigned to a theatre arts intervention showed increases in short- and long-term (but not working) memory capacity and creative problem-solving, relative to a singing intervention or wait-list control group (Noice & Noice, 2009). Likewise, dance training improves cognitive performance, attentional switching, and reaction times in experimental and quasi-experimental interventions (Coubard et al., 2011; Kattenstroth et al., 2013; Kimura & Hozumi, 2012). In a small randomized control trial, women experiencing burnout participated in a combined creative arts program for three months; the program reduced alexithymia and increased the women's ability to describe and identify their own emotional states (Viding et al., 2015).

A considerable body of work has focused on the role that reading and fiction play in increasing our ability to understand and relate to others' mental states. Fiction, specifically, has been argued to improve people's ability to infer others' emotional and cognitive states, by simulating socio-cognitive processes and learning via concrete fictional examples (Mar & Oatley, 2008; Oatley, 2016). To this end, a recent meta-analysis found that, relative to not reading or reading nonfiction, randomly assigning people to read works of fiction led to small but significant improvements in social cognition ($g = .15$), including mentalizing, perspective-taking, and emotion identification (Dodell-Deder & Tamir, 2018). Oatley (1999) argues that fiction acts as a mental simulator more broadly, allowing us to imagine and simulate counterfactual experiences. And indeed, people who read more fiction show greater functional connectivity in brain areas related to language and mentalizing when listening to literary narratives (Willems & Hartung, 2019). Likewise, music appears to activate portions of the default mode network associated with conscious streams of thought, mind-wandering, and mental simulation (Wilkins et al., 2014).

Finally, the humanities may lead people to experience greater *reflectiveness*, or the intentional motivation to shift one's own identity, values, and beliefs (Tay et al., 2018). Such motivation may partially account for many of the cognitive benefits outlined in this section, as well as the social benefits outlined in the following, that together create long-term sustainable changes in psychological well-being. Reflectiveness, in particular, may foster sustained changes in psychological richness, if people take that impetus for change seriously, and come to see themselves and the world from new perspectives.

Social (Indirect) Benefits of the Humanities

Engagement in the arts, music, and literature may also spill over into social capital, either via status gains by participating in high-prestige activities (e.g., art galas, operas) or through artistic activities that act as markers of shared identity (e.g., street art, folk music). Tay et al. (2018) refer to these as *socialization* mechanisms that foster flourishing. Writers bond in writing groups, painters and visual artists form collectives, and people come together to consume the books, artwork, and music they produce, leading to vibrant book clubs, lively art shows, and tight-knit music scenes that blend enjoyment of the arts with social bonding. Such sharing can intensify positive feelings (Boothby, Clark, & Bargh, 2014), and may itself serve as a powerful source of well-being.

Unanswered Questions

Initial evidence suggests that art, music, and literature may confer both immediate affective benefits, as well as indirect cognitive and social benefits. However, it is not yet clear how and whether such processes directly account for global lasting changes in well-being, who benefits most from such engagement, and whether some activities are more beneficial than others.

Is It Causal?

Much of the evidence reviewed in the preceding section is correlational; while good experimental evidence exists for art, literature, and music's ability to temporarily boost positive moods, there is less evidence for whether they lead to *lasting* changes in well-being. The same is true, to a lesser extent, of the mechanisms at play; while there is strong consensus that the humanities can directly foster positive emotions, claims regarding their effect on cognition have been more controversial (see Dodell-Deder & Tamir, 2018). And to date it is unclear whether and how such effects might trickle up and account for increases in well-being more globally. Providing rigorous longitudinal experimental evidence for the direct and indirect causal effects of the humanities on overall subjective well-being would greatly contribute to our understanding.

Who Benefits and Why?

Does everyone benefit from the humanities, and if so, do they all benefit equally? For instance, in a study of several thousand British residents, engagement in the arts did predict subjective well-being—but only for those who were relatively unhappy to begin with (Hand, 2018). We suggest that there are likely strong person-by-environment interactions in the humanities, with certain people benefiting more (or less) from particular activities. Why might this be? For people to cognitively engage in and benefit from *any* activity, they must have both the motivation and ability to do so successfully (Westgate & Wilson, 2018). For instance, while time spent per week in creative activities did not predict happiness in two Canadian samples, the quality of that engagement did—satisfaction within many creative domains was modestly correlated with happiness (Michalos & Kahlke, 2008; Michalos & Kahlke, 2010). When people are both willing and able to appreciate the humanities, the resulting cognitive engagement is generally experienced as feelings of interest, enjoyment, and flow, or what Tay et al. (2018) term *immersion*. Such motivation and ability vary widely across people, and interacts with the nature of the task at hand, whether it's reading a novel or solving algebraic equations.

Motivation. Motivation is important both for exposure to the humanities, and to engage successfully and benefit when exposure occurs. People who are motivated and interested in art, music, and literature are more likely to seek them out. Tay et al. (2018) refer to this as *acquisition*, or a sense of *embeddedness* in people's lives; in short, the "socio-cognitive processes that underlie practice, learning, and cultivation." People who feel more embedded in the arts—either through encouragement, a sense of mastery, or past positive experiences—are more likely to benefit from them (p. 4).

Does it matter whether motivation is intrinsic or extrinsic? In adolescents, the number of hours spent reading for pleasure (but not required reading) predicts grade point average (GPA) (Ferguson, 2014), and choosing to listen to music for personal reasons is a stronger predictor of global happiness (Morinville et al., 2013). Likewise, default mode network activity is higher when participants view works of art (e.g., paintings, sculptures) that they

personally like (Vessell, Starr, & Rubin, 2012); connectivity is likewise higher when listening to favorite pieces of music (Wilkins et al., 2014).

While extrinsic motivation may suffice to increase exposure to the humanities, we suggest that intrinsic motivation is necessary for high-quality engagement, the sort of rich rewarding encounters that increase subjective well-being. People who are motivated to seek out such experiences, and are rewarded affectively with rich and positive experiences in doing so, may be particularly likely to seek out such opportunities again in the future. Indeed, evidence from a longitudinal study of talented teens suggests that only those teens who learned to enjoy practicing stuck with their talent (e.g., art, music, science) in later years (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 1997).

Ability. Motivation matters; yet work in aesthetics suggests that engagement requires that a person cognitively grasp their experience, whether it be poetry, artwork, or a piece of music (Silvia, 2006). For instance, people assigned to read "The Whitest Parts of the Body," a modern abstract poem from *The Life of Haifisch*, enjoyed it only if they were first clued in that the poem was about sharks (Silvia, 2005). Likewise, in literature, background knowledge and genre expectations shape readers' experiences (Hartung et al., 2017; Hoven et al., 2016). Indeed, one of the best determinants of reading comprehension is not merely the text's difficulty, but how much the reader knows about the topic. Pilots do better at reading aviation texts than non-pilots, and baseball fans do better at reading stories about a ball game (Morrow, Leirer, & Altieri, 1992; Recht & Leslie, 1988). Similarly, appreciating modern jazz requires understanding the conventions that govern it.

Background knowledge may also enhance psychological richness. In one experiment, participants listened to the pianist Nobuyuki Tsujii perform an etude by Chopin (Oishi & Axt, 2019). Beforehand, half the participants were informed that Mr. Tsujii was born blind. Despite watching the same performance and learning the same background information (with the exception of Mr. Tsujii's blindness), only participants who knew he was blind reported greater psychological richness; there were no differences in mood. Music often moves us, but with additional information, it may move us even more. For instance, even knowing the background of Chopin's "revolutionary" Etude, op. 10, no. 12—namely, that it was written as he fled his beloved homeland of Poland for France amidst a failed attempt at revolution, never again to set foot in his home country—might lead to a psychologically richer experience.

In sum, people need to be both able and motivated to benefit from the humanities, if the arts, music, and literature are to enhance their subjective well-being. But whether they are able to do so may depend not only on the person, but the activity.

Do We Benefit More from Some Activities than Others?

While we have largely lumped art, music, and literature together, treating these disciplines as interchangeable overlooks important distinctions (Shim et al., 2019). For instance, in a comparison of cultural activities, novels, cinema, and theatre were among

the best predictors of well-being; poetry and classical music less so (Grossi et al., 2011). We suggest that such differences are best understood in the context of the person by environment interactions discussed earlier. People's individual interests may lead them to seek out, enjoy, and benefit from different activities. As such, features of the activity may impact people's ability and motivation to engage successfully, including their accessibility (e.g., difficulty, cost, duration to subjective well-being payoffs), as well as social and cognitive features (e.g., primarily social vs. solitary, requiring mentalizing or not) that impact the indirect benefits such activities are capable of conferring.

For instance, expressive writing has been found to have profound benefits for psychological well-being, presumably because autobiographical narratives necessarily entail deep processing and reappraisal of life events that lend itself to meaning-making (King, 2001; Pennebaker, 1997). Likewise, Noice and colleagues (2013) find that dramatic acting exercises confer well-being benefits above and beyond that of arts appreciation or singing interventions, in part because they require navigating complex simulated social interactions. And in reading, genre matters; many documented social cognitive benefits are restricted to literary fiction, presumably because fiction provides practice using social-cognitive processes to comprehend social information in a way that nonfiction typically does not.

Whether discipline matters depends, ultimately, on *why* the humanities are beneficial for subjective well-being. If the humanities increase well-being primarily by providing rich, interesting experiences, what matters most may be not the type of experience in question but people's subjective enjoyment of it. If so, any of the humanities may do the trick, as long as people are motivated and able to enjoy them. In contrast, if increases in well-being are driven indirectly via their social and cognitive benefits, then disciplines that maximize those benefits may be most beneficial. More evidence is needed to disentangle these theoretical mechanisms, and to determine which better accounts for the relationship between the humanities and psychological well-being.

Summary

There is growing evidence the humanities make people's lives psychologically richer and happier, both via their direct and indirect effects on emotion and cognition. As in the classic proverb, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime," the humanities offer a powerful potential tool for building better lives, providing people the lasting cognitive and social skills that form the building blocks of a rich, happy, and meaningful life.

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CHAPTER

7

Lessons for Positive Arts and Humanities from the Science of Meaning in Life

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Abstract
This chapter addresses the likely contributions of art and literature to meaning in life. First, the authors define meaning in life, describe its general features, and consider its place in human flourishing. They consider variables (particularly positive mood) that predict meaning in life and link these factors with the arts and humanities. Then, they consider the place of regularities and routines in meaning in life and place such experiences within the arts and humanities. They then consider the feeling of existential mattering as it relates to participation in culture. Finally, they draw an analogy between difficult times and difficult works of art and literature, and explore the ways that effortful meaning-making might contribute to the Good Life.

Key Words: meaning in life, art, literature, eudaimonia, positive affect

The concept of meaning so pervades the human conversation about art, literature, poetry, film, podcasts, TV shows, and so forth that it hardly seems necessary to suggest that the experience of meaning is intertwined with encounters with these media. After slogging through a difficult text or watching a profound but baffling film, it is not at all unusual to sit with friends and pose the question, "What does it all *mean*?" Certainly "meaning" is a multifaceted concept that captures a host of associations, from authorial intent, to resonance to the self, to deep interpretation, and on and on (Leontiev, 2007). Reading Toni Morrison's *Beloved* or experiencing a production of *Hamlet* are likely to be *meaningful* events to the person who comes to these open and ready to be affected. Within philosophy, scholars and students might grapple with the meaning *of* life, seeking to find an objective answer to one of life's Ultimate Questions.

Searching for the underlying Meaning (with a capital M) of works of art, literature, drama, film, music, and dance, etc., or of life itself, can be a profitable way to engage with these topics. We can learn to understand difficult texts or troubling poems—rendering these works meaningful to us. We can learn to look at and see challenging art in ways that allow us to experience meaning even in the obtuse. There is little question that these

pursuits lend meaning to our lives in important ways. Here, however, we do not really broach these ways of connecting with the arts and humanities (or life itself) to extract meaning. Instead, this chapter is occupied with a different sort of meaning—not the meaning of life, but meaning *in* life as an aspect of psychological well-being. Here, we offer an overview of empirical research on this topic, noting especially the kinds of findings that offer lessons for an emerging Positive Humanities.

Here, we focus on the human experience of meaning in life and the likely contributions of experiences with works of art and literature to this important aspect of well-being. We begin by clarifying some aspects of the science of meaning in life, defining meaning in life, describing its general features, and considering its place in the pantheon of human flourishing. Then, we consider variables that predict the experience of meaning in life and seek to link these factors with the arts and humanities. We place special emphasis on the experience of pleasure because the role of positive feelings in meaning in life challenges many assumptions about the psychology of the "Good Life" (and the place of happiness in that life). In turn, it also calls us to think about potential challenges in understanding the role of the arts and humanities in human flourishing, potentially challenging assumptions about these as well. Next we consider the place of regularities and routines in the experience of meaning in life and, again, seek to draw links to experiences with the arts and humanities. We then turn to a central feature of the experience of meaning in life, the feeling of existential mattering, and link this feature to the ways we participate in culture and cultural narratives and recognize ourselves (or not) in works of art and literature. Finally, we draw an analogy between difficult times and difficult works of art and literature, and explore the ways that effortful meaning-making might contribute to the Good Life.

The Experience of Meaning in Life

To begin, it may be helpful to review (and dispel) a few concerns about the scientific study of the experience of meaning in life. People who are not immersed in the research literature on well-being (i.e., most people), often come to the topic of meaning in life with key questions, "How can a scientist possibly study meaning in life? Isn't it an ineffable mystery?" Indeed, it would be impossible to study a topic that cannot be defined. Imperfect but tentatively sufficient definitions have emerged, as we note in the following.

In addition, people may think of a meaningful life as one characterized by profound achievement or significance. Within psychology, meaning is studied not as some objective good that might spring from a life of great accomplishment. Rather, like other psychological variables, we study meaning in life as a *subjective* experience. As is the case with happiness, unhappiness, anger, or love, we assume that the person living a life is the best arbiter of its felt meaningfulness. This choice may represent the best way to think about meaning in life. Consider the following wisdom offered by Klinger (1977, p. 10):

> The meaningfulness of someone's life cannot be inferred just from knowing his or her objective circumstances. Meaningfulness is something very subjective, a pervasive quality of a person's inner life. It is experienced both as ideas and as emotions. It is clear, then, that when we ask about the meaningfulness of someone's life we are asking about the qualities of his or her inner experience.

A final aspect of meaning that warrants note in this context is the fact that meaning in life is not always a *constructed* experience. Although in literary scholarship, a person might undertake a hermeneutical search for underlying meanings of symbols or signs, the experience of meaning may be present in the absence of such a search. There are times when something—a poem, a novel, a painting, a sculpture—fills a person with a sense of meaning, but they cannot explain how or why. We typically refer to such inexplicable meaning as a product of intuition. Such intuitive experiences may be more related to the experience of meaning in life than other, more reflective or deliberative experiences (Heintzelman & King, 2013, 2016). Standing in front of a painting, a museum-goer may find themselves awestruck without knowing why or how. At times such as these, a person may be dumbfounded if asked to explain why the piece is so compelling. Yet, the presence of meaning is no doubt felt. Later in this chapter we will return to the effortful process of meaning-making. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that meaning may be present in the absence of active, effortful construction—that some experiences can simply offer a feeling of meaning without effort (Hicks, Cicero, Trent, Burton, & King, 2010; King & Hicks, 2009).

Defining Meaning in Life

Progress in the science of the experience of meaning in life suffered, for many years, from the absence of a consensual conceptual definition of the construct. Numerous such definitions have been proposed. Reviewing these, King and colleagues offered the following summary, "Lives may be experienced as meaningful when they are felt to have a significance beyond the trivial or momentary, to have purpose, or to have a coherence that transcends chaos" (King, Hicks, Krull, & Del Gaiso, 2006, p. 180). This definition represents the current scholarly consensus that the experience of meaning in life includes at least three components: significance, purpose, and coherence (Costin & Vignoles, 2020; George & Park, 2016; King & Hicks, 2021; Martela & Steger, 2016). Significance entails the degree to which a person believes his or her life has value, worth, and importance. Purpose refers to having goals and direction in life. Coherence, characterized by some modicum of predictability and comprehensibility, allows life to make sense to the person living it (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002). Through this facet, we might say that when a person has the experience of "getting it"—of understanding an event or experience—they have experienced meaning (Hicks et al., 2010).

Measuring Meaning in Life

In keeping with the psychological focus on the *subjective experience* of meaning, meaning in life is often assessed by asking people to rate (e.g., on a scale from 1, not at all, to 7, very much) how meaningful their lives are. Research uses items such as "In life, I have very clear goals and aims," and "My personal existence is very purposeful and meaningful," to assess the experience of meaning in life (Steger et al., 2006). More recently, assessments have been developed that tap the three facets of meaning (Costin & Vignoles, 2020; George & Park, 2016). These measures include items targeting the experiences of significance, purpose, and coherence separately, allowing for a more nuanced sense of how specific experiences contribute to a global or general sense of meaning in life (Costin & Vignoles, 2020; Womick et al., 2019).

Although the notion of measuring the grand or profound experience of meaning in life using simple, face-valid items and ratings scales may seem heretical to some, there is no question that those who rate their lives as meaningful are better off than those who rate their lives as less meaningful in a host of ways, ranging from psychological adjustment, to physical health, to occupational success (Heintzelman & King, 2014a; King & Hicks, 2021). The experience of meaning in life is rightly considered a cornerstone of human functioning.

How meaningful is life, on average?

With the development and implementation of reliable and valid measures of meaning in life, research on the topic has accrued apace. It has become possible to ask about the general features of this experience. Importantly, although often portrayed as a rare accomplishment (Seligman, 2011), meaning in life appears to be a relatively commonplace experience. Many people rate their lives as pretty meaningful (i.e., above the midpoint on a 1–7 scale; Heintzelman & King, 2014a). Some Western philosophers and existential psychologists assume that human existence is inherently meaningless (e.g., Yalom, 1980), but most people do not experience life as lacking in meaning. A review of research studies in which participants completed well-validated measures of meaning in life showed that individuals in a host of circumstances (women with breast cancer, people in treatment for addiction or serious psychological disorders, those who have been hospitalized for life-threatening illnesses) report meaning in life, on average, above the midpoint of the scale (Heintzelman & King, 2014a). Interestingly, this review uncovered just one (rather small) sample who reported their meaning in life to be below (or just at) the midpoint of the scale. That sample was a group of undergraduates.

This conclusion from empirical studies of the experience of meaning in life sits alongside results from large representative samples in which people have rated their experience of meaning in life. These studies typically show a high level of meaning in life. For example, Oishi and Diener (2014) reported the results of a worldwide representative survey conducted in 132 nations. Respondents were asked a "yes or no" question: "Do

you feel your life has a special purpose or meaning?" The results showed that, at the level of nation, the percentage of people answering yes was quite high, 91 percent (Oishi & Diener, 2014). Other representative samples have shown similar results (see Heintzelman & King, 2014a for a review).

Finding that most lives are experienced as pretty meaningful supports the idea that the experience of meaning may have adaptive value. Similar to the way in which scholars have argued for the potential adaptive value of positive mood (which is also commonplace) (Diener et al., 2015), we might consider that the experience of meaning has a role in adaptation (Baumeister & von Hippel, 2020). The "meaning as information" approach (Heintzelman & King, 2014b) argues that feelings of meaningfulness provide information about the extent to which the experiences make sense or are characterized by reliable pattern. Research showing that such feelings do track the presence of pattern in stimuli (Heintzelman, Trent, & King, 2012) support the idea that subjective feelings of meaning provide people with information about whether the world makes sense. The commonplace nature of meaning in life tells us that very often it does.

If life is generally pretty meaningful, why is it that people often subjectively feel that they are longing for meaning? The experience of meaning has long been recognized as a central human motivation (Frankl, 1984 [1946]). Yet, the urge toward meaning, urgent though it may be, sits alongside a reality of the presence of meaning in life, a commonplace experience (King, 2012). This seeming paradox can be understood by placing the motivation for meaning in the context of other adaptive motivations: We do not lose the urge to eat, drink, or connect with other people simply because we have food, water, and loved ones. Rather, adaptive experiences are by definition commonplace (they must be, or a species could not survive; Halusic & King, 2013). Like other adaptive experiences, the experience of meaning in life is common and yet a continued subject of longing.

This urge toward meaning, no doubt, is commonly (if even unintentionally) employed by storytellers to engage listeners and readers. This longing has been famously toyed with by authors in literary works that tempt the reader to find meaning in signs and symbols. For instance, in his short story "Signs and Symbols," Nabokov dares the reader to find meaning in a slew of dismal potential omens, leaving us to wonder if a ringing phone is just a wrong number or a psychiatric hospital calling to inform an elderly couple that their son (a patient in the hospital) has died by suicide. Similarly, the novel *Moby Dick* is filled with moments that challenge the reader to choose a world of reality (without attached meaning, the whale as animal) or a world of subjective meaning (Ahab's view of the whale). As Melville's narrator, Ishmael, finds himself floating on Queequeg's coffin, the reader faces the tantalizing urge to attach symbolic meaning, or to exist in a reality emptied of such associations.

Given its commonplace nature, it makes sense that meaning in life is linked to common experiences—experiences that are widely available to us as human beings. Indeed, research has revealed that meaning may spring from unexpectedly mundane places. Understanding

the variables that foster a sense of meaning in life allows us to see with greater clarity how experiences with the arts and humanities might enhance this experience, as we now consider.

What Makes Life Feel Meaningful?

In this section, we describe research that links potentially mundane experiences with the experience of meaning in life. We review the literature on positive mood, regularities and routine, and finally the experience of mattering to others as important antecedents of meaning in life. For each, we address the potential implications for the ways that experiences in art and literature might enhance the experience of meaning in life.

Positive Mood and Meaning in Life

Perhaps one of the most surprising (yet robust) findings in the literature is that one of the strongest predictors of experiencing life as meaningful is being in a pretty good mood (e.g., King et al., 2006; Tov & Lee, 2016). Meaning in life and positive mood share a strong, positive relationship. This relationship is not explained by other experiences that are correlates of positive mood (e.g., religious faith, Hicks & King, 2008; social relationships, Hicks & King, 2009; Hicks, Schlegel, & King, 2010; global focus or seeing "the Big Picture," Hicks & King, 2007). In one study, participants rated their daily experience of meaning in life each day over the course of five days. The results showed that the strongest predictor of a day being rated as meaningful was not the amount of goal-directed activity, but rather the number of positive feelings that had occurred that day (King et al., Study 2, 2006).

Importantly, the association between positive mood and meaning in life is not simply correlational. That is, it might seem not surprising at all that people who experience life (or a day) as meaningful are also more likely to report themselves as happy (or cheerful, joyous, or feeling enjoyment, etc.). What *is* likely to be surprising is that happiness (that is, just being in a pretty good mood) shares a *causal* relationship with the experience of meaning in life. Inducing positive mood is a relatively simple experimental manipulation. Psychologists who study emotion routinely "put" people in a good mood by having them listen to happy music, write about happy experiences, look at happy pictures, watch funny video clips, or giving them unexpected treats. Research has shown that such positive mood inductions lead reliably to higher reports of meaning in life (e.g., Hicks, Trent, Davis, & King, 2012; King et al., 2006). Interestingly, these results do not reflect simply the "mindless" reports of college student participants. Rather, the association between a positive mood and meaning in life appears to be stronger with age (Chu, Fung, & Chu, 2020; Hicks, Trent, Davis, & King, 2012). Although the vaunted experience of meaning has often been portrayed by psychologists as apart from the simple pleasures of life (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2008; Seligman, 2011; Waterman, 1993), this research shows that

with age (and wisdom?), the experience of positive mood becomes ever more definitive of the experience of meaning in life.[1]

The causal relationship between simple pleasure and meaning in life suggests one important pathway through which encounters with literature and art can promote a sense of meaning in life. It may be an eternal frustration of English professors throughout history that students come to literature thinking about whether or not they "like" it. Yet, the experience of *enjoyment* may be an important way that literature and art contribute to the sense that life is meaningful. When a poem brings us joy, that poem is conferring a sense that life matters, has purpose, and makes sense. It is a life worth living. This likely truth suggests an important lesson for an emerging Positive Humanities, a lesson that is still being fully processed in the field of well-being.

Approaches to well-being have often been bifurcated into two camps, hedonic and eudaimonic well-being (e.g., Kashdan, Biswas-Diener, & King, 2008; cf., Ward & King, 2016). Hedonic well-being refers to how a person feels—the balance of positive and negative mood they experience—as well as the person's evaluation of his or her satisfaction with life (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999). On this view, a happy person is a happy person, no matter where that happiness comes from.

In contrast, the eudaimonic approach to well-being contends that the experiences from which happiness emerges are of great importance in determining whether that happiness is of the right kind (Waterman, 1993; Waterman & Schwartz, 2013). Drawing on Aristotle's definition of happiness (eudaimonia), these scholars view eudaimonic well-being (or happiness) as that kind of happiness that emerges from actualizing one's potential, using one's talents, expressing oneself authentically, or engaging in morally virtuous action (Ryff & Singer, 2008; Ward & King, 2016a). Importantly, positive mood and meaning in life are emblematic of these different forms of well-being: positive mood is definitive of hedonic well-being, and meaning in life is considered a feature of the more erudite experience of eudaimonic well-being.

Clearly, research showing that induced positive mood leads to higher meaning in life challenges the notion that these two experiences are qualitatively different. This blurring of the lines between the mundane experience of mood and the rather more rarefied experience of meaning in life bears an important lesson for the Positive Humanities. There is a tension between the ideas that scholars may bring to the idea of the Good Life and the many, many good lives that are being lived every day. For whatever reason, scholars of the Good Life have often portrayed it as an elite experience reserved for those with

[1] The relationship between being in a pretty good mood and the experience of meaning in life is not mirrored in the link between negative mood and meaning in life. Although negative mood may be negatively correlated with the experience of meaning in life (King et al., 2006), multivariate analyses show that negative feelings are not as strongly related to the experience of meaning as positive feelings (Tov & Lee, 2016). In addition, negative mood inductions do not lead to lower meaning in life (compared to neutral mood; King et al., 2006).

the motivation and intellectual ability to seek it out (Ward & King, 2016a), as if human flourishing is an acquired taste. The denigration of enjoyment as an appropriate criteria by which art, music, or literature might be judged belies the likely value of this experience in the "higher" experience of meaning in life.

Literature, poetry, art, drama, dance, and music that inspire pleasure may be vital components of a meaningful (if potentially low brow) life (Ward & King, 2016a). Importantly, even eudaimonic researchers have shown that watching a favorite TV show can contribute to the satisfaction of organismic needs (Adachi, Ryan, Frye, McClurg, & Rigby, 2018). Activities that may seem superficial—the easily inspiring poem or the directly applicable story—might well serve the higher motivations toward the Good Life. Scholars of Positive Humanities are well served to note William James's (1950 [1890], p. 125) assertion, "All Goods are disguised in the vulgarity of their concomitants in this workaday world. But Woe to him who can only recognize them when he thinks them in their pure and abstract form." There may be meaning lurking in the quotidian aspects of life.

Of course, happiness or being in a good mood is not the only experience that fosters a sense of meaning in life, but research has shown that when other (perhaps more putatively "meaningful") sources of the experience of meaning in life (e.g., social relationships, religious faith) are lacking, positive mood can serve a compensatory function. As an example, happy people who are lonely experience meaning in life on par with those who have many social connections (Hicks, Schlegel, & King, 2010).

Figure 7.1 shows a schematic of the compensatory results described in the preceding paragraph. As can be seen, typically research has shown that those high in more stable sources of meaning (such as social relationships or religious faith) report high levels of meaning in life regardless of their mood. However, among those low on those sources of meaning (shown in the dashed line in the figure), positive mood can provide a boost of meaning in life. This pattern has been demonstrated with a host of predictors of meaning in life, ranging from religious faith (Hicks & King, 2008) to financial status (Ward & King, 2016b). Individuals whose life circumstances are lacking in important ways may nevertheless experience high levels of meaning in life as a function of positive mood. Thus, even watching a sitcom, or reading a popular novel or a poem (that horrifyingly rhymes), that momentarily boosts positive mood may allow the person to experience meaning in life.

It is worth noting, too, that those mood inductions described here reveal a simple truth: pleasure is a relatively easy experience to come by. That easy experience may be an important outcome of experiences with the arts and humanities, and our capacity to enjoy is a link to the experience of meaning in life. This simple pathway from pleasures to the experience of meaning is recognized in literature itself. The main character of Sartre's *Nausea*, for example, experiences a respite from his existential longing when he hears "Some of These Days" playing in a bar. Similarly, Ellen Glasgow's heroine in *Barren Ground*, though buffeted by innumerable negative experiences, recognizes a central truth,

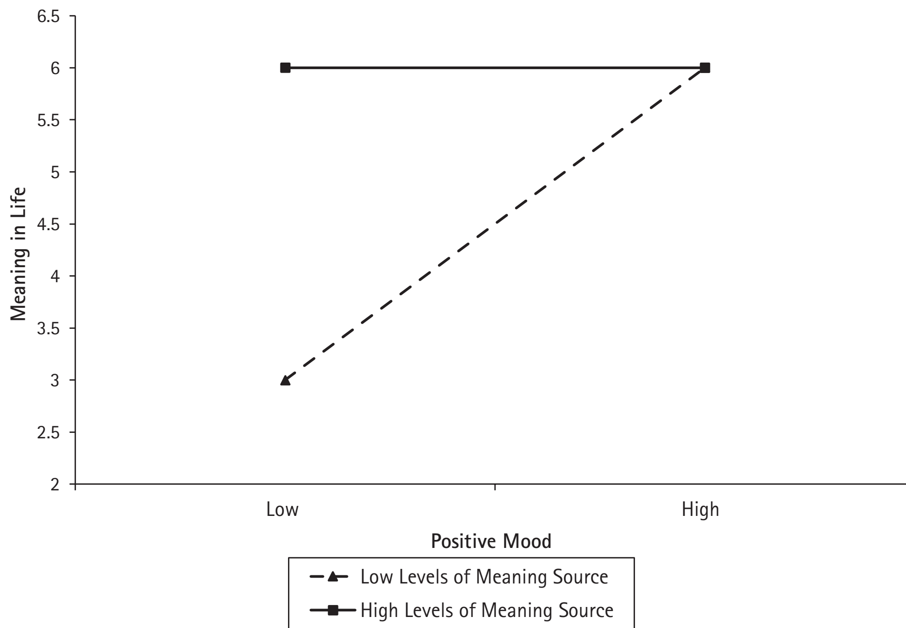

Figure 7.1. Positive mood compensates for low levels of other sources of meaning in life.

"where beauty exists the understanding soul can never remain desolate" (Glasgow, 1985 [1925], p. 510). In literature, sometimes, simple pleasure may be sufficient to quell the longing for meaning. The inspirational aspects of nature (and art, music, and literature) can serve to make life worth living, often through the experience of joy.

Regularities, Routines, and Ease of Processing

The coherence aspect of meaning in life suggests that when life makes sense, it is likely to be felt as meaningful. This idea led to research on the ways that exposure to stimuli that "make sense" might influence the experience of meaning in life. A series of studies showed that exposure to objective coherence (vs. incoherence) led to reports of higher meaning in life (Heintzelman, Trent, & King, 2012). More recently, research has extended this idea to living out of regularities in habit and routine. This work showed that self-reports of routinization (measured with items like, "I do pretty much the same things every day") were positively correlated with meaning in life, an association that was not affected by controlling for religiosity (certainly a source of routine in many people lives) or mindfulness (the very opposite of routinization; Heintzelman & King, 2019). In addition, in an experience sampling study, participants were likely to indicate higher momentary meaning in life when their behavior at that moment represented their everyday routine (Heintzelman & King, 2019).

These results have implications for the ways that the arts and humanities may support a sense of meaning in life. Consider the familiarity of plots or feelings unfolding

on repeated experiences with books, poems, works of art, and so forth. Such experiences may be quiet sources of meaning in life—attained via the enactment and completion of a known whole. Well-loved genres, with all of their conventions and tropes, may be watering holes of meaning for people who engage with them. The familiar regularity of forms used in literature may also spur a sense of meaning in life. Surely, the routine of iambic pentameter is part of the whole that leads us to experience meaning in Shakespeare.

Moving to an even lower level of abstraction, research has examined the link between ease of processing and the experience of meaning in life. Stimuli that are easy to process are understood without difficulty—they readily make sense. When texts are processed easily, they are more likely to be experienced as "right" or true (Alter & Oppenheimer, 2009; Schwarz, Song, & Xu, 2009). A simple example of the effects of ease of processing is the "rhyme and reason" effect. This effect refers to the fact that rhyming statements (or aphorisms) are more likely to be viewed as true compared to statements that make the same point do not rhyme (e.g., "What sobriety conceals, alcohol reveals" vs. "What sobriety conceals, alcohol unmasks"; McGlone & Tofighbakhsh, 2000). Rhyming texts (that are easily processed) are more likely to be experienced as true. Such results certainly have implications for poets everywhere.

Can something as subtle as ease of processing infuse life with meaning? One study tested this possibility (Trent, Lavelock, & King, 2013). Participants completed a scale measuring meaning in life printed in a hard-to-read (vs. easy-to-read) font. The hard-to-read font included characters in a random array of font styles and sizes. Results showed that meaning in life was rated as lower when the scale was presented in a hard-to-read font. Thus, such subtle experiences of processing ease may foster a sense of the "rightness" of the world, the feeling of meaning (Hicks et al., 2010).

The idea that texts that are easily processed are likely to feel meaningful suggests, again, the value of repeated readings of the same text, not only for what is newly discovered in beloved works, but in the completion of something known. When texts or works of art become an overlearned and ritualized part of life, they are likely to imbue life with meaning.

Mattering

Research incorporating measures of the three facets of meaning in life points to a potentially provocative conclusion: it may be that meaning is (mostly) about mattering. Significance refers to the degree to which people find their lives to have importance and value, and often in ways that transcend the day-to-day. "Existential mattering" is measured with items such as, "Even considering how big the universe is, I can say that my life matters" (Costin & Vignoles, 2020). Such scales are thought to track the ways in which feeling that one is contributing to the world, leaving a mark, or legacy, can bolster the feeling that life is meaningful. Some research supports the idea that mattering is the most consistent predictor of meaning in life, compared to the other facets of purpose

and coherence (Costin & Vignoles, 2020; Womick et al., 2019). When people perceive that their existence matters to others, they feel their lives are meaningful (Stillman, et al., 2009). Importantly, like positive mood and routine, social connections are the rule, not the exception, in human life (Leary & Cox, 2008). Most people do matter to the people around them.

Existential mattering is not only about having deeply satisfying social relationships. A key way in which human beings experience their lives as significant—as mattering, perhaps even after death—is through investment in culture (Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 1991; Vess, 2013). To the extent that art and literature are emblematic of culture, engaging with these media is investing in culture, suggesting that art and literature that allow us to recognize common aspects of human experience may be expected to enhance meaning in life. Identifying with characters and their strivings can allow a person to feel a sense of vicarious belonging and a sense that their own life story enacts a shared narrative (Breen et al., 2016).

One aspect of existential mattering is the sense that one has made a mark on others, enough to be remembered. Surely being forgotten can be a common, mundane experience. Having met someone, say, only once for a few minutes, it might not seem surprising that the person might have forgotten us. One study examined whether the experience of being forgotten in this very mundane way might have impact on meaning in life. In the study, participants simply came to the lab for a brief assessment and then returned two days later. The student experimenter was the same on both occasions, and for some participants she said, "Were you here on Tuesday? I don't remember you." Participants who were given this bit of information reported lower meaning in life than those in comparison groups (King & Geise, 2011, Study 1). The effect of being forgotten on meaning in life has been replicated and extended in other studies showing that having a place in another person's social memory is a sign of importance, of mattering (Ray et al., 2019).

When a person finds their experience reflected in art and literature, the person may feel powerfully attached to culture that will outlive the self. However, regarding the potential role of such works in the experience of mattering, we might ask these questions: Who is remembered/noticed/and represented in art, literature, poetry, etc.? Who might feel that they are being forgotten? Considering these questions compels us to consider the importance of representation and the capacity for readers and viewers to recognize themselves in works of art and literature and the creators of these—to know that they and their experience are, indeed, noticed (Breen et al., 2016).

Surely, human beings may identify with very different others and experience a oneness with humanity. At the same time, considering the previously noted effects of ease of processing on the experience of meaning in life, it seems likely that ready connections and identifications may be optimal for enhancing a sense of mattering. Importantly, positive representations of group identities in art and literature can be vital to the positive experience of personal identity (Filipovic, 2018; Smith-D'Arezzo & Musgrove, 2011).

Of course, not all meaning in life emerges from "easy" or even positive experiences, such as the pleasure of a Dave Brubeck number or a morning cup of coffee. People often seek out experiences in art and literature that are difficult, complex, and challenging—potentially leading to emotions beyond pleasure (Mares, Bartsch, & Bonus 2016). How can we place meaning in life in the context of more difficult, challenging experiences? We examine this question next.

Meaning from Chaos

Very often poetry, fiction, art, and music not only support and promote a sense of meaning in life but *challenge* our assumptions about the things we think are meaningful—what it is that makes us significant, gives our lives purpose, or how things make sense. What are the implications of such challenging experiences for our sense of meaning in life? One way to answer this question is to consider the role of challenging experiences in personality development.

Block (1982) used the Piagetian concepts of assimilation and accommodation as a way to understand the role of difficult experience in adult personality development. In assimilation, the person is able to integrate new or challenging experiences into existing ways of thinking about the world (i.e., schemas). In accommodation, new or challenging experiences require a central change in these existing ways of making sense. Accommodation involves the revision of old ways of understanding and interacting with the world and development of new ways to exist—in a word, meaning-making. Accommodation can occur for both negative and positive experiences. Instances of profound experiences such as awe can foster accommodative processing.

Researchers have used personal narratives of life experiences to understand the implications of assimilation and accommodation (i.e., meaning-making) for well-being and maturity. In this research, people have been asked to write (or tell) narratives that "tell the story" of their experience. These stories have then been content analyzed to identify narrative features that correlate with well-being (including meaning in life) and other aspects of personality development (e.g., Weststrate et al., 2018).

One type of content analysis has focused on specific features of the narratives that are associated with high levels of coherence, such as foreshadowing, happy endings, and a high level of closure. To get a sense for the analogy between these personal stories and literary works, consider an example of foreshadowing, found in a study of parents who wrote stories of finding out they would be parenting a child with Down syndrome (King et al., 2000, p. 519):

> At our baby shower, we opened a box with a child care book. My husband opened it at random and started reading aloud. I looked at him in horror as we both realized he was reading about Down syndrome.

Narrative features indicating a highly coherent story are most likely to be related to psychological well-being and self-reported meaning in life (King et al., 2000; Lilgendahl, Helson, & John, 2013).

However, not all life experiences end happily. Indeed, stories that lack trouble—the drama of accommodation—are unlikely to be "good stories." Are there outcomes beyond subjective feelings of happiness and meaning that might be of value in such cases? Here we might consider outcomes such as wisdom or psychological maturity. For example, ego development refers to the complexity with which a person experiences the self and world (Hy & Loevinger, 1996). Interestingly, research has shown that personal narratives featuring a high level of exploration, searching, and accommodation are associated with higher levels of ego development, concurrently and prospectively (King & Hicks, 2007). This means that individuals who describe their life experiences as involving important identity-challenges and a need to rewrite their perspectives on what makes life worth living are more likely to show increases in ego development over time. It is important to bear in mind that ego development—this construct that taps into the complexity and insight a person brings to experience—is not related to well-being. Thus, this newfound way of looking at the world does not necessarily mean sacrificing happiness (nor does it mean necessarily gaining happiness).

Can we consider difficult times to be analogous to difficult works of art and literature? In the context of art and literature, "difficult" has multiple meanings. It may indicate hard to understand or comprehend. It can indicate content that is challenging because it includes descriptions of traumatic events or content that calls into question one's preconceived notions about life and the world. Can grappling with these various forms of difficulty potentially lead to gains, if not in happiness and meaning in life, then in insight or maturity? Some evidence suggests the answer to these questions is yes. First, some studies have shown that encounters with existentially challenging texts and works of art automatically spur a search for pattern (Proulx & Heine, 2009; Proulx, Heine, & Vohs, 2010). Perhaps the mind searching for connection can "make sense," even when the world is not offering it readily. In addition, research supports the idea that activities that nudge a person to take varying perspectives and to consider a variety of ways to think about a problem can enhance the experience of wisdom (Law & Staudinger, 2016). If we draw a link between difficult experiences and difficult works of art and literature, we can see that grappling with these might not lead to happiness or subjective meaning in life, but they may lead to insight and wisdom and may allow a person to experience happiness and meaning in life of a different, perhaps more complex kind (King & Hicks, 2007).

Closing Thoughts

Before ending this chapter, we wish to offer one last lesson for the Positive Humanities. An unfortunate characteristic of positive psychology is the tendency to view the valued goods of life as rarities that must be earned. A movement meant to illuminate the strengths

that characterize human life has, to its detriment, too often set the goods of life on pedestals and suggested that only by living a certain way, reading a certain book, or attending a certain workshop can one attain them. And nowhere is this unfortunate impulse clearer than in the way positive psychologists talk about the meaningful life. The meaningful life is not a rarity, and it is not separate from the mundane aspects of our existence. It emerges in and through common experiences, including our experiences with works of art and literature.

We hope to instill in those interested in the Positive Humanities the conviction that good things in life need not be rare to be valuable. Sometimes even the highest and most precious human experiences can be found in the mundane, the workaday. The need for meaning should not blind us to the fact that human lives are pretty meaningful already. Art and literature may challenge us and may challenge even this simple statement. But even these challenging experiences are part and parcel of the good lives that are available to humans. We invite the reader to consider the poetry of Mary Oliver. The popularity of her poems (popular poems!) to everyday people has never been in doubt. But the scholarly world never fully embraced these inspiring works that transformed the everyday into the sacred (Syme, 2019). In her poem, *Wild Geese*, Oliver beautifully summarizes the truth about good, meaningful lives:

> You do not have to walk on your knees
> for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
> You only have to let the soft animal of your body
> love what it loves.

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CHAPTER

8 Cultivating Psychological Well-Being through Arts-Based Interventions

Olena Helen Darewych

Abstract
Historically, humans across many different cultures have used the arts as healing practices and forms of self-expression. In recent decades, the arts have become suitable creative interventions in clinical practices for improving the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being of individuals. This chapter provides an overview of the creative arts therapies and presents arts-based interventions that have the potential to cultivate psychological well-being in individuals of all ages. Specifically, the following arts-based interventions, grounded in Ryff's (1989) multidimensional psychological well-being model, are described in detail: Living in the Present, Eco Sculpt, Bridge Drawing with Path (BDP), Island of Connectivity, Sources of Meaning, and Nesting Doll. Case examples illustrate how these arts-based interventions have been integrated within clinical, educational, research, and supervisory contexts. The chapter concludes with some reflections in relation to incorporating these arts-based interventions in research with well-being self-report questionnaires.

Key Words: arts, creative arts therapies, arts-based interventions, positive psychology, psychological well-being

Introduction

Historically, humans across many different cultures have used the arts as healing practices, forms of self-expression, and pathways toward self-discovery and belonging. For example, the Egyptians and Greeks used drama and music to express their daily experiences, while the ancient San people in Africa created rock paintings to protect themselves and their animals from evil spirits (Malchiodi, 2007). In today's society, the arts continue to play a vital role in contributing to human flourishing. As a result, in recent decades, the arts, including dance, drama, drawing, journaling, music, poetry, and sculpting, have become suitable creative interventions in clinical practices for improving the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being of individuals of all ages. Such clinical arts-based interventions are commonly administered by creative arts therapists (e.g., art therapists, dance/movement therapists, drama therapists, expressive arts therapists, and music therapists) as vehicles by which individuals process grief (Thompson & Neimeyer, 2014),

express inner deep conflicts and emotions in a symbolic manner (Puig, Lee, Goodwin, & Sherrard, 2006), gain a sense of accomplishment (Rubin, 2016), and connect with the world around them with all their senses (McNiff, 2009). Creative arts therapists continuously adapt arts-based interventions to suit individuals' emotional and physical states, preferred art forms, and cultural experiences.

Since the inception of the field of positive psychology, a number of creative arts therapists and psychologists have developed arts-based interventions specifically grounded in positive psychology's theoretical underpinnings. Positive psychology's contemporary theoretical framework does not ignore individuals' deficits and life challenges, but devotes more attention to their positive human attributes, such as growth, resiliency, strengths, and well-being (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). As a result, these recently designed positive-oriented arts-based interventions invite individuals in clinical and nonclinical settings to creatively build upon character strengths (O'Hanlon & Bertolino, 2012), express gratitude (Tomasulo, 2019), elicit positive emotions (Wilkinson & Chilton, 2018), achieve life's meaning (Steger et al., 2013), explore best possible selves (Owens & Patterson, 2013), and cultivate psychological well-being (Darewych, 2019; Darewych & Riedel Bowers, 2017).

In regard to the concept of psychological well-being, psychologist Ryff (1989) formulated a theoretical model of psychological well-being which delineates six dimensions that contribute to an individual's mental health and wellness: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Research has shown that individuals with higher levels of psychological well-being tend to have the capacity to make independent decisions, undergo personal growth, connect with their environment, establish healthy relationships with others within multiple contexts (e.g., education, family, work), gain a sense of life meaning, and acknowledge their multiple self-aspects (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

This chapter presents action-oriented and reflective arts-based interventions grounded in Ryff's (1989) multidimensional well-being model that enable individuals to form autonomy, identify personal goals, reconnect with their natural surroundings, establish positive relationships, examine sources that provide them with life meaning, and gain insight into their multiple aspects of self. The following participatory-style arts-based interventions will be described in detail: *Living in the Present*, *Eco Sculpt*, *Bridge Drawing with Path (BDP)*, *Island of Connectivity*, *Sources of Meaning*, and *Nesting Doll*. Case examples illustrate the use of these arts-based interventions within clinical, educational, and supervisory contexts.

Autonomy

Maslow's (1970) self-actualization theory and Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory have long emphasized the importance of autonomy and self-regulation to individuals' psychological well-being. Individuals with higher levels of autonomy have the inner

capacity to engage in activities with confidence, make independent decisions, and regulate their emotions and behaviors (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

Living in the Present (Zeller Cooper, 2019) is a sequential arts-based intervention that encourages individuals to actively participate in a creative act that centers on the present rather than on the past or future. When administering the arts-based intervention in clinical settings, an individual is first directed to independently select a color photograph (approximately 8.5 × 11 inches) that most intrigues them from one of the theme-based modules (e.g., animals, nature, travel). Once they have chosen a color photograph, they are invited to read the corresponding short story. After the reading, the individual verbally shares with the mental health practitioner their personal associations related to the color photograph and the reading. The mental health practitioner then administers an outlined template of the color photograph to the individual to color in with their preferred drawing materials (e.g., markers, oil pastels, soft pastels, digital media).

Although the *Living in the Present* (Zeller Cooper, 2019) arts-based intervention was primarily developed for older adults with early onset dementia who tend to cognitively struggle with recalling past memories and imagining the future, the creative method can also be administered to other clinical adult populations to sustain their cognitive abilities, such as viewing, focusing, reading, speaking, making autonomous decisions, coordinating hand-eye movements, and expressing thoughts and emotions. Regardless of how much or how little assistance the individual requires from the mental health practitioner, the result remains a personal independent accomplishment. The arts-based intervention can be used with individuals and is equally effective in a group setting.

Figure 8.1 depicts the camper color photograph from the *Living in the Present* (Zeller Cooper, 2019) travel module and the following is its corresponding short story:

> Campers on wheels first began their journeys around 1910. People have always been interested in traveling and seeing new places. In order to do this in a vehicle, there needed to be roads to travel on, gas stations, places to purchase supplies and areas to park vehicles for the night. Traveling in a vehicle that included a small fridge and cooking area, as well as a place to sleep, offered independence and freedom. This also made traveling more economical. Now there are many different kinds of camper vehicles that range in size and amenities, such as air-conditioning, heating, electricity, shower, toilet, sitting and sleeping areas. Some have pop-up roofs, or pull-out extensions to offer more space when parked. Some can pull a smaller vehicle for touring, bicycles or even a motorcycle. (para. 1)

Figure 8.2 portrays a camper template colored in by Nathaniel (pseudonym), a man in his late twenties with a developmental disability. The *Living in the Present* theme-based modules were presented to Nathaniel during a ninety-minute, person-centered (Rogers, 1951), digital art therapy session in Canada wherein he created art using the Fresh Paint art-making application on a password protected touchscreen laptop. First, Nathaniel independently chose the camper color photograph and then read the camper story out

Figure 8.1. *Living in the Present*: camper.

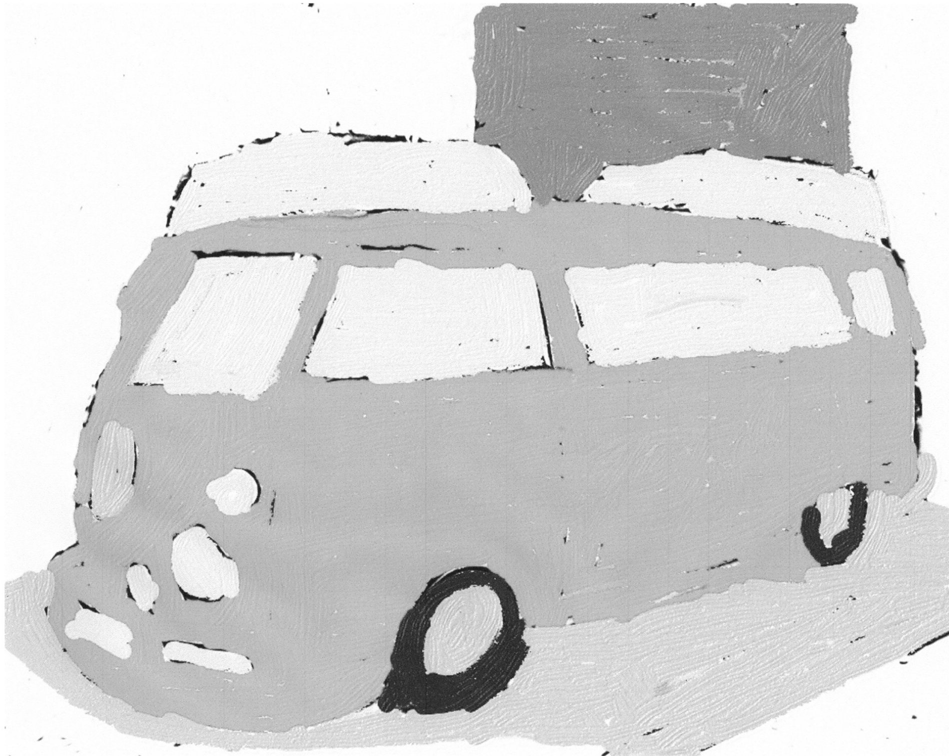

Figure 8.2. Camper.

loud. After the reading, the art therapist uploaded the camper template in Fresh Paint. Using a stylus, Nathaniel colored in the camper template with blue and yellow simulated paint. When prompted with the guiding question, "If you could take a trip in this camper van today, where would you go?" Nathaniel responded, "To my family's cottage." When asked, "What or who would you take with you?" Nathaniel exclaimed, "My mom." The guiding questions inspired Nathaniel to independently draw an image of his family's cottage using the Fresh Paint application.

Nathaniel, who often finds creating with a blank digital canvas an overwhelming experience, enjoyed coloring in the camper template with his favorite colors. At the end of the session, Nathaniel was proud of his final digital artwork. The arts-based intervention enabled him to use his cognitive working memory, to regulate positive and negative emotions, and to gain a sense of accomplishment in the present moment. Further, the creative sequential process activated his imaginative thinking abilities and inspired him to talk about the significant people and places in his life with the art therapist.

Environmental Mastery

The philosophy of ecopsychology gives emphasis to the idea that humans are organically connected with their senses to the natural world and that continuous engagement with the natural environment enables individuals to maintain their mental health and well-being (Roszak, 1992). Ecotherapy, a form of ecopsychology, is a developing therapeutic practice that occurs outdoors and invites an individual to reconnect with nature, either passively (e.g., viewing, exposure to) or actively (e.g., walking, running) (Jordan & Hinds, 2016). Simply the viewing of natural settings or images can have a positive impact on individuals' psychological well-being (Wolsko & Lindberg, 2013). Recent studies have shown that ecotherapy can be an effective approach to alleviating individuals' anxiety (Mackey & Neill, 2010) and attention difficulties (Kuo & Taylor, 2004). A handful of creative arts therapists are now exploring the intersectionality between the arts and nature and have found that both approaches, in combination within clinical practice, have the potential to complement and enrich each other while supporting individuals' wellness (Kopytin & Rugh, 2017).

Eco Sculpt is a multi-sensory arts-based intervention that invites individuals or groups to creatively explore their natural environment and shape a sculpture using nature-based objects. Figure 8.3 illustrates an *Eco Sculpt* created by youth orphans (aged 12–18) in Ukraine during a one-hour strengths-based group art therapy session which occurred outdoors in a natural beach setting. The group was prompted to create a sand sculpture using found objects from the natural beach setting symbolically representing humor, one of the Values in Action (VIA) 24 character strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). This particular group collectively chose to create a sand sculpture using beach sand, shells, seaweed, and sandstones to create a portrait of American musician Elvis Presley. During the post-intervention group dialogue, group members reflected on how listening to some

Figure 8.3. *Eco Sculpt.*

of Elvis Presley's songs uplifts their spirits, kindles laughter, and evokes positive emotions such as joy in them. Near the end of the session, two of the group members sang one of Elvis Presley's songs in English.

The group art therapy session, which occurred outdoors in a natural beach setting, permitted the youth orphans (who predominately reside in orphanages located in or near an industrial city with minimal green space) the opportunity to gain a sense of appreciation of nature and to reconnect with the natural beach setting with their senses. More specifically, the *Eco Sculpt* arts-based intervention encouraged the youth orphans during the group process to utilize their character strengths of creativity, curiosity, social intelligence, and teamwork, and express the character strength of humor verbally and nonverbally through creative means.

Personal Growth

Positive psychological functioning requires an individual to continuously undergo personal growth along their developmental life span (Ryff & Singer, 1996). Establishing concrete short-term and long-term goals inspires individuals to grow, overcome life challenges, and envision their future (Emmons, 2003). The inability to establish a growth or

goal mindset may lead one to struggle with "developmental paralysis" (Damon, 2009)—a period in their lives when they are overwhelmed by feelings of emptiness, boredom, or being stuck.

Bridge Drawing with Path (BDP; Darewych, 2013) is a goal-oriented arts-based intervention that directs an individual to draw a bridge that is connected to a path and then prompts them to write or verbally state where the path is leading them to. It is theorized that the path depicted in the drawing symbolically represents their life pathway, which is leading them to a goal they are hoping to achieve. In clinical settings, the BDP is well-suited for youth or adults who are psychologically preparing to undergo transition (i.e., career, educational, environment, relationship) and are open to exploring their present and future goals in a creative way (Darewych & Campbell Brown, 2016). Upon completion of the BDP, the following guiding questions could be presented to the individual: Why do you want to achieve this goal? Is your goal realistic and attainable? What do you hope your goal will provide you or allow you to do? Do any obstacles stand in your way from achieving this goal? If yes, what are the internal (e.g., character strengths) and external (e.g., peers) resources that will assist you with overcoming the obstacles?

To date, in the research arena, the BDP has been administered to youth orphans in Ukraine (Darewych, 2013), adults with autism spectrum disorders in Canada (Darewych, Newton, & Farrugie, 2018), and higher education students in Britain and Canada (Darewych, 2014).

Figure 8.4 illustrates a BDP created by Sophia (pseudonym), a female undergraduate art student in her early twenties studying in Britain. Sophia completed her BDP drawing during a single thirty-minute research session. On a sheet of 8.5 × 11-inch white paper with a pencil, she sketched a bridge connected to a path leading to "autonomy and complete self-reliance . . . a path home." The BDP provided Sophia for a brief moment during her academic journey to pause and reflect on her future possible self and future journey back home upon graduation.

Positive Relationships with Others

Ryff (1989) identified interpersonal connections as an essential element of psychological well-being. Therefore, it is important for individuals throughout their life journey to establish healthy relationships in multiple contexts (i.e., community, family, work) in order to maintain their overall wellness.

Island of Connectivity is an arts-based intervention that encourages individuals in a group setting to contribute jointly to one creative finished product. When administering the arts-based intervention, group members are first presented with the following solution-focused "stranded on an island" scenario:

> You are all on a boat that has struck an obstacle in the water that has caused some damage to the boat. There is an island nearby that everyone can swim to with their life jackets on. As a

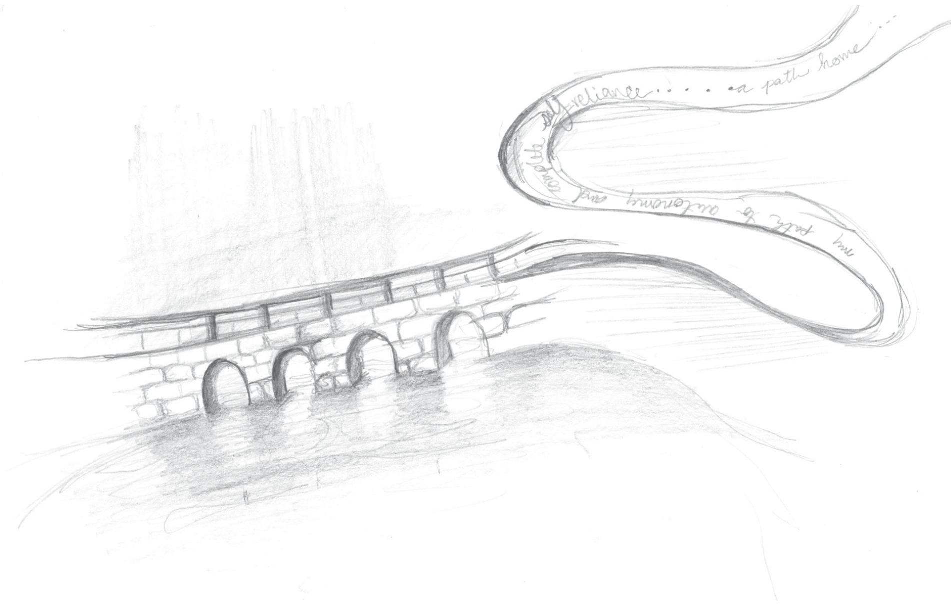

Figure 8.4. *Bridge Drawing with Path.*

> group, you are able to take five items and a sack of food to the island with you for survival purposes until the rescue team arrives. On the island, there is a waterfall and a cluster of fruit trees. As a group, determine who will build temporary shelter from the sun and wind, and which individuals will prepare food. Additionally, determine actions to quicken your rescue. Finally, name your island.

The group is then invited to draw or build their island. Figure 8.5 depicts an *Island of Connectivity* drawing created by youth orphans (aged 12–18) during a group art therapy session in Ukraine. This particular group of eight chose to draw their island on a large 22 × 24-inch white poster board using colored markers. The bottom half of the circular drawing depicts the five items (i.e., rope, matches, first aid kit, compass, and knife) and food (i.e., bread, salt, spaghetti, sugar, potatoes) that they selected to take with them to the island for survival purposes. In order to quicken their rescue, the group decided to build a wooden raft with a sail that would accommodate everyone and build an "SOS" fire. At the end of the creative process, group members named their island "Chance."

The *Island of Connectivity* arts-based intervention instilled hope and feelings of connectedness in the youth orphans. Further, the creative group process encouraged them to use their interpersonal and problem-solving skills, and to build positive relationships with one another.

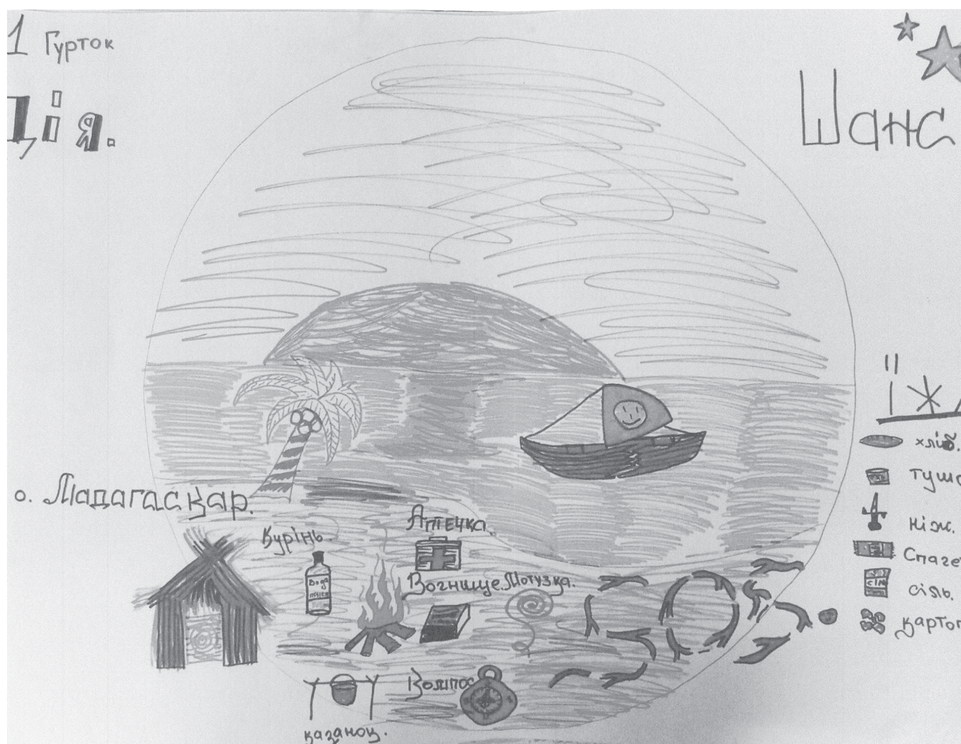

Figure 8.5. *Island of Connectivity.*

Purpose in Life

Individuals throughout their life journey search for life purpose or meaning. Finding meaning in one's life can be viewed as a significant existential task. Psychologist Steger (2012) described meaning as "the web of connections, understandings, and interpretations that help us comprehend our experience and formulate plans directing energies to the achievement of our desired future" (p. 165). Studies investigating the concept of meaning have found a positive association between meaning in life and psychological well-being (Zika & Chamberlain, 1992). Individuals who struggle to achieve a personal sense of a meaningful life may succumb to feelings of emptiness (Frankl, 2006 [1946]). Over decades now, several mental health practitioners have emphasized that the creative process in and of itself can reduce individuals' feelings of emptiness and illuminate sources that provide them with life meanings (Allen, 2005; Lantz, 1993). Moreover, psychologist Csikszentmihalyi (1996) proclaimed that "creativity is a central source of meaning in our lives" (p. 1). Studies have identified the following as primary sources that provide individuals with a sense of life meaning: significant relationships, career and academic achievements, belonging to community organizations, spirituality, and self-development (Damon, 2009; Darewych, 2014; Steger et al., 2013).

Sources of Meaning (Darewych & Riedel Bowers, 2017) is an arts-based intervention that prompts an individual to take a few minutes to visually explore pre-cut magazine images of colors, objects, symbols, and people that are laid out in front of them on a table. After viewing the images, they are directed to select one image and then, on a sheet of paper or in their journal, to freely write about how the element depicted in the image (i.e., person, place, or object) fills their mind, body, and soul with life meaning.

Figure 8.6 portrays a magazine image chosen by Chloe (pseudonym), a female psychotherapy student in her thirties who engaged in the *Sources of Meaning* arts-based intervention during a one-hour clinical supervision session. Chloe selected a magazine image depicting renaissance artist Leonardo da Vinci walking down a cobblestone alley lane. The following presents her free writing associated with the Leonardo image:

Figure 8.6. *Sources of Meaning.*

> Leonardo, it was his imagination that has fascinated me for a very long time. He would dream, create and think his way around things—he didn't have all the answers, but that didn't stop him. He makes me wonder about so much—like he's walking through the streets while the world goes by, everyone unaware that he's making change in this moment. I think Imagination creates meaning. Both are unique human qualities. This image of Leonardo reminds me to live with my imagination, so I may bring meaning to my life.

The arts-based intervention provided Chloe, near the end of her academic and clinical internship journey, a micro-moment to reflect on an artist from the past who continuously sparks her personal creativity and imagination, and provides meaning to her life.

Self-acceptance

The post-modern theories of multiple selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and self-aspects (McConnell, 2011) contest the viewpoint that humans possess one single unified self. These theories stress that individuals are made of multiple self-aspects which develop out of their life experiences, and collectively form who they are. Individuals who accept themselves for who they are and acknowledge their multiple aspects of self, including strong and weak attributes, generally possess a more positive attitude toward the self (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

Nesting Doll (Darewych, 2019) is an arts-based intervention that prompts an individual to playfully discover their inside and outside self-aspects (specifically, past, present, and possible future selves), and obtain a better understanding of how their self-aspects behave, view the world around them, and function with others. The arts-based intervention is well-suited for youth and adults in individual and group settings. When administering the *Nesting Doll* in clinical settings, the mental health practitioner first presents a colorful decorated wooden Matryoshka doll, also known as a nesting doll, a type that was first crafted in Russia. When viewed with a psychological lens, the doll's one-inside-another figure symbolically exemplifies one's repertoire of self-aspects which are interrelated and continuously transforming in size and shape. There are moments when certain self-aspects are in alliance with one another, and then there are moments when certain self-aspects are engaged in an internal dragon fight. The individual is then prompted to define five of their self-aspects with "I am" statements (e.g., I am a friend, a sibling, a parent, a volunteer). Once they identify their five self-aspects, they are given decorative paper, colored markers, scissors, glue, and a multi-size nesting doll paper template, and are directed to create their personal nesting doll ranking their self-aspects from the most prominent (the largest) to the least prominent (the smallest). The most prominent doll may represent their self-aspect that is growing and undergoing self-transformation, whereas the least prominent doll may characterize their vulnerable self or their self-aspect that is becoming less relevant in their inner or outer world. Upon completion of their nesting doll art piece, the individual is prompted to look at each self-aspect individually and to reflect on each

self-aspect's character strengths and values (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The *Nesting Doll* arts-based intervention has been adapted for educational settings as well, particularly for high school and higher education students (see Darewych, 2019).

Figure 8.7 depicts a five-size *Nesting Doll* created by Laryssa (pseudonym), who attended an intensive four-day group psycho-education workshop for youth orphans (aged 17–22) in Ukraine. At the time of the workshop, Laryssa was a fourth-year university student who was approaching the end of her academic journey and was psychologically preparing for her transition to the workforce. During the second day of the workshop, the *Nesting Doll* arts-based intervention was administered to all group members. Laryssa created her five-size nesting doll using the template and floral-patterned scrapbook paper. Her nesting doll presents her five self-aspects of (from most prominent to least prominent): "journalist, leader, translator, student, and photographer." After identifying each self-aspect, she wrote on the back of her nesting doll two strengths and one value for each self-aspect. During the post-intervention group dialogue, Laryssa verbally described her "student" self-aspect's character strength of perseverance and how her budding "journalist" self-aspect who values "optimism" was growing and hoping to acquire employment in the near future that would sustain her whole self emotionally and financially.

Figure 8.7. *Nesting Doll.*

The *Nesting Doll* arts-based intervention offered Laryssa and the other youth orphans, in a group setting, the opportunity to create a concrete artwork depicting their inside and outside self-aspects. Moreover, the creative method encouraged them to envision their future professional self-aspects, and to explore resources (i.e., people, places, and things) that will support their future professional self-aspects.

Conclusion

Due to the continuous contribution of the arts to human flourishing, the arts—such as dance, drama, drawing, journaling, and music—have become suitable creative interventions in clinical practices for improving the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being of individuals of all ages. This chapter has presented action-oriented and reflective arts-based interventions that have the potential to cultivate psychological well-being in individuals from different cultural backgrounds within clinical, educational, and supervisory settings. The arts-based interventions presented in this chapter are cutting-edge creative methods, and hence are theoretical and practical in nature. Only in the last few years have studies examined the outcomes of the *Bridge Drawing with Path (BDP)* arts-based intervention as a creative vehicle for individuals to explore goals and sources of meaning (Darewych, 2013, 2014; Darewych, Newton, & Farrugie, 2018). Consequently, more empirical cross-sectional and longitudinal research is required to better understand the unique effects and benefits of these arts-based interventions on individuals' psychological well-being in clinical, community, educational, and organizational contexts. Future studies, with clinical and nonclinical samples around the world, could administer these arts-based interventions in parallel with valid and reliable well-being self-report questionnaires, such as Ryff's (1989) Scale of Psychological Well-Being and Diener et al.'s (2009) Flourishing Scale.

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CHAPTER

9

The Neuroscience of Well-Being: A General Framework and Its Relation to Humanistic Flourishing

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Abstract

Studying the two main components of well-being—hedonia and eudaimonia—can shed insight into its psychological and neural aspects. This chapter begins by highlighting how neuroscience research in two related domains—creativity and meditation—has been useful. Then, the authors review the extant neuroscientific research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. Finally, they propose a testable, general framework on how the brain may realize both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. This approach is inspired by advances in neuroscience research that examines the structure and dynamics of large-scale brain networks. Identifying these neural markers of well-being can elucidate what motivates human flourishing, and how neural mechanisms might be enhanced to facilitate well-being.

Key Words: well-being, network neuroscience, hedonia, eudaimonia, DMN, creativity, mindfulness

Introduction

Living a happy life can be a lifelong pursuit. People are happy when they feel positive emotions, engage in interesting activities, and experience pleasure (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2011; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). Happiness indicates a sense of well-being—a sense that can be framed biologically (some people are genetically predisposed to well-being), contextually (well-being for a political refugee is different that it would be for a campaigning politician), or psychologically (the mental state of being well).

Here, we focus on psychological and their accompanying neural states of well-being (Huta & Waterman, 2014; Ryan & Deci, 2001). Drawing on Aristotle, we distinguish between *hedonic* well-being (HWB) and *eudaimonic* well-being (EWB). Aristotle (1925/1998) distinguished hedonia, or pleasure, from eudaimonia, or "virtuous activity of [the] soul" (Aristotle, 1925/1998; p. 18). While hedonia refers to experiencing pleasure, eudaimonia points to the lifelong exercise of developing character virtues (Dolcos, Moore, &

Katsumi, 2018). The goals of HWB are short-term and differ from the goals of EWB, which span a longer duration. As HWB and EWB address different aspects human flourishing, identifying how the brain enables hedonic and eudaimonic states can shed light into biological mechanisms recruited by humanist activities that promote well-being. In this chapter we use the terms *well-being* and *flourishing* interchangeably.

Contemporary research recognizes HWB and EWB as generally distinct psychological constructs (Disabato, Goodman, Kashdan, Short, & Jarden, 2016; Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002). HWB is characterized by affective and cognitive evaluations of one's life in relation to pleasure. These characteristics include life satisfaction, as well as frequent positive and infrequent negative emotions (Diener, 2000). EWB is characterized by an individual's realization of their potential; it is related to a sense of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Ryff, 2018). HWB emphasizes positive affect, and EWB emphasizes purpose and growth as defining features (Diener, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 2018; Urry et al., 2004).

Identifying brain mechanisms related to HWB and EWB could enrich our understanding of well-being (Luo et al., 2017). These notions of well-being are rarely studied in cognitive neuroscience. Neuroscientists have considerable experience using functional imaging techniques to assess brain responses evoked by specific experimental tasks. The history of assessing enduring mental states or personality traits is more limited. Resting-state functional magnetic resonance imaging signals (RS-fMRI; synchronized brain activity at rest) can be used to study natural, time-evolving, brain activation related to behavioral and psychological states (Lurie et al., 2020. By coupling neural activation patterns and specific types of well-being, we have the possibility to better understand and chart biological changes rendered by engaging in positive humanistic activities (Tay, Pawelski, & Keith, 2018). Here, we examine the extant literature on the neural correlates of HWB and EWB and propose a consolidating framework to determine neural markers of well-being.

Network Neuroscience: A Primer

Network science is a useful tool to study neural structures and dynamics (Bassett & Sporns, 2017; Medaglia, Lynall, & Bassett, 2015; Sporns, 2011). Network science, based on mathematical graph theory, is a way to study complex systems as networks (Bassett & Sporns, 2017; Medaglia et al., 2015; Sporns, 2011). A network is composed of nodes that represent the basic units of the system (e.g., brain regions) and links, or edges, that signify relations between the nodes (e.g., functional connectivity across brain regions).

Network neuroscience approaches relevant to well-being consider interactions of three large-scale brain networks: the executive control network (ECN), the default mode network (DMN), and the salience network (SN). The ECN is a set of brain regions that activate during cognitive tasks that require externally directed attention, working memory, relational integration, response inhibition, and task switching (Zabelina &

Andrews-Hanna, 2016). The DMN is a set of brain regions that activate in the absence of most external tasks and is associated with mind-wandering and spontaneous thought (Andrews-Hanna, Smallwood, & Spreng, 2014). The SN is a set of brain regions involved in detecting, integrating, and filtering relevant interoceptive, autonomic, and emotional information (Seeley et al., 2007; Uddin, 2015).

Network neuroscience can study processes related to human flourishing, such as aesthetics, mindfulness, and creativity (Tay et al., 2018). Chatterjee and Vartanian (2014) proposed a general framework for neural mechanisms related to aesthetic experiences. This framework involves complex interactions of neural systems similar to those associated with well-being. Providing empirical support for this framework, Belfi et al. (2019) reported that the DMN responds to aesthetically pleasing artwork, potentially tracking the participants' internal state while they are engaged with these images. The authors suggest that during aesthetic appreciation of visual art, the DMN engages in "top-down" sense-making with "bottom-up" sensory input. This interaction highlights the role of different neural networks that deliver mental states such as aesthetic appreciation. Before we discuss network neuroscience observations related to well-being, we briefly describe two examples of domains related to human flourishing, examples that highlight the potential of this analytical approach.

Example I: Meditation and Mindfulness

The past two decades have seen increasing neuroscientific interest in meditation and mindfulness as ways to enhance well-being (Dolcos et al., 2018; Fox et al., 2014; Tang, Hölzel, & Posner, 2015; Van Dam et al., 2018). Meditation encompasses mental training methods that can improve attentional and emotional self-regulation (Tang et al., 2015). Mindfulness generally refers to the awareness that emerges from purposeful attention to oneself (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Neuroscientific studies try to identify underlying brain mechanisms associated with mental improvement produced by meditation and mindfulness (Dolcos et al., 2018).

Despite their popularity, meditation and mindfulness refer to different practices, making the study of their benefits to well-being challenging (Van Dam et al., 2018). Broad claims about lasting effects of these practices on the brain are premature (Fox et al., 2014). Nonetheless, the morphometry (e.g., cortical thickness or density) of a few core brain regions do seem affected by meditation and mindfulness training (Fox et al., 2014; Tang et al., 2015): the frontopolar cortex, related to enhanced meta-awareness following meditation practice; the sensory cortices and insula, areas related to body awareness; the hippocampus, related to memory; the anterior- and mid-cingulate cortex, and the orbitofrontal cortex, areas related to self- and emotion-regulation; and the superior longitudinal fasciculus and corpus callosum, areas related to intra- and inter-hemispherical communication (Dolcos et al., 2018; Fox et al., 2014; Tang et al., 2015).

More recent fMRI studies have investigated the interactions between the ECN, DMN, and SN in mindfulness (Bilevicius, Smith, & Kornelsen, 2018; Doll, Hölzel, Boucard, Wohlschläger, & Sorg, 2015; Kim et al., 2019; Parkinson, Kornelsen, & Smith, 2019). Mindfulness training leads to functional connectivity changes between the DMN and SN (Doll et al., 2015) and between the ECN and SN (Parkinson et al., 2019). Kim et al. (2019) used a mediation analysis in a real-time fMRI study and found that mindfulness scores correlated with coupling of the SN and DMN, which was mediated by the ECN (Kim et al., 2019).

Identifying activation in these brain regions in relation to mindfulness and meditation relates them to neurocognitive processes and advances hypotheses for how the brain realizes a mindful and meditative state. These studies suggest that mindfulness training at the neural level engages one's ability to control (ECN) spontaneously generated internal thought (DMN) in relation to externally driven (SN) stimuli.

Example II: Creativity

While many acts can be creative, most agree that creativity involves generating something that is novel and useful (Benedek & Fink, 2019). Neuroscience studies of creativity have examined the link between cognitive processes, such as executive functions (working memory, fluid intelligence, task switching), attention, inhibition, and episodic memory, as well as personality traits (openness to experience) related to creativity (Beaty, Benedek, Silvia, & Schacter, 2016; Beaty, Seli, & Schacter, 2019). Creativity plays an important role in flourishing and in our engagement with the arts and humanities (Tay et al., 2018).

Preliminary observations report functional connectivity patterns that predict differences in people's creative ability (Beaty et al., 2018; Kenett et al., 2020; Li et al., 2017; Sun et al., 2019), interactions during creative thinking (Beaty, Benedek, Kaufman, & Silvia, 2015; Shi, Sun, Xia, et al., 2018; Vartanian et al., 2018), and reveal white matter connectivity patterns that constrain neural dynamics of creative thinking (Kenett et al., 2018; Ryman et al., 2014).

The ECN, DMN, and SN couple together at different stages of the creative process. Beaty, Benedek, Kaufman, and Silvia (2015) found that early stages are characterized by tighter coupling between the DMN and SN, and later stages by tighter coupling between the ECN and DMN (Beaty et al., 2015). Beaty et al. (2018) described a "creative connectome" that links these three brain networks and predicts participants' performance on a creativity task. RS-fMRI studies report that tighter coupling between the ECN and the DMN in the "resting brain" correlates with better performance in creativity tasks (Beaty et al., 2014; Beaty et al., 2019; Shi, Sun, Xia, et al., 2018). Finally, Fink et al. (2018) reported that training on a creativity task leads to changes in the connectivity patterns of several resting brain networks, further demonstrating a correspondence between RS and task-state brain networks relevant to creative thought. These studies indicate that a

creative person may have heightened ability to shift between spontaneous, free, and evaluative, controlled thought that brings forth ideas that are novel and that also make sense.

The Neuroscience of Well-Being

Most studies investigate neural activity related to HWB (Kong, Hu, Wang, Song, & Liu, 2015; Luo et al., 2017; Shi, Sun, Wu, et al., 2018) and EWB (Kong, Liu, et al., 2015; Lewis, Kanai, Rees, & Bates, 2014; Van Reekum et al., 2007) independently of each other.

HWB encompasses an affective component related to positive rather than negative emotional experiences in one's life and a cognitive component related to a person's appraisals of his or her life (Diener, 2000; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2011; Pavot & Diener, 1993). Examining the neural amplitude of low-frequency fluctuations of RS-fMRI in relation to subjective measures of affect and satisfaction with life, Kong, Hu, et al. (2015) found that the affective component correlated positively with the amplitude of low-frequency fluctuations (*higher* scores relate to *higher* amplitudes) in the right amygdala (a brain region related to emotion regulation), and the cognitive component correlated positively with the left dorsolateral prefrontal cortex and bilateral orbitofrontal cortex. These two brain regions are associated with cognitive control and emotional regulation through the inhibition of inappropriate emotions and behaviors (Hooker & Knight, 2006).

Shi, Sun, Wu, et al. (2018) found that the strength of functional connectivity between SN and DMN correlated negatively with HWB (*higher* HWB scores relate to *lower* SN-DMN functional connectivity). HWB correlates negatively with a neural "state" in which the ECN, DMN, and SN are highly decoupled from each other: weak between network functional connectivity and strong within network connectivity (Shi, Sun, Wu, et al., 2018).

HWB is also directly related to specific cognitive processes (Shi, Sun, Wu, et al., 2018). For example, unhappy people are sensitive to negative feedback and ruminate more frequently, as seen in people with depression (Lyubomirsky, Boehm, Kasri, & Zehm, 2011). Rumination relates to atypical coupling between the hippocampus (a brain region related to memory) and the amygdala (a brain region related to emotion regulation; Cooney, Joormann, Eugène, Dennis, & Gotlib, 2010; Disner, Beevers, Haigh, & Beck, 2011). Luo, Kong, Qi, You, and Huang (2015) found that unhappy people have higher RS functional connectivity within regions of the DMN (anterior medial prefrontal cortex, bilateral posterior cingulate cortex, and the left inferior parietal cortex). Such a connectivity pattern is also related to higher rumination (Luo et al., 2015).

EWB relates to individual fulfillment, such as personal growth, positive relations, and purpose in life (Ryff, 2018). Archontaki, Lewis, and Bates (2013) argued that the neural mechanism underlying EWB exerts control over facets (autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance; Ryff, 2018). They argue that these neural control systems process emotional, reward

incentives, and motivational information (Archontaki et al., 2013). For example, EWB relates to greater gray matter volume of the right insula, a key component of the SN in orienting attention to the external world (Lewis et al., 2014). Furthermore, EWB is associated with increased activity of the superior temporal lobe (Luo et al., 2014), and increased or sustained activity of the prefrontal cortex in response to affective stimuli (Heller et al., 2013; Van Reekum et al., 2007).

Using RS-fMRI to examine the neural correlates of EWB, Kong, Lie, et al. (2015) found that EWB was positively correlated with low-frequency fluctuation (*higher* EWB scores relate to *higher* low-frequency fluctuations) in the right posterior superior temporal gyrus (pSTG; implicated in self-referential processes and autobiographical memory) and the thalamus (involved in relaying motor and sensory information across the brain), replicating a previous study (Luo et al., 2014). Also, EWB correlated negatively with the strength of the thalamic-insular functional connectivity (*higher* EWB scores relate to *lower* thalamic-insular functional connectivity). Such correlations mediated the relation between EWB and personality traits; namely, the pSTG and thalamus mediated the effect of neuroticism as well as extraversion on EWB, whereas the thalamus only mediated the effect of conscientiousness on EWB.

The neural underpinnings of HWB and EWB are typically studied independently. However, recent large-scale genetic studies report that HWB and EWB have strong genetic correlations (r = .78; Baselmans & Bartels, 2018; Baselmans et al., 2019). These studies have demonstrated how the expression of these genes in specific brain regions relate to well-being (Baselmans et al., 2019), which further suggests that there might be similarities in their respective neural correlates.

Investigating HWB and EWB together could shed novel insights on similarity and differences in the neural connectivity patterns and dynamics of these complex constructs (see Berridge & Kringelbach, 2011, for a similar view). Two studies take this approach. One of the earliest such studies looked at differences in frontal EEG patterns as related to HWB and EWB (Urry et al., 2004). The authors found greater alpha waves activity in the left superior prefrontal cortex, related to both HWB and EWB (Urry et al., 2004). In a second study, Luo et al. (2017) compiled a behavioral measure that relates HWB to EWB. This measure, eudaimonic-hedonic balance, quantifies the balance between these two notions of well-being, based on trait measures of HWB and EWB (Luo et al., 2017): a positive score indicates a dominance of EWB, while a negative score indicates a dominance of HWB. The authors found that their measure correlated positively with functional connectivity of the bilateral ventral medial prefrontal cortex and the bilateral precuneus, both regions of the DMN. The hyper-connectivity of these regions was related to dominance of EWB over HWB (Luo et al., 2017).

Conclusions

Establishing the neuroscience of well-being faces challenges. The construct of well-being is imprecise and does not lend itself easily to testable hypotheses and tractable neuroscientific experiments. Functional neuroimaging methods are better developed to examine the brain's reaction to specific situations and less so to enduring mental states. Nonetheless, recent advances in network neuroscience and RS-fMRI promise to move this field forward (Lurie et al., 2018). Many of the studies cited here use reverse inference in making psychological claims. Reverse inference means that one infers psychological or mental states from patterns of neural activity. Such inferences are better thought of as generating hypotheses rather than confirming them. Based on the studies we reviewed, we generate two hypotheses, make a recommendation, and offer one prediction.

First, we hypothesize that HWB and EWB have similar neural signatures that relate to connectivity patterns within and across ECN, DMN, and SN. This hypothesis is supported by the observation that HWB and EWB share a strong genetic correspondence (Baselmans & Bartels, 2018). Activation in the DMN relates positively with both HWB and EWB, thus potentially playing a role connecting HWB and EWB (Kringelbach & Berridge, 2009). For example, a core region of the DMN, the medial prefrontal cortex, is involved in the experience of pleasure (HWB) as well as introspective self-referential cognition (EWB).

Second, we hypothesize that HWB and EWB are also characterized by distinct neural activation and connectivity patterns. The affective component of HWB is typically transient and is potentially driven by the DMN and SN; its cognitive components may require prolonged coordination between the ECN and DMN. Such coordination converges with long-term goals of flourishing and self-fulfillment, related to EWB. HWB and EWB may represent similar neural activations with different temporal characteristics (short- vs. long-term) rather than about activation of different brain regions.

Our recommendation is that we need a better psychological understanding and means to measure well-being that lend themselves to experimental scrutiny. Such an understanding can lead to experimental designs that make forward inferences to confirm or reject hypotheses. We need to link psychological theory to neural implementation more directly. Our general framework for a neuroscientific approach to well-being suggests that both of aspects of well-being are relevant at different time-scales and that they are implemented by overlapping neural mechanisms. While one may have repeated short-term hedonic experiences, these experiences do not automatically give rise to a long-term eudaimonic life of fulfillment. Similarly, long-term pursuit of flourishing may not generate short-term hedonic experiences. Rather, a person who better capitalizes short-term hedonic experiences to facilitate long-term eudaimonic experiences may flourish (see also Wilkinson & King, this volume, Chapter 7).

Finally, we predict that neural processes and functional connectivity patterns related to well-being are modifiable by humanist interventions, such as engagement with the arts (Tay et al., 2018). The effects of meditation and mindfulness and of creativity training on brain structure and function provide support for this prediction (Kim et al., 2019;

Tang et al., 2015). Ultimately, the study of the neuroscience of well-being is motivated to understand how we might enhance human flourishing. A clearer sense of the biology of well-being offers a window into the malleability of this psychological state and tests the role that the arts and humanities play in enhancing human flourishing.

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CHAPTER

10

How to Encourage People to Engage with the Arts and Humanities: Suggestions from Self-Efficacy Theory and Research

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Abstract

Engaging with the arts and humanities (in all their myriad forms) can add a richness to life that can enhance the quality of life and subjective well-being. Too many people, however, often avoid such engagement because they do not believe that they have sufficient knowledge and experience to enjoy and appreciate some of the finer things in life, such as classical music art, literature, theatre, and dance. Self-efficacy theory and research can offer some practical suggestions for how to encourage people to experiment with the arts and humanities, not only as observers and consumers, but also as students and producers of their own work.

Key Words: self-efficacy, self-regulation, well-being, vicarious experience, imaginal experience, verbal persuasion, arts, humanities, deliberate practice

Research shows that wonder, awe, curiosity, and gratitude all contribute to subjective well-being. Because they inspire wonder, awe, curiosity, and even gratitude (to the artist or author, for example), great works of art or literature can enhance well-being, if for only a few brief moments or a few hours. Therefore, whether or not they know it, and whether or not they care, professionals and scholars in the arts and humanities (visual arts, music, dance, theatre, literature) are in the well-being business. In fact, enhancing well-being is *good* for their business because people are more likely to repeat an experience that leaves them feeling intellectually and spiritually enhanced than one that leaves them feeling intellectually and spiritually diminished.

This volume is an exploration of the idea that engagement with and appreciation of the arts and humanities can contribute to subjective well-being. In our personal experience, however, many people are intimidated by the arts and the humanities because they either lack experience with the arts (as everyone does at first) or have had unpleasant experiences with them (such as in high school and college classes) and therefore may lack confidence

in their ability to understand, appreciate, and discuss, for example, a great work of art or literature and thus they continue to avoid exposure to them.

The first author is an art history buff and has read quite a bit of art history and has visited most of the major art museums of the Western world. He is also a fan of nineteenth-century English and Russian literature. However, most of lectures he has attended on art, art history, and literature have left him cold because too many of the speakers seemed more concerned with exhibiting their erudition than with connecting with a lay audience in a way that would lead to an increase in their understanding of great works of art or literature and an increase in their confidence in their ability to understand and appreciate great works of art and literature. In fact, we imagine that a lot of people leave such lectures (including, say, high school and college art history classes) with less confidence in their ability to understand great works of art or literature, which can lead to continued avoidance of museums and galleries and great books.

One way to enhance the well-being of (lay) audiences is to increase their self-efficacy for engagement with the arts and humanities, which would likely increase the accessibility of the arts and humanities. If professionals and scholars in arts and humanities fields are truly interested in enhancing the well-being of their audiences (lay audiences) by increasing their self-efficacy for engagement with the arts and humanities, they need to intentionally shift their focus in that direction. Research on *self-efficacy* may suggest some ways of doing this. Research on self-efficacy shows that the best way to increase one's confidence in any domain of life is through exposure—specifically, exposure that includes successful experiences that often require constructive feedback from a more experienced person.

The basic premise of self-efficacy theory is that "people's beliefs in their capabilities to produce desired effects by their own actions" (Bandura, 1997, p. vii) are the most important determinants of the behaviors people choose to engage in and how much they persevere in their efforts in the face of obstacles and challenges. Self-efficacy theory also maintains that these efficacy beliefs play a crucial role in psychological adjustment, psychological problems, physical health, as well as professionally guided and self-guided behavioral change strategies.

Since the publication of Albert Bandura's 1977 *Psychological Review* article titled "Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavior Change," the term "self-efficacy" has become ubiquitous in psychology and related fields. In this chapter, we attempt to summarize what we have learned from over four decades of research on self-efficacy and what that research might tell us about the effect of exposure to the arts and humanities on well-being, and how experiences with the arts and humanities might be constructed to enhance self-efficacy for engaging with the arts and humanities. We will address four basic questions: (1) What is self-efficacy? (2) Where does it come from? (3) Why is it important for well-being? (4) What does self-efficacy theory and research suggest for how to increase peoples' self-efficacy for understanding and appreciating the arts and humanities? We

conclude by offering concrete suggestions, many of which use mobile technology or other advanced technology, to help improve self-efficacy for understanding and appreciating the arts and humanities.

What Is Self-Efficacy?

Interest in beliefs about personal control has a long history in philosophy and psychology. Bandura's 1977 article, however, formalized the notion of perceived competence as self-efficacy, defined it clearly, and embedded it in a theory of how it develops and influences human behavior.

One of the best ways to get a clear sense of how self-efficacy is defined and measured is to distinguish it from related concepts. Self-efficacy is not perceived skill; it is what you believe you can do with your skills under certain conditions. It is concerned not with your beliefs about your ability to perform specific and trivial motor acts, but with your beliefs about your ability to coordinate and orchestrate skills and abilities in changing and challenging situations.

Self-efficacy beliefs are not simply predictions about behavior. Self-efficacy is concerned not with what you believe you *will* do, but with what you believe you *can* do under certain circumstances.

Self-efficacy beliefs are not intentions to behave or intentions to attain a particular goal. An intention is what you say you will probably do; and research has shown that intentions are influenced by a number of factors, including, but not limited to, self-efficacy beliefs.

Self-efficacy is not self-esteem. Self-esteem is what you believe about yourself, and how you feel about what you believe about yourself. Efficacy beliefs in a given domain will contribute to your self-esteem only in direct proportion to the importance you place on that domain.

Self-efficacy beliefs are not outcome expectancies (Bandura, 1997) or behavior–outcome expectancies (Maddux, 1999). A behavior–outcome expectancy is your belief that a specific behavior may lead to a specific outcome in a specific situation. A self-efficacy belief is the belief that you can perform the behavior or behaviors that produce the outcome.

Self-efficacy is not a motive, drive, or need for competence or control. You can have a strong need for competence and control in a particular domain and still hold weak beliefs about your efficacy for that domain.

Finally, self-efficacy is not a personality trait. Several measures of "general" self-efficacy have been developed and have been used frequently in research, but they have not been as useful as more specific self-efficacy measures in predicting what people will do under more specific circumstances (Maddux, 2018).

Where Do Self-Efficacy Beliefs Come From?

The development of beliefs about self-efficacy is best understood in the context of social cognitive theory—an approach to understanding human cognition, action, motivation, and emotion that assumes that we are active shapers of, rather than simply passive reactors to, our environments (Bandura, 2001). Social cognitive theory's five basic premises, shortened and simplified, are as follows:

1. People have powerful cognitive capabilities that allow for the creation of internal models of experience, the development of innovative courses of action, the hypothetical testing of such courses of action through the prediction of outcomes, and the communication of complex ideas and experiences to others.
2. People also can engage in self-observation and can analyze and evaluate their own behavior, thoughts, and emotions. These self-reflective activities set the stage for self-regulation.
3. Environmental events, inner personal factors (cognition, emotion, and biological events), and behaviors are interactive influences. People respond cognitively, effectively, and behaviorally to environmental events. Also, through cognition, people exercise control over their own behavior, which then influences not only the environment, but also their cognitive, affective, and biological states.
4. "Self" and "personality" are socially embedded. They are perceptions (accurate or not) of patterns of social cognition, emotion, and action as they occur in patterns of situations. Thus, self and personality are not simply what people bring to our interactions with others; they are created in these interactions, and they change through these interactions.
5. People are capable of self-regulation. We choose goals and regulate our behavior in the pursuit of these goals. At the heart of self-regulation is the ability to anticipate or develop expectancies—to use past knowledge and experience to form beliefs about future events and states and beliefs about our abilities and behavior.

These assumptions suggest that the early development of self-efficacy beliefs is influenced primarily by two interacting factors. First, it is influenced by the development of the capacity for symbolic thought, particularly the capacity for understanding cause–effect relationships, and the capacity for self-observation and self-reflection. The development of a sense of personal agency begins in infancy and moves from the perception of the causal relationship between events, to an understanding that actions produce results, to the recognition that they can be the origin of actions that affect their environments. As children's understanding of language increases, so does their capacity for symbolic thought and, therefore, their capacity for self-awareness and a sense of personal agency (Bandura, 1997).

Second, the development of efficacy beliefs is influenced by the responsiveness of environments to a child's attempts at manipulation and control. Environments that are

responsive to a child's actions facilitate the development of efficacy beliefs, whereas non-responsive environments retard this development. The development of efficacy beliefs encourages exploration, which in turn enhances the child's sense of agency. The child's social environment (especially parents) is usually the most important part of his or her environment. Thus, children usually develop a sense of efficacy from engaging in actions that influence the behavior of other people, which then generalizes to the nonsocial environment (Bandura, 1997). Parents can facilitate this by encouraging and enabling the child to explore and master his or her environment and rewarding the child's efforts rather than the child's accomplishments (Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

Efficacy beliefs and a sense of agency continue to develop throughout the life span as we continually integrate information from five primary sources: performance experiences, vicarious experiences, imagined experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological/emotional states.

Performance Experiences

Our own attempts to acquire and enhance new skills and abilities and to control our environments are the most powerful source of self-efficacy information (Bandura, 1997). Successful attempts that you attribute to your own efforts will strengthen self-efficacy for that behavior or domain. Likewise, perceptions of failure that you attribute to lack of ability usually weaken self-efficacy beliefs in that domain.

Vicarious Experiences

Self-efficacy beliefs are influenced by our observations of the behavior of others and the consequences of those behaviors. We use this information to form expectancies about our own behavior and its consequences, depending on the extent to which we believe that we are similar to the person we are observing. Vicarious experiences generally have weaker effects on self-efficacy expectancy than do performance experiences (Bandura, 1997).

Imagined Experiences

We can influence our self-efficacy beliefs by imagining ourselves or others behaving effectively or ineffectively in hypothetical situations. Such images may be derived from actual or vicarious experiences with situations similar to the one anticipated, or they may be induced by verbal persuasion, as when a psychotherapist guides a client through interventions such as systematic desensitization and covert modeling. Simply imagining yourself doing something well, however, is not likely to have as strong an influence on your self-efficacy as will an actual experience (Williams, 1995).

Verbal Persuasion

Self-efficacy beliefs are influenced by what others say to us about what they believe we can or cannot do. The potency of verbal persuasion as a source of self-efficacy expectancies

will be influenced by such factors as the expertness, trustworthiness, and attractiveness of the source, as suggested by decades of research on verbal persuasion and attitude change. Verbal persuasion is a less potent source of enduring change in self-efficacy expectancy than performance experiences and vicarious experiences.

Physiological and Emotional States

Physiological and emotional states influence self-efficacy when we learn to associate poor performance or perceived failure with aversive physiological arousal and success with pleasant feeling states. When you become aware of unpleasant physiological arousal, you are more likely to doubt your competence than if your physiological state were pleasant or neutral. Likewise, comfortable physiological sensations are likely to lead someone to feel confident in their ability in the situation at hand.

Self-Efficacy and Psychological Well-Being

Considerable research indicates that a sense of control over our behavior, our environment, and our own thoughts and feelings is essential for happiness and a sense of psychological well-being. Feelings of loss of control are common among people who seek the help of psychotherapists and counselors. In fact, most of the impact of self-efficacy beliefs results from their crucial role in self-regulation—how people guide their own behavior in the pursuit of desired goals.

Self-efficacy beliefs play a major role in a number of common psychological problems. Low self-efficacy expectancies are an important feature of depression. Dysfunctional anxiety and avoidant behavior are the direct result of low-self-efficacy beliefs for managing threatening situations. Self-efficacy beliefs also play a powerful role in substance use problems, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress, and suicidal behaviors.

For each of these problems, enhancing self-efficacy for overcoming the problem and for implementing self-control strategies in specific challenging situations is essential to the success of therapeutic interventions. Increases in self-efficacy are key mechanisms of change in treatments for issues such as depression, anxiety, drug addiction, and tobacco use.

Self-Efficacy and Self-Regulation

Self-regulation (simplified) depends on three interacting components: goals or standards of performance; self-evaluative reactions to performance; and self-efficacy beliefs.

Goals are essential to self-regulation because the ability to envision desired future events and states allows us to create incentives that motivate and guide our actions and standards against which to monitor our progress and evaluate both our progress and our abilities. Self-evaluative reactions are important in self-regulation because our beliefs about the progress we are making (or not making) toward our goals are major determinants of our emotional reactions during goal-directed activity. These emotional reactions, in turn, can enhance or disrupt self-regulation.

Self-efficacy beliefs influence self-regulation in several ways. First, they influence the goals we set. The higher my self-efficacy in a specific achievement domain, the loftier will be the goals that I set for myself in that domain. Second, they influence our choices of goal-directed activities, expenditure of effort, persistence in the face of challenge and obstacles, and reactions to perceived discrepancies between goals and current performance (Bandura, 1997). If I have strong efficacy beliefs, I will be relatively resistant to the disruptions in self-regulation that can result from difficulties and setbacks, and I will probably persevere. Perseverance usually produces desired results, and this success then increases my sense of efficacy

Third, self-efficacy beliefs influence the efficiency and effectiveness of problem-solving and decision-making (Hoffman & Schraw, 2009). When faced with complex decisions, people who have confidence in their ability to solve problems use their cognitive resources more effectively than do those people who doubt their cognitive skills (Akama, 2006), which usually leads to better solutions and greater achievement. In the face of difficulty, if you have high self-efficacy, you are likely to remain "task-diagnostic" and continue to search for solutions to problems. If your self-efficacy is low, however, you are more likely to become "self-diagnostic" and reflect on your inadequacies, which detracts from your efforts to assess and solve the problem (Bandura, 1997).

Self-Efficacy for Engaging with the Arts and Humanities

Engagement with the arts and humanities is not limited to simply appreciating, for example, works of art, music, and literature and performances—being a *consumer* of the arts and humanities—but also involves acquiring the ability to create one's own works of art or literature, including performances in the arts and humanities, such as learning to draw or play a musical instrument—that is, to be a *producer* of work in the arts and humanities. For example, an old friend of one of the authors decided at age sixty-six to take acting lessons—mainly because he thought it would be fun, but also because he thought it would help him become a more discerning consumer of movies and theatre.

What does self-efficacy theory suggest about how to encourage people to engage in the arts and humanities (in whatever form) in a way that enhances their self-efficacy, thereby encouraging further and deeper engagement?

Self-efficacy theory emphasizes the importance of arranging experiences designed to increase the person's sense of efficacy for specific behaviors in specific problematic and challenging situations. Self-efficacy theory suggests that formal interventions should not simply resolve specific problems, but should provide people with the skills and sense of efficacy for solving problems themselves.

Performance Experiences

As noted previously, research indicates that the best way to enhance one's self-efficacy for a given domain is to arrange for successful experiences—small ones at first, but more

challenging ones as times goes on. For example, someone interested in increasing his or her knowledge of and appreciation for art and art history might begin with any number of art history books written for the express purpose of exposing the novice to information about art theory and history in a nonthreatening and even humorous manner, such as *Art for Dummies* (Hoving, 1999) or *Art History for Dummies* (Wilder, 2007); both books assume that the reader is a novice who is probably intimidated by the subject matter but wants to overcome that intimidation (Other topics covered in the series include music theory, classical music, philosophy, world history, and Shakespeare.). Someone who is trying to learn to draw or play a musical instrument should set small, challenging, but achievable goals that provide the person with the small successes that enhance self-efficacy and encourage persistence. Many smartphone and tablet apps now exist that can help train people how to play musical instruments (e.g., JoyTunes; https://www.joytunes.com/) or how to draw (e.g., ShadowDraw; https://www.shadowdrawapp.com/). These apps are particularly notable because they provide feedback in real time, which will help set the stage for someone to view an experience as successful.

Vicarious Experiences

Another way to enhance one's self-efficacy beliefs for a particular domain is to be exposed to other people who either began as novices and eventually acquired skills through experience, or other people who are also struggling with the challenges presented by acquiring new knowledge or skills. Someone who is trying to learn an instrument could, for example, watch videos on YouTube that feature novice players discussing the process through which they learned guitar and how they coped with obstacles and challenges.

Verbal Persuasion

Guided assistance from an expert is also helpful. The first author, for example, has taken several abstract painting classes from an artist who is not only highly skilled as an artist but also highly skilled as a teacher. She instinctively teaches in a manner consistent with the work of Carol Dweck and others on the distinction between a fixed or entity theory of skill acquisition (and mastery) and an incremental theory. For example, a fixed theory of artistic skill, the one probably held by most people, is that artistic skill is the result mainly of inborn "talent." We might call this the "genius" theory of artistic ability. Great artists (or writers, dancers, singers) have a natural "gift" (literally something *given* to them) that explains their excellence at what they do. An incremental theory, however, maintains that acquiring and mastering a new set of skills (drawing, painting, dancing, playing a musical instrument) is the result of *deliberate practice*—practical experience over long periods of time that is devoted to developing specific skills. She employs this theory in her teaching by talking about the decades she spent trying various media and techniques in her own work until she found something that works for her—and how she now

continues to challenge herself and learn. She also encourages trial and error in the class and teaches her students to relabel "mistakes" as "surprises" and "opportunities."

Several websites provide access to experts teaching their skills through videos and occasionally interactive sessions (which is particularly useful for increasing self-efficacy through verbal persuasion). Master Class (https://www.masterclass.com/) offers classes taught by famous experts in many arts and humanities fields. For example, they offer classes in magic taught by Penn and Teller, acting taught by Natalie Portman, screenwriting taught by Aaron Sorkin, and violin taught by Itzhak Pearlman. LinkedIn Learning (formerly Lynda; https://www.lynda.com/) offers classes in more technology-focused arts and humanities fields, such as video production and digital photography.

Imaginal Experiences

People can think of themselves as art connoisseurs and imagine that going to a museum or the theatre is going to be an enhancing experience even if one is at times confused by what one is watching, listening to, or reading. Recent advances in virtual reality (VR) technology are now making it even easier to imagine oneself experiencing art. For example, technology by VR-all-art (https://vrallart.com/) promises to give a life-like VR experience to people who wish to see the art in a museum without going in person. Beyond being useful in improving the accessibility of the arts and humanities to those who may not be able to access museums otherwise, VR is particularly useful because it will allow people to "dip their toe in the water" and experience a museum environment without needing to first travel to one.

Emotional Reactions

There is a fine line between wonder or awe and confusion. Wonder and awe are pleasant experiences; confusion is not. For this reason, lectures and writings about the arts and humanities should be designed not just to impart knowledge, but to enhance self-efficacy for understanding and discussing works from the arts and humanities. Research on self-efficacy suggests gradually increasing peoples' confidence in their ability to understand, for example, a work of art or literature by actively encouraging discussions in classes and lectures that focus not on what the instructor or "experts" think about the work, but what members of the audience think, with the understanding that there are no right and wrong ways to interpret a great work of art or literature.

Captions for works of art in museums should not only include basic information about the historical and personal context of the work, but also encourage the viewer to *think* about the work by posing provocative questions about the possible meaning of the work and what the artist was trying to say. Many museums now offer smartphone apps or other guided technology that provides a layer of information that makes the art more accessible to a novice.

Can Engagement with the Arts and Humanities Increase Self-Efficacy?

Thus far we have been concerned with ways to increase self-efficacy for engagement in the arts and humanities. But can engagement with the arts and humanities enhance self-efficacy? The answer to this question depends on how one defines and measures self-efficacy. If one takes the stance that self-efficacy can be defined and measured as a personality trait (e.g., general self-efficacy), then the answer is "maybe" because frequent engagement with the arts and humanities may increase one's general sense of well-being, which could lead to an increase in one's general sense of competence (self-efficacy). More likely, however, is the notion, as described in detail earlier, that engagement with specific domains of the arts and humanities (especially guided engagement) will enhance one's self-efficacy for those specific domains. In addition, vicarious learning can be a powerful source of self-efficacy. For this reason, people have always drawn inspiration and hope from great works of music, art, and literature, as well as learning "life lessons" that could increase one's sense of competence in specific domains of life such as relationships. These possible avenues for enhancing self-efficacy await further study.

Summary

Engaging with the arts and humanities (in all their myriad forms) can add a richness to life that can enhance the quality of life and subjective well-being. Too many people, however, often avoid such engagement because they do not believe that they have sufficient knowledge and experience to enjoy and appreciate some of the finer things in life, such as classical music art, literature, theatre, and dance. Self-efficacy theory and research can offer some practical suggestions for how to encourage people to experiment with the arts and humanities not only as observers and consumers, but also as students and producers, such as the many people who take lessons in music, art, or drama for their own pleasure and satisfaction. The suggestions made here provide fertile ground for future research on new ways to enhance well-being and the quality of life. In addition, the advances in teaching technology noted previously provide many exciting opportunities for conducting research on the effectiveness of these technologies for enhancing self-efficacy for engaging in a wide variety of domains within the arts and humanities.

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CHAPTER

11

Understanding and Improving Emotion Regulation: Lessons from Psychological Science and the Humanities

Joseph Ciarrochi, Louise Hayes, *and* Baljinder Sahdra

Abstract

Most psychology researchers define emotion regulation as manipulating the quality, duration, of intensity of emotions. This definition often assumes that the goal of life is to maximize positive emotions and minimize negative ones (hedonism). To understand the limitations of this definition, and the possibility of other definitions of emotion regulation, one must look to the humanities. Philosophy and research can be used to discuss the paradox of hedonism: direct attempts to feel good often lead to feeling bad. Rather than emotion regulation being about feeling good, the authors suggest it can be about doing good. They discuss how people can use the study of the humanities to improve five emotion-regulation skills: (1) the ability to guide behavior based on value and virtue (ethics, moral philosophy); (2) the use of reasoning (e.g., philosophy, logic) in emotional situations, and the ability to recognize the limits of reasoning and to let go of it (e.g., Eastern philosophy focused on mindfulness and paradox); (3) awareness of emotions; (4) the ability to broaden and build one's emotional responses; and (5) the ability to take perspective of the self and others, a skill that can be improved by reading history and literature. The authors briefly discuss the dangers of a feel-good approach to emotion regulation for society. The humanities allow one to see that most acts of prejudice, discrimination, and indifference to suffering stem from a desire to feel good (safe, guilt free, powerful, prestigious) at the expense of others.

Key Words: emotion regulation, hedonism, stoicism, value, acceptance and commitment, DNA-v model

Emotion regulation is one of the most important topics in psychology. Many, if not all, clinical interventions seek to improve emotion regulation. Their outcomes typically involve reduction in distressing emotional symptoms (depression, anxiety, stress). Similarly, every social and emotional learning program implemented in schools has an element of teaching young people how to respond effectively to their emotions.

Despite its importance, the scientific study of emotion regulation is recent. The term "emotion regulation" does not appear in books until approximately 1980 (Figure 11.1). This can be contrasted with the word "virtue," which has appeared steadily in that time,

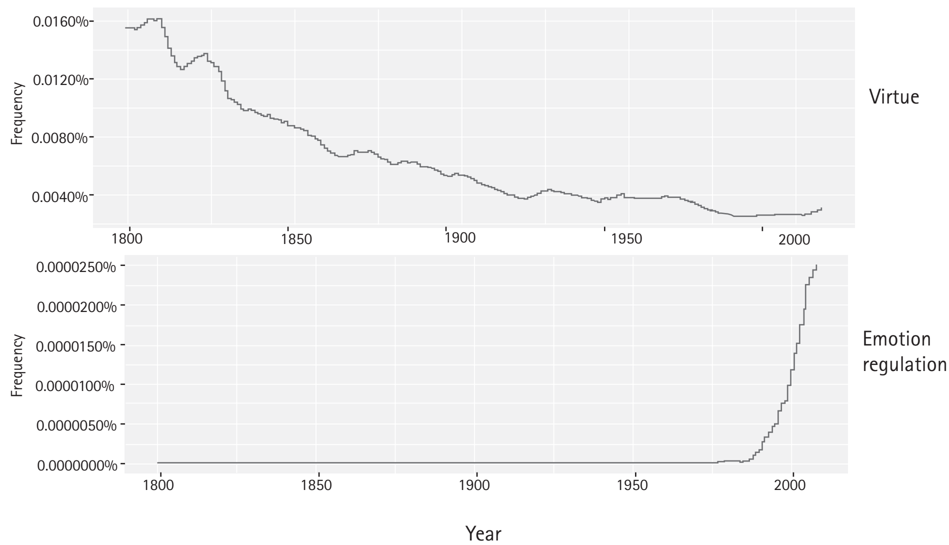

Figure 11.1 Frequency of the occurrence of 'Virtue" and "Emotion Regulation" in sources printed between 1800 and 2008 (Source: Google Ngram)

though it has been in decline. This leads to some interesting questions. Where was emotion regulation before 1980? Was it undiscovered, like some lost dinosaur hiding deep in the Amazon jungle? Or perhaps people did not do it or talk about it? What would it mean to be "good" at emotion regulation? Does this differ at different historical time points, or across different philosophical perspectives (e.g., stoicism versus hedonism)? These kinds of questions are best answered by setting emotion regulation within a humanities framework, the goal of the present chapter.

What Is Emotion Regulation?

Most essays start with defining the topic under consideration. We cannot do that with emotion regulation. Right from the beginning, we need to justify our definition and make our assumptions explicit. Let's start with the "accepted" definition, the notion of emotion regulation that has dominated psychological discourse in the past forty years.

(1) The ability of an individual to modulate an emotion or set of emotions (American Psychological Association, 2019); or
(2) Manipulation of quality, duration, or intensity of emotion (Torre & Lieberman, 2018).

These definitions imply that we need to somehow control emotions, e.g., reducing the intensity of negative emotions. This element of emotion regulation is present in almost all modern definitions of emotion regulation (Braunstein, Gross, & Ochsner, 2017;

Ciarrochi, Atkins, Hayes, Sahdra, & Parker, 2016; Gross, 2013). Most psychological research proceeds from this definition.

Let's now take a step back from this definition and put on our humanities hats. What does this definition imply about the ultimate goal of being human? It implies that the effective human is one who tries to directly maximize positive and minimize negative emotions. These definitions point to hedonism, or the idea that pleasure is the natural end or motive of human action (Pradhan, 2015).

There are many critiques of hedonism and counter-critiques of the critiques (Atkins, 2015). Our purpose here is not to argue for or against hedonism, but to point out the relevance of philosophy for understanding emotion regulation. How we define emotion regulation depends on the philosophical assumptions about the good life. In this chapter, we will declare our assumptions and then describe how these assumptions guide our attempts to understand and improve emotion regulation. In order to meet this aim, we will begin with our definition of emotion regulation.

Emotion regulation is the ability to respond adaptively to emotions. Someone good at emotion regulation can respond to their emotions in a way that promotes growth, meaning, and satisfaction of basic needs for competence, connection, and relatedness (Hayes & Ciarrochi, 2015). Someone ineffective at emotion regulation will respond to emotions by acting impulsively (e.g., lashing out), engaging in destructive forms of avoidance (e.g., drinking, procrastination), failing to persist at valued goals (e.g., giving up because something is emotionally difficult), or clinging to positive emotions (e.g., holding on to pride and refusing to acknowledge negative feedback; Sahdra, Ciarrochi, & Parker, 2016; Sahdra, Ciarrochi, Parker, Marshall, & Heaven, 2015).

Thus, our definition focuses on doing good, rather than feeling good. We have chosen this definition for one particularly important reason, what philosophers call the "paradox of hedonism" (Timmermann, 2005): if we directly seek to feel good, we often paradoxically miss it. There is now clear evidence in the psychological literature that direct attempts to reduce negative affect often fail (Hayes, Wilson, & Follette, 1996; Kashdan et al., 2014; Kohl, Rief, & Glombiewski, 2012). Further, most psychological disorders stem from an attempt to control or minimize negative affect. For example, post-traumatic stress disorder often involves an attempt to minimize anxiety around past trauma, social anxiety often involves an attempt to minimize the fear of negative evaluation, and obsessive compulsive disorder often involves an attempt to minimize fear of contamination (Hayes et al., 1996). Direct attempts to control negative feelings can cause a paradoxical rebound effect in which negative feelings become stronger (Hooper, Sandoz, Ashton, Clarke, & Mchugh, 2012; Wenzlaff & Wegner, 2000). In addition, attempting to control feelings can lead one to avoid or give up valued activities (Hayes & Ciarrochi, 2015). One can only avoid feelings of failure or rejection by not striving for success or relationships.

Attempting to control positive emotions can also be problematic. For example, placing a high value on feeling happy is associated with lower emotional well-being, higher

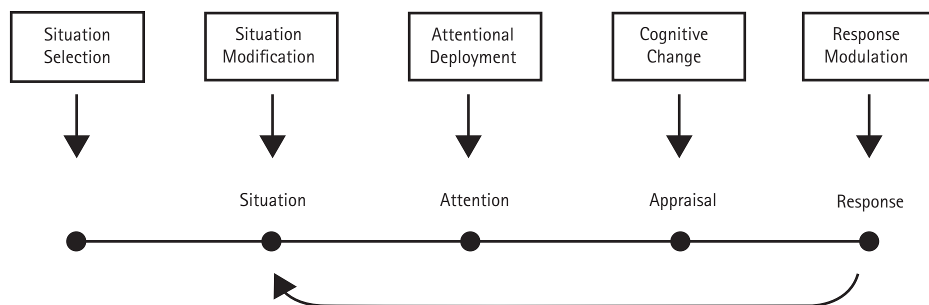

Figure 11.2 Gross emotion regulation model (Gross, 1998).

depression, and greater loneliness (Ford & Mauss, 2014; Mauss et al., 2012). Being attached to positive states and clinging to them leads to worse well-being (Ciarrochi, Sahdra, Yap, & Dicke, 2019).

How Does Emotion Regulation Work?

To address this question, we must again turn to the humanities, and in particular philosophy. How we view the nature of humans will have a rather large impact on how we talk about emotion regulation. We will contrast two major worldviews here: elemental realism/mechanistic worldviews, versus functional contextualist worldviews (Hayes, Hayes, & Reese, 1988). It is important to note that worldviews are pre-analytic assumptions and do not refute each other. One can only state one's preferences, rather than argue for the superiority of one over the other.

The elemental realist view is exemplified by the Gross process model of emotion regulation, illustrated in Figure 11.2 (Gross, 1998, 2013). This type of model is common in psychology and assumes that stimuli are "inputted" into a "processing system," which then transforms them in various ways. Thus, the mechanistic worldview sees humans as made up of different interacting parts, with scientist's goal being to understand how the parts work and interrelate.

In this model, emotions may be upregulated or downregulated at any of five stages. To illustrate, imagine you are seeking to manage your emotions around a difficult male coworker. You could avoid him altogether (situation selection), or modify the situation, for example by getting a new job. You could avoid looking at him (attentional deployment), or try to think differently about him (cognitive change), perhaps convincing yourself that he is "not that bad." Finally, you could fully feel your anger toward the person, but act respectfully towards him (response modulation).

We can contrast the mechanistic worldview with the functional contextualist worldview used in the present chapter and in emotion-regulation approaches such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (Ciarrochi & Bailey, 2008; Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2016). This worldview is pragmatic and focuses on the "act in context," whereby we interpret

any event as an ongoing act inseparable from its current and historical context. The goal is prediction-and-influence, in contrast to the mechanistic worldviews where prediction is often sufficient. Thus, within a mechanistic worldview it would be adequate to examine how the different emotion-regulation components relate to each other. The functional contextualist, in contrast, seeks to know how to predict-and-influence emotion regulation, in a way that helps the person adapt to a context. Functional contextualists could use a mechanistic model, so long as it helps them to influence outcomes.

The two worldviews can complement each other, and do not refute each other. In what follows, we provide a functional contextual description of emotion regulation. Our goal is to provide clear guidance about how to improve emotion regulation for particular individuals in particular contexts. We describe five modifiable components of emotion regulation. We then return to the role of the humanities in supporting each aspect of emotion regulation.

The Five Emotion-Regulation Skills

Ability 1: Skill at Identifying and Affirming Values

Emotion regulation involves behaving adaptively, in the presence of difficult emotions. We define adaptive as the ability to persist in behavior, or change behavior, in the service of values and needs. What is adaptive will depend on the individual context and on what the individual values. For example, imagine two people in the same workplace. One of them values close relationships, whereas the other values challenge and getting ahead. What is adaptive for each of them will be different. Similarly, imagine two people who both value connection in the workplace, but work in different workplaces (one hostile, the other friendly). Both may seek to build authentic relationships in the workplace, but again, the extent this behavior is adaptive or maladaptive will depend on the context.

We can improve adaptation in two ways. First, we can alter the environment to make it meet needs or be more value satisfying (Williams & Ciarrochi, in press; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Second, we can improve people's ability to regulate their emotions by helping them identify and affirm values. Values give people a sense of meaning, purpose, and energy, and help them grow. Most people value connecting with others, giving, being active, challenging oneself, learning, and caring for oneself (Basarkod, 2019; Hayes & Ciarrochi, 2015). Values are like a compass: they help people make good choices when experiencing difficult emotions.

Research on value clarification, or "self-affirmation," suggests that having people complete writing tasks to affirm what they value can have benefits for well-being, self-control, self-efficacy, pro-sociality, and adaptive behavioral engagement (Howell, 2017; McQueen & Klein, 2006). For example, Cohen and colleagues tested a values affirmation intervention with African-American and European-American seventh graders from lower-middle- to middle-class families (Cohen, Garcia, Apfel, & Master, 2006). They presented students with a list of values and half of them (the experimental group) were instructed to

choose two or three of their most important values, whereas the other half were instructed to choose unimportant values. Results indicated that the stigmatized group (African Americans) earned higher grades in the experimental than the control group, suggesting that value affirmation may provide psychological resources that protect against the emotional strain of racial stigma. This result has since been replicated many times (Bowen, Wegmann, & Webber, 2013; Harackiewicz et al., 2014; Miyake et al., 2010).

Ability 2: Skill at Pragmatic Use of Language

A core premise of most modern attempts to improve emotion regulation is that negative or dysfunctional cognitive processes interfere with emotion regulation (Ciarrochi, Robb, & Godsell, 2005). There is clear evidence for this idea. For example, longitudinal research shows that people who have hope are more likely to develop well-being (Ciarrochi, Parker, Kashdan, Heaven, & Barkus, 2015), and people with self-esteem are more likely to develop supportive social networks (Marshall, Parker, Ciarrochi, & Heaven, 2014). Positive self-views are associated with increased life satisfaction and positive affect, and decreased negative affect and depression (Dufner, Gebauer, Sedikides, & Denissen, 2019).

There is also evidence that people can be taught to use language more effectively. Reappraisal interventions encourage people to cognitively change the meaning of a stimulus to reduce its emotional impact (Bettis et al., 2018). Problem-solving interventions are a core part of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and encourage people to accurately represent the problem and systematically work toward a solution (Ciarrochi, Leeson, & Heaven, 2009; Nezu, 2004). A meta-analysis shows a clear link between the use of cognitive reappraisal, problem-solving, and low levels of anxiety and depression (Schäfer, Naumann, Holmes, Tuschen-Caffier, & Samson, 2017). Longitudinal research suggests that having an effective problem orientation (seeing problems as a challenge rather than a threat) is linked to the development of higher levels of positive affect and lower levels of negative affect (Ciarrochi et al., 2009). Intervention research suggests that reappraisal can diminish negative affect (Nook, Vidal Bustamante, Cho, & Somerville, 2019). Research also suggests that reappraisal skill may improve with age (Brockman, Ciarrochi, Parker, & Kashdan, 2017; McRae et al., 2012). There is also some evidence that reappraisal is best used in specific situations, e.g., when a negative event or situation is uncontrollable (Koval et al., 2016).

The previous interventions in this section focused on altering the content of thinking (i.e., form or frequency). In contrast, "function" interventions do not seek to directly alter what people think, but rather target the impact of that thinking on behavior (Ferrari, Yap, Scott, Einstein, & Ciarrochi, 2018; Marshall et al., 2015). For example, someone might think, "I will never be able to accomplish this task on time," and this thought could have either a large impact on behavior (the person gives up) or no impact (the person persists and accomplishes the task on time). Decoupling interventions—sometimes called "defusion interventions"—involve looking at thoughts, feelings, or urges mindfully, as events

that can be observed but not reacted to, and disrupting the literal power of words through repetition, song, or art, so that words are experienced as arbitrary sounds, rather than binding truths (Ciarrochi et al., 2005; Hayes & Ciarrochi, 2015; Hayes et al., 2016). Levin, Luoma, and Haeger (2015) reviewed forty-four studies and found that decoupling was used effectively across a broad range of problems, including substance abuse, depression, anxiety, avoidance behavior, and self-harm.

Ability 3: Skill at Identifying, Describing, and Not Reacting to Emotions (Mindfulness of Emotions)

Within the functional-contextualist framework, no behavior is inherently bad or good. Rather, the behavior is defined in terms of its usefulness for a particular person in a particular context given the person's particular values. This idea is especially important in the area of mindfulness. People often characterize mindfulness as inherently good, or as some magical pill that will make all stress and hardship go away (Ciarrochi et al., 2016). However, we view "being mindful" as just another strategy and not an inherently good one. Indeed, research suggests that mindlessness can sometimes be beneficial (Smallwood & Schooler, 2015).

Mindfulness of emotions has two major components: the ability to identify and describe emotions, and the ability to respond in an accepting and nonreactive way to emotions (Sahdra et al., 2016). Let's consider emotion identification first. Emotions provide people with valuable information about how they are adapting, that is, about what they value and whether the environment is supporting those values (Rowsell, Ciarrochi, & Deane, 2014). For example, sadness is a sign that something undesirable (contrary to value) has happened in the past, fear is a sign that something undesirable might happen in the future, and anger is often a sign that some agent is doing something undesirable and unfair (Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1988). People who report being unaware of their feelings struggle to adapt (Taylor & Bagby, 2004), and are likely to engage in drug addiction to manage confusing feelings (Lindsay & Ciarrochi, 2009), and to develop poor mental health and poor social connections (Ciarrochi, Heaven, & Supavadeeprasit, 2008; Rowsell et al., 2014; Rowsell, Ciarrochi, Heaven, & Deane, 2014).

The second component of mindfulness of emotions involves the ability to accept and not react to feelings with unhelpful behavior. Perhaps one of the most destructive ways to respond to emotions is to seek to avoid them, or to engage in experiential avoidance. There is now clear evidence that experiential avoidance is associated with worse mental health and self-destructive behavior, such as addiction, withdrawing from life, phobia, obsessions, self-harm, excessive worry, rumination, and procrastination (Hayes et al., 1996; Kashdan, Barrios, Forsyth, & Steger, 2006). On the other side of avoidance of feelings is clinging, or attachment to feelings (Sahdra et al., 2016; Sahdra et al., 2015). People often cling to positive feelings, especially those that are attached to ego ("I'm better than you"), to having an ideal life, and to having pleasant experiences that do not end. Research

indicates that psychological clinging is associated with poor mental health and lower likelihood of engaging in prosocial behavior (Ciarrochi et al., 2019; Sahdra et al., 2015).

Mindfulness of emotions appear to be modifiable in many evidence-based interventions, including those that explicitly improve mindfulness (Chiesa & Serretti, 2009; Gu, Strauss, Bond, & Cavanagh, 2015), awareness and acceptance of sensory input (Farb, Segal, & Anderson, 2013; Pollatos et al., 2008; van der Kolk, 2006), skill at describing and labeling emotions (Kehoe, Havinghiurst, & Harley, 2014; Durlak, Weissberg, & Dymnicki, 2011; Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1996), and skill at responding to feelings in an adaptive and non-impulsive way (Hayes et al., 2016; Neumann, van Lier, Gratz, & Koot, 2010).

Ability 4: Skill at Broadening and Building Emotion-Regulation Strategies

There come times in everyone's life when what has worked in a past niche no longer works in a present niche. For example, imagine a young female is being raised by an abusive, alcoholic mother. She may feel fear and as a result act in a small and withdrawing way at home to keep herself safe. This strategy may work somewhat at home, but could be problematic at school. If she responds to her fear with withdrawal, she will fail to form friendships or supportive relationships with teachers. For her to regulate her emotions, she will need to learn to experience her fear and distrust of others, and still be willing to engage in positive social interaction. That is, she will need to broaden how she typically responds to fear.

Because both ourselves and our environments are constantly changing, we need the ability to broaden our behavioral responses to adapt to these changes. Such expansion requires us to try new things, even when our emotions are screaming, "No! It's not safe." We need to be willing to take risks and make mistakes, and learn how to better adapt from our mistakes. People who cannot broaden and build can get stuck in familiar, unhelpful behavioral patterns (Hayes & Ciarrochi, 2015).

Fredrickson's Broaden and Build Theory suggests that positive affect and well-being broaden awareness, drive approach and exploratory behavior, and expand social networks (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2018; Kok & Fredrickson, 2010). Positive affect essentially signals that the environment is safe and it is safe to try new things and take risks. Research suggests that inducing positive affect leads to more creativity and big-picture thinking and increased prosocial behavior and social support (Aknin, Van de Vondervoort, & Hamlin, 2018; Fredrickson, 2001; Fredrickson, Cohn, Coffey, Pek, & Finkel, 2008). Longitudinal research suggests that positive emotions predict an increase in valued activity (Williams, Ciarrochi, & Heaven, 2014). Concerning emotion-regulation interventions, the take home message is that creating environments that signal safety and promote positive affect are likely to help individuals expand the way they adapt to difficult emotional events.

If positive affect is so good, is negative affect bad for broadening and building repertoires of behavior? Negative affect can narrow thought-action repertoire (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005). However, we can think of this narrowing as happening in a specific moment of time, as when you hear a strange movement on the floor of your bedroom at

3 a.m. and you focus all your attention on the sound and nothing else. However, over a broader time scale, negative affect need not cause narrowing. For example, the notion of post-traumatic growth suggests that people can use trauma to broaden their behavioral patterns (Schubert, Schmidt, & Rosner, 2016). Interventions that work to counter narrowing due to negative affect include exposure-based therapies such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and many mindfulness-based therapies. These have been effective in treating a wide range of conditions (Gu et al., 2015; Hooper & Larsson, 2015; Howell & Passmore, 2018) .

An analog to exposure interventions in normal populations is expressive writing. Expressive writing interventions typically ask a person to reflect on negative experiences for about 15–20 minutes a day for several sessions. Expressive writing can focus people's attention on memories that they've avoided and undervalued, can elicit processes similar to exposure, and can help people build coherence and understanding around past negative events. Meta-analyses show the value of expressive writing for promoting well-being and recovery from past negative experiences (Pavlacic, Buchanan, Maxwell, Hopke, & Schulenberg, 2019; Reinhold, Bürkner, & Holling, 2018; Travagin, Margola, & Revenson, 2015).

There are a wide variety of other interventions that might fall under the broaden and build category. Behavioral activation is an evidence-based intervention that involves using methods (e.g., activity scheduling) to encourage people to engage in pleasurable or valued activities, even if they feel unmotivated or depressed (Cuijpers, Straten, & Warmerdam, 2007; Mazzucchelli, Kane, & Rees, 2010; Dimidjian et al., 2006). These interventions often encourage people to "fake it till they make it," that is, to engage in valued behavior before they have the "right" motivations and feelings. This shapes new responses in the presence of difficult emotions.

Art activities are another helpful way to help people broaden their way of responding to difficult emotional experiences by broadening their emotional experiences and ways of viewing the world. One review suggests that in-school art programs can build self-esteem, sense of belonging, and relationships (Zarobe & Bungay, 2017). The activities involved in the interventions were diverse, including dance, drama, storytelling, film making, and drum circles.

Ability 5: Skill at Taking Perspective on Oneself and Others

Finally, a key emotion-regulation skill involves the ability to take perspective of oneself and of others. Perspective taking involves verbal framing behavior, such as, *I* and *you*, *here* and *there*, and *now* and *then* (Barnes-Holmes, McHugh, & Barnes-Holmes, 2004; Hayes, Barnes-Holmes, & Roche, 2001). For example, "I see myself, now, looking at what I was like, then." Or, "I see how I made you feel." We develop perspective taking, in part, by answering questions such as, "What were you doing there?" or "What am I doing now?" and "What was she feeling then?" Perspective taking is essential to being able

to regulate emotions, and encompasses pragmatic language use (ability 2), mindfulness (ability 3),and broadening and building (ability 4), as discussed earlier.

Perspective Taking Directed at the Self

Consider an example of poor emotion regulation. Imagine someone incorrectly believes the statement "No one loves me." They experience social anxiety and depression, engage in social withdrawal, and fail to build relationships or to seek social support. How can perspective taking help?

First, they can learn to view themselves from a distanced, "outsider" perspective (Grossmann, Sahdra, & Ciarrochi, 2016; Kross, 2010), as in "I, here, see myself suffering there." Such a distanced perspective weakens the power of unhelpful thoughts and feelings. For example, you can imagine yourself in the distant future looking at your experiences now, seeing yourself as an old person, looking back on your young self who is thinking, "No one loves me." This simple distancing intervention reduces distress in reaction to negative situations such as social rejection (Kross, 2010). Other forms of self-distancing that have proven to be effective include talking about oneself in the third person, or taking an outsider's view (Ahmed, Somerville, & Sebastian, 2018; Powers & LaBar, 2019; White et al., 2017). Self-distancing is likely to work by helping people become aware of their feelings in the moment (ability 3), diminishing the affective impact of cognitions though making the difficult situation seem more distant and abstract (similar to ability 2), and helping people to regulate their behavior (Powers & LaBar, 2019). This regulation may occur by helping people to experience unhelpful thoughts as just thoughts, and not truths that must interfere with valued action (Hayes & Melancon, 1989). Distancing interventions also create a "mindful space" between oneself and one's emotions, giving people a moment to regulate their choices based on their values, rather than their impulses.

Perspective taking of the self can also focus on one's ability to grow and change, in other words, to develop a "growth mindset" (Sarrasin et al., 2018). If you believe "Nobody loves me," then you will be especially miserable if you also believe you can't improve and change. Growth mindset interventions can help people to see themselves as changing and capable of improvement. They involve perspective shifts such as, "I am different now than I was then; I will be different again in the future." Through such perspective taking, one sees the self as something that is growing, not fixed. There is clear evidence that growth mindset interventions improve achievement (Sarrasin et al., 2018) and well-being (Schleider & Weisz, 2018; Zeng, Hou, & Peng, 2016).

Finally, one can take a kindly perspective on the self, or engage in self-compassion practice. One can ask, "If someone who loves you heard you say, 'nobody loves me,' what might that person say to you? How might that person treat you?" Research suggests that self-compassion can be taught and has a positive impact on indicators of well-being (Ferrari et al., 2019, 2018). Self-compassion, like growth mindset, broadens one's view of

the self, from someone who needs to be psychologically "beaten" into shape to someone who suffers and deserves kindness.

Perspective Taking Directed at Others

Humans are a social species. If we believe the thought "Nobody loves me," we will experience it the same as physical pain (Williams & Nida, 2011). Loneliness is as big a risk factor for death as smoking a substantial number of cigarettes every day or being significantly overweight (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010; Holt-Lunstad, Smith, Baker, Harris, & Stephenson, 2015; Rico-Uribe et al., 2018). Loneliness and similar emotions can be toxic.

Empathy, or taking perspective on others, may help people to build strong supportive relationships and thereby help them manage feelings of loneliness and isolation. Empathy promotes one's ability to engage in socially effective behavior (Hirn, Thomas, & Zoelch, 2018), increases prosocial behavior (Sahdra et al., 2015), and increases relationship satisfaction (Sened et al., 2017). In addition, a meta-analysis suggests that empathy can be taught (Teding van Berkhout, 2016).

The Humanities can promote emotion regulation

We have shown how our definition and view of the world influence how we work with emotions. The humanities, and especially philosophy and various art forms, have much to contribute in understanding emotion regulation, and promoting adaptive emotion regulation. We end by showing how teachers can help develop each of the five emotion-regulation skills through the study of humanities.

Value identification (skill 1) relates to the study of ethics, morals, and philosophical discussions of what makes a good life. It is also relevant to philosophical, historical, and literary treatments of the conflict between individual values and group and societal values.

The wise use of language (skill 2) is most closely linked not only to writings about reasoning and logic often found in philosophy, but also to work on the limits of reason, as exemplified by the Pascal quote, "The heart has its reasons, which reason knows nothing (Pascal, 1958)" Eastern practices often seek to disrupt harmful language processes. For example, Zen koans are riddles that resist logical solutions and thereby hint at the dangers of overusing reasoning.

Art may be one of the most powerful mediums to help people become aware of their feelings (skill 3) and also broaden and build their emotion-regulation skill (skill 4). For example, the visual arts allow people to connect with their feelings in a way that is new and does not involve excessive verbal control. Indeed, music, dance, and other forms of art have been used for this exact purpose (Zarobe & Bungay, 2017; Gilroy, 2006; Gold et al., 2004; Ritter & Low, 1996).

The study of literature and history may be one of the best ways to develop perspective taking. We suspect that one type of literary work is especially valuable for developing perspective taking, namely, the literature in which the authors do not assert their viewpoint,

but rather allow characters to have different, often conflicting viewpoints (e.g., some work by Shakespeare and Dostoevsky). For example, two characters in the play *Hamlet*, Hamlet and Fortinbras, are princes who have completely different perspectives on life. Hamlet has a deep understanding of the problems of living, is conflicted ("to be or not to be"), and often is unable to take decisive action. Fortinbras "only" understands the ordinary problems of life and can take decisive military action. Shakespeare never indicates which position he thought "better," leaving readers to explore the different perspectives themselves.

Perspective taking is also inherent in the study of history. We learn to see ourselves in relation to the past. We learn, for example, that it is easy for humans to make dangerous assumptions about people from other groups, nationalities, and genders. We learn to see our potential for cruelty or benevolence by studying the actions of past societies.

In conclusion, we need philosophy, history, literature, and various art forms to understand the assumptions we make about emotion regulation (is it about feeling good, or doing good?) and to cultivate different skills that can help us better regulate our emotions. We need to learn how to reason well with words, but also recognize that words can only do so much, and we need to explore our feelings in the nonverbal mediums found in the arts. We need history and literature to break out of our narrow perspectives and to be able to see our emotion-regulation strategies in a more honest light. For example, we can see that, throughout the ages, people have vilified other groups in order to have feelings of safety and self-importance. We can ask, is this an effective emotion regulation strategy? Does vilifying others build value for myself, my community, and my world (skill 1)? Do my stereotyped beliefs about others bring joy to my life (skill 2)? Our should I recognize my fear of those who are different (skill 3), seek to understand their position in life and whether they pose a genuine threat (skill 5)? Perhaps, when we feel fear toward someone who is different, we should not engage in the default response we have seen throughout history (vilification), but rather consider new ways of responding that allow us to live with our fear and our fellow humans (skill 4). We need the humanities to both understand and teach emotion regulation.

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CHAPTER

12

Character and Virtues in the Arts and Humanities

Willibald Ruch *and* Fabian Gander

Abstract

This chapter discusses the role of character in the arts and humanities. The authors introduce the most influential model of character, the Values in Action (VIA) classification of character strengths and virtues, review the relevance of the arts and humanities in the creation of this classification, and discuss earlier research and practice of character strengths in these disciplines. They review earlier studies and present new data on differences in character strengths between people working in an occupation related to the arts and the humanities (vs. other occupations), with a special focus on professional and amateur musicians. Finally, they examine whether the arts and humanities might also be associated with character strengths via role models. They conclude that in particular the character strength of appreciation of beauty and excellence might play a crucial role in the arts and humanities and discuss avenues for further research in this area.

Key Words: character strength, virtue, VIA classification, arts, humanities

Character Strengths and Virtues

Character represents the positive, adaptive part of personality.[1] The study of character has flourished since the introduction of the Values in Action (VIA) classification of character strengths and virtues by Peterson and Seligman (2004). One of the basic assumptions of this classification is that "character is plural" (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 10) and that multiple dimensions are needed to describe good character. According to Peterson and Seligman (2004), this is best accommodated through a hierarchical conceptualization of character, comprising—from top to bottom—virtues, character strengths, and situational themes. On the top level, the classification suggests six core virtues (i.e., wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence) that

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have emerged from analyses of philosophical theories and religious traditions (Dahlsgaard, Peterson, & Seligman, 2005). At the mid-level are the character strengths, a set of twenty-four positively valued traits that represent distinct ways of displaying the virtues (see Table 12.1). Character strengths were selected by scanning through numerous sources for candidate traits and determining whether these candidates mostly fulfilled each of several criteria for character strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; see also Ruch & Stahlmann, 2019). One of the most important criteria is "a strength contributes to various fulfillments that constitute the good life, for oneself and for others" (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 17). A plethora of research has corroborated the robust positive relationships between character strengths and different aspects of well-being (e.g., Wagner, Gander, Proyer, & Ruch, 2020), and has underlined their relevance for success and flourishing in several life domains, including work (e.g., Harzer & Ruch, 2014; Heintz & Ruch, 2020), school (e.g., Wagner & Ruch, 2015), and friendship (Wagner, 2019). In other words, character strengths have theoretically and empirically been shown to go along with human striving for moral and intellectual excellence. At the bottom level of the classification, there are specific habits of displaying a particular character strength in a particular situation. While the situational themes represent very narrow, situation-dependent habits and the virtues very general, abstract concepts, the core of the classification are the character strengths—measurable interindividual differences that offer a compromise between abstraction and specificity and show considerable stability across time and situations (Gander, Hofmann, Proyer, & Ruch, 2020).

Character in the Arts and Humanities

The relationship of character and the arts and humanities is evident, and a natural one. While questions of morality, excellence, well-being, and the "good life" are relevant in almost every academic discipline, such questions are often explicitly topics of the arts and humanities (as opposed to other disciplines, such as STEM i.e., science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, for example). This is also well reflected in the development of the VIA classification: among the sources that were considered for potential candidates of strengths were instances of popular and high culture from music (e.g., popular song lyrics), visual and performing arts (e.g., graffiti), philosophy (from ancient Greek philosophers to contemporary philosophy of ethics), literature (e.g., from writings of Benjamin Franklin to Harry Potter novels), as well as several historical figures (e.g., Charlemagne). Further, character and virtue have been taught using poems (Moores et al., 2015), books (FitzSimons, 2015; Kilpatrick, Wolfe, & Wolfe, 1994), movies (Niemiec & Wedding, 2013), and songs (Peterson, 2006) that display and celebrate prototypical expressions of character strengths.

Tay, Pawelski, and Keith (2018) introduced a conceptual model proposing that engagement in the arts and humanities may "strengthen normative aspects of human flourishing, such as character, values, civic engagement, and morality" (p. 220). They suggest four

Table 12.1 The VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues
1. **Wisdom and knowledge**: Cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge. *Creativity* [*originality, ingenuity*]: Thinking of novel and productive ways to conceptualize and do things; includes artistic achievement but is not limited to it. *Curiosity* [*interest*, *novelty-seeking*, *openness to experience*]: Taking an interest in ongoing experience for its own sake; finding subjects and topics fascinating; exploring and discovering. *Judgment* [*critical thinking*]: Thinking things through and examining them from all sides; not jumping to conclusions; being able to change one's mind in light of evidence; weighing all evidence fairly. *Love of learning*: Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge, whether on one's own or formally; obviously related to the strength of curiosity, but goes beyond it to describe the tendency to add systematically to what one knows. *Perspective* [*wisdom*]: Being able to provide wise counsel to others; having ways of looking at the world that make sense to oneself and to other people.
2. **Courage**: Emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal. *Bravery* [*valor*]: Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain; speaking up for what is right even if there is opposition; acting on convictions even if unpopular; includes physical bravery but is not limited to it. *Perseverance* [*persistence*, *industriousness*]: Finishing what one starts; persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles; "getting it out the door"; taking pleasure in completing tasks. *Honesty* [*authenticity*, *integrity*]: Speaking the truth, but more broadly presenting oneself in a genuine way and acting in a sincere way; being without pretense; taking responsibility for one's feelings and actions. *Zest* [*vitality*, *enthusiasm*, *vigor*, *energy*]: Approaching life with excitement and energy; not doing things halfway or halfheartedly; living life as an adventure; feeling alive and activated.
3. **Humanity**: Interpersonal strengths that involve tending to and befriending others. *Love*: Valuing close relations with others, in particular those in which sharing and caring are reciprocated; being close to people. *Kindness* [*generosity*, *nurturance*, *care*, *compassion*, *altruistic love*, "*niceness*"]: Doing favors and good deeds for others; helping them; taking care of them. *Social intelligence* [*emotional intelligence*, *personal intelligence*]: Being aware of the motives and feelings of other people and oneself; knowing what to do to fit into different social situations; knowing what makes other people tick.
4. **Justice**: Civic strengths that underlie healthy community life. *Teamwork* [*citizenship*, *social responsibility*, *loyalty*]: Working well as a member of a group or team; being loyal to the group; doing one's share. *Fairness*: Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice; not letting personal feelings bias decisions about others; giving everyone a fair chance. *Leadership*: Encouraging a group of which one is a member to get things done and at the same time maintain good relations within the group; organizing group activities and seeing that they happen.
5. **Temperance**: Strengths that protect against excess. *Forgiveness*: Forgiving those who have done wrong; accepting the shortcomings of others; giving people a second chance; not being vengeful. *Humility*: Letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves; not regarding oneself as more special than one is. *Prudence*: Being careful about one's choices; not taking undue risks; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted. *Self-regulation* [*self-control*]: regulating what one feels and does; being disciplined; controlling one's appetites and emotions.

Table 12.1 Continued

6. **Transcendence**: Strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning.
Appreciation of beauty and excellence [*awe*, *wonder*, *elevation*]: Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in various domains of life, from nature to art to mathematics to science to everyday experience.
Gratitude: Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen; taking time to express thanks.
Hope [*optimism*, *future-mindedness*, *future orientation*]: Expecting the best in the future and working to achieve it; believing that a good future is something that can be brought about.
Humor [*playfulness*]: Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people; seeing the light side; making (not necessarily telling) jokes: liking to laugh and joke; bringing smiles to other people.
Spirituality [*faith*, *purpose*]: Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe; knowing where one fits within the larger scheme; having beliefs about the meaning of life that shape conduct and provide comfort.

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main mechanisms for these effects of the arts and humanities on character: By immersion (i.e., by eliciting positive emotional states or flow states during engagement with arts and humanities), embeddedness (i.e., by vicarious experiences or the experience of mastery or encouragement that might support the development of skills or habits), socialization (i.e., by accumulating several roles and identities within a culture that also strengthen social networks), or reflectiveness (i.e., by reflecting upon one's habits or views, these might be developed, altered, or discarded). The idea that character can be cultivated through engagement in the humanities is an old one. Tay, Pawelski, and Keith (2018) summarized this as follows: The "humanities have long been relied on for education and socialization of the young and for maintaining cohesion among citizens by emphasizing standards of conduct and values shared within a society" (p. 220). Accordingly, the literature is rich with ideas and examples of how character could or should be taught and fostered in schools (e.g., Lavy, 2019; Linkins, Niemiec, Gillham, & Mayerson, 2015; Waters, 2011; White & Murray, 2015). While many of these studies reported positive effects on well-being-related outcomes (e.g., Brunwasser, Gillham, & Kim, 2009), studies of effects on character have been comparatively rare or critically discussed (Was, Woltz, & Drew, 2006). In a recent systematic review, Vaziri, Tay, Keith, and Pawelski (2018) assessed the literature on effects of engaging in history, literature, and philosophy on virtues and other well-being outcomes: the authors identified several studies that examined the effects of such interventions on concepts associated with the virtues of wisdom (42 studies; mostly addressing engagement or interest), humanity (32 studies; mostly addressing empathy or theory of mind), and justice (2 studies; addressing willingness to engage in social justice or civic behaviors), but no studies examining effects on concepts related to courage, temperance, or transcendence. While the largest part of these studies reported positive effects, the existing research on effects of the arts and humanities on character is limited in two main regards. First, most studies did not address longer-term changes that go beyond pre–post comparisons. This

is problematic since one can assume that fostering character strengths might unfold over longer periods of time. Second, although these studies examined concepts that are associated with character strengths and virtues, they did not assess character strengths as personality traits, as suggested in the VIA framework. Therefore, although these findings are encouraging, they are of limited relevance for the question whether character strengths can be fostered through engagement with arts and humanities. While the research for settling this question has yet to be done, we can gather information about what strengths might be particularly relevant in the arts and humanities from cross-sectional studies. Although this of course does not allow for drawing any inferences about the directions of effects, or even causal relationships, it might still be helpful for inspiring and guiding future studies. Thus, in the following sections, we review previous research and present new data that might help for scrutinizing the relationships between character strengths and the arts and humanities. In particular, we are focusing on two specific aspects: first, we are discussing the role of character strengths in occupations related to the art and humanities, with a special focus on the discipline of music, and second, we are studying the relationships of character strengths with role models in the arts and humanities.

Character Strengths in Arts and Humanities Occupations

Tay and colleagues (2018) suggested that describing the arts and humanities by the occupations that comprise them offers one possible way for demarcating the field. Also, some occupations, as they go along with specific roles and identities, might foster human flourishing (coined as "socialization" by Tay et al., 2018). Thus, one intuitive approach for assessing the relevance of character strengths in the arts and humanities is comparing the level of character strengths between people who are in occupations related to the arts and humanities with those of people in other occupations. For this purpose, we analyzed data from a representative sample of the Swiss workforce (n = 1,721; Maggiori, Rossier, Krings, Johnston, & Massoudi, 2016) who provided information on their occupation (coded according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations) and completed a measure on their character strengths (Character Strengths Rating Form, a twenty-four-item self-report instrument for the assessment of the twenty-four character strengths of the VIA classification; Ruch, Martínez-Martí, Proyer, & Harzer, 2014).[2] When comparing occupations from the arts and humanities with other occupations in their character strengths (see Table 12.2), results suggested higher scores in occupations related to the arts and humanities in the strengths of creativity, curiosity, judgment, love of learning, kindness, humility, appreciation of beauty, and gratitude. For the other strengths, no

[2] Two independent raters coded the occupations with regard to whether they are occupations within the arts and humanities (= 1) or not (= 0). There was a substantial agreement between the raters (Cohen's κ = .75), and only those cases were considered in which both raters agreed. The occupations coded as "arts and humanities" covered art teachers, philosophers, historians, political scientists, pastors and pastoral helpers, authors, journalists, linguists, musicians, singers, composers, directors and film producers, photographers, and interior designers.

Table 12.2 Relationships of Character Strengths with Having an Occupation or Role Model from the Arts and Humanities, and Playing a Musical Instrument

	Occupations[a]	Musical instrument[b]	Role models[c]
Creativity	.06**	.13***	.01
Curiosity	.07**	.13***	.12
Judgment	.05*	.08***	.08
Love of learning	.06*	.15***	.05
Perspective	.01	.10***	.03
Bravery	.03	.09***	.14
Perseverance	.03	.04*	-.06
Honesty	.03	.04**	-.05
Zest	.04	.07***	.09
Love	.05	.00	.11
Kindness	.06*	.07***	.02
Social intelligence	.03	.06***	.03
Teamwork	.02	.06***	-.05
Fairness	.03	.13***	.02
Leadership	.03	.08***	.04
Forgiveness	.03	.10***	.07
Humility	.06*	.07***	-.15
Prudence	.01	.05***	.00
Self-regulation	.00	.07***	-.03
ABE	.06*	.27***	.18*
Gratitude	.05*	.05***	.07
Hope	.02	.08***	.12
Humor	.01	.05***	.02
Spirituality	.04	.05**	.16*

Note. ABE = Appreciation of beauty and excellence.

[a] n = 1,721; 0 = no occupation within humanities (98.2%); 1 = occupation within humanities (1.2%).

[b] n = 4,838; 0 = not playing a music instrument (52%); 1 = playing a music instrument (48%).

[c] n = *160*; 0 = no role model from the arts and humanities (39.9%); 1 = role model from the arts and humanities (60.1%).

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed tests).

differences between the two groups were observed. While these results offer important insights, they are based on a comparatively small number of occupations in the arts and humanities (n = 21).

Further information is available from previous studies on a specific occupation within arts and humanities, namely musicians: Güsewell and Ruch (2015) compared the character strengths profiles of professional musicians (n = 108), with matched samples of

amateur musicians (n = 108), and non-musicians (n = 108) who completed the standard form of the character strengths instrument (VIA-IS; Ruch et al., 2010). Professional musicians reported higher scores in self-regulation and appreciation of beauty and excellence than non-musicians, but lower scores in teamwork, fairness, and leadership than the other groups. Eggimann and Schneider (2008) collected data from orchestra musicians (n = 85) who completed the standard form of the character strengths instrument (VIA-IS; Ruch et al., 2010). When comparing the scores of the orchestra musicians with those of a general population sample (n = 1,674; Ruch et al., 2010), results suggest that the orchestra musicians scored higher in appreciation of beauty ($r[1,728] = .26$, $p < .001$), and lower in forgiveness ($r[1,728] = .14$, $p = .047$), while no differences in other strengths were found. The lowered scores in some strengths in both studies raise the question whether these indicate potential negative effects of arts and humanities on character, or are merely context effects (e.g., the conditions under which musicians perform) or confounding factors (e.g., lifestyle, education, or socialization). Right now it is difficult to imagine the mechanisms by which arts and humanities systematically and directly hinder the building of certain strengths or reduce them.

For examining whether potential differences in character strengths also can be traced in non-professional musicians, we additionally analyzed a large data set of children and adolescents (aged 10–17, n = 4,838) who completed a character strengths self-assessment instrument for children and adolescents (Values in Action Inventory of Strengths for Youth; Ruch, Weber, Park, & Peterson, 2014) and indicated whether they are playing a musical instrument (= 1) or not (= 0). Results showed that playing a music instrument went along with higher scores in all character strengths, with the exception of love, with the highest effect sizes for appreciation of beauty and excellence, love of learning, creativity, curiosity, and fairness (see Table 12.2). Of course, one has to assume that children who are playing an instrument also differ in many other aspects from those who do not (e.g., social status), and the effects cannot be solely attributed to engaging in music. No study yet exists that compares character at the beginning and end of musical training and examines whether differences deviate from a regular developmental trend.

Character Strengths in Role Models

Another approach to studying the role of character strengths in the arts in humanities is by examining role models. The arts and humanities might also influence the general public through particularly prominent representatives. Similar to the idea of Tay et al. (2018) that embeddedness—processes that underlie the development of habits—might be activated through the arts and humanities, we assume that role models might guide behavior and shape the character of individuals, in line with social cognitive theory (e.g., Bandura, 1986).

For examining whether having a role model from the arts and humanities is related to character strengths, we asked a sample of participants (n = 160) who completed the VIA-IS (Ruch et al., 2010) to name their role models. Interestingly, the majority of the publicly known role models were from the arts and humanities (60.1 percent).[3] When comparing the character strengths of participants who named a role model from the arts and humanities with those who named role models from other disciplines (e.g., sports, science, politics), we found role models from the arts and humanities to correspond with higher scores in the strengths of appreciation of beauty and excellence, and spirituality (see Table 12.2).

Conclusions and Outlook

While the reviewed studies and presented data showed some differences in their findings, there was one common theme: the particular relevance of the strength of appreciation of beauty in the arts and humanities. Thus, this strength seems to be the most natural starting point for further research in this area. For musicians, this relationship has already been studied in depth (Güsewell & Ruch, 2014, 2015). Güsewell and Ruch (2014) also reported that the degree of involvement in musical practice positively relates to the degree of responsiveness to the good and beautiful, which would also be in line with the hypothesis of Tay et al. (2018) that the variety and depth of the engagement with the arts and humanities should lead to greater increases in outcomes, such as character strengths. Intervention studies have also shown that instructing people to engage in (natural, artistic, and moral) beauty leads to increases in the appreciation of beauty (Martínez-Martí, Avia, & Hernández-Lloreda, 2018), well-being (Proyer, Gander, Wellenzohn, & Ruch, 2016), and hope (Diessner, Rust, Solom, Frost, & Parsons, 2006). Given the obvious relationships between the arts and humanities and the engagement in (moral and non-moral) beauty, this might be one important pathway by which these disciplines can contribute to character development. For example, displays of moral beauty have been related to emotional experiences of elevation (Keltner & Haidt, 2003), which in turn was found to motivate prosocial and affiliative behavior (Algoe & Haidt, 2009). Thus, one might assume that continued engagement in moral beauty might also foster character strengths related to prosociality and affiliation, such as kindness, or gratitude. Finally, it has been argued that the experience of elevation and related states, such as awe, can occur due to the perceived vastness of a stimulus (Keltner & Haidt, 2003). One might argue that

[3] We only analyzed those people who indicated a publicly known real or fictional role model (as opposed to friends, family members, or similar). Two independent raters coded the role models with regard to whether they can be considered representatives of the arts and humanities (= 1) or not (= 0). There was a substantial agreement between the raters (Cohen's κ = .73), and only those cases were considered in which both raters agreed. Mentioned role models of the arts and humanities covered a variety of disciplines including literature (e.g., J. K. Rowling, Hannah Arendt, Astrid Lindgren, Simone de Beauvoir), religion (e.g., Dalai Lama, Jesus Christ, Buddha), music (e.g., Bob Dylan, Bob Marley, Freddie Mercury), cinema (e.g., Audrey Hepburn, Emma Watson), or art (e.g., Frida Kahlo, Sebastião Salgado).

the experience of vastness might foster humility. Indeed, we found minor differences in all these strengths (i.e., kindness, gratitude, and humility) when comparing occupations from the arts and humanities with other occupations. Therefore, examining effects on these strengths might be a second line of concern in future studies.

Additionally, we also found differences in several strengths assigned to the virtue of wisdom and knowledge, in particular creativity, curiosity, and love of learning. This is well in line with the findings of the literature review of Vaziri et al. (2018), who found numerous studies reporting increases in similar concepts following an intervention based on history, literature, and philosophy (further disciplines were not covered in this study). While these effects might also be confounded with engagement in education in general, examining effects on these strengths offers a third line of inquiry for future studies.

Of course, the findings presented here can only provide general ideas of how the arts and humanities might affect character strengths. While we found some evidence on positive relationships with several character strengths, we can only speculate about their direction and assume that they go both ways; while mostly those people with high scores in specific strengths (such as appreciation of beauty and excellence, creativity, curiosity, or love of learning, for example) more frequently tend to engage in occupations or activities related to the arts and humanities, one might also assume that continued engagement in this area shapes character strengths; longitudinal and experimental studies are required for learning more about these relationships, and possible working mechanisms.

Last but not least, future studies might want to look into differences between the arts versus the humanities in their effects on character strengths. While the effects might be comparable overall, we expect that there will be differences as well. We expect the effects of the humanities to be broader (i.e., involving more strengths and covering more virtue domains) than the effect of the arts.

Finally, one might also argue that there could be instances in which the arts and humanities can be an obstacle for character development. Although we found no negative effects in the presented data, earlier studies found lower scores for musicians in specific character strengths (i.e., teamwork, fairness, leadership, and forgiveness; Eggimann & Schneider, 2008; Güsewell & Ruch, 2015). While we assume that these effects can rather be attributed to the specific occupation of professional musician (e.g., being in a highly competitive environment), nonetheless potential negative effects should also be considered by future studies.

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CHAPTER

13

Holocaust and Humanity: Depicting Realities While Creating Pathways for Future Upstanders, Strengths Use, and Flourishing

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Abstract

The Holocaust has become recognized as a defining event of the twentieth century, with vast implications for the understanding of humanity and the inner workings of government and technology, religion, and culture. The event offers significant insight into the capacity of "ordinary" individuals and groups in the commission of radical evil. It also offers insight into humanity, the insistency of altruistic good, resilience, and the expression of character strengths, especially by way of individuals who behaved not as bystanders but as "upstanders," taking action despite danger, expressing their courage and moral conviction against perpetrators and their collaborators by helping the victims, and choosing to act in a humane manner. This chapter offers an exemplary case of the creation of a first-ever Holocaust and Humanity Museum in Cincinnati, Ohio, and documents the task, challenges, and unique design of the entire exhibition.

Key Words: Holocaust museum, Holocaust and Humanity Museum, character strength, virtue, VIA classification, upstander, bystander, choiceless, choice

Introduction

Holocaust Museums dot the globe; they have been built in Jerusalem and Paris, Washington and New York, London and Chicago, Houston, Dallas, and Cincinnati, and even in Hiroshima, Japan. The Holocaust has become recognized as a defining event of the twentieth century, with vast implications for our understanding of humanity and the inner workings of government and technology, religion, and culture. The event offers significant insight into the capacity of "ordinary" individuals and groups in the commission of radical evil, but also the insistency of altruistic good and resilience.

An emerging trend among many of these institutions is the request to move beyond a chronological telling of the Holocaust narrative, and to devote considerable exhibition and narrative space to address its relevance for contemporary society. This is particularly

important for youth, who may feel distant from an event that may not seem pertinent and is overshadowed by more contemporary tragedies.

Telling a history of the Holocaust is a fraught affair. The weight of the subject is as daunting for designers as it is for visitors. Breaking out of common didactic modes of presentation can be considered irreverent for such a sacrosanct subject. Further, searching for ways to make this story relevant and applicable to the visitor's life without falling into worn clichés and simplistic homilies is equally perilous. The desire to "universalize" the experience in a reductive manner is overwhelming: for example, let's use the Holocaust as a gateway to discuss schoolyard bullying; or, let's trace how *intolerance* leads to genocide. With all this in mind, the designers of the Holocaust and Humanity Center (HHC) in Cincinnati, Ohio, have created a broad palette of exhibits designed to engage a widely diverse audience and geared at making this subject accessible and relevant. Equally important are the programmatic goals of the museum to encourage self-understanding, civic responsibility, and action. It is our hope that visitors leave the museum not only informed and edified but enlightened as to how to mobilize their capacities to be upstanders in the face of injustice.

Task, Opportunity, Challenge

On January 27, 2019, the Nancy and David Wolfe Holocaust and Humanity Center opened in the Cincinnati Museum Center. The Center is a one-of-a-kind, multi-museum complex housed in Union Terminal, a historic Art Deco train station and National Historic Landmark. Museum Center's major offerings at Union Terminal include the Cincinnati History Museum, the Cincinnati History Library and Archives, the Duke Energy Children's Museum, the Museum of Natural History & Science, and an OMNIMAX Theater. Museum Center is the largest cultural institution in the city of Cincinnati, with more than 1.4 million visitors per year. Importantly, the Museum Center was the train station where refugees from Nazi Germany and survivors of the Holocaust first landed to begin their "new life chapter" in Cincinnati. As such, it has a direct and sacred connection with the Holocaust narrative.

By name and agenda, the new museum was meant to incorporate a full Holocaust exhibition, seamlessly linked to an exhibition called "Humanity." The museum directorship turned to us, the museum design firm Berenbaum Jacobs Associates (BJA), to devise and design a museum that would answer both these needs in a compelling, impactful, and relevant way. The focus was meant to tell the story of the Holocaust and address its implications for contemporary society in a manner that deepens commitment to human rights, dignity, decency, and diversity in a complex world in which xenophobia and racism, hatred, intolerance, and antisemitism are ascendant. Working hand in hand with the dedicated and knowledgeable director, Sarah Weiss, and the staff of the museum, as well as a prominent local design firm, Jack Rouse Associates, who were retained to oversee production of the project, BJA sought to frame a unique and original narrative. The

collaboration also involved directors of the renowned VIA Institute on Character, a global nonprofit organization that, through science, uncovered humanity's best characteristics, and involved Drs. Neal Mayerson, Donna Mayerson, and Ryan Niemiec.

The initial challenge was how to integrate the two dimensions of the Museum's title, *Holocaust* and *Humanity*:

- What kind of Holocaust narrative would both tell the story of the Holocaust and introduce the issues to be expanded upon in the Humanity exhibition?
- What can one say about so broad a subject as Humanity that will both integrate with the Holocaust narrative and be a practical *call to action* for its visitors? Might it be possible to construct the narrative in a way that moves people toward greater flourishing by sensitizing them to their own potential to effect change in themselves and in the world around them?

Approach to Museum Design

A word about our approach to the design of *narrative history museums*:

- In design and content, an effective exhibition must be driven by the story that needs to be told and the lessons it seeks to transmit. Upon these two considerations, artifacts are identified, imagery gathered, artifacts collected, testimony chosen and diverse media—audio, video, and especially art, etc.—are curated.
- The exhibition must be layered to address the three different types of museum visitors:
  Skimmers: those who walk quickly through an exhibition and view the headlines;
  Swimmers: those who spend more time reading and engaging with exhibits; and
  Deep-Divers: those who read and study every element of each exhibit.
- The exhibition must engage three types of learners: auditory, visual, and tactile.
- A museum exhibition of this type should address general audiences and resonate with visitors of all faiths, ethnic backgrounds, and ideologies, as well as those who have not thought much about any particular historical issue, much less the Holocaust. It must be equally intellectually informative and emotionally compelling.
- That said, we strive to give primary focus to what we consider our most important and challenging audience: high-school-age visitors. They are at once the most critical, scrutinizing, and impressionable audience we have.
- Where possible, building design should support and buttress the exhibition. In the ideal situation, building design follows exhibition design, not the reverse.
- Technology must serve as an aid to storytelling. The visitor should be touched by the content of what she/he sees, rather than marvel at the mode of presentation.
- Personalization: Mass murder is an abstract concept. The murder of millions is a statistic. The experience of the individual is a story that, if told empathically, leaves a lasting impression.

- Localization: Visitors more easily identify with local survivors and activists who have lived in their neighborhoods, attended their schools, and contributed to their community. Further, museum officials are committed to telling the story of the people who have shaped the institutions that are being created. This is especially true of Holocaust survivors who were the driving forces and founders of these institutions.

Let us briefly "walk through" the exhibition and attempt to illustrate how these challenges were addressed.

Lobby

The entrance lobby of the museum is enveloped by a large colorful mural. Composed in the style of a graphic novel, the mural introduces the major characters the visitor will meet in the exhibition. Each makes a statement of what they lived through, for example, "Our refugee ship was denied entry and we were returned to Europe," and "I saw my hero Jesse Owens win his 4th gold medal at the 1936 Berlin Olympics." These vignettes are meant to create an intriguing overture to the exhibition and include characters from both the Holocaust and Humanity sections of the museum.

Orientation

It is our contention that museum visitors will have an enhanced experience if given an introductory orientation prior to entering the exhibition. This is the opportunity to set expectations, offer necessary context, create parameters, and, most importantly, ask key questions that we would like our visitors to consider throughout the exhibition. It also allows the visitor to decompress, to leave the outside world behind and engage in what is to come.

It is with that in mind that groups of 30–40 visitors are led from the lobby into the adjacent *Winds of Change* Orientation Theater to view the introductory movie, setting the stage for the rest of the exhibition. As the lights go down, scenes from the mural appear on the 60-foot-long projection screen, and four Cincinnati survivors go from being animated to their actual "human" selves. Together they address the visitors, giving them an introduction to what lies in store.

The premise of this introduction, as well as the entire exhibition, is indeterministic. In our worldview, human beings have autonomy. They have the gift of free will. In this context, the characters speak about choices. They tell the audience that they are about to experience a difficult story about people who made evil choices—they are called *perpetrators*; about other people who chose to stand by and watch—those are known as *bystanders*; and about those who were oppressed—victims, whose ability to choose was severely curtailed, but who nonetheless made choices, many times heroic, of their own. Finally, we will hear about the *upstanders*, those rare individuals who despite danger, often mortal, had the courage and moral conviction to act against the perpetrators and their collaborators by

helping the victims, and chose to act in a humane manner. The term *upstander* was coined by former US ambassador to the United Nations, American academic, and war correspondent Samantha Power. An upstander is a person who sees injustice, inequality, or unfairness and steps up to do something about it. Upstanders are people who get involved. They stand up for other people and their rights. They set an example for those around them. Upstanders come from all walks of life, across age, gender, race, and ethnicity. Upstanders are ordinary people who see something wrong and work to make it right. This term is meant to serve as the direct inverse to the bystander. It is now widely used as an altruistic epithet, both noun and verb.

The survivor narrators state that everyone has the ability to choose what they will do and how they will behave.

In a rhetorical turn, they say to the audience that they may be tempted to ask:

> "What would I have done back then? Would I have had the courage to help? The strength to survive?"

To which they answer:

> Instead ask yourself: "What can I do to help now?"
> "How can I aid someone I know who is suffering?"
> "How can we be the best of humanity today?"

This final adjuration from the survivor represents a critical point of our educational philosophy rejecting any kind of role-play exercise. In today's hyper-media-driven age, where we are shown everything, we think we understand everything. In opposition to this perception, we educate toward empathic humility. Our students should understand that we can never know "how we would respond," although we may consider how we would like to imagine ourselves responding. And to those we meet when trapped in a world of "choiceless choices," we cannot judge. As the distinguished literary scholar Lawrence Langer (1980) argued:

> After we peel the veneer of respectable behavior, cooperation, hope, mutual support, and inner determination from the surface of the survivor ordeal, we find beneath a raw and quivering anatomy of human existence resembling no society ever encountered before. The situation of the victim can best be described as one of "choice-less choices" where crucial decisions did not reflect the options between life and death but between one form of abnormal response and another, both imposed by a situation that was in no way of the victims' own choosing.

At the close of this seven-minute movie, the narrators ask:

> "What makes some people behave this way and some that? To choose between good and evil?"

They tell the visitors that they will be exploring these questions throughout the exhibition. Indirectly, this production has also turned a light onto the survivors and poses questions concerning their resilience, their fortitude, their positivity.

The Holocaust in Eighteen Words

Every museum exhibition is based on an organizing principle, either overt or hidden. It is chronological, topical, geographic—whichever is deemed best to support the story being told. This exhibition uses an organizing principle which we had never encountered in a museum exhibition. Human behavior is its underlying structure.

The Holocaust Gallery tells the story of the Holocaust by way of historic events, but through the prism of the victim/perpetrator/bystander paradigm, which comes from Raul Hilberg, the "dean" of Holocaust scholars, who addressed the Holocaust from the perspective of these three actors (Hilberg, 1992). The fourth term—upstander—was added to fully round out the behavioral narrative and offers a seamless transition into the Humanity Gallery.

Wherever possible, local stories are the focus of the exhibit. Eighteen distinct exhibit modules tell the story of the Holocaust. The title of each distinct exhibit, like chapters in a book, defines the subjects of the exhibition. Sometimes the clarity of the titles unites disparate elements of the exhibit. At other times, the lack of clarity triggers the visitor's imagination to fill in some details. For the Holocaust segment of the Museum the following headings were used:

Origins: Deals with the origins of German resentment from World War I onward;
Mosaic: Deals with Jewish life before the Holocaust;
Power: Deals with Nazi rise to power;
Violence: Deals with active Nazi persecution of Jews and other marginalized groups;
War: Deals with World War II;
Escape: Deals with the attempt of Jews to flee Germany, as well as Cincinnati-based sponsors;
Massacre: Deals with the mobile killing units and what is known as "the Holocaust by bullets";
Ghetto: Deals with effort to segregate, isolate, and contain the Jews within ghettos;
Concentration: Deals with variety of concentration camps implemented by the Nazis for Jews and other victims;
Implementation: Deals with the historic Wannsee Conference;
Resistance: Deals with both armed and spiritual resistance;
Deportation: Deals with the mobile transfer of victims to the killing centers;
Annihilation: Deals with the six killing centers established for the purpose of industrialized murder;

Survival: Deals with Cincinnatians who survived various ordeals, particularly the camps;
Liberation: Portrays both the liberators and the liberated;
Aftermath: Tells the story of the days after liberation and the immediate struggle to return to life;
Judgment: Deals with the quest for justice;
Rebuilding: Focuses on the physical journey of survivors from the lands of their oppression to the land of freedom and the personal journey from imprisonment to a life of freedom.

Each of these exhibit modules are designed in a manner in which deepening levels of subject matter are revealed to the visitor by activating the exhibit, or through discovering the various elements embedded within. We'll offer several in-depth examples of the eighteen in the following.

The first exhibit, Origins, is presented as a large mural of a World War I battlefield. Upon activation, the mural mechanically splits in half and slides open, revealing soldiers within a trench. A short text describes Germany's devastating defeat in World War I and the social unrest it caused. More images mechanically arise from behind the trench, showing how the schisms grew in German society. Another expansion reveals the outbreaks of antisemitism and scapegoating of Jews in Germany. Throughout each of these reveals, firsthand eyewitness testimony, by way of images, text, and video, accompanies the historical recounting. Emphasis is placed on highlighting the various categories of our victim/perpetrator/bystander/upstander paradigm.

As described earlier, several of these exhibit models work like mechanical origami, slowly unfolding before the visitor to reveal the various layers of the story. Several have been constructed in an artistic manner, more sculpture than standard exhibit. For example, Massacre presents the perpetrator subject of the *Einsatzgruppen*/mobile killing units and their collaborators (including nationalist killing squads and neighbors) who systematically shot their Jewish victims where they lived. This exhibit is presented as a mosaic composition composed of thousands of actual bullet shells of similar caliber used during these mobile killings. The scene depicted in the mosaic is from a clandestine picture showing one of the many murder-by-bullets scenes that took place in the eastern territories. A video monitor is also part of the exhibit, providing an eyewitness chilling account of these actions.

In the final exhibit of the Holocaust section, the visitor is confronted with a large judges' dais. Focus is given to the paradigm of representational justice, the historic Nuremberg Trials (1945), as well as the groundbreaking Eichmann trial that took place in Jerusalem in 1961. It is here that the visitor sees how justice—however symbolic—was meted out to a perpetrator. The Eichmann trial is generally not included in Holocaust museum exhibits (although there is a wonderful traveling exhibition currently touring the United

States). However, it was included in Cincinnati, specifically owing to the perpetrators' defense (Eichmann): "There is a need to draw a line between the leaders responsible and the people like me forced to serve as mere instruments in the hands of the leaders." It was Eichmann's diabolical behavior and his attempt to evade personal responsibility that we wanted to echo in the final Holocaust exhibit. It was, after all, *radical evil*, conceived of and perpetrated by human beings, that was responsible for the Holocaust—not some satanic visitation, not a group of exceptionally clever sadists working behind the scenes, but rather a national effort supported actively and passively by the overwhelming national majority, as well as multitudes of willing cohorts. They all chose to participate.

These notions of judgment provide the transition into the second half of the exhibition, The Humanity Gallery.

The Humanity Gallery

The Humanity Gallery begins with a four-minute video presentation in a small theater. This presentation is meant to recap and highlight some of the important elements that were covered in the Holocaust gallery, and how those ideas will carry through into the Humanity Gallery.

The narrator explains that within the larger story of the Holocaust, and all of the individual stories heard throughout the exhibition, visitors have seen the worst—and in some cases also the best—of humanity. There were those individuals who, despite even mortal danger to themselves and their families, chose to act and to help. Those upstanders show us the best that humanity can strive for. There were also the stories of the survivors, who through their strength, resilience, and fortitude rebuilt their lives, raised new families, and contributed to society in important and meaningful ways.

The visitors are then presented with the key questions upon which the second part of the exhibit is based: What was it about those upstanders, that caused them to act as they did? Why did they risk life and limb to help? Are they extraordinary? Are they superheroes? Are they "righteous," the designation given to them by Yad Vashem, Israel's Memorial to the Holocaust? Do they have attributes that the rest of us normal mortals do not possess? The narrator asks: "What is it that is inside a person, that compels them to stand up? Is it something inside of everyone?"

Regarding the survivors, similar questions are raised: How did they survive the physical and emotional trauma? How were they able to rebuild their lives, often so successfully? What purpose do they feel they serve today as witnesses to one of the greatest willful destructions to befall humanity?

The answer to these questions, which is provided by the video and the ensuing Humanity Gallery, is that every person possesses positive personality traits, called character strengths, that have the potential to draw them toward upstanding behavior. Awareness of one's own most compelling character strengths can catalyze a person to move beyond being a bystander in the face of injustice to being an actual upstander. The video introduces

visitors to the concept that across the religious, philosophical, and ethical spectrum there are those objectively good human qualities that are in every human being—the character strengths—and that scientists have identified twenty-four specific *character strengths* which represent what we value most in ourselves and others (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). They are the elemental sources of human goodness.

These ideas are based on the groundbreaking research of Christopher Peterson, Martin Seligman, and fifty-five scientists who classified six core virtues (wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, transcendence) and twenty-four character strengths (for example, curiosity, perseverance, kindness, fairness, humility, hope) found in human beings across cultures, nations, and beliefs. This historical and scientific work is known as the *VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues* and is viewed as a "common language" of strengths in all people. Over the last decade, over 600 scientific studies have been conducted on this common language, revealing new insights about our positive makeup, how we can better understand our core identity, and how one might take action to flourish and build greater well-being. Millions of people from every country in the world complete the VIA Survey (www.viacharacter.org) each year to discover how these twenty-four character strengths are uniquely profiled in themselves. These twenty-four character strengths and their applications are crucial for not only individual well-being but relational well-being and societal well-being (Niemiec, 2018). By focusing on strengths as much—if not more—than weakness, we may experience greater gains (Cheavens et al., 2012; Meyers et al., 2015). As highlighted by Peterson and Seligman (2004), "character strengths are the bedrock of the human condition and that strength-congruent activity represents an important route to the psychological good life" (p. 131). The Humanity Gallery described herein further offers the proposition that these strengths also are important drivers of upstanding behavior.

To the lead concept-designer of the narrative, this connection seemed the natural transition into a meaningful and impactful humanity exhibit, particularly emanating as it did from the first half revolving around the behavior of the individuals within that story as seen through the victim/perpetrator/bystander/upstander paradigms.

Pushback

While the inclusion of character strengths may seem like a natural connection, there was no little consternation expressed by some of the project stakeholders. And who exactly are the stakeholders? Designing a museum involves many participants, each with their own vision and opinion of what the new museum should be. There is the director of the museum and staff, all versed in the subject matter and rightly demanding varying levels of authorship of the program. Then there is the board of directors, who take their roles seriously and need to be both reported to and heard. In most Holocaust museums, the board includes survivors and children of survivors, creating an entirely different

dynamic. Then there are the donors who contribute to the project, and major donors frequently have strong opinions of their own! Similarly, there are local municipalities who are also part of these projects, as are other facility tenants, who rightly anticipate being affected by how the museum is received. We often form a scholarly advisory group who participate in the exhibition's review committee so that the local intellectual and educational community is informed and involved. All of these diverse groups—often with conflicting perspectives—must be reconciled and somehow brought into some semblance of alignment.

Upon hearing of the "psychological exhibit," many participants were immediately captivated by the concept. Some wanted to know, "Where else had this been done?" To the best of our knowledge it hadn't, which elicited questions like, "Well, how do we know it will work?" Others were less than sanguine in their critique. The following is a small sampling of comments that were expressed:

> These "virtues" do not relate directly to the Holocaust. The viewer does not say to him or herself: "If only everyone possessed these virtues it would prevent Holocaust-like events from occurring in the future."
>
> Specifically, these virtues are not only, in all but one case, irrelevant, they are also misleading and even contrary to what we would hope for.
>
> Justice—a fine thing, but not a virtue, rather a goal.
>
> Temperance—not only does this conjure up the entirely irrelevant thought of Prohibition for the reader who possesses some awareness of American history, but also, as "moderation," it is exactly the philosophy of the bystanders. It is justification for not getting involved: "We shouldn't get too upset over what they are doing to the Jews, shouldn't lose our equilibrium over it." The Biblical Prophets were neither temperate nor moderate.

And it wasn't just the stakeholders. Even the partners within the conceptual design firm tasked in designing the narrative and the exhibition experienced internal conflict. Upon initial internal presentation of the concept, one senior partner responded vociferously that "a museum is not a psychological playground!" There was also a fear that an exhibit of this type would be perceived as being "naive and Pollyanna-ish." It could even lead to us being "the laughingstock of the industry." As mentioned at the opening of this chapter, designing a museum of this type is a fraught affair. It is not uncommon to have aggressive debate, especially when attempting to break new ground—which is what the authors of this chapter and project attempt to do at every opportunity. In the end it was determined that the presentation should be made to the client, and they—rightly—would be the final arbiters.

After considerable exploration, the stakeholders came to understand better that the character strengths were not being conceived as a simplistic antidote to inhumanity, but instead as a science-based complementary element of human nature, with practical implications for preventing and confronting inhumanity when it rears its ugly head.

Unbeknownst to the conceptual designers at that time was the fact that the Cincinnati-based VIA institute, founded by Neal Mayerson, a psychologist and philanthropist, had initiated and produced the study which led to the publication of *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification* (referred to as the VIA Classification of Character Strengths and Virtues). When we presented the concept to the client, it was met by what we perceived as a stunned silence. We thought this was surely a sign that we had in fact overstepped conceptually. But then the client told us of the coincidence that Neal and Donna Mayerson—leaders in the Cincinnati community—had previously expressed interest in the new museum. Eureka!

This led to a valued collaboration with the Mayersons and Dr. Ryan Niemiec, all of whom are psychologists and directors of the global VIA Institute on Character and contributed immeasurably to this exhibit.

While it was our initial desire to label the six modules according to the six virtues of the VIA Classification, it was felt that this may be too abstract for young (high school) visitors. Ultimately, the museum director and staff chose to have topical subjects reflecting the stories used in each exhibit become the titles, with corresponding virtues embedded within the video presentations. This also seemed to alleviate some of the discomfort aroused by the abstractness of using the virtues alone.

In the closing seconds of the Humanity video presentation, the narrator says:

> In the Humanity Gallery to come, you will see how a wide array of upstanders met their moment. Each story is different but shows how each person can activate their own unique set of strengths, to overcome fear, and stand up to injustice. Which of your strengths compel you to be an upstander? Are you ready for your moment?

Humanity Gallery: Moments and Character Strengths

Many of the stories and personalities shown in this gallery present regional initiatives and citizens who may not be well-known to the greater Cincinnati community, but reinforce the notion that ordinary people from all walks of life, all colors and creeds, all levels of education and wealth, are capable of affecting positive change, for themselves, and for others.

The Humanity Gallery features six topic zones—each with a paired video installation and digital interactive stations—each presenting stories of action, transformation, and hope. Thematic video attract stories are projected onto 3D sculptural surfaces, creating visually captivating areas that are as layered and dimensional as the stories they tell. Accompanying touchscreens invite the visitors to explore three distinct moments when upstanders took initiative, and, most importantly, to identify within themselves some of those character strengths that lead to such actions. All of the video pieces were defined and composed as a team effort between the staff of the museum, our colleagues from VIA, and our media arm, Winikur Productions.

The aim of each story is to show how ordinary people identified an opportunity in their lives when their signature strengths of character were energized to respond positively and constructively in that moment. With the repetition of this format throughout the Humanity Gallery, it is hoped that visitors will come to understand that they can raise their awareness when injustice occurs and then consciously deploy their character strengths to respond constructively. Each moment that is presented prompts visitors to reflect on how they themselves may share the virtues/strengths with the upstanders featured in each. The moments also prompt visitors to think about ways in which they have experienced and responded in similar situations.

The topics and their corresponding virtues include the following:

Sharing Our World/ (**Wisdom**):
  Contains three vignettes entitled: *From Trash to Treasure*; *Waking up to Water Access*; and *Creative Cleanup*;
Standing up to Hate/ (**Courage**):
  Contains three vignettes entitled: *A Community Fights Back*; *Real Talk*; *Patriotism in the Face of Prejudice*;
Protecting Civil Rights/ (**Humanity**):
  Contains three vignettes entitled: *A Case for Women's Equality*; *Campaigning for Change*; and *Marching to Make a Difference*;
Responding to Genocide/ (**Justice**):
  Contains three vignettes entitled: *The World Must Know*; *Healing the Scars of Genocide*; *A Crime Without a Name*;
Promoting Pluralism/ (**Temperance/Moderation**):
  Contains three vignettes entitled: *Sharing A Name, Saving a Language*; *Dialogues of Faith*; *Artistic Expression in the Urban Core*;
Finding Home/ (**Transcendence**):
  Contains three vignettes entitled: *Threads of Hope*; *Sole Mates*; *A Foundation for the Future*.

We explore two of these stations/exhibits here in further depth.

In the exhibit *Sole Mates*/*Finding Home*, the virtue of transcendence (which consists of the character strengths of appreciation of beauty, gratitude, hope, humor, and spirituality) is featured. It tells the story of Bassam Osman and his family who, fueled by a resilient hope and enduring optimism for a better life, escaped Syria's complex and bloody civil war between the Assad regime and various opposition forces. Bassam had worked at a shoe factory in Aleppo before it was bombed; and he claims it was spiritual synchronicity or meaningful fate that he was resettled in Cincinnati, home of Clarence Howell Shoe Repair. The store's owner, Clarence Howell, hired Bassam in 2016, not only kindly offering the Osman family stability for the first time in years, but also laying the foundation of

a beautiful friendship, characterized by a deep and mutual kindness and gratitude for one another. This was based not only in their having undergone deep suffering and tragedy in their pasts, but also in their drive to look for the good, beauty, and virtue in other people and the world around them.

In the exhibit, *A Community Fights Back/Standing Up to Hate*, the virtue of courage (which consists of the character strengths of bravery, perseverance, honesty, and zest) is featured. In late 1998, a hate-related incident sent shock waves through the quiet community of Anderson Township in Cincinnati: swastikas were spray-painted on a Jewish family's home, and at least nine other homes were vandalized overnight. Church leaders and an outraged community, fueled by impassioned zest and seemingly limitless perseverance, signed a pledge to stand in solidarity against hate. After a second wave of hate, in the form of racist flyers, the community responded again by founding Greater Anderson Promotes Peace (GAPP). As one of its primary goals, GAPP worked with officials to construct a public Peace Pole, designed to honor diversity, encourage understanding, and promote inclusion.

After witnessing the hateful incidents in Anderson, Louise Lawarre ignited her courage to organize a community event to take a stand—a brave, honest, and persistent stand against hate. The response to the one-time event was so enthusiastic it became a movement and the inspiration for GAPP. Louise said her goal was to encourage her community to "speak out" against the hate that was showing up in their driveway and that silence was not an option.

Make Your Mark Wall

The *Make Your Mark Wall* is the final stop for the visitor in the exhibition. An interactive installation, visitors are asked to carry forward what they have learned in the exhibition and literally *make their mark* upon leaving the museum. It brings the visitor to begin to question, "How might I be an upstander in today's world?"

To do this, visitors are asked three questions, centering on those parts of the exhibition that they most identified with:

a. During my visit, I was inspired by . . .
b. Based on my experience today, I am inspired to . . .
c. Choose three character strengths you have and can activate.

A photo is taken of the visitor and is projected upon the large LCD wall, where the photographs of all the other participants appear like floating documents throughout the exhibition. In this they become part of a community of people committed to carrying the lessons learned in the museum forward, and its mandate: "to inspire action based on the lessons of the Holocaust."

Asking the visitor to review and articulate elements of personal inspiration from the exhibition reinforces those memories, crystallizing those images and stories as the visitor leaves. By asking visitors to choose the three character strengths that they most identify with, along with taking a "selfie" of themselves, it is the museum's hope that these simple actions will become a lasting mnemonic for the visitors who will leave the exhibition with the notion of character strengths and upstanding foremost in their mind.

Conclusion: Future Directions, Moving Forward

Many in the Holocaust field fear that expanding narratives beyond the Holocaust itself challenges its uniqueness and threatens to trivialize the memory of this singular event. Others seek to situate the event as a sort of satanic visitation on humanity, outside of the realm of "normative" human behavior.

Confronting the Holocaust as the paradigm of human potential for evil is as true as it is conventional. Wrestling relevant lessons from this event that may actually alter how we view our responsibilities to our fellow humans, as well as how one behaves day to day, is a challenging and critical departure from that convention. Such lessons require us to confront our human capacities for both evil and good. If the adage "never again" is ever able to attain practical traction, we as humans must chronicle the conditions that bring out both the worst and the best in all of us. Such knowledge puts us in a better position to manage ourselves, communities, and nations so as to minimize the expressions of human evil and maximize the potential of human goodness.

The radical evil that the perpetrator forces us to confront in the Holocaust becomes unfortunately less surprising the more we know of the world and the human capacity for virulent malevolence. It also rightly forces us to confront other genocidal occurrences with the same critical tools, including comparative and analogous reflections with the Holocaust. To be specific, we are against cavalier Holocaust analogies heard frequently in the media. That said, we do support critical and scholarly comparisons and analogies with similar genocidal occurrences. We stress that comparison is not equivalence. It is only through comparison that distinction is revealed. We should embrace those distinctions as we do the paradigms.

The tragic dignity often witnessed from victims of the Holocaust—and similar destructive events—even in their world of *choiceless choices*, is frequently inspiring. It is also relentlessly harrowing.

The passivity and aloofness of all bystanders should force one to examine their own moral and psychological preparedness to react to real-world situations that require immediate intervention.

The altruism and nobility of upstanders everywhere should instill a desire to emulate the refusal to accept an unacceptable situation, regardless of the consequences. Their frequent inability to even conceive of another way to behave illuminates what one may

describe as the radical goodness inherent within human beings, and that which must be mined as a most precious human resource.

Finally, the grace and resilience of many survivors will hopefully kindle within the visitor a sense of obligation to participate in the repair of an unredeemed world. It is through the prism of these perspectives, which elevate our collective consciousness, that we determine, actively or by default, whether it will be our capacities for coarse inhumaneness or our resplendent capacities for human goodness that will find expression.

While there have been no analytical studies done gauging the effect that this exhibition has had on its visitors thus far, anecdotal reaction to date tells us that we have tapped into a wellspring of possibility. It is our contention after this experience that we may reach even further into the science of positive psychology, character strengths, and human flourishing to serve as catalysts for future work and inspire others to do the same.

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PART IV

Pathways from Arts and Humanities Engagement to Human Flourishing

Part IV discusses different psychological and behavioral pathways from engagement in the arts and humanities to human flourishing. These are the mechanisms that bring about flourishing through participation in culture. Because of the enjoyable nature of the arts and humanities, many people are passionate about art, music, theatre, movies, literature, history, philosophy, religion, and other forms of culture. Harmonious passion can give rise to many adaptive outcomes, such as positive emotions, creativity, performance, and identity. Positive experiences can also sustain longer-term participation and flourishing. These experiences include flow states, narrative transportation, awe, wonder, and inspiration. Participation in the arts and humanities also engenders deeper and broader thinking that supports flourishing. Moreover, the arts and humanities can be especially effective at promoting well-being beyond the individual, at the level of the community.

CHAPTER 14

The Role of Passion in the Arts and Humanities: How Quality of Engagement Matters

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Abstract

The arts and humanities are prevalent sources of passion. Whether it is through performing them or appreciating the performance of others, the type of passion that individuals have for the arts and humanities can shape a variety of outcomes. Following the model proposed by Tay, Pawelski, and colleagues (2018, 2019), the present chapter documents the role of passion for the arts and humanities in personal outcomes such as emotions, creativity, performance, well-being, and identity processes. Research on passion for the arts and humanities demonstrates that the type of passion matters: while engaging in the arts and humanities out of harmonious passion leads to adaptive outcomes and even protects against negative ones, being obsessively passionate may be maladaptive. Thus, while engagement in the arts and humanities has the potential to contribute to human flourishing, the quality of engagement matters for those who are passionate about these domains.

Key Words: harmonious passion, obsessive passion, dualistic model of passion

> It's the passion . . . I always say if they stopped me now,
> I'd just do it as a hobby tomorrow, so it's just something you love to do.
>
> —*Paul McCartney*

> With me poetry has not been a purpose, but a passion.
>
> —*Edgar Allan Poe*

The arts and humanities permeate our lives. Whether it is music, dance, painting, or poetry, such activities surround us. Be it through engaging in the arts and humanities directly by performing them or doing so indirectly by appreciating the performance of others, they can contribute to our lives in a variety of ways. Recently, Tay, Pawelski,

and colleagues (2018) have proposed an important model on the influence of the arts and humanities engagement and how they can contribute to human flourishing. Such a model takes into consideration the types of activities one engages in (e.g., music, painting), the modes of engagement (e.g., active engagement or appreciation of the work of others), the mechanisms involved while doing so (e.g., the immersion or socialization), and the outcomes that one can derive from such engagement (e.g., emotions, psychological well-being).

For over a decade, our research and that of others has focused on how the quality of engagement in various activities can influence optimal functioning (Vallerand, 2013). Specifically, such research has shown that being passionate for a given activity, either as a performer or as a consumer of the arts and humanities, can potentially contribute to a host of adaptive outcomes (Vallerand et al., 2003). We all know of passionate performers, like Paul McCartney in the introductory quote, who still thrive on passion years into their illustrious careers. However, not all passions are equal, and while some types of passion are adaptive (i.e., harmonious passion), others (i.e., obsessive passion) are much less so, and can even lead to maladaptive outcomes. Several hundreds of studies in the field of passion now support this analysis, including several in the arts and humanities. Such an analysis is in line with Tay et al. (2018), who posit that although the arts and the humanities have the potential to contribute to human flourishing, "[t]his by no means suggests that engagement in the arts and humanities always leads to increased well-being" (p. 215).

The purpose of this chapter is to document the role of passion for the arts and humanities with respect to some of the outcomes identified by Tay et al. (2018). In doing so, we will rest squarely on the Dualistic Model of Passion (DMP; Vallerand, 2015; Vallerand & Houlfort, 2019). This chapter contains three sections. First, we present the DMP. Second, we review the literature on the role of passion with respect to some of the outcomes identified by Tay et al. (2018). It will then be seen that the distinction between harmonious and obsessive passion for the arts and humanities matters when predicting outcomes. Finally, we draw conclusions on the role of arts and humanities in human flourishing.

The Dualistic Model of Passion

Over the past fifteen years or so, much research has been conducted on the construct of passion. Much of this work has been conducted under the umbrella of the DMP (Vallerand, 2010, 2015; Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand & Houlfort, 2019). The DMP posits that people engage in various activities throughout life in the hope of satisfying the basic psychological needs of autonomy (to feel a sense of personal initiative), competence (to interact effectively with the environment), and relatedness (to feel connected to significant others; see Ryan & Deci, 2017), and to grow psychologically. With time and experience, most people start to display a preference for some activities. Of these activities, a limited few will be perceived as particularly enjoyable and important, and will have some resonance with our identity or how we see ourselves. These activities become

passionate. In line with this observation, passion is defined as a strong inclination toward a *self-defining* activity that one loves (or strongly likes), finds important, and in which one invests time and energy (Vallerand et al., 2003). Such an activity comes to be so self-defining that it represents a central feature of one's identity. Playing a musical instrument (e.g., the guitar), painting, reading, or writing poetry all represent examples of activities that people can be passionate about in the arts and humanities.

The DMP further posits that there are two types of passion, harmonious and obsessive, that can be distinguished in terms of how the passionate activity has been internalized into one's identity (Vallerand et al., 2003). Harmonious passion (HP) results from an autonomous internalization of the activity into the person's identity and self, which occurs when individuals have freely accepted the activity as important for them without any contingencies attached to it. This type of internalization emanates from the intrinsic and integrative tendencies of the self (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Hodgins & Knee, 2002). HP produces a motivational force to willingly engage in the activity that one loves and engenders a sense of volition and personal endorsement about pursuing the activity. When HP is at play, the activity occupies a significant but not overpowering space in the person's identity and is in harmony with other aspects of the person's life. In other words, with HP the person fully partakes in the passionate activity with a mindful (Brown & Ryan, 2003; St-Louis, Verner-Filion, Bergeron, & Vallerand, 2018) and non-defensive perspective (Hodgins & Knee, 2002) that opens up access to adaptive self-processes (Deci & Ryan, 2000; St-Louis & Vallerand, 2015) that are conducive to positive outcomes. An example would be a student who is passionate about rock music and plays rock music before studying to give himself the energy necessary to complete his homework.

Conversely, obsessive passion (OP) results from a controlled internalization of the passionate activity into identity. Such an internalization process leads the activity representation, as well as values and regulations to be internalized outside the integrative self (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This type of internalization prevents access to optimal self-processes. Thus, people with an OP can find themselves in the position of experiencing an uncontrollable urge to partake in the activity they view as important and enjoyable. They cannot help but to engage in the passionate activity. Consequently, they risk experiencing conflicts and other negative affective, cognitive, and behavioral consequences during and after activity engagement. To return to the previous example, a student who is so obsessively passionate about playing rock music may start playing in good faith for just a few minutes before studying, but when the time comes to stop playing, she just can't help it and continues to do so. As such, playing the guitar conflicts with her studying and leads to some negative outcomes (feeling guilty and anxious) and can become a negative factor in her life, as it prevents her from being optimally functioning, at least as pertains to school.

In sum, with HP the person controls her passion, while with OP one is controlled by one's passion. One can see that although both types of passion are very powerful

motivational forces, HP would appear to be more adaptive than OP and should therefore lead to more optimal outcomes than the latter. Thus, the DMP posits that while HP for the arts and humanities may indeed be more adaptive, OP may not be and in fact could even be maladaptive in some cases. In closing, we wish to underscore that while HP and OP both reflect passion, they are still distinct constructs that lie on two continua (Vallerand, 2015). In fact, because they lie on two different continua, HP and OP may have independent, conjoint, or opposite effects on outcomes. Recent research using a quadrant approach where both HP and OP can be high or low supports this analysis with respect to a variety of physical and psychological health outcomes (see Schellenberg et al., 2019). Most of the research on passion has focused on the opposite effects that HP and OP may have on outcomes and we now turn to this research.

Passion for the Arts and Humanities and Flourishing

Passion plays a central role in shaping personal and interpersonal experiences. This becomes particularly important in the arts and humanities, as passion is often discussed as an inseparable part of activity engagement (e.g., Greene, 1992; Hennion, 2001, 2017; Purcell, 2015; Roach, 1993). Following the DMP perspective, research on passion for the arts and humanities has largely focused on the differential roles of HP and OP in individuals' emotional, psychological, and physical well-being, as well as in outcomes like creativity and performance. In line with previous research on passion in a variety of contexts (e.g., educational settings, work, and sports; for reviews, see Curran, Hill, Appleton, Vallerand, & Standage, 2015; Vallerand, 2015; Vallerand & Houlfort, 2019; Vallerand & Verner-Filion, 2020), it would be expected that HP for the arts and humanities would consistently yield more adaptive outcomes, while OP may be unrelated to such outcomes or may even contribute to maladaptive consequences. In this section, we review some of the research focusing specifically on passion for the arts and humanities as pertains to emotions, creativity, performance, well-being, and identity processes. These outcomes follow directly from the Tay et al. (2018) model (see Figure 2 in their article).

Passion and Emotions

Numerous studies have explored the distinctive influence of HP and OP on people's emotional experiences (e.g., Philippe, Vallerand, Houlfort, Lavigne, & Donahue, 2010; Vallerand et al., 2003). This relationship between passion and emotions is very important in the arts and humanities, as passionate activities such as listening to music are highly consumed by the general population (e.g., Bonneville-Roussy, Rentfrow, Xu, & Potter, 2013; Warburton, Roberts, & Christenson, 2014) and are often engaged in specifically for the pursuit of emotional experiences (e.g., Olsen, Powell, Anic, Vallerand, & Thompson, in press).

Results from studies exploring passion for the arts (e.g., music, painting) consistently demonstrate HP to be a positive predictor of positive emotions (e.g., Burke, Sabiston, &

Vallerand, 2012; Mageau et al., 2009; Philippe et al., 2010, Study 2; St-Louis et al., 2018) such as wonder, peacefulness, and transcendence (Olsen et al., in press) when listening to a variety of music genres, as well as when playing a musical instrument (e.g., Vallerand et al., 2003), engaging in dramatic acting (Fredricks, Alfeld, & Eccles, 2010), or painting (Philippe et al., 2010, Study 2; Vallerand et al., 2003). Furthermore, HP seems to have a protective effect against negative emotions (e.g., shame; Philippe et al., 2010, Study 2; St-Louis et al., 2018; Vallerand et al., 2003), suggesting that being harmoniously passionate about the arts and humanities positively contributes to positive emotional experiences and alleviates negative ones. Similar results were found in other fields, such as passion for a cause (i.e., environmental activism; see Vallerand, 2015), work (Vallerand & Houlfort, 2019), and even religion (Rip, Vallerand, & Lafrenière, 2012).

With OP, the opposite pattern consistently emerges. Studies on listening to music (Burke et al., 2012; Olsen et al., in press; Philippe et al., 2010, Study 2; St-Louis et al., 2018; Vallerand et al., 2003, Study 1) or playing a musical instrument (Mageau et al., 2009, Study 3; Vallerand et al., 2003), have found OP to be a positive predictor of *negative* emotions such as anger, fear, and sadness when engaging in the passionate activity. Additionally, some studies (e.g., St-Louis et al., 2018) have found OP to *negatively* predict positive emotions. This finding suggests that being obsessively passionate can prevent people from experiencing the emotional fulfillment that is often associated with engaging in the arts and humanities activities with HP. Taken together, existing research clearly demonstrates that HP promotes positive emotions and protects against negative ones, while OP is associated with experiencing negative emotions, and may even prevent the experience of positive emotions. It is important to note, however, that one study (Lecoq & Rimé, 2009, Study 1) involving participants who were passionate about the arts, found both HP and OP to be positively correlated with the emotion of awe. Thus, future research on this emotion, which is prevalent in arts and music, is important in order to determine if these results can be replicated.

Passion and Creativity

Creativity refers to the creation of a novel and original product that is adaptive in light of conditions and task (Sternberg, 1999). Much research reveals that positive emotions lead to creativity (e.g., Isen, 1987). As highlighted in the previous section, HP leads mostly to positive emotions and OP to negative emotions; therefore HP should also facilitate creativity, and this should be less the case for OP. Research in the work domain has indeed shown that HP leads to high levels of creativity while OP does not (Liu, Chen, & Yao, 2011; Luh & Lu, 2012). Such research reveals that HP predicts creativity, as assessed by self-reports, including with painters (Lafrenière, St-Louis, Vallerand, & Donahue, 2012; Luh & Lu, 2012; Schenkel, Farmer, & Maslyn, 2019), as well as through more *objective* assessments such as external informants (Liu et al., 2011; Yang, Long, & Hou, 2018). Research by St-Louis and Vallerand (2015) with artists (painters, designers, musicians,

etc.) further showed that positive emotions are involved in the creative process and are experienced more by artists who display HP for their art than artists with an OP. Further, the artists with OP tend to experience negative emotions, which undermine creativity.

Of additional interest, Liu et al. (2011) identified the determinants of HP in the context of creativity. In line with past research on passion (e.g., Mageau et al., 2009), they tested a sequence involving autonomy support, passion, and creativity. Autonomy support, or a social environment that fosters personal volition, has been identified as facilitating creativity (e.g., Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby, & Herron, 1996; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Oldham & Cummings, 1996). The research by Liu et al. (2011), mentioned earlier, demonstrated that the relationship between autonomy support and creativity was fully mediated by HP. These findings were further supported by Yang et al. (2018), who examined follower–leader secure attachment (FLSA) as an antecedent of HP. FLSA is defined as a relationship where the leader is available to the follower (i.e., employee) in times of need, encourages professional growth, and provides space for the employee to take actions based on personal choices. The authors have found that FLSA positively predicted HP, and HP, in turn, predicted creativity.

Other research in the work domain has suggested that passion represents the mechanism that mediates the relationship between cognitive style and creativity (Luh & Lu, 2012). Cognitive style refers to an individual's ways of addressing a problem, such as finding solutions (e.g., using sources of information, seeking expert advice), and combining existing ideas to generate a new one (Kirton, 1989). Two cognitive styles are proposed: a propensity to innovate and a propensity to adapt, with the former being associated with a desire to find novel and creative solutions, and the latter referring to a desire to do things in accordance with accepted norms (Kirton, 1976, 1989). Not surprisingly, an innovative cognitive style was found to be a better predictor of creativity in design, and this relationship was fully mediated by HP, but not by OP. Indeed, HP appears to be the path through which individual creativity is cultivated. In addition to facilitating positive emotions during the creative process, HP also fully mediates the relationship between predictors of creativity (i.e., autonomy support, cognitive style) and creative output.

In sum, although several studies support the role of HP (but not OP) in creativity, few studies have investigated HP in the arts and humanities. Future research is needed in this area.

Passion and Performance

Does passion for the arts and humanities influence performance? The DMP posits that both types of passion lead to regular engagement in the passionate activity, a desire to constantly improve, persistence in difficult times and through obstacles, and eventually attainment of high performance levels. Thus, passion shapes performance through fueling one's desire to engage in the passionate activity and deliberately practicing the skills necessary to master that activity (e.g., Bonneville-Roussy, Lavigne, and Vallerand, 2011;

Bonneville-Roussy, Vallerand, & Bouffard, 2013; Vallerand et al., 2007, Studies 1 and 2; Vallerand et al., 2008, Studies 1 and 2). Although both HP and OP predict excellence, the roads taken to reach high performance levels differ as a function of the type of passion. For example, Bonneville-Roussy et al. (2011) have found that, with classical musicians, HP leads to mastery goals (i.e., a desire to master the skills necessary to play classical music), which in turn lead to deliberate music practice and high levels of performance; OP, on the other hand, mostly predicts both performance approach (a desire to outperform others) and performance avoidance goals (a desire to avoid doing more poorly than others) and these performance goals, in turn, negatively predict performance. Thus, although the obsessively passionate musicians still achieved high levels of performance, the paths to performance were more arduous than those of the harmoniously passionate musicians. Similar results were obtained in studies with dramatic arts students (Vallerand et al., 2007; Study 1) and dancers (Akehurst & Oliver, 2014).

In addition, the type of persistence displayed by artists is affected by the type of passion underlying it. Specifically, HP has been consistently associated with higher levels of persistence and performance, while OP has been either unrelated to persistence (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2013) or related to rigid persistence, which eventually led to possible harmful consequences such as chronic physical injury in dancers (e.g., Akehurst & Oliver, 2014; Rip, Fortin, & Vallerand, 2006). Similar findings have been obtained in other fields such as sports and exercise (Stephan, Deroche, Brewer, Caudroit, & Le Scanff, 2009). In short, with regard to performance and persistence, HP has been found to lead to more adaptive outcomes than OP in most situations.

Passion and Well-Being

One of the major hypothesized effects of the arts and humanities engagement is that it contributes to well-being. However, the DMP makes an important distinction: positive effects should follow mostly if one's engagement in the arts and humanities is fueled by HP and not by OP. Results of over twenty studies conducted in a number of fields including the arts and humanities suggest that this is indeed the case (see Curran et al., 2015; Vallerand, 2015; Vallerand & Houlfort, 2019). For instance, research on passion for engaging in artistic activities has revealed that HP (but not OP) positively contributes to psychological well-being, such as satisfaction with life, having a purpose and meaning in life, satisfaction of basic psychological needs, and vitality. These effects have been shown in various activities, such as playing music (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2011; Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2013; Bonneville-Roussy & Vallerand, 2020; Helonen & Lomas, 2014; Lalande et al., 2017; Stenseng, 2008), listening to music (Burke et al., 2012; St-Louis et al., 2018; White, Tong, & Schwartz, 2018), dancing (Guilbault, Harvey, & Vallerand, 2020; Padham & Aujila, 2014), painting (Lafrenière et al., 2012; Vallerand et al., 2003), and the performing arts (Mullen, Davis, & Polatajko, 2012; Vallerand et al., 2007). In addition, HP has been found to decrease, and OP to facilitate, negative psychological

experiences, such as performance anxiety in musicians (Bonneville-Roussy & Vallerand, 2020) and burnout (Vallerand et al., 2010).

Research suggests that HP leads to general psychological well-being through the boosting of positive psychological states during activity engagement (see Vallerand, 2015). Such findings have been observed for the experience of flow during engagement in a passionate activity (Crooms, 2012; Fredricks et al., 2010; Vallerand et al., 2003). Flow is defined as the experience of being fully absorbed in the activity to the point of losing track of time and consciousness, becoming one with the activity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Previous research has demonstrated that HP leads to flow during activity engagement, which, in turn, contributes to higher levels of well-being (e.g., Carpentier, Mageau, & Vallerand, 2012). Other research has shown that HP is associated positively, and OP negatively, with mindfulness during activity engagement while listening to music (St-Louis et al., 2018). Mindfulness, in turn, positively predicts positive affect and negatively predicts negative affect as well as vitality (St-Louis et al., 2018). Research has also found that positive emotions mediate the positive effects of HP on psychological well-being (see Rousseau & Vallerand, 2008). Once again, the quality of passion (i.e., HP over OP), rather than its mere presence, seems to be important in shaping the psychological experiences of individuals who are passionate about the arts and humanities.

The work of Fredricks et al. (2010) provides additional support for the role of passion in flow from a different conceptual perspective. The authors conducted a series of interviews with young artists (e.g., dancers, musicians, dramatic artists). Results from their qualitative analysis showed that passion led to a state of flow during activity engagement. Flow, in turn, not only led to positive emotions, but also helped the participants cope with negative experiences in their personal lives. Indeed, flow was an important mediator in the relationship between passion and psychological well-being. Thus, the qualitative research of Fredricks et al. (2010) is very informative on the role of passion in experiencing flow.

Finally, in addition to shaping psychological processes, passion also plays a role in physical well-being (i.e., physical health). Research on passion for the arts and humanities has revealed that HP leads to a variety of physical benefits, from feeling energized (Halonen & Lomas, 2014) and experiencing vitality (Curran et al., 2015) to recovering better from physical injury (e.g., Rip et al., 2006) and disease (Burke et al., 2012); OP, on the other hand, is often associated with risky behaviors that may lead to physical suffering (e.g., Vallerand et al., 2003, Study 3). For example, Akehurst and Oliver (2014) have demonstrated in a sample of professional dancers, whose livelihood depends on their physical health and capabilities, that OP leads to engagement in risky behaviors such as prematurely quitting a treatment routine or not going to the doctor after an injury, while HP is unrelated to such behaviors. Furthermore, Rip et al. (2006) have found that OP is associated with behaviors that promote prolonged physical distress, such as ignoring pain and continuing activity engagement despite an injury in performing dancers. Conversely, in Rip and colleagues' research, HP has been associated with health-promoting behaviors

among dancers, such as seeking advice and treatment following an injury, while being negatively related to risky behaviors like hiding an injury or ignoring pain. Finally, studies have found obsessively passionate dancers to engage in risky eating behaviors (e.g., calorie restriction, food preoccupation), thereby jeopardizing their overall physical health (Aujla, Nordin-Bates, & Redding, 2015; Padham & Aujla, 2014).

In sum, it appears that passion plays a role in a variety of dimensions related to well-being. From psychological well-being to physical health, HP seems to have a positive impact on the well-being of passionate individuals, while OP leads to negative experiences and maladaptive decisions that can have an impact in the short term, but also have negative consequences for well-being in the long term.

Passion and Identity

Identity changes represents a final outcome outlined by Tay et al. (2018) in their model. Passion, by definition, represents a central part of a person's identity (Vallerand, 2015). Consider the words of a student musician, Annie: "If you change yourself, you change the world. The passion inside drives these changes, and my goal is to change the world with my passion: music" (http://whatmusicmeanstome.org/?page_id = 143). Research suggests that various processes are at play when individuals derive a sense of identity from an activity (in our case, in the arts or humanities) that individuals are passionate about. These identity processes include a resonance between the activity and a person's own perception of him- or herself (e.g., someone who sees him- or herself as musically inclined may be drawn to play the guitar), as well as a sense that a person's future is unimaginable without engagement in the passionate activity (Fredricks et al., 2010; Mageau et al., 2009; Mullen et al., 2012). As such, becoming passionate changes how people see themselves.

In line with these findings, research by Bouizegarène and colleagues (2018) has shown that different types of identity processes may underlie HP and OP. Specifically, in two studies, results have revealed that HP takes roots from an informational identity style (where individuals willfully reach for available self-relevant information and are capable of identity commitments that emerge from a thorough exploration of identity options; Berzonsky, 2011). Conversely, OP results mostly from a normative identity style (where the search for identity is rigid and close-minded with regard to available self-relevant information; Berzonsky, 2011). People with a normative style then mostly construct their identity by imitating social norms and internalizing significant others' beliefs and values. As such, it would appear that the identity that develops with OP may be more insecure and rigid than with HP. In OP's identity formation, the subsequent consequences that develop over time may be less adaptive and less likely to lead to flourishing.

Some examples of such rigidity have been demonstrated with passion for the humanities (e.g., passion for a cause, religion), where OP has been shown to lead not only to self-neglect and maladaptive health and well-being (St-Louis, Carbonneau, & Vallerand, 2016), but also to aggressive and unethical behavior toward others (Bélanger, Caouette,

Sharvit, & Dugas 2014; Gousse-Lessard, Vallerand, Carbonneau, & Lafrenière, 2013; Rip et al., 2012, Study 2). Research on ideological passion (e.g., religion; Rip et al., 2012) and passion for a cause (e.g., Bélanger et al., 2014; Gousse-Lessard et al., 2013) suggests that while OP leads to extremism, hostility, and hatred in identity-threatening situations, HP is unrelated to such negative cognitions and emotions. That is, under circumstances that pose a perceived threat to their passion-derived sense of identity, harmoniously passionate individuals are less likely to experience negative emotions and less likely to behave in more radical (e.g., aggressive) ways than their obsessively passionate counterparts. Furthermore, passion seems to shape value judgment. Bélanger et al. (2014) investigated the psychology of martyrdom and found that OP was a stronger predictor of endorsing self-sacrifice for a cause and such extreme behaviors. Also, people who were obsessively passionate about an ideology (i.e., religion) indicated that they believed that their religion was more important than the life of others, while HP was unrelated to such egocentric beliefs. More recently, Bélanger and colleagues (2019) examined the model that may explain such values and behaviors, revealing that OP is linked to disengagement from one's moral regulatory processes, thereby allowing a person to act in unethical ways. HP was found to be negatively related to such moral disengagement.

In sum, research on passion in the arts and humanities has revealed a wide array of adaptive outcomes and processes that are associated with HP. Conversely, OP is consistently either unrelated or negatively related to such outcomes, while being associated with more maladaptive consequences. It should be noted that the empirical literature on passion in the arts and humanities to date has largely employed cross-sectional designs. However, passion research in other fields using cross-lagged panel (Lavigne et al., 2012), longitudinal (Bonneville-Roussy, Vallerand, & Bouffard, 2013, Study 2), multilevel (Liu et al., 2011), and experimental designs where HP and OP are induced (see Bélanger, Lafrenière, Vallerand, & Kruglanski, 2013; Lafrenière et al., 2013) has revealed results similar to those discussed here, providing additional support for the reported findings. Nevertheless, future research is necessary to establish the causal relationship between passion outcomes specifically within the confines of the arts and humanities.

Conclusions

The preceding review leads to a number of conclusions. First, it would appear that in line with the DMP, HP for the arts and humanities contributes to a host of adaptive outcomes. These include emotions, flow, creativity, performance, psychological and physical well-being, and adaptive identity processes. To the extent that one has an OP for the arts and humanities, such adaptive outcomes may not be forthcoming. Second, HP may even protect one against negative outcomes such as negative emotions and psychological distress; OP does not ensure the promotion of adaptive outcomes and the prevention of maladaptive ones. Tay et al. (2018) have underscored that the arts and humanities may not always lead to flourishing and that research was necessary to identify the conditions

under which engagement is optimal. The role of the arts and humanities in purportedly promoting human flourishing may thus very well depend on individuals being harmoniously passionate in the process. As such, HP seems to represent one of the conditions that Tay et al. (2018) have sought to identify.

Third, as highlighted by Lalande et al. (2017), people may engage in arts and humanities activities to make up for what may be missing in other parts of their life. Engaging in activities with OP may allow some individuals to experience benefits in the short term. However, doing so regularly may lead to failures to attend to other areas of one's life and may come to be detrimental in the long run. Lalande et al. (2017) have highlighted that using the obsessively passionate activity to compensate may lead to lower levels of psychological well-being than engaging in the activity out of HP. Future research should shed light on how OP and HP toward the arts and humanities may provide some short-term relief or shelter from difficult times without leading to negative long-term effects.

Fourth, to date, research on passion in the arts and humanities has been conducted in a limited number of activities such as music (both listening and playing music), dancing, the performing arts, and religion. Further research with a number of other activities in the humanities, such as literature writing, poetry, and reading, may shed light on whether the findings reviewed in this chapter can generalize to most arts and humanities activities. In addition, the emotion of awe that seems so prevalent in the arts and humanities needs some research attention, especially as both OP and HP have been related to it (Lecoq & Rimé, 2009, Study 1).

In conclusion, the arts and humanities have the potential to contribute to human flourishing, and the research reviewed here clearly shows that this is the case. However, the adaptive outcomes take place mostly when engagement in these activities is fueled by HP and not by OP. Future research is necessary to more clearly delineate the processes that facilitate HP (rather than OP) for the arts and humanities so that the benefits from such activities are experienced by all.

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CHAPTER

15 Flow in the Arts and Humanities: On Cultivating Human Complexity

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Abstract

The authors' review of relevant literature revealed the following: (1) flow, an optimal experience, can occur during participation in the arts and humanities; (2) flow is a vehicle to flourishing; and (3) the arts and humanities are abundant sources of wisdom that can aid in the understanding of oneself and the world. These points together suggest that flow experiences in the arts and humanities offer a special opportunity for growth, and the authors conclude this chapter by proposing three avenues for this development: (1) because flow is an intrinsically rewarding experience, the experience itself encourages people to engage with the benefits of the arts and humanities; (2) flow breaks down the barrier between conscious and subconscious thought to facilitate creative and contemplative pursuits; and (3) recurring flow experiences in the arts and humanities lead to the cyclical development of challenge and skill, cultivating mastery and wisdom.

Key Words: flow, well-being, arts and humanities, psychological complexity, human development, psychological engagement, attention, optimal experience, growth, wisdom

In this chapter, we examine the ways in which the experience of flow can serve as a pathway for the arts and humanities to create and support flourishing. To do this, we take a broad view of human flourishing, one that includes components of hedonic and eudaimonic well-being and the cultivation of psychological complexity. Although the term *complexity* has been used in a multitude of ways, here we refer to the process whereby individual potential is developed through ongoing differentiation and integration, where one rejects or selects environmental inputs for assimilation into one's understanding of oneself and the world. It can be characterized as having the flexibility to hold differentiation and integration in balance without overdoing either. This process of individual complexification underlies the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of human complexity on the larger scale because it leads to higher and higher levels of adaptation to the human environment. For a more complete treatment of this concept, see Rathunde and Csikszentmihalyi (2006). We will begin by describing the experience of flow, its conditions, and the qualities characteristic of the experience. We then turn to a review of literature relevant to flow in the context of the arts and humanities, and flow

in connection with flourishing outcomes in domains other than the arts and humanities. Finally, we consider how flow can act as a catalyst for producing flourishing outcomes within the arts and humanities.

Flow in the Arts and Humanities

Flow, often described as "an optimal experience," is a state of complete absorption and engagement in an activity, which is enjoyed both in the moment and in retrospect (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Flow can occur and has been observed in activities including, but not limited to, athletics, work activities, scientific discovery, and the arts. Observing artists engaged in their craft served as one of the foundations for the conceptualization of the flow experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Simply participating in the arts and humanities is not equivalent to experiencing flow. Additionally, we are not aware of any empirical evidence thus far that demonstrates that people experience more flow when engaged in the arts and humanities than in other activities; however, flow in the context of the arts and humanities may provide a special opportunity for flourishing. Since the seminal theory of flow was published (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, 1990), the flow experience has been observed and studied in a multitude of creative disciplines in the arts and humanities, and is incorporated into Tay, Pawelski, and Keith's (2018) conceptualization of the immersion mechanism, one of the ways in which the arts and humanities can lead to flourishing. Additionally, there is evidence that flow can be experienced not only in the creation or performance, but also in the experiencing or appreciation, of the arts and humanities. The conditions for flow to occur in an activity are a relative balance of challenge and skill, clear goals, and immediate feedback. Flow experiences are often described by qualities such as a feeling of oneness with the activity, becoming unaware of one's surroundings, losing track of time, and feeling that the activity is worth doing for its own sake. In the following sections, we will review themes in the existing literature on flow (an optimal experience) in (1) the creation and performance, and (2) experiencing and appreciation, across disciplines in the arts and humanities.

Creating and Performing

The flow experience has been studied in musicians (e.g., Wrigley & Emmerson, 2013), artists (e.g., Banfield & Burgess, 2013), dancers (e.g., Hefferon & Ollis, 2006), actors (e.g., Martin & Cutler, 2002), and writers (e.g., Perry, 1999). Research on experiencing flow in the creation or performance of the arts and humanities has found evidence for many of the same qualities as flow in other activities such as sports or scientific creativity. For example, intrinsic motivation has been closely tied to the experience of flow in the arts and humanities in qualitative interview studies of musicians and dancers (Bloom & Skutnick-Henley, 2005; Hefferon & Ollis, 2006), as well as a quantitative study of theater students (Martin & Cutler, 2002). While no single component of flow can guarantee a flow experience, the challenge-skill balance seems to have especially important implications for

well-being outcomes in the arts and humanities (Fritz & Avsec, 2007; Habe, Biasutti, & Kajtna, 2019), perhaps because of its importance for growth and increasing complexity.

While flow may have many of the same qualities in the creation and performance of the arts and humanities as in other activities, the best opportunities for flow seem to vary by domain. First, flow seems to be more readily attainable in domains where the creator is focused on the process, rather than on the product. Banfield and Burgess (2013) found that textile artists and painters (2D artists) experienced more immersion than glass, ceramic, and wood artists (3D artists) in the creation of their artistic product. The authors suggest this could be due to 2D artists exploring and designing as part of the formal creation of their artistic product, while 3D artists must do most of their exploring and designing prior to the formal creation of the artistic product. In performance art, flow seems to be less achievable when performance anxiety is present, which is in line with flow theory, since anxiety occurs when there is an imbalance of challenge and skill. Many of the musicians interviewed in Bloom and Skutnick-Henley (2005) described more flow experiences in non-performance settings, such as rehearsal or personal practice. Thomson and Jaque (2012) found that overall levels of anxiety were not related to flow in dancers, but dancers with clinical levels of anxiety had fewer flow experiences. While the piece of work may be an appropriate challenge for a flow experience in a non-performance setting, the added challenge of performing in front of an audience, with very little to no mistakes, may bring a person out of flow and into performance anxiety. While performance settings may have some of the components of a flow experience, like clear goals and unambiguous feedback (Wrigley & Emmerson, 2013), a performer must have enough self-confidence to combat feelings of anxiety (Hefferon & Ollis, 2006), as anxiety may inhibit the loss of self-consciousness and the merging of action and awareness that are important qualities for flow to occur. Confidence may come with experience and increased skill. O'Neill (1999) found that high-achieving music students practiced more and experienced more flow than average-achieving music students. However, it seems less clear that flow experiences enhance the quality of the product in the arts and humanities. In writing, Larson (1988) proposes that the flow experience or an experience of boredom or anxiety will be reflected in the quality of the writing, saying that "the quality of the performance will depend, to a large extent, on how well the thinker is able to arrange his or her thought processes so as to make them enjoyable" (p. 171). On the other hand, Marin and Bhattacharya (2013) found that flow was not predictive of piano achievement, and Gaggioli, Chirico, Mazzoni, Milani, and Riva (2017) found that flow scores only predicted self-reported performance, but not expert evaluated performances in musicians.

Creating or performing together, a common practice in many of the arts and humanities, may provide a special opportunity for flow. Fritz and Avsec (2007) suggested that the combined effort in a group to produce a single product may be one of the best opportunities for flow because of "responsibility dispersion." Responsibility dispersion might explain why an orchestral performance or a full cast scene can be less anxiety producing and more

flow inducing than a solo performance or a monologue. Research on the existing connections between group members and communication and connections made during the group flow experience is compelling and has important implications. An individual's flow experience within a group may be influenced by the other group members, and perhaps especially through the leader of the group (Bakker, 2005). Bakker (2005) suggested that this happens through a process similar to emotional contagion. Gaggioli et al. (2017) found that individual musicians felt more intrinsically motivated when they had stronger emotional connections with their band. Lucas (2018) suggested that social flow may help maintain and build trust and relationship quality. The relationship between emotional connection and optimal experiences in groups are likely cyclical, with flow helping to build connection and with connected groups more easily experiencing flow.

Experiencing or Appreciating

Through interviews with museum professionals, Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990) described the elements of an intense experience with art. In these interviews, many of the museum professionals described a flow-like state that occurred when they viewed art. About two centuries prior, Thomas Jefferson wrote in a letter to Madam de Tott, "It fixed me like a statue a quarter of an hour, or half an hour, I do not know which, for I lost all ideas of time, even the consciousness of my existence" (Jefferson, 2018, p. 187). Jefferson, here, is sharing a flow experience that he had when viewing the painting *Marius at Minturnae* by Jean-Germain Drouais. Flow in experiencing or appreciating the arts and humanities has been measured quantitatively in the domain of visual arts (Wanzer, Finley, Zarian, & Cortez, 2018) and in the reading of literature (Thissen, Menninghaus, & Schlotz, 2018). The body of available literature regarding the experience of flow in appreciation of the arts and humanities is relatively small. Here we are not referring to the potential use of the arts or humanities to enhance experiences of flow in other activities, such as listening to music to increase flow experiences while engaged in athletics (e.g., Pates, Karageorghis, Fryer, & Maynard, 2003). Instead, we are specifically referring to the experience of flow when the primary focus of the individual is appreciating the arts and humanities. Research thus far on flow in appreciating the arts and humanities has focused on the correlates and predictors of the flow experience. For example, Diaz (2013) found that a mindfulness intervention significantly improved flow in a music listening experience. McQuillan and Conde (1996) found that autonomy in book choice was predictive of flow in reading experiences. In viewing a theatre performance, Meeks, Shryock, and Vanderbroucke (2018) found that flow (part of a larger latent variable in their study) helped to predict multiple well-being variables as well as theatre experience satisfaction, and Aykol, Aksatan, and İpek (2017) found that the perceived authenticity of the theatrical performance may often be a prerequisite for theater absorption and flow experience.

Researchers studying flow in the appreciation of the arts and humanities seem to have leaped into measuring the flow experience in this context using existing flow measures

designed for other purposes to investigate potential correlates or predictors of the experience. While interesting, it is important, first, to fully understand the phenomenology of this kind of flow experience. While some flow conditions and elements of the experience can be easily transferred to the appreciation and experience of the arts and humanities (e.g., intrinsic motivation and time distortion), others seem to be qualitatively different. What is the challenge? What skills are necessary to meet that challenge? What is the ultimate goal of an experience with the arts? When an individual has "an experience," as described by John Dewey (1934), with the arts and humanities, we propose that the challenge, the skill of the individual, and the goal may include what follows.

The challenge when having an experience with the arts and humanities may be to first understand the work. *What is it? What is the creator trying to communicate? And what does it all mean?* The skills required to face that challenge are a familiarity with the arts and humanities medium, and a tolerance for ambiguity (for a review of this concept, see Furnham & Ribchester, 1995). Familiarity with the medium may allow an individual to better understand the work of art, whereas someone with the skill of tolerance for ambiguity might be more likely to persevere in the process of understanding if the work does not make sense at first. Once the individual has an understanding of the work, the next challenge is making associations and connections between the work and their general understanding of themselves and their world. *What does this mean to me in the context of my life and my beliefs about the world?* The skills required to face this challenge may be knowledge of oneself and one's beliefs and facility for introspection. Finally, the goal in experiencing the arts and humanities may be an incorporation of what is learned through the associations and connections made into the self, which may lead to transformed perspectives and an enhancement of individual capability—which is to say, a complexification of the individual.

From Flow to Flourishing

This chapter's ultimate concern is examining flow in the arts and humanities as a pathway to flourishing. In the absence of extensive empirical work involving all three elements, we look to flow research in other contexts to provide a place from which to extrapolate as we consider the ways in which flow may be working to produce flourishing outcomes within the domain of the arts and humanities. This section will first consider the flow state, in and of itself, as a contributor to flourishing. We then discuss flow in the context of important life domains and the flourishing that results through domain-specific mastery.

Llorens and Salanova (2017) provide a comprehensive review of the outcomes of experiencing flow at work. Across the studies they reviewed, they found evidence of a direct and positive impact of flow on subjective well-being, positive emotions, positive mood, active coping and commitment, task engagement, job satisfaction, energy level, as well as reduced exhaustion, cynicism, anxiety, and burnout. Another diary-based study by

Demerouti, Bakker, Sonnentag, and Fullagar (2012) examined the relationship between three dimensions of flow at work (absorption, intrinsic motivation, and enjoyment) and found that flow at work, particularly the enjoyment dimension, was positively related to vigor and negatively related to exhaustion, both at the end of the workday as well as at the end of the evening.

Several researchers in this area have presented sound arguments that experiencing flow may contribute to flourishing by way of increasing overall levels of positive affect (Demerouti et al., 2012; Moneta, 2004). In line with both the hedonic and eudaimonic aspects of flow theory (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), they suggest the theory of "broaden and build" (Fredrickson, 1998) to account for momentary and long-term benefits resulting from flow experience. According to broaden and build, positive emotions cause a broadening of one's awareness, an openness to the environment, and novel ways of thinking. This provides a momentary hedonic benefit and at the same time creates an upward spiral of emotional well-being over time that results in the development of valuable skills and resources.

In addition to the upward spiral of emotional well-being, the flow experience produces flourishing outcomes in another important way; the experience itself is one of self-organization and growth. The deep concentration and well-ordered consciousness characteristic of flow helps the self to develop through a process of differentiation and integration. Differentiation refers to increased uniqueness, a separation of one's self from others. Integration refers to a merging of the self with other people, ideas, or entities. During a flow experience, one has the internal coherence to organize these elements within the self. Proper distance can be gained between the self and views, opinions, and ways of thinking and being that one is not willing to make part of oneself. Conversely, a deep merging of entities beyond the self with one's own ways of being, knowing, feeling, and understanding can take place. After a flow experience, through the processes of differentiation and integration, the self becomes more complex.

Although the experience of flow in and of itself contributes directly to flourishing in important ways, it is most powerful in facilitating flourishing outcomes when it occurs within a content domain that is meaningful to the person. The repetition of flow experience in a meaningful domain, motivated by the intrinsically rewarding state inherent to flow, will ultimately result in skill development and competency in a domain of life important to the person, a defining feature of flourishing. Evidence of this process was demonstrated in a longitudinal study by Salanova, Bakker, and Llorens (2006), which looked at workplace flow among teachers, and found that experiencing flow at work at time one was associated with increased work-related self-efficacy at time two. The construct of vital engagement (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2003) encapsulates the two elements; it adds *meaning* to the concept of *flow* and is defined as a relationship to the world characterized both by enjoyed absorption and subjective significance.

Because the state of flow is intrinsically rewarding, it encourages people to return to the domain in which it was experienced. Since flow also requires a match between challenge and skill, skill may increase over time as practice is carried out in the domain in which the practice is performed. Through deliberate striving in a domain that is meaningful or important to the person, he or she will gain skill and competence in a domain important to his or her life by seeking and repeating flow experiences. We can understand mastery gained in a subjectively meaningful domain as the development of domain-specific complexity.

From Creating and Appreciating to Flourishing

Art and humanities making and appreciating have the potential to promote flourishing in myriad ways. Tay, Pawelski, and Keith (2018) produced an excellent review of literature in this arena. Instead of conducting an exhaustive review here, we highlight a few unique features of the arts and humanities that are potentially valuable to human flourishing, and discuss how these elements may benefit those who engage with them in ways that would support flourishing. First, we consider the question, "Which aspects of the arts and humanities are especially valuable to flourishing?" Aristotle believed that art communicates information about essential human life, morality, virtue; and that it offers the opportunity to think about thought itself. He also believed that art is "imitation" (a rendering of the unrealized ideal that comes to life, not merely a representation or historical account) of mental, emotional, and spiritual human life. Butcher (1951) summarizes Aristotle's conceptualization of art with the following words: "The common original, then, from which all the arts draw is human life—its mental processes, its spiritual movements, its outward acts issuing from deeper sources; in a word, all that constitutes the inward and essential activity of the soul" (p. 124).

If this conceptualization is accurate, the arts and humanities are a rich trove of human and cultural wisdom and would indeed contain the content necessary to support individual human development, as well as the development of our species, on profound levels. This is indeed what the findings of studies reviewed by Tay et al. (2018) seem to suggest. They report benefits from engagement with the arts and humanities in the forms of perspective taking, the construction of meaning, and creativity.

The arts and humanities may also offer the opportunity to think using an unfamiliar structure, to transform or reorganize one's own thinking; by applying the structure displayed in the artistic work to issues in one's own mind, the very structures of thought can be questioned, challenged, and reorganized, or at least understood to be one of many possible structures of thought, even if they are not in fact changed. Additionally, engagement with the arts and humanities may provide the opportunity to question and shift one's ontological understanding of one's self, and one's moral and ethical responsibilities (Bendor, Maggs, Peake, Robinson, & Williams, 2017).

The study by Bendor et al. (2017) provides an elegant and concrete demonstration of this process in action. By interacting with a multimedia art installation, participants in the

study were immersed in a set of different "possible futures" based on different sustainability-related worldviews. The researchers' goal was to create an experience that would stand up to artistic standards, one that could be appreciated for both its content and its form, and one that makes explicit the relationship between the ontological, or the way we understand the world, and the ethical, the way we believe we should act in the world. The installation was designed to engage participants "not through an infocentric prism but from the perspective of aesthetics and experience" (Bendor et al., 2017, p. 7). It was not intended to teach participants something new about sustainability or to persuade them that one view of sustainability was preferable to another; instead, it aimed to destabilize any singular meaning of sustainability by encouraging deeper awareness of the relationship between different conceptualizations of sustainability and different worldviews. In post-experience group discussions, a number of participants were willing to critically reconsider their understanding of sustainability and even to acknowledge that other meanings of sustainability were equally valuable. Some participants reported that they had indeed changed their mind, and some even insisted that they had not changed their views while explicitly expressing a view different from the one they had previously endorsed. Although flow was not explicitly measured or mentioned by the authors, they discuss the challenges of designing an experience "at the right scale as to inspire a sense of freedom and agency while avoiding creating too much anxiety, bafflement, or boredom" (Bendor et al., 2017, p. 8). This language is identical to that used to describe flow. If the researchers were as successful in designing to these criteria as they were in designing an enjoyable and moving experience, it is reasonable to consider that a flow experience may have contributed to the complexification and growth that participants demonstrated in response to their interaction with the installation. This process described by Bendor et al. (2017) underlies most learning processes and leads to the shaping of a more complex self.

Another aspect of flourishing that the arts and humanities may be uniquely suited to enrich is creativity. In his three-phase model of creativity, Feldman (1994) describes three essential aspects of creativity. The first is the natural tendency of the mind to take liberties with what is real in mostly subconscious ways, although with the possibility of being or becoming conscious. The second phase is something he calls the transformational imperative; it is what he sees as an innate and fundamental human need to change our external world to make it conform to our wishes, to create, to contribute. The third and final phase is that of "the crafted world," or the world of artifacts of creative work that are available as a source of information and inspiration to those who also wish to change the world.

The richness of important human content in Feldman's crafted world provides a space for the expression of life themes and exposure to the life themes of others. (in the case of appreciating), or the expression and sharing of and reflection/processing/development and feedback on one's own life. Creators can share and receive feedback on their own life themes by contributing to the body of work comprising the crafted world. Appreciators of the crafted world can apply new understandings gained to any area of life. Furthermore,

as creators appreciate the work of others, their reflections can inform their future contributions. This communication process serves to develop individual complexity but also creates a sociocultural dialectic where individuals share and exchange important human information—supporting individual and societal-level integration and differentiation. On this basis, this exchange has the potential to allow us to see and understand each other more deeply. This level of understanding, if embraced, has the power to humanize the alienated, and to inspire tolerance, compassion, and self-transcendence.

Though the bounty offered by the arts and humanities is rich, that does not mean that people will necessarily take advantage of the opportunity; or, even if they would like to, that they would necessarily have the requisite skill to gain the benefits described. In the next section, we explore potential ways that flow during art and humanities making and appreciation may facilitate flourishing.

Flow, the Arts and Humanities, and Flourishing

To conclude, we present a theoretical reflection on three modes by which the state and conditions of flow in the context of the arts and humanities may act as a catalyst for increased flourishing, as well as to suggest some possible directions for future research. The three modes are (1) taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the arts and humanities, (2) breaking down barriers, and (3) developing assets to support flourishing over time.

The first way we believe flow may be working as a catalyst for the arts and humanities to produce flourishing outcomes is that it motivates people to become actively involved in the opportunities offered by the arts and humanities (Massimini, Csikszentmihalyi & Delle Fave, 1988). As mentioned earlier, the intrinsic rewards provided by the flow state motivate those who experience it to repeat similar behavior in the future. If one experiences flow during arts and humanities appreciation or creation, one will likely be motivated to return to a similar activity again and again in the future, making it more likely that one will benefit from the opportunities offered. Likewise, attention is required to gain benefits from interaction with the arts and humanities; simply showing up is not enough. Attention is an essential feature of the flow state, which means that if returning to the state of flow is a motivating factor in arts and humanities participation, one *has* to devote one's focused attention. This also makes benefiting from the opportunities offered much more likely.

The second mode by which flow may be acting as a catalyst between the arts and humanities and flourishing is by breaking down the barrier between conscious and subconscious thought. The language of the arts and humanities is often the language of symbol, metaphor—the language of the subconscious mind. The state of flow draws conscious and subconscious thought closer together (similar to meditation) and facilitates communication between the two through present-focused attention and loss of reflective self-consciousness. Conscious thought, thereby, is allowed to direct subconscious thought with goals and objectives so that it can create and offer novel solutions/possibilities by drawing connections between loosely connected or uncommonly combined elements, which it does

naturally, unlike the conscious mind. This combination allows for the strengths of both conscious and subconscious thought to be used at the same time in creatively productive or contemplative pursuits (Feldman, 1994; Perry, 1999).

The final catalyzing action we would like to propose is that flow encourages the development of assets that support flourishing over time. In flow, the skill level of the person experiencing it must meet the challenge of the task at hand. In the case of creation or appreciation of the arts and humanities, the task is either to create and offer something novel and meaningful, or to understand what is being presented and to integrate it into one's own perspective, or (in the case of a discordant aesthetic experience) to differentiate one's perspective from it—all of which enrich one's complexity by transforming one's perspective, and reorganizing the structure of one's thought. Persistence in these tasks would mean continuously developing one's skill, seeking out new challenges to meet the new skill level, and again developing additional skill to meet the new challenge. Over time, this type of engagement would amount to becoming an expert or developing mastery in the domain. Though we are not aware of any empirical evidence to directly support this, it would stand to reason that if one repeats this process over the course of a lifetime, substantial growth and wisdom could be gained.

Flow experienced in creating and appreciating the arts and humanities is worth experiencing in and of itself. Furthermore, the perspective and complexity one gains through flow in the arts and humanities is not limited to the world of the arts and humanities, but can then be transferred and applied to situations and decisions in everyday life. Well-ordered consciousness and deep concentration allow for important and potentially enriching content to be integrated into the self, or into a deep working through of one's own life themes, one's worldviews, and the development of mastery.

Questions for Future Research

This chapter has proposed processes and outcomes that require empirical assessment. Initial questions that might guide research include:

1. Do flow experiences in the arts and humanities lead to increased complexity, and if so, how? We propose testing whether flow experiences lead to perspective change via pluralizing meanings and/or increasing valuing of different perspectives.
2. Beyond the technical challenge, what other challenges (e.g., existential problems) are involved in the creation or performance of the arts and humanities?
3. In experiencing or appreciating the arts and humanities, to what extent is the challenge to understand the work? In what respects is it to understand the self?
4. Likewise, in experiencing or appreciating the arts and humanities, to what extent do the skills involve experience with the artistic medium and its history? To what extent do the skills involve a tolerance for ambiguity or an ability to introspect?

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CHAPTER

16 Stories for Good: Transportation into Narrative Worlds

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Abstract

Narratives and literary works have delighted and enchanted audiences for centuries. This chapter explores how stepping into a narrative world can contribute to human flourishing. Engaging in stories can provide an escape from the mundane into a realm where one can safely discover new and otherwise inaccessible experiences; stories can also help create meaning and provide a framework for interpreting events in one's world. The authors review research on narrative transportation: the experience of "losing oneself" in the world of story. They describe the antecedents and consequences of this state, and the ways in which transporting narratives may change attitudes and beliefs. They also examine the link between narratives and empathy, including research suggesting that reading fiction or literature may be associated with better social skills. Finally, they discuss the potential benefits of restorative narratives, a type of story focused on recovery and resilience.

Key Words: theatre, containment, embodiment, flourishing, psychological mechanism, transfer

Literature has been an enduring part of human culture since the days of oral storytelling traditions. Narratives and literature can contribute to the good life in a variety of ways. On a mundane level, they can help individuals escape from boredom or trouble in their everyday lives, providing fun or relief from stress. At a more profound level, narratives help individuals create meaning in their lives and provide ways for people to describe and interpret their experiences. Stories and the characters within them can provide a form of comfort and companionship, helping individuals feel less alone as they navigate common human experiences such as love, loss, or challenges. Literary works can be a source of beauty through their use of language, as well as allowing readers to see the world in a new and different way. Furthermore, stories can be a way for individuals to vicariously experience other lives. Stepping into these narrative worlds can both build empathy for other perspectives and expand individuals' own horizons, providing glimpses into other possible realities, some of which may be incorporated into readers' actual selves.

Narratives and literature provide imagined worlds for readers and viewers. These story worlds are likely to have the most effect when individuals are completely immersed or

absorbed in them: transported into the narrative worlds. In this chapter, we will describe theory and research on transportation into narrative worlds, the state of being fully cognitively and emotionally absorbed in a story. These stories can come in the form of written works, spoken/audio stories, films, or even interactive narratives or story games. Furthermore, although we are focusing here on narratives and literature, some of the same broad ideas may potentially apply to other humanities areas, such as immersion into works of art or music.

Transportation into Narrative Worlds

Transportation as an Enjoyable and Sought-After State

Imagine you are sitting in a dark movie theater, completely mentally and emotionally immersed in the story unfolding on screen. For just a few hours, the stressors of day-to-day life dissipate. Every day, mass audiences eagerly escape into the alternate universes of movies, television, and books. The desire to replace mundane reality with new and exciting narrative worlds, even just for a short time, is evidenced by the thriving industry of entertainment media.

The capacity for entertaining narratives to immerse audiences within the world of a story is described by *narrative transportation*. The experience of transportation can be understood as an integrative melding of cognitive, emotional, and imagery involvement within a narrative world (Green & Brock, 2000; Green & Brock, 2002). This state is not only desirable and highly sought-after by audiences, it can foster narrative-based attitude and behavior change. While transported, individuals may become less likely to counterargue with the story, so as not to disrupt their own transportation and enjoyment (see Vorderer, Klimmt, & Ritterfeld, 2004); reduced counterarguing can lead to greater persuasion. (Literary scholars may recognize this tendency to accept claims in the narrative as a state that Coleridge (1817) termed the "willing suspension of disbelief.") The elements involved in transportation itself—such as connections with story characters, mental imagery, and emotional engagement—can also affect persuasion.

Although transportation has long been used as a metaphor for narrative experience, psychological investigation of the concept of being "transported" to a narrative world was given special attention by cognitive psychologist Richard Gerrig (1993), who highlighted the analogy of traveling to a new place and returning somewhat changed by the journey. Gerrig (1993), and later Green and Brock (2000), drew a parallel between this experience and the experience of entering a story world, becoming immersed, and returning somewhat changed as a result (Green & Brock, 2000).

More generally, Narrative Transportation Theory describes the phenomenological experience of immersion in a narrative world, as well as the mechanisms underlying transportation effects and the circumstances under which transportation is enhanced or reduced (see Green & Brock, 2002; see also Green, Brock, & Kaufman, 2004).

Measurement of Transportation

The extent to which one is transported into a narrative can be measured using the fifteen-item Transportation Scale (TS; Green & Brock, 2000). The scale assesses the broad dimensions of transportation, including emotional involvement, cognitive attention, suspense, lack of awareness of surroundings, and mental imagery. The first eleven items capture the overall experience of being transported. Example items include, "While I was reading the narrative, I could easily picture the events in it taking place," "I was mentally involved in the narrative while reading it," and "While I was reading the narrative, activity going on in the room around me was on my mind" (reverse-coded). Four items assess imagery relative to the particular story; for example, having a vivid image of the story's main character or setting. All items are assessed on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*).

The scale is useful for both written and audio/visual (AV) narratives, though the wording should be modified when necessary (e.g., "reading" would become "viewing" in AV narratives). A six-item short-form version of the TS (TS-SF; see Appel, Gnambs, Richter, & Green, 2015, for scale validation) may be especially useful in contexts where brevity is important or participant fatigue is a concern.

Related Concepts (e.g., Identification, Flow, Presence)

Transportation is related to other concepts such as identification with story characters (Cohen, 2001; see also Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008; Sestir & Green, 2010). Identification has been described in many ways, but in general it relates to experiencing narrative events from the perspective of the character, as if they were happening to readers themselves. Although transportation and identification tap unique experiences, the two tend to be highly correlated (e.g., measures of identification include items such as "While viewing [the program], I forgot myself and was fully absorbed"; Cohen, 2001). The same is also true for transportation and one's general enjoyment of a narrative. Transportation and enjoyment tend to be positively correlated, but the two are conceptually different (see Green et al., 2004).

Other experiences that are conceptually similar to transportation include Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) *flow*, brought about by absorption in an activity that is optimally challenging to the individual and their level of skill, and *presence* (Klimmt & Vorderer, 2003), or perceived physical presence in a mediated world (a concept most often used in studies of virtual reality). Although these states share some characteristics with transportation (e.g., loss of time and spatial awareness), transportation is an experience specific to narratives. However, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) notes that reading is a common flow experience, and some of the flourishing benefits of transportation may overlap with those of flow.

Overview of Research on Transportation

The antecedents and outcomes of transportation have been studied extensively by media and narrative researchers (for a meta-analysis on transportation studies, see van Laer, de Ruyter, Visconti, & Wetzels, 2014). Studies on transportation tend to be experimental, in which certain aspects of a story are manipulated to assess their impact on transportation and, subsequently, the overall experience and persuasive effects. In a typical study, participants will read or view a story and then complete the transportation scale to assess their transportation into the story, as well as other survey items that assess, for example, changes in attitudes or beliefs relevant to the narrative. Transportation can also be experimentally manipulated through reading instructions or pre-story information, although these manipulations are not always successful (see Tukachinsky, 2014, for a review of experimental manipulations of transportation and related concepts).

Influences on Transportation

The likelihood of becoming transported varies from story to story, person to person, and across person and story (e.g., an interaction between story and person, as with story genre preferences). First, the features of a particular story can affect its likelihood to be transportive. Poor quality of the narrative text, such as a lack of coherence in the storyline, can decrease the likelihood that a reader will be transported. A distracting setting can also decrease transportation, whereas a quiet, controlled setting can increase a story message's impact (Zwarun & Hall, 2012). Transportation is also less likely to occur in instances where the narrative text uses confusing language or is uninterpretable by the reader (see Kreuter et al., 2007, for further discussion of elements of narrative quality).

The extent to which the story, characters, and/or conflicts are understood can also relate to a reader's narrative comprehension ability, which may differ across individuals. More broadly, some individuals have a higher tendency to be transported than others (Mazzocco, Green, Sasota, & Jones, 2010). The propensity of being transported has been described as one's "transportability" (Dal Cin, Zanna, & Fong, 2004). Tendencies toward mental imagery production (e.g., how well readers can mentally imagine the story characters and events) and emotional responding should influence one's transportability. Further, individuals high in need for affect (having a strong motivation to approach emotions) and those high in need for cognition (who enjoy exerting cognitive effort) are more susceptible to being transported (e.g., see Appel & Richter, 2010; Zwarun & Hall, 2012). Recent research also suggests that some individuals are uniquely motivated to engage with the minds and perspectives of others, including narrative characters (mind-reading motivation; Carpenter, Green, & Fitzgerald, 2018). Individuals with higher mind-reading motivation, who are innately curious about the perspectives of others, are more likely to be transported than those with lower mind-reading motivation.

Persuasive Outcomes of Transportation

In addition to the different influences on transportation, considerable research has provided evidence of the capacity for engaging narratives to persuade readers across a variety of social, psychological, and health domains (for a review, see de Graaf, Sanders, & Hoeken, 2016; Shen, Sheer, & Li, 2015; van Laer et al., 2014). In particular, public health organizations often use storytelling strategies to disseminate health-related messages (Kreuter et al., 2007; Merchant, Ford, & Sargeant, 2010). Transporting stories have been shown to be particularly effective in these contexts, as they can evoke self-relevant emotions which in turn can influence risk perceptions and screening or prevention behaviors (Dunlop, Wakefield, & Kashima, 2008, 2010). For example, one study found that more transportation into a story about the risks of tobacco was associated with higher reports to quit smoking at a two-week follow-up (Williams et al., 2011). Transportation can also aid in the retention of new health knowledge, and can influence subsequent health-related behaviors (Kim et al., 2012; Murphy et al., 2011; Murphy et al., 2013).

Although narratives are sometimes used by persuaders to increase flourishing through encouraging healthy or beneficial life choices, it is important to note, however, that unhealthy behaviors can also be modeled by transporting narratives. Research has shown that movies that depict a character smoking can increase smokers' desire and intentions to smoke (Dal Cin et al., 2007). Thus, although research has tended to focus on the positive effects of transportation, future research may consider the instances when transportation and narrative persuasion could be used to promote negative or dangerous ideas.

Transportation, Literature, and Empathy

Beyond persuasion, one potential way that literature could contribute to flourishing is by helping in the development and exercise of empathy. Although a variety of definitions of empathy have been proposed, empathy is typically understood as understanding the perspectives of others and sharing their emotional experience (e.g., Davis, 1983).

The importance of connecting with narrative characters has been a theme throughout narrative psychology research, including topics such as identification with story characters (e.g., Cohen, 2001; Sestir & Green, 2010), social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), and parasocial interaction (e.g., Giles, 2002). Social cognitive theory focuses on characters as role models who can help individuals learn through vicarious experience; by seeing a character make choices and experience the rewards or punishments that flow from those choices, individuals can gain knowledge about the social world. Parasocial interaction refers to the "one-way" interaction that individuals might have with celebrities, television personalities, or story characters. Individuals may feel like the characters or celebrities are friends, but there is no direct interaction with them. These processes may draw upon individuals' empathic abilities.

Connecting with others is a central part of the human experience, and similarly, perspective-taking is a key aspect of narrative processing. In fact, Zunshine (2006)

proposed that fiction reading is rewarding primarily because it allows individuals to exercise their theory of mind or perspective-taking abilities. Theory of mind refers to the ability to impute mental states to oneself and to others, and to recognize that others may hold different views of the world than oneself (e.g., Premack & Woodruff, 1978).

Research has explored the link between reading and empathy in two ways: through experimental studies of the immediate link between different types of texts and empathy, and through longitudinal or correlational studies of the relationship between fiction-reading and social skills.

In one of the pioneering studies on this topic, Mar and colleagues have shown that, despite the common "bookworm" stereotype of the socially awkward reader, individuals who frequently read fiction (as indicated by recognizing the names of authors) appear to have stronger social skills, at least on some measures (Mar, Oatley, Hirsh, de la Paz, & Peterson, 2006). In particular, frequent fiction-readers demonstrated a greater ability to read the emotions of others through the "mind in the eyes" task (Baron-Cohen et al., 2001), a well-established instrument that measures a person's ability to interpret emotion given a limited amount of social information (individuals must identify an emotion from a picture showing only a person's eyes). However, other related measures in the study (a video-based interpersonal perception task and the Interpersonal Reactivity Index empathy measure) did not show statistically significant effects.

Additional research on the relationship between reading fiction or literature and social cognition generally confirmed this relationship, suggesting that lifetime exposure to fiction is associated with slightly higher social-cognitive skills (Bal & Veltkamp, 2013; Mar et al., 2006; Mar, Oatley, & Peterson, 2009; Panero et al., 2016; see Mumper & Gerrig, 2017, for a meta-analysis). Some initial experimental work suggested that exposure to a literary work (as compared to nonliterary reading) led to immediate improvements in social abilities (Kidd & Castano, 2013; see also Kidd, Ongis, & Castano, 2016); the authors argued that the complexity of literary reading, which requires intellectual engagement and creative thought, might put individuals in a mindset that attunes them to social information. However, despite these promising early results, a number of later experiments have failed to replicate the findings about short-term influences of reading a work of fiction or literature (e.g., Black & Barnes, 2015; De Mulder, Hakemulder, van den Berghe, Klaassen, & van Berkum, 2017). These failures to replicate included a well-powered direct replication attempt (Camerer et al., 2018). However, taken as a whole, this research suggests that despite the absence of significant immediate or short-term influence, the repeated practice of mental simulation through narratives is associated with real-world social skills.

One area for future research is how exactly this empathy effect occurs. Are particular elements of literature or fiction necessary for creating better social awareness? It is possible that individuals who read literature are better able to identify their own emotions and those of others, and that being able to put these experiences into words leads to greater social skill.

Transportation as a Way of Escaping and/or Expanding the Self

In addition to creating connections with others through empathy, transporting stories or literature can also directly affect the self. Some lines of research have focused on the idea that stories can be a distraction from negative situations or negative self-thoughts (Moskalenko & Heine, 2003), or can temporarily relieve the burdens of self-regulation (Slater et al., 2014). These experiences can promote well-being by reducing negative experiences.

In addition to serving as a form of relief from negative psychological states, stories can also contribute more directly to flourishing by providing a pathway for individuals to try on new identities or have vicarious experiences (Green, 2005). The experience of transportation may loosen the boundaries of the self, allowing individuals to more easily take on the experiences of characters. These experiences may then help individuals construct their future selves, by modeling themselves after a character's bravery or independence, for example; having positive role models can help lead to well-being or flourishing.

Restorative Narratives: Narratives of Recovery from Trauma or Difficulty

The benefits of narrative engagement extend beyond stories read purely for fun. Narratives about recovery from trauma or difficulty, such as *restorative narratives* (Tenore, 2015; see also Dahmen, 2019; Fitzgerald, Paravati, Green, Moore, & Qian, 2020), may provide an especially positive emotional state and, as a result, promote audience well-being.

Restorative narratives share instances of trauma while highlighting themes of hope and perseverance. This shift in focus allows audiences to emotionally engage with negative content—content that might otherwise generate a need to regulate emotions to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Sharing a story that is restorative rather than problem-focused could also increase empathic responses to those suffering in the story and promote a desire to help. Helping might include aiding those directly affected by the event in the story, or individuals affected by related issues (e.g., donating to a disaster relief fund after reading a restorative narrative about a hurricane victim). Moreover, because restorative narratives illustrate the value of resilience in the face of adversity, they may allow audiences themselves to feel more resilient (Fitzgerald et al., 2020).

Restorative narratives initially emerged as a journalistic approach to counteract negative news, which, rather than motivating a sense of urgency and need for action, could emotionally overwhelm and exhaust its audiences (e.g., see Pfefferbaum et al., 2014). Images & Voices of Hope (ivoh, now a part of The Peace Studio; see ivoh.org for more information) is a nonprofit organization which first proposed the term "restorative narrative," as well as several characteristics and outcomes of the restorative narrative genre. In particular, ivoh identified certain restorative narrative features (e.g., they capture hard truths, they are sustained inquiries, they show meaningful progression; see Tenore, 2015, for a list and description of all proposed features). Although little empirical research has examined restorative narratives, Fitzgerald et al. (2020) utilized the features proposed by ivoh to

create a working definition and two testable features of restorative narratives: restorative narrative is a story that provides an authentic sharing of negative experiences while highlighting the strength and meaningful progression of the individual. Thus, a restorative narrative should contain elements of (a) strength, such as resilience, and (b) a meaningful progression of the individual or community experiencing the hardship.

Fitzgerald et al. (2020) further provided some initial evidence of the unique effects of restorative narratives. In their study, the researchers compared a restorative narrative to a negative narrative about a woman's diagnosis and treatment of a rare disease. The restorative version of the story featured strengths of the narrative character (e.g., perseverance despite setbacks), and her progression through treatment throughout the story.

Results suggested that the restorative narrative, compared to a negative version of the same story—that is, a version nearly identical to the restorative narrative other than a few sentences and sections that, instead of strengths or progression, focused on problems or negative aspects of the diagnosis and treatment—led to more positive and prosocial outcomes. In particular, the restorative narrative evoked more positive emotions and a greater desire to read and share the story as compared to the negative version. The restorative narrative also increased the willingness to help through these emotions. These effects have also been replicated with different stories (e.g., recovery from natural disasters; addiction; Fitzgerald, Green, & Paravati, 2020). Additional research has explored restorative narrative specifically in the context of journalism (Abdenour, McIntyre, & Dahmen, 2017; Dahmen, 2019; McIntyre, Dahmen, & Abdenour, 2018), for example, assessing how restorative narratives may fit into the landscape of modern journalistic reporting.

Future research should continue to examine how restorative narratives can impact audiences' well-being, particularly through repeated exposure to restorative narratives over time.

Conclusion

Narratives and literature not only record the human experience, they can also enhance it. Individuals who are transported into story worlds can relieve the stresses of their lives, find new senses of meaning, experience beauty, and even transform themselves. Becoming absorbed into works of literature can contribute to flourishing in multiple ways. Although research has provided important insights into how these processes occur, future studies can continue to illuminate the types of content, literary forms, and other variations that create positive psychological effects.

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CHAPTER

17 Awe, Approached

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Abstract

Experiences of states like awe, wonder, inspiration and curiosity have been empirically linked with both human flourishing as well as with engagement in the arts and humanities. Recent research in affective science investigating the structure of these emotions has begun to shed light on exactly why. This chapter argues for two ways in which these disciplines may promote human flourishing via their capacity to trigger such states in observers. It begins by laying out a conceptual framework for awe and its relation to other similar states. It will then survey existing research on awe's relationship to two domains of well-being: the self-transcendent and the epistemic.

Key Words: awe, well-being, epistemic, self-transcendent, arts, humanities

> The enemy of art is the absence of limitations.
>
> —*Orson Welles*

By articulating the importance of limitations in art, Welles has widely been understood to be communicating the importance of practical limitations in the process of artistic *production* (e.g., budgeting, marketing, the medium in which an artist is working). He believed that constraints trigger creativity. In one sense this seems obvious. Given the constraint that Anthony Perkins could not *actually* stab Janet Leigh in the film *Psycho*, Hitchcock needed to find a way to create the illusion of the act. Operating within limits necessitates artistic innovation. But Welles can also be understood as revealing something about how the *consumption* of art, or any discipline which seeks to depict the human experience, operates: transcendent art entails psychological limitations. If there are no limits to what kinds of events we have previously experienced, what kinds of ideas we have previously conceived, or what kinds of perspectives we have previously considered, then what boundaries remain for music, art, literature, philosophy, history, theatre, film, or religion to transcend? Our experiences are bound by the cognitive structures through which we filter the world, and it is only through poking up against these boundaries, violating the

expectations that these structures create, that the arts and the humanities can elicit the kinds of emotional states psychologists believe are intertwined with human flourishing: awe, wonder, inspiration, curiosity.

Experiences of these states have long been linked with engagement in the arts and humanities, and recent research in affective science investigating the structure of these emotions has begun to shed light on exactly why. This chapter argues for two ways in which these disciplines may promote human flourishing via their capacity to trigger such states in observers. It begins by laying out a conceptual framework for awe and its relation to other similar states. It will then survey existing research on awe's relationship to two domains of well-being: the self-transcendent and the epistemic.

A Conceptual Framework for Awe

Awe has been defined in a variety of ways. For example, Ekman (1992) speculated that awe would likely be found to satisfy all commonly accepted criteria for inclusion as a basic emotion, but he offered no framework for understanding its causes or consequences. In 2003, Keltner and Haidt published *Approaching Awe, a Moral, Spiritual and Aesthetic Emotion*, a seminal conceptual framework for the empirical study of awe which has shaped the course of research over the past two decades. Their theory identifies two core components of this affective experience: a *perception of vastness* and a *need for accommodation*. On this view, awe is triggered when in the presence of something that cannot be understood in terms of one's current theories of the world (i.e., it is perceptually vast) and that involves a strong motivation to adjust those theories in order to make sense of the novel stimulus (i.e., a need for accommodation). In other words, awe is experienced when an event transcends the limits of our ordinary experience.

Importantly, vastness can be perceived in a variety of ways: the incomprehensible depths of outer space; the power and strength of a nuclear explosion; the authority of an individual; the complexity of an idea; the beauty of a piece of music; the elegance of a scientific theory. Vastness simply requires that a stimulus cannot be easily understood through the existing cognitive architecture of the perceiver. It exceeds the capacity of our explanatory power. Because such stimuli are not easily explained, or *assimilated* into existing mental structures, they require "cognitive accommodation". This conceptualization of awe is grounded directly in Piagetian theories of cognition (Piaget, 1971), on which we process new information either by assimilating that information into preexisting schemas or by changing our preexisting schemas to accommodate the new information. Awe is thought to be evoked when we confront information that cannot be assimilated into preexisting schemas and, consequently, triggers accommodation instead.

Several lines of research support this framework. For example, Shiota, Keltner, and Mossman (2007) found that when asked to recall an experience of awe, most participants described the kinds of perceptually vast stimuli that Keltner and Haidt's model suggests: panoramic views, works of art, others' astonishing performances. This work also supported

the link between a need for accommodation and awe, showing a correlation between dispositional awe proneness and the need for cognitive closure (an index of an individual's discomfort with uncertainty and desire for consistency; Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). Awe-prone participants demonstrated less of this need, suggesting that individuals who chronically experience awe are more comfortable revising existing mental structures to assimilate novel information.

Separate lines of research further support the model by revealing awe's relationship to feelings of uncertainty. Uncertainty, which is generally considered to be a negative psychological state, results from failures of assimilation (Keltner & Haidt, 2003), and research suggests that the desire to reduce this uncertainty constitutes the main motivation behind cognitive accommodation. In short, feelings of uncertainty motivate a drive for increased understanding as a means of accommodating novel information. Awe is triggered when information transcends the limits of our knowledge, and it motivates us to wrap our minds around the eliciting event. Taken together, this work shows how awe motivates explanation-seeking as a function of its relation to uncertainty, and supports the need for accommodation as a fundamental component of the awe experience.

An important consideration in the conceptual work on awe has been how to distinguish it from related emotional states. This work has proceeded along two distinct lines, both of which ultimately link awe with outcomes associated with well-being. The first identifies awe as belonging to a family of self-transcendent emotions – emotions that reduce attention to the self and its goals – along with admiration, elevation, gratitude, inspiration, appreciation and compassion (cf. Stellar et al., 2017). Much of this work has focused on distinguishing awe from elevation and admiration, since all three can be evoked in response to witnessing the excellence (in virtue or ability) of others (Shiota, Thrash, Danvers, & Dombrowski, 2017; Onu, Kessler, & Smith, 2016; Van Cappellen, Saroglou, Iweins, Piovesana, & Fredrickson, 2013; Immordino-Yang, McCall, Damasio, & Damasio 2009). According to this work, awe is unique in its ability to foster group cohesion and connectedness, at least in part through its effects on feelings of subordination to authority and a diminished sense of self.

The second line identifies awe as belonging to a family of emotions that can be labeled "epistemic." These affective states are all defined by their relation to knowledge and understanding -surprise, wonder, curiosity, interest. The relationship between these states has thus far been ambiguous, with researchers either using the terms interchangeably or defining certain states as blends or variants of others. For example, awe has been defined as a kind of interest (Izard, 1977), possibly leading to curiosity, as well as related to feelings of surprise (Frijda, 1986). The terms *awe* and *wonder* have not been distinguished empirically, with wonder often being included in composite measures of awe (e.g., Shiota et al 2007). According to this work, awe may be unique in both its elicitors (i.e. stimuli

individuals fail to assimilate into existing mental structures) and its consequences on subsequent understanding (i.e., motivating conceptual change).

Awe as a Self-transcendent Emotion

Social connection is a primary psychological need (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and a key to well-being (Seppala, Rossomando, & Doty, 2013; Berkman & Syme 1979; Cacioppo et al., 2002). Not only do individuals with satisfying social lives report above-average levels of happiness (Diener & Seligman 2004; Putnam 2001) and lower levels of depression and anxiety (Lee, Draber, & Sujin, 2001), but those who report social isolation, loneliness or exclusion suffer from a variety of psychological and physical maladies (Baumeister & Tice, 1990; Baumeister, Twenge, & Nuss, 2002; Cacioppo, Hughes, Waite, Hawkley, & Thisted, 2006; Twenge, Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Bartels, 2007).

Functionalist theories posit that emotions have in part evolved to help motivate adaptive responses to social challenges. Given the primary import of forming and maintaining social bonds, a functionalist perspective predicts that certain emotions ought to serve these ends. Indeed, affective scientists have created a category of positive emotions, known as the self-transcendent emotions, defined by their shared effects on promoting coordination and cooperation within a group. These emotions reduce attention to the self and its goals, and focus attention on enhancing others' welfare and motivating prosocial behavior (Stellar et al., 2017). Following from the tight link between social connection and well-being, these emotions are also expected to directly relate to well-being. As mentioned earlier, awe is considered to be in this category of emotion, along with states such as gratitude, compassion, and admiration. Though this classification emerged after Keltner and Haidt's original theoretical work on awe, that work predicted that awe would be associated with the kinds of cognitive and behavioral tendencies that motivate commitments to social collectives. Evidence over the past decade has begun to support this hypothesis.

For example, awe increases feelings of interconnectedness and common humanity with others (Shiota et al., 2007) and decreases self-interested goals such as the desire for money (Jiang, Yin, Mei, & Zhu, 2018). Awe motivates prosocial behavior (Piff, Dietze, Feinberg, Stancato, & Keltner, 2015), increases the amount of time participants are willing to devote to others (Rudd, Vohs, & Aaker, 2012), and increases willingness to help a person in need (Prade & Saroglou, 2016). Individuals higher in dispositional awe-proneness show greater generosity to others in an economic game, and experimentally induced awe increases ethical decision-making and reported prosocial values (Piff et al., 2015). Piff et al. (2015) shed light on a potential mechanism through which awe's effects on prosociality operate: a diminished sense of self. In their research, feelings of smallness in relation to the world mediated awe's prosocial effects. Experiencing awe made the self and its goals seem less significant, and increased the salience of, and commitment to, the needs of others.

More recent work is consistent with the diminished self-hypothesis, showing that this relationship exists across cultures (Bai et al., 2017) and that awe relates to feelings of

humility (Stellar et al., 2018). Bai et al. (2017) found that experimentally induced awe lead to greater feelings of self-diminishment across both individualistic and collectivist cultures and that this relationship explained awe's effect on prosocial engagement. Stellar et al. (2018) found not only that awe-prone individuals are viewed as more humble by their peers, and report more instances of humility in a diary over the course of two weeks, but also that experimental inductions of awe increased self-reported humility. Taken together, this work reveals how awe functions to fold individuals into a larger collective. One study supports the possibility that awe also increases devotion and commitment to powerful others within a group (cf. Bai et al., 2017). Participants in this study felt lower status compared to awe-inspiring others, and reported increased loyalty to, willingness to sacrifice for, and positive views of ingroup members. These results are consistent with portrayals of awe as eliciting feelings of low power and submission (e.g., in religious epiphanic experiences).

Though awe, and other self-transcendent emotions, are typically considered to be a subset of positive emotions, awe is unique in that it can be colored by feelings of fear (Keltner & Haidt, 2003). Though negative awe experiences are relatively rare compared to positive variants (cf. Shiota et al., 2007) it may be that they are particularly conducive to eliciting feelings of a diminished self. Being in the presence of something larger and more powerful than the self might be an effective means of triggering the kinds of self-transcendence that motivates prosocial behavior. Only a few studies have focused on threat-based variants of awe (Gordon et al., 2017), but what they have found is consistent with this possibility. Specifically, threat-based awe evokes feelings of powerlessness. This will be an active area of future research into the emotion.

Awe as an Epistemic Emotion

Epistemic emotions are defined by their relation to knowledge, and have been studied in a variety of ways with respect to processes associated with understanding (e.g., attention, exploration, and explanation-seeking). But the relationship between these states has thus far been ambiguous, with researchers either using the terms interchangeably or defining certain states as blends or variants of others. Though researchers seem to agree that all these emotions are triggered when gaps in our existing knowledge are made salient through violations of our expectations (Kashdan, Sherman, Yarbro, & Funder, 2013; Loewenstein, 1994; Silvia & Kashdan, 2009), and that they influence processes related to acquiring or revising that knowledge, there are important distinctions between them. Valdesolo, Shtulman, and Baron (2017) proposed a conceptual framework that identifies the need for accommodation as the feature distinguishing awe from the related states of surprise, curiosity and wonder (see Valdesolo et al., 2017, figure 1).

Surprise can be elicited when any there is a discrepancy between an existing schema and a current input (Reisenzein, Meyer, & Niepel, 2012; Schützwohl, 1998). The intensity of the experience maps directly onto the degree of unexpectedness of the eliciting

event (Stiensmeier, Pelster, Martini, & Reisenzein, 1995). But importantly, an unexpected event can be surprising even if it can be explained easily. For example, one might be surprised by family members jumping out from behind a couch at a birthday party. Experimental manipulations of surprise are consistent with this conceptualization, using simple techniques such as unannounced changes of computer stimuli to evoke the emotion (Reisenzein & Studtmann, 2007). These kinds of events do not require effortful assimilation or explanation to understand, and it is this feature that distinguishes surprise from other states like curiosity, wonder, and awe. Though some research has linked complexity of explanation for an event with intensity of surprise (Foster & Keane, 2015), this research did not measure other similar states, and work that has done so has found important distinctions in the kinds of events that elicit surprise and other epistemic emotions (e.g., Shiota et al., 2007).

If an explanation for an unexpected event is not obvious, and an effortful causal search is required in order to assimilate information, then the emotional state generated by the event is best described as curiosity or wonder. Curiosity and wonder are conceptually similar emotional states, characterized by not only the presence of an unexpected event but also the salience of a gap in current knowledge and a desire and need to acquire more information in order to explain that event. Experimental inductions of curiosity map onto this definition, the most common of which is presenting trivia questions that participants cannot answer but may desire to know the answer (Gruber, Gelman, & Ranganath, 2014; Kang et al., 2009). No empirical work has studied wonder per se, though the term has been used in composite scales of awe (Saroglou, Buxant, & Tilquin, 2008), and it is often used interchangeably with *curiosity* in language to refer to a positively valenced approach state geared toward acquiring knowledge (e.g., "I am curious about," "I wonder about").

Curiosity and wonder do not require the accommodation (or restructuring) of existing mental structures in order to make sense of an event. They are thought to be evoked only by relatively minor violations of expectations, while violations that represent major threats to understanding either evoke fear-like aversive reactions (Hebb & Hebb, 1949; Loewenstein, 1994) or are simply ignored because of an inability to assimilate the new information into existing mental structures (Chinn & Brewer, 2001).

Awe is triggered by an unexpected event, like surprise, and involves the salience of a gap in knowledge and a desire to acquire more information, like curiosity and wonder, but it also entails an inability to assimilate information into existing mental structures and a resulting need for accommodation. Distinct from curiosity and wonder, awe seems to be evoked by major violations of expectations that, while they can evoke feelings of uncertainty and confusion, also motivate explanation-seeking via a need for cognitive accommodation. Consistent with this conceptualization, awe can be both positively or negatively valenced and can be characterized by either approach or avoidance motivations (Keltner & Haidt, 2003), likely depending on individual differences in constructs, such as the need for cognitive closure and openness to experience (Shiota et al., 2007)

or perceptions of threat or great power in the awe-evoking stimulus. A growing body of empirical literature supports this conceptual definition of awe, and it is the accommodative component of the awe experience that distinguishes it from other epistemic emotions.

Of central importance to understanding awe as an epistemic emotion is its relationship to feelings of uncertainty. Uncertainty, which is generally a negative psychological state, results from failures of assimilation (Keltner & Haidt, 2003), and research suggests that the desire to reduce this uncertainty constitutes the main motivation behind cognitive accommodation. For instance, Shiota et al. (2007) found a correlation between dispositional awe-proneness (example item: "I often feel awe") and the need for cognitive closure. Specifically, awe-prone individuals were less likely to demonstrate such a need, suggesting that individuals who chronically experience awe are more comfortable with uncertainty. Griskevicius, Shiota, and Neufeld (2010) found a complementary effect showing that experimentally manipulated awe leads to increased feelings of uncertainty.

These studies also showed that awe leads to more systematic cognitive processing and that this relationship is mediated by feelings of uncertainty—a result interpreted as demonstrating that feelings of uncertainty motivate a drive for increased understanding. Indeed, while other positive emotions tend to increase reliance on heuristics and stereotypes when processing novel information (Griskevicius et al., 2010), awe is unique in that it does the opposite: it motivates systematic processing of information geared toward understanding and explaining the awe-inducing event. In short, feelings of uncertainty motivate a drive for increased understanding as a means of accommodating novel information.

Building from this work, Valdesolo and Graham (2014) and Valdesolo, Park, and Gottlieb (2016) directly tested whether awe would increase explanation-seeking and whether feelings of uncertainty might represent the motivational force behind this effect. They did so in the distinct domains of scientific and supernatural thought. On their surface, scientific and supernatural thought offer competing explanations for natural events (Preston & Epley, 2009), but research in anthropology (Frazer, 1922) and psychology (Rutjens, van der Pligt, & van Harreveld, 2010) suggests that they stem from the same underlying motivation: the need to explain, predict, and control the natural world (Preston, 2011; Shtulman & Lombrozo, 2016). A large body of literature has shown that explaining events via either religious frameworks (Kay, Whitson, Gaucher, & Galinsky, 2009) or scientific frameworks (Rutjens, van Harreveld, van der Pligt, Kreemers, & Noordewier, 2013) can buffer against the aversive state of uncertainty, and, consistent with that literature, Valdesolo and Graham (2014) found that awe increased affinity for supernatural explanations as a function of how strongly it raised feelings of uncertainty. Similarly, Valdesolo et al. (2016) found that the effect of awe on attraction to either religious explanations or scientific explanations depends on preexisting explanatory commitments. Individual differences in theism moderated the effect of awe on the kind of explanations to which participants were attracted. Other empirical work is consistent with this finding, showing that manipulations of awe can increase reported spirituality (Van

Cappellen & Saroglou, 2012), and that its effects on spirituality can in turn influence self-transcendence (Yang, Hu, Jing, & Nguyen, 2018).

Taken together, this work shows how awe motivates explanation-seeking as a function of its relation to uncertainty, and points to the possibility that the need for accommodation that accompanies awe experiences may influence explanation-seeking and meaning-making in ways that are unique from other epistemic emotions. Specifically, awe might be particularly conducive in promoting the kind of deeply engaged learning that education researchers consider to be most transformative. Researchers distinguish between easy, run-of-the-mill learning ("knowledge enrichment") and learning that is more effortful and protracted ("knowledge restructuring" or "conceptual change"). While other epistemic emotions might be equally effective in promoting the former, awe's relationship to the need for cognitive accommodation suggests a unique pathway to deep learning and, consequently, flourishing.

Conclusion

You can't always be in awe of someone's talent, living with them.

—*Yoko Ono*

The enemy of awe is the absence of limitations. If information can be easily assimilated into existing mental structures, then the experience of the emotion is extinguished. We must be faced with something we are not equipped to understand and explain. When the magician reveals her trick, the audience's uncertainty fades, along with their experience of awe. When the process of creation is revealed, genius can seem ordinary, as appears to have been the case with Yoko Ono and John Lennon. The content and form of the arts, and the ideas embedded in the humanities, are uniquely capable of triggering awe. These domains play with the limits of our understanding and expectations. They transport us to previously unimaginable places and confront us with ideas that challenge the very basis of our knowledge about the world. Awe propels inquiries in these domains forward by motivating exploration and understanding, and contributes to well-being and flourishing via both its self-transcendent and epistemic effects.

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CHAPTER

18 The Role of Reflection in Transformative Learning: Staff and Student Experiences

Camille Kandiko Howson *and* Saranne Weller

Abstract
In the humanities, reflection is often a tacit practice, and more explicit strategies for engaging and scaffolding reflection can be used. This chapter draws on data from three studies in the humanities that use innovative pedagogical practices, including concept mapping, critical reading, and co-development to evidence reflection. These studies in Classics, history, English, and other humanities fields integrate activities of staff and students, bringing perspectives together and encouraging them to consider the educational experience from other viewpoints. Engaging in such activities can trigger critical thinking and critical reflection, and such reflective practices can act as a mechanism for transformational learning, which enables a sense of agency, intellectual and emotional growth, and flourishing.

Key Words: reflection, transformative learning, concept mapping, co-development, student engagement, pedagogy, threshold concepts

In his seminal 1984 report for the *National Endowment for the Humanities*, William Bennett recalled Kant's famous four questions: What can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope? and What is the human being? (1963, p. 538) as the essence of the humanities. Three decades on, questions about how to effectively teach and learn to address such questions remain a cause for concern. For students to be able to engage in dialogue with the humanities, they need to reflect on written, spoken, and non-literary texts and works. Through this process of personalizing their learning, and through reflecting on Kant's questions, they may become transformed themselves, developing a greater sense of self-awareness, self-efficacy, and purpose, bedrocks of flourishing and well-being.

Introduction

Reflection "is a deliberate and conscientious process that employs a person's cognitive, emotional and somatic capacities to mindfully contemplate on past, present or future (intended or planned) actions in order to learn, better understand and potentially improve

future actions" (Harvey, Coulson, & McMaugh, 2016, p. 9) and in an educational context "can be understood as a mechanism by which experience is transformed into learning" (Kandiko, Hay, & Weller, 2013, p. 80). Reflection is a broad term in education studies, used as "a noun, a verb, an adjective, a process and/or an outcome" (Rogers, 2001, p. 40), across various levels (Ryan, 2013) and fields of study (Kreber & Castleden, 2009). Yet while "soft" humanities disciplines such as English, history, or philosophy are more likely than sciences to be oriented toward "student character development" (Neumann, 2001, p. 137), that is, an outcome of student critical reflection on personal experience and perspective, the process of reflection is more likely to be recognized as fundamental in health and social care professions education and much harder to build explicitly into the curriculum of non-practice-based programs such as the humanities (Smith, 2011). However, the placement of reflection in summative assessments can lead to emotional performativity, sidestepping the intended transformational learning (Macfarlane & Gourlay, 2009).

The challenge to embed reflection into non-practice-based disciplines is evidenced in the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Subject Benchmark Statements that are designed to define the scope and nature of the disciplines at undergraduate and some postgraduate levels in the UK system. In a practice-based discipline such as Education Studies, the statement is explicit that graduates will demonstrate the "ability to reflect on their own and others' value systems" and "locate and justify a personal position in relation to the subject" (QAA, 2019a, p. 11). Likewise, in the statement for Social Work, reflection is one of four fundamental learning processes whereby "a student reflects critically and evaluatively on past experience, recent performance, and feedback, and applies this information to the process of integrating awareness (including awareness of the impact of self on others) and new understanding, leading to improved performance" (QAA, 2019d, p. 19).

Conversely, the statement for Philosophy defines reflection only within a set of generic skills as an outcome of studying the discipline ("reflect clearly and critically on oral and written sources") (QAA, 2019c, p. 8). Similarly, for students graduating with a degree defined in the History of Art, Architecture and Design, the capacity to "reflect on one's own learning" is one of a number of generic intellectual skills rather than positioned as being central to the nature of learning the discipline (QAA, 2019b, p. 10). For Tay et al. (2018), reflectiveness in the arts and humanities is hypothesized as a fundamental mechanism for generating the positive and long-lasting outcomes of human growth. Yet while practice-based disciplines explicitly locate reflection as central to the imperative of changing as a person in the process of becoming, say, an educator or social worker, the capacity to reflect on experience, values, and perspective is only peripheral to what it means to become a graduate of philosophy or history. For example, in reviewing teaching and learning in history, Timmins, Vernon, and Kinearly (2005) suggest that while "reflexivity" is a "gateway to the serious study of history" (p. 19), few institutions develop this learning experience explicitly.

This chapter argues that in the humanities, reflection is often a tacit practice and that more explicit strategies for engaging and scaffolding reflection can be used to enhance it as a mechanism for transformational learning, which enables a sense of agency, intellectual and emotional growth, and flourishing.

Transformational Learning

Reflection is part of engaging in the teaching and learning process. Transformation can be an outcome of the process of critical reflection and critical self-reflection (Mezirow, 1991). Critical reflection is a "claim for autonomy, for personhood and for self-actualization" (Barnett, 1997, p. 94). The agential and transformative potential of reflection is manifested through creative exploration and discovery (Brockbank & McGill, 1998), a foundation of study in the humanities. Transformative learning is "a deep, structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions" (Transformative Learning Centre, 2004, 2nd paragraph), drawing on the work of Habermas (1984) and Freire (1970, 1973). "It is the kind of learning that results in a fundamental change in our worldview as a consequence of shifting from mindless or unquestioning acceptance of available information to reflective and conscious learning experiences that bring about true emancipation" (Simsek, 2012, p. 201).

> . . . transformation can lead developmentally toward a more inclusive, differentiated, permeable, and integrated perspective and that, insofar as it is possible, we all naturally move toward such an orientation. *This is what development means in adulthood.* . . . A strong case can be made for calling perspective transformation the central process of adult development. (Mezirow, 1991, p. 155)

It is important to consider the content and the process of reflection. Content focuses on the information upon which students reflect and the process of reflection on the mechanisms for doing so. Transformative learning has been widely used as a theory and practice in educational research, capturing outcomes on spirituality (Tolliver & Tisdell, 2006), sustainability (Moore, 2005), civic education (Kreber, 2016), and global connectedness (Lehtomäki, Moate, & Posti-Ahokas, 2016).

Meaning-making through critical reflection, triggering transformative learning (Mezirow, 1990), has been widely evidenced through many pedagogical practices, including team-based learning (Michaelsen, Knight, & Fink 2004), reading fiction (Hoggan & Cranton, 2015), experiential learning (Harvey, Coulson, & McMaugh 2016), service-learning (Bamber & Hankin, 2011; Kiely 2005), and peer mentorship (Preston, Ogenchuk, & Nsiah 2014). Such activities and actions lead to changes in frames of reference: "sets of fixed assumptions and expectations (habits of mind, meaning perspectives, mindsets)" (Mezirow, 2003, pp. 58–59). For Ryan (2013), the failure to teach learners how to reflect and scaffold their reflection in disciplinary pedagogy will ultimately lead to superficial outcomes that have little transformational impact. This highlights the

importance of diversity and differentiation in pedagogical practices and the need to go beyond teaching content with the expectation that learners will be reflective in response to explicitly developing the students' awareness of their frames of reference and how these can support successful learning.

Reflection and Transformation in the Humanities

The tacit nature of reflective activities in the humanities means that many of the personally transformative outcomes from learning in the disciplines are not made explicit. We use the outcomes from three research projects set in humanities fields which through different approaches explore innovative pedagogical activities to draw out what students, and staff, gain from reflecting. These longitudinal studies provided opportunities for reflection and for any change in perception to be captured, showing the possibilities for transformative learning to occur through such practices. All three studies were based at an urban research-intensive university in the United Kingdom, working with early-career staff and early-years undergraduate students in humanities departments.

Concept Mapping in Classics

Concept mapping was used to collect data to assess students' learning experiences over time. Students were asked to create concept maps at the beginning, midpoint, and end of a university Classics course. Concept mapping as developed by Novak (1998) has been widely used to visualize, measure, and assess learning. Concept mapping is based on a hierarchical structuring of knowledge, with concepts linked to form propositional statements. Concept mapping can be used as a research and pedagogical tool. How students' personal understandings are constituted and how understanding corresponds with achievement are among the most important issues for higher education. Fundamentally, learning is about change in personal understanding (Jarvis, 2006), but how personal understandings change are rarely visualized through a university course.

Findings from the study have been previously reported (Kandiko et al., 2013). This research identified the use of concept mapping as a reflective tool for externalizing personal understanding in a dialogic model and explored the development of the relationship between public and personal learning through reflection. The study found that concept maps can be the beginning of a reflective dialogue with the public texts of teaching, students' personal understanding, and the teacher, and identified concept mapping as a vehicle for visualizing reflective learning. "By the end of the course, the students' maps showed a personal understanding and an engagement with the discipline through the concentration and development of an argument . . . through continual processes of rehearsal, revision and reflection among theory, argument and debate" (pp. 76–77).

This method uses semi-graphic methods to externalize and structure verbal explanations of personal understanding in a dialogical fashion (Bakhtin, 1981), since it facilitates successive rounds of internalization and external representation through dialogue with the

self and with others. Findings indicate that maps can be used as learning and discussion tools, combining the simultaneous facilitation of internal and external dialogue in disciplinary contexts. They enable the simultaneous development of personal understanding and external representation of ideas that are appropriately contextualized and discipline specific. And they allow individuals to represent and self-prompt for explanation and development of their personal understanding in dialogue with the self or with others. In this study, the teacher identified greater student creativity and transformation of understanding in the mid-term maps, as the final maps were more directed toward the final assessment exams and essays, highlighting the importance of how reflective exercises are embedded within the curriculum for directing student learning.

This method of facilitated reflection through mapping provided pedagogical outcomes for both the teacher and the students. The teacher was able to gain insights into students' progression of understanding during the course, rather than having to wait until the final assignment at the end of the module. Furthermore, the role and timing of the assessment in relation to students' approaches to learning were illuminated through the mapping exercise. Students showed the sense of self-awareness of the educational process in their strategic approach to refining their argument to match the assessment. The mapping showed students' creativity in their thinking during the course, evidencing personal reflection with the texts.

Reading in the Humanities

The capacity to read texts critically to identify both author and multiple reader points of view and frames of reference is fundamental to the practice of the humanities. This is usually achieved through an apprenticeship pedagogy whereby the learners "observe" the performance of these reflective practices by their teachers in lectures and seminars and engage in this through their participation in dialogue with their peers to explore and test out their interpretations. Yet ultimately, as discussed in a comparative study of student and lecturer acts of reading by Weller (2010), the conceptualization of what criticality is and how it is performed significantly diverges between experienced lecturers and their novice student readers. In this study, students and their lecturers in American Studies, Comparative Literature, and Theology participated in semi-structured interviews about their disciplinary practices and articulated their differing understandings of what it meant to read critically. For the lecturers, their understanding of texts was palimpsestic, with multiple readings, interpretations, and lenses overlying each other in ways that they could consciously visualize and manipulate as expert readers. Conversely, their students reported a more linear and temporal perspective, with an understanding of the practice of critical reading as seeking to master the capacity to determine which of the different readings of the text over time was in fact the "correct" reading of the text.

In analyzing the student strategies, Weller (2010) argues that "in circumscribing different readings as the expression of 'opinions' or the adopting of 'angles' from which to

perceive the text, students evade the necessity to determine the interrelationship between different, sometimes contradictory, critical accounts of a text" (p. 95). This is also to evade the fundamental practices of the discipline founded on the process of critical reflection. It is only in being able to recognize that "rather than seeing their encounter with a discipline as an all-or-nothing acquisition of an 'object'" (Anderson & Hounsell, 2007, p. 467), students have to identify their own and others' repeated textual encounters as experiential practice moments that are central to the development of their disciplinary identity. It is that experience of a text in a fixed moment in time that constitutes the "practice" that is the focus for reflection and evaluation for learners. Analysis of the experience and the perspectives on that experience are comparable to reflecting on practice in clinical or classroom settings for healthcare or education students. In revisiting that experience or evaluating the perspectives that they have brought to understanding that experience, students in the humanities subjects can put under scrutiny the values that have shaped that time-bounded first or second encounter with a text and the point of view or frames of reference and make them subsequently open to change.

Reflective Practices in English and History

This project evaluated a model of student-engaged educational development through reflection by new teaching staff and students on the role of students in the educational development and enhancement process, and the impact on identity and power relations (Kandiko Howson & Weller, 2016). In this study, students were paired with a new lecturer. Each student led a teaching observation, with one new lecturer participating on a development course, facilitated by an experienced educational developer with the aim to engage in collaborative dialogue about observed teaching practice. The students also participated in one program seminar linked to the observation activities. Students, new lecturers, and developers were asked to create concept maps facilitated by the researchers at each stage of the process (before, during, and after interventions) to elicit conceptions of teaching and learning "expertise" and the role of "student voice" in learning and teaching enhancement.

This approach provides benefits for teacher reflective practice and professional learning (Cook-Sather, 2008) and, for students, can provide a transformational lens to consider their own agency and responsibilities toward their learning. Student participation in enhancement activities with faculty is a threshold concept—a "conceptual gateway" that leads to a transformed view or understanding (Meyer & Land, 2006) for both staff and students (Werder, Thibou, & Kaufer 2012). Kandiko Howson and Weller (2016) reported on the distinctive perspective that students can bring through reflecting on the education process and engaging in dialogue about it. The new lecturer identified how students, with their fresh perspective, could "react emotionally" to the teaching they observe, and that the experience of receiving feedback helped build confidence in new lecturing

staff. Students found that the reflective exercise allowed them to think creatively, to be innovative, and to develop coping skills and personal responsibility.

Student engagement in educational development offered an alternative model of student feedback which operates under an "ethics of care" moral framework (Bozalek et al., 2014). It provides evidence of the importance of "critical-dialectical discourse" for transformative learning to occur, which can lead to development of metacognitive skills (Mezirow 2003). However, expectations from both students and staff about the appropriate role for students in the development process limited the possibilities for students to be agents of transformative change beyond their own experience. As with the study of critical reading discussed earlier, student perspectives on practice were framed by both students and lecturers as specific and personal expressions of points of view, rather than as opportunities for abstraction, critique, and change through reflection on the observation of disciplinary practices.

Discussion

The three studies together identify the importance of the tacit and undervalued element of reflection in the humanities disciplines and how vital it is that students and teachers develop reflection as the basis for transformative learning to evolve disciplinary ways of thinking and practicing. It is reflection, or becoming capable of reflection, that constitutes the "disorienting dilemma" for students in the subjects (Mezirow, 1991). Concept mapping and metaphoric visualization enable learners to stand outside the discipline and see it more explicitly in terms of ways of thinking and practicing. Moreover, it shows how some of the personal and internalized ways of seeing and describing within humanities disciplinary contexts become visible in a dialogical mapping-record, even when they remain largely opaque to other assessment methods.

This issue has important bearing for the future reflective assessment methodologies, but it is also important for the development of Threshold Concept Theory (Meyer & Land, 2006) since it means that the "specific lenses" or "windows on a disciple" can be visualized. Together, these studies show that reflection and reflective thinking can be seen as a threshold concept in humanities subjects, indicating that once it is learned, it cannot be unlearned and that the process of learning it not always clear. This indicates the need to make this tacit practice more visible, identifiable, and knowable.

The three studies highlight the role of reflection in different levels of learning: (1) instrumental (Classics); (2) practical (reading) and (3) self-reflective (history). These studies show different opportunities for reflection to support communication, through mapping, feedback, and dialogue. This allows for "the intersubjective relation that speaking and acting subjects take up when they come to an understanding with one another about something" (Habermas, 1984, p. 392). The capacity to recognize a frame of reference is central to change for students in becoming expert in those fields, and pedagogically we need to promote learning experiences that expose students to reflection in ways these

disciplines do not always articulate. The studies highlight the need to define experiential practice in the humanities as a basis for enabling reflection and growth and to raise awareness of reflective practices, offering a process for supporting the development of reflectiveness in the humanities.

The studies identified broad outcomes from reflection and developing reflectiveness, facilitating growth and flourishing. Reflection develops a sense of agency in individuals, and personal learning raises levels of critical awareness. Through engaging in dialogue about teaching and learning, in Kandiko Howson and Weller (2016) a student identified "enjoyment and pride in their own work" as reflective practices that support them in understanding the purpose and potential benefits of their work, and found that such practice can provide "a sense of purpose and direction" (p. 58) through linking university study to their next steps in life. This also offered possibilities for career planning, as students gained insight into academic practices from a different perspective.

Reflection in pedagogy in the humanities is about bringing about transformation for students and lecturers. However, students and staff need sufficient preparation to support the reflective process (Boud & Walker, 1993). The effect of transformational learning on student and staff well-being can be multifaceted, and not necessarily positive. Critical reflection can also be troubling, due to a loss of previous sense of self and place in the world. The studies indicated ways to bring student and lecturer perspectives together to create positive pedagogical experiences, but such efforts need to be supported through professional development, which can be positioned as a transformative learning experience in itself (Cranton, 1996).

This highlights the need for more research on ways to build reflectiveness, despite it being a tacit skill in the humanities, and whether unmediated encounters with different frames of reference are sufficient for transformative learning to occur. Areas for future research include how to embed experiential practices in the curriculum and how to shift reflection from a tacit skill to something more explicit, while avoiding the pitfalls and bureaucracy found in mandated reflection exercises in other disciplines (Maben et al., 2006; Lakasing, 2013).

Conclusion

As Bennett's (1984) report noted, learning in the humanities requires good teaching and a good curriculum. As the three studies evidence, the non-practice-based ways of thinking and engaging that define humanities disciplines neglect the messy, personalized and human encounters that students have as they learn, and the potential for these to be rich experiential sources for reflection and growth. A more explicit defining of the experience of argumentation, critical reading, and pedagogic engagement, as outlined in the three studies, is fundamental if students are to integrate the personal and the disciplinary through experience and reflection in ways that are distinctive to the humanities as a practice and vital for graduates from these disciplines.

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CHAPTER

19 Creativity and Human Flourishing

Mark A. Runco

Abstract

Creativity is related to effective problem-solving, adaptability, diverse indicators of success, and various indicators of health, learning, development, and growth. This chapter examines how creativity is related to human flourishing. It ties creative problem-solving to flourishing, the idea being that it is easy to flourish when the individual can creatively solve problems. Much the same logic is used in the discussion of adaptability and creative thinking. Self-actualization is recognized because it has been associated with both creativity and the highest form of psychological health. Divergent thinking, one kind of creative thinking, is brought into the discussion because it describes how ideas may be generated, some of which are original and creative. Divergent thinking is very clearly tied to flourishing, for it allows an individual to identify the fullest range of options and possibilities. Divergent thinking is not linear and does not lead in only one direction, but instead branches out so the individual has more freedom, more latitude, and a very full set of choices which add richness to life. This chapter touches on several different ways that creativity may be associated with human flourishing.

Key Words: divergent thinking, originality, adaptation, learning, problem-solving, self-actualization, criterion problem, invention, innovation

Introduction

There are various indications that creativity is strongly related to human flourishing. Before exploring the evidence, it is necessary to focus and operationalize. The terms "creativity" and "human flourishing" must both be operationally defined. The latter is defined throughout this volume, its richness quite apparent. Several different kinds of human flourishing are discussed in this chapter. Several relationships between creativity and human flourishing are suggested by research on the arts and with artists. This research shows, for example, that the self-expression that is often a part of artwork leads to improvements in immune functioning (Pennebaker, Kiecolt-Glaser, & Glaser, 1997). On a more general level there is research showing that artists often express concerns about culture well before scientists realize that these same concerns are of any importance.

What of the term, "creativity"? It is much too ambiguous to be useful, which is why one suggestion has been to avoid the noun form of the word (i.e., creativity) and only use the

adjective "creative." That helps because it requires useful specificity. It is possible to discuss not only the creative personality, for example, but also creative products, the creative process, creative potential, creative achievement, and so on. This chapter focuses on one specific facet of creativity, namely creative thinking. Most of what is covered involves one particular approach to creative thinking, namely divergent thinking.

The key question here is therefore, how is creative thinking related to human flourishing? One way of answering this is to consider all of the benefits of creative thinking that have been acknowledged in the research, most of which with empirical support. Creative thinking is, for instance, related to effective problem-solving, adaptability, diverse indicators of success, and various indicators of health, learning, development, and growth. These are easy to associate with human flourishing, and each is tied to creative thinking.

Before diving into the specific benefits of creative thinking for human flourishing, one more thing should be said about wording. There is a clear benefit to avoiding the general noun of creativity and a benefit to focusing on creative thinking, but there is also a trade-off which must be acknowledged. This is the trade-off involving certainty and generalizability. It is analogous to the trade-offs discussed when comparing (a) laboratory research, where there is experimental control and where causes and effects can be isolated, but where generalizations to the natural environment are lacking; versus (b) naturalistic research, where there can be no control but, largely for that reason, results do generalize to life outside of the laboratory. In the present case, clear observations and associations with human flourishing are possible by focusing on creative thinking, but in the natural environment, thinking does not work in isolation. Creative thinking depends on mood, affect, attitude, and various meta-cognitive conditions. These will be identified, when possible, throughout this chapter.

Flourishing through Creative Problem-Solving, Health, and Adaptability

If we assume that effective problem-solving contributes to human flourishing, and effective problem-solving is associated with creative thinking, it follows that creative thinking is associated with human flourishing. As a matter of fact, this may be the easiest relationship to support of all of the associations mentioned earlier. Creativity has been related to effective problem-solving for decades (Guilford, 1968; Parnes, 1999; Osborne, 1953; Torrance, 1995). This is not to say that problem-solving is synonymous with creative thinking. Sometimes creative thinking is expressed in *problem finding*, which by definition occurs before there is any problem to solve (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi, 1976; Runco, 1994). Creative thinking may occur as a kind of playfulness, where there is no obstacle or goal (as there always is when problem-solving), or as a kind of self-expression which can be proactive rather than reactive. Problem-solving is always reactive. From the other angle, sometimes problem-solving is not creative. A solution that has been used before might be recalled, for example, so a problem is solved without originality, and originality is a requirement for creativity (Runco & Jaeger, 2012).

In short, creative thinking is sometimes used for problem-solving, but not always, and some problem-solving is creative, but some is not. Creative thinking and problem-solving overlap but are not one and the same thing. When creative thinking is associated with problem-solving, it tends to make it more effective. This is not to say that it makes it faster or even more efficient. Consider, for example, the problem-solving technique known as *satisficing*. This technique involves accepting the first marginally adequate solution. No other solutions or options are considered. This is a fast method for problem-solving, and efficient if the only consideration is time, but it is nearly the opposite of creative problem-solving, which tends to take time (Gruber, 1981; Runco & Cayirdag, 1999). Frequently, time is required for incubation (i.e., time away from the problem), though sometimes it is involved with the collection of information or, very probably, for the exploration of alternative solutions. Only by considering a large number of options can original and superior options be found. One line of research supporting this involves remote associates (Mednick, 1962). This confirms that the best solutions are found only after the common (and unoriginal) ones are depleted. It takes time to find a remote associate.

When creative thinking is used to solve problems, the individual or group may flourish—or at least take a step in that direction. That is in part because problems can deplete resources and distract an individual such that mindfulness and other manifestations of the quality of life are unlikely. Maslow (1973) and Rogers (1959) seemed to hold this view when they reported that creative individuals tend to be self-actualized. The explanation is that self-actualization is not possible if more basic needs are unmet. You might say that self-actualization is difficult if there are problems meeting basic needs. True, self-actualization and creativity also share things like spontaneity and self-acceptance (honesty). They may in fact be inextricable—at least that was Maslow's final conclusion about self-actualization and creativity.

Note that the discussion here made a transition from the association of creative thinking with problem-solving to creative thinking and health, or at least self-actualization, which is often viewed as the epitome of psychological health. There is also evidence that creative thinking is associated with not just psychological health, but also physical health (Runco & Richards, 1997). The interesting thing here is that it may be the process of creative thinking, and in particular the self-expressive nature of certain creative acts, that contributes to physical health (Pennebaker, Kiecolt-Glaser, & Glaser, 1997). Impressively, the measurement of physical health in this line or research involves T-cells, objectively counted from bloodwork. Individuals who have regular opportunities to express themselves, even in something as simple as a journal, show improved immune functioning.

Before making another transition, it should be noted that research also relates creativity (but not necessarily creative thinking) to societal health (Simonton, 1997). It is not much of jump from there to demonstrations of how creative thinking (i.e., the generation of original ideas) is related to creative economies, and in both cases (i.e., societal health and creative economies) it is easy to see the connection to human flourishing. Creative

economies involve professional expressions of creativity, and surely it is a good thing if individuals within a particular society have regular opportunities to generate ideas and express their creativity. If avocational creativity is good for people, which it seems to be (Richards & Runco, 1997), very likely having opportunities for creativity at work would be just as good—and maybe better. If creativity is a part of work, there is some assurance that the beneficial opportunities will be regular and predictable. Creative economies are defined in terms of the industries and professions involved (Florida, 2004; Runco et al., 2016). More will be said about societal flourishing and creativity in the following.

Creative thinking was connected to adaptability early in this chapter, and not just to effective problem-solving and health. The assumption about adaptability and human flourishing is as intuitively obvious and as easy to defend as the assumption about problem-solving and human flourishing. Both problem-solving and adaptability allow individuals and groups to avoid challenges and disturbances. There is a clear difference between problem-solving and adaptability. Simplifying some, in the former there is a goal and an obstacle, and the obstacle is removed or circumvented by the solution(s). In the latter, on the other hand, the individual or group changes—that is, adapts—so the problem or obstacle may not be eliminated but is no longer a disturbance or distraction. This distinction between problem-solving, where a solution is found and an obstacle outside of the individual is removed, versus adaptation, where the person him- or herself changes—is simplistic in that there are situations that do not fall neatly into one or the other category. Consider in this regard the case described by Wittgenstein (1921/1974). He referred to the "disappearance of the problem." This describes a situation where there is a problem "out there," but the individual eventually internalizes it because it is so enticing, and then the problem becomes something that is not something to be solved but instead is an intrigue and a part of one's being. This logic fits nicely with research on the role of intrinsic motivation and creativity (Amabile, Goldfarb, & Brackfield, 1990; Runco, 1993, 2019) and is an example of what was promised earlier in this chapter, namely situations were creative thinking involves extra-cognitive processes, including motivation.

The Piagetian view is also relevant and in some ways fits very well with theories of creativity and adaptability. For Piaget, an individual might be challenged by some misunderstanding. This occurs when the individual's current cognitive status cannot process new information. There is *disequilibrium.* When this occurs, the individual is intrinsically motivated to adapt, which for Piaget means that information is altered such that it can be brought into one's cognitive system (i.e., information is "assimilated") and then the cognitive system can change ("accommodate") to account for the new information. Importantly, for Piaget, "to understand is to invent," the idea being that understandings are invented by individuals. They are not simply learned or found via experience. Instead, the individual must him- or herself go through the assimilation-accommodation process, the end result being an adaptation, a change in cognitive structures, and a new personally meaningful understanding of the world. A person must be intrinsically motivated to do

this, and each of us must do it for ourselves. Otherwise, understanding is superficial and will not generalize; it depends solely on memory but does not represent authentic understanding. All of this applies to the current discussion because "create" can be substituted for "invent," in which case "to understand is to create (new understandings)" (Runco, 2007). This brief discussion is relevant to adaptation but also provides one description for how creative thinking (the creation of new understandings) is related to human flourishing. Here creative thinking is necessary for understanding our experience. It underlies all authentic learning and growth, and surely learning and growth are a part of flourishing.

There are other explanations for how creativity is related to adaptation. Campbell (1960) and Simonton (2007) both used a Darwinian model to explain creativity, and Darwin's theory hinges on adaptation, though he was concerned with the adaptation of species, while Campbell and Simonton were instead interested in how individuals rather than species adapt. They described the *blind variation and selection retention* of mental elements as underlying the creative thinking of individuals. In this view, the mind generates mental elements, which are much like ideas and options, but it does so blindly. It is not teleological. Only after new mental elements are generated, much like mutations produce variations, can selection occur. Such selection leads to "survival of the fittest," which for Campbell and Simonton translated to good creative ideas and options.

There are other models describing the mechanisms underlying creative thinking (Roberts, Sternberg, Runco, Acar, Ward, Kolomyts, & Kaufman, 2021), but before turning to those other models, something more should be said about the association between creative thinking and cultural and technological advances, for these also are easy to relate to human flourishing. A few comments were offered earlier about the creative economy, but there is more to societal advance.

Societal advance often entails innovation and invention. The first of these is defined in various ways. One uses the standard definition of creativity, which recognizes both originality and effectiveness. Both are necessary for creativity. Innovation may also involve both originality and effectiveness, but it may be that the ratio is different, with originality being primary for creativity but effectiveness being primary for innovation. This view is consistent with a second definition. Here is where innovation involves *implementation.* This conception of innovation draws on a well-known stage model of the creative process (Amabile, 2019; Wallas, 1926), which has creative thinking beginning with *preparation*, and then moving to *incubation*, *illumination*, and *verification*. This four-stage process may be adequate for creative thinking, but innovation requires a fifth stage, namely implementation. A third alternative has creativity leading to things which are entirely new, while innovation instead improves on things which already existed. The electric car, for example, improved dramatically on the internal combustion automobile, but cars did exist before the electric models. Thus the process was innovation, not creativity per se.

Invention involves bringing something new into existence, and usually it is a tangible thing, not just an idea. True, Piaget was quoted earlier as believing that "to understand

is to invent," but he was not writing in English, so the translation may account for the wording. It may not seem easy to distinguish invention, innovation, and creativity, but then again there is a system in place that seems to work quite well. I am referring to the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). They have methods in place that allow good decisions about the newness of inventions. Interestingly, Simonton (2012) has used the same USPTO criteria in his suggestions for a broad definition of creativity, which he believes applies even outside of the invention process. This definition includes "non-obvious" as a criterion, to go along with newness (originality) and utility. There are other suggestions for criteria, but what is most pertinent is that both invention and innovation depend on creativity. They are not synonymous with creativity, but all patentable inventions and all useful innovations are creative. Some improve the human condition and can thus be viewed as one part of human flourishing.

Divergent Thinking

Various definitions have been offered in this chapter. It started with definitions, as well as the caveat that the focus in this chapter could be on creative thinking rather than creativity more broadly defined. So far the blind variation and selective retention model of creative thinking has been reviewed, as was the Piagetian view (with assimilation and accommodation) that allowed him to conclude that "to understand is to invent." At this point, it is useful to look at another particular model of creative cognition, namely that involving *divergent thinking* (DT). There is probably more research on divergent thinking than any other description of creative thinking, and the processes described by this corpus of research point to fairly specific mechanisms which take us a step closer to understanding how creative thinking can lead to human flourishing.

DT is a mode of thought in which numerous and diverse ideas are generated. It is best understood in contrast to the *convergent thinking* that is required by most academic tests and the IQ test. These almost entirely ask examinees to identify the one best or more conventional answer (e.g., "On which continent is Mexico?"). Convergent thinking draws mostly on memory and partly on experience. Nothing new is produced when thinking convergently. There is a question or problem, and the individual's thinking must draw from what is known and then converge on the best answer. But when thinking divergently, remote associates can be found and original ideas discovered. This is why DT is viewed as an indication of creative potential. It allows originality, and originality is a prerequisite for creativity. Divergent thinking is not synonymous with creativity, but often plays a significant role in creative cognition.

DT can be measured with open-ended tasks that allow examinees to produce pools of ideas (Runco & Mraz, 1994; Acar & Runco, 2012). That pool of ideas can then be scored for fluency (the number of ideas produced by any one individual), originality (the number of unique or statistically uncommon ideas), and flexibility (the number of conceptual categories used by the individual). Some DT tests are quite simple (e.g., "List as many uses

for a brick as you can") and others are domain specific or resemble problems that might be encountered in the natural environment. The last of these are viewed as "realistic tests of divergent thinking" and may ask a student what can be done if there is a distracting or trouble-making peer in the next desk, or what do to when homework is forgotten. Both of those are open-ended tasks, which is vital for the testing of divergent thinking. The individual must be able to generate a number of alternative ideas. Work with entrepreneurs used fairly realistic tasks based on the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) model, so they were asked four things: first about the strengths of their business, and then about the weaknesses, opportunities, and finally threats to their business.

DT is sensitive to the setting and immediate context. When testing DT, for example, it is important to avoid test-like expectations, because if examinees think the DT tasks are just like other tests (e.g., academic exams), they tend to focus on conventional ideas, as if they are going to be graded and need to produce answers that the examiner or teacher wants. If DT tasks are administered under game-like conditions, however, with plenty of time and encouragement to think playfully, examinees tend to be much more original. The same sort of thing is apparent when using DT tasks in an organization, to actually find good options or perhaps as a kind of exercise. There, too, the conditions are important, and it is best, if the objective is original thinking, to create a relaxed setting, free of evaluation, while avoiding constraint or psychological pressure.

DT tests are reasonable validity, when they are given under the right conditions. In fact, when given under the right conditions, DT tests predict real-world successes much more accurately than IQ or academic tests! Much, of course, depends on the criteria used in this kind of research. Indeed, there is a long-standing *criterion problem* in the creativity research (Paek & Runco, 2017) because it can be so difficult to measure authentic creativity, which usually involves things like spontaneity and intrinsic motivation—things which are precluded by typical tests. Recall here the idea mentioned earlier that creativity is only partly cognitive and also has motivational, attitudinal, and affective components.

One relevant investigation of the predictive validity of DT tests showed that they had quite surprising accuracy over a fifty-year period (Runco et al., 2011). Predictive coefficients were only slightly above .30, but given the time span involved, and the fact that DT only measures the cognitive contribution to creative behavior, this is quite impressive. Notably, the criterion that showed the strongest correlation with DT over the fifty-year period involved personal creativity, rather than socially recognized creative achievements. Certainly socially recognized achievements are important for society and probably are indicative of invention, innovation, and some of the advance and progress that was mentioned earlier when listing indicators of human flourishing, but so too are personal expressions of creativity quite important for the human flourishing of individuals. Think, for example, about the self-actualization related to creativity by Maslow (1973) and Rogers (1959).

The DT approach focuses specifically on ideation and the production of numerous, original, and varied ideas. Thus this chapter has narrowed the discussion, from creativity most broadly to creative cognition, to divergent thinking, and finally to ideation. This helps explain exactly how the indicators of human flourishing are related to human creativity. Consider how clearly ideation can be related to problem-solving, for example, for it is surely almost always beneficial to consider a wide range of options before choosing the solution in which to invest. As a matter of fact, DT can be viewed as the antithesis of the satisficing that was defined earlier. Admittedly there may be times when satisficing is sufficient, and it may even occasionally be the best option (e.g., when a problem is unimportant, and there are no contingencies, so any solution is adequate if it allows the individual to move on to more important things). Still, very likely just about all problem-solving will benefit from the consideration of options, which means that DT is nearly always helpful for problem-solving and any benefits that result from it.

The tie to adaptability is even clearer. There ideation plays a role in the sense that when the person is faced with a challenge and must adapt, if there are no alternatives, changes are impossible or close to it. As a matter of fact, adaptation might be defined in terms of making changes, and the alternative changes can be found via DT. To bring this point home, consider the processes underlying ideational flexibility, which was also defined earlier. When thinking flexibly, the person considers various categories and different kinds of ideas. Flexibility thus provides breadth to the alternatives that can be considered. The opposite, which can be called inflexibility but is also rigidity, implies that there is no breadth and that only one or very few different kinds of ideas are considered. It is easy to see how the options needed for adaptation would be limited when there is little or no breadth and variety to the alternatives available.

Literal Divergent Thinking and the Full Range of Possibility

Some of the more recent research on DT suggests a somewhat different take and actually offers a more qualified view of creative thinking. Interestingly, this new perspective on DT implies that creative cognition can lead to human flourishing, whether in effective problem-solving, self-actualization, adaptation, learning, or improved health—but it does not always do so.

The new approach to DT was designed to test ideas about *literal DT.* That concept was proposed because it became apparent that most tests of DT did not really always require an actual divergence of thought. The same is true of situations in the natural environment which are open-ended and which thus benefit from DT. In both cases, a person can find multiple and varied ideas by simply following one associative pathway, in a straight line, so to speak. Following one associative pathway will provide numerous ideas, and the more remote ones are likely to be more original. Yet all of them may be connected in some semantic or conceptual fashion, in which case the thinking is more linear than divergent. With this in mind, Acar and Runco (2014, 2015) set out to design a method to determine

if some people do in fact think divergently—literally divergently, where the thinking is nonlinear and truly diverges in the sense of moving in different directions. In one investigation in this series, individuals completed DT tasks and the ideas were coded using a range of dichotomies. Dichotomies were used because they were useful for checking nonlinear processes, the epitome of which was when a person thought about, say, highly moral options, but then jumped to highly immoral options. Other dichotomies used for scoring the ideas included natural versus artificial ideas, original versus conventional, malevolent versus benevolent, primary (process) versus secondary, feasible versus impractical, close versus remote, and synthetic versus nonsynthetic. Analyses of ideational output indicated that some people were in fact capable of using literal DT. Put differently, they tapped cognitive *hyperspace*: they followed one line of thought and then jumped to a very divergent line of thought, only to jump again and again. And this kind of literal DT was correlated with originality as measured by an independent criterion measure. Cognitive hyperspace is not necessarily a metaphor. There is no reason why people can't follow one line of thought, then take a perpendicular turn and follow an orthogonal line of thought, only to do so again and again and again. There are only three dimensions in physical space, but mathematics and astrophysics often describe the possibility of hyperspace in other realms, and cognition is very likely capable of it.

There are practical implications of the idea of literal DT and cognitive hyperspace. Some of those are in the area of testing, where these new ideas simply lead to more accurate assessment, and perhaps more accurate predictions of actual creative performances. Of relevance to the present discussion is the implication that creative thinking can go in any direction. Creative thinking does not always lead to practical, useful, moral, legal, and beneficial ideas. Indeed, creative thinking can be malevolent; the last few years have seen a surge in research on the *dark side of creativity* (Cropley et al., 2010; McLaren, 1993; Runco, 1993, 2010). This does suggest that conclusions about creativity and human flourishing are qualified. Creative thinking may lead to health and effective problem-solving and those other indicators that someone or some group is flourishing, but it does not always do so.

This in turn is a reminder that creative thinking is only one aspect of creativity, or what is often called the *creativity syndrome* or *creativity complex*. Mood, affect, attitude, and motivation were mentioned earlier as other facets of the same complex, and it is quite possible that someone with a capacity for DT or some other kind of creative cognition may be motivated to, say, commit suicide rather that live a long productive life. In that case, the motivation directs the creative capacity away from those things associated with flourishing. Certain values could do the same thing, as could a dark mood or a bad attitude.

It might be useful to consider the point of a chapter I wrote some years ago on adaptability. Looking at the research, it quickly became clear that an adaptable person is not necessarily creative. Sometimes adapting means fitting in and going with the crowd, in which case creativity is precluded, at least given the standard definition of creativity, which

requires originality. Originality is impossible if the person is conventional and conforming. In addition, creativity may be maladaptive. Consider in this regard creators who have been jailed (Brower, 1999; Eisenman, 1992) or otherwise punished for their creativity (e.g., Galileo). What was most important was that this review of the research showed that various developmental disturbances (e.g., loss of a parent) sometimes actually contribute to a notable creative capacity. But such disturbances and trauma do not always do so. For that reason I paraphrased the Existential philosopher Fredrich Neitzsche, who had said, "that which does not kill me makes me stronger." The wording varies some from translation to translation, but the paraphrasing fits with each of them. My conclusion about adaptability was a bit different. I wrote, "that which does not kill me can make me stronger." Tension, discord, and challenges of all sorts do not necessarily make a person stronger. They can, but not always. Apparently the same may be said about creative thinking and human flourishing.

In fact, this is another way in which the research on the dark side of creativity is relevant. I was co-editor of a volume completely devoted to the dark side; but my contrarianism led me to explore the possibility that "creativity has no dark side" (which was the title of my chapter). Of course the creative capacity is sometimes used for malevolence (e.g., computer viruses, weapons, scams), and sometimes those are quite intentional. But it is not the creative capacity that is malevolent. The creative capacity merely provides a process that gives the individual original and effective options and choices. The person's values, attitudes, and motivation direct the creative capacity in one direction (malevolence) or the other (benevolence).

Much the same may be said when considering the relationship of creative thinking and human flourishing. Indeed, the practical message offered here as a conclusion is that it is wise to invest in the creative capacity to ensure that individuals and groups have the potential to produce original and effective ideas, but to contribute to human flourishing involves other things (e.g., values, attitudes) as well. These are likely to take the creative process in one direction (beneficial) or another (destructive). If asked how to support human flourishing, I would certainly point to creativity. It plays a key role in human flourishing, even if it does not work alone and depends on other human qualities. I am for this reason pleased to have this chapter in a volume which no doubt explores many of the other contributions to human flourishing.

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CHAPTER

20

The Flourishing Congregations Project: Character Strengths Pathways to Enhance Well-Being beyond the Individual

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Abstract

Researchers in philosophy and psychology have called for an integration of the science of positive psychology with the humanities, to catalyze new avenues of flourishing throughout society. Religion, as a field within the humanities, may be well poised to be integrated with positive psychology, namely character strengths, to promote flourishing. On the other hand, religious institutions have entrenched and sacrosanct perspectives and traditions, which may preclude them from using the science to become houses of human flourishing. To explore this potential integration, the Flourishing Congregations Project was developed. The project included ten distinguished rabbis who were immersed in the science of character strengths and well-being, and were tasked with developing insights and practices to modify their High Holidays services to meaningfully impact their congregants. The chapter presents qualitative findings of this project, including examples of receptivity and barriers to change among rabbis and congregants, and broader implications across congregations and communities.

Key Words: character strength, flourishing, congregation, science of well-being, High Holidays, positive religion

Introduction

Researchers in the fields of philosophy and psychology have called for an integration of the science of positive psychology with the humanities, such that important questions regarding how to promote flourishing throughout society might be answered. As Pawelski and Tay note (2018), although scholars in positive psychology have made progress in defining, operationalizing, and assessing concepts central to the study and promotion of well-being (e.g., joy, hope and love), some of these constructs continue to lack the cultural and contextual richness experienced by individuals who express them within specific communities. Partnering with scholars in the humanities could help to capture more of the

nuanced cultural meanings of these terms. Moreover, such collaborations could also yield interventions that more successfully promote flourishing across a wide variety of contexts, the implementation of which requires deep immersion in the knowledge base about these contexts that has been generated across time, largely in the humanities (Pawelski & Tay, 2018). Religion is an area in the humanities that seems to lend itself well to being integrated with the science and practice of positive psychology toward enhancing the study and promotion of flourishing. Religious institutions were ideally created, and continue to exist, to help humanity achieve the promise that lies in the many positive qualities with which we have been imbued. Put another way, one of the central "jobs to get done" of religion, as both a field of study and practice, is to enhance human flourishing and to develop character. Moreover, religious institutions may be prime candidates for institutionalizing gains in knowledge from positive psychology to help people flourish, as both the practices and rituals promoted in them have been found to relate to well-being (e.g., prayer, VanderWeele, 2017), and millions of people are served by religious institutions throughout the world. However, the challenge in this domain is that religious institutions often have entrenched perspectives and practices that are encapsulated in a protective shell of "the sacred" as well as sacrosanct and sentimental tradition. The result is resistance—even in light of modern science—to transforming practices and rituals into interventions promoting human flourishing.

The Flourishing Congregations Project (FCP) was developed in the fall of 2016 to investigate these questions. It was hoped that through this project, religious leaders might be encouraged to more intentionally draw on the lens and tools of positive psychology to better understand which religious practices and rituals are successful (and unsuccessful) in promoting flourishing, and how some examples of practice and ritual might be further adjusted, customized, redesigned, and/or rethought to better help humanity to flourish. The lead investigators and facilitators of this project were rabbinic scholars of the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership (CLAL), and positive psychology thought leaders and psychologists working with the VIA Institute on Character, a global nonprofit whose mission is to advance the science and practice of character strengths. The specific participants in this project were ten leading rabbis in the United States from across a range of Jewish denominations (Reconstructionist, Reform, and Conservative), and two or three of their congregants. Additionally, after the first year of the project, an outside evaluator, the first author of this chapter (a psychologist with expertise in positive youth and character development), was hired to conduct an exploratory evaluation of the program. This evaluation examined if and how the project enhanced flourishing among rabbis and their congregants, and what questions might be examined in the future to contribute to the study and promotion of flourishing throughout religious congregations.

Although the rabbis and their congregants were the participants in this project, because rabbis are also scholars and serious practitioners of Judaism, they provided valuable insights and feedback about *how* to connect, integrate, and apply what they were learning

from the science of character strengths and well-being to Jewish knowledge and practice. In this way, the project and the evaluation of the project were exploratory and participatory (Fetterman, Rodríguez-Campos, Wandersman, & O'Sullivan, 2014).

In the following, this project is described in relation to the question of what psychological and behavioral processes might connect the humanities (in this case, the study and practice of Judaism) to flourishing. Prior to describing the project, research regarding how religion and flourishing are associated with one another is reviewed, and gaps in this research are articulated. In this review, we focus in particular on research regarding character science, flourishing, and religion (for additional research on flourishing and religion, see Koenig, Koenig, King, & Carson, 2012; Myers, 2018; and Newman & Graham, 2018). The methods and findings from the evaluation of this project will then be discussed in regard to this literature, and implications for future research and programming that continue to leverage the strengths provided by religious leaders and institutions (as a component of the field of religion), and for the science of positive psychology, will be described.

The Character Strengths and Flourishing Link

From the infancy of the science of positive psychology, character strengths, or positive traits, were articulated as one of the most central elements of the field (Seligman, 1999). After extensive research, six overarching virtues (Dahlsgaard, Peterson, & Seligman, 2005) and twenty-four character strengths nesting under these virtues, were articulated. This is known as the VIA Classification of character strengths and virtues and was detailed in a scholarly tome (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Since the arrival of this consensual nomenclature, over 600 studies have been published to date in basic and applied research on this VIA Classification, many showing beneficial outcomes associated with these character strengths (VIA Institute, 2019). One of the outcomes most investigated has been well-being, in which various measures of flourishing (e.g., positive relationships, accomplishment, meaning) have been positively correlated with character strengths. From early studies (Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005) to recent studies (Wagner et al., 2019), to cross-cultural work (Shimai et al., 2006), to comprehensive well-being reviews (Harzer, 2016), to direct causal work (Proyer et al., 2013) and multiple intervention studies (e.g., Gander et al., 2013), the alignment of well-being indicators and character strengths is one of the most consistent positive findings in the field of positive psychology.

In terms of character strengths and religiousness, spirituality, and related areas such as meaning, Berthold and Ruch (2014) examined those who practice their religion and those who do not. They found that those who practice their religion scored higher on the character strengths of kindness, love, hope, forgiveness, and spirituality, in addition to a more meaningful life, compared with those who have a religion but do not practice it and compared with the non-religious (Berthold & Ruch, 2014). The twenty-four character

strengths are naturally intercorrelated with one another, which includes the strength of spirituality. The top five correlations with the strength of spirituality are gratitude, hope, zest, love, and kindness (reported in Niemiec, 2018, from data collected by McGrath, 2013). There have been several studies looking at the link between character and meaning in life. The character strengths most connected with meaning in life—in a study using both self-report and other-report—were curiosity, perspective, social intelligence, appreciation of beauty/excellence, gratitude, and spirituality (Wagner et al., 2019). Other studies have also found strong connections between meaning and spirituality, gratitude, and curiosity, as well as the strengths of hope and zest (Peterson et al., 2007).

Given the diversity of the religious landscape in the United States and beyond, more research is needed that explores these potential connections *within* different religious communities, with consideration given to how being a part of a religious group that is in the minority might influence this link, as well as to how character strengths that are particularly valued within religious communities might relate to flourishing. To address this gap in the research, and in answer to the larger call to explore productive ways the science of positive psychology might bridge with the humanities, the Flourishing Congregations Project is examined in the following section.

The Flourishing Congregations Project

As described previously, the FCP was developed in the fall of 2016 as a partnership between the VIA Institute and CLAL. The project was led by two rabbinic scholars from CLAL (including the third author of this chapter), and three psychologists from the VIA Institute (including the second author of this chapter). The Project participants were ten distinguished rabbis from across the United States, who were already active in CLAL's Rabbis without Borders (RWB) and collectively represented a wide range of Jewish practice. The mission of RWB is to "use Jewish wisdom as a source of well-being for anyone anywhere" (RWB, 2021). As such, these rabbis already had strong commitments to promoting flourishing within and beyond the Jewish communities with which they worked. Nevertheless, through this project, rabbis were immersed in extensive training in the science of well-being, namely character strengths and well-being theory.

The character strengths material encompassed the latest character strengths theory, concepts, research, and best practices in helping individuals and groups. The well-being theory material stemmed largely from Seligman's (2011) theory of PERMA, an acronym for five areas of well-being that can be independently assessed and intervened upon: positive emotions, engagement, relationships (positive), meaning, and accomplishment. According to this theory, the twenty-four character strengths mentioned earlier are the pathways to each of the PERMA areas (Seligman, 2011). The science has continued to strongly support that connection (e.g., Wagner et al., 2019).

Thus, the year-long project took place from the fall of 2016 to the fall of 2017 and included a range of activities:

- Rabbis took the VIA Survey, a free, online scientifically valid measure of the twenty-four character strengths to become aware of their signature strengths. The rabbis read a central book on the practice of character strengths, *Mindfulness and Character Strengths* (Niemiec, 2014), chapters from Peterson and Seligman (2004), and peer-reviewed articles on flourishing (e.g., Seligman et al., 2005).
- Rabbis came together for a five-day training immersed in learning and experimenting with character science, PERMA theory, and discussions of integrating this knowledge with the practice of Judaism (including Jewish liturgy, wisdom, practice, and interpretation of religious texts) under the mentorship of three psychologists from the VIA Institute and the two rabbinical scholars from CLAL.
- Rabbis received an extensive Flourishing Congregations resource manual and were encouraged to continue exploring these intersections through emails and online discussion on a joint listserv as they planned for High Holidays.
- Additional follow-up involved rabbis taking part in three to four individualized coaching calls with a psychologist from the VIA Institute, focusing on their experiences of bringing the character strengths into their personal lives, their rabbinical work, and their High Holidays preparations.
- About one year following the rabbis' engagement in the project, they rolled out specific character strengths and flourishing applications for the High Holidays services in their congregation.

The culminating activity in which the rabbis engaged was applying character science to develop a wide array of insights, practices, and protocols toward a more intentional use of High Holiday worship services and activities to promote flourishing of attendees.

The High Holidays include Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, a span of ten days in the Jewish calendar devoted to repentance, or *teshuvah*, where Jews are supposed to spend time reflecting on their sins, asking for forgiveness, granting forgiveness, and resolving not to repeat their sins**.** This is typically a somber experience, though interestingly, Jewish tradition teaches that historically Yom Kippur was the happiest day of the year; the introduction of character science and positive psychology to such rituals represents a significant shift in how the High Holidays are usually approached and paradoxically a return to a more ancient psycho-spiritual flourishing sensibility. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, more Jews reportedly attend their synagogue and participate in synagogue activities in the United States than on any other days of the year.

In the second year of this project (between August 2017 and February 2018), the first author conducted the exploratory evaluation of the program, with a focus on the success of the activities the rabbis implemented. The evaluation included: (1) an in-depth review of all intervention materials; (2) semi-structured interviews with the five project leaders

regarding their experiences of the intervention and their expectations of how it might impact rabbis and congregants; (3) content analyses of interviews (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) toward identifying shared understandings of expected impacts of the project on rabbis and congregants and developing a Theory of Change that would guide the evaluation; (4) the development of a Theory of Change diagram illustrating these understandings; (5) semi-structured interviews with each of the ten rabbis regarding their experiences of the project, changes they made to High Holiday services, and other changes they experienced personally and professionally that they believed were related to their participation in the project; (6) interviews with two to three congregants from each rabbi's synagogue (n = 22) regarding their experiences of the High Holidays and, for those who were aware of it, of the Flourishing Congregations Project more generally; (7) inductive and deductive, across-case and case-based analyses of rabbi and congregant interviews toward understanding potential direct and indirect influences of the project on their lives; and, finally, (8) the development of reports presenting initial findings from the evaluation, with feedback sought from project leaders and rabbis (see Hershberg, 2018, for more information).

The Theory of Change (Figure 20.1) for this project will be presented and described in relation to the guiding theme for this section of this edited volume, that is, regarding the psychological and behavioral processes that might connect the humanities (in this case, the study and practice of Judaism) to flourishing. Then, select findings from interviews with rabbis and congregants will be presented that highlight some of the effective ways in which this intervention appeared to promote flourishing in rabbis themselves and their congregants, as well as the resistances to experiencing flourishing. Implications from this intervention for the future study and application of an approach to flourishing that draws on tools from religion and positive psychology will then be discussed.

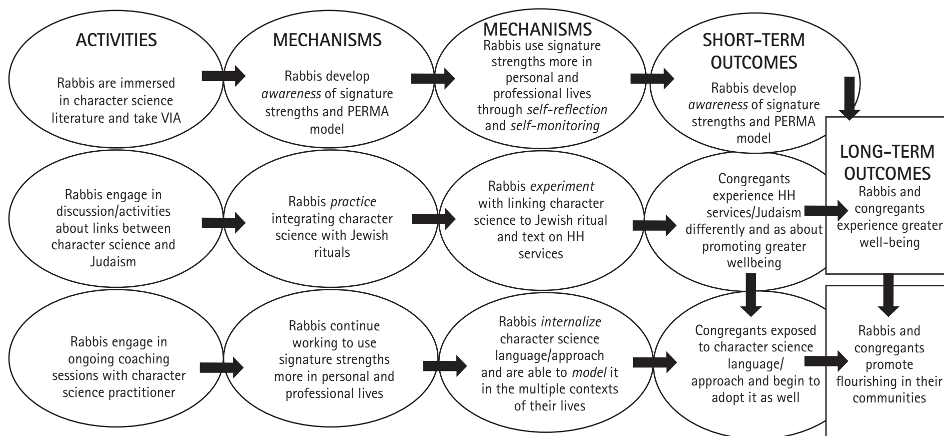

Figure 20.1 Theory of Change Guiding the Evaluation of the Flourishing Congregations Project

Theory of Change

After engaging in in-depth interviews with the five leaders involved in this project, Hershberg developed the Theory of Change diagram (Figure 20.1) to guide interviews with the ten rabbis and their twenty-two congregants (across rabbis), and initial analyses of data. This diagram depicts the main **ACTIVITIES** in which rabbis engaged; the **SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES** that leaders expected rabbis and their congregants to experience (i.e., October–December 2017); and the **LONG-TERM TERM OUTCOMES** that they thought some rabbis and congregants might experience. It was expected that some of the rabbis and congregants would reference these long-term outcomes in interviews, but that more time and measurement would likely be required to document them across all or even the majority of participants. Also illustrated are the potential **MECHANISMS** or processes through which the training and activities in which rabbis engaged as part of their participation in the Flourishing Congregations Project were expected to impact them and their congregants. Each of these components is described in the following.

Theory of Change Guiding the Evaluation of the Flourishing Congregations Project

The major activities rabbis engaged in throughout the FC project were: (1) immersion in the character science literature; (2) taking the VIA Survey and discussing their findings regarding their signature strengths with their fellow rabbis and the project leaders; (3) engaging in ongoing discussion among rabbis in the cohort and the project leaders regarding their plans and attempts to integrate character science and Jewish liturgy; and (4) several coaching sessions with a character strengths expert.

Based on these activities, it was anticipated that rabbis would engage in several processes that would yield beneficial personal and professional outcomes. These processes were described as (1) developing a greater *awareness* of their signature strengths, which would then help rabbis (2) *use* their strengths more in their personal and professional lives. It was expected that *strength use* would be accompanied by *self-reflection* and *self-monitoring*, which would, in turn, enable rabbis to develop *more awareness* of when they were or were not using their strengths in optimal ways or were underusing or overusing them; strengths overuse/underuse are important dynamics of how character strengths come across in context (Niemiec, 2019). Such awareness would also be accompanied by an *ability to spot strengths* in others, including family, coworkers, and congregants and the ability to use character strengths as a hermeneutic tool in analyzing religious stories and texts. Importantly, these activities and processes were informed by the literature on positive psychology, which has shown that strength awareness and strengths use are essential processes in creating a flourishing life; one representative sample of thousands of workers found that those in the highest quartile of strengths awareness were nine times more likely to be flourishing than those in the lowest quartile of strengths awareness, while those in the highest quartile of reported strengths use were eighteen times more likely to be flourishing than those in the lowest reported quartile of strengths use (Hone et al., 2015).

Rabbis also had the task of making changes to High Holidays services, drawing from their participation in the FCP. It was expected that through (3) practicing integrating character science with Jewish ritual at the intensive trainings, rabbis upon returning to their synagogues would develop a plan for High Holidays and, for (4) linking character science to Jewish liturgy and the High Holiday experience specifically. Finally, through (5) continued engagement in the process of using their strengths in their personal and professional lives, it was expected that rabbis would eventually (6) internalize the character science language and approach and begin to more seamlessly use it in the various contexts of their lives. Here, too, rabbis were expected to draw on their wisdom and experiences to promote greater well-being in their congregants through the integration of Jewish knowledge and character strengths applications.

Some of the major outcomes that resulted from these activities and processes are depicted in Figure 20.1. They include (1) *more frequent strength use* in personal and professional lives, which would also lead to (2) *enhanced personal and professional relationships.* In addition, after applying character science to High Holiday services (and to other Jewish activities), it was anticipated that (3) congregants might experience High Holiday services specifically, and "Jewish" more generally, as connected to and promoting flourishing or well-being. Through such experiences, project leaders hoped some congregants might (4) come to use the character science language or approach in their own lives. Finally, leaders also hoped that these activities, processes, and short-term outcomes might eventually lead individual congregants to see and experience "Jewish" as a discernible path to greater flourishing and that such flourishing—and the possibility of "Jewish" being a path of human flourishing—would ripple throughout the congregation and communities more broadly.

Findings from the Flourishing Congregations Project

The analyses of interviews with rabbis and congregants yielded initial evidence indicating that the FCP positively influenced participant rabbis and congregants in several ways. Findings were grouped into three main categories: (1) Impacts on Rabbis, (2) Potential Impacts on Congregants, (3) Case-Based Findings. The first two categories of findings were derived from across-case analyses, that is, from looking at interviews with all rabbis, collectively, and then with all congregants. The third category of findings was derived from considering each rabbi and his/her congregants as a unique case unto itself.

The FCP appeared to positively influence rabbis in a variety of ways. Through taking and discussing the VIA Survey with one another and the leaders, rabbis reported (a) becoming more *aware* of their signature strengths (what their strengths were and when they were or were not using them), and of the strengths of others, which enabled them *to better understand self and others*, including family members, coworkers, and congregants. Rabbis (and some of their congregants) also described this enhanced understanding as leading to *more resources for resolving conflicts* when they occurred, including those related to minor

personality differences among board members, to more significant challenges, such as those regarding the future directions of synagogues. Rabbis also reported that (b) their sharpened awareness of signature strengths, more strengths use, and strengths-spotting appeared to *enhance their personal and professional relationships*. As anticipated, almost all rabbis also reported that the project (c) provided them with a new framework, or lens, to use when approaching Jewish liturgy, which appeared to help them implement changes to High Holidays services and/or to other synagogue activities, including board meetings and educational programs that made these experiences more meaningful. Unanticipated findings were that through implementing these changes, rabbis seemed to become "more accessible" to their Congregants, and appeared "more grounded." Additionally, most rabbis described developing a (d) new *sense of purpose from this project*, which appeared to be enhancing their daily work with their congregants. Examples of these findings, and corresponding example excerpts from or about rabbis, are presented in the **online supplement**.

There is also some initial evidence that the FCP positively impacted congregants through influencing the personal and professional development of rabbis. In a few cases, individual congregants did appear to *experience greater well-being* (i.e., flourishing) through changes rabbis made to services and synagogue activities. In addition, some congregants described these changes and/or activities as promoting flourishing throughout their communities/congregations more broadly. Examples of impacts on congregants came to the fore in descriptions from congregants and some rabbis of changes and/or activities rabbis created and implemented around High Holidays that integrated Jewish liturgy and character science, such as the messages and workshops on character strengths integrated into the month of Elul, the month prior to the High Holidays devoted to preparing for the High Holidays. In one of the most inspiring cases, for example, a congregant described how one such workshop changed her life by allowing her to leverage her newly identified strengths of optimism and hope. Several rabbis also described making significant changes to the educational programs they provided to youth in their community, drawing from character science and positive psychology.

Rabbis and some congregants also described specific changes/additions to services, such as using a revised version of the Ashamnu prayer that emphasized positive strengths (this prayer is a confessional recited five times on Yom Kippur that traditionally emphasizes one's sins); using character strengths as guiding themes in sermons and homilies; and witnessing community members share personal stories wherein expressions of character strengths, such as forgiveness or perseverance, were highlighted. Each of these examples were described as making congregants' experiences of High Holidays more positive and meaningful (see Flourishing Congregations Report, Hershberg, 2018, for full examples of these findings). Select examples of these positive impacts are presented in the **online supplement**, with supporting excerpts.

Although the project seemed to achieve many of its goals, and had generally positive impacts on rabbis and congregants, case-specific analyses indicated that rabbis and their

respective congregants spoke of the impact of the project on their personal and professional lives in different ways. Moreover, these case analyses suggested that individual characteristics of rabbis (e.g., leadership skills) and synagogues (e.g., financial security) might have influenced the effectiveness of the intervention. More specifically, congregants' particularly compelling descriptions of meaningful High Holiday programs or changes made by rabbis were often accompanied by emphatic descriptions of their rabbis as strong and compelling leaders prior to the FCP beginning. In contrast, when congregants described a lack of meaningful changes to High Holiday services, or ineffective changes, their descriptions were accompanied by less positive descriptions of their rabbis in general, as well as comments about other challenges or frictions within their synagogues. These findings suggest that there will be barriers to successfully implementing interventions aiming to bring positive psychology and flourishing to bear on religious practice in contexts where well-being and flourishing is particularly low (for religious leaders and/or their congregations). Excerpts from congregants supporting this idea can be found in the **online supplement**.

Conclusion

Scholars from across disciplines have called for more research and programming that leverages the insights gained from both positive psychology and the humanities to promote greater flourishing throughout humanity (Pawelski & Tay, 2018). The FCP was an intervention developed by experts in both positive psychology and the humanities (i.e., Religious/Jewish Studies) to see if integrating some of the teachings from positive psychology (namely, the science and practice of character strengths) with the knowledge and practice of Judaism could enhance flourishing among a select group of Jewish leaders and members of their congregations.

As described earlier, the project was largely successful at enhancing flourishing in many of the participants, and at generating some additional questions for the future integration of positive psychology with areas of religious study and practice. One significant question is: how might religion be utilized further to promote well-being among religious leaders and their congregants? In some of the preceding examples and in the **online supplement**, rabbis worked hard to help congregants engage in deep reflection about their character strengths so that they could use them more, and through such use, experience greater well-being. In one compelling example, a rabbi modeled for congregants how Jewish liturgy might be connected to character strengths by sending out weekly online messages about this, which led to a grandmother facilitating conversations with her young grandson about how he could put into practice the Jewish value of *tikkun olam* ("healing the world").

Another rabbi discussed how his ability to connect prayer and even his discussions of Jewish texts to character strengths and well-being helped him meet the needs of his congregants more; in his words, it "changed my life and the relationship I had with people." It's clear that his professional life was enhanced by this, and thereby, his own well-being.

These findings also suggest that when rabbis shift their understandings of their roles from preserving and transmitting inherited traditions and rituals to consciously using and adapting those traditions in light of the science of character strengths, these traditions actually become new protocols and interventions that promote well-being. These protocols help rabbis connect parishioners more deeply to their religion and help people flourish; further research may also find that they are potentially a source for new interventions for the field of positive psychology.

In some of the previous examples, it's clear that the rabbis' ingenuity yielded some tools that might be useful for further consideration in additional studies that integrate religion and positive psychology. One consistent example was that rabbis reframed some High Holiday prayers such that they would include a sense of hopefulness and looking toward the future, rather than only focusing on repentance and sins of the past. Although some religious leaders might find such a reframing controversial, it did appear to be positively received by members of their congregation. Importantly, rabbis did not completely throw out the traditional somber framing of these prayers, but, rather, added a positive version to the traditional recitations. Future research is needed to confirm if such adaptations—where character strengths of hope and optimism are highlighted—have long-term effects on congregants' experiences of these important holidays, but preliminary evidence suggests that at least some congregants had a more meaningful experiences of services due to these changes.

Another additional change that appeared to positively influence congregants' experiences was creating opportunities for them to reflect on their character strengths in workshops connected to the High Holidays. Self-reflection is built into these weeks for Jews; thus adding these workshops did not reflect a controversial shift in ritual. It would, nonetheless, be important to explore if such workshops continue to help congregants think about their own character strengths and to use their strengths more. Previous research suggests that strengths use is highly correlated with flourishing and general well-being (Wagner et al., 2019). Thus, these workshops may hold real promise for a future practice of Judaism (and of other religions) that is more explicitly connected to character science.

We suggest that more dedicated and long-term measurement of the use of such interventions within Jewish and other religious contexts could not only enhance these contexts further, but also contribute to advancing positive psychology. Here, we have presented findings from an initial and short-term experiment drawing on resources from both positive psychology and religion, with a focus on ten specific Jewish settings. Although our research suggests that some of the trusted mechanisms for flourishing identified in the field of positive psychology do translate well to these settings (e.g., enhanced self-reflection, self-monitoring, greater strength use), there is certainly room for more resources and, perhaps, for a more in-depth integration of these character science resources with some of the tools from Jewish ritual and prayer. Jews across the globe may benefit from such continued efforts as, at this current moment, Jews are especially vulnerable to experiencing lower

well-being, with the uptick in anti-Semitic attacks in Jewish communities throughout the United States and the world (including during this past Hanukkah; see Romero & Dienst, 2019). Further integration of positive psychology and the humanities, and further application of this integration, may be one answer to this significant challenge.

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CHAPTER

21 No Man Is an Island: How Community Arts and Social Support Underpin Well-Being

Katie Wright-Bevans *and* Alexandra Lamont

Abstract

This chapter explores the specific role of the arts and humanities in developing well-being through community and social support. The authors review research evidence from the arts (music, drama, dance, art, crafts) and humanities (history, literature, and poetry) and provide links between these and overarching theories of well-being. The review highlights not only the role of arts and humanities interventions in facilitating well-being but also the social and psychological mechanisms underpinning these various activities. The chapter draws on international examples of arts and humanities interventions to demonstrate the need for such interventions to embrace the sociopolitical environment within which they occur. Finally, the authors draw attention to the many avenues of further exploration regarding the role various interventions may play in supporting individual and community well-being.

Key Words: arts, collective singing, arts intervention, participation, social support, collective storytelling

Many of the key theories of well-being, such as Seligman's (2018) PERMA approach, emphasize the importance of other people in engendering and supporting well-being. In PERMA, the key social dimensions are relationships, which reflect direct interactions with others and networks, and meaning, which reflects a broader connection to community, culture, or spirituality (see Lamont, Chapter 24 in this volume). In this chapter, we explore the specific role of the arts and humanities in developing well-being through community and social support. We review research evidence from the arts (music, drama, dance, art, crafts) and humanities (history, literature, and poetry) and provide links between these and overarching theories of well-being, where well-being is defined in a broad sense to include mental and physical health and happiness (Burton, Boyle, Harris & Kagan, 2007). We highlight areas of consensus and conflict and in doing so critically appraise the existing literature and highlight directions for future research.

Eastern traditions of thought place community at the center of humanity, and many collectivist societies around the world place responsibility for collective happiness on all

their members. Blessi, Grossi, Sacco, Pieretti, and Ferilli (2014) found that cultural participation tends to have greater well-being outcomes when it is more social in nature. Collective music-making, and especially singing, has been found to be extremely powerful for a range of well-being outcomes. These can be physical, such as reductions in self-reported tension and enhancements in secretory immunoglobulin (Kreutz, Bongard, Rohrmann, Hodapp, & Grebe, 2004; Johnson, Louhivuori, & Siljander, 2017; Valentine & Evans, 2001); psychological, such as enhanced quality of life, emotional well-being, personal growth, and mood (Clift, Nicol, Raisbeck, Whitmore, & Morrison, 2010); and social, such as group support and identity (Bailey & Davidson, 2002; Dingle, Brander, Ballantyne, & Baker, 2013; Lamont, Murray, Hale & Wright-Bevans, 2018). Group singing can also be beneficial for a range of physical health conditions such as Parkinson's disease (Abell, Baird, & Chalmers, 2016; Di Benedetto et al., 2009; Stegemöller, Radig, Hibbing, Wingate, & Sapienza, 2017), irritable bowel syndrome (Grape, Wikström, Ekman, Hasson, & Theorell, 2010), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (Morrison et al., 2013), and general levels of pain (Hopper, Curtis, Hodge, & Simm, 2016). As well as measuring behavior, biological changes result: singing releases higher levels of oxytocin (Grape et al., 2010) and beta-endorphins (Machin & Dunbar, 2011).

What is it that makes group singing in particular so effective? Many of the reported benefits hinge around the formation of a group identity through the activity, in addition to the positive physical and psychological outcomes. Dunbar (2012) suggested that singing and dancing could be evolutionary adaptations whose purpose is to promote group cohesion. Following this line of enquiry, Pearce, Launay, and Dunbar (2015) found that singing initially facilitated more rapid social bonding than creative writing. Their participants enrolled in adult education classes in singing, crafts, or creative writing over seven months. Singers showed much closer bonding in the early stages (tested after one and three months), whereas the non-singers caught up over time. Pearce et al. suggest an evolutionary mechanism in that singing enhances positive affect, which encourages willingness to coordinate with others, with further evidence from a different study (Pearce et al., 2016) finding that even in competitive situations, such as singing in competition with other groups, social bonding was enhanced by the act of singing together.

Drama provides similar opportunities for group work, requiring the input of others both on stage and behind the scenes, and creative participation has been found to have mild but persistent effects on a range of health and well-being outcomes for children and young people (Bungay & Vella-Burrows, 2013). Community arts can provide a catalyst for the development of mutual understanding, shared identities, and friendship. Craft activities such as hand-knitting and visual art have been shown to have powerful positive benefits in terms of dealing with stress, illness, and invasive forms of treatment such as chemotherapy (Reynolds & Prior, 2006). The community element of this seems to be important; for instance, older adults engaging in group art and craft activities were able

to regain their occupational identity and their sense of pleasure and purpose (Howie, Coulter, & Feldman, 2004; Liddle, Parkinson, & Sibbritt, 2013).

Humanities-inspired community activities such as poetry reading and local history projects have also been found to improve collective well-being. Seymour and Murray (2016) used poetry to engage lonely and isolated older adults within residential settings in group discussions. In as few as six sessions, the older adults reported higher levels of life satisfaction and well-being. The residential care staff were also interviewed pre- and post-intervention and discussed witnessing improvements to mood, memory, attention, and energy among the older adults. Community gardening and community heritage conservation have provided two key avenues to well-being through engagement with the local area and local history. For example, Power and Smyth (2016) interviewed people who had been involved in community heritage work, to examine the effects of this work on participants' well-being. Heritage work was found to increase well-being, personal enrichment, and social learning. The social aspect was fundamental to participants' accounts of the benefits of the work.

One explanation for the positive benefits of group artistic activity relates to coordination and synchrony. Bonding through, for instance, dancing or moving in time with others can promote social closeness and positive social behavior to those others, whether they are adults or infants. For instance, Wiltermuth and Heath (2009) asked people to walk or engage in a music-directed game which involved them to be either in synchrony or out of synchrony with their partner(s). In all cases, synchronizing led to higher levels of subsequent cooperation. Cirelli, Einarson, and Trainor (2014) found that bouncing infants aged one year old in synchrony with an experimenter standing opposite them led to more likelihood that the infant would help the experimenter afterward (the frame of helping is much more limited in these studies to acts such as picking up dropped objects).

The very nature of community provides some suggestions as to how it may interrelate to well-being. Communities can be defined in several ways (Burton et al, 2007; Howarth, 2001). They may arise from a shared sense of place (e.g., a neighborhood), shared heritage (e.g., ethnicity or culture), interest (e.g., passion, value, or hobby), or identity (e.g., identity that is either self-selected or imposed or assumed by others). Places and spaces occupied by communities can provide favorable conditions for enhanced well-being through collective meaning-making (Howarth, 2001). Collectively, through action, shared language, and communication, individuals make sense of who they are and who they are not, promoting feelings of belonging and social inclusion.

Most mainstream developmental, health, and social theorists recognize that community plays a role in supporting individual well-being, even if the extent of that role is subject to debate. Bronfrenbrenner's (1994) classic ecological systems model outlines the role of various environmental factors in supporting a child's holistic development, including the family, school, and community. Bronfrenbrenner's core argument, that support and nurturing in each of these "systems" is crucial for a child to flourish, is supported by

much evidence and practice. Bronfrenbrenner's model has indeed been used to justify and inform arts provision in schools, homes, and communities (Mansour, Martin, Anderson, Gibson, Liem, & Sudmalis, 2016).

One sub-discipline that has contributed substantially to knowledge on the interplay between community and individual well-being is critical community psychology. Critical approaches to community well-being similarly reject the notion that well-being can be addressed solely at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, or even community level (Kagan, Burton, Duckett, Lawthom, & Siddiquee, 2019). Critical community approaches instead attempt to identify wider social, political, and cultural barriers to well-being. Those barriers may be tangible, such as space, materials, or expert support. Alternatively, wider barriers to well-being may be more symbolic, such as stereotypes, stigma, and ideologies. Activities designed to elicit and challenge these symbolic barriers are more likely to improve well-being. Wright-Bevans and Murray (2018) demonstrated how negative stereotypes of aging can hinder the development of appropriate creative community activities for older adults due to assumptions about older adults' skills and abilities, or lack thereof.

Critical community psychologists advocate that poor mental health has little or no neuropsychological basis and is instead a result of a lack of economic, social, cultural, and creative opportunities to thrive (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2009). As a consequence of this approach, empirical research in this area is less interested in clinical populations and formal or professional diagnoses and more interested in the promotion of well-being in a holistic and collective way. More specifically, critical community psychologists are interested in ways and means of enhancing this and identifying the mechanisms at play. Arts and humanities pursuits align well with the intrinsic goals of critical community psychology and in many instances have provided the catalyst for personal and collective growth and development, whether through poetry reading (Seymour & Murray, 2016), mural-making (Murray & Crummett, 2010), or theatre (Bicknell, 2014). Matarasso (1997) presented a now well-recognized, comprehensive account of the social impact of participation in the arts in which he argued that arts are both use and ornament. Through an extensive study of arts initiatives in the United Kingdom, he concluded that participation in the arts can lead to personal growth, enhanced confidence, skill-building, educational developments, social cohesion, and positive social change.

Not all community arts and humanities activities, however, have had the desired effect on well-being. Many projects fail to engage individuals or end prematurely (Newman, Curtis, & Stephens, 2003). In order for community arts programs to be successful, resources both physical and symbolic are required. For example, adequate accessible space, time, equipment, and staffing are physical resources that if not present, could not only lead to the failure of a program but could negatively impact community cohesion, morale, and individual motivation. In an evaluation of community arts for health among British Asian communities in Bradford, United Kingdom, South (2006) warned scholars of the dangers of underestimating the resources required to establish and implement successful

community arts interventions. Symbolic resources such as community will, engagement, interest, and trust in program staff can also determine the success or failure of an arts program. Thompson, Hall and Russell (2006) encountered many of these symbolic (i.e. psychological) barriers in a writing and arts project to promote skills development and well-being in primary school children. A conflict of opinion between the writer employed to facilitate the project and the teachers in the school resulted in the children's project being censored and modified to better fit what the school believed to be an appropriate outcome. Such censorship is fundamentally opposed to the goals of most community arts, which seek to empower and instill ownership, as it is these very mechanisms that are thought to be one source of improved well-being. Furthermore, there is much evidence to suggest that where community members have greater involvement in the development and maintenance of a project, it is more likely to succeed and reap sustained benefits (Murray & Wright-Bevans, 2017; Alcock, Camic, Barker, Haridi, & Raven, 2011).

The power of specific creative community strategies to promote well-being and flourishing have been examined by scholars. For many who adopt a critical approach to the study of well-being, strategies to improve well-being naturally use arts and humanities activities such as storytelling as a catalyst for positive social and individual change. Storytelling has been shown to improve well-being even in highly conflict-ridden situations and circumstances. An example of the power of storytelling can be found in the work of Maoz (2012) who examined four strategies for the promotion of Israeli-Palestinian harmony. Three strategies involved contact of sorts between groups but only to a superficial degree, where each engaged in creative activities either individually or collectively. These strategies mirrored many of those employed in community arts programs, whereby the presence of 'other' is established but communication is not facilitated. Maoz (2012) demonstrated how a fourth, narrative storytelling strategy using creative activities could explicitly address the impact that the surrounding conflict had upon individual and community lives. Within this strategy, participants shared personal stories of the conflict and its impact. It was this fourth strategy that was shown to be most successful in enhancing personal and collective well-being. The mechanisms of success were attributed to the way in which the storytelling embraced, rather than dismissed, the wider sociopolitical context and the group members' lives and roles in this. Too often, community arts strategies are employed to promote community cohesiveness and, in their attempts to promote harmony, individual, community, and sociopolitical differences are quelled. Evidence suggests that the opposite is more effective, where arts embrace the surrounding context, rather than operating in an apolitical vacuum.

Crucially, that is not to suggest that all arts and community projects require sociopolitical goals or motivations in order to be successful. Guerlain and Campbell (2016) used participant photography to explore how community gardening impacted the psychosocial well-being of an urban marginalized community in East London. The participants self-reported goals and motivations for participation centered on a love and enjoyment

of gardening. In turn, this community participation was seen to address their personal adversities, but this was a secondary added benefit from the participants' perspective. Such interventions demonstrate the need for community arts and humanities interventions to embrace the sociopolitical environment within which they occur, rather than attempt to operate in a vacuum. Such an embrace may or may not result in an intervention or program holding explicit sociopolitical goals or the participants expressing sociopolitical motivations.

Certain kinds of arts and humanities–based community activities appear to be more successful than others in enhancing well-being. For instance, Pearce et al. (2016) and Hallam and Creech (2016) suggest that music groups are more effective at social bonding and well-being than other creative activities such as creative writing or craft. Their music programs, however, were very enriched and provide much more potential for interactions and also for performance, so there may be specific mechanisms at play that remain underexplored. Community projects that are embedded in and acknowledging of the sociopolitical condition that contribute to well-being (i.e., Guerlain & Campbell, 2016; Maoz, 2012) have been shown to be particularly successful. It is not clear, however, if or how participants differentiate between individual goals of enjoyment and collective goals of social justice. Research therefore needs to work to identify additional and more precise mechanisms of change so that there is some understanding of not only which collective arts and humanities activities work best to enhance well-being, but also how they do so. Scholars working to understand the relationship between arts, humanities, and flourishing need to address questions such as the following: How can symbolic community intervention resources (such as aligned goals and values) be implemented, communicated, and sustained to ensure a project has the best chance of success? Does the way in which community is defined (by place, heritage, identity, or interest) play a role in determining the success of a community arts project aimed at improving well-being? And how can community arts practitioners ensure that projects are socially and politically situated and explicitly address sociopolitical differences within groups if participants own motivations are based on individual and collective enjoyment rather than social justice? In many ways, this final question brings us back to Matarasso's (1997) discussion of community arts as use or ornament and suggests that intervention participants themselves may be best placed to answer this question.

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CHAPTER

22

A Walk in the Sun: The Awakening of Human Flourishing in Creative Youth Development

Ivonne Chand O'Neal

Abstract

Creative Youth Development (CYD) strategically employs the arts and humanities to promote flourishing in youth by linking arts programming to personal youth experiences, providing asset-based safe spaces that emphasize belonging, the development of relationships, and social skills at high levels of expectation to facilitate optimal learning among youth. The current chapter identifies the deep connections between the CYD movement and the study of human flourishing by first providing a brief progressive history of this work culminating in the discussion of two case studies—the Mosaic Model and Arts Amplify Youth!—illustrating how youth from diverse backgrounds found a place where, through the arts and humanities, they could be heard, could feel safe, and could surround themselves with adults and peers who genuinely cared about their well-being, while fostering their creativity, strengthening their sense of self, and developing their own voice to serve as advocates in their own communities.

Key Words: creative youth development, CYD, positive youth development, well-being, youth voice, youth-driven, Mosaic Model, Arts Amplify Youth!, empowered self, youth participatory evaluation

Youth who are provided with opportunities, support, and motivation are primed to lead, engage with their communities, and thrive. The arts and humanities provide an engaging, personal, poetic, and often reality-based schema within which youth can participate in creative experiences. Creative youth development (CYD) has emerged as a term used to describe these experiences through a substantial body of work and theory of practice that combines expression, creative problem-solving, and inquiry with positive youth development principles, igniting creativity, building emotional stability, and engaging youth in the active building of life skills—key tenets also found in the field of positive psychology. For the purpose of this discussion, the arts will be conceptualized as an outcome or applied representation of a humanities framework. More specifically, humanities themes, including cultural traditions, family histories, gender politics, and immigration stories, influence the artworks of many of the youth participating in CYD

programs throughout the United States, and though both the arts and humanities are intricately interwoven and equally essential to CYD efforts, *the arts* are typically the term used to describe the culminating works of CYD efforts.

The current chapter serves to identify the deep connections between the CYD movement and the study of human flourishing by first providing a brief progressive history of this work with key themes of the movement, followed by two current project examples that underscore how the arts and humanities can be applied in the CYD context to help youth flourish. One example is youth-centered, and one is youth-led; both are designed to investigate well-being, safety, and other flourishing themes. An analysis of these case studies will connect outcomes with real-world scenarios rich with unexpected surprises, inventive solutions, and implications for how studies of positive psychology in the arts and humanities can serve as an organizing framework for future research in CYD.

The Emergence of the Creative Youth Development Movement

The twentieth century launched an earnest concern for the care and well-being of our nation's youth with the discovery that adolescence serves as a unique transitional period between childhood and adulthood during which advanced reasoning skills are developed, including the ability to explore a full range of possibilities inherent in a situation, the ability to think hypothetically, and the ability to use logical thought processes. With this realization came an increased sense of responsibility for the care and welfare of young people. In the 1950s, increases in juvenile crime and concerns about troubled youth led to the start of major federal funding initiatives in the United States to address these issues. These trends in juvenile behaviors accelerated in the 1960s, as did national rates of poverty, out-of-wedlock childbirths, divorce, and single parenthood.

At first, interventions to support youth and families were mainly responses to existing crises. Efforts were focused on more immediate goals at the time, including reducing crime and transforming poor character. As the nation bore witness to the increase in youth problems, interventions and treatments for a wide range of specific problems were developed. Over the last four decades, policies and services designed to reduce the problem behaviors of troubled youth have dramatically increased. The effectiveness of these programs has been documented in a variety of research studies on substance abuse, teen pregnancy, conduct and antisocial behavior, and academic failure (Agee, 1979; Cooper et al., 1983; DeLeon & Zeigenfuss, 1986). Prevention approaches also began four decades ago with emphasis placed on supporting youth before problems occurred. Many of these positive youth development approaches changed in response to program evaluations that documented lack of positive impact on academic failure, delinquent behavior, sexually transmitted diseases, and drug use (Ennet et al., 1994; Kirby et al., 1989).

A pivotal moment in the field occurred as researchers and service providers incorporated results from longitudinal studies that identified key predictors of problem behaviors in youth into their program efforts. The resulting new generation of prevention efforts

were strategically aimed at the use of longitudinal outcomes to interrupt the process leading to specific problem behaviors. For example, drug abuse prevention programs began to address empirically identified predictors, including peer and social influences to use drugs, as well as social norms that condone and promote such behaviors (Elickson & Bell, 1990; Pentz et al., 1989; Arkes & Iguchi, 2008). These prevention efforts were often guided by theories on how people make decisions, including the Theory of Reasoned Action (Azjen & Fishbein, 1980; Morrison et al., 1994) and the Health Belief Model (Janz & Becker, 1984; Rosenstock, Strecher, & Becker, 1988), and mainly focused on single problem behaviors.

In the 1980s, the approach to focus on single problem behaviors came under increasing criticism. The main prevention models at the time were formulated to examine the co-occurrence of problem behaviors within a single child, as well as the common predictors of multiple problem behaviors. Practitioners and investigators were also encouraged to incorporate what was known about environmental predictors and interactions between the individual and the environment. It was during this time that many advocated for a focus on factors that promoted positive youth development—work that is clearly in alignment with positive psychology themes that center on the arts and humanities. Clear consensus among practitioners began to develop, and the idea that a successful transition to adulthood requires more than avoiding drugs, promiscuous behavior, or school failure began to emerge. The advancement of children's social, behavioral, emotional, and cognitive development began to be perceived as the key to preventing problem behaviors themselves (W. T. Grant Consortium, 1992). This shift in focus can be seen as the precursor to the CYD movement.

A movement with historic roots, CYD is experiencing a renaissance with advances in visibility, organizing, and interdisciplinary support. The field is uniting and building on research, publications, and model programs about the characteristics, approaches, impact, and outcomes of quality CYD programs. CYD is an intentional, holistic practice that combines hands-on art-making and skill-building in the arts, humanities, and sciences with development of life skills to support young people in successfully participating in adolescence and navigating into adulthood. CYD organizations and programs encompass those working in arts-, humanities-, and science-based youth development, with an emphasis on creative inquiry and expression (Montgomery, 2017). CYD programs position young people as active agents of their own change, with inherent strengths and skills to be nurtured and developed (Heath, Soep, & Roach, 1998).

Early CYD programs began as a means to safely occupy youth during out-of-school time (OST). The focus has since shifted to a dynamic community-based arts education initiative intentionally engaging youth at high levels to contribute to acquiring skills in artistic disciplines, substantial learning, and enhanced critical thinking (Lampert, 2011; Holloway & LeCompte, 2001), resulting in a number of outcomes consistent with studies in human flourishing, including such benefits as heightened confidence, physical and

psychological safety, caring relationships, sense of agency, community connection, and belonging (Quinn, 1999; Dworkin, Larson, & Hansen, 2003; Chand O'Neal, Tadik, et al., 2019). Studies examining CYD outcomes examine constructs as constellations or themes, recognizing that behaviors are often intertwined, and are influenced by many complex factors. Based on this supposition, studies have begun to establish the link between adolescent engagement, efficacy, and responsibility with the amplification of youth voice and adolescent engagement (Chand O'Neal & Goldberg, 2019*)*.

Early Positive Youth Development studies document the effectiveness of programs housed within such organizations as the Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs, museums, performing arts centers, and various grassroots organizations. Older children and teenagers facing difficult circumstances demonstrated increased academic achievement, a heightened capacity for self-assessment, and a strong sense of what a positive future could look like by involvement in programs for as little as three hours, three days a week, for one full year (Heath, Soep, & Roach, 1998).

Themes central to CYD have become prevalent at a number of levels as the movement has grown. For example, at an international level, organizations including USAID have utilized a Positive Youth Development (PYD) framework that parallels CYD aims in multiple ways. At the state level, organizations like Mass Cultural Council have provided CYD programming for over twenty years, and have also found that effective CYD programs approach young people as agents of their own change, with skills and dispositions that are to be nurtured. At each of these levels, multiple agencies and organizations have set forth a number of key aspects of successful CYD programs that can be summarized in seven essential components:

1. *Provide safe and healthy youth spaces*. Promoting safe spaces—both physical and emotional—is critical to these environments. Youth must feel protected, secure, and nurtured at all times. Establishing clear ground rules for personal interactions, processes for dealing with emergencies, and activities that foster mutual respect and trust are strategies to facilitate feelings of safety.
2. *Emphasize belonging and membership.* Programs that work foster activities where youth feel included regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disabilities, or other factors. These programs also identify activities that provide a positive sense of belonging (schools, sports, community service, faith-based youth group, etc.)
3. *Are assets-based.* In successful CYD programs, youth are seen as "partners in learning" and "resources in the community" rather than "problems in need of fixing" or "recipients of services." By working with youth to identify and build upon preexisting strengths, these programs extend their vision to the full, healthy development of all youth. Examples of such "assets-based" programming include activities that

uncover youth talent and expertise; skill-building projects; and community service, entrepreneurial, and part-time job opportunities.

4. *Foster the development of positive relationships and social skills.* Effective CYD programs facilitate the development of stable relationships through peer and adult mentorships and adult role models. Successful programs may provide community- and team-building activities; one-on-one time with adult leaders; and rituals that promote a sense of belonging.
5. *Are youth-driven.* In programs that succeed, caring adults help youth become agents of their own development by facilitating personal goal-setting and monitoring. By actively participating in the design and implementation of programming, youth develop a sense of ownership, responsibility, independence, and initiative. In successful programs, youth have a significant voice in shaping their projects, the program, and, when appropriate, the organization. Youth also have involvement in decision-making, and opportunities to partner with adults.
6. *Set high expectations for growth and learning.* Effective CYD programs provide opportunities and encouragement for young people to take risks within a supportive environment. Through rigorous skill-building instruction, youth are required to commit to high but realistic levels of time and effort, and are provided the resources to ensure success. Young people experiment with taking chances, exploring the unfamiliar, and pushing themselves to new levels of achievement. Culminating artistic activities, such as final performances, exhibitions, readings, and spoken word performance, create "safe opportunities" by challenging youth to meet goals, adhere to timelines, support their peers, and create products they are proud to share with audiences. Effective programs include activities that build competencies in the arts, humanities, or sciences and provide clear expectations with strong, consistent, and professional adult instruction and guidance.
7. *Address the broader context in which creative youth development operates.* Successful CYD programs are inclusive and strive to effect change by providing programming in the context of the local community. They respond to the larger context in which they function by including schools, foster care programs, and other youth support organizations central to the needs of their population. Examples include a collaborative base of planning; shared support of the young people with families and community organizations; and activities that deal with local, national, global, and historical issues (Mass Cultural Council, 2019; Hinson, Kapungu, Jessee, et al., 2016).

Theoretical Connections between Literature on Well-Being and Tenets of Creative Youth Development

A number of negative generalizations about adolescents are held by society, with urban adolescents serving as their primary targets; yet, research suggests that there is a great deal of positive adjustment and resiliency among urban youth. They are able to adapt to challenges and threatening situations in spite of the lack of support found in their environment (D'Imperio et al., 2000). Though many live in high-risk contexts, youth can overcome adversity and experience healthy development (Werner, 1989). Specifically, extrafamilial support is a protective factor that is critical to the positive adjustment of children in high-risk contexts (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). Positive relationships with teachers and other adults are also major protectors against negative environmental pressures (Chand O'Neal, 2015c). Positive adult relationships can serve a significant role in the lives of disadvantaged urban youth, substantially minimizing risks for negative outcomes (Chand O'Neal, I. (*under review*)). Building Superheroes: Mentorship as a Component of Creative Youth Development through an Examination of the Impact of Mentoring on Arts Amplifying Youth! Leaders. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*. Ryan, Miller-Loessi, & Nieri, 2007).

During adolescence, a sense of belonging is also important. Membership in different groups and subcultures offers an environment of social connectedness and acceptance. Some of these subcultures, such as substance users and gangs, however, offer these social connections in more negative contexts, often resulting in elevated levels of violence and victimization. The resulting goal is to involve youth in positive activities that support their developmental needs in affirmative ways, through such avenues as extracurricular activities and community-based programs. Research has found that youth who participate in extracurricular activities are less likely to use substances, due to less unsupervised time and prosocial bonding with adults at these activities (Catalano, Kosterman, Hawkins, Newcomb, & Abbot, 1996).

In addition, creating and maintaining a strong sense of self-esteem and overall sense of self is critical for at-risk youth to succeed in urban environments. Studies have found that high school "high achievers" exhibit patterns of (1) developing a strong belief in self, (2) having a cadre of supportive adults around them, (3) having a network of other high-achieving peers, (4) being involved in extracurricular activities, (5) challenging their learning experiences, (6) having personal characteristics that include strong motivation and appreciation of their cultural background and having a strong sense of willpower, (7) being highly resilient, and (8) having strong family support (Hebert & Reis, 1999). Furthermore, the existing literature suggests that these types of characteristics can be promoted through highly effective youth development programs, as illustrated in the following case studies. These two examples highlight the integration of the arts and humanities into applied CYD work with the understanding that though the humanities may not consistently be mentioned in CYD policy, they are a primary influence in CYD programming, as evidenced by the inclusion of literature, cultural history, gender politics, and social justice philosophy serving as the foundation for the majority of the culminating artistic works.

Case Studies of Effective CYD Programs That Focus on Flourishing Outcomes

Case Study 1: The Mosaic Model, Detroit, Michigan

The Mosaic Youth Theater of Detroit serves as an example of an effective CYD program that has strategically used the arts and humanities as a springboard to launch youth into challenging their own creative capabilities. Mosaic was established with a dream for urban youth to pursue their artistic passions. Recognized for its high-quality theatrical and musical programs and performances, Mosaic's mission extends well beyond excellence on stage—it seeks to motivate and inspire its youth to pursue excellence in life.

The Mosaic Model as a theory of change is operationalized by three mechanisms that serve to guide young artists to achieve goals central to positive youth development and support success in life: high expectations, a supportive and accepting environment, and the empowerment of its young artists.

The mechanism of high expectations is reflected in Mosaic's insistence on total commitment from their young artists, as well as the dedication of the artist-teachers who act as coaches and the support system for these youth. The Mosaic Model inspires youth to achieve beyond their own expectations by treating youth as professionals and promoting meaningful challenge within a consistent and predictable structure (Gutierrez & Simmons, 2008). Research asserts that youth learn best in environments that provide information and support at a level that is at or above their current level of cognitive functioning, also known as the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). Similarly, studies also suggest that successful arts programs that promote complexity in learning experience and refute the tendency to simplify are the most effective at passionately engaging students (Seidel, 1999).

Environment, as a mechanism, was identified by Bronfenbrenner (1994) as a setting that impacts youth development. Taking this concept one step further, the Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth has identified a number of features of positive developmental settings for youth programs, including physically and psychologically supportive environments, composed of health-promoting facilities and practices that increase safe peer interactions, as well as settings where caring, loving, and competent adults provide secure attachments and serve as good mentors and managers, providing scaffolding for learning (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Mosaic promotes findings supported by studies in youth development underscoring the capacity for youth to express themselves fully through the arts and humanities, to speak with their own voice, to think through problems for themselves, and to have a greater respect for individual viewpoints, traditions, and beliefs. Mosaic takes these concepts one step further by asserting that the program tolerates no less than the total acceptance of the "whole person" as a key tenet of the program. This is a critical element of safety, particularly for the diverse population of youth in its program, and has been documented as a necessary, youth-identified component of arts programs in urban environments (Chand O'Neal & Goldberg, 2020). Mosaic also

explicitly promotes tolerance beyond individual expression and provides opportunities for sociocultural identity formation and support for cultural competence.

The third mechanism operationalized by the Mosaic Model is empowerment, which is promoted in several ways. First, active and participatory learning is emphasized as an important tool for personal and professional growth, and is supported by evidence identifying active learning as a method that requires youth to act on the learning material, which entails a cycle of receiving basic instruction, practicing new behaviors, and receiving feedback on the new behaviors until mastery is achieved (Durlak & Weissberg, 2007).

Specific CYD outcomes reported by Mosaic alumni include the following (excerpts from Chand O'Neal (under review). Gutierrez & Spencer, 2008):

> *Artistic Skill Building and Employability Skills*
>
> The achievements of Mosaic in teaching young artists the discipline and skills of acting, singing, and the technical side of theatre are evidenced by: (a) the success of and recognition received from its performances, (b) the success Mosaic alumni have found professionally, and (c) its own evaluation data in which alumni report that the program has been extremely successful in developing advanced acting, singing, or technical skills.
>
> The Mosaic Model promotes employability skills. For example, Mosaic alumni reported they received important and transferable skills that enhance employability, including: creativity, giving and receiving productive feedback, speaking in public, time management, leadership, and working effectively with peers.
>
> *Academic Achievement*
>
> Mosaic takes great pride in the success of their student-artists in the area of academic achievement. Evaluation data presented from the alumni survey corroborate with the hypothesis that Mosaic positively impacts academic achievement, as a vast majority of alumni reported that their participation improved their ability to maintain high academic performance in school, develop effective study skills, improve their academic standing, influenced their decision to apply to college/university, and see themselves as capable of academic success.
>
> *Positive Self Image and Social Capital*
>
> Beyond artistry and academics, Mosaic believes that participation enhances young artists' socio-emotional development. Alumni report that the program helped them to develop and maintain a positive sense of self/identity, experience personal growth and transformation, and had a positive impact on developing social capital as young artists, including their ability to develop a sense of belonging to the Mosaic family and develop strong and trusting friendships with other young people.

The case study of the Mosaic Model summarized a three-year evaluation conducted by the University of Michigan identifying the key elements of effective community arts programming that promote creative youth development. This model is one example of an effective

CYD program that articulates a theory of change, provides a basis for strategic planning, ongoing evaluation, continuous quality improvement, and sustainability through arts mentorship, resulting in increased artistic, academic, and employability skills, as well as positive self-image and social capital for urban youth in Detroit, Michigan.

Case Study 2: Arts Amplify Youth (AAY!)!, San Diego, California

The Arts Amplify Youth! (AAY!) CYD case study examines a new, energetic grassroots youth-led enterprise based in San Diego, California, and is a second example of a successful CYD program that capitalizes on the arts and humanities to connect urban youth with their heritage, identity, neighborhoods, and communities. AAY! is housed in the broader Art = Opportunity Initiative, based at Center Artes of California State University at San Marcos, which is a research-based initiative focusing on providing access to the arts to community youth. This inclusive program targets all children and youth enrolled in public school in the greater San Diego metropolitan area through exemplary arts integration and arts education practices. This multifaceted initiative is a large web of in- and out-of-school partners, including the AjA Project, TranscenDANCE, La Jolla Playhouse, San Diego Opera, Izcalli, SOULcial workers, Rock-n-Roll Camp for Girls, and A Reason To Survive (ARTS). The diversity of partnerships points to the inclusion of the arts and humanities in community programming to meet the needs of young people from extremely diverse backgrounds, including homeless youth, youth in foster care, and those impacted by the current immigration crisis.

The mission of AAY! is simple: Arts making a change by youth for youth. For the past two years, in response to the question, how can we bring art to youth in a meaningful way?, adult mentors have worked in the background as youth leaders have assembled weekly to identify youth-relevant themes to populate the annual AAY! Youth Summit. The inaugural 2018 Summit theme centered around four key words—diversity, inclusion, equity, and change. In year two, AAY! leaders identified safety as the theme most relevant to today's youth. The following excerpt from Chand O'Neal and Goldberg (2020) provides an account of how astute AAY! youth leaders were in identifying the topic of safety as the theme for the 2019 AAY! Youth Summit:

> On April 27, 2019, at 11:23 a.m., a shooting took place inside a synagogue in Poway, California. At exactly the same time, less than 30 miles away, youth gathered at the second annual Arts Amplify Youth (AAY!) Summit to identify what it means to feel safe—emotionally, spiritually, sexually, physically, artistically, and intellectually. Ethnic minority youth from foster, homeless, and disenfranchised circumstances were among the groups present to discuss and engage in youth-designed arts workshops on safety—a theme they identified as central to their lives. This youth-led initiative used the arts to teach their peers how to identify, create, and sustain safe spaces in their lives dominated by adults and formalized systems that do not include youth voice. Ethnographic research revealed that a high percentage of ethnic youth

in these environments feel unsafe around the adults in their lives and are often subject to discrimination, abuse, neglect, and identity dysmorphia.

The AAY! leaders listened to their peers and served to amplify youth voices around the theme of safety through thoughtful participatory workshops in which they created environments for their peers to explore what a safe space must include, how to build them, identify them, and how to use the arts and humanities to amplify their voice to make a change in their communities around the theme of safety.

Evaluation efforts pertaining to the AAY! initiative are multi-pronged, and so far have included a qualitative component which focused on the AAY! youth leaders and their experiences on the theme of mentorship. Questions focused on challenges and successes and how each was met, what the youth leaders learned, and how they would use these experiences to inform future mentor/mentee relationships. The following themes emerged from the content analysis (Chand O'Neal & Goldberg, 2020).

The mentorship felt more like a partnership. AAY! leaders felt heard, respected, and validated in their relationships with their mentors, and believed they were in more of a partnership than a mentor/mentee relationship. They stated that based on this relationship, when given the opportunity to mentor in the future, they would want people to feel as empowered as they did in this process. They learned what it was like to be heard with consistency; not just when it was convenient; but when it was inconvenient and unpopular. They felt supported and believed that their adult mentors "had their back." They said that this was one of the few times in their lives that they had such a positive relationship with adults.

A connection was made between arts as an idea and arts as an application. AAY! leaders learned what process looks like in a very tangible way. They brainstormed ideas and used some parts and pieces, merged some things together, and threw other components out, all with the goal of building a workshop that used the arts and humanities to express what they believed in a way that would draw their peers in through oral histories, spoken word, drama, cultural traditions, and visual art. They wanted to convey to their peers how impactful the arts can be to heal, provide a safe space, and help you "find your people."

Personal transformation. AAY! leaders noted their own transformation from the beginning of the weekly meetings, where many initially felt reluctant to share their ideas or provide feedback. As time went on and they experienced how AAY! meetings were structured as a safe space, where ideas grow and flourish, they mentioned their comfort with opening up and sharing their ideas, and offering feedback to their friends, recognizing that they were all on the same side and shared the same goal of making the AAY! Youth Summit the best it could be. They talked about belonging to this group, knowing that they can count on these friends to "be there for them" based on the trust developed during the weekly meetings. They plan to replicate this process in other parts of their lives—including school clubs and other youth meetings.

In a recent landscape analysis commissioned by Americans for the Arts (2019), Arnold, Dolenc, & Wells (2012) identified essential features of the CYD framework as involving: (1) the presence of adults who fostered skill, community building, and hope for youth; (2) youth who were seen as resources to be developed rather than problems to be fixed; and (3) programs that created spaces of belonging where youth feel safe, cared for, and empowered. In many of the analyzed studies, instead of emphasizing specific outcomes, focus centered on constructing evaluations with a comprehensive approach to youth development in mind. Though early in its multiphase evaluation, the emerging findings of the AAY! evaluation are consistent with program evaluations in the nascent field of CYD, and are breaking new ground as the youth are engaging in innovative forms of youth participatory evaluation. The AAY! evaluation is in year two of implementation, and in its next phase will incorporate youth to design and lead the evaluation efforts. The inclusion of youth in the evaluation process is critical to its success and sustainability as a youth-led project. When isolated from community development, youth development efforts are stunted in their ability to cultivate young people's individual growth, their membership in communities, and their ability to effect institutional and community change. At best, what has been called an objectifying model deprives youth of valuable learning opportunities and relationships; at worst, it leads to youth alienation and resentment of the implied low expectations and the cultural and political disconnect from their communities (London & Erbstein, 2003).

The Two Case Studies and Themes of Flourishing

The two presented case studies identify two different approaches in which the field of CYD addresses themes of flourishing through the arts and humanities. In the Mosaic Model, themes that emerged included increased artistic, academic, and employability skills, as well as positive self-image and social capital. In the AAY! example, the identified outcomes centered on respect, social justice, and personal transformation. Both programs serve as exemplary ways in which youth are learning how to change their futures.

The literature on CYD outcomes identifies three key themes that are consistent with flourishing, or how to address obstacles to flourishing, including (1) the empowered self, (2) the skillful artist, and (3) the community contributor (Jalea, 2019). Using different terms, these themes have been articulated as organizational values by groups such as Dream Yard (Empower. Create. Connect), the Boston Youth Evaluation Project (I am. I create. We connect), Destiny Arts Center (Peaceful. Powerful. Creative), and Mosaic Youth Theatre (Self. Skill. Society) (Jalea, 2019).

The theme of *empowered self* has evolved from earlier studies in CYD, focusing on teamwork, decision-making, and communication skills, to developing a comprehensive and robust sense of self by realizing participants' full inner potential (Levine, 2002). This refers to developing or enhancing attributes such as confidence, integrity, honesty, self-esteem, responsibility, resilience, moral character, and overall self-worth. Various organizations

have described this in terms of "influencing students' capacities to be powerful" (Destiny Art Center), or to encourage youth to "evolve as unique individuals" (artworxLA), or develop "empathy and connection to empower the individual" (Yerba Buena Center for the Arts) (Jalea, 2019).

In addressing the theme of the *skillful artist*, the emphasis in current CYD programs goes well beyond the focus of merely building technical artistic skill through the humanities framework, but to use these techniques to develop skills in all domains of youth life. Emphasis is placed on self-motivation, decision-making, and the refinement of essential employability skills. It is important to note, however, that this renewed focus also encompasses traditional assessments of academic achievements, such as accessing post-secondary educational opportunities, scholarship, and performance on standardized tests. An example of this type of emphasis can be seen in the case of Mosaic, "helping young people to learn to manage their lives effectively by teaching skills, providing resources, and developing their talents and interests" by providing "opportunities for skill building in physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social arenas" (Gutiérrez & Spencer, 2008).

Finally, addressing the theme of the *community contributor*, the notable characteristic of CYD programs is the commitment to championing youth engagement with the community. Jalea (2019) emphasizes that these programs highlight the importance of adopting the skills needed to not only identify socially pressing issues, but also underscore the importance of having youth actively contribute to the communities to which they are inextricably connected. Such engagement is mediated through many concepts that include social justice, cultural competence, conflict resolution, love, peace, and unity, but all revolve around the call for youth to be "active agents for social change in their communities," as Destiny Arts Center articulates in their theory of change. This call to action is distilled into outcomes such as nurturing empathy, or as "respect for diversity, community involvement, and positive social capital" (Gutiérrez & Spencer, 2008), and is quantified into short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals that progressively integrate youth into their communities—moving from forming positive bonds with those different from themselves to eventually gaining recognition for their service.

What Are the Emerging Trends in the Evaluation of This Work?

Across the field of creative youth development, projects have increasingly incorporated what is termed "youth participatory evaluation" (Checkoway & Gutierrez, 2007; Sabo Flores, 2008; Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2006). This approach considers youth as resources rather than subjects of the evaluation, and places them squarely in the middle of the evaluation process as leaders, consultants, and co-creators. With appropriate support, youth can be included in the development of research questions, the identification of the sample, collecting data, analyzing data, and definitely making recommendations for program improvements.

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations for Future Work

The field of CYD has evolved from a discipline shaped by examinations of deficit-based approaches to youth development, or fixing what is wrong, to a position focusing on what can be done to promote positive dispositions, approaches, strategies, and life skills as options for youth to engage with their communities as agents of change. The arts and humanities serve as an anchor to ground this movement in the culture, personal histories, and real-life experiences of the youth and communities being served. Authentic connections are made between current youth-centered life experiences and the lives they are inspired to lead. These approaches and strategies are captured in the seven key components identified by international and local agencies that serve youth, and include providing asset-based safe spaces that emphasize belonging, fostering the development of relationships and social skills at high levels of expectation to facilitate optimal learning and growth among youth. The two presented case studies highlighted how these components were implemented in real-world settings—in both Detroit and San Diego—with actual youth who were diverse in their backgrounds, ethnicities, living situations, family structures, and emotional health. What is common to both programs, and underscores human flourishing themes, is that the youth found a place where, through the arts and humanities, they could be heard, could feel safe, and could surround themselves with adults and peers who genuinely cared about their well-being while fostering their creativity, honing their artistic skills, respecting their heritage and personal histories, and strengthening their sense of self to enable them to thrive in a world where they often felt unseen. Of critical importance is that youth in both programs developed their own voice, and learned how to use it to better equip them to serve as advocates in their own communities.

Recommendations for future studies in CYD are twofold; I add my voice to the growing number of researchers in the field (see Swaback, 2014; Jalea, 2019) who suggest that our program evaluations and research studies offer separate findings; but what are we really learning, and how are we improving our programs based on this collective interdisciplinary evidence? Creating a central repository of assessments, logic models, theories of change, and additional resources is essential to sharing knowledge and applying it to improve existing programs, and to develop new program models based on what we learn. In addition, future CYD studies should also examine themes found in the creativity and social emotional learning (SEL) literatures that focus on creative ideation, divergent thinking, as well as belonging, emotional regulation, and empathy. The examination of these constructs together will provide an even more robust picture of how the arts and humanities are instrumental in impacting programs targeting youth, preparing them for an unknown future by better understanding how cognitive and social emotional mechanisms influence action. Finally, creating more opportunities for youth participatory evaluation is also critical. By combining youth-led efforts with multi-method approaches, we will learn from the youth themselves what speaks to them, and how to give them the tools they need to institute change in their own lives, peer groups, and communities.

Creative Youth Development, as a growing field and with hundreds of exemplary programs throughout the United States and abroad, contributes significantly to young people's sense of self, artistry, and community advocacy. The field has identified multiple paths for advancement and is poised for new breakthroughs in research and policy development. However, what remains most essential to this work is to apply what we have learned to increase the capacity of our youth to flourish.

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CHAPTER

23 Love and Other Positive Emotions in Contemporary Visual and Social Practice Art

Claire Schneider *and* Barbara L. Fredrickson

Abstract

This chapter integrates theory and evidence on the science of positive emotions with recent examples of contemporary visual and social practice art that touch on resonant themes. Focus begins with an emphasis on the individual experience of positive emotions and extends to co-experienced positive emotions, at both relational and communal levels. The artists considered—Janine Antoni, Louise Bourgeois, Nick Cave, C.S.1 Curatorial Projects, Harrell Fletcher, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Sarah Gotowka, Jim Hodges, Emily Jacir, Julia Jamrozik, Miranda July, Coryn Kempster, Felice Koenig, Antonio Vega Macotela, and Kateřina Šedá—as well as the theorists Nicholas Bourraid and Luce Irigaray are all advocating for a more emotional and connected world after decades of highlighting difference. The chapter concludes with specific suggestions for more richly integrating scientific and artistic approaches to understanding and evoking positive human experiences.

Key Words: positive emotion, positivity resonance, love, Broaden-and-Build, collective effervescence, relational aesthetics, social practice, Nick Cave, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Kateřina Šedá, Nicholas Bourraid, Luce Irigaray

We are delighted to explore how our two areas of expertise—positive psychology and contemporary visual art—might become more mutually supportive. We met in early 2013 when we discovered our shared interest in the topic of *love*. One of us had a new general audience book on the science of love (Fredrickson, 2013a) and the other had newly curated a special exhibit *More Love: Art, Politics and Sharing since the 1990s* (https://ackland.org/exhibition/more-love-art-politics-and-sharing-since-the-1990s/; Schneider, 2013b).

Our early dialogue about how the two perspectives fit together planted the seeds for the current chapter. Our aim is to expand that dialogue to include positive emotions more generally, and to identify timely opportunities for our respective disciplines to support and advance each discipline. The specific aims are twofold. First, we share the latest scientific theory and evidence regarding the unique adaptive value of human experiences of

positive emotions. Second, we offer a scientific appreciation of how contemporary visual artists activate and deploy positive emotions in their work and in the varied ways these works impact individual viewers and communities. This interdisciplinary endeavor not only illuminates how certain artistic works have significant community impact, but also how the arts might be leveraged to advance scientific understanding of human nature.

A Scientific Understanding of One Person's Positive Emotions

More than two decades ago, Fredrickson (1998) introduced a novel scientific theory to explain why the ability to experience and express positive emotions is a ubiquitous feature of human nature. At the time, emotions were just emerging as a rigorous area of focus within psychology, having been swept aside for roughly half a century as behaviorism had its heyday (for a review, see Fredrickson, 2013b). Within this initial scientific renaissance, however, near exclusive focus was devoted to unpleasant emotional states—anger, fear, disgust and the like—with scarcely few pages devoted to joy, serenity, gratitude, interest, and other pleasant emotional states.

This new "Broaden-and-Build Theory" (Fredrickson, 1998, 2001) addressed this imbalance and states that positive emotions had been useful to our human ancestors and preserved over millennia as part of human nature because positive emotions fundamentally alter how the human brain absorbs information in ways that—incrementally over time—made individuals more resourceful. Specifically, the momentary uplift of positive emotions expands awareness (i.e., the broaden effect), creating a form of consciousness within individuals that includes a wider array of thoughts, actions, and percepts than typical. These subtle and unbidden moments of expanded awareness proved useful for developing resources for survival (i.e., the build effect). That is, little by little, moments of positive emotional experience, although fleeting, reshaped individuals by setting them on trajectories of growth and building their enduring resources for survival. In short, the Broaden-and-Build Theory describes the form of positive emotions as to broaden awareness and their function as to build resources.

This meant that negative and positive emotions alike came to be part of our universal human nature through selective pressures related to survival, albeit on vastly different human timescales. Negative emotions carried adaptive significance in the moment that our human ancestors experienced them. Specifically, the action urges associated with negative emotions—e.g., to fight, flee, or spit—called forth behaviors that saved life and limb. Positive emotions, by contrast, carried adaptive significance for our human ancestors over longer stretches of time. Having a momentarily broadened mindset is not a key ingredient in the recipe for any quick survival maneuver. It is, however, in the recipe for discovery, e.g., discovery of new knowledge, new alliances, and new skills. In short, broadened awareness led to the accrual of new resources that might later make the difference between surviving or succumbing to various threats. Resources built through positive emotions also increased the odds that our ancestors would experience subsequent positive

emotions, with their attendant broaden-and-build benefits, thus creating an upward spiral toward improved odds for survival, health, and fulfillment. Figure 23.1 provides a graphic summary of this Broaden-and-Build Theory of positive emotions.

Empirical evidence to support both the broaden effect and the build effect of positive emotions has grown significantly in the intervening decades (for a review, see Fredrickson, 2013b). For instance, rigorous and randomized laboratory experiments show that when people are induced to experience even mild positive emotional states (through an unexpected gift of candy, carefully selected excerpts from music or film, or via relived emotional memories), they show expanded peripheral vision and visual search (Rowe, Hirsh, & Anderson, 2007; Wadlinger & Isaacowitz 2006) and an increased ability to take in the big picture rather than getting stuck in small details (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005; Gasper & Clore, 2002; but see Harmon-Jones, Gable, & Price, 2013). Complementing this evidence for the short-term effects of positive emotions, longitudinal randomized controlled trials show that when individuals develop skills to self-generate day-to-day positive emotions more readily, they spur their own development, becoming more socially integrated, more resilient, and even physically healthier in the ensuing months (Fredrickson, Cohn,

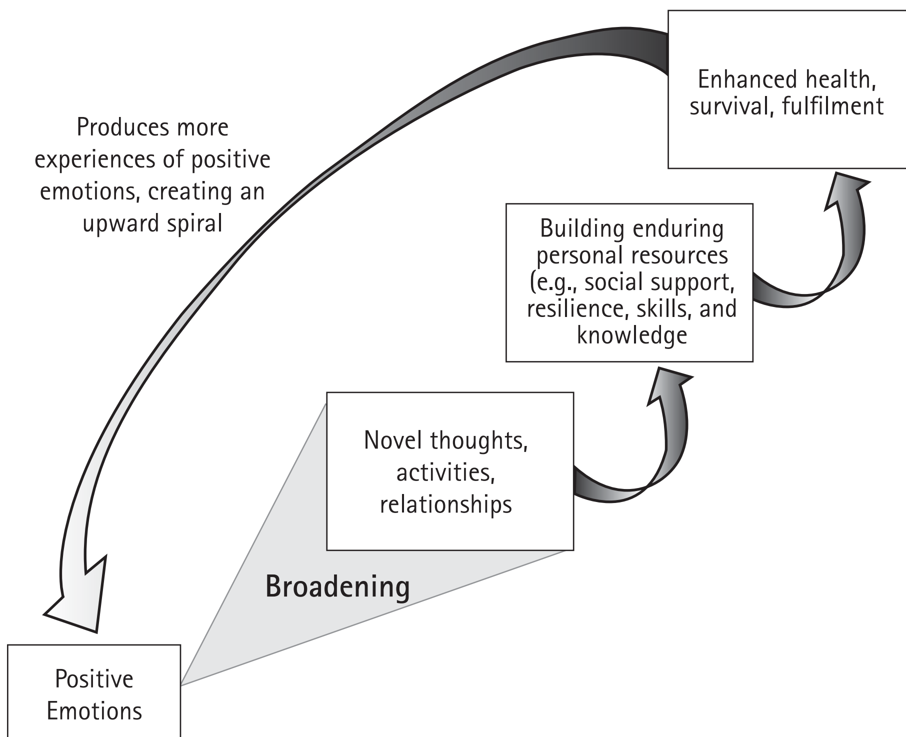

Figure 23.1. The Broaden-and-Build Theory of positive emotions.

(adapted from Fredrickson & Cohn, 2008, Figure 48.1).

Coffey, Pek & Finkel, 2008; Kok et al., 2013). Contemplative practices have been shown to be particularly well-suited for this (Fredrickson et al., 2017, 2019).

Appreciating the Way Artists Use Positive Emotions in Art on the Individual Level

Mirroring the earlier aversion in science to studying emotions, visual artists for decades—beginning in the 1960s with pop art, minimalism, and conceptualism—have prioritized ideas over emotions as central drivers of works of art (Baume, 2005). As a result, when a video, piece of language art, performance work, and even a painting did address emotions, it was usually a negative one, such as sadness or anxiety. In addition, much of the art critiqued societal systems—media, gender, race, or institutional power—and hence focused on what was going wrong.

It is important to note that artists work differently than scientists. While many artists want to influence discourse on issues they care about, works of art are rarely created in the manner of a scientific experiment—where one has a thesis and creates a situation as a means of testing an empirical question. Contemporary art is more like a poem or philosophical piece, working to give form to experience.

That said, it is illuminating to take the Broaden-and-Build Theory of positive emotions and retrospectively interpret artists' works via this lens. Over the last twenty-five plus years, a growing number of artists have purposely created works of art that turn toward positive emotions—joy, gratitude, interest, amusement, and awe. Their strategy, much like the feedback loop of the Broaden-and-Build Theory, is to conceive works that inspire these feelings—either for the viewer or the participant collaborator—so that she will be more open to new ways of thinking. Nevertheless, it is also important to note that the art discussed in this chapter was created for a fine arts context, like a museum, and not developed for an educational or therapeutic setting, where working to support or heal others is the primary starting point. The artists discussed in the following examples are choosing to use positive emotions as a means of articulating larger ideas about the world we live in.

One of the most important artists of the last thirty years (Schneider, 2013a; http://www.cs1projects.org/table-of-contents), Felix Gonzalez-Torres (https://static1.squarespace.com/static/52179b56e4b02837fdbc1732/t/5c9e555e9140b7dac0c38aff/1553880414803/Gonzalez-Torres%2C + Felix+p102-107.pdf) creates works which consist of various "ideal weights" of candy, places these enticing sweets in a pile or carpet configuration, and allows viewers to take a piece and consider enjoying it. Not surprisingly, seeing that much candy anywhere elicits joy in almost anyone, from kids to heart-hardened skeptics. In a pristine gallery, a place where one is cautioned not to touch, much less taste, this offering almost feels illicit and even ecstatic. Central to Gonzalez-Torres is the creation of work that is conceptually open and whose ultimate interpretation would be up to every individual who encountered it. Why would someone create such an offering? What does it evoke in you?

One reading among many is that Gonzalez-Torres created these works, one prime example being "*Untitled*" (*Portrait of Ross in L.A.*) https://www.artic.edu/artworks/152961/untitled-portrait-of-ross-in-l-a, to address the AIDS crisis in the early 1990s, which included the death of his partner Ross and ultimately himself (https://video.search.yahoo.com/yhs/search?fr = yhs-iba-1&hsimp = yhs-1&hspart = iba&p = untitled+%28ross + in+la%29 + felix+gonzalez-torres#id = 4&vid = 140ec18740053a4f2456f26f16f8a376&action = click). The weight of the candy, for those works which list the ideal weight as 175 pounds, can represent a human body, perhaps his body or another healthy individual, and as it is consumed, it can slowly disappear, perhaps mirroring the wasting from the disease. (The possibility also exists to replenish the candy at any time.) While Gonzalez-Torres may have wanted to address the grief he experienced watching his lover's illness progress, he also captures the complete bliss and gratitude he feels for his soulmate and lover. By doing so, he shares this delight with his audience. And, as a result, people who engage with this work may be more likely to approach AIDS and the once vilified topic of homosexuality with a broadened awareness. Her mood may be more open as a result of being given the unexpected gift of a sweet; perhaps she will remember the time when someone she cares deeply for passed away. No longer is the viewer focused primarily on the shameful and visual nature of the disease (as much work about the crisis did), but instead on the common ground all humans face when someone they feel warmly or passionately about passes away.

Like all works of art, the artist's personal circumstance is just the beginning point for understanding a work. Working to connect with a large, broad audience, who could come to the work in any way they saw fit, was of primary importance to Gonzalez-Torres (https://www.felixgonzalez-torresfoundation.org/). He said, "Without the public, these works are nothing, nothing; I need the public to complete the work. I ask the public to help me, to take responsibility, to become part of my work, to join in" (Spector, 2007, p. 57). There is something deeply positive about Gonzalez-Torres's work, which connects with the Broaden-and-Build Theory. Not only in this case, with its offering of edible joy, but in its constant insistence that its meaning remain open, and as a result relevant to everyone who encounters it, previously, in our time, and in the future.

Likewise, Nick Cave (https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s8/nick-cave-in-chicago-segment/) courted broad audiences by inducing joy. He created colorful sculptures of found materials that have the intricacy, sense of uniqueness and awe, and total more-is-more saturation of adornment that mixes tribal regalia, Mardi Gras attire, and high fashion. Known as Soundsuits, these wearable pieces, which occasionally make noise, hide one's identity, functioning as a kind of armor. Originally created by sewing twigs to a face-covering bodysuit, Cave's first Soundsuit in 1992 was a response to the Rodney King beating. It allowed him to both embody the monstrous and throw away nature, too often associated with black men, and also to shield himself. As Cave's materials expanded to include suits of buttons, toys, beaded ball gowns, colored hair, raffia, latch

hook rugs, and doilies, the material mood turned more festive and gleeful. As a result, Cave is able to draw a wide public to his work to consider the beauty in what is discarded and the way one can maximize, protect, and reclaim one's identity.

Czech artist Kateřina Šedá (http://www.katerinaseda.cz/en/) creates scenarios that occur outside of a fine arts setting to build enduring resources for a network of family members and specific Czech communities. With *It Doesn't Matter* (2005–2007), Šedá turned around her grandmother's constant refrain. Jana (1930–2007) had become the family's main focus when she retired and quit cooking, cleaning, and shopping, and began watching television all day. One of the few things that she often talked about was her thirty-three-year service as a tools stock manager at a hardware store. Šedá convinces her grandmother to draw all of the 650 items she remembers. For three years up until her death, Jana became interested again in what she was doing, created 521 drawings, and the baneful phrase, "It doesn't matter," disappeared from her grandmother's vocabulary. Fearful that these drawings would become routine, Kateřina created three more pieces, *What Is it For?*, *1x Daily Before Meals*, and *Travel Diary*, all of which engage her grandmother with questionnaires that encourage her to stay interested in life (Fetzer, 2012, p. 29).

A Scientific Understanding of Shared Positive Emotions

Fredrickson's initial theorizing on the evolved adaptive function of positive emotions centered on emotions as *individual experiences* that, for the most part, carried benefits for individual survival and well-being. Underemphasized were positive emotions as *collective experiences* that carry benefits not only for the individual, but also for that individual's relationships and broader community. Although an emphasis on emotions, more generally, as intra-individual phenomena has long been predominant in Western scholarship, investigations of emotions as inter-individual phenomena are on the rise (Brown & Fredrickson, 2021).

Joining this course correction, Fredrickson (2013b, 2016) introduced a new theory, which has come to be called Positivity Resonance Theory. Drawing together insights and evidence from affective science, relationship science, and developmental science, this theory posits that a core elemental feature of the emotion of love is "positivity resonance," or micro-moments of co-experienced positive affect that resonates between and among individuals. More specifically, positivity resonance is defined as brief episodes of high-quality interpersonal connectedness characterized by a synthesis of three key features: (a) shared positive affect, (b) caring nonverbal synchrony, and (c) biological synchrony (Brown & Fredrickson, 2021; Fredrickson, 2016). In keeping with the Broaden-and-Build Theory, the holistic experience of positivity resonance transcends self-focus and self-interest and thereby broadens each individual's momentary awareness to include a focus on others. Additionally, frequent experiences of positivity resonance accumulate over time to build

social bonds and other social and collective goods, such as trust, loyalty, commitment, and safe communities.

Empirical evidence to support Positivity Resonance Theory is growing. Fredrickson's team has introduced a brief, self-report measure of "perceived positivity resonance" which across three studies shows that it is reliably linked to higher levels of flourishing mental health, lower levels of loneliness and depression, and (albeit less reliably) lower levels of illness symptoms (Major, Le Nguyen, Lundberg, & Fredrickson, 2018). Her team has also developed a video coding system to capture behavioral indicators of positivity resonance and shows that this new global coding system outperforms more fine-grained and time-consuming coding systems in predicting relationship satisfaction (Otero et al., 2020). Additional research has also linked shared experiences of positive emotions to physiological synchrony (Chen, Brown, Wells, Rothwell, Otero, Levenson & Fredrickson, 2020), resilience to adversity (Prinzing, Zhou, West, Le Nguyen, Wells & Fredrickson, 2020), and to the day-to-day enactment of caring, prosocial actions that protect public health (West, Le Nguyen, Zhou, Prinzing, Wells & Fredrickson, 2021). Importantly, although individual well-being, health, and longevity have been linked both to positive emotions more generally and to social integration more generally, tests of Positivity Resonance Theory suggest that the intersection of these two broader constructs (i.e., positive emotions experienced within social connection) may be especially beneficial (Major et al., 2018; Prinzing et al., 2020).

Given the right conditions, positivity resonance is relatively easy to cultivate. Fredrickson (2016) describes two primary preconditions for its emergence. The first is perceived safety, which allows individuals to open up to and trust each other, despite the ever-present risks of rejection or exploitation. The second precondition is real-time sensory connection, which is best attained through in-person, face-to-face interaction, although also possible with simultaneously shared voice and/or shared visual access. Real-time sensory connection is vital because positivity resonance is an embodied form of human connection, neither abstract nor symbolic. True synchrony in behavior and biology, for instance, is not possible when human communication is distilled into text only, or even into recorded messages. In as yet unpublished work, Fredrickson's team has found that simply describing the value of social connectedness to people is sufficient to inspire them to engage with others in ways that cultivate positivity resonance more frequently in daily life, which in turn builds altruism and other prosocial tendencies. We turn next to ways that the arts can foster this high-quality form of human connection in ways that build both individual and relational resources.

Appreciating the Way Artists Document and Influence One to One Human Connection

Schneider's selection of works for *More Love* similarly conceptualized love as micro-moments of shared connection, whether with close relations or even strangers. After

many decades of celebrating difference, in the 1990s and gaining momentum in the early 2000s, artists and philosophers began paying close attention to human connection (Schneider, 2013a, p. 24). This follows the 1980s where individual experience, by gender, race, sexuality, etc., is emphasized, which is itself a reaction to movements, like feminism of the 1970s, that are criticized for being too white and straight. In fact, attending to love in the 1990s and onward is a re-emergence, but one that focused on the individual, whether one on one or in groups, compared to the 1960s communal ethos (Katz, 2013). In addition, the long-heralded death of the author was giving way to the birth of the viewer. In her 2002 book, *The Way of Love*, feminist theorist Luce Irigaray (2002) advocated for non-hierarchical wisdom that could emerge from dialogue. She sought a "wisdom of love," rather than "love of wisdom" (p. 2). At the same time, artists began to investigate ways to allow others, often the viewer, to become collaborators. (Schneider, 2013)

In *"Untitled" (Perfect Lovers)* (1987–1990) (Figure 23.2), Felix Gonzalez-Torres places two standard wall-hanging office clocks side by side. While in part born of both his fear of time running out (although the clocks can be replaced or maintained) and a gratitude for the time, "our time" (Gonzalez-Torres in Ault, p. 155), he and his lover had together,

Figure 23.2. Felix Gonzalez-Torres, *"Untitled" (Perfect Lovers)*, 1987–1990, Wall clocks. Original clock size: 13½ inches diameter, Edition of 3, 1 AP. Photo: EPW Studio/Maris Hutchinson. Installation view: *Felix Gonzalez-Torres*. David Zwirner Gallery, New York, NY, April 27–July 14 2017. © Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Courtesy of The Felix Gonzalez-Torres Foundation.

this work literalizes the behavioral synchrony of positivity resonance. Finding a way to celebrate his same-sex lover that evaded the era's displeasure and censorship of explicit images of homosexuality encouraged Gonzalez-Torres to focus on love's underlying universality.

In his "*Untitled*" (1991), a billboard of an empty double bed that appears to have just been vacated, with rumpled sheets and indented pillows, he instinctively captures and evokes the other two aspects of positivity resonance: safety and real-time sensory connection. For Gonzalez-Torres, the work offers the viewer an inviting space upon which she could project her own desires and, in so doing, advocate for love in whatever form it might emerge—gay, straight, monogamous, sexual, maternal, etc.

Because micro-moments of positivity resonance that build bonds are by nature ephemeral, cumulative, difficult to record, and emotionally complex, many of the artists in *More Love* amass unique collections of these tender and fleeting actions. In *Butterfly Kisses* (1996–1999), Janine Antoni uses her eyelashes to mark Cover Girl Thick Lash mascara on paper 2,248 times to articulate the inherent flirtation and play, as well as labor, involved in sustained connection. In *Love* (2000), Louise Bourgeois stacks ascending square red pillows into a totem. In *These Arms of Mine* (2011), Sarah Gotowka knits her boyfriend's texted emoticons into body warmers. In *Diary of Flowers (In Love)* (1996), Jim Hodges creates voluminous collections of flowers doodled on diner napkins.

Other artists have conceived works where the design of the work itself centers around producing nonverbal behavioral and biological synchrony between two people. In *Drawing Together* (2015) (http://www.cs1projects.org/#/drawingtogether/), Felice Koenig and C.S.1 Curatorial Projects created a platform where seventy members of the public co-create drawings with Koenig on the same piece of paper for ninety minutes. Koenig begins by asking her partner to make the first mark and then mirrors and embellishes his or her gesture. Colorful dots, squiggles, and lines build up a pattern in a jazz-like fashion as the paper is regularly turned; a deep sense of connection is created, a resonant flow. Time stops. The creative self is alive in the joy of making without the care of a final product. The other person's reciprocal marks feel like gifts. As the drawing builds up, so do positive emotions and sense of possibility. As an initially nervous librarian said, "I think the experience dusted off a part of my brain, because that evening I stopped at my piano, sat down and played—for the first time in ages" (Schneider, 2015).

Miranda July and Harrell Fletcher conceived of *Learning to Love You More* (http://learningtoloveyoumore.com/) in 2002. This website, in use until 2009, was created as an antidote to the way technology isolates and the art world excludes. Seventy assignments were created to encourage participants to leave their computers, to become more engaged with life and their fellow humans, and then to report back their findings to this new online community, free of a critical gatekeeper. Some of the assignments provoked and then documented brief episodes of high-quality interpersonal connectedness through

physical interaction or trust-building exchanges: "Take a picture of strangers holding hands"; "Talk to someone who has experienced war"; "Take a picture of your parents kissing"; "Braid someone's hair"; "Spend time with someone dying."

When the embodied human connection necessary for love is not possible, artists will act as surrogates for the imprisoned. Antonio Vega Macotela created *Time Divisa* (2006–2011), where he completed 356 collaborations with Mexico City prisoners. In exchange for hugging, shaking hands, and visiting the grave of a family member, Macotela asks inmates to document physical actions—diagram a basketball play, dance alone in one's cell, or sportcast a basketball game, as if it were poetry. In *Where We Come From,* 2001–03, Emily Jacir offered something similar to those who could not return to Palestine. "Visit my mother, hug and kiss her and tell her that these are from her son." "Go to Haifa and play soccer with the first Palestinian boy you see on the street." "Go on a date with a Palestinian girl from East Jerusalem that I have only spoken to on the phone." These fragile instances of physical intimacy and community connection are the foundation of our individual and collective well-being and as a result these simple acts become intense forms of protest.

Toward a Scientific Understanding of Positive Emotions Shared Across Communities.

Although less frequently the target of study, positive emotions may also be experienced in larger collectives, such as entire communities engaged in shared rituals or other large-scale collective events. Stadiums filled with sports fans sharing their delight in and excitement for their team's performance provide just one example. Community-level moments have been identified as "collective effervescence" in sociology and "communitas" in anthropology. To the extent that such uplifted communal moments contain elements of caring nonverbal synchrony—and not simply shared positive affect and biological synchrony—they may also be described as positivity resonance en masse. Extending Positivity Resonance Theory to this level of analysis suggests that community-level resources would accrue with recurrent experiences of this sort, such as perceived safety within one's community and community resilience. With disrespect and arrogant divisiveness on the rise in public discourse, a better understanding of community-level shared positive emotions and how best to cultivate them may be vital to re-establish civility and trust in humanity. Here we explore what can be learned from artists' attempts to create positive community-level experiences.

Appreciating the Ways Artists Encourage Shared Positive Emotions at a Community Level

Since the early 1990s, a range of artists have been rearranging one's encounter with art to prioritize relationships over objects. In 1998 Nicholas Bourriaud named this new type of art "relational aesthetics." "The work of art as social interstice" (Bourriaud, 1998, p.

160), as he named it, often means creating a social situation so that the gallery or museum experience presents not objects to encounter, but rather new conversations and connections. In the seminal example from 1990, Rirkrit Tiravanija invited people to come to a stark white downtown New York gallery, and when they arrived, rather than finding objects to consider, they were served pad thai. The unexpected offer of comfort food shifts the viewer's experience of the gallery, food, and art.

This type of practice went by a number of names: socially engaged art, participatory art, and social practice. Two large changes affected the rise of this work: digital media and global political and socioeconomic shifts. Bourriaud uses the automated teller machine (ATM) as a symbol of the mechanization of social function. "[These] machines now perform tasks that once represented so many opportunities for exchanges, pleasure or conflict" (Bourriaud, 1998, p. 162). This loss encourages artists to do the inverse and repair this social space. It is through "little gestures," (what Fredrickson [2013a] calls micro-moments of connection), that the "relational fabric" of society may be "re-stitched" says Bourriaud (Bourriaud, 2002).

Kateřina Šedá rebuilt community after the fall of communism in the Czech Republic. She worked for a year to convince a small village to do the same thing for a day in *There Is Nothing There* (2003), her first large public project. Everyone went shopping, swept their walks, ate the same lunch, their children rode their bikes, and had a communal drink at the same time. The mundane Saturday routine turned into a joyful and amusing shared activity. Šedá's positivity resonance en masse restored pride in the community, helping them to see that "everything substantial" does not "take place in cities," (Fetzer, ed., p. 17) as they had reported on her initial questionnaires.

While *Learning to Love You More (LTLYM)* prompted caring face-to-face connection, sharing one's work online with others in a space "predicated on total and instant acceptance and equality" instigated a community (Mangione, 2013, p. 96). Some assignments even built on previous ones: "Get a temporary tattoo of one of Morgan Rozacky's neighbors"; "Recreate a scene from Laura Lark's life story" (http://learningtoloveyoumore.com/reports/22/22.php); "Lipsync to [Maurisa's] shy neighbor's Garth Brooks cover." As Fletcher and July have written: "The best art and writing is [*sic*] almost like an assignment; it is so vibrant that you feel compelled to make something in response. . . . For a brief moment it seems wonderfully easy to live and love and create breathtaking things" (Fletcher & July, "love" page of website http://www.learningtoloveyoumore.com/love/index.php). *LTLYM* does many of the same things as positivity resonance en masse, although it is virtual. It creates a supportive environment. All of the assignments require doing something, which is embodied. And like the way in which positive emotions broaden and build overtime, the website created a cascade of positive interactions that built on one another, creating an enduring community.

With *Full Circle* (http://www.cs1projects.org/#/full-circle/; 2016), a specially designed structure of seven free-hanging seats in the round is placed on an empty lot. The idea was

to alter the linear structure of most swing sets where people sway side by side, and instead place them in a circle, as if everyone is at the same table. As one mom reports, compared to other playgrounds, it was hard not to make a friend, even for the shy among us, as one is swinging and smiling. By providing a communal gathering place, especially on a site surrounded by a diverse neighborhood of various races, classes, and places of origin, that creates joy and places visitors in direct face-to-face interaction, real relationships are built.

The material abundance and joyous movement of Cave's Soundsuits gave way to orchestrating collaborative art-making as a further means of eliciting positive emotions, this time, en masse. In Shreveport, Louisiana, for *AS IS* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v = wVdIGBSQy78; 2016), Cave created beaded blankets with the residents of five social service agencies (for the homeless, at-risk children, those with HIV/AIDS, mental illness, and developmental disabilities) over six months. These blankets were then the centerpiece for a dynamic theatrical production, built from the city's poetic, musical, and dance talents. This long-term, shared creative endeavor had the community do something physical and creative over time together. A cascade of supportive and acknowledging conversations ensued: trust built up slowly as a result, and pride accumulated, creating a communal sense of purpose. Compare *AS IS* to the traditional places where collective effervescence is measured—at concerts, places of worship, or during sporting events. In Shreveport, Cave's piece has a whole town across communities working to be producers, rather than just congregants or fans, of a unique, joy-filled, affirming work of art designed to celebrate them.

When Cave brought his performance *Up Right,* as part of his *Nick Cave: Feat. Nashville* production to Schermerhorn Symphony Center, creative leaders of various cultural institutions were brought together in an unusual collective experience. As "Practitioners," they dressed the "Initiates"—young African-American men—in Cave's bejeweled suits of wonder and stature. (Cave, 2018, p. 4) In preparation, they built the kind of` trust that "one does at camp," said one curator. "I will be that much more likely to call on someone to do something new together or offer support" (Katie Delmez, curator, Frist Art Museum, personal communication, April 19, 2018), explaining how the special bonds created would broaden and build, birthing a new network. These kinds of opportunities are rare, especially across institutions, and so offer an opportunity to bring community together.

Future Possibilities and Summary

While contemporary visual art is produced to both document and foster ideas, rather than produce a specific measurable "impact," artists do want to create awareness for issues that they care about. Perhaps there would be benefits to creating a matrix with which to assess works of social practice. Some art critics say some of this work looks too much like a party or is doing the work of social service agencies. A standardized way to evaluate various projects would create an alternative and specific language for critique. Part of this could include measures already in use, such as measures of "perceived positivity resonance."

As many of these projects purport to have positive community impact, such a matrix would help document this for communities and their necessary funders. In addition, it would communicate that the effects of this artwork are not only immediate and momentary, but can also be cumulative and enduring, as cycles of upward momentum and change ensue. Longitudinal studies would be well suited to understand the full life cycle of effects of certain community-level art works.

A data-driven as well as a journalist or oral history approach to collecting the responses of large samples of participants is also needed. Art history, as an intellectual history, gathers the reviews of experts about works of art. If, however, the artwork is about rethinking hierarchies and who the producers of knowledge are, art history about social practice works demands collecting the thoughts, both anecdotally and systematically, from the viewer/collaborators. Perhaps these interviews, like relationship interviews, could be coded for behavioral indicators of positivity resonance.

Additionally, it might be important to better understand how artists (as well as individuals) try to create positivity resonance when they cannot share physical space with others. What do the best virtual communities do? How do artists create experiences to mimic the core features of positivity resonance? Additionally, if humans lived originally in small groups where all contact and art was made face to face, what can positive psychology studies learn from current art-making practices, knowing that the viewer will often not experience the work with the makers in real time?

Historically, artists and scientists have worked together on a variety of topics. Richard Loveless (http://nautil.us/blog/the-man-who-changed-how-artists-and-scientists-work-together), a pioneer of such collaborations, has funded over 200 projects, including work with a psycho-neuro-immunologist and a theatre director. Perhaps, a positive psychologist and a social practice artist could work together to create a new piece and/or a new study. As both disciplines seek to advance their fields, creating projects that are mutually beneficial to both, rather than retroactively evaluating a previous work, would offer a particularly compelling incentive.

Much more research could also be done to evaluate the positivity of art making of all kinds: painting, drawing, crafting, dancing, etc. And what is the effect of doing these art forms collectively? Are they reliable sources of positivity resonance and positivity resonance en masse? If so, do they initiate social and psychological cascades toward improved health and strengthened communities?

What can the science of psychology learn from the way artists build their projects? Artists produce powerful works by addressing the emotional complexity of life: the grief or sadness embedded in joy, for instance. By attending more closely to developments in artistic practice, positive psychologists may gain insights on how best to measure and manipulate positivity and positivity resonance.

In summary, the arts can be leveraged in many ways to advance scientific understanding of human nature. Likewise, scientific understandings of human nature can be leveraged

to advance understanding in the humanities concerning the age-old impulse to create and share artistic works.

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PART V

Disciplinary Considerations

Part V turns to specific disciplines within the arts and humanities, providing depth and nuance on how each domain can lead to human flourishing. The chapters highlight how features of a discipline need to be understood from different perspectives (e.g., performer vs. observer) and describe specific mechanisms in greater detail as they pertain to a particular discipline. In the realm of the arts, engagement in music, visual arts, film, and theatre can all lead to higher well-being. The humanities can also lead to greater flourishing both by providing a deeper conceptual understanding of the nature of well-being and by promoting its practice. Beyond individual disciplines within the arts and humanities, it is important to study and support the interplay between the humanities and disciplines or contexts outside the humanities, such as business education and medical humanities.

CHAPTER 24

Music and Flourishing

Alexandra Lamont

Abstract
This chapter draws on theory and a range of recent research literature to explain how music contributes to human flourishing. It first treats music listening and music-making as separate domains, and then brings them together to consider the world of the musician across a range of contexts. Parallels are drawn between theories of well-being and theories of emotion in music. It also includes a developmental perspective on how music is associated with well-being at different stages in life, and how culture and society work together to foster this. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the purposes and goals of engaging with music for well-being and flourishing.

Key Words: music listening, music performing, PERMA, creativity, engagement, positive emotion, negative emotion

Why Music?

Music has been associated with humanity since the dawn of the archaeological record, and many researchers have argued for a fundamental evolutionary drive for music in human culture (e.g. Cross, 2009; Tomlinson, 2013). A number of different sources of evidence support this fundamental role of music in culture: for instance, all new parents instinctively sing to their babies (Trehub et al., 1997), and music provides a way for parents and infants to bond through synchronization (Trevarthen, 1999). Research shows that adolescents engage in music listening more than any other leisure activity (North, Hargreaves, & O'Neill, 2000), and that music is the most-talked-about topic when people are getting to know strangers (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2006); sales figures for popular music around the world indicate that even in the digital age, music remains a fundamental part of many people's lives (IFPI, 2019).

Research into the impact of music has covered a wide range of topic areas, from fine-grained analyses of why a particular chord evokes a sense of emotional release through to the broader motivations to make music or listen to particular styles. In many cultures around the world, the phrase "music" incorporates both the act of making music and that of listening. Western cultures are unusual in making a distinction between the two

different activities, but this chapter will first consider research on each separately before bringing them together.

Music-Making and Flourishing

Most contemporary theorizing about well-being and flourishing emphasizes the importance of agency and involvement in engaging activities. For instance, Seligman's PERMA framework (2011) purports that in order to engender well-being an endeavor must not only engender *p*ositive emotions but also provide the potential for *e*ngagement through a sense of flow, building *r*elationships, stimulating a sense of *m*eaning from the activity itself, and finally also a sense of *a*ccomplishment. Similarly Tay, Pawelski, and Keith (2018; see also Tay & Pawelski, Chapter 1 in this volume) theorize the importance of the ways humans interact with the arts for well-being in their functional analysis, defining modes of engagement and the four mechanisms of immersion, embeddedness, socialization, and reflectiveness as explaining how well-being can be generated. There is a wealth of evidence showing that music-making (including singing) leads to enhanced levels of well-being (e.g., Bailey & Davidson, 2005; Clift et al., 2010; Pérez-Aldeguer & Leganés, 2014; Vaag, Saksvik, Milch, Theorell, & Bjerkeset, 2014), yet these data are accompanied by a need to explain the different elements that may contribute.

Taking each element of PERMA in turn, it is easy to see how the framework could apply to making music. First, performing music is often a direct emotional experience that creates positive affect. Research has found that singing, either alone or in a choir, reduces tense arousal and increases energetic arousal and positive hedonic tone (Kreutz, Bongard, Rohrmann, Hodapp, & Grebe, 2004; Valentine & Evans, 2001). In Gabrielsson's research, where he asked over 1,000 participants to report on their strongest experiences of music, 19 percent of the reports addressed performance (Gabrielsson, 2010, 2011). Performers described a range of positive emotions associated with their experience, particularly joy and happiness, rapture and euphoria, and calm and peace.

In terms of engagement and flow, playing and performing music can induce flow in infants and young children (Custodero, 2005). In relation to adult performers, Gabrielsson and Lindström Wik (2003) found musical performances that reflected engagement with loss of self-awareness, indicative of flow: for example, "sometimes it is as if it isn't me who is playing. The fingers move by themselves" (p. 176). Experiencing flow can also lead to enhanced motivation (e.g., Austin, Renwick, & McPherson, 2006, McPherson & Davidson, 2006; Woody & McPherson, 2010). For instance, O'Neill (1999) found that higher-achieving children reported significantly more flow experiences with music than lower achievers (see also Fritz & Avsec, 2007). Similarly, Sloboda (1991) found that adults who remembered peak experiences with music before the age of about ten were more likely to pursue involvement with music later on.

In terms of relationships, music performance works particularly effectively in terms of developing one's own musical identity and becoming a musician (Lamont, 2002).

Children define "being a musician" simply as someone who can play a musical instrument. Developing a positive musical identity is also an important motivator, as well as a result of engaging in music performance, and a lack of musical self-concept or musical identity leads many people to disengage from musical activities (e.g., Ruddock & Leong, 2005). Developing a group or social musical identity is also important. The powerful social motives for musical engagement have been studied by Faulkner and Davidson (2004) in the context of an Icelandic male choir, where members felt that singing connected them with others, as well as allowing them to communicate with others. Gabrielsson and Lindström Wik (2003) highlighted a sense of community among performers and between performers and listeners in their examples of strong experiences of performing.

The search for meaning in a positive psychology context is typically related to spirituality and religion (Wills, 2009). This aspect has received very little research focus to date in relation to music, although there are a few studies pointing to spirituality being experienced through music (e.g., Hays & Minichiello, 2005). It is likely that performers do reach a sense of transcendence and spirituality through their performances, as hinted at in some of Gabrielsson's findings (2011), although this has yet to be fully documented. However, quality of life, which may relate to meaning in some way, is clearly found to be higher in people engaging in musical activities (Clift et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2020).

There is also far less research in music performance that explores achievement in a well-being context. Achievement motivation is commonly explored, particularly in child learners (e.g., Austin et al., 2006), but has not been linked explicitly to well-being, and the performer's own sense of well-being has rarely been incorporated into such studies. Some exceptions include a study by Ascenso, Williamon, and Perkins (2017), who found elements of all aspects of the PERMA model, including accomplishment, in the musical well-being of a group of professional musicians. Similarly, Lamont and Ranaweera (2019) compared amateur music-makers with amateur knitters, and confirmed all five PERMA elements in both groups (with a slight emphasis on relationships and meaning). Many performers reported a sense of flow in attempting to achieve certain technical challenges they had often set themselves, and there was a clear focus on the importance of learning and stretching oneself through music-making that seemed to be tied up with the positive benefits. Finally, Bonneville-Roussy and Vallerand (2018) proposed that the underlying feature behind evidence for PERMA in musicians is passion, particularly harmonious passion.

Music Listening and Flourishing

As suggested earlier, listening to music could be viewed as a more passive endeavor that might not perhaps embody as much potential for flourishing, and the theoretical approaches to flourishing reference far fewer of such "passive" activities. Nonetheless, relating research on music listening to PERMA shows that many elements can be addressed,

and Hargreaves, Hargreaves, and North (2012) have argued persuasively that music listening has as much potential for creativity and imagination as music-making.

In relation to positive emotions, listening to music has considerable potential to engender pleasure. Brain imaging studies show that music listening stimulates the areas of the brain involved in reward/motivation, emotion, and arousal, including the ventral striatum, midbrain, amygdala, orbitofrontal cortex, and ventral medial prefrontal cortex (Blood & Zatorre, 2001; Panksepp & Bernatzky, 2002). The responses are similar to those from other "euphoria"-inducing stimuli, like food, sex, and drugs of abuse. In strong experiences of music, direct physical and physiological responses to the music, such as chills, are experienced alongside high arousal feelings of rapture and euphoria, ecstasy and intoxication (Gabrielsson, 2001). In the laboratory, manipulating musical stimuli can induce different emotional responses in listeners, and music can be used experimentally as a powerful means of mood induction (Swaminathan & Schellenberg, 2015; Westerman, Spies, Stahl, & Hesse, 1996). Enjoyment is frequently referenced as a primary reason for choosing to listen to music (Groarke & Hogan, 2016; Lamont & Webb, 2010), and positive effects can be generated even without conscious attention (Juslin, Liljeström, Västfjäll, Barradas, & Silva, 2008).

Engagement through flow certainly seems possible through listening to music; Csikszentmihalyi (2002) included music listening in his original definition of the concept. He proposed that listeners should have a high degree of attention and focus, setting aside time and space to engage fully. Gabrielsson's (2010) listeners reported many different characteristics of engaged listening, such as focused attention and complete absorption, changes in attitude, feeling embedded in the music, and coming to hear things in a new way. Focused, self-chosen music listening provides a means to engage in reminiscence, catharsis, calming, and other intellectual outcomes associated with high levels of engagement (DeNora, 2000; Sloboda, O'Neill, & Ivaldi, 2001), and more emotionally engaged listeners seem to gain more from concert experiences (Thompson, 2006) and have greater awareness of both their own music listening behaviors and their contribution to happiness (Greasley, Lamont, & Sloboda, 2013).

Music listening and its associated activities can develop relationships and bring people together. Adolescents mostly listen to music alone (North et al., 2000), but still share a great deal of their music (Brown & Sellen, 2006). By early adulthood, many experiences of music listening are shared with others (Juslin et al., 2008; North, Hargreaves, & Hargreaves, 2004), and, as noted earlier, music provides an important channel of communication in new social settings (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2006). Developing and enhancing personal connections through musical experiences helps support relationships (Gabrielsson, 2010). The social dimension might thus provide a way into a collective musical experience that fulfills the requirements of meaning by allowing the listener to go beyond him- or herself as an individual. A further element of relationships that music listening can facilitate is the sense of identity resulting from belonging to particular musical

taste cultures, and many researchers have emphasized this pursuit of identity as an important function of engagement with music (Tarrant, North, & Hargreaves, 2002; Tekman & Hortaçsu, 2002).

Corresponding to the general lack of research on the component of meaning (Seligman, Parks, & Steen, 2005), little research has explored how music listening can help develop meaning in a well-being perspective. However, music typically accompanies other activities that can be more clearly labeled as meaningful, such as religion (Sloboda, 2002). Becker (2001) described the sense of collective ecstasy experienced in religious rituals by Muslim Sufis and Pentecostal worshippers. While the primary purpose of such rituals is not musical, the music, spirituality, and group setting all combine to evoke strong emotions in those present and engaged, at both a personal and social level. The more spiritual elements of transcendence, such as offering a glimpse of God or heaven, out-of-body experiences, and feelings of pure being, are reflected in descriptions of strong musical experiences (Gabrielsson, 2010). This combination of factors may account for the power of such experiences in a range of therapeutic outcomes (Gabrielsson & Lindström, 1995).

Finally, Csikszentmihalyi's description of focused music listening in the context of flow (2002) perhaps reflects how music listening can serve the function of accomplishment. It is possible that the sense of accomplishment that comes with knowledge of music, one of the most popular motivations to engage with music, according to Schafer, Sedlmeier, Städtler, and Huron (2013), may be associated with outcomes for well-being, but more research is needed.

In summary, from a theoretical perspective, music listening can potentially affect happiness through the pursuit of all of Seligman's (2011) routes: pleasure, in terms of boosting positive emotions; engagement, in terms of highly intense focused music listening which changes the way listeners think and feel; relationships with others through shared experiences; meaning, broadly conceived of as spirituality and aesthetics; and finally, accomplishment through engagement with music and knowledge around music. Much research has explored music's power to affect emotions in broadly positive ways. Less is known about engagement, although this is a dimension that has been shown to vary among people (Greasley & Lamont, 2011), and very little research has explicitly explored meaning or accomplishment in relation to specific instances of music listening. However, Groarke and Hogan (2016) confirmed Greasley and Lamont's (2011) finding of individual differences in the emphasis placed on different functions of music. They found at least four different types of emphasis in reasons for choosing music listening, prioritizing creation of personal space (for the end goal of entertainment), reminiscence (for emotional effects, particularly reduction of boredom or fear), transportation (relaxation, stress reduction, and connections leading to personal meaning), or strong emotional experience (leading to social connections and personal growth). This framework provides considerable potential for future exploration in bringing together diverse fields with more explanatory power.

From the field of music psychology, another recent popular model for explanations of emotional responses to music is that proposed by Juslin (Juslin, 2013; Juslin, Barradas, Ovsiannikow, Limmo, & Thompson, 2016; Juslin & Västfjäll, 2008). Juslin identified a number of underlying mechanisms (currently nine) to explain how music induces emotions. The most primitive response in his BRECVEMAC framework is the *brainstem response* (B) to sound or pleasant sounds, held to be an evolutionary response relating to arousal. *Rhythmic entrainment* (R) reflects the listener locking in to a common periodicity in the music, through heart rate, breathing, or actions. *Evaluative conditioning* (E) reflects repeated pairing of the musical stimulus, at a fairly general level, with particular emotions, such as the use of horns to evoke jolly hunting scenes. *Emotional contagion* (C) concerns the mimicking of the emotion perceived in the music by the listener, in a fairly automatic manner. *Visual imagery* (V) reflects the shapes in the music and visual patterns in the listener's mind that are stimulated by the music. *Episodic memory* (E) refers to the idea that particular pieces of music become associated with specific moments in listeners' lives, which tend to evoke emotions such as nostalgia. *Musical expectancy* (M) concerns the patterns embodied within the music that evoke tension and release, such as harmonic prolongation (Meyer, 1956). These combine to produce the *aesthetic response* (A), and finally, *cognitive appraisal* (C) is a multidimensional assessment of the implications of the music for the listener's current goals or plans.

The BRECVEMAC approach can be aligned quite closely with PERMA. Brainstem responses can lead straightforwardly to positive emotions, while engagement results from generating musical expectancies. Relationships are fostered through rhythmic entrainment and emotional contagion at a fairly basic level and through episodic memory at an individual life-span level. Meaning comes from wider connections with others through evaluative conditioning, and accomplishment arises through the achievement of the aesthetic response. BRECVEMAC was not developed to explain well-being per se, but its synergy with the PERMA framework perhaps explains why music listening is so popular and emotionally engaging.

The Case of Negative Emotion in Music

Much of the theorizing in flourishing prioritizes positive emotions, with approaches such as PERMA or Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build theory continuing a fundamental point established by Diener (1984) that positive affect and the absence of negative affect are critical in well-being. However, second wave positive psychology has more recently emphasized the importance of acknowledging the negatives in human experience (Lomas & Ivtzan, 2016). Similarly, in music, much research has prioritized positive emotions as the motivators for engaging with music (Groarke & Hogan, 2016; Mas-Herrero, Marco-Pallares, Lorenzo-Seva, Zatorre, & Rodriguez-Fornells, 2013; Saarikallio & Erkkilä, 2007). However, there are two distinct areas where negative emotions arise in music: music performance anxiety and listening to sad music.

Music performance anxiety affects around half of all performing musicians (Kenny & Asher, 2016). Most of the research has focused on identifying symptoms and cognitive or medical interventions. Interestingly, some of the characteristics of positive strong emotional experiences of listening or performing are also found in less positive instances of music performance anxiety: increased heart rate/pounding chest, excessive sweating, dry mouth, nausea, trembling hands, and cognitive symptoms such as loss of concentration and negative thoughts about the performance (Lehmann, Sloboda, & Woody, 2007). The difference here is the cognitive appraisal of those symptoms to indicate threat and negativity (Juslin & Vastfjäll, 2008). However, it appears that music performance anxiety is not a more extreme version of a rush of adrenaline that might facilitate performance, or performance "boost" (Simoens, Puttonen, & Tervaniemi, 2015). Performers feel that anxiety results from perceived pressure, while the more facilitative boost results from perceived support. The most successful approaches to treating performance anxiety as a trait focus on cognitive and behavioral measures, and flow has occasionally been referred to as a desirable state that might help reduce anxiety (Wilson & Roland, 2002). Positive psychology and the strengths approach championed by Linley (e.g., Linley, Nielsen, Gillett, & Biswas-Diener, 2010) has the potential to help those experiencing performance anxiety (Lamont, 2012), although research is still required to support this assertion. What also seems paradoxical is that performers, both amateur and professional, continue to engage in an activity which they know will cause them genuinely negative emotions: with a lack of research it can only be assumed that the benefits outweigh the disadvantages in the longer term, similarly to other challenge-based activities.

When considering emotions in music listening, an important distinction must be made between emotions portrayed by the music itself and those experienced by the listener (Lundqvist, Carlsson, Hilmersson, & Juslin, 2009). It is generally accepted that these are not contiguous, but overlap to differing degrees. Listeners are typically able to recognize emotions that they do not themselves experience, and as shown earlier, performers are also able to convey emotions they do not experience. However, music exhibiting a certain emotional tone is likely to influence its listeners and to evoke emotions in them. Listening to sad music is an apparent paradox which has puzzled researchers over the past decade or so, with various explanations being proposed. Huron (2011) initially argued for a hormonal component in that listening to music produced prolactin, a hormone generating a sense of solace. However, more recent evidence suggests that listening to sad music generates a state of emotional arousal, and sadness is experienced alongside enjoyment and being moved (Eerola, Vuoskoski, & Kautiainen, 2016; Vuoskoski & Eerola, 2017).

Hanser et al. (2016) discovered that listening to music was reported to be the most popular source of consolation in times of loss and sadness, and that the music induced a sense of being moved and a mixture of both positive and negative emotions. This use of music as consolation (cf. Saarikallio, 2011) is in some ways redemptive, and clearly has positive benefits. It was found in listeners who preferred either classical or popular

music, and many chose "solace" music, which they counted among their favorite music. The description of the way people chose to listen to music for consolation reflects many of Csikszentmihalyi's (2002) flow characteristics: turning up the volume, listening alone, and shutting out the environment. However, there is some evidence that listening to sad music can create higher levels of depression in listeners (Garrido & Schubert, 2015), particularly those with higher levels of depressive mood and negative social comparisons (ter Bogt, Canale, Lenzi, Vieno, & van den Eijnden, 2019). While most people feel they would benefit from listening to sad music, people with higher levels of rumination did not systematically report this (Garrido & Schubert, 2015), which suggests that we do not always engage in a search for positive emotion.

A More Integrated Approach

One similarity between PERMA and BRECVEMAC lies in the fact that they identify a number of different mechanisms or principles which in practice operate together. Seligman, Parks, and Steen (2005) have argued that activities need to try to incorporate as many of the PERMA elements as possible and that balanced well-being relies on all of them being met in some way or another (see also Sirgy & Wu, 2009). Juslin et al. (2014) attempted to isolate features of BRECVEMAC in a laboratory setting. They manipulated the musical features of a single sequence (randomly altering loudness levels, selecting a deliberately sad musical structure, inserting a familiar excerpt, or violating melodic and harmonic expectations) to deliberately evoke four of the different mechanisms (brainstem reflex, emotional contagion, episodic memory, and musical expectancy). Participants experienced the intended emotions (surprise, sadness, happiness/nostalgia, and irritation) from these manipulations, but also experienced unanticipated responses. For instance, the version of the piece designed to evoke sadness through emotional contagion also evoked nostalgia. This impossibility of isolating features clearly highlights the multifaceted nature of emotional responses to music.

Separating out the dimensions of performing or music-making and music listening also belies the complexity of how music works in flourishing. For the performer, music listening is a near-constant. Some intriguing work has explored how emotions might be experienced in the live performance setting. Van Zijl and Sloboda (2011) found that personal involvement with emotions varied at different stages of preparation for a performance. Emotional playing featured in the earlier stages of preparation, while an expressive performance was found to comprise more detached and conscious communication, with a smaller proportion of experienced emotion. Hearing the music while preparing the performance seems likely to have contributed to some of the emotional response, but successful communication of such emotion through performance required more detachment.

Another factor which is missed in part by treating listening and music-making separately relates to the type of music. Most of the research on motivations for music listening and the functions of music listening for the listener tends to ignore the details of the music which evokes the response, and very few studies address even styles of music, let alone

specific pieces. The research on music performance largely ignores aspects of the music beyond the broad style within which the performer is working: for instance, jazz contains more improvisation and necessitates more communication and interaction between performers and a shared goal for a given performance, while classical music is more closely linked to the musical score and an interpretation which may be led by one or more of the performers but does not require the input of all those performing.

At a style level, there certainly are differences in engagement with different musical styles. For instance, younger adults prefer hip-hop/rap, DJ-based music, dance/house, R&B, indie and current chart pop, while older adults prefer classical, sixties pop, musicals, and opera (North & Hargreaves, 2007). Bonneville-Roussy, Rentfrox, Xu, and Potter (2013) found similar age trends. Preferences for Contemporary and Intense music peaked in adolescence and declined with age, preferences for Sophisticated and Unpretentious music were lowest in adolescence and increased with age, and preference for Mellow music remained relatively stable (see also Bonneville-Roussy, Stillwell, Kosinski, & Rust, 2017). However, style preference is rarely linked to any consideration of the well-being or flourishing elements of musical engagement (cf. Knox & MacDonald, 2016), beyond a small body of research focusing on the converse, i.e., the potentially negative effects of liking particularly "extreme" forms of music such as metal, rap, and hip-hop. This research tends to be motivated by the premise that aggressive music may generate violent emotions, but often finds that people drawn to such music experience very positive emotional responses to it (e.g., Thompson, Geeves, & Olsen, 2019), and long-term exposure to violent music does not generally desensitize people to violence (Sun, Lu, Williams, & Thompson, 2019). It thus seems likely that experience with such styles mediates any potential negative effects.

For performers, lifestyle is a major component of differences in well-being between different styles of music. It seems likely that classical performers experience a host of health problems, including burnout and psychological pressure (Pecen, Collins, & MacNamara, 2016), irregular sleep schedules (Vaag, Saksvik-Lehouillier, Bjørngaard, & Bjerkeset, 2016), and poor health habits (Panebianco-Warrens, Fletcher, & Kreutz, 2014). Vaag et al.'s research found classical, contemporary, rock, and country musicians all experienced a high prevalence of insomnia, while solo and lead performers, vocalists, keyboard players, and traditional musicians experienced greater anxiety and depression (Vaag, Bjørngaard, & Bjerkeset, 2016). Differences in the types of musicians affected by different health and well-being suggest that there are no clear patterns of negative results according to genre. However, a recent survey by Kenny and Asher (2016) suggests that metal and punk musicians were most at risk of accidental death or suicide, rap and hip-hop musicians were more likely to be murdered, rock musicians were more likely to experience accidental death, and health-related outcomes such as cancer or heart disease were most prevalent among folk, jazz, and blues musicians. The lifestyle associated with particular genres thus has particular consequences for flourishing or lack of flourishing.

At an individual level, the work on strong emotional experiences of music helps to redress this balance, but its conclusions are that there is very little about the music itself that can explain why it evokes such strong memories. Episodic memories which connect the listener to autobiographical events or people do account for individual listeners' personal engagement with specific pieces, but research has shown that this is likely to be highly variable (Hanser et al., 2016), even within relatively homogenous populations (Lamont & Webb, 2010). There is some evidence that generalized acoustical features can be found from the individual pieces listeners choose in situations such as pain relief (Knox, Beveridge, Mitchell, & MacDonald, 2011). Conversely, often performers have little choice in the pieces they play, so the focus at a more general level is perhaps warranted, but exploring strong experiences of performance makes it very clear that performers do have similarly strong connections to specific pieces that perhaps merit more attention in future work (Gabrielsson, 2011).

The Goals of Engagement with Music

This chapter has highlighted many positive outcomes of involvement with music, as well as some that are less positive. However, on balance, the positive effects of either or both music-making and listening can provide powerful motivators for engagement with music in a range of applied settings, particularly when people are undergoing challenging circumstances. This relates most closely to the cognitive appraisal element of BRECVEMAC and the functional aspects of Tay et al.'s (2018) model in terms of the functions which music can serve.

In acute short-term situations, music can be used as a relatively straightforward means of emotion regulation to enhance positive mood and provide distraction, as well as boosting people's sense of control. For instance, Dingle and Carter (2017) provided preliminary evidence that music listening was as effective as cognitive behavioral therapy to manage emotional states and cravings in smoking cessation. Similarly, Hallett and Lamont (2019) found listening to music helped participants maintain their longer-term exercise goals in a short-term decision-making situation: favorite inspirational music helped participants decide to undertake a planned exercise session as effectively as implementation intentions, and more effectively than controls. In induced-pain situations such as the cold-pressor task, music diminishes perceptions of pain (Choi, Park, & Lee, 2018), and in short-term settings such as post-operatively, music listening can be effective to divert attention (Finlay, Wilson, Gaston, Al-Duhaili, & Power, 2016).

Considering chronic conditions, music also has considerable potential to aid or ameliorate in a range of settings. Managing longer-term pain is an area that has received a great deal of attention in the literature, with evidence that music listening can also reduce pain intensity, unpleasantness, and anxiety levels in the short term (Finlay, 2014). Undergoing painful treatments for ongoing health conditions such as cancer can also be ameliorated through regular involvement in singing (Fancourt et al., 2016), and these

positive impacts are also found for caregivers and bereaved caregivers as well as cancer patients. Singing has similarly been found to be beneficial for mothers experiencing postnatal depression (Perkins, Yorke, & Fancourt, 2018). Conditions more likely to affect older participants have also been aided through music, such as living with Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease (Garrido, Dunne, Perz, Chang, & Stevens, 2018) and stroke rehabilitation (Särkämo, 2018), as well as tackling social isolation and loneliness in an aging cohort (Hays & Minichiello, 2005; Johnson et al., 2018; Lamont, Murray, Hale, & Wright-Bevans, 2018).

Returning to the theories of music and flourishing, the fact that musical activities of all kinds have the potential to evoke emotion and affect the participants in many *different* ways has been proposed as a main factor in its powerful potential. Särkämo (2018) outlines how music stimulates a widely distributed neural network which is related to emotion, arousal, and cognitive function. Lamont and Ranaweera (2019) introduced the new idea of repeated experience and a temporal dynamic approach to PERMA found in their data on musicians and knitters. Both began with initial phases of learning and teaching, through repetition of the process toward outcomes, and finally toward an overall sense of purpose, and most elements of PERMA were observed throughout, However, there were differences. While knitters had more social connections in the outcomes, musicians had stronger social connections in the learning and purpose phases. Longer-term engagement with music through these processes seems to be responsible for enabling participants to experience the "build" effect (Fredrickson, 2001) to enhance well-being over time. Music thus seems to have particular impact on flourishing due to its rich potential to engage on many levels and over time.

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CHAPTER

25 Visual Arts and Community Well-Being

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Abstract

This chapter reviews evidence of impact from visual arts experiences on human flourishing in communities: families, centers, neighborhoods, and municipalities. Evidence is increasing from US and international sources that suggests positive impacts of visual arts experiences on community well-being. However, the literature is widely varied in quality, methods, and audiences addressed, and much of it is non-empirical advocacy and theory. Some qualitative and quantitative studies exist, and some of these are methodologically strong. The authors compare a sample of studies to an existing logic model for well-being (Tay, Pawelski, & Keith, 2018) to identify mechanisms that future research designs might employ to increase robustness of evidence about visual arts' impacts on community well-being.

Key Words: visual arts, community, well-being, human flourishing, review, mechanism, impact, evidence, research design, model

Introduction

The literature on visual arts' impacts on human flourishing is international, increasing in quantity, and varied in quality, methods used, and audiences addressed. Much of it is non-empirical advocacy and theory, although qualitative and quantitative studies exist, and some are methodologically strong (Staricoff, 2004; Chemi, 2015). Here, we focus on impacts of visual arts experiences on well-being at the community level: families, centers, neighborhoods, and municipalities.

The authors developed a preliminary logic-model (inputs, mechanisms, and outcomes) before conducting searches through the Massachusetts College of Art and Design's "Search Everything" platform, using synonyms for well-being, visual art, and empirical (truncating all terms). Searches identified about 500 relevant articles, far more than this chapter could address; among them was Tay, Pawelski, and Keith's conceptual framework for the role of arts and humanities in human flourishing (2018; hereafter, the "original TPK model"). We sorted articles using categories from Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1994), selected those in the micro- and macro-levels, and adapted the original

TPK model to address group inputs, mechanisms, and outcomes to fit the community visual arts context, highlighting relevant factors for future research designs.

Traditionally, community well-being has been indexed by economic prosperity and numbers of participants at events or programs, but these qualities offer limited information for public and organizational decision-makers. Current research redefines community well-being as improved group capabilities achieved through mechanisms that leverage extant networks of social interaction, rather than improved neighborhood economies through replacement of original populations (Stern & Seifert, 2017). Recently, economic and socio-culturally informed approaches are beginning to align (Murdoch, Grodach, & Foster, 2016).

Challenges to Studying Art in Communities

The central challenge to testing theories about visual arts' effects on cultural well-being is whether experimental methods must be used or if alternative methods can be developed to determine causality and generalize. Other challenges include lack of arts funding (a low priority in the United States, although other countries have more dedicated resources) despite increasing demand (e.g., vulnerable cultural groups often suffer from social pressures resulting from globalization), and a dominant view among scholars that visual arts are primarily aesthetic objects. Sherman and Morrissey argue convincingly to recast visual art as primarily socio-epistemic, referring to "[art's] communicative nature, its capacity to increase one's self-knowledge and encourage personal growth, and its ability to challenge our schemas and preconceptions" (2017, p. 1). Art is a social, meaning-making process, and this focus offers a compelling way to understand art's role in social change.

State of the Evidence

Searches surfaced many advocacy studies (i.e., assertions without systematic evidence from data), theoretical studies of social capabilities and cohesion, and empirical research using various quantitative and qualitative paradigms. Some advocacy studies correlate art with well-being outcomes, while others offer loosely supported claims (Cleveland, 2011; Frost-Kumpt, 1998). Promising theoretical stances from interdisciplinary models developed by sociologists, political scientists, and economists connect visual arts impacts to designated social groups and could be used in experimental designs (Borrup, 2016; Gaffaney, 2017; Perry & Temple, 2015; Stern & Seifert, 2017). The empirical works, mainly qualitative case studies, often compare shifts in participants' thinking following arts experiences (e.g., after art-making in specialized settings, singular public events, or festivals) by analyzing patterns of self-reports from surveys and interviews. The best of the qualitative work, an evaluation by the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, rigorously analyzed its programs for quality (McClanahan & Hartmann, 2017).

Quantitative and mixed-methods studies are scarce. Typically, these are secondary analyses of large data sets and not experiments. Several descriptive demographic studies

identify numbers and locations of cultural nonprofits as resources for community well-being (Jackson, Kabwasa-Green, & Herranz, 2006; Markusen, Gadwa, Barbour, & Beyers, 2011). Correlational research by Stern and Seifert (2017) at the University of Pennsylvania is well-designed, implemented, and analyzed, and it does not over-claim. The only randomized, experimental study we found was in the Houston Public School District (Bowen & Kisida, 2019); however, it is of limited relevance to visual arts. It reports causal evidence from increased arts experiences in schools, including, but not distinguishing, visual arts; also, although reported impacts easily extrapolate to communities, indicators were of individual well-being (e.g., empathy, aspiration for attending college).

Claims of Community Well-Being Impacts from Visual Arts

The positive impact of visual art on communities has often been cited and celebrated but rarely demonstrated with scientific rigor. Arts generally (not specifically visual arts) are said to (a) improve student performance in the aggregate (Stern & Seifert, 2017), (b) reduce a school community's need to discipline students (Bowen & Kisida, 2019), (c) help groups cope with trauma (Broach, Pugh, & Smith, 2016), (d) develop a sense of pride, recognition, and human dignity in groups (Cleveland, 2011), and (e) drive revitalization of neighborhoods' economic prosperity (Grodach, 2011).

The claims, mostly unsubstantiated by demonstrated causal impacts or identified mechanisms, reflect a broad public perception that arts access is an important bonding mechanism in community/group settings. Future studies need to define mechanisms, specify the types of art experiences associated with positive impacts, describe contexts and locations of effective examples, and lay out how arts are implemented (Guetzkow, 2002).

The Original TPK Model Revised for Communities

We modified inputs in the original TPK model (Extensional Definition Objects "What"; and Functional Analysis Subjects "How"). In Table 25.1, we identify community-level inputs from studies identified in the searches to classify group type and participants (Who), type of arts intervention (What and Where), and method of study (How).

Mechanisms and Outcomes: Well-Being of Communities

We mapped elements of the research reviewed onto the community-level modifications we made to the original TPK model, retaining mechanism names (Immersion, Embeddedness, Socialization, and Reflectiveness) with slight changes to definitions and with outcomes shifted to emphasize groups.

Immersion

DEFINITION

In the original TPK model, immersion refers to the immediacy of engagement derived from arts experiences. For communities, *immersion* describes the sense of immediacy and

Table 25.1 Inputs of Community Arts Experience

Who	What / Where	How
Kinship groups: nuclear families	Therapy sessions, group art-making, & discussing images about issues / conducted in homes and clinical centers	Clinical case study
Museum visitors: general public, designated populations	Classes and specialized programs / conducted in museums	Action research; case study
Community organizations for general public, artists, children, youth	Classes and facilitated experiences / conducted in publicly and privately funded art centers, small studio residencies, and after-school community programs (e.g., Boys and Girls Clubs)	Collaborative action research; case study; secondary data analysis; surveys; mixed methods
Designated populations such as immigrants, elderly, aboriginals, at-risk youth, the incarcerated, general public, people with emotional, social, cognitive, and/or physical challenges	Classes, facilitated experiences, and discussion groups / conducted in dedicated art, residential, prison, and/or small centers and settings	Case study; surveys; mixed methods
Schools: children, youth, teachers, curriculum developers	Visual arts and/or arts-integrated instruction in classes, pre-service professional development in arts-based pedagogies, curriculum development using visual arts to teach citizenship and peacebuilding / conducted in PK–12 schools/districts	Mixed methods; curriculum analysis; qualitative observational study; secondary data analysis
Civic participation among general public, artists, designers	Conflict-resolution groups, community art projects (e.g., documentary films), content creation for community media outlets / conducted at art festivals and local community centers	Participant observation case study; secondary data analysis
Communities and neighborhoods including general public, policymakers, entrepreneurs	Research studies of cultural capital/socioeconomic status where arts are cultural assets for revitalizing neighborhoods, long-term, adult well-being assessment tied to early arts education experiences / conducted in community centers, research centers, businesses, and universities	Surveys; longitudinal secondary data analysis

relatedness that might lead to outcomes such as collective emotional flow states (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014), increases in average student engagement (Bowen & Kisida, 2019), and positive social outcomes such as improved health, higher levels of schooling, and increased security (Stern & Seifert, 2017). We found only one study to categorize as visual arts immersion at the community level. In that study, an analysis of semi-structured interviews with festival organizers suggests that visual arts experiences at festivals create well-being that bridges social divides and stimulates higher levels of community participation. The well-being effects are said to diffuse into the community via community arts centers, museums, and cultural events (Brownett, 2018).

Embeddedness

DEFINITION

In the original TPK model, embeddedness refers to psychological processes that promote positive individual health (e.g., self-efficacy, emotional regulation). For communities, we define embeddedness as the collective, interdependent perspectives, skills, and methods used within groups to promote well-being of the whole. Metaphorically, embeddedness is the "group brain." Groups achieve efficacy (well-being) through visual arts processes that lead to mastery of an organizational system. These processes include communicating (listening, responding, turn-taking, focused speaking/writing); and sustaining engagement, curiosity, flexibility, and openness (Bowen & Kisida, 2019); planning, scheduling, participating, and choosing among options; sharing resources and ideas; and checking for agreement and unpacking disagreement (Holland, 2015); compromising, committing, synthesizing, and analyzing; and balancing autonomy with relatedness (Sherman & Morrissey, 2017); practicing by turning toward difficulty (Perkins, 2009); understanding error, including accepting, using, and learning from mistakes (Hetland, Winner, Veenema, & Sheridan, 2013); defining goals and purposes; and visualizing meanings (Project Zero & Reggio Children, 2001).

Embeddedness through visual arts functions and is studied differently in small and larger groups. Usually studies by participant observers focus on small groups (e.g., people living and/or working in community arts, the incarcerated, or those in residential settings), while studies of large groups (e.g., neighborhoods and communities) use surveys and secondary data analysis.

EMBEDDEDNESS WITH SMALL GROUPS

In 1996, Jerome Bruner wrote that culture gives the "mind its shape and scope" (Blatt-Gross, 2010). Claims that learning occurs within and is dependent on cultural contexts, resources, and shared mental representations (Bruner, 1996; Donald, 2006) come from traditions of scholars such as Vygotsky, Dewey, Arnheim, and Langer, among others (Blatt-Gross, 2010). Case studies illustrate how art shifts group perspectives. In one, elementary student groups in Britain better understood the concept of national identity by learning

through visual arts–based projects (Collins & Ogier, 2013). The children's dialogue about images helped them look critically at their preconceptions and form new ideas as a group. Another case study suggests that art in the form of "participatory media" (i.e., communications produced by the community) was transformative; art prompted group dialogue that led to shared meaning in a community that had experienced trauma (Baú, 2018).

Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007; Immordino-Yang, 2016) use imaging to study how emotions relate to complex decision-making, seeing emotions serving as a rudder to guide transfer from logical reasoning to real world contexts of social decisions. They assert that " . . . our brains still bear evidence of their original purpose: to manage our bodies and minds in the service of living, and living happily, in the world with other people" (p.4). Huss (2016) explains that art's ambiguity presents an opportunity platform for conflict resolution and helps people reframe contentious issues. Humans more easily empathize with others' thoughts and feelings when these are expressed in images rather than words, possibly because images generate greater cognitive flexibility and alternate possibilities. Such flexibility facilitates integrative complexity (i.e., collaboration, innovation, conflict resolution, knowledge generation, group efficacy, and creativity) and allows individuals to feel empathy and overcome self-protective, rigid, and binary positions (Huss, 2016). Such an approach, Huss believes, stands in contrast to typical language-based processes where participants hold on to personal narratives that promote division.

Ethnographic case studies in smaller groups set visual arts as moderators for collective psychological experiences (i.e., they affect the size of the impact). These small-group studies suggest that visual arts support group flourishing because art making and encounters shift inward-facing tendencies to more empathetic, outward-facing stances. Such shifts increase complex thinking and knowledge about other perspectives, integrating these qualities into the group as shared information (Parsons, Gladstone, Gray, & Kontos, 2017; Huss, 2016; McGovern, Schwittick, & Seepersaud, 2018). In smaller groups, visual arts embeddedness generates co-constructed meaning and shared knowledge through dialogue. Four outcomes of arts-embeddedness in small groups include generation of shared knowledge, integration of multiple perspectives, creative innovations, and developed agency and mastery (Blatt-Gross, 2010; Huss, 2016; Immordino-Yang, Darling-Hammond, & Krone, 2018). Dialogue around visual art is hypothesized to lead to better cognitive processes such as cooperative problem-solving and cross-cultural understanding.

Perspectives, skills, and methods used in visual arts experiences correlate with the development of agency and mastery. Clinical case studies of art therapy suggest that visual arts help families maintain motivation, use positive self-talk, connect with feelings, communicate to feel understood, discuss emotional issues, make the invisible visible, and sustain collaboration toward shared solutions despite frustration (Maliakkal, Hoffman, Ivcevic, & Bracket, 2017). Evidence from vulnerable populations in specialized settings (e.g., low-income youth in after-school programs, arts programs for the incarcerated, museum workshops for the cognitively impaired, accessible studio spaces for individuals with

physical impairments) suggests how arts-based programs embed agency and mastery as mechanisms for effective recovery. Such programs help develop high-functioning citizens, increasing the well-being of the society as a whole. Participants report that visual arts programs in these settings helped them build agency and confidence toward advancing their educations, transferring those positive feelings to life after leaving the programs (Betts, 2006; Brewster, 2014; Evans, Bridson, & Minkiewicz, 2013; Overgaard & Sørensen, 2015; Reid & Anderson, 2012).

EMBEDDEDNESS IN LARGE GROUPS

Embeddedness for large groups is studied mainly through secondary analyses of large data sets. System processes include tracking national trends of arts participation, correlating early arts engagement with long-term indicators of thriving, and assessing well-being outcomes in neighborhoods. When combined in research syntheses, information from larger samples and multiple sources provides greater understanding of the well-being impacts that result from art (Stern & Seifert, 2017).

Government-sourced data sets and information provided by agencies, businesses, and cultural organizations (Stern & Seifert, 2017) are used by both advocacy groups and university researchers. Projects in several cities monitored well-being and identified indicators; researchers of these studies are seeking agreement about tools for sharing data and the identification, definitions, and indicators for measuring well-being at a community level (Perry & Temple, 2015).

Advocacy groups and scholarly research both use data sets provided by national surveys such as the *National Endowment for the Arts, 2008 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts* (Williams & Keen, 2009). The NEA and other government agencies fund research on the arts, and these data sets then are used to track arts participation across the United States. Government and nongovernmental organizations have cooperated to design surveys (Sarkar, 2019). A secondary analysis correlates arts programs for at-risk youth with greater civic participation as adults in voting, reading newspapers, and political involvement (Catterall, 2009). A 2008 report correlates early access to visual arts education with arts participation as adults (Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011). A central finding of this report is that indicators of cultural vitality, such as adult participation in arts as makers or viewers, drop as funding decreases for arts in schools.

More researchers are beginning to investigate possible connections between visual arts participation and initiatives such as taking action, impacting policy, and determining societal outcomes for entire neighborhoods and cities. As mentioned earlier, researchers used to describe well-being as economic growth, but those promoting neighborhood revitalization, gentrification, and beautification have been criticized for displacing original residents; program benefits accrued to outside visitors or new members of the community instead of to the original residents (Stern & Seifert, 2017). In the last twenty years, a new understanding of cultural ecology has emerged. More research considers needs of extant

communities where neighborhood and community development give current residents access to resources that develop capabilities as citizens. Such an approach promotes flourishing of the original residents and the systems that support them (Stern & Seifert, 2017).

Other findings suggest that city-wide arts events and festivals stimulate positive outcomes among those who participate. These outcomes include self-efficacy and increased participation in community events, which are thought to lead to a sense of personal well-being by providing community members opportunities to engage, build skills, and serve greater community causes (Borrup, 2016; Brownett, 2018).

Credible research by the University of Pennsylvania's Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP) examines culture's impact on social well-being in an ecology of neighborhoods. Living in clusters of geographically proximal cultural assets (i.e., nonprofit cultural providers, for-profit cultural firms, resident artists, and cultural participants) correlates with positive well-being outcomes, including a 14 percent reduction in the need to investigate child abuse and neglect, a 5 percent reduction in obesity, an 18 percent increase in children and youth scoring in the top stratum on English Language Arts and Math exams, and an 18 percent reduction in the serious crime rate (Stern & Seifert, 2017). The study suggests that social inclusion and access to resources provided by social networks in the cultural sector are mechanisms for community thriving; that is, there is evidence that the interrelatedness of multiple organizations throughout a community acts collectively as a mechanism for well-being. Of course, it could be that populations with those characteristics are drawn to those locations—the evidence is not causal.

In sum, the embeddedness of visual arts treatments in small and large groups may open up questioning within community spaces, providing a necessary rupture to fixed perceptions and inviting broader groups in the community to reconceptualize previously accepted norms (Parsons et al., 2017). As societies face complex problems of the twenty-first century, more studies are suggesting that art's embeddedness can be a mechanism for integrating multiple points of view, involving diverse groups of people, and finding innovative solutions to emerging challenges.

Socialization

DEFINITION

In the original TPK model, *socialization* refers to roles and identities assumed by individuals in communities; this mechanism in the original model ties more closely to groups than the other mechanisms. It addresses physical (bodily), psychological (mental), and subjective (felt) well-being. For communities, we translate these perspectives to *physical* structures and systems in the community, ways *sociology* judges quality of life in communities, and *subjective* ways that communities feel about themselves.

PHYSICAL PERSPECTIVE

Case studies document the restoration and revitalization that arts and culture bring to communities that were once run down (Florida, 2012; Frost-Kumpt, 1998). Analysis of past physical improvement through art development projects has sparked interest in defining indicators of cultural well-being and informing urban planning with culturally sound practices. The field has begun to embrace a social perspective on well-being that balances physical indicators of economic well-being with analyses of physical impacts on pre-restoration populations.

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Visual art can function as a mechanism to help communities form social cohesion, widely interpreted as indicating community well-being (Keyes, 1998). Social bonds created by externalizing inner human experience through visual arts build a sense of individual belonging within the group (Huss, 2016; Vallejos et al., 2017).

In addition to promoting belonging, visual arts are also associated with developing personal freedom within communities. Individual dignity and agency come from being noticed, heard, and valued by members of groups (Overgaard & Sørensen, 2015). Additionally, several studies looked specifically at those who may otherwise be marginalized on the basis of race, gender, age (McGovern et al., 2018; Jackson, Kabwasa-Green, & Herranz, 2006), or ability (Brewster, 2014; Reid & Anderson, 2012). Governments, too, have begun to recognize ways in which visual arts and cultural programs enable individuals to identify with each other across political and cultural differences. The creative arts, including visual arts, offer an effective means of encouraging and equipping local people to develop leadership skills and take up new roles and responsibilities in their communities (Stone, Destrempes, Foote, & Jeannotte, 2008).

Public health initiatives have also been effectively implemented through collaborative arts projects. For example, a qualitative study describes how a mental health charity's Support to Recovery Gallery was a vital addition to the local community. Artists commented that there was "'nothing else like it' and 'it has created an artistic community'" (Holland, 2015, p. 262). The opportunity for artists to be among other artists and engage in artistic conversations was particularly important for those working on their own, who reported reduced social isolation. Many exhibiting artists also expressed satisfaction in achieving personal goals, increased confidence, and improved self-esteem from exhibiting and selling their artwork in the local community.

It is not only the policies of governing bodies that shape society; people's commitment, accountability, participation, and understanding of collective life are foundational to citizenship (Parsons et al., 2017; Stanley, 2007). Secondary analyses suggest that arts participation, especially during formative years, correlates with higher civic engagement and social tolerance (Leroux & Bernadska, 2014). Some suggest that visual arts are gaining

ground because access, funding, and incorporating arts in schools and across the curriculum are linked with adult participation in civic life (Rabkin & Hedberg, 2011; Zakaras & Lowell, 2008). With calls by the United Nations to use arts education to support resolution of cultural and social challenges (UNESCO Second World Conference on Arts Education, 2010), public schools are exploring the possibility of teaching global citizenship skills with visual art (Cabedo-Mas, Nethsinghe, & Forrest, 2017).

SUBJECTIVE PERSPECTIVE

Subjective well-being obtains in a general sense of trust in others and feelings of safety within a population. Such social cohesion increases when groups share and create visual art together about personally meaningful topics (Williams, 1996). Study participants report feeling more fulfilled when they have a sense of belonging and connection in a community. This is evidenced as a sense of group identity and, in some communities, as ethnic pride (Jackson et al., 2006).

Reflectiveness

DEFINITION

In the original TPK model, *reflectiveness* is a personal process for developing values and worldviews. For communities, we adjust that to consider policy-making as the intentional, socio-cognitive process of developing group or community agreements that align principles and values with intentions and actions. Through visual arts, societies can create, change, and facilitate unifying principles that underlie their governance (Parsons et al., 2017; McGovern et al., 2018).

In prompting people to ask questions, visual arts are mechanisms for reflection, leading to more democratic processes of making meaning (Parsons et al., 2017). Visual arts and culture bring attention to ethical and moral choices and promote policies and programs around equity and inclusion (Stone et al., 2008). Visual arts may also disrupt power through visualizing and activating the voices of vulnerable populations, making their needs and opinions visible in ways that gain attention from decision-makers (Parsons et al., 2017).

A reflective practice that is increasingly common since the 1990s is cultural planning, “an inclusive process for engaging city residents, visitors, and representatives of arts and culture and other sectors to help identify cultural needs, opportunities, and resources and to think strategically about how to use these resources to help a community achieve its goals” (Boston Creates, 2015, paragraph 1). Advocates of cultural planning call for urban planners to use sound cultural policy as their foundation (Borrup, 2016) and argue for the critical need to develop a community’s cultural assets in partnership with local residents. This perspective views the city as an ecosystem composed of interactions among the built environment, economics, and ethical values (Stone et al., 2008).

National governments (e.g., Australia, England, and Canada), too, are recognizing the need to build society on a platform of culturally sensitive policy. Policymakers view arts and culture, including visual arts, as both vehicles (mechanisms) and indicators (outcomes) of well-being; they have also begun to tie the rights of citizens to their artistic expressions, especially for minorities and indigenous peoples who strive to have their cultures recognized, to have representation in cultural decision-making, and to take control over cultural self-determination (Stone et al., 2008).

Conclusion and Future Directions

"In contrast to the many measures we have of neighborhood divisions and deficits, we have relatively few measures of community strengths" (Stern & Seifert, p. I-6). Our review applies a promising model to existing visual arts literature addressing community strengths. Reframing the original TPK model to the community level offers smaller organizations information about how visual arts can help to refine programs and aid negotiation of research and funding partnerships to improve community well-being. Describing visual arts mechanisms that promote community well-being provides criteria to improve study designs (Perry & Temple, 2015). Identifying inputs (who, what, where, and how), mechanisms, and outcomes from a sample of existing studies allows researchers to better design future studies to generalize target concepts of importance beyond samples studied.

Future Directions

How Can Study Design Be Improved?

Most visual arts research on well-being at the community level has not been experimental or longitudinal; studies often are ethnographies of one-time-only events or programs, or they are correlations identified through secondary data analysis. Replications of existing findings using matched-controls in longer, quasi-experimental studies would strengthen confidence in conclusions, even if randomization is seldom feasible. Qualitative and mixed-methods studies could put flesh on the bones of specific quantitative outcomes, iterating toward ever more rigorous and useful findings.

What Are the Challenges of Funding?

Lack of funding limits study quality and longitudinal inquiries; in a competitive funding environment, community organizations out are reluctant to undertake research initiatives whose results may conflict with donors' values; and community organization leaders worry that research may undermine support for current initiatives (Evans, Bridson, & Minkiewicz, 2013). Past results of well-meant programs that gentrified once diverse areas following arts initiatives displaced residents and homogenized neighborhoods, which raises skepticism and fear of negative impacts among community leaders (Stern & Seifert, 2017). Unequal funding limits access to cultural assets, including schools, which reinforces socioeconomic stratification (Stern & Seifert). Politics and funding by corporations

also jeopardize the integrity of arts programs. Although smaller organizations can sometimes operate under the radar of politics and money (Cleveland, 2011), researchers need to partner with communities to reduce the effects of outside policymakers and influencers who use local groups to further their own ends (Stern & Seifert, 2017).

How Can Partnerships Support Quality Research?

Researchers will benefit from engaging with local stakeholders in ongoing reflection and dialogue about how visual arts and culture impact and respond to the well-being of communities. They need to partner with community members, value local expertise, and listen carefully to those who know their neighborhoods best. Positive outcomes consistently result when community arts are supported primarily from within by local organizers, resources, and capacities, and when leaders monitor equitable access and inclusion. Local ownership, participation, and program development correlate with more positive outcomes (Novak, 2019; Stern & Seifert, 2017). Within organizations, management can align institutional goals with those of the broader community (McClanahan & Hartmann, 2017; Overgaard & Sørensen, 2015). Personal relationships with residents developed through the arts lead participants to feel heard and valued. Constructivist approaches, especially visual and dialogic, lead to more sharing of knowledge and a sense of agency that participants report as positive experiences (Collins & Ogier, 2013).

What Can International Studies and Non-Arts Disciplines Offer to Improve Research Quality?

Future research may be informed by seeking models of effective research designs and funding mechanisms from other disciplines and countries. "It is important to distinguish the nature of the event—ongoing or episodic, individual or group, formal or informal, reason for engaging, how does engagement change over time?" (Jackson et al., 2006, p. 4). Excellent examples of high-quality research exist, and the field needs more of these to consolidate a case for the value of visual arts in promoting community well-being.

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CHAPTER

26 Film and Meaning

Keith Oatley

Abstract

Most films are narrative stories about intentions and the vicissitudes they meet. Two themes of this chapter concern the emotions of people who read or watch these stories, and the psychological principle of projection. Empirically, it has been found that engagement with fictional stories, especially when they are artistic, enables people to increase their emotion-based empathy and their understanding of others. Two kinds of story occur frequently in films: stories of love and of angry conflict. Films have their own language, some elements of which must be learned. In plays and films one projects aspects of what one knows onto circumstances on stage or screen. One play and seven films are discussed to explore themes of emotion and projection, and how these relate to happiness and societal well-being.

Key Words: fiction, emotion, narrative, projection, cooperation, film

Introduction: Two Themes

Most films are fictional stories portrayed as narratives. Watching films, reflecting on them, and discussing them with others may contribute to human flourishing and to a sense of meaning and purpose across the human life span (Singer, 2004).

Two principal themes in this chapter are how we might think of the emotions of people who watch films and the psychological principle of projection. As we proceed, I will emphasize these.

Lyubomirsky, King, and Diener (2005) suggest a useful heuristic. They say that well-being (meaningful human flourishing, often thought of in terms of the theme of emotional happiness) depends on three main factors.

The largest factor is genetic. Each of us is born with a certain temperament based on a random throw of the genetic dice. Our temperament tends to continue throughout life. Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) estimate that genetics contribute about 50 percent to our sense of well-being and general happiness. Plomin (2018) cites the same 50 percent proportion of who we are, in ourselves, and says that this amount of variation among individuals, within any society, is predicted by large groups of tiny influences from DNA sequences.

Extensive research on psychological genetics, reviewed by Plomin, suggests that the 50 percent proportion is approximately right.

For well-being, Lyubormirsky et al. (2005) suggest two other factors. They say that circumstance can contribute about 10 percent to well-being, and intention about 40 percent. Brown and Rohrer (2019) are very critical of these percentages. Perhaps they are correct. Imagine a married couple who decide to have a child (intention), then the child turns out to have a chronic disability (circumstance). Or think that if a war starts (circumstance) how a person's decision to become a refugee (intention) will change this person's life. This breakdown—10 percent, 40 percent—is based on averages, which may not always be helpful in analyzing any particular person's case. Again, that's where fiction can come in. Each novel or fictional movie deals with interactions between these two factors in a very individual way that can affect us emotionally, to help our understanding of the wide variety of others' circumstances and intentions.

The focus on intention is important. Bruner (1986) proposed that: "narrative deals with the vicissitudes of human intentions" (p. 16). He says it is a distinctive mode of human thought, about others and ourselves. So, in this mode, we come to understand intentions in the everyday world, in our lives with families, friends, and work colleagues. It's different from the mode of thought that Bruner called "paradigmatic" about mechanisms in the physical and biological world. In the paradigmatic mode, if one watches a film about astronomy, one comes to know more about its subject matter, stars and planets. The subject matter of narrative is people.

Narrative, founded in human intentions, is the way we think about human beings and what we are up to together in the social world. An argument of this chapter is that films and other kinds of fiction are in the narrative mode, based on human intentions, with vicissitudes (some based in circumstance) portrayed, so that characters in the narrative and those who engage with it experience emotions.

There are transfers, back and forth. We use what we experience in everyday life to understand novels and movies. In the other direction, engagement in imaginative fiction improves our understandings of ourselves and those we know.

In this second direction research has shown that engaging with fiction enables us to improve our understanding of other people in the everyday world, which psychologists call theory-of-mind (Oatley, 2016; Mar, 2018a; 2018b). This research started with associations found between the amount of fiction that people read with measures of empathy and theory-of-mind. A meta-analysis of these studies by Mumper and Gerrig (2017) showed small but consistent positive effects. By subtracting out other possible influences, such as people who are more empathetic preferring to read fiction, the implication is that the causal direction is that fiction enables people to improve their understanding of others (Mar, Oatley, & Peterson, 2009).

After the initial studies, experiments were performed in which effects of reading pieces of fiction were compared with those of reading pieces of nonfiction. Some of these

involved very short pieces of text, and effects of these very short pieces have not always replicated (Panero et al., 2017). There have also, however, been experimental studies of more extensive reading (e.g., Koopman, 2015), which showed that certain kinds of story can prompt pro-social behavior. A meta-analysis that included experimental studies, by Dodell-Feder and Tamir (2018), also found a small positive effect of fiction improving social cognition.

Although most studies of fiction's effects on social cognition have been based on reading, similar effects have been found for films and other visual media. So, Mar, Tackett and Moore (2010) studied how much time preschool children had stories read to them, had watched children's movie stories, and had watched regular children's television. With controls for children's age, gender, vocabulary, and parental income, time spent listening to stories from storybooks and watching movies was significantly associated with better theory-of-mind, as assessed in five tests. Watching regular children's television (with its variety of input) had no effect. In adults, Black and Barnes (2015) showed that improved theory-of-mind occurred from watching an award-winning television series (see also Black & Barnes, 2020). In a parallel way, Green et al. (2008) found that absorption in a story (called "transportation") happened similarly with stories told verbally or watched in films. Bormann and Greitemeyer (2015) found that people who played a video game introduced as a story improved their theory-of-mind, whereas people in a control group who were introduced to the game by asking them to attend to its technical aspects did not. So although plays, novels, films, television dramas, and video games have their own emphases, these different modes of story presentation seem to have similar positive effects on empathy and understanding others.

More people now seem to watch films and television series than those who read short stories and novels. Although they may do this to pass the time, or to escape from problems of daily life, when they do so, they are sometimes moved emotionally (Oatley, 2013), and this can prompt reflection: a step toward understanding others and themselves, a step toward well-being, as discussed in this *Handbook*'s Introduction (Chapter 1) by Tay and Pawelski.

Hogan (2003) analyzed stories from around the world that originated before European colonization. Three kinds appeared so often as to be almost universal. Each is based on an emotional theme. Most common is the love story, when, for instance, two lovers long to be united but are opposed by a powerful older male. Second, and almost as common, is the story of angry conflict: someone is in charge and someone else seeks to depose that person, so two people, or two sides, engage in a battle. Third most common is the story of emotional suffering in a community, which someone diagnoses and sacrifices her- or himself to save that community.

Empirically, based on reading, certain genres such as love stories and detective stories have been found to have the strongest effects in the improvement of social cognition (Fong

et al., 2013), probably because to love another person one needs to understand them, and to discover “who-dunnit” involves recognition of motives, often emotion-based.

Research on how we organize films into series of events that have meaning is by Zacks (2013). In terms of Hogan’s first two kinds of stories (with two emotional themes), in Hollywood, a frequent circumstance is presented that love overcomes everything; a second frequent set of events is one of angry conflict. Because we don’t always quite understand these emotional issues in others or ourselves, we are invited to reflect. Might it perhaps be that, in order to flourish, we need and want to understand more?

Moments in the History of Film

In terms of history, here follow some steps in the development of film.

William Heise, *The Kiss* (1896): This eighteen-second film shows a man and a woman engaging in a kiss. It was denounced because it was disgusting for this to be seen in public, even worse for it to be seen on film. But the action of two people engaging in a kiss has continued, in the movies, to become the principal sign of love.

Edwin Porter, *The Great Train Robbery* (1903): The first movie constructed from scenes filmed separately and then edited together is said to have been this twelve-minute-long film. The opening scene shows a train dispatcher sitting at desk. Two men enter his office: men with guns. The film is one of angry conflict. A posse is formed. It finds the robbers and kills them in a shoot-out. The final sequence is a medium close-up of the leader of the robbers firing every round of his pistol at the camera, at us. By contrast with reactions to *The Kiss*, *The Great Train Robbery* was mainly received with respect.

In 1918, Lev Kuleshov showed that to depict an emotion in film, it’s best not to use a shot of an actor’s facial expression but instead to use two shots: one of an actor’s expressionless face and then cut to what she or he is supposedly looking at (see Mobbs et al., 2006).

Let us now see how, in 1925, an emphasis on the theme of emotion enabled the making of a famous film (in the second category of universal stories found by Hogan: that of angry conflict). This film is *The Battleship Potemkin.* In a 2010 review of this film I wrote that:

> *The Battleship Potemkin* was directed by Sergei Eisenstein and written by him in collaboration with Nina Agadzhanova-Shutko. It’s a historical film that focuses on the mutiny, in 1905, of the crew of a Russian battleship against its officers, which was said to have been triggered by sailors’ objections to the rotting food they were given to eat. Really, though, the mutiny was part of a huge wave of unrest that spread through Russia at that time in response to repression by the autocratic czarist government. The unrest achieved concessions that included the establishment of a limited parliamentary system.

Psychologists who learn about film are told about apparent motion so that in consecutive frames taken by a movie camera of something moving, an image in one frame

is displaced a bit in relation to the image in the previous frame. When such successive images are viewed in the cinema, this something does indeed appear to move. Herein is the perceptual mechanism of the movies. But Eisenstein suggested something in addition. It is that, with editing, there can be juxtaposition of different scenes, and this produces a new kind of effect.

Battleship Potemkin begins with shots of sailors on the battleship getting out of their hammocks, and shots of a large piece of meat being hoisted from the ship's hold. Everyone sees that the meat is rotten. In an intertitle (in this silent film) we read what a sailor says: "The meat could crawl overboard on it its own." Here are the next five shots, with approximate durations in parentheses (from Oatley, 2010).

1. Medium-range shot of a side of meat and a row of sailors' faces looking away from the meat and scowling (one second).
2. Medium-range shot of the ship's doctor, who has been summoned to declare the meat fit to eat. He removes his glasses (four seconds).
3. Close-up of doctor's hands folding his glasses to make a double-lensed magnifying glass (two seconds).
4. Extreme close-up of doctor's eye seen through the folded glasses (two seconds).
5. Close-up of doctor's hand holding his folded glasses over the meat on which, without the aid of the magnifying glass, dozens of large maggots can be seen to crawl (two seconds).

So although, in this film, there is the usual effect of apparent motion, much of what's important takes place between the shots—in the minds of viewers. Eisenstein called this effect "montage." So film is a new language, which invites imagination. It may also be especially effective for prompting emotions (Westermann, Spies, Stahl, & Hesse, 1997). Film is not principally about action. It's an invitation to audience members to engage in a meaningful flow of emotions, within themselves.

In film, one might think nothing would be easier than to have an actor depict an emotion, such as disgust. But, as Kuleshov and Eisenstein realized, it's better to have audience members feel the emotions within themselves, by means of empathy. Bordwell (1985) wrote that in Eisenstein's films, narration is "the process of making manifest some emotional quality of the story" (p. 130; see also Bordwell & Thompson, 2013). So although narrative films involve sequences of story-events, other sequences occur, of emotions experienced by viewers.

Cutting, DeLong, and Nothelfer (2010) measured shot lengths in Hollywood films from 1935 to 2005. In *The Great Train Robbery*, shots last a minute or so. By 1945, this time reduced to an average of 6.8 seconds. In succeeding decades, it reduced further to an average of four seconds, approximately the length of time that, in ordinary life, we focus our attention on one thing, then switch to the next, to understand cognitively and emotionally what goes on in our social world.

Stories of Human Lives and Intentions

Although "fiction" is a word often used for plays, novels, films, and television series, it is not quite the center. Following Bruner (1986) a better way of putting the issue is "narrative stories about human interaction." These include not just pieces of fiction, but memoirs, biographies, and some kinds of history. So the real focus is not on etymology ("fiction," from Latin, means "something made"), but on the content. When one comes to engage with narrative stories, one comes to know more about other people and ourselves.

Whereas a recent movement has sought to prioritize technological education at the expense of humanities, findings that engaging human stories can improve understanding of others, show that this movement gets things the wrong way around. As Tomasello (2016, 2019) and his research group have shown, we human beings are distinguished from other animals by our ability to make arrangements with others, to cooperate, and to form cultures. In cooperation with people and groups, shared goals become more important than individual goals. Of primary importance is that, for any kind of cooperation, we need to understand the other person or people involved. Improved understanding of others, that can occur by engaging with narrative life stories, in plays, novels, films, and television series, particularly of the artistic kind, which are subjects of the humanities, enable us better to join with others, cooperatively, to improve our societies, including our technologies—to improve human flourishing.

As Vittersø (2016) has argued, although hedonic emotions occur, with the experience of pleasure, these can sometimes be rather self-involved. Much more important are emotions that involve other people which, says Vittersø, can "reflect a kind of 'complex goodness' and are considered eudaimonic because of their ability to facilitate personal growth (interest) and civic virtues" (p. 253). In a similar way, Oliver et al. (2018) argue that there is growing research interest in how the content of films and other media enables us to look beyond our own individual concerns, to experience emotional connections with humanity and nature.

In a further kind of outcome of empirical studies of reading, narrative literature that is artistic has been found not just to enable us better to understand others; it enables us to change within ourselves (Oatley, 2016; Oatley & Djikic, 2018); these changes are mediated by the emotions of people as they read the texts. Narrative life stories that are artistic invite us to reflect, and intentionally to change ourselves, by small amounts, that perhaps can cumulate.

With a toaster, one can make bread turn into toast. Artistic stories don't make anything happen. They are invitations that can enable us to understand others, and to change within ourselves.

The Love Story

Hogan (2003) found that the most common kind of story, around the world, was about love. It usually starts with the theme of projection: that a certain person is someone to whom a protagonist can devote her or his whole life. To understand how this works, we need to go back before the invention of film. At the age of about thirty-one, Shakespeare

had the idea that to discern deeper aspects of life, especially our emotions, one needs something that we would now call a mental model. He called this model: "dream."

The play he wrote based on this idea was *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In it, Titania, Queen of the Fairies, has some juice of "a little Western flower" dripped into her eyes as she sleeps, the effect of which is to have her fall in love with the first person she sees when she wakes. This person is Bottom, the weaver, who has been turned into a donkey. He sings a little song and she says:

> I pray thee gentle mortal, sing again.
> Mine ear is much enamoured of thy note;
> So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape
> And thy fair virtue's force, perforce, doth move me
> On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee. (Act 3, Scene 1)

In the modern world, here's how we might think about emotion. If you are an actor in a film, you have a script of words by means of which you depict emotion-based relationships with other characters. For emotions in our day-to-day lives, it's the other way around. We have, within us, nonverbal emotion-scripts for several different kinds of relationships, and for each kind, as Titania did, we find words to fit.

At the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* Shakespeare has Robin Goodfellow say to the audience:

> If we shadows have offended,
> Think but this and all is mended:
> That you have but slumbered here,
> While these visions did appear;
> And this weak and idle theme,
> No more yielding but a dream. (Act 5, Scene 1)

"Shadow" meant actor. In Elizabethan times, it meant both what it means today and also, then, a reflection as in a mirror. A word with which Shakespeare sometimes contrasts it is "substance," meaning the inner being. Might understanding inner substance be enabled by presentations of certain kinds of shadows?

How Film Works: The Theme of Projection

Helmholtz (1866) showed that visual perception is the projection of our models of the world onto cues from the retinal input. As explained by Oatley (2013), as we look at the world, details of only a small patch about the size of an American quarter, at arm's length, are available to the visual system in high resolution. Everything else is at very low resolution. Perception occurs by the visual system sampling from rapid successions of fixations from these tiny patches, to discern cues that prompt the construction and projection of

mental models, such as those of objects and people, arrayed in three-dimensional space. Our conscious experience is thus based on a simulation.

Hippolite Taine (1882) put it like this:

> So our ordinary perception is an inward dream, which happens to correspond to things outside; and, instead of saying that a hallucination is a perception that is false, we must say that perception is *a hallucination that is of the truth*. (p. 13, my translation, emphasis in original)

If we adapt this idea to film, we might say that watching a film is an inward dream, which corresponds to things suggested by the writer, director, and actors. And instead of saying that a hallucination is a perception that is false, we must say that engagement in a film is *a hallucination that is of the story.*

Some elements of the language of film must be learned. Sermin Ildirar (2008) studied people in a remote area of Turkey who had never seen film or television, and compared them with people who had five years' experience of viewing film and television, and people who had ten or more years of such viewing. She showed participants film clips that included elements of the language of film: jump cuts, panning, ellipsis, establishing shots, parallel montage. People with ten or more years' experience of film could understand the meanings conveyed by these techniques. Those with no film experience and those with only five years' experience could not understand the meanings of jump cuts, panning, and establishing shots, but could understand the meanings of ellipsis and parallel montage.

It is not, however, that when we engage in a story that we are just carried away in a dream. What art does—and this includes artistic films—is to enable us to see the day-to-day world differently. It's like having two eyes instead of one, or by moving a bit, being able to take two views of a certain subject. In Ingmar Bergman's (1982) *Fanny and Alexander*, not far into the film, Oscar Ekdahl, the manager of a theatre, makes a speech at the theatre company's Christmas party. He says:

> I love this little world inside the thick walls of this playhouse. . . . Outside is the big world, and sometimes the little world succeeds in reflecting the big one so that we can understand it better.

Within each of us is a little world—an inner world; the purpose of that, too, is to reflect the big world.

In other words, what a piece of art (such as a play or a film) does is to offer us a view of the world (a kind of dream, or simulation) that is different from that which we usually perceive, so that the association of these two views can invite us to see things more deeply, as Ekdahl says, "better."

Alfred Hitchcock's (1958) *Vertigo* is about whether sexual love is projection. This film is also about how an audience projects onto the story's events a conception that is incorrect.

The protagonist of *Vertigo* is Scotty, a San Francisco detective. The film starts with a roof-top chase (intention) in which Scotty slips and hangs by his fingers on a gutter (circumstance). A colleague tries to rescue him, but slips and falls to his death. Scotty is rescued. Traumatized, he retires from the police with an emotion-based phobia for heights. A college friend, Gavin Elster, asks Scotty to keep watch on his wife Madeleine who, he says, has been suffering mental absences, and seems to be possessed by her great-grandmother, Carlotta, who killed herself. Scotty falls in love with Madeleine and rescues her when she throws herself into San Francisco Bay. Madeleine tells Scotty she's had recurring dreams of a place with a white church and bell-tower, where she has never been, but which is connected with Carlotta. It's a Spanish mission 100 miles south of San Francisco. He thinks that, if she goes there, she will be freed from her suicidal impulses. They drive there and declare their love for each other. Then Madeleine runs up the stairs of the bell tower. Scotty tries to follow her but, because of his phobia of heights, cannot mount the stairs. Through a window he sees what he thinks is Madeleine's body hurtling down, then sees her lying dead below.

What has really happened is that Madeleine (a woman hired by Elster) has run upstairs in the bell tower, where Scotty cannot bring himself to follow. Elster, who is up there, throws his wife, whom he has killed—clad in the same grey suit that Madeleine wears—from the top of the tower. When we viewers see this, it's the turning point in the film: our model of the story world changes. For Scotty, the world changes again when he meets someone called Judy, who reminds him of Madeleine, so that he projects his erotic longing onto her.

Vertigo substitutes for our first projected interpretation of events a different one, of a crime that we did not know was being planned. An artistic aspect of this film is the question of whether projection of erotic fantasies may sometimes involve something in the nature of a crime.

Art

Collingwood (1938) proposed that an artist is strongly moved by an emotion which is important, but which she or he does not yet understand. A work of art is an expression of this emotion in a language, such as words, music, painting, or film. Its externalization, in this language, enables the emotion to be explored. Readers, listeners, or viewers, then, can also take part in this exploration, and come to understand the emotion better. According to this hypothesis (presented at more length by Oatley, 2003), we go to movies to be moved, and to understand our emotions more deeply.

Novels and short stories that seem to have the largest effect on enabling us to understand others are artistic. For many films we can say the same. Other kinds of films, which concentrate on displays of violence, can have an opposite effect, of promoting hostility to others (Bushman, 2016).

For artistic films, one can hardly do better than those of Yasujiro Ozu, for instance his 1949 film, *Late Spring.* In it, the twenty-seven-year-old Noriko lives happily with her widowed father, a university professor. Her aunt persuades Noriko's father to press Noriko to marry. Here the theme of projection is that the aunt and the father both project their desires onto Noriko. *Late Spring* invites us to put ourselves into the mind of Noriko. By artistic means that include gaps between scenes, we come to think of what marriage means for her. Because our interpretations of Noriko's face are experienced one at a time, they are like cuts between shots—juxtapositions of different aspects—linked to our mental model of her, and to the emotional progressions of the story. Our interpretations take place in our minds, as spectators, not on the screen. We viewers experience our own emotions, as we have taken on Noriko's goals and intentions. We remain ourselves but, metaphorically, also become Noriko.

Love need not involve projection. In Sarah Polley's (2006) film *Away from Her*, Fiona is married and getting old; she starts to suffer from Alzheimer's disease (circumstance). She decides (intention) that she should leave home, and live in a retirement facility, where she can be looked after. With the progression of her dementia, we viewers see Fiona's husband, Grant, experiencing the person he loves moving away from him. Polley, who adapted her film from a short story by Alice Munro, wrote: "I had thought when I finished reading it the first time, that with all of this fictional marriage's failures, this was perhaps not the greatest love story I'd ever read, but the only love story I'd read" (2007, p. xv). Grant had not been the most loyal husband. Twenty years previously, he'd had extramarital affairs. Now he's almost forgotten them. So there's a delicate balance, with a certain irony, which we viewers experience, between this kind of forgetting, and Fiona's demented forgetting as she goes to live in the retirement home.

Art, including the art of film, can be thought of as an invitation to become thoughtful, reflective, human beings who, by experiencing emotions that relate empathetically to other people, can improve their theory-of-mind, sometimes by reducing unhelpful projections, and increasing abilities to cooperate. In this way, artistic fiction can contribute to society in ways that, perhaps, enable more people in society to flourish.

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CHAPTER

27

Embodiment and Containment: Flexible Pathways to Flourishing in Theatre

Thalia R. Goldstein *and* Kristen Hayes

Abstract

Theorists and practitioners have long proposed that theatre directly causes human flourishing. Yet as with any proposal of far transfer (especially from an art form to an unrelated psychological outcome), evidence is mixed or absent, and multiple questions remain: What kind of theatre, and what kind of flourishing? Under what circumstances and for whom? In this chapter, the authors propose that regardless of type of theatre or other contextual variables, the act of *embodiment*, of physicalizing emotions, mental states, and situations that are different from oneself, and the safe *containment* of those emotions and mental states for actor and audience, can lead to higher well-being. Flexibly—across professional and amateur theatre, for actors and audience, drama, comedy, and musical—it is this embodying and containment that may be mechanistically responsible for theorized and found links between theatrical engagement and flourishing outcomes such as empathy, sense of community, and emotional control.

Key Words: theatre, containment, embodiment, flourishing, psychological mechanism, transfer

Flourishing in and through the arts has been conceptualized broadly and in a number of disparate ways.[1] This conceptualization is most typically expressed as a causal assertion such as "engaging in the arts leads to flourishing." Yet this simple statement belies a host of other questions: What are the differences between flourishing *in* and flouring *through* the arts? How should theorists, practitioners, and researchers conceptualize "flourishing" and/or conceptualize the "arts"? What does "leads to" mean, and how does it function, behaviorally and psychologically? Are there multiple, flexible pathways from theatre to flourishing, or only one trajectory?

Engaging in theatre specifically (either as actor or audience) has also been long hypothesized to directly cause human flourishing. Yet even with this narrower focus, significant questions remain for each piece of this hypothesis, summarized in Figure 27.1.

[1] We thank Amanda Feinberg for her assistance with writing this chapter.

What are the varieties of theatrical experience, types of theatre, and categories of engagement that may be associated with flourishing? What is the psychological or behavioral mechanism that causes transfer effects from theatre to flourishing, from flourishing back to theatre, or from a different, third variable, to both flourishing and engagement in theatre? What are moderating factors on this relationship: (1) demographics such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, experience, and personality, and (2) contextu(Bastién, 2016)al factors such as culture, time, and group dynamics in which the theatre occurs? Finally, what are the varieties of flourishing outcomes specific to the type of engagement theatre uses and primes? Is theatre directly causing flourishing? Or is theatre teaching other skills (such as empathy) that then lead to flourishing?

These questions are not unique to the idea that theatre leads to flourishing. Any activity which is theorized to lead to far transfer (that is, to learning and applying outcomes not directly related to the activity; Barnett & Ceci, 2002) requires deep thought into the relationship's moderating factors, varieties of activity, and varieties of outcomes. The arts are a prototypical model of this problem, as they are often defined not as existing for their own sake, but for another construct or learning outcome (Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles, 2000; Catterall, 2005; Winner, Goldstein, & Vincent-Lancrin, 2013; Winner & Hetland, 2004).

In this chapter, we focus on elements that are unique to engaging in theatre and hypothesizing flourishing from the theatre, separating the multiple ways in which individuals engage in theatre and delineating how each might have differential effects for flourishing. We then discuss ways in which individual differences and characteristics may have moderating effects in various contexts. Finally, we focus on mechanistic pathways from theatre to flourishing, and difficulties with making and using strong claims. We discuss research

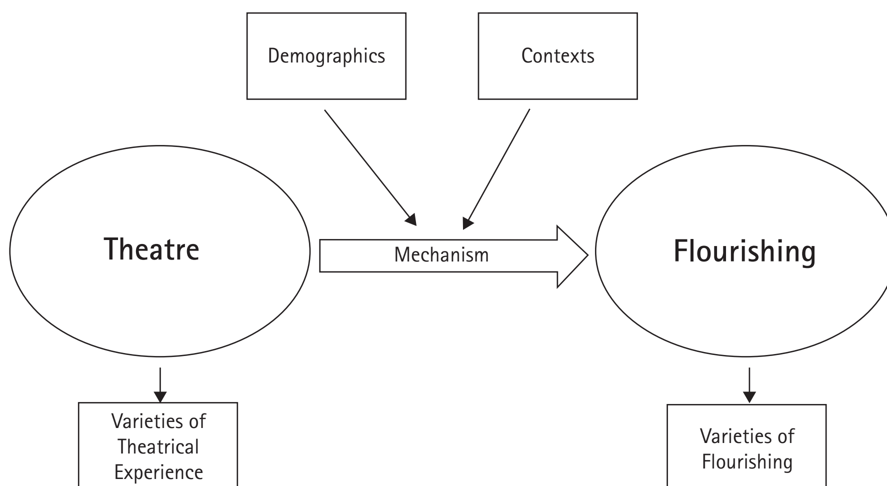

Figure 27.1. Factors in the relationship between Theatre and Flourishing.

where research exists, theory where it does not, and focus on open questions and future directions.

Historical and Theoretical Perspectives

A reader with a theatre background may now be asking themselves why such a chapter and model even necessary? Theatre writers and theorists have always deliberated flourishing, since the first writings on Western theatre. Historical perspectives support this debate, from Aristotle and Cicero to Shakespeare and modern theorists and advocates (Wiles, 2011; Woodruff, 2008).

Beginning with Greek theatre, the most important Western theatre up to Shakespeare's time, often playing to 25 percent of a city's population at once (Brown, 2001), the theatre has been theorized to move viewers into comprehension by allowing them to express their emotions fully in the safe space of an audience (Halliwell, 1998). Aristotle, while claiming that theatre was tragic and deplorable, also believed that engaging in theatre provided a unique and necessary catharsis by which citizens could transform to lead fuller and better lives (Aristoteles & Hutton, 1982; Halliwell, 1998). A focus on the cathartic experiences at theatres improving well-being continues today, yet research has found that it may not actually help. Focusing on expressing anger or sorrow may instead increase negative emotions or cause heightened negative rumination (Bushman, 2002).

Theatre has also been proposed as harmful to its practitioners (e.g., Magelssen, in press). Because theatre is often focused on stories of tragedy and painful emotions, it might be dangerous to experience as an actor (Barish & Barish, 1981; Freeman, 2016). Acting training is rife with stories of actor burnout, of professional actors who suffer immensely for roles (although this is often a promotional technique for winning awards from films; e.g., Bastién 2016). Almost no research that we know of has investigated these claims, although one study finds that burnout experienced by actors is not overly difficult to overcome, nor is it particularly related to any element of acting itself (Orberndorf & Goldstein, 2017).

While the debate continues, we will join the majority of the literature in focusing on the hypothesis that theatre leads to flourishing for both actor and audience member. We propose that theatre provides flexible, multiple, unique experiences to encourage the expression of emotion and the exploration of human psychology specifically. These experiences then lead to flourishing in the actor and the audience. Regardless of performance goals, hierarchy, age, or level, theatre can provide two key psychological mechanisms to flourishing: (1) a safe space to engage with emotions, mental states, behaviors, and situations (containment); and (2) a technique to personalize and experience such states (embodiment). These two key elements exist across varieties of theatrical experiences. This flexibility in context allows for flourishing under many circumstances. However, their potency in regard to evoking human flourishing may vary.

Varieties of Theatrical Experience

Aesthetic, Informative, Transformative

Different types of theatre (i.e., whether is the goal of a work is aesthetic, informative, or transformative) may provide different types of emotional or cognitive containment for audiences and embodied experiences for actors.

Aesthetic theatre is theatre for its own sake, meant to provide an aesthetic experience for individuals to reflect on beauty, truth, or universality of human experience. Theatre attempts to be imaginatively rich and aesthetically compelling (Jackson, 2005). In defense of theatre's intrinsic value (not simply as a conduit for other outcomes) McCaslin (2005) writes that the most important element to teach about theatre is: "it is an art and should be taught as an art form first and foremost" (p. 12). This aesthetic experience may produce (for both actor and audience) a sense of awe, a positive aesthetic emotion linked to a sense of well-being (Keltner & Haidt, 2003; Rudd, Vohs, & Aaker, 2012).

Informative theatre is theatre meant to teach the audience about a particular experience, time, or place using simulation and abstraction of the social world (Mar & Oatley, 2008). Storytelling with live humans in front of a live audience may activate autonomic psychological processes such as empathy (Goldstein, 2017). Thus theatre may serve as an entry point into different worldviews and perspectives, and ultimately lead to reflection or dialogue about the self, communities, or other cultures (Taylor, 2003). Various forms of Theatre for the Oppressed (Boal, 2000), or activist theatre, aim to inform audiences of and allow performers to experience what they may not otherwise have access to, such as homelessness, refugees (Day, 2002), genetic testing (Nisker et al. 2006), war (Redington, 2016), or hunting (Heide, Porter &, Saito, 2012).

Transformative theatre purposes to move the audience to action by changing their minds and actions about a situation. Beginning with Brecht and others, theatre is proposed to spur the audience to revolution (Behan, 2000; Leach, 2004; Symons, 1971). By seeing realities on stage in their harshest light, audience members should want to change their cultures and societies. Similarly, actors may be transformed by participating—either implicitly, through their engagement with the words, characters, and emotions they are portraying, or through deep understanding of a particular topic as a result of portraying it for an audience.

Actor and Audience

Within each of these goals, questions of what theatre is and what it does for people might be answered differently depending on whether the participant is a creator/practitioner of theatre (actors, directors, designers), or a receiver of theatre (audience). Audience members engage in theatre through reflection and analysis, while actors engage through embodiment and practice. Both may experience safe containment of their emotions, behaviors, and personality in different ways. Actors can learn about a variety of experiences and emotions through their portrayals, without facing consequences.

Theatre can provide audiences a safe space of a contained emotional experience without immediate consequence—for example, experiencing disgust or a truly frightening moment from a horror scene without the reality of having to escape from danger (Hanich, 2011; Menninghaus et al., 2017; Rozin, Guillot, Fincher, Rozin, & Tsukayama, 2013). Emotions can be felt and processed, alternative mental states understood, and cultural and group phenomena explored, but then allowed to be left behind once the show is over.

For the actor, the multiple and flexible ways in which theatre can be practiced suggest a causal link from theatre to flourishing regardless of goal. Actors can be generative in improvisation or interpretive in understanding the work of others. From informal and commercial theatre, performers can explore other perspectives (Holdsworth, Milling, & Nicholson, 2017). Whether in performance or rehearsal, oriented around a common goal or individual-focused, flexibility in actors' experiences can provide the benefits of embodiment regardless of many other adjustable variables.

For the audience, theatre is available to all ages, across developmental and ability spectrums. There is theatre for babies (Fletcher-Watson, 2013, 2016; Goldfinger, 2011), young children (McCaslin, 1971; Reason, 2010; Schonmann, 2006), adolescents and adults, = Autistic (Fletcher-Watson, 2015) and Down syndrome audiences. This flexibility across practices, applications, populations, and levels of agency allows for a range of contexts and opportunities to create safe containment and therefore possibly flourishing.

Yet multiple persistent questions remain: Within varieties of types and experiences with theatre, what are common and underlying factors that allow for or cause transfer to flourishing? Is it simply enough to be in the same space where something theatrical is occurring? Are there practice mechanisms that cause flourishing? Is it enough to experience containment, or to embody emotions? Could other factors, such as empathy, emotional catharsis, engagement with others, be necessary or specifically affected by theatre? If embodiment and containment are factors within theatre that can lead to empathy, catharsis, or a sense of community, is theatre merely a set of contexts for eudaimonia? And within those mechanisms, are there moderating factors of individuals or contexts that change, or mediate (that is, partially explain) the relationship between theatre and flourishing?

How Theatre Causes Flourishing

Because theorists, practitioners, and writers in theatre have for so long seen anecdotal exemplars of flourishing in their own lives, students, and stories, there is a general assumption that theatre causes, and has always caused, flourishing. For many practitioners and some current arts advocates, theatre checks all the boxes and key tenets of flourishing (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Tay, Pawelski, & Keith, 2018). It is proposed to engage personal growth and autonomy (Barba, 2002; Hughes & Wilson, 2004), self-acceptance (Dubost, 2002; Manna, 1989), and the growth of human community (Byam, 1999; McCarthy, Ondaatje, Zakaras, & Brooks, 2004; Taylor, 2003). Theatre causes emotional

understanding (Goldstein & Winner, 2012), and interpersonal connections (Mulinix, 2018, Wamsley, 2013). Theatre requires emotion regulation, competency, and relatedness (Carroll, 2015; Wamsley, 2013, taking on roles and identities (Blair, 2007; Tust-Gunn, 1995), and reflecting on oneself (Reason, 2010; Tust-Gunn, 1995). Yet many of these proposals and theories do not have experimental, causal, or even strong empirical evidence (Winner et al., 2013). Often there is a "black box" of causal change—a lack of clear mechanism for *how* theatre causes flourishing.

As a result, there is sometimes a grasp onto any psychological theory that sounds as though it would hold an appropriate explanatory value for the value of theatre, without a full realization or understanding of that psychological construct. The application and misapplication of theories rely on multiple factors: the misunderstanding of evidence behind a theory, the misappropriation of the theory beyond what the researcher believes it to hold, and the preservation of a theory that the field of psychology has shown false, or has moved away from. It is therefore only carefully that we propose our psychological mechanisms for flourishing from theatre.

While still in need of significant work, the two psychological constructs we believe hold the most promise for being mechanistically, causally able to link theatre and flourishing are embodiment, or the connection and engagement between the mind and body, and containment, or the ability to provide a safe psychological and physical space to contain emotional expression, exploration, and control. Both occur within the context of theatre in a way that is unique to theatre spaces. Both allow the theatre's practitioners and audience members to engage with difficult topics and emotions. And both may provide the practice of skills such as mindfulness, community, empathy, and emotional control that can be learned, can be applied outside of theatre, and can help give audiences and actors a sense of flourishing.

Embodiment

"Embodiment" can refer to a variety of different concepts: how humans use language about the body to describe mental states and therefore form thinking (Gibbs, 2005); the fact that psychological processes are influenced by sensory and motor systems of the body (Glenberg, 2010); the fact that feeling an emotion is the process of understanding what is happening in one's body (Prinz, 2004); or the idea that engaging in many activities that use psychological processes also use bodily processes simultaneously—the body is part of the activity (Lewis, 2000; Russ & Dillon, 2011).

Embodying an action can change cognitive function. When physical activity or gesture is integrated with mental activities, such as learning about math, language, or science, children learn more than when engaging mentally without the body (Goldin-Meadow, 2005; Goldin-Meadow & Beilock, 2010; Mavilidi, Okely, Chandler, Cliff, & Paas, 2015; Mavilidi, Okely, Chandler, & Paas, 2016; Mavilidi, Okely, Chandler, Domazet, & Paas, 2018; Toumpaniari, Loyens, Mavilidi, & Paas, 2015). Embodied practice of skills means

that individuals are better able to learn those skills (Gallagher & Lindgren, 2015; Madan & Singhal, 2012a, 2012b).

Given the physical nature of theatre, theatre actors may benefit in a similar manner. As actors use their bodies to explore and discover a character, and then determine the best way to show that character to an audience, they may be learning about others' mental and emotional states, and their own mental and emotional states, in a direct and deep way. Learning about cultures through embodied means may provide personal understanding. It is this learning that may then lead to higher levels of empathy, interpersonal understanding, mindfulness, and other aspects of well-being.

For an audience, the path through embodiment is not as clear. There may be unconscious mimicry of actors' emotional portrayals occurring in the audience (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999), and we know that audience members have physiological reactions to watching live performance (Bläsing et al., 2012; Jola, Ehrenberg, & Reynolds, 2012; Latulipe, Carroll, & Lottridge, 2011; Martella, Gedik, Cabrera-Quiros, Englebienne, & Hung, 2015). Yet audiences are not having the same type of embodied experience as actors. Immersive theatrical experiences may provide a more embodied experience for audience members as they move throughout a space to experience a performance, which may heighten emotional reactions and mental-state processing (Biggin, 2017; Dinesh, 2016, 2019).

Furthering the idea that embodiment may be a pathway from theatre to flourishing, many well-being practices emphasize bodily awareness and integration of body and mind. Mindfulness teachings and mindfulness-based stress reduction focuses on paying attention to the body and its signals (Grossman, Niemann, Schmidt, & Walach, 2004; Kabat-Zinn, 2009). Many theatrical training techniques use body awareness, such as the Alexander Technique, to focus on the body's relationship to mental and emotional states (Gelb, 1995). This integration of body, expression, and cognition is unique to theatre and has, importantly, a clear start and endpoint—it is contained.

Containment

Containment is a critical piece of the larger idea of theatre as a "safe space," that is, a space where emotions can be expressed without fear of belittling or bullying, where ideas can be explored without real world consequences, and where risks can be taken for an individual's identity and then left behind at the end of the theatre occurrence. The space held by theatre could therefore allow for emotional exploration and understanding, again leading to a better sense of community and self, and therefore flourishing.

The idea of theatre as containment has been explored in theoretical writing, often implicitly, in a few ways. Space can be thought of as an explicit physical setting in which people engage in activities, as a process itself, and as a performative location that the people create together (Lutterbie, 2001). Such space is protected, cathartic, and insular (Hunter, 2008). In a contained space, theatrical exploration can test new and potentially dangerous ideas before taking them out of a space to the real world (Lumsden, 2000).

Theatre makers often have a goal of group familiarity where experimentation and innovation can take place for both actor and audience. Risky creativity and new performance are proposed to follow (Hunter, 2008).

Theatre can also be conceptualized as a space for fluid, different and non-assumptive meaning-making to potentially occur—a space as a "time bound affective experience" (Sloan, 2018). Theoretical writing describes theatre as healing through the space's separation from the traumatic reality of a situation in order to process it (Biggs, in press). Containment could also be interpreted as the audience's experience, such as in theatre of war where the audience is confined to the space with a forced, but also safe, confrontation (Lodewyck, in press). The cognizing of traumatic and difficult emotional events through writing about them helps heal trauma (Pennebaker, 1997), and repeated theatrical performance of traumatic events could cognitize emotional responses with enclosed beginnings and endings.

In psychology, the therapeutic room is often thought of as a safe space to explore and work through difficult emotions. Theories from psychoanalytic traditions and modern research support that both the therapist and physical room act as safe containers for the patient (Case & Dalley, 2014; Maliphant & Horner, 2016). For trauma and other issues, the therapeutic space provides specific spatial and temporal boundaries, free from interruptions, and linked with confidentiality (Bondi & Fewell, 2003). The psychological "container" and stability of the room contribute to trustful clinical relationships (Punzi & Singer, 2018), leading to a proposed healing process (Goodwin, 2006; (Brosan, Reynolds, & Moore, 2007)).

Similarly, fiction has often been thought of as a safe space for practicing emotions and exploring other situations through its use of mental simulation (Harris, 2000; Mar & Oatley, 2008). Fiction is specifically formatted to evoke certain emotions in audiences (Mar et al., 2011; Oatley, 1999, 2002), which can be put aside by putting aside the book or movie that caused it. Pretend play, too, is often thought of as a safe space for children to learn new concepts, act out new ideas, and feel emotions that they would not otherwise want to feel (e.g., pretending to cook a baby and then feeling horrified at a cooked baby—or delighted at a cooked baby!). This play allows for the modulation of emotion (Harris, 2000; Hoffmann & Russ, 2012; Moore & Russ, 2006; Russ, 2013). These theories of fiction and play are applied to theatre as well, although no work we know of has specifically tested these hypotheses.

Moderating and Mediating Factors on the Relationship between Theatre and Flourishing

While embodiment and safe containment are flexibly applied in theatre, personal and contextual characteristics likely moderate their efficacy for flourishing. Two primary types of moderating characteristics are: demographic characteristics of the individual, such as sex, age, personality, previous experience, type of acting technique, interest in theatre,

or the types of theatre previously experienced; and contextual variables, particularly the context in which theatre is happening. Individuals can participate in theatre as actors, producers, performers, or other members of a theatre space. However, theatre can also reflect the stories of a community and illuminate similarities across different groups. At a cultural level, theatre portrays potentially unfamiliar cultures or explains a particular cultural or time-centered phenomenon. Other considerations are the broader context of the time in which the theatre takes place, and the ways groups interact. Any of these specific experiences may enhance, prevent, or help explain some of the relationship between theatrical engagement and flourishing.

Not only may theatre differentially lead to flourishing based on individual characteristics, but perhaps there is also an interaction between theatre topic and individual-level variables. Previous experience with theatre, individual levels of empathy, emotion regulation, emotional intensity, affect intensity, expressiveness, or other emotional factors could moderate this relationship, or even partially explain it. There are almost endless hypotheses here. Perhaps for those with high levels of empathy, watching theatre can change individuals' sense of well-being about themselves, but for those with low empathy, it may make them feel worse as they reflect on their inability to connect with others. Perhaps with moderate levels of affect intensity and reactivity, theatre has a strong effect, but with very low or high levels, theatre either does not affect audiences or has such an effect that the audience member becomes deeply overwhelmed. Perhaps theatre reflective of distant human experiences actually prevents flourishing because it is not close enough to people's lived realities. Perhaps well-trained and talented actors feel a sense of flourishing as a result of theatre, but non-talented actors cannot.

Types of Flourishing Specific to Theatre

Flourishing can encompass many behaviors, mental states, emotional states, feelings, and senses. So where specifically within flourishing does theatre lead? The causal pathway from theatre to flourishing may end at a general sense of flourishing, but more likely at specific psychological constructs within flourishing, separable both theoretically and empirically. Elements of social connections have been studied in relation to theatre, such as empathy and theory of mind, as well as personal and emotional skills that are associated with positive outcomes, such as self-concept, emotional control, and mindfulness. Generally, empirical evidence is mixed, but there are theoretical and small findings to suggest these connections should exist. Previous work has found that theatre games, readings, and improv can lead to a higher sense of fun, relaxation, group relationships, and a sense of resilience for medical students (Nagji, Brett-MacLean, & Breault, 2013). For empathy and higher levels of understanding of others, theatre has long been proposed to serve as a conduit to be able to feel the emotions of other people, and to therefore sympathize with those emotions (Verducci, 2000). Some evidence supports this theory for medical students (Dow, Leong, Anderson, Wenzel, & Team, 2007), and elementary and high school

students (Goldstein & Winner, 2012; Goldstein, Wu, & Winner, 2009; Ng & Graydon, 2016). It is important to note that empathy may lead to well-being by way of connection with others (Davis, 2018), and is not necessarily a component of flourishing on its own (Bloom, 2017a, 2017b).

A second construct within flourishing that theatre might positively affect is mindfulness. Improvisational theatre in particular requires its practitioners to be fully present and paying close attention to a particular moment onstage (Spolin & Sills, 1999). Theatre is immediately engaging (McConachie & Hart, 2006), which may create an environment in which audience members and actors are fully present, with no distractions, mind wandering, or multitasking. From being in a mindful flow state, audience and actor may experience flourishing (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013; Ivtzan & Lomas, 2016).

Third, we look at self-awareness and self-concept. Some evidence supports the hypothesis that theatrical improv can help children gain self-concept (DeBettignies & Goldstein, 2019), reduce social phobia, and increase self-efficacy, particularly in their willingness to make mistakes (Felsman, Seifert, & Himle, 2020. Transformation and learning may occur intrinsically, and only upon reflection would an audience member or actor recognize that they have been absorbed in a performance, reflective of the performance, and therefore changed by the performance (Brown & Novak-Leonard, 2013).

Finally, the ability to control and think about emotions in oneself and in others may result from theatre (i.e., thinking about how emotions are processed, regulated, and expressed). There are positive links between knowledge, control, and well-being (Sanchez-Alvarez, Extremera, & Fernández-Berrocal, 2016). Some previous work has also shown that theatre may lead to higher levels of emotional knowledge and control, but this study was in children (Goldstein, Tamir, & Winner, 2013).

Taken together, mindfulness, connection to others through empathy, a better understanding of the self, and emotional control and understanding seem to be the best potential flourishing outcomes produced by theatrical engagement.

Conclusion

Embodiment of emotions through portraying them to an audience and having a set contained time and place to experience those emotions seem strong candidate pathways between engaging in theatre of all types and experiencing a variety of flourishing outcomes. Either as an audience or an actor, regardless of whether one is performing a Broadway play about a tragic family, or devising a work on your own personal history, theatre may lead to a greater sense of self-concept, a feeling of mindfulness about your body and mind, and a sense of connection with others. These pathways—from theatrical experience, through embodiment and containment—to flourishing outcomes are the most theoretically and empirically supported, and most likely to inform the hypothesis that "theatre causes flourishing."

A central question still remains: *Which activities* within theatre lead to *which outcomes* within flourishing? It cannot be the case, for example, that improv classes lead to empathy in the same way that a scripted piece of theatre, deeply studied, about a culture unlike your own can foster empathy. Reverse causality (that having higher levels of empathy leads someone to register for an acting class) may also be true. The flexibility within theatre—differences in directors, actors and topics—may affect how and to what extent individuals flourish within theatre. Yet amidst this flexibility, we consider the key mechanisms to flourishing—embodiment and containment—to consistently appear. While the idea that theatre leads to flourishing is not new, the study of its mechanisms will allow us to demystify it and understand how it differentially affects audience and actor. Deconstructing how theatre works gives more insight into its importance. Future study of theatre will hopefully provide evidence of its benefits, and if supported, interventions in other contexts can incorporate mechanisms of theatre (embodiment, containment) to promote flourishing.

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CHAPTER

28 Philosophy and Well-Being

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Abstract

Abstract: This chapter aims to provide the reader with an understanding of philosophical research on well-being in the Western analytic tradition. For the last several decades, philosophical theories of well-being have been divided into "the big three": hedonism, desire satisfactionism, and objective list theories (Parfit 1984). This tripartite classificatory system now seems limited, however, and some recent research suggests dividing philosophical theories of well-being into two types: enumerative and explanatory. The authors follow this line of thought here. Under the heading of enumerative theories, they discuss the most popular monistic theory on offer, hedonism, as well as pluralistic theories. They conclude from their review of enumerative theories that explanatory theories (theories that explain why pleasure or the other potential items on the list of goods do indeed contribute to well-being) also have an important role to play. Under the heading of explanatory theories, they discuss perfectionism, desire satisfactionism, and value fulfillment.

Key Words: Aristotle, desire satisfactionism, eudaimonia, hedonism, human nature, objective list theories, perfectionism, philosophy, value, well-being

Introduction

Philosophers have been thinking about well-being or something like it ever since there have been philosophers, which is a very long time indeed. In Ancient Greece, the birthplace of Western philosophy, philosophers advocated different paths as the best ways of life for human beings. The Stoics taught equanimity, the Epicureans pushed pleasure, the Cynics counseled simplicity, and Aristotle advised a life of virtue. This long history of reflection and debate has not resulted in consensus about the nature of a good human life, but it has produced nuanced understandings of the pros and cons of various ways of thinking about the subject. We hope in this chapter to convey some of this nuance in a way that will benefit the growing field of positive psychology. Given the diversity and multidisciplinarity of research on well-being, we take our main contribution to be a critical exploration of options, rather than an argument for a specific theory. Some philosophical theories that do not currently have much uptake by social scientists may serve

as inspiration for future work, while some of the objections raised to popular theories of well-being stand as a warning against focusing too much on a single aspect of well-being.

Before we begin, being analytic philosophers, we cannot resist a point about terminology. Various terms are used for the main topic in the arena of positive psychology: well-being, happiness, flourishing, *eudaimonia*, and "the good life." These do not all mean the same thing, and some philosophers take themselves to be theorizing about *one* of these concepts, but not the others. Many philosophers these days understand "happiness" to be a psychological state, such as pleasure or positive emotion, while "well-being" refers to what is good for a person in a broader sense that may include (but is not necessarily limited to) happiness (Haybron, 2008). Philosophers who specialize in the Ancient tradition tend to reject this terminology and to take "happiness" to be equivalent to "flourishing" and, therefore, a good translation for the Ancient Greek word *eudaimonia* (Annas, 1993). Terminological difficulties are intensified by the fact that psychologists and philosophers use words (such as "eudaimonia") in quite different ways. Because we will be discussing a variety of authors who do not agree about terminology, our strategy here will be to use the word "well-being" for the broadest sense of the good for a person (as opposed to the moral good, or the aesthetic good) when we are speaking in our own voice, and to acknowledge when we are following someone else in using a different term.

Classifying Theories

According to the recent tradition (dating back to Parfit, 1984), philosophical theories of well-being fall into three types: hedonism, desire satisfactionism, and objective list theory. Hedonism takes well-being to consist in pleasure and the absence of pain. Desire satisfactionism takes well-being to consist in the satisfaction of desires, or those desires one would have under certain conditions (such as being fully informed). Objective list theories take well-being to consist in the possession of goods such as friendship, achievement, knowledge, and pleasure. These three theories have long traditions of their own, and we'll say more about each in what follows.

But first, we want to point out that this traditional taxonomy is problematic in at least two ways. First, the taxonomy leaves out several important theories. L. W. Sumner's (1996) life satisfaction theory, according to which well-being consists in an authentic (informed and autonomous) affective and cognitive appraisal of one's life overall, is not represented. Perfectionism, the modern inheritor of Aristotle's theory, according to which well-being consists in the excellent exercise of your human capacities, is also not captured by Parfit's list. Second, as Roger Crisp and others have pointed out, different theories of well-being may be trying to answer different questions, and this taxonomy obscures this point (Crisp, 2006; Fletcher, 2013; Woodard, 2013). Crisp draws our attention to the

distinction between two questions one might ask about well-being, and hence two levels of theory providing answers to those questions. The first—and prior—question is something like: "Which things make someone's life go better for them?" . . . [The answers we receive to this question] we might call *enumerative* theories of well-being. The second question is: "But what is it about these things that *make* them good for people?" . . . And all the answers to the second question we might call explanatory theories. (2006, pp. 102–103)

Objective *list* theories, in Parfit's taxonomy, seem primarily concerned with enumerating the things that are good for people, while desire satisfactionism seems primarily concerned with offering an explanation for why things on a list are good things for a particular person (that is, they are good for that person because he or she desires them).

Crisp (2006) is sure to remind us that the distinction between enumerative theories and explanatory theories is probably not a sharp one, as subsequent discussion of it shows (Lin, 2017). Often, theories of well-being are trying to answer both questions, or they don't distinguish the questions in this way. That said, we think it is useful to distinguish theories by which question they are *primarily* trying to answer: the enumerative or the explanatory. One advantage of this in the current context is that many of the characterizations of well-being used by psychologists are not explanatory theories, but rather enumerations of lists of goods. Consider Ed Diener's highly influential view that subjective well-being consists in life-satisfaction, domain satisfaction, and positive affect balance (Diener et al., 1984). Diener does not advance this as a complete theory of well-being; rather, it is advanced as a set of measurable items that are at least extremely important to well-being in the broadest sense. Ryan and Deci take the satisfaction of basic needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness to *foster* well-being, which is itself defined as "healthy, congruent, and vital functioning" (Ryan & Deci, 2001, p. 147). In their case, the measurable components of well-being are an enumerated list of well-being components, and the explanation for why these things are good for people is quite thin. When we acknowledge the distinction between the enumerative and the explanatory questions ("which things are good?" and "why are those things good?"), we can see different ways in which psychological theories and philosophical theories might be "friends." In particular, enumerative theories in psychology might benefit from the resources of explanatory theories in philosophy.

Toward this end, we will organize our review by first considering theories that tend to be concerned mainly with enumeration, and then move to theories that are concerned mainly with explanation. We'll start with hedonism and objective list theories, then move to perfectionism, and then to desire satisfaction and value fulfillment theories.

Enumerative Theories

Hedonism

Hedonism about well-being is the view that pleasure is the only thing that is intrinsically good for people; anything else that is good for a person would be good instrumentally, as

a means to pleasure (or avoidance of pain). Hedonism dates back to Epicurus, but recent work draws inspiration primarily from the English philosophers Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. Both Bentham and Mill were interested in pleasure because they saw a close relationship between what is good for people and what they ought to do. Bentham (1789 [1996]) famously said, "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*," and claimed that the right action is the one that produces the most net pleasure. Mill (1863[2001]), in like fashion, claimed that the only reason that people act is either to experience pleasure or to avoid pain, but added that when determining what to do, we must take into account both the quantity and *quality* of pleasures that might be produced. Pleasures involving the use of our higher faculties carry a special weight for Mill; famously, he thought that it's better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied. For Bentham, on the other hand, pushpin (a simple children's game) is as good as poetry as far as happiness is concerned.

Mill and Bentham understood pleasure to be a distinctive sensation or feeling. They thought that whether one experiences pleasure as a result of eating a delicious meal, completing a difficult task, or enjoying a work of art, insofar as these are pleasures, they share a phenomenology (i.e., "a way that it is like" to have them).[1] This conception of pleasure invites what we might call the *heterogeneity objection.* The objection is that we don't actually experience this common phenomenology: the pleasure of eating a delicious meal is very different from the pleasure of appreciating a work of art, which are both very different from the pleasure of a sneeze. In response to this objection, Fred Feldman, a recent defender of hedonism, has suggested that we adopt an alternative conception of pleasure, which he calls attitudinal pleasure. On this view, pleasure consists in having a certain pro-attitude toward an experience or state of affairs: "a person takes attitudinal pleasure in some state of affairs if he enjoys it, is pleased about it, is glad that it is happening, is delighted by it" (Feldman, 2004, p. 56). You experience the pleasure of a delicious meal when you enjoy whatever it tastes like; you experience the pleasure of gazing at a great painting when you are delighted by that visual experience. Thus, Feldman avoids the heterogeneity objection by denying that there is a single sensation or feeling common to all pleasures.

Hedonism has some strengths as a theory of well-being. It is simple, empirically tractable, and intuitive. It is hard to deny that pleasure is good and pain is bad, and often when you ask why something or other is good (chocolate, roses, massages), it is natural to trace its goodness back to pleasure. Whether pleasure is the *only* good, however, is an open question. The next objection we'll consider challenges the claim that pleasure is the only intrinsic good.

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[1] Bentham certainly held the view that pleasure was a distinctive sensation, as did Mill, but with one caveat, which was that our experience of the sensation was not only augmented by its intensity and duration, but also by the quality of the pleasure (Crisp, 2006; Macleod, 2018).

The *experience machine objection*, introduced by Robert Nozick (1974), asks us to consider whether we would want to plug into a machine that could flawlessly provide us with a life replete with pleasure (more net pleasure, say, than we could ever experience in the actual world). We are asked to imagine that others also have the option to plug in (so we don't need to worry about our obligations to them), that the machine will never break down, and that once attached we would not remember having plugged in. Nozick argued that the fact that many people (perhaps most people) would choose not to plug in shows that there are things we care deeply about other than pleasure. This objection has been taken to support the anti-hedonist claim that there are things other than pleasure that are good for us: actual things in the world (such as knowledge of the world and real relationships with other people) that we could not obtain in the machine (where we merely *think* we are achieving these things).

Hedonists have responded to the experience machine objection in a variety of ways. Some have argued that we need not posit goods other than pleasure to explain why plugging in does not make for the best life. Feldman (2002), for example, suggests that the hedonist could argue for a truth condition on pleasures, such that a pleasure provides more well-being when it is taken in true states of affairs. Other hedonists bite the bullet, accept that it makes sense to plug in despite initial intuitions to the contrary, and attempt to explain why these intuitions should be ignored. For example, a hedonist could claim that people react negatively to the machine because they discount important features of the example (Bramble, 2016). That is, the hedonist could claim that if we were really to take seriously the stipulations that one would not remember plugging in, and that the machine would work perfectly and never fail, then our intuitions would likely change.

These responses have not satisfied everyone, and many still take the experience machine to be an important challenge to hedonism. Faced with the thought that pleasure is obviously good, but not obviously the *only* good, we might think that the solution is to add to the list of goods. This is what pluralistic "objective list" theories of well-being do. We'll turn to these theories in the next section.

Objective List Theories

Objective list theories, in contrast to hedonism, claim that there is more than one thing that is intrinsically good for people. For example, an objective list theorist might list pleasure, knowledge, and friendship as the things that contribute directly to one's well-being. Aristotle is typically thought to have provided the main historical example of an objective list theory. To live well as a human being, according to Aristotle, one must possess a number of goods, including the virtues (prudence, courage, temperance, justice, and so on), and also all the things necessary to cultivate the virtues, like friends and wealth. He took this enumeration to be widely agreed upon, and so determined the central task of his ethical writings to be to identify the *highest* good, by reference to which the prudential value

of the items on the list could be explained. We will examine the nature of that explanation in the next section, when we move to discuss explanatory theories. For now, we'll focus on the list part of the theory.

Readers from other fields may wonder what the word *objective* is doing here. After all, positive psychologists have list theories, too (discussed briefly earlier in the chapter), but they are unlikely to claim that there lists are lists of "objective goods." What do philosophers mean by this? Essentially, what's meant is that the goods on the list are good for people independently of the subjective attitudes of the person for whom they are good. To put it another way, the goodness of objective goods does not depend on someone liking, wanting, or approving of them. The attraction of such theories is that people do sometimes like, want, or approve things that seem decidedly bad for us. People sometimes want addictive drugs, like romantic relationships with unsuitable others, and approve of joyless commitment to tradition. An objective theory of well-being allows us to say that people can be simply wrong about what's good for them, and it gives us clear standards for what would make their lives go better. The price of this advantage is that objective theories must offer some proof that their objective goods really are what they claim to be.

What kinds of arguments can objective list theories provide? Much of the support for objective list theories is intuitive: pleasure, knowledge, friendship, and so on, just seem good for people and a life without these things seems paradigmatically bad. Defenders also support them by defending them against objections. For example, Guy Fletcher, a recent objective list advocate, addresses the charge that objective list theories cannot avoid being problematically arbitrary. Apparent arbitrariness seems to be a direct result of the theory's focus on enumeration, but Fletcher's response is to say that the objection, as it is often stated, cannot be avoided by any theory of well-being:

> If we ask the hedonist *why* pleasure (and only pleasure) is good for someone (and why pain and only pain is bad for someone) it is not clear what non-trivial explanation they could give for this. Similarly, if we ask the desire-fulfillment theorist *why* something is good for us if and only if, and because, we desire it, it's not clear what non-trivial explanation they could give of this fact. The same is true for nature perfectionism and every other theory of well-being. Whilst more explanatory depth is better, other things being equal, all explanation stops somewhere. For that reason one cannot say that in the absence of a further justification for the things on the list then the theory is troublingly arbitrary, for a similar objection could be mounted against all of the other theories. (2013, p. 218)

Still, the objective list theorist has to provide some justification for why their list contains all and only the correct items. This highlights how important it is for the objective list theorist to develop a non-arbitrary identification procedure. In service of this, Fletcher explains two tasks that such a procedure must accomplish. First, it must be able to identify goods that are not currently on the list. And second, it should be able to test goods on the list in order to determine whether or not they should remain. In both cases, we are to

imagine two persons with identical bundles of goods. We add a good to our list if it's the case that adding that thing to one person's bundle but not the other's makes it plausible that the one becomes better off. Similarly, we remove an item from the list if we can take it away from one person's bundle without their becoming worse off than the other. In addition, we can test items according to whether or not their apparent goodness can be accounted for by other items on the list (to use Fletcher's example, "knowledge" might be accounted for by items like "achievement," specifically, one's epistemic achievements). If so, we strike them.

Notice that this identification procedure brings us back to the intuitive method mentioned at the start of this section. We are asked to compare different lives containing different bundles of goods and to consult our intuitive judgments about which life is better. Notice also that this procedure is itself rather intuitive and perhaps even hard to avoid. But what do we do when intuitions clash? In this case, it would be more satisfying to have a theory that provides a compelling explanation to which to appeal. Fortunately, there are several explanatory theories that are far from disappointing in this regard. We consider these theories next.

Explanatory Theories

Human Nature Theories

Explanatory theories aim primarily at explaining why the things that are good for people are indeed good for people, rather than at enumerating which things are good. Aristotle did enumerate a list of goods, but his biggest contribution was his explanatory theory, so let's start there. At their core, Aristotelian theories take human nature and what it is to flourish as a human being as the explanatory starting point. For something to flourish, as Aristotelian philosophers understand it, is for it to perform well as the kind of thing that it is.[2] So, for example, an apple tree flourishes when it grows strong enough to produce fruit, a worker bee flourishes when it contributes to feeding the queen, and a dog flourishes when it excels at catching squirrels (or begging for treats, as the case may be). For Aristotle, to flourish as a human being is to use our characteristically human capacities, our rational capacities, in an excellent way. According to Aristotle, then, to flourish as a human being is *to use our reason in accordance with virtue*. This means using reason both intellectually and practically to ensure that our character disposes us to undertake certain kinds of actions (e.g., acts of courage, justice, temperance, and so on), and that we regularly act in those ways. Flourishing, for Aristotle, was the highest good for human beings, and so the good which explained why other things (i.e., the virtues and the things required to cultivate them) were good.

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[2] Perhaps because of this, Aristotelian theories are often called "Perfectionism." No one seems to like this label, not even those who defend the theory, so we will avoid it here. It is also misleading, because perfectionists do not say that we should aim at *perfection*.

Aristotle had a teleological conception of the world: everything has a natural function, and to do well is to achieve the function given by nature. Most contemporary philosophers eschew this teleological view, which means that they must find other ways to explain how it could be, in this diverse world, that the same things are good for every person.

Martha Nussbaum (1993), in an effort to address this question, takes for granted the general idea that flourishing consists in excellent activity, and focuses her attention on defending a conception of the virtues that applies to all human beings. Her defense is inspired by her interpretation of Aristotle, according to which he provides a two-step procedure for defining the virtues. The first step is to identify spheres of experience within which every human being inevitably must act. It then follows that within each sphere, there are better and worse ways in which to act, and to act as well as one can within a sphere is to act virtuously. This amounts to a minimal, formal definition of a given virtue, something of the form "having virtue *x* means to act well within sphere *y*." Once these spheres have been identified, then, and only then, can excellent activity in those spheres be fully defined. So, for example, one sphere of life identified by Aristotle was the sphere pertaining to management of one's personal property, where others are concerned, and the corresponding virtue was generosity. The full specification of generosity (or any other virtue), Nussbaum notes, can be up for debate:

> People will of course disagree about what the appropriate ways of acting and reacting [within a given sphere] in fact *are*. But in that case, as Aristotle has set things up, they are arguing about the same thing, and advancing competing specifications of the same virtue. The reference of the virtue term in each case is fixed by the sphere of experience. (1993, p. 707)

We may disagree about the full definition of a virtue, but there is a shared core, grounded in experiences that are characteristically human. For example, different groups of people may disagree about whether generosity requires giving wrapped gifts, money, or cattle, but we share the idea that there is virtue in giving freely to others. On this view, then, the value of the virtues (defined broadly) transcends particular cultures and individual differences. This is the objective core of what makes human lives go well.

Richard Kraut (2007) proposes another contemporary Aristotelian account that focuses on characteristically human capacities or powers, which he calls *developmentalism*. For Kraut, human flourishing consists in the possession, development, and enjoyment of our physical, cognitive, affective, sensory, and social powers (2007, p. 137). The rather large number of ways in which one might exercise these powers, then, explains the apparent diversity of goods in the world. A human being is flourishing when it is enjoying the exercise of its various powers, which it has developed or trained over the course of its life. Think about reading a good novel, or about running a marathon. Your enjoyment of the former involves a complex utilization of your psychological powers, while your enjoyment of the latter involves the thorough employment of your physical powers (along with the psychological resilience required to push through!). Further, the enjoyment of both

activities requires that you have developed your psychological and/or physical powers to a sufficient extent. Finally, Kraut claims, like Aristotle, that one needs to regularly exercise one's powers in these kinds of ways in order to be well off. To cease to act is to cease to flourish.

There remains the question of why one's nature, which is determined by one's species membership, should have any bearing on what is good for them. Nussbaum and Kraut explain why the virtues are good by reference to group membership, but do they say anything to justify this move? Kraut defends the approach by appeal to a philosophical methodology that gives significant weight to common sense and inference to the best explanation. In explaining his reliance on human nature, he says that his view begins with what common sense tells us are good things. Then, we are to look at the features common to those good things, and determine what best explains those features. The explanation, he claims, is that all good things have features that involve the development and enjoyment of the various powers that we possess, powers which nature has provided human beings.

While human nature may explain much common sense about well-being, theories that rely on human nature may struggle to respect individual differences. If a person doesn't have the rational capacity to learn about philosophy, or the physical capacity to run, or the social capacity to make lasting friendships, why are these things good for that person? The next explanatory theories we will consider have an easier time with individual differences.

Desire Satisfactionism

Desire satisfaction theories of well-being claim that what is good for a person is to get what they want or would want under certain conditions. Desire satisfactionism is primarily *explanatory*: desire is offered as that which explains why the various objects of our intrinsic desires (whatever we want for its own sake) are intrinsically good for us. Desire satisfactionism is also a *subjective* theory, because it makes what is good for us depend on our having some positive attitude (namely a desire) toward it. One of the major attractions of desire satisfactionism is that it makes good sense of a strong intuition that many have about well-being, which is that whatever happens to be good for us, it ought to *engage* us in some way. The idea here—sometimes called "the resonance constraint" (Brink, 2008) or the "non-alienation condition" (Railton, 2003)—is that it would be a mistake for a theory of well-being to say that there are things that are good for us that we don't care about in any way. Since desire satisfactionism explains the goodness of things with reference to our desires, it follows straightforwardly that we will be interested or engaged by the things that are good for us according to this theory.

The English philosopher Thomas Hobbes is probably the earliest proponent of a desire satisfaction theory of the good in the Western tradition. In *Leviathan* (1651[1994]), Hobbes's central goal is to defend a system of government on the basis of a certain conception of human nature. In short, Hobbes thought that the actions of every person were directed at their own self-interest, such that something was good for a person if and only

if it was an object of one of their desires. This view of human nature, coupled with how he reasoned that humans would interact with one another outside of a state, led him to conclude that living under an absolute monarchy was in our best interest. But despite Hobbes's place in history, desire satisfactionism need neither be committed to a view about human nature, nor be employed in defending a system of government. It need only say that a person is better off to the extent that they get what they want. There are a few ways that this might be understood, the simplest of which says that a person becomes better off when one or more of their desires are satisfied, all else being equal. This simple view says, for instance, that if you have a desire for a slice of raspberry cheesecake, and you get a slice of raspberry cheesecake, then you have become better off. This view, however, leads to some pressing problems.

For example, we tend to think that there are plenty of desires that, if satisfied, would not make a person better off. One might have the trivial desire of wanting to do nothing but count blades of grass, or the immoral desire to take another's life, or the ignorant desire to take a drink from a water bottle, not knowing that the water had recently been replaced with gasoline. These are examples of defective desires, and in order to account for them, philosophers like Peter Railton (1986) have suggested that instead of understanding well-being with reference to the actual desires of persons, we understand it with reference to *idealized* desires. Specifically, he suggests that the things that are good for us are those things that a fully informed version of ourselves would want us to want.

To illustrate this, Railton asks us to consider Lonnie, a homesick and dehydrated traveler in a foreign country. Due to his homesickness and dehydration, Lonnie finds himself with a strong desire to drink a cold, comforting glass of milk. However, if Lonnie were to satisfy his desire, he would only exacerbate the discomfort he feels due to his dehydration, and this would in turn make him long for the comfort of home even more. Instead, Railton says, Lonnie should want to drink clear liquids. Specifically, Lonnie should want to drink clear liquids because that is what Lonnie-Plus, the idealized version of Lonnie, would want Lonnie to want. And, Lonnie-Plus has these desires because he has full knowledge of Lonnie's physical and psychological constitution, and of the circumstances in which Lonnie finds himself.

Moving to the "ideal advisor" model, as Railton does, helps solve the problem with uninformed and irrational desires, but it's not clear that the advisor model helps much with trivial or immoral desires. This is because it seems possible that someone could be constituted in such a way that they really would want, even if fully informed, to count grass or murder other people. But perhaps this is something about which desire theorists shouldn't be too concerned. Recall the attractions of desire satisfactionism: its ability to explain the resonance between a person and their well-being, and the effect of individual differences on well-being. Maybe such theories should just say that strange people can achieve well-being in strange ways; after all, this doesn't imply that these lives are morally good or admirable.

Still, it would be nice if a desire theory had something to say about our intuitions concerning trivial and immoral desires. Chris Heathwood (2006) offers a solution to this problem on behalf of his Subjective Desire Satisfactionism. According to Heathwood:

> An instance of "subjective desire satisfaction" is a state of affairs in which a subject (i) has an intrinsic desire at some time for some state of affairs and (ii) believes at the time that the state of affairs obtains. An instance of "subjective desire frustration" occurs when (i) above holds but the subject believes that the desired state of affairs does *not* obtain. The value for the subject of (or the amount of welfare in) a subjective desire satisfaction is equal to the intensity of the desire satisfied. Likewise for frustration, except that the number is negative. The theory is summative so that the total amount of welfare in a life is equal to the sum of the values of all the subjective desire satisfactions and frustrations in that life. (2006, p. 548)

To unpack this a bit, an *intrinsic* desire has as its object something that is desired for itself, not as a means to something else. I might desire a knife, but only in order to cut and serve the cheesecake, the thing I really want. Now, it is the fact that the theory is summative that allows Heathwood to satisfy our intuitions about trivial and immoral desires. This is because it makes room for a distinction between something being *intrinsically good for someone* and something being *all things considered good for someone* (Heathwood, 2006, p. 546). Something is intrinsically good for someone just in case it is an object of one of their intrinsic desires, while something is all things considered good for someone if it would lead to a better life for that person were it to obtain (i.e., it would lead to greater net subjective desire satisfaction). So, when it comes to counting blades of grass or committing murders, these things could very well be intrinsically good for someone, but not all things considered good (and, for many people, this is probably the case). That said, the theory does not rule out the possibility that these things might also be all things considered good for some people.

To be sure, the summative feature of Heathwood's theory also allows him to make good sense of intuitions about irrational desires. For instance, drinking milk would be intrinsically good for Lonnie if he wants milk for its own sake, but not all things considered good. Heathwood's view has many strengths, but those who are persuaded by the experience machine objection to hedonism might worry that the objection applies here, too, since belief that one's desire has been satisfied (as opposed to the actual achievement of the desired object) is all that's required.

Although there is no analogue to desire satisfactionism in positive psychology, psychologists might appreciate this theory as an explanation for the goodness of items on their lists. Indeed, Martin Seligman (2012, p. 16) lists the fact that people pursue something for its own sake as a necessary condition for counting it as an element of well-being. After all, desire satisfactionism does not posit objective values and it is highly sensitive to individual differences, and these features will be attractive to psychologists. Nevertheless, one might worry that *desire* is the wrong psychological state to focus on, because desire

seems both too broad and too narrow: too broad, because we can desire things that don't seem connected to our own well-being (world peace, that Pluto be a planet); too narrow, because other psychological states such as emotions seem highly relevant to our well-being. The next theory we'll consider, value fulfillment theory, is structurally similar to desire satisfactionism, but it puts different psychological states at the center of the theory.

Value Fulfillment Theory

Value fulfillment theories draw their inspiration from desire theories. Specifically, value theorists think that it's a good idea to look to agents' attitudes in explaining why things are good for them, but in addition suggest that psychological states other than desire are relevant to well-being. As we'll see, the relevance of these additional states leads to a specification of what it means for someone to *value* something, as opposed to merely desiring it.

Consider a desire you might have to be part of a particular friendship. A value fulfillment theory will say that besides this desire, there are other psychological states that need to be considered when determining whether or not that friendship is good for you. The theory could say, for example, that if you have a desire to be part of a certain friendship, but the satisfaction of this desire fails to harmonize with your emotional dispositions, then the friendship is not as good for you as it might be. Maybe it's the case that your friend is a good running partner but also a prolific gossiper, so that despite the bond formed through running together, you find yourself feeling like you can't share thoughts that you would otherwise share with a good friend. If this lack of trust prevents you from being disposed to enjoy the company of your friend, a value theory could say that the friendship is not as good for you as it could be. That is, though you wanted the friendship, the theory would entail that it would be better for you if the friendship satisfied your desire *and* you were disposed to enjoy it.

Valerie Tiberius (2018) is one value fulfillment theorist who thinks that the things that are best for us are those things that are suited to both our desires and emotions. In addition, she thinks that the things that are best for us are *reflectively endorsed*. A good is reflectively endorsed when we judge it to provide us with reasons to act in certain ways, or in other words, when we view it as something worthy of consideration as we reason about how to live our lives. For example, a person who fully values friendship is to have judged that the friendship gives her reasons to support her friend, to spend time with her friend, and so on. For Tiberius, then, to *value* something is to have a relatively well integrated pattern of motivational and emotional states with respect to it, and to endorse it as relevant to planning and life evaluation.

Further, Tiberius says, well-being is not just a matter of fulfilling one's values, but of living a life rich in the fulfillment of *appropriate* values. Appropriate values are both psychologically integrated and capable of being fulfilled together over time, according to the standards of success that the person has for those values. We sometimes have values that are in conflict, or values that we hold to standards of success that make them conflict with

each other. For example, consider a person who values his career as a lawyer and thinks he must work seventy hours a week to do a good job, and who also values being a hands-on parent who bakes cupcakes from scratch for every bake sale. These values, understood in this demanding way, will be hard to fulfill together. Tiberius argues that

> [a]ppropriateness comes in degrees and much of what we are doing when we think about how to improve our lives is trying to inch our values toward greater appropriateness. Completely inappropriate values would be projects, relationships, and ideals that do not motivate us, that leave us emotionally cold, and that we could not successfully pursue over time even if we tried. Completely inappropriate values, then, are not going to get onto our radar. Mostly what we've got, and what we will think about when we're thinking about our well-being, are values that are at varying degrees of appropriateness, and our task is to think about how to make that system of values better for us. This may involve jettisoning values that are on the "less appropriate" end of the spectrum, but there is no bright line between values that are appropriate enough and values that are too inappropriate to keep even in a modified form. (2018, p. 67)

To be sure, each of the preceding conditions has bearing on the degree of appropriateness of any given value. We can more or less desire something, more or less feel disposed to enjoy something, more or less judge something to give us reasons, and more or less be able to pursue something over time. This provides the theory with the flexibility to handle the kinds of objections posed to desire theorists. Consider again the problem of defective desires. While value theorists have to concede the possibility that some immoral or trivial desires might be best for some people, they have a lot to say about how exceptional these sorts of people have to be. That is, for these desires to be part of a maximally appropriate set of values, the people who pursue them not only have to get what they want, but also feel disposed to enjoy what they get, judge it to be reasoning giving, and this has to continue to be true over time. While it's not too hard to imagine someone appropriately valuing these kinds of things to a degree, it's very difficult to imagine many people for whom counting grass or committing murders would be best.[3] For most, these kinds of values will be too inappropriate to be worthy of consideration, and so would add very little to their well-being if fulfilled.

Jason Raibley (2012) is another value fulfillment theorist who argues that while the preceding account is an improvement over desire satisfactionism, it hasn't gone far enough. This is because he thinks that other value theories fail to adequately assess the well-being of folks who experience abrupt changes to their value systems. He asks us to consider Michael, a Catholic who has lived a life fulfilling a coherent system of values, the most

[3] The same goes for folks with irrational desires. Lonnie's desire for milk clearly clashes with his value of being in good health, and perhaps also with his value of becoming a well-traveled person (unpleasant experiences in foreign places are apt to make one more reluctant to leave home in the future!).

important of which is his relationship with god. He values this relationship so strongly that he structures the rest of his values around it, decides to become a priest, but realizes upon completing seminary that he no longer believes in god. This prompts a crisis of faith, resulting in a breakdown of his value system and so an erosion of his motivation to live a godly life. Raibley says that it should be obvious that despite regularly fulfilling his values up until his completion of seminary, Michael's life has not gone very well. But value theorists, it seems, are forced to say that since his life has been replete with value fulfillment, he is doing quite well despite his loss of faith.

In light of this, Raibley puts forward another kind of value fulfillment theory, according to which one is well off to the extent that their life resembles a paradigm case of faring well. Such a life is one where an agent (i) has values, (ii) acts in ways that realize those values, and (iii) maintains "physical and psychological systems that make values-realisation possible and likely—i.e., [maintains] the causal basis for a *disposition* to succeed" (Raibley, 2012, p. 259). Further, an agent's well-being needs to be understood with reference to time, such that an agent does well over a segment of time to the extent that they resemble the paradigm case over that segment of time (2012, p. 259). So, on Raibley's view, Michael's loss of a central value, and the resulting damage that it does to his motivational system, causes his life to lose much of the resemblance that it had with the paradigm case. That is, a paradigm case of faring well over time does not include sudden losses of value or breakdowns of the dispositions to succeed in realizing one's values.

Whether or not Raibley's account improves upon standard fulfillment theories, the core of the standard view is still present. That is, what is centrally important for well-being is getting what we value, where valuing is understood to involve a complex array of attitudes, not merely desires. Value fulfillment theories may be attractive to positive psychologists because they offer an explanatory framework for investigating many of the things psychologists measure: subjective happiness, feelings of meaning, relationships, mental health, autonomy, mastery. These are, after all, things that most people value. Value fulfillment theory recommends measuring both how well people are doing at achieving these widely shared values and also how much people value the things on this list, how they understand success, and how well they are doing at fulfilling their more idiosyncratic values. This makes measurement very complicated, of course. Value fulfillment theory does not make well-being easily measurable, because it makes well-being a multifaceted, diachronic quality.[4]

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[4] We should not think that it is impossible to measure value fulfillment in its complexity, however. New methods may be developed and old methods may be recruited for the purpose. For example, Bedford-Peterson et al. (2019) use Personal Projects Analysis (Little, 2006, 2015) to examine correlations between value fulfillment and subjective well-being. Personal Projects Analysis elicits participants' important personal projects and then asks them to rate those projects on various standard dimensions such as stage of completion, place in a hierarchy of project, and emotional salience.

Conclusion

We have tried to provide an overview of the most prominent theories of well-being in the Western philosophical literature.[5] We hope that the distinction between primarily enumerative theories and primarily explanatory theories has helped to make clear their advantages and shortcomings. Hedonism has the virtues of being simple and empirically tractable, but it has to deal with the widespread conviction that pleasure is not the only good. Objective list theories have the virtue of making sense of this conviction but are saddled with the task of convincing us that their lists are not arbitrary. Human nature theories, desire satisfaction theories, and value fulfillment theories are prepared to explain why goods on a list are indeed good, but these theories also have their problems. In addition to the problems we have discussed, we might wonder whether such theories can give us enough direction about what should make it onto a list of goods. Perhaps both enumerative theories and explanatory theories are necessary and perhaps they should be developed in tandem. If nothing else, their co-development can help us to better discern the relationship between our intuitions about what is good, and potential explanations for goodness. If it turns out that our best explanations and intuitions harmonize, all the better for the joint effort. If they diverge, then theorists being in close conversation with one another can only help to reconcile differences. Indeed, given the long history of philosophical thinking about well-being and the complexity of the subject matter, cooperative effort seems essential, not just across a single discipline like philosophy, but also across different disciplines. We hope that this chapter will be useful in supporting this cooperative effort.

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[5] To be sure, the realm of possible theories can be conceived to be much broader than what we've presented, especially if we take for granted the enumerative/explanatory distinction. For one analysis of how big this space of possibility might be, see Woodard (2013).

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CHAPTER 29

History and Human Flourishing: Using the Past to Address the Present

Peter Stearns

Abstract

This chapter argues that historical analysis can actively contribute to the growing interest in well-being in several specific ways, in addition to the pleasure that many people find in reading or listening to various kinds of historical work. Four connections are emphasized: first, the role of history in providing perspective on some of the key well-being recommendations, by noting earlier approaches to similar qualities—for example, in classical philosophy or Hindu or Buddhist texts; second, awareness of the very real and complex modern history of the idea of happiness itself, and how it has connected to areas like work and family life; third, assessment of recent claims of progress, and how these, and the complexities they involve, affect current well-being and perceptions of well-being; and finally, explicit historical work on a variety of modern trends, in domains like consumerism, or trust, or gratitude, that generate awareness of some of the current problems faced in the well-being movement, particularly in its larger social and cultural context.

Key Words: history, happiness, progress, consumerism, trust, gratitude, loneliness

Exploration of the past, when purposefully directed, improves our grasp on our condition today, whether the focus is on the individual or on the social context more generally. In fact, history offers the most comprehensive opportunity available to evaluate the human experience and determine the trends that are currently shaping our lives. The historical perspective can be focused in several ways directly relevant to human flourishing, as this chapter will suggest. The common link is the opportunity to use selected features of earlier patterns to inform our lives today and contribute to the growing interest in improving well-being.

This approach requires a few preliminaries, before engaging the main tasks of exploring some of the key opportunities.

First, many people already see history as a source of both enlightenment and pleasure. They read biographies, or other accounts of the past, or probe their own family experience to provide better understanding of their own lives (Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998). Their goals may be improvement of identity: how history helps illustrate the experiences of

social groups, ethnicities, or regions; or a delight in exploring some of the achievements of the past that enhance appreciation of the present—the glories of the Renaissance, perhaps, or the successful struggles for fuller recognition of human rights, or the wisdom of the Founding Fathers; or examination of past challenges that were ultimately overcome, that offers some balance to contemporary gloom-and-doom.[1] Whatever the particular pleasures, including history as part of the enjoyment of life inspires a host of readers, a wealth of local history societies, and the strong interest of many retiree learning groups in highlighting the history offerings available.[2]

Second, urging history as a contributor to well-being requires recognition that the most conventional exposure to the study of the past—the school classroom—is not always a pleasant memory, despite the real enthusiasm that good history teachers continue to generate. The history that contributes to human flourishing is not an accumulation of facts to be memorized or an emphasis on the wars, kings, and presidencies that so often hog the textbooks. For some, using the real opportunity to gain new perspectives on the human condition involves giving history—a somewhat different kind of history—a second chance.

And third, focusing history's contribution to human flourishing will bother some very good historians who shy away from unduly utilitarian uses of their discipline and who, most particularly, are nervous about too much connection with the present. There is, in the tradition of the discipline, an admirable commitment to study the past for the past's sake, without the potential distortion of application to current issues and concerns. For some, indeed, the distinctiveness of the past may be something of a refuge from the complexities of the present. The kind of history that contributes to human flourishing does not focus solely on the most recent developments, but it does have a somewhat presentist bias. It certainly does not seek to oversimplify the past, though it centers on the most relevant highlights. "Well-being history," if the term is acceptable, is not the only kind of history that should be pursued, and tensions with purists should be acknowledged. But the benefits of this more selective approach to the past deserve careful consideration as well.

Indeed, for many historians, the opportunity to contribute to the growing interest in human flourishing, as a research area and set of practices, extends the uses of the discipline and takes advantage of the range of topics developed over the past half-century.

This chapter will suggest four overlapping ways to apply historical perspective to contemporary considerations of well-being. The first highlights precedents for concepts of well-being themselves, both to connect to earlier recommendations and to identify and

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[1] An informal survey of retiree learners who express delight in history emphasized this point strongly: the sense that amid the flood of current problems the chance to look back on even worse dilemmas was encouraging.

[2] It is also worth remembering the common injunction that failure to learn from history will simply cause mistakes to be repeated. This is an important feature of the role of the discipline in policy, including military strategy; it may be less applicable to the more positive qualities of human flourishing.

explain innovations. The second centers more specifically on a history of modern ideas of happiness, which also help frame the current discussion but raise some cautionary flags as well. Third—and this category is potentially vast—history can be assessed in terms of actual trajectories of well-being while also addressing nostalgia for qualities that may have been lost over time. And finally, shading off from this massive venture, history can be applied to trends that quite directly affect well-being today, some of them recent but some stretching back at least three centuries. Any one of these categories could support a considerable literature and, in some cases, invite further research as well; but a more summary sketch can lay out the terrain.

Well_Being in the Past

For many historians (particularly those dealing with premodern topics), a prime opportunity to use the past to frame the present targets the exploration of past ideas about well-being. Philosophers, physicians, and theologians have devoted a great deal of thought to the definition of human well-being and to qualities that would promote well-being in individual lives. Greek philosophy might provide a familiar touchstone, but Confucian, Arab, and Indian approaches are also readily available. More generally, the idea of using classical ideas to help assess contemporary values is a familiar one in many educational traditions—assessment of political theory offers a familiar example—and there is good reason to apply the approach to well-being (Pawelski, 2016).

And the results, surely, will be a mixture of confirmation and contrast. Greek or Hindu promptings about moderation and health resonate strongly with well-being staples today. Confucian insistence on the importance of group harmony can be tested against some of the more individualistic emphases in the well-being movement, but there is overlap as well. At the same time, not surprisingly, some contemporary topics reflect issues that were not common before modern times. The need to caution people against undue consumerism, and the realization that well-being is better advanced by interesting experiences than by acquisition of things, may touch base with more traditional concerns about greed, but obviously there are important new ingredients and warnings. The classical sages were not dealing with this aspect of contemporary culture. Other current interests—in curiosity, resilience, or grit—warrant evaluation in terms of older ideas as well (Sheldon & Lucas, 2014; Kashdan & Ciarrochi 2013). It would be revealing, for example, to explore the relationship of a relatively new term—mindfulness—to older ideas.

It might also be enlightening to encourage a more systematic history of the evolution of interest in well-being itself, again at least for purposes of general perspective. While the term *human flourishing* is quite new, dating back only to the 1960s, well-being has a much more extensive pedigree. Google Ngrams, which trace the relative frequency of word use, show important peaks of interest in well-being in the English language particularly in the

Figure 29.1 Frequency of the word "well-being" in English, 1600–2008, Google Ngram Viewer, accessed August 2, 2019. Google Ngram Viewer is a search application that allows one to measure the frequency of particular terms or words in the Google Books database. While in some ways problematic and obviously not a complete representation, the tool is a helpful way to assess cultural trends and changes.

eighteenth century, and then a steadier surge from the mid-nineteenth century onward, with the most dramatic increase after 1950 (see Figure 29.1).

It seems probable that the first peak followed from Protestant debates about spiritual well-being and the second picked up on the growing Enlightenment interest in the secular human condition. Further exploration might well shed light on overlaps and contrasts with the more recent surge of interest.

And of course it is informative to pick up on the rise of the more recent interest itself. Fortunately, an important recent study offers at least a good start on this, tracing the relationship between psychological interest—first from humanistic psychology in the 1980s and then from the positive psychology movement after 1998—and an older tradition of self-help literature (Horowitz, 2016).[3]

An initial set of historical perspectives on human flourishing centers on establishing explicit context for the interest in well-being and for the more specific recommendations that flow from contemporary advice. Many key points are supported not just by current research, but by strong valuation in the past, as in the emphasis on moderation or the importance of positive social relationships. Other points reflect some of the differences between contemporary life and its counterpart in the past. Both aspects can be illuminating.

The Rise of Modern Happiness

General context leads to a second, more specific historical venture with important implications for contemporary goals in the history of the idea of happiness itself (and attendant interest in greater cheerfulness).

[3] Some readers will find this book somewhat cynical, in pointing to some of the pragmatics in the effort to define a new kind of psychology.

There is no question that ideas about happiness, and the sheer level of interest in happiness, began to change rapidly in the Western world in the eighteenth century (MacMahon, 2006; Kotchemidova, 2005). Google N-grams clearly show the pattern, as references to happiness peak dramatically in the second half of the century (roughly the same incidence captures a new interest in cheerfulness). A number of cultural historians have noted the contrast between a predominant emphasis on slight melancholy in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, appropriate to human sinfulness according to influential versions of Protestantism, and the more unapologetic commitment to goals of happiness after about 1750. Diary writers stopped berating themselves for bursts of humor, as had been common even in the 1730s. And of course the American revolutionaries of 1776 would proudly list the "right" to the pursuit of happiness, translating a major cultural shift into the political arena (Eustace, 2011; Kotchemidova, 2005).

The most important cause of this new interest was unquestionably the philosophy of the Enlightenment and its extensive popularization. Greater optimism, a belief in the validity of progress and satisfaction on this earth, combined with increasing attacks on older, gloomier ideas such as original sin. But changes in living standards, at least for the property-owning classes, might also contribute. Physical comforts improved for many people in the eighteenth century, from better bedding to the availability of umbrellas to protect against rainstorms (though a few British stalwarts objected to the latter as a French import incompatible with sturdy national character). New kinds of consumer goods, most obviously imports such as sugar, coffee, tea, and chocolate, were becoming available. At the same time, one historian has speculated that better dentistry helped reduce the incidence of rotting teeth, making people more willing to expose themselves in smiles (Jones, 2017).

Obviously, cultural change of this magnitude involves all sorts of complications. Cultures outside the West would not participate to the same degree, a differentiation still visible today, as in the greater Japanese hesitation about prioritizing happiness (Katayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000). In the West itself, people in the poorer classes would hardly be able to share in the new expectations, and the aspirations may have applied more to men than to women. Certain religious groups, still attached for example to ideas of original sin and damnation, resisted the tide at least for a time (though mainstream Protestantism largely adjusted) (Greven, 1988). Children, also, were included only a bit later, for it was hard to break through older assumptions about some of the limitations of childhood, including, of course, its association with high rates of mortality. References that linked children and happiness begin to rise only after 1800, and intensified only toward the middle of the century (Stearns, 2011). At the same time, there are some intriguing confirmations of the steady groundswell in expectations: a number of new words—*sulky*, *grumpy*, *grouch*—were introduced into English from the late eighteenth century onward (*grouch* is the most recent, in 1895) to designate people who were not horrible but who needed to be cited for their failure to live up to desired standards of cheerfulness.

Some differentiations may have reflected comparative distinctions even within Western culture broadly construed, though further comparative analysis would be useful. European visitors to the new United States in the early nineteenth century noted a particularly resolute cheerfulness and a desire to make others laugh, that they found distinctive and, in some cases, decidedly off-putting (Stearns 2020).

But for all the important qualifications, the new belief in happiness was unquestionably launched and, despite some obvious setbacks (the horrors of World War I, for example), it would not only persist but often intensify.

Marriage and family life formed one obvious target. As relationships were increasingly formed through some kind of direct courtship rather than parental arrangement, with love rather than property considerations the prime criterion at least in principle, it was not surprising that the idea of evaluating marriage in terms of happiness gained increasing attention—with a growing literature developing from the late nineteenth century onward (Coontz, 2006). Insistence that children should be happy surged as well, with whole books on the subject by the second quarter of the twentieth century. And a new institution—the birthday party—gained ground from the 1850s onward, primarily as a vehicle for celebrating children's happiness; and on cue, the song "Happy Birthday" emerged in 1926 to highlight the connection (Baselice, Burrichter, & Stearns, 2019).

Ideas about happiness at work developed more haltingly. The famous middle-class work ethic urged the importance of hard work but was noncommittal on whether it directly fostered happiness or merely provided the means for a happier life off the job. By the twentieth century, however, with the rise of industrial psychology and a growing interest in reducing worker discontent, discussions of creating a happier workplace began to solidify—connecting directly with aspects of the well-being movement today (Rodgers, 1979; Chmiel, 2000). Finally, of course, the rise of new forms of leisure during the same turn-of-the-century decades was presumably based on a belief that sports and entertainments would actively contribute to happier lives. The criterion was increasingly ubiquitous, covering a growing range of human activities, with clearly rising expectations to match.

The persistent and often intensifying interest in individual happiness marked Western cultures off from many other regional value systems. International polls seeking to measure happiness in the early twenty-first century almost invariably rated Western cultures on the high side, compared, for example, to other advanced industrial societies such as Japan or South Korea. A fascinating parental survey in 2018 showed that respondents in India, China, and Mexico rated the achievement or health of their children above happiness, but Western societies uniformly rated happiness well above all other goals—at 86 percent for France and mid-70s percentages for the United States and Canada (Malhotra, 2015).

The deep commitment to happiness had its drawbacks, as historians and others have pointed out (MacMahon, 2006). The emphasis might make sadness more difficult to cope with, at an extreme even equating it with psychological disorder—and this applied

to children as well as adults. Expectations might simply rise too high, making the normal bumps of life less acceptable; from the early twentieth century onward, many marriage experts warned about unrealistic emotional goals for marriage that might actually compromise stability (Coontz, 2006). In some cases as well, and perhaps particularly in the United States, happiness goals intertwined strongly with consumerism; not surprisingly, advertisers were eager to persuade potential customers that additional purchases would enrich their lives. The Walt Disney firm, founded in the 1920s, has consistently used happiness as a core slogan, describing some of its theme parks as "the happiest places on earth" and seeking actively to persuade customers that they should be overjoyed simply to be involved. And the excesses of the happiness/consumerist connection are widely noted in the current well-being literature. In sum: the pressure to be happy and seem cheerful could be double-edged, in terms of the implications for human flourishing.

This complex history links directly to the broader interest in well-being, helping to explain, among other things, why proponents are usually eager to distinguish their goals from mere happiness and often concerned about modifying some of the expectations that the happiness culture promotes. Here is a case, clearly, where knowledge of the historical trajectory of a cultural quality contributes directly to personal assessments of life goals and to some of the subtler challenges in the positive psychology initiative itself.

Historical Trends in Well-Being

The well-being movement raises an even broader historical question, related to analyzing the idea of happiness but going beyond its scope: Can we use history to determine whether life satisfactions have been increasing over time and, if so, whether this might nourish the current interest in greater well-being? Recent publications, such as Steven Pinker's *Enlightenment Now*, dear to the hearts of many positive psychologists, raise the challenge clearly (Pinker, 2019).

Arguing that the human condition has been improving is a huge claim, and a few preliminaries are essential. First, the claim was made at one earlier point, in the later nineteenth century, when many historians and publicists pointed to the huge gains in education, living standards, or the abolition of slavery to argue that life was getting better and would continue to do so (Butterfield, 1965; Lamoreaux, Raff, & Temin, 2004). This interpretation, called Whig history, was dashed by events like World War I, and the result has left many observers properly cautious. Few historians, usually interested in more specific topics in any event, are comfortable with big progress claims today—and Pinker's optimistic assertions have earned a largely critical assessment (Gutting, 2018; Gillespie, 2018; Bakewell, 2018). And ultimately, in all probability, the trends involved are too complex to resolve definitively.

But the issues are worth some discussion, if the goal is the broader interest in history's relationship to well-being. The argument is admittedly tricky, particularly against the backdrop of scholarly skepticism. Yet, it can be argued that tallying up some of the big

pluses and minuses of modern life is actually a good way to translate historical findings into contemporary guidance in ways that relate directly to well-being concerns—without falling into Whiggish oversimplifications.

The big question is how industrial society compares with its previous, agricultural counterpart, and this really is worth thinking about (Stearns, 2017). The question highlights industrialization—now more than two centuries old in some regions—as the most important single historical change in modern times, which despite all the other competing developments is almost certainly true. And it points to the many limitations and drawbacks of agricultural society. (There is an argument that human well-being was in fact at its peak before agriculture, when among other things the species was in greater harmony with the environment; but this interesting claim is a bit remote for our purposes; MacMahon, 2018).

So here is where industrialization brings advances—and continues to do so as agriculture recedes in importance; indeed, many of the global gains have been accelerating as industrialization takes fuller hold, even granting some initial hardships in launching the process of change. The list, and the historical sense involved, should become familiar to anyone interested in the context for contemporary well-being—though some of the historians' leading caveats should be taken to heart as well.

Incontestably, first in the West and then more globally, human health has improved, stature has increased, later middle age has become less debilitated, life expectancy advances, while rapidly falling birthrates facilitate other positive changes in women's lives. Perhaps most strikingly, infant mortality drops to such a point that, for the first time in human history, most families do not have to expect the death of one or more offspring as a matter of routine. Education levels advance, literacy and other related gaps between boys and girls decline, children's work obligations largely drop away. Poverty declines, quite massively. Worldwide, 137,000 people have been emerging from the starkest poverty every day for the last twenty-five years (pre-COVID). Access to electricity advances steadily. And this list of basics can be further expanded (Roser & Ortiz-Ospina, 2017; Pinker, 2019).

Almost certainly, along with these developments, women's lives have improved in other respects, for example in the steady decline of child marriage. Rates of capital punishment have dropped. Data suggest a decline in violent crimes over time, thanks to better policing and improved impulse control (Pinker, 2012). It is even possible that exposure to some of the less pleasant emotions has been reduced. Most obviously, for growing numbers of people, better sanitary facilities bring a marked decline in the experience of disgust. It is also interesting to speculate about the incidence of grief: lower death rates before old age suggest fewer occasions for grief, though unexpected loss or death may be harder to accept than before (Corbin, 1988). Overall, certainly, in a host of major ways, the human condition has been advancing dramatically, and some of the most important drawbacks of agricultural society—such as the high mortality rates—have been remedied and then some.

And these same points are arguably significantly linked to the interest in human flourishing. They legitimately support a degree of optimism, against the "progressophobe" tendencies of many experts, eager to highlight problems and challenges over human gains. It is not naïve to be somewhat encouraged about the basic state of the contemporary world (again, pre-COVID), or at least key aspects of it, as we consider the context for our own well-being and that of those around us.

But these same facts raise an equally legitimate question, again applying selective recent history to our own context: Why, amid so many signs of greater flourishing, is an active sense of positive satisfaction not more widespread? Several responses deserve consideration, again as part of a historically informed evaluation of the world around us. Four or five factors invite attention.

First, of course, with regard to many recent gains, the cup is only half full: there is still a great deal of poverty and disease in the world, and this should cause distress. We may hope that additional advances will improve the situation, but we have not reached nirvana. Second, there is the embarrassing but vital point that many of the crucial recent gains have been more visible outside the United States and the West than within. We can, if we are benevolent, rejoice that regional economic inequality has been dropping thanks to industrial gains in China, India, etc., but it is not entirely selfish to note that it is hard to find comparable progress back home during the past few decades. (Indeed, on the crucial measure of child and maternal mortality, things have recently been getting worse in the United States.)

Third, there is a really interesting challenge to memory and gratitude. The decline of infant death is a huge improvement in the human condition, but for most people in the West it occurred several generations ago. We have no active memory of the bad old days, and therefore no basis for any particular appreciation. Our focus is more likely to be a worry lest, however rarely, a child might die. The same applies to several other aspects of living standards, where the most crucial breakthroughs occurred a few generations back. A well-being-focused history can address this to an extent, but a gap between past achievement and current priorities will remain.

Fourth, pretty obviously, industrial society has *not* resolved some other important issues; progress, by any measure, is hardly unalloyed. For example, while some optimists believe that we have figured out how to reduce war, the evidence is at best limited and insecure. Inequality has not been seriously dented, though it is interesting to consider how much this affects well-being once poverty is reduced (Scheidel, 2017).[4]

And finally, industrial society creates some massive new problems that must feed into any historical assessment of our contemporary context. Environmental deterioration is an inescapable topic here, but many people would add possibly new problems in family

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[4] Looking at the impact of ongoing inequality on well-being is an interesting interdisciplinary challenge, history very much included.

life (though historians warn of misleading nostalgia), or the decline of spirituality, or the rise of novel psychological issues associated with modern life. Even the adequacy of sleep seems to be challenged with the advance of industrialization (Hornborg, McNeill, & Martinez Alier, 2007; Pinker, 2019; Reiss, 2017).

What's suggested, then, is an active historical appreciation of some of the real gains of modern life, which are often obscured both by undue presentism and by historians' reluctance to venture big-picture evaluations. But this appreciation must be modified by an equally historical assessment of unresolved issues and new challenges. There is, admittedly, a balancing act here, along with a frustrating inability to make sweeping statements about the mix of advances and deteriorations. But the exercise, even if less than conclusive, can help us lift up from the details of the moment to a wider assessment of the framework in which we operate, both the strengths that we can build on and appreciate and the leading targets for redress. The actual trajectory of human happiness (as opposed to the increase in expectations) is too complicated to be captured in a single formula, but there is an active and usable history of many of the ingredients (Coontz, 2006; Laslett, 2004; Matt, 2011).[5]

Tracing Current Patterns

This leads directly to the final main opportunity in connecting history and human flourishing: the application of historical analysis directly to assess patterns and trajectories for some of the key components of human well-being, both to provide perspective on the issues involved—to encourage further thought—and to help guide our own responses. The agenda here takes advantage of the huge expansion of the range of historical inquiry in recent decades—though additional challenges remain. It emphasizes relatively recent developments, privileging contemporary history, but in some cases—as with the idea of happiness itself—it must extend back in time for at least several centuries.

Any list in this category must be illustrative, not exhaustive, but the opportunities should be clear. Some topics involve direct juxtaposition of current circumstances with counterparts in the relatively recent past. We are all trying to figure out how social media affect well-being—do they, for example, promote destructive levels of envy—and while all sorts of analyses are welcome, the questions are fundamentally historical (Matt, 2019). Well-being experts already grapple with the excesses of consumerism, and here too there is a rich history that will help us understand what modern consumerism is all about and why (and when) it may have gotten out of hand (Cross, 1993, 2000). The quality of modern leisure, juxtaposed against older forms such as the great and now largely lost tradition of popular festivals, is another prime candidate, with particular relevance to relationships between individual and community; here, too, we can trace the emergence of more

[5] Historical analysis is also essential in evaluating stubborn nostalgic beliefs, not to debunk but to help clarify this kind of relationship between misleading images of the past and present discontents.

modern emphases, such as the strong element of spectatorship, and evaluate the process of change (Hecht, 2007; Robert Malcomson, 1973; Marrus, 1974).

There are other, less familiar invitations as well. A strong emphasis in well-being research involves the salutary effects of gratitude. At one level, the findings do not require a history; they speak for themselves. But they gain additional meaning, and invite fuller consideration, when a history is attached. Currently, there are two historical studies of gratitude, both relevant. The first juxtaposes more traditional forms of gratitude, which were used to bind communities together and link people across social hierarchies, and then notes how this kind of extensive and connective gratitude began to decline with greater individualism in a fascinating process of change. The second study, focused on the United States over the past two centuries, highlights the strong emphasis on gratitude that persisted in the nineteenth century but then its later diminution, in part because of the decline of formal manners, in part because of a growing sense of entitlement that reduced the feeling of thankfulness. Both of these assessments of the process of change help us think more clearly about gratitude today, suggesting the need for more effort than some well-being advocates may imagine. And they also highlight some of the newer, more individualistic features of the current gratitude emphasis, itself, as in the (by more traditional standards) odd notion that people might simply record their thanks in "gratitude books" without necessarily reaching out to others (Leithart, 2018; Clay & Stearns, 2020).

The importance of trust offers another connection between well-being efforts and explicit historical perspective. Trust is properly emphasized for its role in positive social relationships. But various forms of trust have clearly been eroding in the United States over the past half-century. Polls show a steady decline of trust in most basic institutions since the 1960s. Though hard to measure, trust in neighbors and fellow citizens has also been shaken. For various reasons—including obvious ones, like the impact of air conditioning and television in reducing activities outside the home—many neighborhood contacts have dwindled. Negative emphases from news media and some politicians played a role as well. New levels of fear, as in the Halloween candy scare of 1979, which encouraged assumptions that someone next door might be trying to poison the kids, had the same effect. As Robert Putnam has shown, American participation in other kinds of associations, like local clubs, has also dropped. None of this detracts from the importance of building trust as part of well-being, but it suggests some troubling trends that must be addressed (Putnam, 2001; Glassner, 2018).

Loneliness is another target for historical perspective. Very recent sources of loneliness are fairly familiar: the expansion of the elderly population and the isolating effects of social media. But there is a strong suggestion that, at least in some Western cultures, a new awareness of loneliness began to develop as early as the late eighteenth century, as the word itself took on its current meaning in terms of absence of contact with others; this type of loneliness, by contrast, was less present previously (Alberti, 2018). Here is a reminder, first, that as with the expectation of happiness, some contemporary issues

require historical inquiry beyond the most recent decades. The same finding opens an opportunity to gain a deeper appreciation of what contemporary loneliness is all about.

The basic point is clear. There is a history of a surprising range of human phenomena—some of it already available, some open to further inquiry as connections between historical findings and the interest in human flourishing expand. This newer focus on the human experience does more than offer opportunities to explore the origins of current phenomena; it connects directly to our understanding of the setting in which people operate today. This expanded kind of history tells us where we are coming from, and we must know this as part of knowing where we want to go, as individuals and as a society.

Conclusion

The historical contributions to human flourishing are varied, from perspectives on well-being itself to specific inquiries into key aspects of the current human condition. The contributions suggest a few adjustments in some of the standard kinds of historical inquiry and presentation, but they build on the current strength of the discipline as well. They invite interaction with other kinds of perspectives on well-being and on the formation of positive goals. History does not, in the end, tell us what we should do next, to enhance our potential. But it does describe the context in which decisions are made, and it clearly highlights some of the key issues any decisions will encounter. Historical perspective helps connect individuals with their social environment, a crucial issue in the well-being movement. Historical knowledge is in fact fundamental to human wisdom, and we flourish more abundantly if we seek to be wise.

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CHAPTER

30 Practical Wisdom: What Philosophy and Literature Can Add to Psychology

Barry Schwartz

Abstract

In the course of studying the cognitive and affective components of wise judgment, psychology has largely neglected the moral dimensions of wisdom. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle places moral will at the center of his discussion, and points out how skill divorced from will—divorced from virtue and character—can create knavish individuals who will mold institutions that corrupt human character. In this chapter, the author discusses the central role that moral will must play in a complete discussion of wisdom. Understanding moral will requires understanding the proper *telos* of human activities and practices, as well as the virtues of character that people need in order to remain true to the *telos* of those practices. Discussion of these essential topics is avoided by psychologists, but embraced by philosophers. Thus, philosophy has a central role to play in developing a proper understanding of practical wisdom. Moreover, for Aristotle, wise practice typically involves finding the "mean" between extremes. But the mean is not formulaic; it is context specific. This means that wise judgment must give priority to the particular, which, in turn, means that judgment must be understood as embedded in narrative. Thus, an understanding of narrative, best embodied by literary studies, has much to contribute to a complete understanding of wisdom. In sum, a complete account of practical wisdom requires psychology, philosophy, and literary studies acting as partners.

Key Words: Aristotle, practical wisdom, moral will, telos, the "mean" narrative, philosophy, literature

In recent years, psychology has embraced the study of wisdom (e.g., Schwartz & Sharpe, 2011; Sternberg & Glueck, 2019). We now have a clearer idea of the psychological processes—cognitive and affective—that make wisdom possible. We have a much richer understanding of the importance of context, both in determining what a wise course of action would be and in judging whether the chosen action was, in fact, a wise one. But there are neglected aspects of wisdom that need to be understood if wisdom is to be understood. And those neglected aspects have more to learn from philosophy and literature than from the social and behavioral sciences.

My own work, with Kenneth Sharpe, has focused on what Aristotle (1999) called "practical wisdom" (*phronesis*) and on how Aristotle's key ideas could be translated into a

more modern conceptual framework (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2011). Following Aristotle, we argued that practical wisdom is an essentially moral attribute. It is what enables people to do what is right in any given situation. It consists of two fundamental components—moral skill and moral will. Moral skill is what enables someone to determine what a situation calls for so that she can do the right thing. Moral will is what motivates a person to *want* to do the right thing. Will, without skill, leads to people who "mean well" but often leave situations worse than they found them. But skill, without will, creates people who can use their insights, sensitivity, and judgment to manipulate and exploit others, rather than serve them. Psychological research on wisdom has emphasized the "moral skill" needed to be wise, but has neglected the "moral will."

In this chapter, I will address this issue. I will make a case for why attention to moral will is essential. It is not enough for people to do the right thing; they must do the right thing for the right reasons. And moral philosophy has much to teach us about what the right reasons are. In addition, finding the right thing to do depends critically on context. Courage in one situation is recklessness in another. Every situation is relevantly different from every other. To be sensitive to context often requires that we embed the particular situation we face in a narrative that helps us make sense of what the particular situation calls for. Sometimes narratives are built up from personal experience. But sometimes, narratives come from learning about the experiences of others. Literary studies has much to teach us about understanding narrative. Thus, I will suggest, a proper understanding of practical wisdom requires insights from psychology, buttressed by insights from philosophy and literature.

Moral Will: Wanting to Do the Right Thing

In order to say anything meaningful about the will to do the right thing, one must be able to say something about what the "right thing" is. This is not a simple matter. From Aristotle's teleological point of view, every human activity has its own appropriate *telos* (purpose, aim, end), so that doing the right thing means achieving the *telos* of the activity. In order to judge whether a doctor is a wise doctor, or a teacher is a wise teacher, or a soldier is a wise soldier, we must be able to specify what the *aims* of medicine, education, and warfare are. The will to do the right thing is the will to pursue the *telos* appropriate to that activity. To know what practical wisdom is and to act wisely means embracing this teleological view of human activity. Moral skill, in the service of the wrong ends, produces anything but wise actions.

Aristotle conceived of practical wisdom as the crucial capacity that human beings need for making good choices. Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* is a book written not simply for philosophers but for statesman and legislators—for people who build institutions (it is the prequel to his *Politics*). At its heart, *Nicomachean Ethics* is a book about character, wisdom, education, and human flourishing. It is a book that elucidates the distinction between the theoretical wisdom (*sophia)* emphasized by Aristotle's mentor, Plato, and

practical wisdom. Aristotle argued that *sophia* was important but incomplete because it failed to stress the centrality of being able to choose well in our daily activities. To be a parent, or a spouse, or a friend; to be a doctor, or a teacher, or a citizen—actually to act in the world—demanded *phronesis*. The reason people needed practical wisdom was that the everyday choices they made took place in circumstances that were quite often ambiguous, puzzling, and contradictory. They were circumstances about which choice-makers had incomplete information. Often, they were circumstances that were, in important respects, unique. And the kinds of choices Aristotle was interested in were deeply ethical; they were about the right way to do the right thing for the right reasons.

For Aristotle, then, practical wisdom was a kind of moral expertise. A practically wise person—a *phronemoi*—had the expertise to deliberate about the right thing to do and had the motivation (the disposition) to do it. A practically wise person had both the moral skill and the moral will to choose and act rightly.

Aristotle stressed the importance of moral skill because he wanted to underline the limits of general rules and principles in guiding choice. Such general rules were limited, first, because of the very nature of the world: the particularities and uncertainties of the context in which people make choices frequently befuddles the application of general rules. We recognize this point today when we talk about the need to exercise discretion or judgment because a rule does not fit, given the particularities of a specific situation (see Ng & Tay, 2020, for an elaboration of this point, along with methodological suggestions about how psychology might study context specificity with rigor). Second, rules and principles—even good ones—are often in conflict: truth telling can conflict with kindness; empathy with detachment; justice with mercy. We need practical wisdom to achieve a balance among good aims. Third, even if we know *what* the right thing to do is, there is no rule or principle to tell us *how* to do it—in what way and when. When and how does a teacher interrupt a student, and when does the teacher let the student talk and stumble? When and how does the teacher ask the student a question to help her figure things out herself, and when does the teacher just tell the student the answer? Answering these questions depends on what the teacher knows about the student, and what the teacher notices in the particular moment. Is the student an introvert or an extrovert? Is the student secure and reflective or riddled with anxiety?

Sternberg (1998) emphasized just these kinds of context-dependent factors and balancing acts when he distinguished practical intelligence—and the tacit knowledge upon which it depends—from academic problem-solving. Academic problems, Sternberg said, tend to be formulated by others, well-defined, self-contained (all needed information is given), disconnected from ordinary experience, and characterized by one correct answer and one method for getting it. But the practical problems that require—and might help teach—wisdom are ill-defined, lack some of the information needed to solve them, are related to everyday experience, and are characterized by multiple solutions and multiple methods for picking a solution.

Given these particularities of context, having the capacity to deliberate and choose, to balance conflicting virtues, and to figure out how to act rightly, demands capacities such as judgment, improvisation, good listening, perspective taking, and empathy—all attributes of skill (see Schwartz & Sharpe, 2011, for a discussion of the importance of these skills and what psychology has to teach us about them). But these skills can be dangerous if they are aimed at the wrong things, if they are unmoored from good purpose. This was something Sternberg recognized after identifying the importance of practical intelligence for wisdom. He wrote, "A person who uses his mental powers to become an evil genius may be academically or practically intelligent, but the person cannot be wise" (Sternberg, 1998, p. 355).

Aristotle would have agreed about the potential dangers of practical intelligence. He referred to it as "shrewdness" or "cleverness" and he said of it that:

> [t]here exists a capacity called "cleverness," which is the power to perform those steps which are conducive to a goal we have set for ourselves and to attain that goal. If the goal is noble, cleverness deserves praise; if that goal is base, cleverness is knavery. That is why men of practical wisdom are often described as "clever" and "knavish." But in fact this capacity [alone] is not practical wisdom, although practical wisdom does not exist without it. Without virtue or excellence, this eye of the soul, [intelligence,] does not acquire the characteristic [of practical wisdom]. . . . Hence it is clear that a man cannot have practical wisdom unless he is good. (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book Six, lines 24–37)

Thus, Aristotle thought that a disquisition on what constitutes a moral motivation could not be avoided. Without it, there could be no serious discussion of practical wisdom. "Our discussion, then, has made it clear that it is impossible to be good in the full sense of the word without practical wisdom or to be a man of practical wisdom without moral excellence or virtue" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book Six, 1144b–30). For practical intelligence to serve practical wisdom, it had to aim at the right thing, at the proper purpose of an activity. That is why Aristotle put central importance on what he called the *telos* of an activity.

Knowing the purpose of your action was not, for Aristotle, knowing a general ethical norm about how a human being should, in general, treat another human being. Rather, the proper, ethical action depended on the kind of activity in which you were engaged: doctoring, soldiering, statesmanship, friendship, citizenship, navigation. Such activities or practices had proper aims—curing the ill or reducing suffering for the practice of medicine, justly ordering the distribution of honors and positions if you were a legislator or a statesman. So, the moral expertise to choose wisely depended on knowing what the aims were in the particular practices that framed one's choices. Knowing the direction you are aiming at will not tell you how to get there, but it will be a guide on your path—the essential guide. A wise person needs the moral skill to navigate along a path, but she also needs the compass that provides the direction, the *telos* of a practice. And crucially, even

an appreciation of the *telos* of an activity is not enough. One must embrace that *telos* as one's own, what Schwartz and Sharpe (2011) meant by "moral will."

Critically, from Aristotle's point of view, none of the virtues of character he regarded as the hallmarks of human excellence could be judged apart from the *telos* of the activities in which they were displayed. The very meaning of virtues like courage, compassion, honesty, or loyalty depended on the practice. And it was these virtues—directed at achieving the aims of a practice—that enabled people to do the right thing. The moral will to use the skill of practical reasoning wisely depended on wanting to do the right thing in achieving the aims of a practice. But this meant that Aristotle was working from a theory of motivation very different from most common variants today. It is to that theory of motivation—and the allied concepts of *telos* and practice—that I now turn.

Moral Will and the *Telos* of Human Activity

Aristotle's teleological framework for understanding human nature is probably foreign to most modern students of human behavior. But it has become a commonplace to distinguish between "intrinsic" and "extrinsic" motivation. Extrinsically motivated activity is directed to some other end. It is a means to that end. It is instrumental. Intrinsically motivated activity is an end in itself. Extrinsically motivated activity is work; intrinsically motivated activity is play. Extrinsically motivated activity is all about achieving some instrumental goal; intrinsically motivated activity *is* the goal (see Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett, 1973; Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1985; Pink, 2011).

This research on intrinsic motivation is important for understanding the importance of moral will and *telos* in Aristotle's theory of practical wisdom. But much of the existing literature in psychology on intrinsic motivation misses something important about the moral will demanded by practical wisdom. Often intrinsic motivation is associated with the pleasure that derives from simply engaging in the activity, rather than with consequences of the activity. This assumption, that intrinsic motivation is entirely about the activity and not its consequences, leads to an oversimplification of what is an extremely complex set of relations between motives, actions, and consequences. Here, I attempt to clarify some of these relations (see Schwartz & Sharpe, 2019 Schwartz & Wrzesniewski, 2019, for further discussion).

The Idea of a "Practice"

Imagine a college professor who enjoys her work and is good at it. Her work produces a family of consequences for her. She gets satisfaction from the minute-to-minute, day-to-day character of her job, and from interacting with young minds. She gets satisfaction from knowing that she is an excellent teacher—that she does the job well. She gets satisfaction from evidence that students are learning and are enthusiastic. She enjoys respect and admiration from her peers. She enjoys respect and admiration from her students and from society at large. She appreciates her nice salary and benefits, as well as her job

security. She is pleased that her work hours are flexible. She likes the flexibility to make her own schedule. She is pleased with free time in the summer for travel, scholarly activity, and the development of new courses.

Which of these multiple consequences serve also as motives? There are several possibilities: pleasure in the activity, pursuit of excellence, status and acclaim, salary, job security, and benefits, and the desire to have a positive impact on others. Which of these motives count as "intrinsic"? And what are the criteria for establishing a motive as intrinsic?

I think the preceding questions can be profitably addressed from a framework developed by neo-Aristotelian philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre. In *After Virtue* (1981), MacIntyre introduces the idea of a "practice," which he defines as "any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended" (p. 175).

This definition is complicated, and requires elucidation. First, practices are complex. The game of tennis is a practice, whereas hitting a tennis ball over the net is not. Gardening is a practice, whereas mowing the lawn is not. Second, practices are characterized by the pursuit of excellence or, at least, competence. People who engage in practices strive to be good at them. Third, what constitutes excellence is itself defined by standards internal to the practice, largely established by practitioners themselves. Thus, we are perfectly free to say something like, "I don't know much about art, but I know what I like." But we are not entitled to expect that anyone (especially artists) will care what we like or interpret our likes and dislikes as an indication of the quality of their art. In another domain, the quality of a search engine in presenting users with exactly the information they seek (the *telos* of search engine design, after all) need have nothing to do with the profits it generates for shareholders. Software designers engaged in the practice seek search-engine excellence. Shareholders and software designers who are not "practitioners" seek profitability.

The concept of excellence is necessarily imprecise. First, if MacIntyre is right, excellence is a moving target, since as practices develop, the standards of excellence among practitioners change. And second, each practice has standards of excellence that are peculiar to it. There is no abstract standard of excellence that unites instances of excellence across different practices. Moreover, there is room for disagreement, both among practitioners and between practitioners and non-practitioners, about what excellence means (see Kuhn, 1977, for a parallel argument about judgments of the excellence of scientific theories among practicing scientists). Nonetheless, only activities that have standards of excellence (however imprecise "excellence" may be) can be practices in MacIntyre's or Aristotle's telling.

A fourth feature of practices is that practitioners pursue goods or ends that are internal to the practice itself. In other words, there is an intimate relation between the ends of

the practice and the means to achieve those ends. For our hypothetical college professor, educating students and engendering in them enthusiasm for learning are internal to the practice. They are the aims, the *teloi*, of the practice. Salary and benefits, job security, and summers off are not. These ends could be achieved in other ways, through other occupations. The relations between the teacher's teaching and these other ends are purely instrumental. Not even praise and admiration from students and colleagues are unambiguously internal to the practice. Perhaps praise for excellence *as a teacher* is; praise for excellence more generally is not. The line between what is and is not a practice is sometimes fuzzy, and some activities may be practices at one point in their development but not at another. But I think the differences between prototypical practices and mere instrumental activities are clear. And MacIntyre's framework enables us to discern whether a given participant in a practice is a true practitioner or not.

Two things about MacIntyre's conception of practices are especially worth noting in this context. First, in contrast to the way in which "intrinsic motivation" is understood, it is not just the doing, but also the achieving, that matters. The gardener wants a beautiful and bountiful garden; the professor wants enlightened, enthusiastic students. Second, there is no mention of pleasure in MacIntyre's account. Of course, our college professor may derive pleasure from her day-to-day activities, but that is just icing on the cake. As Aristotle (1999, X.3) wrote, "there are many things for which we would exert our efforts even if they would not entail and pleasure. . . . [And] we would choose them even if we were to get no pleasure from them" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X.3 1174a4–7). Aristotle did not disdain pleasure. It would be hard to sustain the practice of friendship, he argued, if the relationship did not give the friends pleasure (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI.5 1157b5–25). But not pleasure at every moment: in the challenging and painful moments in a friendship, it will be the virtues of loyalty, courage, empathy, and patience that will sustain the friendship. Aristotle also argues that people need to learn to take pleasure in the right things—in the arc of a friendship, not in immediate gratification of fleeting desires. Nussbaum (1990) observes, in commenting on the preceding passage from Aristotle, that "even if in fact pleasure is firmly linked to excellent action as a necessary consequence, it is not the end *for which* we act" (p. 57). In other words, not every consequence of an act is a motive for the act. What makes the professor's activities "intrinsically motivated" is that she is pursuing aims that are internally and intimately related to teaching—aims that cannot be achieved in any other activity. The crucial point here is that participation in a practice is not aimless. It is not "play." Aims and results matter critically. But the route to achieving those results also matters. A "practicing" gardener pursues a beautiful and bountiful garden, and will do back-breaking, unpleasant work amid weeds and mud and bugs to achieve that aim. Hiring someone to plant and weed will not be the practice of gardening for her. The "practicing" painter aims to pursue a striking work of art despite the frustrations and failures along the way; hiring someone else to paint just won't do. The "practicing" doctor wants to be the one who cures disease and

eases suffering, the "practicing" teacher wants to be the one who opens up and inspires young minds, and so on.

Practicing competitive games underlines the importance of treating ends as internal to a practice. Competitive games have winners and losers, and people who love the games want to win. Indeed, if they are practitioners pursuing excellence, they *should* want to win. But they should not want to win by cheating. If they cheat, they are treating the ends as external to the activities that produce them.

It is perhaps an unfortunate accident that early research on intrinsic motivation focused on the drawings of four-year-olds and the puzzle-solving of college students (Deci, 1975; Lepper, Greene, & Nisbett, 1973). Neither of these activities is a practice, and both are rather effortless. Thus, the focus was on pleasure in the activity—engaging in the activity "for its own sake," rather than on pursuit of excellence in the activity. But even in these cases, I doubt that the preschooler would be pleased if others did the drawing and handed it to her, or the college student would be pleased to get handed already solved puzzles. Preschoolers want pleasing pictures *that they drew*, and college students want solved puzzles *that they solved*. The framework of means and ends is thus as characteristic of "intrinsically" motivated behavior as it is of "extrinsically" motivated behavior. The critical distinction between these two categories of means–ends relation is in the *connection* between means and ends. With so-called intrinsically motivated behavior, the relation between means and ends is anything but arbitrary. And MacIntyre's conception of practices helps us to understand what Aristotle meant by the *telos* of human activities.

The Dangers of Skill without Will

My discussion has focused on what psychological research on wisdom has largely left out—the motivation to do the right thing, or moral will. One might conclude from this line of argument that I think that research on wisdom is incomplete. Actually, I think the problem is worse than this. Conceiving wisdom as skill, or practical intelligence, unharnessed from moral will (Aristotle's distinction, noted earlier, between "shrewdness" and practical wisdom) is actually dangerous (see Schwartz & Sharpe, 2011). When Aristotle argued that practical reasoning enabled people to manipulate others more effectively than they would if shrewdness were absent, he was thinking of the danger posed by the Sophists of his day. These political orators and teachers of rhetoric—the art of persuasion—prided themselves on their skill at using rhetoric to convince citizens to be swayed by demagogues. Aristotle would have understood the danger of lawyers, or political consultants, or public relations experts today who contract out their shrewdness to serve the ends of whichever client will pay. He would have understood the danger of the prosecutor today who aims not to pursue justice by punishing the guilty and exonerating the innocent, but who instead is motivated to cajole suspects to accept plea bargains in order to be recognized and rewarded for having high "clearance rates." Or the professor who aims not to inspire curiosity and awaken young minds, but to achieve high evaluations while

pretending to be aiming at awakening young minds. Moral skill, without moral will, risks becoming a tool for exploitation and manipulation.

Awareness of and commitment to the *telos* of a profession is important for another reason. Often, doctors, lawyers, financial advisors, and teachers face challenges that are complex and ambiguous. How *should* this patient be treated? How *should* this client be advised? How *should* this student be taught? Should the doctor be honest or kind? Should the lawyer be an advocate or a counselor? Should the teacher be stern or forgiving? Resolving these conflicts and determining the right thing to do requires judgment, improvisation, good listening, perspective taking, and empathy—all attributes of moral skill. But for the professional to get things right, to use judgment and discretion in a way that serves the client, the *telos* of her activity must be kept firmly in mind as a guide to making difficult decisions. Absent a firm and guiding grasp of the *telos* of her profession, a doctor, lawyer, or teacher might worry too much about the feelings of her patients, clients, or students, or worry too much about the financial returns on her time, and thus fail to cure, counsel, or educate.

Moral Will, Moral Skill, Philosophy, and Literature

In this chapter, I have argued that practical wisdom demands not only the skill of practical reasoning or practical intelligence, but also the will to engage and pursue excellence in activities for reasons that underscore the purpose of the activities themselves. Where do the skill and will come from?

Wisdom comes from experience. Dr. Jerome Groopman (2002) describes his painful path to learning how to give a young patient very bad news. Groopman stumbled badly in this respect in his early days as a doctor, but experience gave him a more nuanced understanding of what patients needed—of how to deliver bad news with empathy and kindness. His wisdom came from his experience. Yet, wisdom does not come *only* from experience. A young physician (or lawyer, or teacher) can read Groopman's account, learn from it, and be much more sensitive, empathic, and wise than Groopman was when he started. In other words, as Nussbaum (1995) pointed out, wisdom can come from literature. It can come from accounts like Groopman's and also from narrative fiction. By reading narrative, we get to experience vicariously the unique lives of people like those we may be dealing with in our own lives. We get to see inside them, to appreciate their subtlety, their conflicts, their complexity. Using the study of literature as a teaching tool can prevent some of the mistakes in interpersonal interaction that Groopman made. So, a way to develop moral skill in people is to teach them through narrative.

But, as I have argued, skill is not enough. A doctor's skill in interpersonal relations can induce patients to overlook his incompetence or neglect in treatment. The patients like him too much to complain. What must be combined with skill—with practical intelligence—is will. Practice must be guided by the proper *telos* of the activity. And where does this will come from? To a large degree, it comes from being properly socialized into

a practice by experienced practitioners. But it is all too easy for practices to lose their way as they succumb to the pressures of keeping institutions afloat and making a living. Practices need watchdogs, and those watchdogs need to be trained in moral philosophy. And so, to be a good doctor, lawyer, or teacher, one needs to know the technical details of the profession, but one also needs to know how patients, clients, and students feel, and one needs to know what medicine, law, and education are for. I think that literature and philosophy are essential tools in helping to keep practices on course and helping to make practitioners wise.

Any situation in which what one does affects other human beings has a significant moral dimension. And that moral dimension, though central to Aristotle, has been peripheral to the interests of psychology and other social sciences. They have either ignored or presupposed the moral dimensions of human action. Choosing between right and wrong demands an understanding of the *telos* of a practice.

But if the *telos* of a practice gives us guidance for choosing rightly in ambiguous, uncertain, and complex contexts in which rules and principles are of limited value, it is not enough. Actors (decision-makers) also need the excellences (*arête*), the virtues or character traits that guide, motivate, enable them to act in the right way: courage, loyalty, self-control, a commitment to fairness and justice, patience, humility (a willingness to admit that you are wrong), caring, compassion. The specific manifestation of these character traits or virtues depends on the *telos* of the practice (e.g., courage means something different for a student, a teacher, a warrior, and a doctor). And importantly, these virtues are not ethical adornments; they are essential traits needed to perform the practice wisely and well. Aristotle was right: one can't be practically wise without the virtues. And the converse is also true: one can't exercise the virtues without being practically wise (*Nicomachean Ethics*, Book Six, 1144b–30). It turns out, then, that practical wisdom is the master virtue.

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CHAPTER

31

Contributions of Reading Fiction to Well-Being: Positive, Negative, and Ambiguous Consequences of Engaging with Fiction

David Kidd

Abstract

From the child considering whether the pigeon should drive the bus to the literature professor pondering the thematic threads in Toni Morrison's novels, people are transfixed by stories. Yet, they know relatively little about how engaging with stories might shape who they become. This chapter explores recent research investigating the effects of reading fiction on cognitive and intellectual development, personal development, and social development. In each domain, attention is given to how qualities of texts and readers may interact to yield seemingly contradictory effects. The chapter concludes with examples of practical applications of reading programs and suggestions for addressing key limitations and gaps in the research literature.

Key Words: reading, fiction, critical thinking, social cognition, personal identity

Reading, particularly fiction, has long attracted praise and skepticism, with commentators and scholars debating the potential benefits and possible pitfalls of engaging with texts (Gottschall, 2013; Keen, 2007). As researchers continue to grapple with how to answer basic questions about the psychological consequences of reading, there is substantial evidence that ordinary readers believe the activity has obvious and, at times, transformative effects (Carlsen & Sherrill, 1988; Sabine & Sabine, 1983; Nell, 1988). Merga (2017) describes a large-scale study in which over 1,000 self-described avid readers responded to the question, "Why do you read books?" (Merga, 2017, p. 149). Their answers, mostly about fiction, fell into nine broad categories: perspective-taking, acquiring knowledge, personal development, mental stimulation and critical thinking, entertainment and pleasure, escape and relief, social connectedness, creative inspiration, and developing language skills.

Although perhaps skewed, these reasons suggest an array of benefits to reading. Some of these may be mutually reinforcing, others antagonistic; some may be valued in some contexts and viewed with alarm in others; and some may depend on different features of

the text and reader than others. Figuring out how and for whom reading promotes different elements of human flourishing is a challenge that has been increasingly met by relying on psychological theories and methods.

Psychological Models of Engaging with Narrative Fiction

Much contemporary research on the psychology of engaging with fiction is informed by the theory that fiction supports rich simulations of life, particularly its social aspects (Mar & Oatley, 2008; Oatley, 1999, 2016). In this view, we use the same processes to make sense of fictional worlds that we use to navigate the real one. As Mar and Oatley observe, just as a flight simulator is designed to help pilots hone their abilities in a compelling but consequence-free environment, works of fiction allow readers to explore experiences and perspectives with little risk.

An early review of neuroimaging studies supported this view, suggesting that understanding narratives calls on a range of psychological capacities in addition to those required for language processing (Mar, 2011; Spreng, Mar, & Kim, 2009). Drawing on subsequent research, Jacobs and Willems (2018) propose a neurocognitive poetics model suggesting links between narrative processing and internally generated cognition, particularly perspective taking and situation model building. The simulation account also coheres with what readers say about their experiences: most of the reasons for reading cited by avid readers (Merga, 2017) imply simulation (e.g., perspective-taking, escape, creative inspiration) and can be easily understood in terms of internally generated cognition (e.g., personal development, critical thinking) and language processing.

The simulation account of engaging with fiction provides a productive framework for thinking about how reading might develop knowledge and refine psychological processes, and it has received broad empirical support (for reviews see, Oatley, 2016; Oatley & Djikic, 2018). Researchers have also articulated extensions of the simulation account to clarify how variation in aspects of the text, reader, and their interaction corresponds with differences in the nature and effects of simulated engagement. This sort of research often draws on work of cognitive literary theorists (e.g., Culpeper, 2001; Miall & Kuiken, 1994; Zunshine, 2006) to investigate the relations of textual features and different psychological processes. For example, some work has considered the role of the subject matter of texts in determining how reading influences social beliefs and attitudes (e.g., Black, Capps, & Barnes, 2018; Fong, Mullin, & Mar, 2015). Other research has explored reader engagement and immersion, or narrative transportation (e.g., Appel & Richter, 2007; Gerrig & Rapp, 2004), the impacts of structural or formal elements of texts (e.g., Kidd & Castano, 2013; Koopman, 2016; Miall & Kuiken, 1999), and the importance of reader characteristics (e.g., Carpenter, Green, & Fitzgerald, 2018; Miall & Kuiken, 2002).

A number of recently proposed models integrate several of these lines of research to account for extant findings and refine hypotheses. Mar (2018) emphasizes the dual importance of the content of works of fiction (or narrative, more broadly) and the types

of processing activated by story engagement. Mar (2018) observes that there are at least three sets of cognitive processes that may be engaged by fiction. The first two, theory of mind and empathy, have each received more attention from empirical researchers than the third, which Mar (2018) describes as memory of social schemas. Mar's (2018) point is similar to Kidd and Castano's (2013, 2017b, 2019) proposal that fiction may vary in the extent to which it evokes individuating social cognition (e.g., theory of mind; folk psychology) versus categorizing or schematic cognition (e.g., stereotyping; folk sociology). The common thread here is a recognition that researchers must attend to the form of readers' psychological engagement to understand the impacts of reading.

Barnes (2018) draws more attention to general features of literary reading, primarily the depth and creativity that readers bring to their engagement. Along with others, Barnes distinguishes between relatively passive and active reading, and highlights the possibility that readers can approach practically any text in an active manner, even if some texts may better scaffold or encourage active engagement. Along similar lines, Koopman and Hakemulder (2015) emphasize the importance of role-taking, defamiliarization, and stillness as distinct factors in narrative engagement.

These theoretical views converge in supporting the position that there are many ways of reading fiction, and these likely have different psychological bases and effects. Broadly, they distinguish between non-reflective, schema-driven reading and reflective, defamiliarizing reading. Relatively non-reflective reading can be understood as corresponding to high levels of narrative transportation (Green & Brock, 2000), in which readers likely experience fluency and mastery of schema-consistent plots and characters (Gerrig & Rapp, 2004), narrative emotions (Mar, Oatley, Djikic, & Mullin, 2011), identification with characters (Gabriel & Young, 2011), and, generally, a sense of being fully immersed in a fictional world. In contrast, reflective reading may be typified by defamiliarization (Miall & Kuiken, 1994), iterative interpretation (Zunshine, 2015; Kidd & Castano, 2019), the experience of aesthetic as well as narrative emotions (Koopman & Hakemulder, 2015), and critical thinking (Djikic, Oatley, & Moldoveanu, 2013; Koek, Janssen, Hakemulder, & Rijlaarsdam, 2016, 2019).

The degree to which a reader experiences one or both of these forms of engagement, according to all of these models, is likely to vary depending on a complex interaction of features of the text, the reader, and the context. These interactions are far from being understood, but distinguishing between relatively non-reflective and reflective engagement provides a simple framework for thinking about the different sorts of ways fiction appears to impact readers. In the following sections, this approach will be adopted while presenting research investigating the ways in which reading fiction may cultivate psychological development in intellectual, personal, and social domains.

Cognitive and Intellectual Development

One of the ways reading fiction may support human flourishing is by cultivating literacy, critical thinking, and general knowledge. Reading, particularly fiction-reading, presents opportunities to learn new words and encounter a wide range of stylistic devices (Mar & Rain, 2015). In addition, the cognitive demands of reading fiction, such as interpreting stylistic elements and evaluating narrators, may promote critical thinking, and even in fiction, readers encounter information about real places, people, and things (Mar & Oatley, 2008; Mar, 2018).

Verbal Abilities

Early research revealed robust positive relations of print exposure and linguistic abilities (Stanovich & Cunningham, 1992; Stanovich, West, & Harrison, 1995; West, Stanovich, & Mitchell, 1993; West & Stanovich, 1991; see Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998, and Mol & Bus, 2011 for reviews). The link between reading and linguistic abilities is thought to be bi-directional and mutually reinforcing, such that reading improves verbal abilities, which in turn make more complex texts accessible to readers (Mol & Bus, 2011). Cunningham and Stanovich (1997) found that, controlling for verbal ability assessed ten years prior, print exposure predicted the development of verbal abilities and general knowledge (for a replication, see Sparks, Patton, & Murdoch, 2014). Subsequent research has shown that exposure measures limited to fiction are positively related to verbal abilities (Acheson, Wells, & MacDonald, 2008), and may account for most of the effects of general print exposure (Mar & Rain, 2015). There is, however, a need for research regarding the role of reading fiction in the development of literacy skills throughout adulthood, as most extant work focuses on children and adolescent readers.

Critical Thinking

There is some evidence that reading fiction can promote the development of critical thinking skills. Djikic et al. (2013) proposed that fiction affords readers a simulated environment in which the absence of consequences reduces the motive to make quick judgments and stick by them. In Djikic et al.'s study, participants who were assigned to read literary short stories, compared to those assigned to read essays, reported lower levels of need for cognitive closure, consistent with the argument that reading fiction can promote slower and deeper processing (Koopman & Hakemulder, 2015). In a mixed-method prospective study of adolescent literature students, Koek, Janssen, Hakemulder, and Rijlaarsdam (2016) found that improvements in critical literary understanding were associated with generalized critical thinking skills. In a qualitative follow-up study, Koek et al. (2019) documented ways in which literary reading evoked critical thinking abilities, including de-automatization and text (re)construction. Although they make no causal claims, Koek et al. observe that the results support the theoretical connection between defamiliarizing literary reading and critical thinking.

There is also evidence that other forms of engagement with fiction may have contrary effects. For example, watching television shows aimed at entertainment can increase just world beliefs (Appel, 2008), a system-justifying set of ideas associated with a high need for closure (Jost, Fitzsimons, & Kay, 2004). It also seems likely that readers sometimes choose stories that conform to their expectations about the (social) world (Gerrig & Rapp, 2004), particularly if they are seeking high levels of narrative transportation or escape (Mar et al., 2011). Therefore, it may be that more reflective reading, of the sort studied by Djikic et al. (2013) and Koek et al. (2016, 2019), is most likely to cultivate critical thinking, while relatively non-reflective reading may reinforce reliance on less demanding processes.

Knowledge, Beliefs, and Attitudes

The capacity to engage in pretend-play emerges early, with children as young as two years able to recognize pretense (Friedman & Leslie, 2007), and it reflects the initial development of sophisticated meta-representational abilities that underpin readers' compartmentalization and integration of fictional experiences into their general memories (Gerrig & Prentice, 1991). However, despite understanding the concept of fiction, readers appear to pick up and use both true and false information from stories they read (Marsh, Meade, & Roediger, 2003).

Most studies of learning from fiction focus on narrative persuasion, often in the context of clear rhetorical goals (Green & Carpenter, 2011). Work on narrative persuasion typically uses short, highly evocative stories with overt themes. Participants might be asked about attitudes toward a different social group that has been positively portrayed in a story (e.g., Mazzocco, Green, Sasota, & Jones, 2010). Or, they might read a story highlighting the negative effects of tobacco use and then are asked about their intentions to quit (e.g., Dunlop, Wakefield, & Kashima, 2010). Generally, the extent of story-consistent changes is driven by either a predisposition to be transported into the story or post-reading reports of transportation (Green & Brock, 2000; Green & Carpenter, 2011). More generally, story-consistent changes may be greatest for readers less prone to critical thinking, suggesting that non-reflective reading may be most conducive to learning (for better or worse) from fiction (Appel & Malečkar, 2012).

The apparent credulity of readers, however, is not unwarranted. Scholars have argued that storytelling may be the oldest and most effective way of communicating social knowledge (Gottschall, 2013; Dunbar, 2014; Smith et al., 2017), and many avid readers are explicit about seeking information from works of fiction (Merga, 2017). Vicary and Fraley (2010), for example, present evidence of a reinforcing cycle in which works of fiction meet and reinforce perceived needs for domain-specific information. However, research aimed at understanding the sorts of knowledge readers seek, why they do so, and what they learn, is limited.

The research reviewed here broadly supports the idea that reading fiction presents opportunities for developing cognitive and intellectual skills, such as literacy and critical

thinking, and that it may also help inform readers about the world around them, especially its social aspects. There remains, though, a clear need for additional research, particularly studies addressing adult populations and frameworks that incorporate factors related to differences in how readers are engaging with stories.

Personal Development

Drawing on decades of studying life narratives, McAdams (2019) argues that we use stories to represent ourselves and that these influence our development. Although the centrality of narrative to identity has been disputed (Strawson, 2004), research has documented the development of narrative life stories in adolescence (Fivush, Habermas, Waters, & Zaman, 2011) and has explored the implications of autobiographical narratives to well-being (Adler, Lodi-Smith, Philippe, & Houle, 2016; Fournier, Dong, Quitasol, Weststrate, & Di Domenico, 2018). Generally, this work suggests that we use narratives to make sense of our experiences, who we are, and what our future might be like. To do this, we rely on narrative structures and elements that we acquire socially, and reading fiction may be one mechanism through which these are shared (e.g., McAdams, 2019; Fivush et al., 2011). In 2010, Mar, Peskin, and Fong noted a lack of direct evidence linking exposure to fiction with the structure or coherence of life stories, and that lacunae largely remain (Brokerhof, Bal, Jansen, & Solinger, 2018).

There is more direct evidence that engaging with fiction can change how people understand themselves. In a recent review, Brokerhof et al. (2018) propose that reading literature can affect identity through three pathways: a personal pathway that includes processes of identification and observation of others, a cultural pathway including the acquisition of narrative techniques (e.g., themes, plots), and a reflective pathway characterized by gaining self-awareness and considering multiple possible selves. Each of these pathways appears to include more and less reflective variants.

For example, there is apparently conflicting evidence that reading fiction can lead to idiosyncratic (e.g., Djikic, Oatley, & Carland, 2012; Djikic, Oatley, Zoeterman, & Peterson, 2009) and relatively uniform (e.g., Isberner, Richter, Schreiner, Eisenbach, Sommer, & Appel, 2018) changes in self-concept. Djikic et al. (2009) found that participants who read a Chekhov story changed their responses to a personality questionnaire more than those who read a documentary account of the same events, but in idiosyncratic ways. In contrast, other studies demonstrate story-consistent changes. Gabriel Young (2011) showed that reading stories about vampires and wizards led participants to more readily associate related terms (e.g., fangs, potions) with themselves, and cross-cultural developmental research suggests that early engagement with stories can shape the evaluation of seemingly basic emotions like happiness (Tsai, Louie, Chen, & Uchida, 2007). Other research has yielded similar effects, suggesting that narrative transportation and identification with characters can lead to story-congruent modification of self-concepts

(e.g., Isberner et al., 2018; Krause & Appel, 2020; Richter, Appel, & Calio, 2014) and attitudes (e.g., Vezzali, Stathi, Giovannini, Capozza, & Trifiletti, 2014).

Alongside evidence of assimilation of personality characteristics, there are indications that readers sometimes contrast themselves with people they encounter in fiction. Krause and Appel (2020) found that participants reporting low transportation into a story about a diligent student and who found themselves challenging aspects of the story tended to report themselves as *less* conscientious, just as their more transported peers reported greater conscientiousness. The counterarguing observed by Krause and Appel (2020) may reflect a response similar to defamiliarization, as both entail challenging or reflecting on overt meanings in a text. This more reflective reading may decrease the likelihood of story-consistent changes, even as it supports shifts in self-perception.

Despite the centrality of storytelling to theories of identity development, the extant empirical research is limited, particularly concerning long-term accruing effects. Nonetheless, it appears that reading characterized by defamiliarization is most likely to activate the reflective pathway identified by Brokerhof et al. (2018). However, both forms of engagement might operate along the personal and cultural pathways, just in different ways. While transporting reading may promote assimilation to norms embodied by fictional characters (e.g., Richter et al., 2014), more reflective, defamiliarizing reading may encourage their critical evaluation and perhaps rejection (e.g., Krause & Appel, 2020). Both forms of engagement may have similarly varied effects on the cultural pathway. For example, McAdams (2019) proposes that the themes and structures of redemption stories in American culture are widely shared across popular narratives, providing a template that individuals can use to understand their own experiences.

There are strong theoretical reasons and some empirical evidence that reading fiction can encourage adoption of story-consistent values and self-conceptions. There are also good reasons to believe it can support idiosyncratic exploration of unfamiliar identities and life trajectories. These contrasting effects can be at least partially reconciled by integrating the distinction between relatively reflective and more transporting engagement with the model of personality change described by Brokerhof et al. (2018). However, much additional research is needed to evaluate the many theoretical claims about the effects of reading on personality.

Social Development

The effects of reading fiction on social cognition have received recent attention from psychologists, though this work has yielded few conclusive findings. The fact that human (or human-like) characters and relationships are central to most works of fiction (Mar & Oatley, 2008) has led scholars to propose that parsing the social content of fiction is one of the greatest demands and pleasures of reading (e.g., Bruner, 1986; Zunshine, 2006). In this view, reading is a deeply social activity, and there is evidence that readers (and viewers) of fiction can even develop intense (parasocial) relationships with characters that

help them meet their basic social needs (Gabriel, Valenti, & Young, 2016; Gabriel, Read, Young, Bachrach, & Troisi, 2017; see also Mar, Oatley, & Peterson, 2009). Consistent with the simulation account, readers interpret and engage with the social content of fiction much as they do with the real social world. Along the way, they may encounter useful information about people and social relations (e.g., Johnson, Carroll, Gottschall, & Kruger, 2011) and refine psychological processes associated with social engagement (e.g., Kidd & Castano, 2013).

Early evidence suggesting that encountering fictional social worlds affects social cognition was presented by Mar, Oatley, Hirsh, dela Paz, and Peterson (2006). Participants were asked to complete checklist-based measures of their prior exposure to fiction and nonfiction, as well as measures of social cognition and, in a subsequent study, personality factors (Mar et al., 2009). In both studies, exposure to fiction (but not nonfiction) was positively related to a measure of theory of mind (ToM), the Reading the Mind in the Eyes Test (RMET; Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright, Hill, Raste, & Plumb, 2001), even after accounting for individual differences in trait openness to experience and fantasy-proneness, a construct related to transportability (in Mar et al., 2009). This finding has been replicated numerous times in a range of populations and using variations of the author-checklist method of assessing exposure to fiction (Mumper & Gerrig, 2017), and it has received indirect support from neuroimaging studies (Jacobs & Willems, 2018; Tamir, Bricker, Dodell-Feder, & Mitchell, 2015).

Experimental methods have also been used to test whether reading fiction can improve performance on tests of ToM. An initial set of five experiments comparing RMET performance among participants previously randomly assigned to read literary fiction with those assigned to read nonfiction (one experiment), nothing at all (two experiments), and popular fiction (four experiments) yielded results suggesting that only reading literary fiction produces short-term improvements in ToM (Kidd & Castano, 2013). This general finding suggests that the greater sociocognitive complexity and defamiliarizing features of literary, relative to popular genre fiction, prompted stronger recruitment of ToM processes.

However, both the findings and motivating theory presented by Kidd and Castano (2013) were quickly challenged by two sets of replication studies that failed to find a reliable positive effect of reading literary fiction on RMET performance, but also used different methods (Panero, Weisberg, Black, Goldstein, Barnes, Brownell, & Winner, 2016; Samur, Tops, & Koole, 2018). A reanalysis of one study for which data were available, Panero et al. (2016), suggested that the replication failure was at least partially due to failure to ensure that participants read the texts (Kidd & Castano, 2017a; though see Panero, Weisberg, Black, Goldstein, Barnes, Brownell, & Winner, 2017). A high-fidelity, large-scale exact replication of the first experiment, that comparing nonfiction and literary fiction reading, however, failed to find any evidence of a positive effect of reading literary fiction in this paradigm (Camerer et al., 2018).

Despite these failed replications, there is evidence that reading literary fiction, compared to popular genre fiction, can improve RMET performance. In a very close, though not exact, replication study, van Kuijk, Verkoeijen, Dijkstra, and Zwaan (2018) found a strong positive effect of reading literary fiction. In addition, in a series of pre-registered exact replications of the final, most advanced experiment reported in Kidd and Castano (2013), two studies yielded inconclusive results (based on applications of a small-telescopes test; Simonsohn, 2015) and one replicated the expected effect with an effect size consistent with prior results (Kidd & Castano, 2019). Taken together, these findings suggest that the key results of Kidd and Castano (2013) can be replicated, but the effects are small and vulnerable to even slight methodological changes. There is more robust correlational evidence that exposure to literary fiction, but not popular genre fiction, is positively associated with performance on tests of ToM (Kidd & Castano, 2017b; Kidd & Castano, 2019), bolstering the position that ToM abilities are more strongly linked to more reflective literary reading.

The experimental effects do not provide a very convincing case, on their own, that reading literary fiction reliably makes people noticeably more adept at inferring others' mental states, but the converging correlational evidence suggests consistent differences in the ways that literary and popular genre reading relate to social cognition. Direct evidence that literary fiction introduces greater socio-cognitive complexity than popular genre fiction was found in experiments in which participants rated characters in popular genre fiction as more stereotypic and predictable than those in literary fiction (Kidd & Castano, 2019). This finding suggests that readers of popular genre fiction may use more efficient schema-based social cognitive skills to interpret the relatively simple social content typical of fiction often populated with stock characters and formulaic plots. Accordingly, works of popular genre fiction may be most likely to affect social cognition by reinforcing or modifying the social scripts and stereotypes readers use to make sense of the real world when not motivated to rely on more demanding processes (for dual-process models of social cognition, see Fiebich & Coltheart, 2015; Swencionis & Fiske, 2014).

Additional research indicates that fiction can operate on aspects of social cognition other than ToM, particularly stereotypes and other social beliefs. For example, Appel (2008) found that people who watch more fictional television, which tends to be highly formulaic, have stronger beliefs in a just world. Other research has shown that reading stories depicting outgroup members in a positive way can improve explicit and implicit attitudes toward the groups as a whole (Husnu, Mertan, & Cicek, 2018), particularly when the readers are highly transported into the story (Johnson, 2013; Johnson, Jasper, Griffin, & Huffman, 2013). These findings are consistent with research showing that even indirect positive contact with other groups can improve intergroup attitudes, making fiction a potential tool for combating prejudice (Murrary & Brauer, 2019). Research into stereotyping and attitude change (e.g., Yzerbyt, Coull, & Rocher, 1999) suggests that immersed, rather than reflective, readers may be most likely to demonstrate altered

beliefs. These mechanisms could either reduce or increase prejudice, depending on how groups are portrayed and the degree to which readers are willing to engage with stories that challenge their beliefs. However, insofar as the process of individuation inhibits the activation or application of stereotypes (Swencionis & Fiske, 2014), more literary reflective reading may also reduce prejudice, though not by substantially modifying the content of schematic representations.

Research investigating the effects of fiction on ToM and perceptions of groups has not generated definitive proof of causal effects on either, though there is initial meta-analytic evidence of positive correlational (Mumper & Gerrig, 2017) and experimental (Dodell-Feder & Tamir, 2018) effects on ToM. As researchers continue to explore other dimensions of social cognition, such as moral judgments (Black, Capp, & Barnes, 2018), prosocial behavior (Johnson, 2012), and even empathy for animals (Małecki, Pawłowski, Cieński, & Sorokowski, 2018), systematic manipulation of different forms of engagement will help clarify the mechanisms leading to change. Readers ranging from the anonymous respondents in the study described by Merga (2017) to the former US president Barack Obama (Obama & Robinson, 2015) have identified reading fiction as a way to better understand their social world and the people who inhabit it. Research is still needed to empirically evaluate these claims.

Conclusion

The novel is a fairly recent development in human history, even if it has storytelling roots that stretch to the earliest days of our development. Whether this invention has provided a tool (or toolkit) for honing key psychological capacities or meeting important needs (e.g., Gottschall, 2013) is a theoretically well-motivated question that has earned increasing attention from empirical researchers. Currently, much of this research has been aimed at understanding the contributions of reading fiction to intellectual, personal, and social development, yielding encouraging but often incomplete results.

Sorting out contradictory results will require both theoretical innovation and the application of rigorous methods (e.g., adequate power, pre-registration, direct replication, longitudinal studies). This latter point is especially important given that some of the most encouraging findings, such as Bal and Veltkamp's (2013) demonstration that being transported into a story can increase empathy and Johnson et al.'s (2013) finding that transportation can reduce implicit bias, have not been confirmed in direct replications. Other findings, such as those of Kidd and Castano (2013) that have been the subject of multiple replication attempts, have yielded more mixed results, highlighting the need for methodological improvements.

Although specific effects are often difficult to pin down, there is a growing literature documenting the benefits of engaging with literature in applied settings. In these mostly qualitative studies, effects often vary across participants, with some citing intellectual growth, others changes in self-perceptions, and others focusing on improved social connections

or understanding (e.g., Longden et al., 2015; Longden, Davis, Carroll, Billington, & Kinderman, 2016). Many programs utilizing literature also involve facilitated discussions about the texts to encourage interpretation and reflection, and these elements may have independent or moderating effects on outcomes (DeVries, Bollin, Brouwer, Marion, Nass, & Pompilios, 2019).

Reading programs have been deployed to improve intellectual, personality, and social flourishing with populations ranging from incarcerated adolescents and adults (Billington, 2011; Houchins, Gagnon, Lane, Lambert, & McCray, 2018) to adults with psychosis (Volpe, Torre, De Santis, Perris, & Catapano, 2015). Reading, especially in groups, can combat loneliness and provide cognitive stimulation throughout life, making fiction a potentially critical resource in helping address health challenges associated with aging (DeVries et al., 2019; Longden et al. 2016; Rothbauer & Dalmer, 2018; Rane-Szostak & Herth, 1995). Strikingly, Bavishi, Slade, and Levy (2016) found that, after controlling for a host of potentially confounding factors, that regular reading (though not exclusively fiction) is associated with greater longevity.

The research reviewed here suggests that reading fiction may support human flourishing in a wide variety of ways. Empirical research examining these effects and how readers achieve them is still nascent and far from settled, but recent years have seen an increase in inquiry that has set the foundations for more sophisticated investigations into the contributions of reading fiction to psychological development and well-being.

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CHAPTER

32 The Holiness of Wholeness: Religious Contributions to Human Flourishing

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Abstract

This chapter proposes that the essential contribution of religion to flourishing goes beyond any single factor. Instead, religion is concerned with human wholeness—that is, how people put the bits and pieces of their lives together into a coherent whole. What lends unity to the lives of many individuals is the focus on sacred matters. Religious institutions are most uniquely concerned with what people hold sacred and how they can develop and foster their relationship with ultimate concerns. Drawing on theory and research, this chapter examines three key ingredients of wholeness and their intimate connections to religion: the capacity to see and approach life with breadth and depth; a life-affirming view of oneself and the world; and the ability to organize the life journey into a cohesive whole. Wholeness may be understood as a superordinate virtue, a major key to human flourishing and life well-lived. Although the focus of this chapter is on "religion at its best," the authors also acknowledge the darker side of religion and its capacity to lead to suffering and brokenness.

Key Words: religion, spirituality, sacred, flourishing, wholeness, well-being

Religion was a dimension of central value and interest to the founding figures of psychology, such as William James and Edward Starbuck.[1] In sharp contrast, much of the twentieth century was marked by antipathy toward religion among many leading psychologists, including Sigmund Freud, B. F. Skinner, and Albert Ellis. Over the past fifty years, however, many studies have shown positive links between religious engagement and flourishing (Koenig, King, & Carson, 2012; Newman & Graham, 2018; VanderWeele, 2017). Most work in this area has attempted to identify specific aspects of religion that bode well for human functioning. For example, theorists have posited and debated various candidates for the benefits religion can provide, such as meaning (e.g., Geertz, 1966), emotional comfort and impulse control (e.g., Freud, 1927/1961), and social connectedness

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and identity (e.g., Durkheim, 1915) (see Pargament, 2013, for a discussion). There is, however, no need to choose.

We propose that the essential contribution of religion to flourishing goes beyond any single factor. Instead, religion is concerned with human wholeness—that is, how people put the bits and pieces of their lives together into a coherent whole. The essential glue from a religious perspective is holiness, or the sacred. We will discuss the intimate relations between wholeness and holiness. What lends unity to the lives of many people is the focus on sacred matters. Of all human institutions, religion is most uniquely interested in what people hold sacred and how they can develop and foster their relationship with their ultimate concerns.

With this perspective in mind, we will begin by briefly describing some underlying assumptions that guide our discussion of wholeness. Next, we draw on theory and research to examine three salient ingredients of wholeness, focusing specifically on religious contributions (for a more extended discussion, see Pargament & Exline, in press; Pargament, Wong, & Exline, 2016). These are not necessarily the only ingredients, but they provide a window into this construct. The three ingredients are: (1) the capacity to see and approach life with breadth and depth; (2) a life-affirming view of oneself and the world; and (3) the ability to organize the life journey into a cohesive whole. Our focus here will be on "religion at its best"—that is, the contributions of religion to human flourishing. However, we also acknowledge the dark side of religion; though it can bring out the highest of human potentials, it can also lead to suffering and brokenness.

Some Underlying Assumptions about Wholeness

Wholeness, as we speak of it, has several qualities. First, it is not limited to any single attribute or even set of attributes. Instead, wholeness centers on the constellation of thoughts, emotions, actions, and relationships that define a person. Rather than referring to the person in isolation, wholeness refers to the person in relation to a larger social and situational context. In this chapter, we examine wholeness from the perspective of the individual-in-context. Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter, wholeness could also be profitably examined from the larger vantage point of families, organizations, communities, and cultures.

Second, wholeness is not static. It is a dynamic process that continuously evolves over the life span. This property of wholeness has been incorporated into other theoretical models. In self-determination theory, Deci and Ryan (1991) speak of organismic personality integration as an active process which involves putting together aspects of oneself into a higher-order organization. In his theory of faith development, Fowler (1981) describes this process as a shift over time from fragmentation to greater wholeness. However, because life constantly presents new challenges and because people are limited finite beings, the movement toward wholeness can never be completed. At any point in time, we can examine where someone stands in their movement toward wholeness, but

wholeness itself is an ideal and must always remain a work in progress (Pargament et al., 2016). From a religious perspective, the achievement of perfect wholeness may be reserved for the Buddha, God, or other divine being.

Third, wholeness is a capacity. Although some writers maintain that people are born whole or have an inner wholeness that can be released or freed from constraints (e.g., Palmer, 2004), we believe it is more accurate to say that people have a potential or capacity for wholeness that can be nurtured to a greater or lesser extent. In the same vein, Miller (2016) has described spirituality as natural and inherent, citing a body of evidence on the biological basis of people's ability to relate to the sacred.

Finally, wholeness and brokenness are not polar opposites. No one goes through life without wounds, scars, and some degree of brokenness. These experiences cannot be fully eliminated—nor, perhaps, should they be, as they may be sources of wisdom, growth, and an enriched life. Thus wholeness requires ways to incorporate brokenness (Russo-Netzer, 2016).

Religion and Wholeness

There is an affinity between wholeness and holiness. In fact, the term *holiness* has etymological roots in the Old English word *halig*, meaning wholeness, health, and happiness (New World Encyclopedia, 2008). Fostering wholeness and holiness are central religious tasks, as noted by classic and contemporary theorists. William James (1902) spoke about the vital role of religious experience in helping individuals move from a divided to a unified self. Similarly, Gordon Allport (1950) spoke of religion in its mature form as a "uniquely integral system" that attempts to organize all of life into a meaningful whole (p. 124). Religion, at its best, can help to provide an overarching organization to all of the elements and ingredients of life.

Of course, not all people turn to religion as a source of wholeness. Many find meaning and structure for their lives outside of organized religion. They may take a secular approach, or pick and choose from several traditions (Bibby, 1987), or design a more personal spiritual path (Russo-Netzer & Mayseless, 2014). Another important caveat is that religion can actually lead to more brokenness than wholeness in some cases. Yet, although the connection between holiness and wholeness is not a perfect one, we propose that religion can contribute to wholeness in important ways. Here we will consider how religion might contribute to three ingredients of wholeness: breadth and depth, life affirmation, and cohesiveness.

Religious Contributions to Breadth and Depth

Wholeness calls for a broad and deep orientation to life, one consisting of thoughts, feelings, practices, values, and connections that can guide people toward significant purposes and goals. Religion is concerned with the life journey in all of its breadth, from birth to death and even after death. Pargament (1997) has noted that religions offer road maps

for living. Every tradition specifies destinations people should seek and pathways to reach them. These maps provide direction in response to life's great existential questions: Why are we here, and how did we get here in the first place? How should we treat ourselves and others? How do we understand and respond to suffering and injustice? How do we respond to the conflicts and divisions within ourselves? What happens when we die? The focal point of religion is a human being of breadth: an individual and a part of a larger collective; someone with a past, present, and future; a container of good and bad; and one who knows, experiences, acts, and relates.

Religion has to do with the depth as well as the breadth of life. To borrow from Paul Tillich (1957), religions address matters of "ultimate concern." All deal with something larger than ordinary material existence, though in different ways: Buddhism offers an eight-fold path toward enlightenment; Christianity suggests a means to salvation by welcoming Christ into one's life; Judaism asks its adherents to bring God into the world by living according to the Torah; and Islam fosters service to God via the Five Pillars. Broadly speaking, religions invite people to see the world through a sacred lens. Through prayer, meditation, ritual, or study, people are taught to find sacred meaning in even seemingly secular aspects of life, such as work, strivings, the body, sexuality, nature, the arts and humanities, family, and social change (Wong & Pargament, 2017). Life is experienced with greater depth and breadth when viewed through a sacred lens. Consider, for example, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's well-known Sonnet 43: "I love thee to the depth and breadth and height my soul can reach. . . ."

People who perceive a deeper sacred dimension and integrate it into their life pathways and destinations tend to flourish, as shown in many studies (see Pomerleau, Pargament, & Mahoney, 2017, for a review). For example, Ellison, Henderson, Glenn, and Harkrider (2011) found that married partners who sanctified their marriages reported greater commitment, stronger bonds, better marital quality, and more positive emotions. Also, sanctification of marriage buffered the effects of perceived stress and financial problems on marital quality.

People who have experiences that extend beyond ordinary perception and immediate material existence, such as mysticism, flow, and sacred moments, also report major benefits (Yaden, Haidt, Hood, Vago, & Newberg, 2017). For example, in a study of psychotherapists and clients, both groups were asked to identify an important moment in therapy (Pargament, Lomax, McGee, & Fang, 2014). Those who imbued this moment with more sacred qualities, such as transcendence, ultimacy, and boundlessness, reported a stronger therapeutic alliance, greater perceived gains by the client, and greater well-being of both clients and therapists.

A second example comes from music. "Music is the language of the spirit," Lebanese Christian writer Kahlil Gibran (2008, p. 96) once observed. From Gregorian chants to Quwwali songs in Sufism and Tibetan Buddhist throat singing, diverse faith traditions have long utilized music as a vehicle for accessing the sacred. Research suggests that music does

indeed elicit spiritual experience and related benefits. In a study of professional orchestra musicians across the United States, most reported sacred moments in their musical lives, marked by experiences of deep interconnectedness, ultimacy, transcendence, and boundlessness (Wong & Pargament, 2018). These perceptions predicted greater job satisfaction and work-related meaning after controlling for demographic variables. Music is, in short, one of the arts and humanities that offers pathways toward greater wholeness and holiness.

Religious Contributions to Life Affirmation

Wholeness also rests on an affirming approach to life (cf. Doehring, 2015), one replete with hope, support, and compassion in relation to oneself, other people, the world, the sacred, and life itself. We propose that religions can be valuable sources of life affirmation. Rather than denying the reality of evil, pain, and suffering, religions place these darker aspects of life into a spiritual context which offers ways to achieve enlightenment, salvation, liberation, and eternal life in spite of life's challenges. Self-compassion, for example, is a practice rooted in Buddhism that fosters nonjudgment, awareness of one's suffering, and efforts to attend to it (Neff & Dahm, 2015). In a sample of Iranian Muslims, self-compassion was linked with greater autonomy, competency, feelings of relatedness, and ability to integrate past and present experiences with hopes for the future (Ghorbani, Watson, Chen, & Norballa, 2012).

Empirical studies have also shown that religiousness is associated not with the denial or suppression of pain, but with a more positive reappraisal of stressful situations (Vishkin et al., 2016). One caregiver to parents with Alzheimer's disease put it this way: "It is the most rewarding and devastating experience of my life. . . . There has been combativeness, wandering—lots of frustrations. But I'm learning for the first time to take each day at a time. This illness is teaching me to gain strength from the Lord" (Wright, Pratt, & Schmall, 1985, p. 34).

Religious traditions offer their adherents a variety of positive coping resources to enable them to sustain themselves and even grow through adversity. These include guidance, comfort and care from God, spiritual support from family, friends, and clergy, and experiences of spiritual connectedness (Pargament, Koenig, & Perez, 2000; Wong, Pargament, & Faigin, 2018). This cluster of positive religious coping methods has been tied to greater mental health and well-being. In one meta-analysis of over 100 studies that focused on several predictors of stress-related growth, such as social support and optimism, positive religious coping was found to be the strongest predictor (Prati & Pietrantoni, 2009).

It is important to add that religious traditions are not solely focused on the well-being of their adherents. They also encourage care for others, as highlighted by the many faith-based charities in the world. An experimental study provides another illustration. When primed with spiritual words (e.g., "divine," "sacred," "God"), theists were more likely to leave money anonymously for a stranger than when they were primed with non-spiritual words (Shariff & Norenzayan, 2007). In a meta-analysis of twenty-five experiments,

Shariff, Willard, Andersen, and Norenzayan (2016) found a robust effect: for believers, religious priming prompted prosocial behaviors and attitudes. Thus, the sacred can empower people to treat other people well.

Religious Contributions to Cohesiveness

A third ingredient of wholeness is the capacity to put thoughts, values, emotions, actions, and relationships into a coherent, integrated whole. This capacity consists of several more specific qualities, including an authentic guiding vision, wisdom and discernment, balance, and the ability to live with paradox. Religion at its best can foster each of these qualities.

Flourishing requires an authentic, overarching, and guiding vision that can organize life as a whole. A large body of research underscores the importance of living according to one's authentic or true self in the pursuit of a higher set of strivings or purpose (e.g., Lenton, Slabu, & Sedikides, 2016; Schlegel & Hicks, 2011; Vainio & Daukantaité, 2016). Religion can play a key role in the development of an authentic guiding vision. Psychiatrist Viktor Frankl's (1988) seminal work speaks to the fundamentally religious character of the individual's authentic vision or meaning in life. He writes that there is a "right" and "true" meaning for every person, one that is "something to be found rather than to be given, discovered rather than invented" (p. 62). The discovery of this higher purpose, the one intended for each person is, from Frankl's point of view, a key task in living. Research by Emmons (1999, 2005) has shown that people who report a higher proportion of spiritual strivings in their list of life purposes indicate greater purpose in life, greater life and marital satisfaction, and less conflict among goals. Those who instill greater sacred value and meaning into their life purposes also report more joy and happiness and better physical health (Mahoney, Pargament, & Cole, 2005).

Cohesiveness also involves wisdom, the ability to weave together the disparate threads of life into a fabric of "whole cloth" (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000). Discernment, or "knowing when to do what," is a key element of wisdom and cohesiveness. Religious communities can contribute to wisdom and discernment by helping people make sense of their problems and select effective solutions. Perhaps the best-known illustration comes from the Serenity Prayer by theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, a prayer central to the philosophy of twelve-step programs: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference." Empirical studies also support the idea that an emphasis on the sacred promotes wisdom. Practical wisdom has been conceptualized as a broad-based virtue that helps with translating character strengths into actions for problem-solving (Schwartz & Sharpe, 2006). Using a large, national sample of American adults, Krause and Hayward (2015) delineated pathways from church attendance to practical wisdom, which in turn related to a sense of connectedness with others, feelings of God-inspired awe, and life satisfaction.

Closely related to wisdom and discernment is the ability to find balance in life. Balance, James (1902) wrote, offers a necessary corrective to human excess: "Strong affections need a strong will; strong active powers need a strong intellect; strong intellect needs strong sympathies to keep life steady" (p. 333). Balance is an important value within many religious traditions. For example, Buddhism emphasizes the Middle Path of non-extremism, while Native American religions focus on harmony within oneself, with others, with nature, and with the spiritual world. Taoism encourages practices such as the martial art of *tai chi* to encourage the balance of *yin* and *yang* energies (see Wallace & Shapiro, 2006), and studies have shown positive associations between *tai chi* and psychological well-being (e.g., Wang et al., 2014).

Finally, cohesiveness calls for the capacity to come to terms with the reality that we are contradictory, paradoxical beings marked by inconsistencies in the ways we think, feel, act, and relate. Religion can offer ways to reconcile these incongruities. The penultimate stage of faith maturity, according to Fowler (1981) is a conjunctive faith, one in which the individual shifts from either/or to both/and thinking that is "alive to paradox and the truth in apparent contradictions" (p. 198). Wholeness from this perspective grows out of a joining or harmonization of opposites (Russo-Netzer, 2016) embedded in the sense of an underlying, transcendent, and unifying reality. Rockenbach, Walker, and Luzader (2012) illustrated these points in a qualitative study of college students who were experiencing spiritual struggles. Their struggles were, according to the authors, "steeped in the conflicting, contradictory, and paradoxical aspects of life" (p. 62). Growth, they found, did not entail the elimination of paradox and incongruity, but rather a "spirituality of imperfection" (cf. Kurtz & Ketcham, 1992) in which the students could better reconcile important tensions: tensions between ideal and actual selves, revealed and concealed selves, self and others, and worldview and lived realities.

Religion and Brokenness

Yet for some, religion is not a source of breadth and depth, life affirmation, or cohesiveness; it can in fact lead to greater brokenness. Rather than fostering breadth and depth, religion can be constricting. For example, faith may be used to bypass difficult questions and existential realities by offering soothing but superficial reassurances (Fox, Cashwell, & Picciotto, 2017). Also problematic are narrow religious beliefs that exclude God's protection and care from those who are different. These beliefs have been associated with greater prejudice and discrimination (Hall, Matz, & Wood, 2010; Whitehead, Perry, & Baker, 2018). In addition, it can be challenging to develop and maintain a fully dimensional spiritual perspective within a materialistic culture that fosters a more one-dimensional worldview. As a result, some are likely to experience what Gallup and Lindsay (1999) described as a spirituality "only three inches deep" (p. 45).

Other religious expressions may be life-limiting rather than life-affirming. Images of an angry, punitive God have been tied to poorer physical and mental health (Exline,

Park, Smyth, & Carey, 2011). Religiously based feelings of shame and guilt have been associated with a number of negative outcomes, including suicidality (Exline, Yali, & Sanderson, 2000). When religious and spiritual struggles are left unresolved, they tend to erode one's health (e.g., Park, Holt, Le, Christie, & Williams, 2018).

Furthermore, religion can contribute to incohesiveness rather than cohesiveness. How? In many ways: by guiding visions that are imposed rather than personally owned or that set people apart rather than draw people together; by ultimately destructive visions that rest on demonic depictions of outsiders; by imbalanced worldviews that focus on otherworldly concerns to the exclusion of making this world a better place; by encouraging a religious rigidity that limits the ability to practice wisdom and discernment; and by treating incongruity and paradox as problems to be solved rather than mysteries that are part and parcel of what it means to be human.

The darker side of religious life should not be ignored. But neither should it be overstated. For many people, including those undergoing struggles in their lives, religion and spirituality offer the possibility of transformation to a life of greater wholeness. Chittister (2003, p. 96) captures this potential:

> The spirituality of struggle is . . . a spirituality that takes change and turns it into conversion, takes isolation and makes it independence, takes darkness and forms it into faith, takes the one step beyond fear to courage, takes powerlessness and reclaims it as surrender, takes vulnerability and draws out of it the freedom that comes with self-acceptance, faces the exhaustion and comes to value endurance for its own sake, touches the scars and knows them to be transformational.

Conclusions

The concept of wholeness both simplifies and complicates efforts to understand and foster human flourishing. It is a parsimonious construct, a metaphor that can unite a host of abilities, connections, and virtues that make us human. Wholeness, we believe, may be understood as a superordinate virtue, a major key to human flourishing and life well-lived. Yet the journey toward wholeness is neither simple nor straightforward. Wholeness is always a work in progress, never fully achieved. Further, wholeness cannot sidestep human vulnerability, woundedness, and brokenness; instead, it integrates and builds upon them. Fostering wholeness requires attention to the myriad bits and pieces that form a full life.

We have tried to clarify the meaning of wholeness by focusing on three critical ingredients and their intimate connections to religion. Wholeness and holiness, we have suggested, often go hand in hand. Of course, wholeness can be rooted in other contexts as well, such as culture, family, and educational institutions. Yet religion, with its distinctive interest in sacred matters, may play a special role in the process of forming the whole life.

Our focus here has been on religion at its best. But religion is not always at its best. If religion can foster breadth and depth, it can also contribute to narrowness and shallowness.

If religion can encourage an affirming approach to life, it can also contribute to life-limiting views. And if religion can be a source of cohesiveness, it can also be a source of disintegration.

Ultimately, though, religions often provide ways to help people move toward greater wholeness in spite of their brokenness, even when that brokenness is partly rooted in religion itself. The Japanese art form of *kintsugi* (golden joining) offers a compelling illustration. Reflecting influences of Shinto, Buddhist, and Confucian thought, *kintsugi* involves the preservation and repair of broken ceramic pieces by applying golden or silver filigree bonds that highlight, rather than conceal, the brokenness within the re-formed object. Through *kintsugi*, wholeness is literally created out of brokenness. The result is a new work of art, one of greater beauty than the original, unblemished ceramic piece.

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CHAPTER

33

Insight and Sight: The Interplay between the Humanities and Business and the Impact on Student Well-Being

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Abstract
This chapter explores the impact of the interplay of humanities and business on student well-being and flourishing both in theory and in practice. Drawing on positive psychology, the chapter uses a conceptual model supplied by Tay, Pawelski, and Keith (2018) and focuses on a cognitive-emotional process that fosters two modes of thought characteristic of liberal learning: namely, reflection and creative thinking. The conclusion of the chapter attempts to answer the call of critics of management education so that students get the full benefit from and make the most of a meaningful connection between the study of humanities and the study of business.

Key Words: humanities, business education, management education, liberal learning, positive psychology, flourishing

"Faith" is a fine invention
For Gentlemen who *see*!
But Microscopes are prudent
In an Emergency!

—Emily Dickinson

Introduction

Although the study of the humanities and the study of business have been intertwined for a long time, critics of undergraduate business education have often found a lack of meaningful integration between the two and have called for a tighter connection.[1] In order to explore the interplay of the arts and humanities and the study of business, we use

[1] Grants awarded by the Teagle Foundation to Franklin & Marshall College, Bucknell University, and The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania have made this exploration of management and business education possible.

a conceptual model supplied by Tay, Pawelski, and Keith (2018) and focus on a cognitive-emotional process that fosters two modes of thought, in ordinary terms, reflection and creative thinking. The Teagle project at Franklin & Marshall College reminds us that ethics has served as the main connection between the arts and humanities and the study of business, and that virtue ethics, in particular, enables students to reframe business challenges and opportunities with richer notions of human flourishing than the abstractions of the efficient market model. The Teagle project at Bucknell University builds on the liberal arts tradition by elaborating on the idea of *liber*. More specifically, students who cultivate a progressive or innovative character are thoughtful about the world's broader social, cultural, and ethical challenges and also are free to create positive change. Coursework that incorporates both active and contemplative moments makes the most of the transformative potential of business education and enhances its traditional instrumental value. The Teagle project at The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania underscores the dominance of problem-solving and application as course objectives and the prevalence of case studies within the Wharton undergraduate curriculum. Skills such as creative thinking and the ability to reflect—typically associated with the study of the arts and humanities—are less salient. Moreover, case method, the dominant pedagogy at Wharton and, presumably, at business schools across the United States, is a microcosm of the macrocosm—of the push and pull between the humanistic and scientific cultures of the academy; between enlightenment and vocation; or, in the wordplay of Emily Dickinson, between seers and those who see, insight and sight. We will conclude this chapter with thoughts on how to answer the call of critics so that our students get the full benefit from and also make the most of a meaningful connection between the study of humanities and the study of business.

Conceptual Framework

In order to explore the interplay of the liberal arts and humanities and the study of business, we rely on work by Tay, Pawelski, and Keith (2018) who provide a conceptual model that includes "an operational definition of the arts and humanities, an articulation of the various types of flourishing outcomes to which they might lead, and a set of mechanisms through which these outcomes may occur" (p. 2). More specifically, these authors complement an extensional definition of the arts and humanities (that would include commonly held disciplines, subjects, and courses of study) with a functional analysis that puts equal emphasis on the way in which we interact with these objects of study. In their words:

> We propose that the arts and humanities can be understood operationally by integrating the extensional definition and the functional analysis. The extensional definition demarcates and constrains the content and domain. The functional analysis addresses the ways this content is

> presented, as well as the types of engagement and participation involved. Thus, these modes of engagement and activities of involvement describe actions and interactions undertaken within extensionally defined domains and are closely related to measurable mechanisms that lead to flourishing outcomes. (p. 3)

Of the four mechanisms they identify—immersion, embeddedness, socialization, and reflectiveness—we pay particular attention to "reflectiveness," "an intentional, cognitive-emotional process for developing, reinforcing, or discarding one's habits, character, values, or worldview" (p. 4). The reason for our attention is that reflectiveness lends itself to the exploration and contemplation of values and points of view. In this way, reflectiveness fosters two modes of thought that Colby, Ehrlich, Sullivan, and Dolle (2011) would say are characteristic of liberal learning; namely, "the Reflective Exploration of Meaning" and "Multiple Framing." The former is the "traditional heart of liberal education, the focal point of humanistic learning" because this mode of thought raises such fundamental questions as "what difference does a particular understanding or approach to things make to who I am, how I engage the world, and what is reasonable for me to imagine and hope." The latter mode of thought encompasses the ability "to work with fundamentally different, sometimes mutually incompatible, analytical perspectives" (p. 60). Both modes of thought are of special interest to us because they evoke the language of subjectivity, interpretation, and problem-posing typically associated with the liberal arts and complement the language of objectivity, analysis, and practical problem-solving characteristic of scientific and management education (see Greenhalgh, 2007).

In the process of exploring the impact of the interplay of the humanities and business on student well-being, we recognize, as Ryan and Deci (2001) make clear, that Aristotle's classic formulation of eudaimonia contrasts with more popular understandings of happiness rooted in the hedonic paradigm that emphasizes pleasure attainment and pain avoidance. The eudaimonic tradition views happiness as a state characterized by "meaning and self-realization and defines well-being in terms of the degree to which a person is fully functioning" (p. 141). Moreover, of special interest to our study is the notion that eudaimonic happiness is anchored in virtues and character identity that coalesce as the result of thinking, feeling, and practicing in situ. Making sense of and reflecting on experience matter.

The Arts and Humanities and the Study of Business

The liberal arts and humanities and the study of business have been intertwined from the very start. The birth of business education in the United States took place in Philadelphia in 1881. Joseph Wharton, an entrepreneur and manufacturer in the steel and nickel industry, established the world's first collegiate school of business at the University

of Pennsylvania. As Colby et al. (2011) report, Joseph Wharton's "aim was to replace the ad hoc nature of on-the-job business training with systematic cultivation of a perspective that would combine courses in the knowledge and arts of 'modern finance and economy' with the broadening effects of the liberal arts, including a special focus on the then-new social sciences of economics and politics" (p. 15). They go on to add that The Wharton School was "attempting a kind of integrated liberal education for business in order to shape a new kind of highly educated man of affairs" (p. 15). They conclude that "business education began as an effort to establish university training as a way to instill in the then-new occupation of manager an understanding of purpose that was explicitly public in orientation. For this purpose an education based in the liberal arts was thought essential" (p. 16).

From the beginning, the relative emphasis and predominance of the humanities in relationship to the study of business has been up for debate. Again, Colby et al. (2011) recall the initial and ongoing tension between the two:

> If taken as a serious goal in education for business, understanding and balancing strategic goals with social responsibilities would require strong ties to liberal education precisely in order to ensure that future managers could grasp the complexities of multiple aims and conflicting interpretations of facts. In contrast, if economic efficiency and technical productivity were the only or dominant goals, then preparation for management could more narrowly focus on technological and economic competence. This split image of the identity of professional management posed a problem for business education, one that has remained unsettled (p. 18).

Over the years, as Peknik (2013) summarizes, "each generation has had its own reasons" to rejuvenate the debate, whether prompted by the entrance of women into colleges in the 1920s, the rise of government-funded research at state universities in the 1950s, or the post–World War II expansion of universities, to name a few (p. 24).

On balance, critiques of business education have highlighted the tension, often finding a lack of meaningful integration between the two. Gilbert (1997) describes attempts to integrate the liberal arts and humanities with the study of business as either "fertilizer," "Chamber of Commerce," or "heartstrings" approaches. Gilbert concludes that these three approaches thrive—and we would add, continue to thrive—because they "preserve conventional ways of talking about management practice. To this cause of reaffirming the language of management studies, the fertilizer genre contributes intellectual skills, the Chamber of Commerce genre contributes precedents, and the heartstrings genre contributes emotional zest" (p. 31). More recently, Colby et al. (2011) describe the relationship between the liberal arts and business curricula as a kind of barbell in which students struggle to find the connection between the business courses they take and their broader general education requirements (p. 5). Harney and Thomas (2013) are even less optimistic, saying, "If there is a conflict of the faculties today in management education, then

higher faculty has largely vanquished the lower faculty to the margins" (p. 512); in other words, the study of vocation has trumped the pursuit of enlightenment (p. 509).

In light of critiques such as these, sustained arguments for a tighter integration between the humanities and business have found prominence in recent book-length publications such as *Management Education and Humanities*, edited by Gagliardi and Czarniawska (2006). In one of the chapters, Hendry (2006b) argues that business schools put an emphasis on knowledge that "masquerades as technique" and also on knowledge that makes "claim to scientific status" (pp. 35–36). Here and elsewhere (Hendry, 2006a), he argues that "studies within the humanities are indispensable for the rational and informed questioning of people's judgements, and indeed of their actions in general" (2006a, p. 268). In their book *Transformative Management Education: The Role of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, Landfester and Metelmann (2018) explain the call for tighter integration as a twofold response: first, to the global financial crisis which business school graduates, at worst, promoted and, at best, failed to avert; and, second, to prepare graduates for the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world they will inhabit (p. 3). The Teagle projects at Franklin & Marshall College and at Bucknell University provide illustrations of two responses to the most recent call for a tighter connection between the humanities and business.

Ethics: A Prevailing Point of Intersection

The Teagle project at Franklin & Marshall College reminds us that the study of ethics is the prevailing way in which humanistic thinking and values have entered business pedagogy and practices. Prompted initially by corporate scandals during the 1970s, ethics entered the curricula of business schools and programs and has now developed a prominent presence among business educators and corporate leaders. As long ago as 1991, 90 percent of schools that are members of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) covered ethics in the curriculum, and more than half of the schools expressed interest in increasing coverage of the subject (Schoenfeldt, McDonald, & Youngblood, 1991).

The link between pedagogy and practice is crucial here. While the original interest in ethics among management teachers arose as a reaction to corporate scandals, ethics pedagogy itself has now developed into a more mature, innovative field influencing business practices ranging from strategy to accounting to marketing (see, for example: Armstrong, Ketz, & Owsen, 2003; Husted & Allen, 2000; and Yoo & Donthu, 2002). Significantly, too, implicit in many of the contemporary approaches toward teaching ethics is a distinctive conception of business excellence, of what it means to do business well.

The foundational contribution of ethics to management pedagogy lies in the way it reframes business challenges and opportunities, thus helping to engender a new narrative for business. Colby et al. (2011) emphasize the importance of multiple framing in

business education, pointing to the debilitating consequences of an inadequately understood or restrictive business model in the formation of the outlooks of business students:

> Typically, students are asked to learn and apply standard business concepts without their origins and broader significance. When concepts are taught in this way, students tend to see them as corresponding to some objective reality instead of tools created by human beings. This problem is exacerbated when individuals remain embedded in a single conceptual frame over an extended period of time (as the dominance of the efficient market model in business almost ensures), coming to treat the model as real even if they are aware at some level that it is not. (p. 75)

Reframing of business challenges and opportunities in ethical terms opens the door for a more complex story of business, one centered on a richer notion of human flourishing than the abstractions of the efficient market model. Notably, this new narrative of human flourishing in business attends to the good of individual managers and the larger public good and also to the good of corporations, now reframed as a kind of community whose virtue must be examined.

Virtue ethics has thus emerged as one prominent way of addressing such basic concerns and challenges in business. Drawing historically from Aristotle and extended into the business environment by philosophers such as Robert Solomon and Edwin Hartman, virtue ethics brings the question of human flourishing to the fore. From the perspective of virtue ethics, human flourishing is intimately intertwined with the development in individuals of virtues or states of character, dispositions that are admirable or praiseworthy. From this point of view, individual preferences or interests are no longer the foundational point for ethical analysis. As Hartman (1994) puts it: "[It] can make little sense to say virtue is or is not in your interests because vice or virtue determines what your interests are" (p. 257). Individuals of good moral character will have desires that differ from those whose dispositions have been corrupted.

Developing such virtues is not simply a matter of individual choices or actions. Good persons require good communities in which to flourish. Drawing upon Aristotle, Edwin Hartman goes on to say, "But for a good person, in particular a cooperator inclined to trust others, life in a community full of treacherous free riders would be unhappy. So we can see the point of Aristotle's claim that a virtuous person must live in a great *polis*—can only survive in a good community we might say" (pp. 257–258).

Such an emphasis on the importance of the good community requires the evaluation of the various kinds of business communities, including, most prominently, the corporation. As Robert Solomon (1992) points out, "Corporations are real communities, neither ideal nor idealized" (p. 325). Such communities provide an embodied and richly socialized context that is formative of our identities. "What it means to be part of a community," Solomon asserts, ". . . is, among other things, to identify yourself and your interests in and with the community. It is, simply, to become a different person" (pp. 280–281).

Under the Teagle grant, Franklin & Marshall College engaged in pedagogic innovations and experiments marked by a distinctive understanding of business excellence. At the core of this understanding is the recognition of the embedded nature of the business enterprise, one that has been called a "nested conception" of business. In the words of Nesteruk (2017), "Under this nested conception, business is never a world unto itself claiming vindication of its actions as 'just business,' but rather a socially integrated practice in which doing well is inextricably tied to doing good."

The Teagle initiative brought the nested conception of business to the fore through the collaboration of business and liberal arts professors. Through a variety of linked courses and other creative collaborations, participating faculty interwove the values and perspectives of business and liberal learning. One prominent collaboration took place between an entrepreneurship professor and an instructor of improvisational dance. A second linked course occurred between a professor of sustainable business teaching a course on the business of food and a literary scholar teaching a class on the literature of the Anthropocene. A third course collaboration between a corporate law scholar and a political theorist brought into view how human flourishing involves more than rule following and is intertwined with the development of dispositions that are admirable or praiseworthy. Through guest lectures, joint classes, and common readings, this collaboration aimed to illuminate economics from the standpoint of political theory, examining the limits of market dynamics and values. It brought to business students new questions, ranging from "Is loyalty possible in business?" to "What can't money buy?" to "Does the character of shareholders matter?" to "Are corporations moral persons?"

In each collaboration, students had the opportunity to practice the reflective exploration of meaning and multiple framing, to borrow terms from Colby et al. (2011). Students found moments where such creative collaborations were "transforming," as one student wrote:

> Overall, I thought both creativity exercises were helpful in improving my creativity and seeing things from a new perspective. . . . I think that going forward I will be able to cut out some of the analytical thinking and just brainstorm. I think this will help me be less restrictive in my ideas so that I can view issues from a new perspective.

In short, such collaborations between business and liberal arts professors deepen ethics education from an intellectual classroom exercise into practices with the potential to carry over into students' lives and careers. Significantly, they do so by emphasizing how ethics is not simply a matter of individual choices or actions. Rather, these collaborations embed business students in an interconnected world, one in which their individual flourishing is intimately connected with the larger public good and one in which corporations must be the kind of communities that good persons require in order to flourish.

Character Building: Liberal Values at the Crossroads

The Teagle project at Bucknell University shares much in common with the effort at Franklin & Marshall College in that both projects attest to how the arts and humanities can augment business and management education in a manner conducive to human flourishing. Each project complements the other by fostering reflection and multiple framing, but with a different emphasis. Whereas the Franklin & Marshall project places more weight on multiple framing as a way to help students see and understand that management and business concerns are nested and part and parcel of larger community values and concerns, the Bucknell project puts more emphasis on character building and the interplay between students' individual-level embodied practices and the multiple frames they use to interpret their personal relationship to their educational experience. Stated differently, the Franklin & Marshall project operates at the level of the *habitat* of classroom content, and the Bucknell project operates more at the level of *habits* involved in the learning experience.

Colby et al. (2011) emphasize that "going to college changes people" and argue for shifting the emphasis from the traditional, instrumental aim of a business education to a more transformative purpose (p. 32). Instead of emphasizing the tools students need from a business curriculum in order to advance in the workplace, the focus shifts to what kind of people our students are becoming. Similarly, Landfester and Metelmann (2018) turn to the European educational focus on character, Bildung, which emerged in the early 1800s, and make the case that "transformative management education means focusing more on the students than the subjects taught" (p. 23).

In keeping with its emphasis on character building, the Bucknell project draws on the origins of the liberal arts tradition by embracing the classic root of the word "liberal," *liber*, meaning "free." In the context of thought, speech, and action, this root often conveys *freedom from* dogma, prejudice, and convention. By contrast, a more forward-looking meaning of *liber* connotes the *freedom to* have a creative, performative force on the world. Taking seriously Colby et al.'s (2011) assertion that college changes people, the Bucknell project explicitly emphasizes building a progressive or innovative character in students. Such a character means inhabiting the world in a manner other than taking the world for granted or letting the world go by in an unquestioning way (*freedom from*). Stated positively, a progressive or innovative character entails taking a posture toward the world that is sensitive to its broader social, cultural, and ethical challenges and also imbued with the inclination and confidence to create positive change (*freedom to*). In conceptualizing character, the Bucknell project also draws on Aristotle's understanding that character is not an inner quality, per se, but rather is composed of habits that are honed through active practice. In the spirit of eudaimonia, character building is not passive but, rather, a blend of action and reflective contemplation. Building character is a process.

An experimental course, entitled "Building an Innovative Character," is illustrative of the Bucknell project. Jointly created by a management professor and an art professor, the

course engaged students in the exploration and practice of five primary habits that comprise an innovative character: (1) child's eye/hyper-observation (a mode in which individuals are hyper observant of their environment and question aspects that typically go unnoticed); (2) embracing ambiguity; (3) failing forward; (4) developing creative confidence; and (5) empathizing. Although these five habits may not be exhaustive and definitive, they build logically from one to the next. With greater mindfulness and observation, the world becomes less certain and more ambiguous. One response is to retreat to the familiar black and white; another is to embrace the gray and ambiguous. The emergence of new and surprising pathways can lead to uncertainty about the right choice to take, fear of the risk of forging a new direction, indecision and paralysis. At this juncture, failing forward and creative confidence can sustain progress, however defined. Finally, through empathy (and, perhaps, its close cousin, compassion), a progressive character may orient toward "the good" and eudaimonic life.

Offered twice over two consecutive semesters, this experimental course was composed of fourteen discrete, transportable one-week modules taught by interdisciplinary teams of faculty. Consistent with the Aristotelian view of habits and eudaimonic existence as involving both active and contemplative moments, these modules included prominent experiential and embodied elements linked to one or more of the five habits comprising a progressive character. In addition to conceptual readings, each of the modules required individual reflections on the embodied experiences, such as in-class exercises and homework assignments.

As illustration, one module taught by a management professor and a dance professor focused on the topic of "active hope." Active hope offers a way of grappling with the daunting challenges facing humanity (for example, climate change and global poverty) by reframing so that students are not so overwrought with despair that they become devoid of energy and are unable to become part of the solution. Through physical movements that explore how the body plays a role in our relationship with the environment and through reflection by way of gratitude journaling, students at Bucknell—like those at Franklin & Marshall College—practiced multiple framing and the reflective exploration of meaning, to borrow again from Colby et al. (2011). As one student wrote at the end of the module:

> I realized that the first step towards achieving active hope is being able to face reality, and to discuss topics that are bleak or depressing. . . . When a difficult topic is brought up, it is easy to push it under the rug, or attempt to avoid it at all costs. However, in order to fail forward as a society and actively make a change, it is necessary to acknowledge and discuss issues that are uncomfortable and daunting. Once we are willing to face reality, we can then address issues before they progressively get worse overtime. . . . Next, in order to take action and to fulfill the last step, it is necessary to empathize with others. . . . Thus, once we consider ourselves as a cohesive unit with society, and are willing to put ourselves in the shoes of people who are completely different than us, it becomes easier to induce change.

By combining reframing and reflection, the Bucknell project provides evidence and hope of contributing to student well-being and flourishing.

Case Method: The Embodiment of the Interplay and Tension

The Wharton project at the University of Pennsylvania has enabled a snapshot of the undergraduate business curriculum during the academic year 2015–2016. Following Augier and March (2011), this snapshot is not panoramic but limited—a singular portrait of one business school at a particular moment in time. As they said of their study, "Within the population of North American Business schools, variations across time and among graduate and undergraduate schools, private and public schools, large and small schools, rich and poor schools, and all their combinations are daunting to any attempt to generalize" (pp. 7–8). Nonetheless, this snapshot of the Wharton undergraduate business curriculum is worthy of note because it reveals the salient course objectives and dominant teaching method at the nation's first collegiate business school and one of the country's most prestigious undergraduate programs.

Painting a picture of the business curriculum required downloading all 220 of the 100- to 300-level course syllabi in ten departments at Wharton: Accounting; Business Economics and Public Policy; Finance; Healthcare Management; Legal Studies; Management; Marketing; Operations, Information, & Decisions; Real Estate; and Statistics. If sections of a course were taught by different professors using different syllabi, these sections counted as separate courses. If all sections used the same syllabus, regardless of the professor, they counted as one course. Painting a picture also required going through each syllabus looking for specific mentions of skills taught (such as problem-solving, analytical thinking, critical thinking, application, creative thinking, and reflection) and of teaching methods for delivering course content (such as the use of cases, simulation and role play, novels, films, or videos). Skills taught and methods used that were stated in the course description received greater emphasis than those mentioned in course assignments or grading rubrics.

A close look at the Wharton undergraduate curriculum reveals the primacy of problem-solving and application as course and learning objectives. Overall, the most prevalent skills were analytical thinking and problem solving (noted in 74 percent and 70 percent of all course syllabi, respectively) and application (noted in 63 percent of syllabi). The least prevalent skills were critical thinking (noted in 21 percent of course syllabi) and creative thinking (noted in 18 percent of all syllabi). Roughly two-thirds of the course objectives at Wharton aim to teach students how to solve problems and apply what they have learned. Skills typically associated with the study of the arts and humanities—namely, the ability to think creativity and pose problems, as well as the ability to reflect on what is learned—are less prevalent. The salience of problem-solving over problem-posing points to the dominance of the scientific approach over the literary (Greenhalgh, 2007).

A close look at the Wharton undergraduate curriculum also sheds light on the dominant pedagogy: Case method. A majority—71 percent of all courses—use cases. The use of case method to teach students how to solve business problems and apply what they have learned is a microcosm of the macrocosm—a way of teaching that replays the tension between two narratives, the push and pull between the literary and scientific cultures of the academy, as outlined by C. P. Snow (1963) in his famous lecture on the two cultures. Case method is at once a scientific, laboratory method in which students solve problems and apply what they have learned, and also a literary method in which students use their interpretative and reflective capacities to address and resolve issues (Greenhalgh, 2007). And, as Starkey and Tempest (2008) point out, the case study itself becomes "a quintessential example of business school knowledge" (p. 384). Although they may be rightly critical of the kind of knowledge that cases represent—"war stories, dubious narratives of success, with a cast of all-powerful leaders and, recently, more powerful entrepreneurs" (p. 384)—we had better take cases seriously, following Sharen and McGowan (2019), who argue for providing positive female role models in the written cases we ask our students to read because "[a]s educators, we consciously and unconsciously shape our students' identities as managers and leaders through what we teach, how we teach it, our choices as role models, the discussions we entertain in the classroom, and the materials we select" (p. 159).

Answering the Call

Taking seriously what we teach and how we teach it for the sake of our students' flourishing means answering the call and making a tighter and more meaningful connection between the arts and humanities and the study of business. But making a tighter and more meaningful connection necessitates more than including more liberal arts content alongside or within the business curriculum. As Buşoi (2017) cautions:

> [a] humanities-based education offers no guarantees. For no matter how much philosophy you have read, no matter how many artwork [sic] you have looked at, whatever classical, sublime music you have listened to, it is still possible to be immoral/amoral, it is possible not to understand, it is possible to remain selfish and inert like a plain, soulless rock on a dusty road, that has no role, and no goal, but just to hurt the feet of those who are passing by. (pp. 128–129)

To answer the call, we need to include virtue ethics as part of the study of business so that our students can see business issues and problems as matters of human flourishing in addition to market efficiency. In addition, we need to give our students the opportunity to act and reflect and build character through coursework that makes the most of their transformational and instrumental education. We must also use case method as a literary method of interpretation, as well as a laboratory method of analysis, so that our students can develop their creative, associative, and interpretive skills as well as their critical, linear,

and analytic abilities (Greenhalgh, 2007). And finally, we need to enhance our students' ability to reflect in a deep rather than superficial way so that they can analyze and interpret rather than simply record and describe their experiences in and out of our classrooms.

Research by Dyment and O'Connell (2011) reveals that the quality of reflection found in student journals varies considerably, from superficial to profound. In their review, Dyment and O'Connell (2010) identify a series of limiting and enabling factors that they find inhibits or enhances reflection: namely, "clarity of expectations, training, responses, assessments, relationships with the lecturer, and developing the practice" (p. 233). If we answer the call and help our students reflect so that they can make a meaningful connection, we will give them hope and faith in their ability to *see*—with the insight and sight afforded to those who benefit from the study of the liberal arts and humanities and the study of business.

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CHAPTER 34

The Medical Humanities: Embracing the Interdisciplinary Art of Medicine and Healthcare

Faye Reiff-Pasarew

Abstract
This chapter discusses the historical origins, modern development, and current state of the Medical Humanities. It explains how the Medical Humanities create meaning and connection for providers, and the effect on patient experience and provider wellness. Other uses of the Medical Humanities will be presented, such as in medical and allied health professions education and training, as well as directly with patients. The chapter will review the state of the literature with particular attention to the quality level of the data. It concludes with a discussion of present debates and future directions for the field.

Key Words: Medical Humanities; Humanism; Interdisciplinary; Art; Burnout; Wellness; Empathy; Communication; Narrative medicine

> Twin berries on one stem, grievous damage has been done to both in regarding the Humanities and Science in any other light than complemental.
>
> —*Sir William Osler*

We were at a standoff. My patient was a young African-American man with sickle cell disease. I was concerned about escalating doses of opiate pain medication. He eyed me with suspicion. I was not relieving his pain. I was not believing his pain. Caring for a large population of patients with sickle cell disease in our hospital, many providers had similar experiences. These patients, sometimes called "sicklers"—a disrespectful name, though sometimes re-appropriated by patients—were mostly African-American, the providers were mostly not. This interaction would likely have ended there, had I not recently attended an event involving the sickle cell community. Through narrative, musical performance, and history, I'd learned about the history of sickle cell disease—the excruciating pain and premature death of those whose illness was denied by the medical

community, the limited funding and support, the discrimination faced. Studies show that African-Americans receive less pain medication than whites (Hoffman, 2016) in general, and those called “sicklers” in particular (Glassberg, 2013). Back in the hospital room with my patient, I realized that I had to acknowledge his mistrust of the medical community, his mistrust of me. That mistrust was legitimate. While I might have learned this history from a textbook, it would not have had the emotional resonance provoked by artistic expression and the personal human narrative. Acknowledging my patient’s perspective and my implicit bias did not eliminate the difficulty in caring for him, but exposure to the humanistic context of this disease redirected my feelings of frustration and strengthened my resolve to provide quality empathetic care.

Introduction and Disambiguation

This chapter discusses the historical origins, modern development, and current state of the medical humanities. It explains how the medical humanities create meaning and connection for providers, and how that impacts patient experience and provider wellness. Other uses of the medical humanities will be presented with a review of the state of the literature, as well as present debates and future directions.

The medical humanities are sometimes perceived as “soft” in contrast to the “hard” biologic sciences. The irony of this view is that any provider will tell you that the challenges involved in caring for patients from a humanistic perspective are inevitably more difficult than the scientific questions of what to treat and how—though, in truth, the language used to describe the medical humanities has been vague, leading to a general misunderstandings of the field. To clarify, the “medical humanities” are an interdisciplinary approach drawing upon the fine arts, humanities, and social sciences to better understand and process the experience of health and illness, involving providers, patients, caregivers, or the community at large. While “medical humanities” is the most commonly used term, some argue for “health humanities” as more inclusive of those who are not doctors, such as nurses, pharmacists, and the allied health professions (Jones, 2017).

In contrast, “humanism in medicine” refers to a holistic approach to caring for patients, rooted in respect for individual humanity. The terms are linked in that one way to foster humanism in practice is through the use of the medical humanities.

Burnout is a long-term stress reaction characterized by depersonalization, including cynical or negative attitudes toward patients, emotional exhaustion, a feeling of decreased personal achievement, and a lack of empathy for patients (Physician Burnout, https://edhub.ama-assn.org/steps-forward/module/2702509). Burnout has become a major buzzword in the medical community, as it is now at crisis levels among providers (Physician Burnout Report, http://www.massmed.org/News-and-Publications/MMS-News-Releases/Physician-Burnout-Report-2018/). In contrast, “wellness” has emerged as a popular term to describe providers who not only are not burned out, but also derive meaning, connection, and well-being from their work.

History

Prior to the emergence of the modern biomedical model, medical practitioners extolled the virtue of a humanistic approach. To Hippocrates, "It is more important to know what sort of person has a disease than to know what sort of disease a person has." Prior to the twentieth century, Western higher education was predominantly humanities based. Medical training was split between academic physicians, who had a broad humanities-based background but had little patient interaction and no standard requirements, and surgeons, who were trained via apprenticeships and were regulated by guilds (Custers, 2018).

The twentieth century saw the inclusion of the natural sciences in higher education alongside the humanities, the blossoming of the social sciences, and increasing specialization and credentialism, as each field of study developed their own pedagogy and academic training requirements. The Flexner report of 1910 (Duffy, 2011) advocated for reforms in medical education, leading to a standardized medical education structure. In the latter half of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first, the "STEM" (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields overtook the humanities in prestige, funding, and professional remuneration.

Though the past century has seen incredible advances in the scientific understanding of health and illness, they have been accompanied by disruption. Discontinuity of care, sub-specialization, throughput demands, algorithmic care, billing and documentation requirements, and rapidly changing technologies have led to a decentralization of the provider–patient relationship. This has led to increasing provider burnout as well as patient dissatisfaction. While many of these changes in medicine have greatly improved healthcare delivery, they also mean that healthcare institutions must be more thoughtful and deliberate in fostering connection between providers and patients. There has been a movement to reintegrate interdisciplinary and humanities-based study in order to repair this relationship, as well as to reclaim the benefits of interdisciplinary study (Skorton, 2018).

The Present State of Medical Humanities

The term *medical humanities* first emerged in the 1960s, and programs have since proliferated. In 2018, 70 percent of medical schools included required medical humanities coursework, with 80 percent offering medical humanities electives (Klugman, 2017). There are also programs outside of medical schools, such as the Narrative Medicine program at Columbia University (https://www.narrativemedicine.org/about/), centers and publications affiliated with medical schools, such as the Alan Alda Center at Stony Brook University (https://www.aldacenter.org/) and the Bellevue Literary Review at New York University (https://blreview.org), nonprofit organizations such as the New York Academy of Medicine (https://nyam.org/), peer-reviewed journals such as *Medical Humanities* and *Journal of Medical Humanities*, and conferences worldwide. In 2018, the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine called for the integration of the humanities and arts with the STEM fields (Skorton, 2018). Interest in the medical humanities has grown internationally as well (Song, 2017).

The medical humanities are also growing outside of the medical establishment. Patient-directed programs such as "Dance for Parkinson's" (https://danceforparkinsons.org/) and graphic medicine (www.graphicmedicine.org) (the use of comics to tell personal stories about disease and health) are two examples among many. Podcasts such as Sawbones (https://www.maximumfun.org/shows/sawbones) explore the history of medicine for a lay audience.

"Narrative medicine" is one academic pedagogy under the larger umbrella of the medical humanities. Developed by Rita Charon at Columbia, it uses narrative to understand the experience of illness and caregiving (www.narrativemedicine.org) (Charon, 2001). While Columbia is the only master's degree-granting program, the study of narrative medicine based on Charon's work is now taught throughout the world.

Goals and Methods of Medical Humanities Interventions

The goals of the medical humanities are broad, and have been criticized as vague and ambiguous (Bleakley, 2015). In response to critics, there is increasing interest in delineating specific goals and studying impact. Inherent in the field is a tension between pragmatists, who favor simple discrete interventions that lend themselves to quantitative measures, as they provide valuable evidence for their utility and support advocacy for funding and inclusion in medical curricula, and idealists, who worry that this is reductionist and argue for a more idealistic engagement with narrative and interdisciplinary humanities-based study (Garden, 2008, https://josephensign.com/2014/07/16/the-problems-with-narrative-medicine/).

Within medical (and allied health professions) education and professional development, the medical humanities have a number of goals, such as fostering meaning and connection between providers and patients, developing empathy, skill-building in observation, listening, and communication, encouraging self-reflection, increasing professionalism, and countering burnout.

For interventions aimed at patients, goals frequently include improving patient satisfaction, quality of life, and the reduction of pain and anxiety. Medical humanities interventions have also been used in quality improvement in healthcare delivery. More recently, medical humanities interventions have targeted objective biologic outcomes. Certain goals, such as creativity in diagnosis and treatment, or a "humanistic approach" to patient care, are often discussed as overarching goals, but are difficult to measure.

If its goals are diverse, the methods are even more heterogeneous, involving approaches drawn from the social sciences, the visual and performing arts, as well as practices such as mindfulness and reflective writing.

Evidence for the Medical Humanities

Until recently, the majority of publications on the medical humanities were not true studies. Position papers with titles like "insights" and "approaches" abounded, along with theories, critiques, program descriptions, opinion pieces, and phenomenologic treatises.

Many "studies" evaluated only acceptability according to feedback surveys. A prior review (Ousager, 2010) found a dearth of well-designed studies measuring impact. Many of the studies that existed were compromised by low statistical power, lack of randomization, selection bias, and self-report as a metric.

However, recent years have seen an increase in well-designed studies that measure the impact of medical humanities programs. Due to limited funding for research, the studies inevitably have small sample sizes and are often limited in follow-up time. Many still rely on self-reported outcomes. However, there are now a significant number of quantitative controlled trials and well-designed qualitative studies with demonstrable outcomes.

Evidence for the Medical Humanities in Medical Education and Professional Development

Exposure to the humanities starts prior to medical training. Majoring in the humanities or social sciences as an undergraduate correlates with improved CIS scores (communication and interpersonal skills)—one of the grading elements of the USMLE (United States Medical Licensing Exam), with no difference in the written test of clinical knowledge between humanities and natural science majors (https://www.aamc.org/system/files/reports/1/factstablea17.pdf). A study of nearly 750 medical students demonstrated a correlation between exposure to the humanities and empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, as well as an inverse relationship to burnout (Mangione, 2018).

At the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, humanities majors accepted into medical school without the traditional pre-medical requirements were found to be just as successful as their peers in their grades and graduation distinctions. They performed slightly lower on the USMLE Step 1 (a predominantly basic science-based, nonclinical test), though they performed better in psychiatry and were more likely to pursue careers in primary care and psychiatry, two fields in which the United States needs more physicians (Muller, 2010).

At Harvard Medical School, students were randomized into the New Pathways program, which emphasized social and behavioral sciences with an express interest in humanism in medicine (Tosteson, 1990). Students were followed for nearly ten years after graduation and self-reported greater confidence in practicing humanistic medicine and managing patients with psychosocial issues. They were more than twice as likely to choose primary care or psychiatry (Peters, 2000).

Using visual arts training to improve observation skills has gained popularity, with programs present in at least seventy medical school programs internationally (Mukunda, 2019). These programs often involve partnerships with local museums and garner significant popular interest (https://www.forbes.com/sites/robertglatter/2013/10/20/can-studying-art-help-medical-students-become-better-doctors/#28459f84cdbd; https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/22/well/live/what-doctors-can-learn-from-looking-at-art.html). A 2018 review demonstrated qualitative and quantitative improvement in skills

such as reflection, observation, and tolerance of ambiguity (Mukunda, 2019). Three of these studies—at Yale, Harvard, and the University of Pennsylvania—were randomized trials (Dolev, 2001; Naghshineh, 2008; Gurwin, 2018) that used blind evaluations of observation skills tests. A study at Columbia and Cornell used pre- and post-testing with validated scales to show improvement in reflection, tolerance of ambiguity, and awareness of personal bias (Gowda, 2018).

Another goal of medical humanities programs is deepening the provider–patient relationship via improved communication skills and empathy. In a study from Taiwan, medical students randomly selected to take a narrative medicine course performed better on the communication skills section of the OSCE (objective, structured, clinical examination) (Tsai, 2012). At Columbia University, medical students learning to counsel pregnant women randomized to take a narrative medicine class also scored significantly higher on the OSCEs (Rivlin, 2019). At Washington State University, researchers used the Jefferson Scale of Empathy (JSE), a validated tool, to demonstrate increased empathy among students who took humanities courses compared to those who took non-humanities electives (Graham, 2016). When taken by medical students, the JSE has been shown to correlate with third-party assessments of students' empathic behaviors (Hojat, 2005).

Another popular approach in teaching communication and empathy to medical students is using theater skills. A study from New Zealand examined the impact of a workshop taught by an actor, which included training on body language and interpersonal skills. The intervention group demonstrated improved clinical skills on the OSCE and increased empathy on the JSE compared to the controls (Lim, 2011).

Beyond medical school, an interdisciplinary program involving mindfulness, narrative, and self-reflection, among seventy primary care doctors demonstrated increased levels of mindfulness, well-being, emotional stability, mood, patient-centeredness, and empathy fifteen months post-intervention (Krasner, 2009). Staff physicians at the Cleveland clinic were randomized to participate in a faculty development program introducing narrative medicine and reflective writing. The intervention group demonstrated increased empathy as measured by the JSE (Misra-Hebert, 2012).

While most studies focus on medical students or physicians, a large randomized controlled trial of a narrative medicine intervention with nursing students in northeast China demonstrated increased empathy on the JSE. The study employed two control groups, one of which received non-narrative medicine-related education and one that received education on the theory of narrative medicine only. The intervention group that underwent the full narrative medicine program had significantly higher scores in empathy compared to both control groups, suggesting that the process of practicing narrative medicine is more than just learning the theory behind it (Yang, 2018).

A large study in Taiwan was unique in that it evaluated a competition involving narrative medicine and performance with physicians, traditional Chinese physicians, dentists, nurses, pharmacists, medical technologists, physical therapists, respiratory therapists, and

nutritionists. The investigators demonstrated increased empathy scores on the JSE post-intervention that were sustained up to one and a half years (Chen, 2017).

A final goal is alternately referred to as metacognition, reflection, or introspection. Though many argue that a provider's ability to be thoughtful, humanistic, emotionally healthy, and oriented toward self-improvement requires this type of self-reflection, figuring out how to teach this skill is challenging. The medical humanities are frequently employed in this endeavor through reflective writing exercises. What makes this skill particularly hard to teach is the difficulty in gauging success. Looking for long-term outcomes associated with improved reflection is expensive, time-consuming, and complicated by confounding factors. Many methods have been used to assess the quality of reflection in reflective writing (Niemi, 1997) (Moon, 2013; Boud, 2001; Regmi, 2013; Wald, 2012). Though many bristle at the idea of "grading" reflective writing, the goal is not to evaluate the work in order to grade students, but rather to evaluate whether programs are truly able to create deeply reflective experiences. These models have been used to tie the quality of reflection to outcomes such as professionalism (Hoffman, 2016). This bolsters the argument not only for incorporating reflective writing into education and training across the allied health fields, but also for ensuring that these programs promote truly reflective work versus merely descriptive writing.

Narrative medicine has also been used to develop reflective skills. While even more difficult to assess quantitatively, a large qualitative study was conducted at Columbia that employed grounded-theory-based iterative methodology with multiple readers coding 130 student focus group responses following a narrative medicine course. The students reported engaging with themes of "attention," "representation," and "affiliation," all aspects of the narrative medicine pedagogy that were successfully communicated, as well as "critical thinking," "reflection," and "pleasure" (Miller, 2014).

Evidence for Patient-Directed Medical Humanities Programs

There are also an increasing number of medical humanities interventions aimed at patients and patient care delivery. The most common interventions studied are music therapy (involving a therapist) and "music medicine" (the use of music without a therapist). Two reviews (Gramaglia, 2019; Dileo, 2008) of music therapy interventions in cancer patients demonstrated improvement in pain, anxiety, fatigue, depression, and quality of life. In Italy, "Donatori Di Musica," a live classical music performance in the hospital, followed by a shared meal with patients, musicians, and staff, has spread to multiple oncology departments with 150 musicians involved. A quantitative study demonstrated improved anxiety (as measured by a validated assessment tool) among patients (Toccafondi, 2016). Music interventions have also been shown to decrease end-of-life symptoms and increase well-being in palliative care patients (Peng, 2018), decrease stress and pain among Emergency Department patients (Mandel, 2019), decrease preoperative anxiety (Kipnis, 2016), decrease the anxiety of mothers of babies in the neonatal intensive

care unit (NICU) (Ranger, 2018), decrease pain in fibromyalgia patients (Alparslan, 2015), reduce agitation among psychiatric patients (Bensimon, 2018), decrease pain and anxiety among hospitalized patients (Xue, 2018), and decrease anxiety and increase well-being among patients undergoing cardiac catheterization (Jayakar, 2017).

While most of the music studies listed use symptoms reported by patients or observed by providers, several studies also include physiologic outcomes. A meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials of music interventions during treatments for burn patients demonstrated heart rate reduction in addition to reported decreases in pain and anxiety (Li, 2017). Cortisol, along with reported anxiety, was reduced in salivary samples of Alzheimer's patients after a music intervention (De la Rubia, 2018), heart rate variability parameters improved in NICU babies after a musical intervention (Ranger, 2018), and endothelial function improved in cardiac patients after listening to music (Deljanin, 2017).

The performing arts are also being integrated into healthcare. A 2018 meta-analysis of seven randomized controlled trials of dance therapy with Parkinson's disease patients demonstrated increased executive function. A systematic review of dance used in the rehabilitation of patients with cerebral palsy showed positive impacts on balance, gait, walking, and cardiorespiratory fitness (Lopez-Ortiz, 2018). A theater improvisation course offered by "The Second City" in Chicago demonstrated improved ability to accomplish "activities of daily living" (Bega, 2017). While there are a number of dance and theater programs flourishing (www.aldacenter.org, Shanahan, 2014), more high-quality research is needed to evaluate their impact.

Narrative medicine has also been studied with patients. In a narrative-medicine-based "storytelling" program called TimeSlips in a Pennsylvania care home, participants with mild to moderate dementia demonstrated improvement in quality of life indicators (Vigliotti, 2018). Oncologists also used narrative medicine with leukemia patients to better understand their experience taking Tyrosine Kinase Inhibitors (Breccia, 2016).

A new and exciting direction for the medical humanities is its inclusion in quality improvement (QI) projects aimed at improved healthcare delivery. Given the enormous interest and financial support for QI projects due to quality-based financial incentives for health care institutions, it offers a unique opportunity for the medical humanities. In Italy, narratives of those living with chronic spontaneous urticaria were elicited through a large public campaign; 199 patients submitted narratives that were analyzed via qualitative and quantitate methods with themes extracted to be used in improving healthcare delivery to this patient population, particularly with regard to improved doctor–patient continuity and psychological support (Cappuccio, 2017).

Debates

While humanism in medicine has always garnered theoretical—if not financial—support, the medical humanities has received some pushback against its inclusion in

required medical education curricula. While few reject the ideals, some argue that it is not worth the time it would take within crowded curricula, nor is it worth the funding. A related concern is that these programs would add to the already overwhelming workload in training or practice. However, it is worth noting that so-called soft skills, such as communication and empathy, have repeatedly been shown to correlate with patient outcomes, including reduced diabetic complications, improved symptoms of viral illness, improved adherence, and patient satisfaction (Canale, 2012; Rakel, 2011; Kim, 2004; Derkson, 2013).

Addressing burnout and fostering wellness has gained much traction within and outside of the medical community. As healthcare organizations increasingly respond to incentives tied to quality metrics such as patient satisfaction, there is an emerging appreciation that burned-out providers do not provide a high-quality experience to patients (https://cdn1.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2019/01/PhysicianBurnoutReport2018FINAL.pdf). Thus, tied as it is to financial incentives, there is much more support and funding for programs aimed at reducing burnout and fostering wellness. This may include the medical humanities, as well as mental health services, self-care, and, most crucially, systems reform. While the medical humanities may be viewed as a form of self-care, they are fundamentally a way to enhance meaning and connection, the lack of which precipitates burnout. There has been some pushback against "self-care," or any interventions that are directed at individuals. The healthcare system has created an intolerable workplace for providers, and many argue that it is ineffective and insulting to ask those same providers to practice better "self-care." While systems reforms are desperately needed, and the onus should not be placed on individual providers, it is still essential to help providers cope in an imperfect system. Even in the best of systems, delivering medical care to patients will always be emotionally demanding work.

"Moral injury" is a term that was originally used to describe the moral distress felt by combat veterans. More recently, it has been adapted to describe healthcare providers and has been proposed as a fundamental cause of "burnout." According to Simon Talbot and Wendy Dean, "Moral injury describes the mental, emotional, and spiritual distress people feel after perpetrating, failing to prevent, or bearing witness to acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations" (www.statnews.com/2018/07/26/physicians-not-burning-out-they-are-suffering-moral-injury/). This is an existential conflict felt by providers when they are not able to practice medicine according to their ideals within our broken healthcare system. Taking this argument one step further, it is perhaps not enough to help providers to become more humanistic; rather, we should also be thinking about how to make the entire system more humanistic. This may mean expanding the medical humanities beyond providers to healthcare administrators, healthcare companies, governmental organizations, etc. For many of those whose work affects patients' lives, they may never interact with a patient at all. Perhaps the medical humanities may be a way to reach these groups and help them to connect to the patients affected by their work.

Conclusions and Future Directions

The medical humanities are both a foundational underpinning of practicing medicine and also a new and exciting approach to intentional interdisciplinary study. There is excitement around including the medical humanities in medical (and allied health professions) education, training, and professional development, as well as growing interest in patient-directed medical humanities work. While evidence has traditionally been of low quality in this field, the past decade has seen a surge in the number of quantitative and rigorous qualitative studies, with very positive outcomes over a huge range of goals.

Going forward, medical humanities programs should continue to expand beyond medical schools to professional development as well as training programs for nurses and allied health professions. Most programs are centered in clinics or hospitals. Hopefully, we will see more programs expanding into other care areas, such as skilled nursing facilities and dialysis centers. More rigorous studies that provide quantitative evidence of long-term outcomes—particularly with respect to metrics relevant to healthcare institutions in the era of quality-based incentives—would be helpful in securing funding and support for this field. Finally, if we truly wish to reform an impersonal medical system that creates burnout and moral injury, as well as poor quality for patients, we must use the medical humanities to foster humanism in medicine among leaders and decision-makers beyond front-line providers.

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PART VI

Public Engagement and Policy

Part VI discusses how the arts and humanities can be integrated into public life and policy and considers the effects of this integration on human flourishing. The public humanities can benefit from greater humanistic engagement in public programs, such as adult education and museums. Art museums can embrace the role of advancing public flourishing by connecting people to aesthetic experiences and to each other. A historical analysis of how policies in the United States have sought to promote engagement with the humanities found that they focused on bringing citizens together through a common understanding of the American experience, even though the demographics and the understanding of what the American experience is have shifted significantly over the years. More recent policy proposals on the arts and humanities center on the work of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing in the UK, which was tasked to examine the health and well-being impact of attending cultural events and participating in creative activities. This culminated in the *Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing* report presented to the UK Parliament in 2017.

CHAPTER

35

Investigating the Contributions of the Public Humanities to Human Development

David Kidd

Abstract

The public humanities provide opportunities for members of the general public to engage with the humanities in a wide range of contexts. This chapter outlines recent advances in empirical investigations of the value of humanistic engagement in public programs, with a focus on illustrating theoretical models of humanistic development using studies of specific programs. Research on museum experiences and adult humanities education programs is reviewed in order to explore the psychological processes activated in the humanities and the forms of human development they cultivate. The chapter concludes with reflection on ways in which future research can benefit from unique features of the public humanities while contributing to both psychological theory and public debates about the value of the humanities.

Key Words: public humanities, human development, museum, adult education, applied research

In the first lines of its 1964 report recommending the establishment of what would become the National Endowment for the Humanities, The Committee on the Humanities asserts,

The humanities are the study of that which is most human. Throughout [humanity's] conscious past they have played an essential role in forming, preserving, and transforming the social, moral and aesthetic values of every [person] in every age. One cannot speak of history or culture apart from the humanities. (The Committee on the Humanities,1965, p. 1)

Now, over half a century after the report's publication, the National Endowment for the Humanities finds itself at risk of losing funding in the budget proposed by the executive branch for the third year in a row (Schuessler, 2019). Although previous attempts to defund the endowment have met with summary rejection by legislators, the efforts suggest that the ACLS's confidence in the value of the humanities is not universally shared. Many people, it seems, think we could all do just fine without them. The era-defining educational acronym, STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics), lacks an "H," and the humanities have even been neglected in the acronym's more recent arts-inclusive

permutation, STEAM. It is critical, then, to revisit assumptions about the impacts of the humanities and investigate empirically the extent to which they truly play essential roles in shaping individuals and their communities. This task is beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead, the goal here is to orient researchers in extant research using theoretical frameworks of humanistic development, and to outline ways in which future research can help us learn more about what the humanities can and cannot do to improve ourselves and our communities.

What Are the Public Humanities?

Some scholars define public humanities work as any form of engagement by humanists with others outside formal academic study, though there is disagreement regarding what constitutes truly public engagement (Wickman, 2016) and what separates the humanities from the arts (Ellison, 2012; for an example of this tension in practice, see Groen & Hyland-Russell, 2012). A recent large-scale study (Fisher, 2018) of over 1,500 programs provides a more pragmatic definition of the domain. Fisher (2018) found that five general types of programs could be identified: those promoting outreach by scholars to a general audience; programs encouraging engagement and the mutually beneficial transfer of knowledge between facilitators and participants; research projects that involve substantial collaboration of academics and community members; teaching projects that encourage student engagement with the broader community; and infrastructure projects. For this chapter, the first three forms of public humanities activity are most relevant, as they help focus attention on what it means for a member of the general public to engage with the humanities.

Yet, while Fisher's (2018) analysis helps clarify what sorts of activities might characterize the public humanities, it does little to help distinguish the humanities from the arts. Here, a definition offered by Carol Amour, a community outreach coordinator for the Lac du Flambeau Tribe, illustrates a helpful rule of thumb:

> The beautiful wigwassi jiiman (birchbark canoe) that Ojibwe artist Wayne Valliere created with ENVISION students from Lac du Flambeau represents art. The lessons we learn from looking at and talking about the through-line of centuries of Ojibwe culture that the canoe represents and how tradition can carry culture, represents [*sic*] the humanities. (Wisconsin Humanities, n.d.)

As Amour's depiction of the distinction between the arts and humanities makes clear, many public art programs invoke the humanities, and many public humanities programs encourage engagement with the arts. This complicates discussion of the effects of engaging with the public humanities, in part because many studies of engaging with art might be easily understood as investigations of the public humanities. Arts engagement, particularly when the definition includes aesthetic appreciation as well as creation of art, has received increasing attention from psychologists and other empirical researchers (e.g.,

Winner, 2018; Starr, 2013), but there is relatively little work focused specifically on the humanities.

What Do the Public Humanities Do?

Even a cursory look through some of the more than 1,500 public humanities programs identified by the National Humanities Alliance (NHA) as part of its Humanities for All project (Fisher, 2018) reveals that they can be found in settings ranging from places of incarceration to canoes on a river, involve participants of all ages, reach people in urban centers and rural counties, and touch on an apparently limitless range of topics. What connects these programs is their common reliance on humanistic methods in the pursuit of humanistic goals.

In an analysis of the 1,800+ programs it identified, the Humanities for All project (Fisher, n.d.) found five general goals: "Informing contemporary debates; amplifying community voices and histories; helping individuals and communities navigate difficult experiences; expanding educational access; and preserving culture in times of crisis and change." These findings point primarily to civic concerns, with an emphasis on addressing the needs of underserved ("expanding educational access"), marginalized ("amplifying community voices and histories"), or at-risk communities ("difficult experiences", "times of crisis and change"). The civic focus identified in the Humanities for All project appears also in a qualitative analysis of 89 projects funded by Illinois Humanities between 1981 and 2012, which found 80 (90 percent) of them to prioritize civic development (Pupik Dean, Schein, Kidd, Webb, Kang, Walton Doyle, &Allen, 2020).

That public humanities programs would be oriented toward civic, or public, development is consistent with a long history of advocacy for the key role of the humanities in preparing people for democratic life (e.g., Allen, 2016a; Dewey, 1923 Nussbaum, 2006). The creation of the National Endowment for the Humanities and, subsequently, state humanities councils in the United States was driven by the conviction that the humanities would enrich civic discourse and empower thoughtful civic actors, though definitions of these outcomes have changed over time (Lynn, 2013).

Models of Development through the Humanities

Despite an overwhelming emphasis on cultivating civic life in characterizations of the public humanities, this is just one domain in which they can affect their participants. Allen (2016b) proposes that the humanities can be understood as promoting the development of skills and capacities (e.g., critical thinking, deep understanding of a subject) by engaging sensory inputs (e.g., verbal, visual) and a wide range of forms of psychological processing (e.g., analytic cognitive processes, affective processes). Any single humanities program is likely to activate, though not necessarily simultaneously, multiple forms of

engagement, and consequently promote the development of different intellectual and personality factors.

These desired learning outcomes can in turn be viewed as short-term goals that contribute to broader forms of human development. Allen (2016a;Pupik Dean et al., 2020) argues that development in three domains is necessary for flourishing: the existential domain, which concerns personal identity, one's subjective experiences, and intimate relationships; the vocational domain, which encompasses one's ability to engage in meaningful and productive work to support oneself; and the civic domain, which covers engagement in community life at all levels. The extent to which learning addresses these different domains is expected to relate to the nature of the specific developmental goals pursued.

Working from a perspective rooted in empirical psychology, Tay, Pawelski, and Keith (2018) propose a model for understanding engagement with the arts and humanities that makes similar arguments regarding the importance of recognizing multiple pathways to development. Tay et al. (2018) note that the "what," the actual disciplines and subjects involved, of the arts and humanities is astonishingly diverse, but that the mechanisms (i.e., embeddedness, immersion, socialization, and reflectiveness) underlying their impacts are widely shared. Moreover, these mechanisms support specific physiological, psychological (including competencies and well-being), and normative outcomes. Although physiological outcomes have no overt representation in Allen's (2016b) model, the psychological outcomes noted by Tay et al. (2018) can be understood as similar to the sorts of short-term learning goals in Allen's model, and the normative outcomes (e.g., moral judgment, character, civic engagement) can be understood as ways of describing existential, vocational, and civic development.

Where these two models converge most clearly is a recognition that accounting for the impact of the public humanities on human development will be facilitated by attending to how programs prompt participants to engage psychologically with materials, ideas, and people. The two models also illuminate the complexity of the humanities, and each provides a framework for understanding why different individuals may experience and benefit from a single program in distinct but coherent ways. However, little empirical research evaluating the impacts of the humanities fully accounts for this complexity, though it can be at least partially glimpsed in an aggregate view of different lines of research.

To illustrate the partial application of these models, the mechanisms will be discussed in terms of the psychologically well-developed model proposed by Tay et al. (2018), and the long-term development goals will be characterized using Allen's philosophical framework for understanding human development (2016b; Pupik Dean et al., 2020). However, each of these models has psychological and philosophical underpinnings, and each can be applied fully and productively to the studies examined. As these and other models develop, researchers may find different elements of them useful for illuminating different aspects of humanities engagement.

Public Encounters with the Humanities

In the following sections, studies of public humanities programs will be analyzed to illustrate how common mechanisms appear across programs in ways that contribute to existential, vocational, and civic development. The first section will focus on encounters with the humanities in museums; the second will describe research into adult humanities education programs. It should be noted, though, that much research focused on public humanities is made difficult not just by the complexity of the mechanisms and outcomes, but also by methodological challenges. With few exceptions, randomization to control and treatment groups is impossible, lengthy psychometric assessments cannot be deployed, sample sizes are often small, and researchers often have little control over the program or the broader context. In short, the public humanities are a hostile environment for conducting rigorously controlled research. The extant empirical work, therefore, does more to spotlight likely mechanisms and to guide future work than to prove or refute claims about the impacts of the humanities.

Going to the Museum

For many, their earliest and perhaps most common contact with the public humanities is via museums, and there is a substantial body of research addressing museum-goers' experiences from a curatorial perspective. Much of this work deals with science and natural history museums and is concerned with the acquisition of content knowledge and development of interest. However, museums and similar institutions more clearly focused on the humanities, such as history and folklife museums, have received relatively little attention from empirical researchers.

Some findings from general studies of museum experiences are nonetheless valuable. Drawing on theories of psychological flow and intrinsically motivated learning, Packer (2006) examined the importance of active learning to visitors' enjoyment of museums. The results point to a broad conclusion about why people visit museums: they find them to be places where they can enjoy learning. Most of the nearly 500 survey respondents did not see having fun and learning as conflicting aspects of their museum experiences. Instead, they reported finding joy in their self-directed, curiosity-driven learning. Packer's (2006) analysis of interview responses suggested that attendees' learning was supported by a sense of discovery or fascination, multimodal appeal, minimal demands for overt effort, and availability of choice.

This last point may be most critical. Museums and similar settings can allow visitors to learn on their own terms: they can focus their attention on those subjects that are most personally relevant or stimulating, engage via favored modalities, and move at their own pace. This degree of autonomy likely supports the experience of flow states (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) as learners find an appropriate level of engagement. Young people and adults may find that the exercise of autonomy, itself a fundamental need (Deci & Ryan, 2000), in museum settings allows them to satisfy their curiosity and enjoy learning. This may be

especially valuable to individuals who struggle with motivation in more restrictive educational environments, or, more generally, find few opportunities for self-directed learning.

One study using qualitative methods (Harker & Badger, 2015) focused on the educational impact on middle school students of a visit to a traveling exhibit on the Holocaust, finding that the presence of age-appropriate pedagogical prompts and discussion questions were helpful in promoting critical analysis and reflection (e.g., recognizing ambiguities, connecting the past with the present) on the museum materials. Consistent with the importance of self-direction noted by Packer (2006), Harker and Badger (2015) note that the least favored aspect of the program was that the museum visit was highly scripted and limited opportunities for free exploration.

Bowen and Kisida (2019) conducted a randomized, delayed-treatment experiment that included 42 schools (and over 10,500 students) that received an intervention in the form of a partnership with a local arts organization during the study period. Over the two-year study, students in schools receiving the intervention reported significantly higher levels of compassion, had fewer disciplinary problems, and performed better on the state writing assessment than their counterparts in control group schools. Although not explicitly a humanities program, the arts intervention involved students in reading (most were in theatre programs), critical thinking, discussion, and reflection, as well as active artistic expression. Indeed, Bowen and Kisida (2019) speculate that humanistic inquiry into works of art was an important driver of the effects of the program, particularly on writing achievement. In a similar experiment, third–twelfth-grade students randomly assigned to participate in an art museum outreach program that included pre- and post-visit curricular materials and guided study of four or five works of art demonstrated greater critical thinking skills assessed via brief art criticism responses to a novel painting (Bowen, Greene, & Kisida, 2014; for an extension of this work, see Kisida, Bowen, & Greene, 2016).

There is also limited evidence that less structured engagement with the humanities at museums can have positive effects on adults. For example, Koebner et al. (2019) report effects from a pilot study of a docent-led tour of an art museum on pain intensity and unpleasantness, as well as feelings of social disconnection among adults diagnosed with chronic pain. As with arts-based interventions, this program also strongly encouraged humanistic engagement with the works of art, with a focus on dialogue and interpretation rather than isolated aesthetic appreciation. Analyses of interviews appear to confirm the importance of discussion, with many participants registering the importance of hearing other perspectives, sharing their own views, and learning new ways of understanding art. For many, engaging with the works of art provided a foundation for rich social interactions and so reduced the feelings of disconnection often associated with chronic pain.

The capacity of the humanities to develop social bonds is also apparent in Krmpotich, Howard, and Knight's (2016) report of a program at the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto that involved senior community members in the curation of a collection of Indigenous artifacts. A group of senior Indigenous women worked closely with affiliated

university researchers to put the artifacts, long out of Indigenous control, in an appropriate cultural and historical context. Krmpotich et al. (2016) describe how the participants used their cultural knowledge related to the objects to explore their own and others' identities, and how they used items in the collection to create "careful public displays that taught as much about the objects as they emphasized that Indigenous peoples were indeed citizens of Canada, and citizens on their own terms" (p. 360). The program described by Krmpotich et al. (2016) highlights the potential role of the public humanities in empowering communities marginalized in mainstream culture.

Participatory humanities research can also bridge generations and divides within communities. Halim (2018) presents an account, though not a systematic empirical investigation, of a community archive project in a township adjacent to Johannesburg, South Africa, that, in addition to establishing an important scholarly resource, helped develop "a sense of collective ownership of the history" (p. 19), encouraged young people to become civically active, and promoted intergenerational understanding.

These studies illustrate many of the features of the humanities prominent in Allen's (2016b) and Tay et al.'s (2018) frameworks. First, the programs engage participants across multiple perceptual domains, including verbal and textual, visual (e.g., Bowen et al., 2014), and tactile (e.g., Krmpotich, 2016) activities. Second, key mechanisms appear repeatedly. Immersion, a feeling of flow or emotional involvement, is apparent in reports of joyful learning in museums (Packer, 2006). Embeddedness, which can involve feelings of mastery or direct or indirect forms of positive reinforcement, seems to be operating when participants exercise autonomy (e.g., Packer, 2006), demonstrate skills and knowledge (e.g., Krmpotich et al., 2016), or are guided through new ways of thinking (e.g., Bowen et al., 2014). Socialization, which entails the adoption of new social roles and the formation of new relationships, is an especially critical mechanism that is at least implicit in all of the programs described here. Most people attend museums with other people, and humanities programs often encourage discussion. In some cases, socialization may primarily reinforce solidarity in a fairly homogeneous group (e.g., Koebner et al., 2019), while other programs may work to explore and bridge social identities (e.g., Halim, 2018; Krmpotich et al., 2016; Krmpotich, 2016). Finally, reflectiveness is such a prevalent mechanism across humanities programs that it might be considered a hallmark. The positive outcomes of most programs were directly or implicitly tied to the extent to which they facilitated reflection, which was most often supported through discussions or questions (e.g., Harker & Badger, 2015).

These programs also illustrate the reach of the humanities across the three domains of human development identified by Allen (2016b). Several appear oriented primarily toward existential development, such as the general museum programs studied by Packer (2006) and the therapeutic program described by Koebner et al. (2019). Others have implications for vocational development, such as those focused on developing academic skills (e.g., Kisida et al., 2016), and some place special emphasis on civic development

(e.g., Halim, 2018; Krmpotich et al., 2016). While none of the programs can be thought of as supporting development in only one of the three domains, attending to the emphasis placed on each can help clarify the nature of their likely effects on individuals and communities.

Humanities for All

Developed by Earl Shorris in his work with underserved and undereducated people at the Roberto Clemente Family Guidance Center in New York City (Shorris, 2000, the Clemente Course and programs inspired by it provide structured adult humanities education to people who would normally have no access to higher education. These programs focus on canonical works in the humanities (though not exclusively by Western, white, male, and long dead authors), and are based on a belief that engaging with them through close reading, rigorous discussion and debate, and careful writing is empowering for all, particularly those ordinarily marginalized in mainstream society. The Clemente Course is especially relevant to understanding the public humanities because it engages participants in a full range of humanistic inquiry, including philosophy, literature, and history.

Clemente Courses and their variants have proliferated in recent years, but scholars have noted the difficulty of systematically evaluating their effects on participants (e.g., Connell, 2006; Hyland-Russell & Groen, 2011). Katzev, Allen, and Peters (2009) undertook to address this gap in a pre-post study of participants in two humanities courses for underserved and incarcerated adult learners based on the Clemente model. Using a combination of forced-choice self-report scales and free response items, Katzev et al. (2009) found that program participants made significant gains in their abilities to demonstrate conceptual understandings of several key themes of the course (e.g., defining the relations between power and justice). For self-reported outcomes, results were different for the two groups and not universally positive. Both groups, however, reported increased civic behavior (or intended civic behavior). As Katzev et al. (2009) note, however, their conclusions are limited by a host of methodological constraints, including small sample sizes (15 participants per group).

Despite the limitations of Katzev et al. (2009), the findings are broadly consistent with a small qualitative study conducted with at-risk adults in Clemente programs in Australia (Howard, Marchant, Hampshire, Butcher, Egan, & Bredhauer, 2008). Howard et al. identified six primary types of outcomes in participants' responses: increased self-esteem and well-being; positive social engagement; feelings of being valued by others; identifying as a learner and enjoying learning; greater interest in community involvement; and more interest in shaping their own future. Another mixed methods study of participants in a Canadian Clemente program (Groen & Hyland-Russell, 2010) also found evidence of increased self-esteem, academic efficacy, and greater hope for the future.

Findings from Clemente programs, though based on inconsistent methods and very small samples, provide an initial sketch of the mechanisms at work and their likely effects.

The qualitative data in particular draw attention to feelings of immersion, developing mastery and receiving reinforcement (embeddedness), opportunities to take on new roles and engage positively with peers (socialization), and reflection on personal and social values and relations (reflectiveness). The findings also illustrate how adult courses in the humanities outside of traditional academic settings can activate mechanisms that appear to promote development in existential, vocational, and civic domains.

Directions for Future Research

The studies presented here demonstrate how a wide array of public humanities programs can be understood in terms of their underlying mechanisms and the forms of human development they support. The studies do not, however, constitute a strong body of empirical evidence regarding specific or general effects of engaging with the public humanities. They should be used to guide future studies utilizing adequate sample sizes, perhaps requiring inter-institutional collaboration, psychometrically validated measures, and clear, pre-registered hypotheses.

Involve Stakeholders

Models of humanities engagement should be developed and refined with close attention to how humanists describe their work and how students report their learning. Humanists are often expert educators who utilize methods that are learned in ways similar to crafts, such as modeling, and that are refined through practice. As a consequence, humanists develop and deploy theories of learning that, though often implicit, stem from a deep understanding of how different students learn (Pupik Dean et al., 2020). Psychological researchers should work to elicit and test these learning theories alongside those derived from the psychological literature. Practicing humanists must also be key collaborators because they are well situated to help build the research networks that will be necessary to acquire the data needed for rigorous quantitative inquiry.

Researchers should also attend to what participants in public humanities programs say about their experiences. Self-reports are well-suited to assessing the subjective experiences that are central to the humanities, and there is evidence that self-reports are valid indicators of learning (Douglass, Thomson, & Zhao, 2012). Self-reports are also more efficient and less vulnerable to threats to validity posed by uncontrolled environments than behavioral measures, making them compatible with the time constraints and uncertainties of assessment in public programs. Self-report measures, in addition to receiving psychometric scrutiny, should be calibrated to ensure that the language of their items is appropriate for the diverse populations targeted by public humanities programs. Extant and future qualitative research promises to be a useful resource for scale developers intending to help participants express themselves in authentic, or at least comprehensible, language.

Community Matters

The public humanities exist only in social contexts, and participating in them is given very different levels of support in different communities. This is true of any human activity, but it may be especially consequential for the public humanities. Blessi, Grossi, Sacco, Pieretti, and Ferilli (2016) examined the relation of cultural participation to subjective well-being in two distinct environments, one more supportive of cultural engagement (e.g., by maintaining museums and theatres) than the other. In the more supportive city, individuals' subjective well-being was more strongly predicted by cultural participation than in the other. This finding illustrates one way in which researchers interested in individual-level effects should attend to the broader social contexts in which individuals participate in public humanities. Personal growth through the public humanities may be most likely when there are opportunities for sustained engagement and when the experiences they provide are intelligible and valued by fellow community members. The public humanities are themselves part of this broader context, and future research should also examine how public humanities programs contribute to a sense of community commitment to the attitudes and ways of thinking they support.

Conclusion

One of the challenges of defining the public humanities is that they touch on such a wide variety of subjects and seem to do so in endless ways. The application of psychologically and philosophically based models to accounts of very different programs can help identify common humanistic processes or mechanisms at work in the service of human flourishing and development. However, the existing body of research is limited, particularly when studies that focus primarily on arts engagement are excluded from the literature. This presents an opportunity for researchers to develop participatory research programs that involve direct collaboration with developers of and participants in public humanities programs. Further collaboration of practicing humanists and psychologists may also lead to better theories in both disciplines of how people learn, develop, and flourish.

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CHAPTER 36

“Museotherapy”: A New Concept for Promoting Health, Well-Being, and Therapy through Art

Nathalie Bondil *and* Stephen Legari

Abstract

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) has been active in partnership with community for more than twenty years. During the last decade, the MMFA has pioneered numerous pilot programs with medical health providers. This chapter presents an emerging concept of “Museotherapy” (Nauleau, 2018; Bondil, 2021) that contextualizes a diversity of therapeutically intentioned practices in a museum. Conceived along a continuum of engagement, “museotherapy” seeks to address the wellness of the individual, the group, and the community. This concept was accepted in 2020 by the Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF): Museotherapy is, following its *Grand dictionnaire terminologique*, “une méthode thérapeutique individuelle ou collective qui consiste en l’exploitation de l’environnement muséal à des fins de bien-être physique, psychologique et social. Plus concrètement, il peut s’agir de la contemplation d’œuvres d’art, de la création artistique en atelier ou de visite guidées en compagnie de médiateurs culturels.” An English translation of the definition would read, “Museotherapy: The exploitation of the museum environment as a therapeutic method for an individual or group for the purposes of physical, psychological, and social well-being. More concretely, it may involve the contemplation of works of art, artistic creation in a studio, or guided tours in the company of cultural mediators.” This vision redefines the role of an art museum, especially within society. “Museotherapy” requires reframing the role of the museum beyond the activities of art history, conservation, and supporting artists, and rethinking its public as Homo *aestheticus*, as experiential beings who are nourished by beauty and social connection.

Key Words: museum therapy, museotherapy, art therapy, arts and health, neuroaesthetics, museum education, museum definition, humanism, inclusion

“Museotherapy” is a new concept for wellness through the arts (Nauleau, 2018; Bondil, 2021). Internationally recognized as a pioneer and major player in the field of education and in promoting wellness through the arts, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) has made its mark as a socially committed institution that initiates actions to promote education, inclusion, accessibility, and wellness. It works with over 450 organizations associated with schools, community groups, and healthcare institutions to address issues

such as school dropout rates, stigmatization, violence, discrimination, poverty, illiteracy, radicalization, racism, homophobia, homelessness, obsession with body image, isolation, disabilities, and suicide (see Figure 36.1). A recent report made by the World Health Organization from over 3,000 studies identified a major role for the arts in the prevention of ill health, promotion of health, and management and treatment of illness across the life span (Fancourt & Finn, 2019). Art is good medicine!

The MMFA seeks to become a vehicle for social cohesion and individual well-being. To do so, it takes a holistic approach based on co-creation, developing innovative partnerships, particularly in the areas of research and health (Bondil, 2016). For more than twenty years, the MMFA has been a pioneer in original programming directed toward the actions of inclusion and accessibility and, more recently, recovery, well-being, and therapy to an ever-expanding public (Lajeunesse & Legari, 2019). The synthesis of these activities is at once global and local. The activities are based an evolving best practice echoed in museums around the world and, more immediately, a response to the complexity of healthcare needs of Montreal society. Nevertheless, given the more traditional role of the fine arts museum to conserve and display art and artifact, this reframed stance as a milieu for social health care is not without resistance.

Redefining the Museum: Theoretical and Philosophical Stance

Reframing a fine arts museum is the result of reflection on our long-standing primary mission: the excitement generated by temporary exhibitions should not distract us from our main mandate, which is to address Homo *aestheticus* rather than Homo *festivus*. This vision redefines the role of a fine arts museum, especially within society. Supporting artists, studying art history and carrying out research, are still at the core of the museum's mission, but it is not enough. In 2019 the International Council of Museums (ICOM) discussed a new definition of a museum. Evidenced through applied practice, we propose to enlarge the International Council of Museums's (ICOM) definition of a museum with notions such as inclusion, health, and individual well-being. ICOM's definition of a museum has long been a "nonprofit institution" that "acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment" (International Council of Museums, n.d).

Guided by our own "Manifesto for a Humanist Museum" (Bondil, 2016), we proposed expanding the definition beyond its current scope to encompass the promotion of "inclusion" and "well-being," two values that not only can coexist with, but also can strengthen, the museum's historic commitment to its collections and scholarship (Bondil, 2019). We do believe cultural experiences will be soon understood to contribute to health, the same way that sports improve physical conditioning. Over and above our intellectual knowledge, culture is a school for sensory perception that puts us in touch with our emotional and physical selves. It is what differentiates human beings from robots. Aesthetic pleasure

Figure 36.1 An inclusive visit in the Focus Perfection: Robert Mapplethorpe exhibition, 2016, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. © Sébastien Roy

is therefore anything but a trivial business. As a result, we have worked to become a vehicle for individual and social well-being. With 450 partnerships, including hospitals, schools, and universities, the MMFA plays a vital role. We support victims of abuse and restorative justice. We work against racism, poverty, violence, radicalization, aging, and loneliness. We provide dedicated spaces and a consultation room for medical and community professionals. Our art therapist (a museum first) organizes programs using art and art-making that encourage the expression of emotion. Supported by prominent scientists, we have become a research laboratory for measuring the impact of art on health. In 2018, we created the first medical Museum Prescription, in partnership with the Médecins francophones du Canada. By adopting a holistic approach, we bring museums into conversation with social issues. Introducing values like "inclusion" and "well-being" helps us understand our complexity (Bondil, 2019; Bondil, 2020) (see Figure 36.2).

Aesthetic Emotion Is a Physiological Need

This expansion of the paradigm hinges on essential elements that make up a museum: the public and the context around a central value—relevance—for devising strategy and planning partnerships. As a result, this requires rethinking those essential elements within the reframed paradigm of the fine arts museum as a milieu, a tool, or a modality that fosters development and connection.

Figure 36.2 The Art of Diversity, "The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts brings Arts » free posters programme for schools. © MMFA

Rethinking the nature of our public means, above all, to consider our visitors as living, experiential beings. The human need for "beauty," or at least for aesthetic sentiment, is physiological, and not just philosophical or cultural. A museum is a school for the senses, where we can connect with our emotional side. In this regard, like love or friendship, aesthetic feeling sparks a positive sense of well-being. As neuroscience has demonstrated, art

is a “soft power” that stimulates our empathic circuit (Conway & Rehding, 2013; Pearce et al., 2016; Torabi Nami & Ashayeri, 2011). We now have to think about art as a force for social cohesion and individual well-being. Rethinking context means establishing creative partnerships with other specialists, schools, organizations, associations, institutes, and universities, not to coalesce, but to evolve together. Making ourselves available to the agents of social change requires humility, generosity, flexibility, responsiveness, open-mindedness, and ingenuity. Fostering and nourishing interdisciplinarity will henceforth be a part of the museum’s DNA (Bondil, 2016).

Beauty is a physiological need. We humans are both cultural and biological beings, in equal parts: “The brain studied in biology and the mind studied in psychology are two aspects of the same reality” (Morin, 2014). Research, in particular in neuroscience, is identifying ever more precisely the complex neural circuits that connect our feeling and emoting being to our thinking and reasoning being (Changeux, 2010); Darwinian man has followed on Cartesian man. We, the “Third Chimpanzee” that we are now, stand alongside rational man (Diamond, 1991). The twentieth century not only explored the “Je est un autre” [I am is another] concept by the French symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud in terms of the psyche, but also established the basis of scientific—and not just symbolic—comprehension of our multiple intelligences by exploring the biological processes of our emotional and sensorial experiences, and in so doing, of our aesthetic experiences (the word “aesthetic” comes from the Greek *aistheta*, meaning “perceptible by the senses”).

We now know that the pursuit of beauty, which we will call the aesthetic experience, derives from sexuality and the drive to reproduce. Like the many animals that display bright colors, perform elaborate dances, or sing songs to attract mates, human beings have been dressing up, singing, and dancing since the dawn of time, probably even before we could speak. Some animals demonstrate fascinating behaviors requiring a tremendous effort. These include the bowerbirds of New Guinea and Australia, which build impressive architectural structures, called “bowers,” out of branches and decorate them with brightly colored objects for the sole purpose of offering a home—not just a nest—to their prospective mate, and perform their courtship dance in front of it. Deducing the animal origins of art is no great leap. Thanks to brain imaging, we now understand that aesthetic pleasure in human beings, that which activates the reward circuits, corresponds to the areas of our primitive brain linked to sexuality: “The aesthetic experience does not spring from the simple deciphering of sensorial perception, but generates sensorimotor processes and multiple emotions, both subjective and objective, appealing in particular to the empathic circuits, the mirror neurons and emotional memory” (Lemarquis, 2012).

Art Does Good

The aesthetic experience is thus just as vital to our everyday lives: it is felt when faced with a physically attractive person, contemplating a landscape, listening to music, or admiring a painting. Aesthetic pleasure is therefore anything but a trivial business: it is an

integral part of our healthy animality. Moreover, the brain perceives works of art "as living beings . . . aesthetic emotion is the outcome of, among other things, an evolutionary process of seduction." (Lemarquis, 2012). The instinctive biological need that stimulates the human animal's aesthetic experience is thus irrepressible. The nonvirtual experience—what we call "live art," in that it is not recorded or reproduced, but performed in a social context—is immensely powerful; for example, pleasure's emotional circuits are not stimulated by listening to synthetic music, no matter how impeccably a score may be rendered. The aesthetic experience is thus a hedonic experience combining attention, emotion, and pleasure, which includes both science and philosophy in Schaeffer book (Schaeffer, 2015).

Whereas the twentieth century promoted (in both the arts and psychology) the primal side of our being with our newly liberated bodies, we believe the twentyfirst century will value our experiential being in the virtual world. To make up for the dematerialization we are seeing, the sensual experience is becoming more highly prized: "the psychologization and sensualization of wellbeing, sensory and emotional experiences" (Lipovetsky & Serroy, 2013, p. 419) characterize the pursuit of pleasure in presentday society. Knowing how to be must come before know-how. Over and above developing cognitive and intellectual knowledge, it is equally important to create a "school for the senses." It is what distinguishes humans from robots, our emotional intelligence from artificial intelligence. This field of research is expanding day by day in this new century, and it is exciting to see the humanities link up with science. This approach to education, which unites materials long compartmentalized along a sterile dualism, will help future generations to better understand today's complexities. The main issues of the democratic conversation needed to face the challenges of the future will relate to both science and ethics, which of course relate directly to culture. This is why, to maintain their relevance, cultural institutions like museums are called on to commit to a plurality of approaches: this concept of "museotherapy" shows arts and sciences are, more than ever, interlocking atoms.

The artistic experience and contact with works of art have a positive impact on health and well-being, as described in the recent meta-analysis by the World Health Organization (Fancourt & Finn, 2019). Positive impact of the arts on the academic success of young people and in various segments of society are also proved, following the Arts Council of Montreal (Mendonça, 2017). The studies stipulate that the arts stimulate neuronal connectivity that supports psychological resilience: they have a positive impact on attention and working memory; they promote relaxation, and richer, more complex neural activity. The MMFA initiated a series of video documentaries entitled "L'art fait du bien" [Art does good] (see Figure 36.3) with vibrant testimonies of such experiences (Ouellet, 2014).

Art Therapist and Therapeutic Spaces

The impact of space on therapeutic activity and outcomes has become important to architects and health professionals alike. Both fine art and architecture can connect us

Figure 36.3 @ MMFA

with the living world and experiences of well-being when curation and design are conceived with all 5 senses in mind (Chrysikou, 2014; Richard, 2005). The MMFA's most recent pavilion, the Michal and Renata Hornstein Pavilion for Peace, was designed to highlight an expanded fine art collection across four floors but was also intended for human flow, both in pause and movement. Each level opens onto a gallery of light and

visual interaction with the surrounding city before re-inviting the visitor into another epoch of art history.

With the inaugurations of the Michel de la Chenelière Studio in 2012, then enlarged as International Atelier for Education and Art Therapy in 2016 (Bastien, 2018), the MMFA dramatically expanded its actions in support of wellness and health. With spaces dedicated to therapy, well-being, rest, and activity, this facility provides an unprecedented practice framework for medical and community professionals. The MMFA also is involved in the training of future physicians by offering McGill University medical students work-study workshops aimed at refining their interpretive skills. The Museum has become a research laboratory for measuring the impact of art on health, with a dozen clinical studies currently underway. To consolidate the Museum's position in art therapy and health, the Art and Health Advisory Committee was created in 2017 under the initiative of the MMFA direction Consisting of sixteen experts in health and wellness, art therapy, research, and the arts, it was at first chaired by Dr. Rémi Quirion, Quebec's chief scientist, who became at the same time a member of the Museum's Board of Trustees. These eminent representatives of internationally renowned Quebec institutions, as well as from the CNRS (France) and the Cornelius Foundation (England), meet several times a year to observe Museum research projects that are underway or are about to be launched. These experts from the areas of health, art therapy, research, the arts, and philanthropy provide support in terms of their vision and potential partnerships. The Museum creates new treatment avenues that combine experience of the arts with a holistic curative approach (Pauget & Tobelem, 2019). Supported by the expertise of its Education and Wellness Division team, including a full-time art therapist—a North American museum first (Solly, 2019)—thanks to the support of the Rossy Family Foundation, it establishes programs developed in situ in collaboration with physicians, university researchers, and hospital professionals.

Museums are Vital to the Well-Being of our Society

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Council of Museums (ICOM) recognize the pioneering role of the MMFA in their new publication *Culture and Local Development: Maximising the Impact Guide for Local Governments, Communities and Museums*. (OECD, 2018). Launched in Venice on December 7, 2018, this guide is intended to promote a sustainable future. Several studies commissioned by the OECD and conducted in 2017–2018 provided the basis for the report, which is a road map for local governments, museums, and museum professionals on how to jointly define a development agenda. Several studies on culture, heritage, and local development commissioned by the OECD and conducted in 2017–2018 provided the basis for the guide. The MMFA study was directed by Lucie K. Morisset, professor and holder of the Canada Research Chair in Urban Heritage at UQAM (Université du Québec À Montréal; Sauvage, Morisset, & Joannette, 2018). Promoting inclusiveness,

health, and well-being supports the view that the Museum plays a social role and that culture is vital to the well-being of society, as noted by the OECD guide (2018, p. 38):

> Box 11. Promoting inclusiveness, health and well-being: A Manifesto for a Humanistic Fine Arts Museum. As part of the Manifesto for a Humanistic Fine Arts Museum, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts has put forth a strong vision of the social role of culture and cultural institutions and has taken numerous actions aimed at promoting inclusiveness, health, and well-being. The MMFA's art therapy programme takes a particularly innovative approach, which has earned global recognition. The established programmes are aimed broadly at persons experiencing mental health disorders, autism, eating disorders, and learning and behavioural difficulties, and also extends to socially-excluded and marginalised individuals. Activities are quite diverse ranging from: using art to improve self-image, hosting arts workshops to assist those with speech and sensory disorders and helping immigrants to settle by illustrating their own life stories through art. The MMFA partners with many specialised partners to create these programmes and works with scientific organisations and universities to perform research in these areas. To facilitate these activities, in 2016, the museum inaugurated a purpose-built premises, and in 2017 established an Art and Health Advisory Committee of 16 experts to form policy in this area. In 2018, museums visit prescriptions started to be administered by doctors as part of a new project between the museum and the Canadian association of francophone doctors. For more info: https://www.mbam.qc.ca/en/education-and-art-therapy/art-therapy/.

This recognition by the OECD and ICOM of innovative actions supported by a humanistic and inclusive vision of the Museum as a vector of social progress constitutes a milestone. The validation by international economic and cultural institutions enables us to advance our message to strengthen the role of culture and expand the definition of a trailblazing museum in the areas of inclusion and well-being. We are convinced that in the twentyfirst century, culture will be to health what sport was to it in the twentieth century: we would remind skeptics that only a century ago it was believed that sports could deform the body and harm women's fertility. Cultural experiences will be understood to contribute to wellbeing, as sports are understood to improve physical conditioning. Our understanding of our emotional intelligence is as essential as the artificial intelligence (Bondil, 2016).

"Museotherapy": Applied Practice for a New Concept

The therapeutic and well-being projects of the MMFA are geared to a variety of clientele: people with eating disorders, such as anorexia and bulimia; those with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or intellectual challenges; victims of breast cancer; the elderly; or people suffering from cardiac arrhythmia, epilepsy, language or sensory disorders, Alzheimer's disease, or mental health issues (AAMD, 2017). The following is a sample of those activities at the MMFA that can be conceived along a continuum of the concept

of "museotherapy." Each is drawn from a co-created community partnership. The protocol pursued at the MMFA in community partnership has been carefully developed over decades, wherein the needs and objectives of the partnering agency, be they a clinic, association, or community center, are carefully listened to and integrated into the project design to our best capacity so as to respond to the public with congruency and allyship. In practical terms, the partner is invited to imagine how their members will move through the museum, what kind of encounters they will benefit from, what obstacles must be accounted for, how the museum's collection will serve their objectives, and what professionals will be involved and their respective roles.

Well-Being and Social Connection

Museums can facilitate social connection and inclusion (Sandell, 1998; Thompson, 2012) (see Figure 36.4). In a time where social isolation is on the rise, especially in our major cities, museums have been reconceived as hubs that allow for individuals, families, and communities to gather and develop or reinforce social bonds grounded in arts-based encounters. There are several projects at the MMFA that directly address social isolation, marginalization, and neurodiversity.

Museums have been called upon to act as supportive environments for adults living with Alzheimer's and dementia and their caregivers (Rhoads, 2009). A visit to the MMFA's galleries with the support and guidance of a trained museum mediator (educator) is an opportunity to delight in the fine arts. Participants, along with their caregivers, are invited to share spontaneous associations, memories, and preferences during various themed visits. Qualitative research supports that such activities can positively impact the quality of life for both those living with cognitive disorders and their caregivers by means of social connection, self-esteem, and cognitive stimulation (Flatt et al., 2014; Rosenberg, 2009).

The MMFA also boasts a long-running free program for seniors called *Beautiful Thursdays.* Every week, more than sixty seniors are invited to create, move, and discuss, through activities provided by our museum mediators, whether in an art class, art with yoga or dance, or a guided visit to the galleries. The program provides a valuable social resource for those that may be at risk of social isolation and its associated symptoms of depression and low self-esteem. The success of the program has prompted a study in gerontology (Beauchet, 2018; Beauchet, Bastien, Mittelman, Hayashi, & Ho, 2020), now being replicated in several museums across the globe.

Both children and adults who are neuro atypical/neurodivergent/autistic are at risk of loneliness, social isolation, being bullied, and anxiety (Müller, Schuler, & Yates, 2008; White & Roberson-Nay, 2009). Museums are well-placed to provide specialized programming to confront these social realities and to create welcoming, low-impact opportunities for social connection, alternative communication through the arts, and skill-building that can improve the lives of neuro atypical people, their families, and neurotypicals alike (Langa et al., 2013; Mulligan, Rais, Steele-Driscoll, & Townsend, 2013).

Figure 36.4 Angelina Dass, Humane Pantone, a world-wide performance and installation, also commissioned by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 2019. © Humanae Project, Angélica Dass

In 2015, in response to parent advocacy, the MMFA launched its first program for children on the autism spectrum and/or living with developmental disabilities. The program included creative activities and encounters with the museum collection and was developed in collaboration with parents, teachers, and specialists. Five years later, the program includes a committee for neurodiversity, sensory days, a weekly art therapy program for young adults, and community exhibitions. In 2017, neurobiological researcher Bruno Wicker launched a study at the MMFA using eye-tracking technology to better understand the centers of interest in adults with high-functioning autism and found important differences from their neurotypical counterparts (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 2019) (see Figure 36.5). Additionally, the MMFA has collaborated with French and American museums to develop a best-practice guide for museum programming in neurodiversity (Barthélémy, Bonnave, Giroux, Legari & Wiskera. 2020).

From Art Therapy to Art and Health Pilot Projects

Museums-based art therapy is a specialized practice facilitated by a trained and qualified art therapist. The American Art Therapy Association defines art therapy as "an integrative mental health and human services profession that enriches the lives of individuals, families, and communities through active art-making, creative process, applied psychological theory, and human experience within a psychotherapeutic relationship" (American Art Therapy Association, n.d.). The inclusion of a museum's collection into a clinically inspired protocol makes for dynamic therapy, one that has gained momentum and attention in several museums worldwide (Coles & Harrison, 2017; Betts, Potash, & Kelso, 2015; Jury & Landes, 2015; Pantagoutsou, Ioannides, & Vaslamatzis, 2017; Salom, 2011).

The art therapy program at the MMFA was launched in 2017 as a unique, full-time, and comprehensive program that includes an art therapist in residence, several therapy groups, research collaborations, and training internships for master's-level students (Henry, Parker, & Legari, 2019). In addition to working with people with chronic illness, trauma, grief, and disability, the program is committed to research and evaluation. A 2017 paper showed that the museum art therapy protocol was an appropriate adjunct for those living with eating disorders (Thaler et al., 2017). A follow-up study in museum education explored the program design to inspire its replication (Baddeley, Evans, Lajeunesse, & Legari, 2017). Museum art therapy at the MMFA for people living with epilepsy was the focus of a mixed-methods graduate research study (Smallwood, Legari & Sheldon, 2020). And more recent research has looked at the lived experience of women with breast cancer and those in the chronic phase of stroke recovery.

The Art Hive

The Art Hive of the MMFA is a unique studio among its peers. It is premised on a theory and practice of arts-based social inclusion. In literal terms, it is a creative space that is open to any member of any public twice a week to make art in a community setting.

Figure 36.5 Maxwell Bitton, Self-portraits, 2016, acrylic and photography on foam board. From the February 16 to the March 27, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts presents some 50 artworks by the creative genius Maxwell Bitton, a young artist of 24 years old, who did not let his autism stop him from achieving success. Part of "The Art of Being Unique" programme organized by the MMFA, this installation is the result of an artist's residency for adults with autism spectrum disorder. @ MMFA

It is facilitated by an art therapist and a museum mediator and emphasizes the autonomy of each participant to discover their unique creative voice through a panoply of provided materials. The brain child of art therapy professor Janis Timm-Bottos, the Art Hive, as both method and movement, benefits from decades of engaged research in community settings (Timm-Bottos, 1995, 2011; Timm-Bottos & Reilly, 2014). Its repositioning inside a museum of fine arts has a mutually beneficial impact on both the museum and

the Hive, creating permeability between the world of the fine arts and community-based arts programming. It is also a destination for after-care for those doing closed group experiences in other programs.

The Museum Medical Prescription: A World Premiere

In 2018, the MMFA launched a unique partnership with a national association of francophone doctors (Association des Médecins francophone du Canada) (Riou-Milliot, 2019; Lemarquis, 2020) to develop and deliver a museum prescription that would allow participating physicians to prescribe the MMFA to their patients, including patients' families and partners. Built on the strength of emerging research in social prescribing overseas (Chatterjee & Camic, 2015; Camic & Chatterjee, 2013; Thomson, Ander, Menon, Lanceley, & Chatterjee, 2012), our own prescription proposed a novel model wherein the physician and the museum were direct allies in the patient's wellness goals. The prescription highlights the autonomy of the patient in choosing what kind of experience they would like to engage with, be it gallery visits, tours, the Art Hive, or activities for family or seniors. In its pilot phase, more than 500 prescriptions were filled in under a year, and there are initiatives underway to scale out the availability of the prescription.

Discussion

"Museotherapy" is an emerging concept that contextualizes a diversity of therapeutically intentioned practices in a museum. Conceived along a continuum of engagement, "museotherapy" seeks to address the wellness of the individual, the group, and the community. The "museotherapy" of the MMFA is uniquely embedded within the socio-historical context of the museum's history, especially its collection, and of Montreal society. We believe that what differentiates a therapeutic from quotidian experience at the MMFA is objective and intention. Programs that are designed to meet well-being and therapeutic objectives will be informed by best practice in partnership with our partners in community and medical healthcare. Those visitors, or referring professionals, whose intention is for the museum to be a source of well-being will encounter beauty, connection, and respite.

"Museotherapy" is not without its problems (Bondil, 2021). A single fine art museum cannot respond to the complexity of needs presented in a given society, nor can it present itself as an alternative to allopathic healthcare. "Musotherapy" as a concept is not an official modality of therapy. There are no museotherapists at this time, no training in "museotherapy" is available, nor is the concept grounded in established deontology. "Museotherapy" is thus proposed as framework to both better understand the therapeutic mechanisms and potentialities at work in a museum in the service of its public and to develop innovative approaches to expanding and deepening the therapeutic potential of the museum experience. "Museotherapy" is thus equally poised to inspire other museums to reflect on their own therapeutic potential and contributions to collective best practice.

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CHAPTER 37

Humanities and Public Policy: Forging Citizens and the Nation

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Abstract

This chapter explores the evolution of state, local, and federal policies to promote engagement with the humanities in the United States from the Early Republic through the contemporary moment. It focuses particularly on policymakers' efforts to support or influence educational institutions, libraries, museums, and historic sites. The authors argue that over time, humanities policy has largely focused on the value of the humanities to cultivating a prepared citizenry and forging shared narratives of the American experience, even as views of who comprised that citizenry and whose history and culture ought to be included in representations of the American experience have changed significantly.

Key Words: humanities, citizenship, K–12 education, higher education, museum, library, historic site, National Endowment for the Humanities

Since the Early Republic, policymakers have worked to foster engagement with history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of knowledge and inquiry that we would today call the humanities. This chapter explores the evolution of state, local, and federal policies to promote this engagement, largely through educational institutions, libraries, museums, and historic sites. While these institutions are not, and have never been, the only places to encounter the humanities, policy involvement with the humanities has generally revolved around supporting and influencing the educational and cultural institutions discussed here. Over time, the humanities have had a wide range of impacts on individuals and communities (e.g., fostering literacy, moral development, capacities for reflection and self-expression, etc.). Meanwhile, humanities policy has largely focused on the value of the humanities to cultivating a prepared citizenry and forging shared narratives of the American experience, even as views of who comprised that citizenry and whose history and culture ought to be included in representations of the American experience have changed significantly over time.

In working to ensure the success of the new Republic, policymakers promoted a liberal education grounded in the humanities as a crucible for forging citizens who could shape their own lives and participate in shaping their communities. In this way, education

policy that fostered personal agency through the humanities became central to a vision of citizenship. Over time, even as the role of liberal education would be debated, who was given access to the humanities would become a marker of who was considered a full citizen. Following the Civil War, policymakers also cultivated national narratives about the American past both within educational institutions and through libraries, museums, and historic sites. Initially, the narratives they promoted were grounded in the cultural experience of the original Anglo-Protestant majority and assumptions about cultural and technological progress. While in many ways these narratives reinforced an exclusive sense of citizenship and belonging, more inclusive and pluralistic national narratives that better reflected the experiences of communities and the dynamics of American history were increasingly promoted, beginning in the 1930s. In the long run, liberal education and empirical research would help to advance this more pluralistic vision. The humanities became a force for agency among a wider range of individuals and communities as access to liberal education was extended, humanities scholarship expanded, and diverse communities achieved greater degrees of citizenship.

Creating a Citizenry through Liberal Education

After the Revolution, American leaders recognized the need to prepare the new country's population for citizenship through education. Thomas Jefferson, for example, laid out a vision for educating the newly formed citizenry when he proposed a "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge" in the Virginia House of Delegates in 1779. Calling for a liberal education at the "common expense" for those who could not otherwise afford it, the bill contended that the most effective means of preventing tyranny was to "illuminate [. . .] the minds of the people at large" through the study of history, "the experience of other ages and other countries" (Jefferson, 1779). An educated citizenry, Jefferson contended, would create just and honest laws, contributing to the happiness and well-being of the nation at large.

While Jefferson's bill did not pass, many leaders in the years following the Revolution envisioned schools that would foster within citizens the knowledge, skills, and moral capacities to participate in self-government and shape their lives. They believed that broad learning in math, science, literature, and history would empower individuals to imagine new economic and social possibilities (Neem, 2017, p. 10). The Northwest Ordinance provided a mechanism for funding schools through sales of public land, contending that "[r]eligion, morality, and knowledge, necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged" (Whealan, 1965, p. 11). Many state constitutions contained similar language articulating the need for a liberal education. Equally important to advocates was the notion that placing the responsibility for schools with local governments would cultivate a democratic culture as local communities came together to govern and support them. Local control, however, was sometimes at odds with the goal of universal liberal education. Schools in the

period varied widely in the quality, type, and duration of schooling provided. In small towns and rural communities where most Americans lived, education reflected local cultures, teaching in a variety of languages and emphasizing a range of religious and cultural traditions (Kaestle, 1983). Additionally, some communities resisted imposing taxes for schools, arguing that children most needed common sense, a quality that was best cultivated through practical experience.

As new immigrants made the United States increasingly diverse, native-born Protestant reformers centered in New England promoted the establishment of state boards of education and increased public funding to create more uniform "common schools." Proponents of the common school movement, such as Horace Mann of Massachusetts, believed a liberal education at public expense for youth from diverse backgrounds could instill a common culture that would promote social cohesion (Neem, 2017). At a time when religion was central to many local schools, the curriculum they proposed was non-sectarian and based in the liberal arts. Still, curricular materials commonly presented texts that were grounded in Protestantism and were hostile to religious traditions of more recent immigrants (Neem, 2017). Common school advocates were largely successful in their push for state boards of education, which they believed could prod communities into supporting schools that conformed to their vision, with most states establishing one before the Civil War (Kaestle, 1983). In the years after the Civil War, common school advocates championed larger schools that separated primary and secondary education, and that nurtured self-driven curiosity among students through a liberal arts curriculum that favored deep engagement with texts. This interactive pedagogy, advocates contended, would cultivate the capacities for self-making and democratic thought that they had long argued were crucial to civic participation (Neem, 2017).

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the combination of immigration and new compulsory attendance laws led to a rapid increase in school enrollments—more than 700 percent between 1880 and 1918 (Oakes, 2005, p. 19). This expansion raised questions of whether all students needed a liberal education or whether some were better suited to a vocational one. In 1892, the National Education Association convened a commission to make recommendations for standardizing secondary school education to better prepare students for higher education. Chaired by Harvard president Charles Eliot, who believed that all students had the ability to do intellectual work, the commission recommended that secondary schools should have four courses of study, all appropriate for college preparation and grounded in the humanities: classical, Latin-scientific, modern languages, and English. Under this configuration, Americans of all backgrounds would be provided with a liberal education befitting free and equal citizens (Oakes, 2005, pp. 17–18). Despite the committee's views and those of common school advocates, state and local school systems embraced vocational education (Ravitch, 2000). The federal government also supported vocational education with the 1914 Smith-Lever Act and the 1917 Smith-Hughes Act. Decisions about who was best suited for a liberal education were

shaped by racial, class, and ethnic biases (Oakes, 2005, p. 36), which were reinforced by the US Bureau of Education. Its 1917 report, for example, "[criticized] black educators and parents who wanted a precollegiate education" for black students, recommending instead that they be prepared for manual labor (Ravitch, 2000, pp. 108–109).

While the earliest advocates for public investment in education looked to primary education to foster baseline civic capacities for the population at large, they looked to higher education to equip a more select group with the skills and knowledge necessary to lead. Alongside his advocacy for primary education, Jefferson envisioned a public university in Virginia that would feature an updated liberal curriculum grounded in the humanities to equip citizens for their newfound freedoms. His vision for Virginia influenced Georgia and North Carolina to establish the first public universities. While the University of Georgia was chartered in 1785 to "advance the interests of literature" so as to "suitably form the minds and morals of citizens" (Charter, 1785), the University of North Carolina was the first to enroll students, offering a liberal arts curriculum in 1795. By the Civil War, more than two-thirds of states had established similar humanities-centered flagship public universities.

A push for greater access to higher education came with the Morrill Act of 1862, which incentivized states to establish universities by providing the proceeds from the sale of federal lands as financial support. In the context of population growth, territorial expansion, and increased global industrial and agricultural competition, this expansion of higher education aimed to foster leaders who could be civic and economic agents in their communities. The institutions would provide both a liberal arts education and instruction in "agriculture and the mechanic arts" (Roth, 2014, p. 116). The result was the establishment of comprehensive flagship public universities in the states that lacked them and technically oriented alternatives in states where flagships already existed. These technically oriented institutions also provided liberal education, reflecting the "insistence that liberal learning benefited the individual and society regardless of one's occupation" (Roth, 2014, p. 116).

In a landscape largely segregated by race and gender, African Americans and women sought access to higher education, in general, and liberal arts curricula, in particular, as part of a quest for full citizenship. In an era that presumed motherhood, there was broad consensus that elevating women through liberal education would ensure the flourishing of the next generation. While the first public women's colleges, founded in the 1880s, ostensibly provided a liberal arts education as part of training for this limited role, many students were encouraged to seek opportunities in a variety of professions (Solomon, 1986). And after the end of Reconstruction, a second Morrill Act, passed in 1890, established institutions for African Americans in segregated Southern states. Within this context, advocates such as George Washington Carver and W. E. B. DuBois debated the best curriculum for the public and private colleges for African Americans. While Carver prioritized professional training that would enable immediate economic uplift within the repressive post-Reconstruction regime, DuBois contended that the humanities would

more fully empower African Americans to shatter the limitations placed on them (Roth, 2014, pp. 63–78).

Even with the gradual expansion of access to education in the nineteenth century, educational advocates and policymakers anticipated that many would not receive an extensive formal education. In this context, they urged public libraries to offer materials for self-education to community members of all ages. Beginning in the 1830s and 1840s, many common school advocates called for public support for libraries to encourage engagement with reading materials such as books on moral and political philosophy that would cultivate the "wisdom of the citizenry" (Carpenter, 2007, p. 306). New Hampshire passed a law in 1849 that allowed municipalities to levy taxes to support public libraries, and Massachusetts did the same in 1851 (Pawley & Robbins, 2013 p. 3). By 1880, 18 states had enacted laws enabling public financing for libraries. Still, the number of libraries remained limited as few communities pushed for their establishment (Carpenter, 2007, p. 311).

Libraries became increasingly common in American communities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in large part due to Andrew Carnegie's philanthropy. Driven by his view that access to books enabled both self-education and democracy, Carnegie funded 1,679 public library buildings in the U.S. between 1890 and 1919 (Wiegand, 2009, p. 438). Carnegie motivated further private and public investment as well, by requiring that localities provide the land for the library and ongoing support for its operations. Many communities, inspired by the priorities of the Progressive Era, were eager to accept such terms. For progressive reformers, libraries were crucial to Americanizing immigrants, and they viewed "carefully selected" reading as essential to saving immigrant children from the streets (Pawley & Robbins, 2013, p. 4). The reforming spirit also extended to rural and non-immigrant communities: in Hagerstown, Maryland, community elites supported a county library that would serve the rural population to "raise the tone and character of a community" (Marcum, 1991, p. 93). Several of the first public libraries for African Americans, which also benefited from Carnegie funding, were promoted by an emerging group of black middle-class and professional groups, determined "to build community infrastructure for racial uplift" (Fultz, 2006, p. 340). But much like schools, unequal segregated libraries conveyed less than equal citizenship.

Fostering National Narratives

As leaders in the Early Republic advocated investments in public education to foster individual and societal thriving through the humanities, few policies were directed at museums and historic sites before the Civil War. Members of Congress generally believed that the federal role in fostering national identity and preserving cultural and historical artifacts should be limited. Over the next century, however, policymakers became increasingly involved in the collection of cultural artifacts and the development of museums and historic sites that presented narratives about American history and culture to the public.

The federal government's ongoing investment in research and discovery, along with the work of a growing number of independent research institutions and public and private universities, generated new national narratives that celebrated American progress within a hierarchy of civilizations and that privileged the Anglo-Protestant majority. Over time, academic researchers and policymakers developed and embraced alternative pluralistic narratives that saw a more diverse array of individuals and communities as active agents in American history and culture.

The federal government invested in research through expeditions to explore territories in the West and the Pacific during the first half of the nineteenth century. While these journeys sought transportation routes to promote trade and resources to exploit for economic gain, they also collected natural and cultural objects for scientific research. In practical terms, understanding the variety of cultures these explorers encountered could inform the government as it negotiated relationships with Native American and Pacific Island communities over land and other resources (Meringolo, 2012). With the establishment of the Smithsonian Institution, the federal government began to play a stronger role in supporting this research and discovery enterprise. In 1835, when James Smithson left a substantial bequest to the federal government "to establish an institution for the increase and diffusion of knowledge in Washington, D.C.," Congress was forced to consider a stronger role in knowledge production and dissemination (Ewing, 2007, pp. 316–331). After years of debate, Congress ultimately established the Smithsonian Institution in 1846 under compromise legislation that, with the exception of a national university, included nearly all of the ideas that had been debated: a museum, a library, science laboratories, lecture halls, and art galleries (An Act to Establish the "Smithsonian Institution," 1846). In the years after the Civil War, the Smithsonian played a central role as a repository and interpreter of cultural artifacts: researchers and curators mobilized these natural and cultural collections to create narratives of the United States' place in the world and in the history of civilizations for public audiences (Kulik, 1989, pp. 7–12).

During the Smithsonian's first decades, as the country became increasingly removed from the founding generation, divided over slavery, and more diverse, native-born elites increasingly sought to preserve historic sites as a way to assert the founding generation's continuing relevance. In 1855, for example, women from Virginia formed the Mount Vernon Ladies Association to preserve George Washington's plantation as a symbol of national unity, interpreting the site with their own selective memory of the South and its role in the nation's founding. In the years after the Civil War, white Americans in the North and South built memorials and erected statues, often on battlefields managed by the US Department of War, interpreting the war in terms of bravery, sacrifice, and honor, while eschewing references to slavery and the experiences of African Americans (Kammen, 1993).

In the late nineteenth century, filiopietism toward the founders and the memorializing of the Civil War were joined with racist theories about civilizational hierarchies and cultural evolution to create new national narratives about progress. Drawing on the collections of natural and cultural artifacts assembled by the Smithsonian and other research institutions, a growing number of public exhibitions presented a sweeping view of human development focused on a narrative of progress from "primitive" to "advanced" industrial society. With the centennial of the Declaration of Independence in 1876, for example, the federally chartered (and partially federally funded) US Centennial Commission mounted a massive exhibition in Philadelphia that presented a narrative of progress based on American industrial achievement. At a time when the US Army was fighting battles in the West with Native American tribes, Native American cultures were characterized as a facet of natural history disconnected from contemporary US life. The American exhibits eventually became the centerpiece of the Smithsonian's public exhibitions at its National Museum building, which opened in 1881 (Kulik, 1989, pp. 7–9).

Amid the rise of domestic tourism and increasing levels of immigration, local and state governments created historic sites and museums that would attract tourists and reinforce patriotic themes grounded in Anglo-American identity as the root of political and economic progress. A new federal law spurred local efforts. As prospectors increasingly explored the lands in the West, Congress passed the 1906 Antiquities Act at the urging of academic researchers, conservationists, and tourism advocates, authorizing the executive branch to protect cultural and natural assets by designating sites of natural and historic significance. The Act's popularity with communities looking to promote tourism led Congress to create the National Park Service (NPS) to manage the growing number of properties, including Colonial National Monument in Yorktown and Jamestown, Virginia, and Native American sites such as Casa Grande Pueblo in Arizona (Meringolo, 2012) . Then, in 1935, Congress passed the Historic Sites Act, which authorized a national survey of historic sites and created an advisory board to advise the federal government on which proposed sites to acquire and protect. Under the new act, with the assistance of the board, which included academic historians, the Park Service began to think more holistically about how the sites could individually and collectively create a narrative that would bring American history to life. To aid the advisory board, the NPS created *Patterns in American History*, a guide to historical significance that emphasized political and technological progress (Meringolo, 2012, p. 70). During this period, state and local efforts to document and manage historic sites mirrored the growth on the federal level, as state historical commissions commemorated historic sites through roadside historic marker programs and some local governments created historic districts during the first decades of the twentieth century (Page & Mason, 2004).

During the New Deal, a range of Works Progress Administration initiatives challenged this hierarchical view of culture by presenting a more pluralistic narrative about American history and regional and local cultures. These efforts were grounded in anthropological,

historical, and folklore research emerging from universities. The leaders of the New Deal Federal Writers Project (FWP), in particular, had a pluralistic vision of national identity that was not a fixed cultural inheritance that other cultures could threaten, but rather something that arose from the experiences of diverse communities in the United States and was continually evolving. In 1935, the FWP launched the American Guide Series to document the histories and stories of diverse local and regional communities with the goal of introducing "America to Americans" through guidebooks for tourists. FWP officials appealed to local boosters by focusing on the economic benefits of tourism while enabling communities to celebrate regional and local identities and histories as part of a more complex national narrative (Hirsch, 2003, p. 4). This pluralistic approach treated African Americans, Native Americans, and ethnic immigrant groups as active agents in history, rather than representatives of cultures on an evolutionary rung subordinate to the central Anglo-Protestant one.

The Rise of the Contemporary Policy Landscape

After World War II, federal policies expanded access to liberal education and supported projects that increasingly advanced more pluralistic narratives. While policymakers were initially motivated to make these investments by the perceived civilizational struggle of the Cold War, over time, changes brought by the Civil Rights Movement and other social movements would supply more enduring motivations. During the 1950s and 1960s, landmark legislation bolstered the country's educational and cultural infrastructure—and the humanities within that context—without exerting top-down management of educational and cultural institutions. This legislative framework fostered humanities research, preservation, and public engagement through grant programs to higher education institutions and the growing number of national and community-based museums, archives, and libraries.

As returning soldiers making use of the G.I. Bill of 1944 strained the capacity of college campuses, President Truman appointed a commission to evaluate the ability of higher education institutions to meet the challenges of postwar society. In its 1947 report, the Truman Commission on Higher Education called for increased federal investments to expand these institutions' role in cultivating citizenship in a diverse, industrial society. To achieve this, they argued, higher education must cultivate knowledge of and respect for diverse cultures within the United States and throughout the world. Access needed to be extended to everyone who had the intellectual capacity to succeed in college, regardless of race, gender, religion, or socioeconomic background. With strikingly pluralistic language, the commission argued that a common curriculum grounded in the humanities and social sciences amidst people from diverse backgrounds would cultivate citizens capable of promoting the "intercultural cooperation" necessary for a more just and equitable democracy and a cooperative approach to global leadership (Higher Education for American Democracy, 1947, p. 2).

While the Commission made recommendations for federal policy, the expansion of higher education initially proceeded through increased investments at the state level. In a narrower, more instrumental approach, Congress favored legislation connected to defense and diplomacy, investing heavily in science research with the founding of the National Science Foundation (NSF) in 1950 and in disciplines perceived as necessary for global competitiveness and engagement. The 1958 National Defense Education Act (NDEA) bolstered support for science, math, and foreign languages on college campuses and in elementary and secondary schools. The Mutual Education and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 established the Fulbright-Hays program to support historical and cultural research abroad.

Not until 1964 did the federal government—spurred by the Civil Rights Movement—expand its involvement with broader education policy. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed discrimination based on race, religion, sex, and national origin, finally banning discrimination in college admissions in all states. The following year, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) promoted equitable educational access by funding programs for low-income populations, and the Higher Education Act (HEA) established a system of financial aid that made college affordable to a wider range of students. While these policies largely reinforced liberal education, they did not offer funding for research and education in specific disciplines. With the NSF and the NDEA, the vast majority of federal research funding continued to fund the sciences.

As this funding flowed into research universities, in 1963 the American Council of Learned Societies, the Council of Graduate Schools, and the Phi Beta Kappa Society convened a commission to assess the state of the humanities. The commission found funding disparities particularly concerning, given the importance of the humanities in cultivating wisdom among the citizenry and the role of scholars in introducing Americans to "enduring values as justice, freedom, virtue, beauty and truth" (Commission on the Humanities, 1964, p. 4). Responding to the commission report and parallel efforts of arts advocates, Congress passed the 1965 National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act—the first federal legislation that directly supported the arts and humanities by establishing the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA).

In its first years, the NEH was scholarly in its orientation, funding research, publications, and professional development for humanities teachers. The NEH's strongest supporters in Congress quickly pushed the agency to engage broader audiences with state-based programs and more funding to museums, historic sites, and other institutions (Zainaldin, 2013). By 1980, between funds to the state councils and direct grants, about 50 percent of NEH funds went to public programs (Miller, 1984). Alongside its embrace of publicly oriented work, the NEH worked to ensure that the research and educational programs it funded captured the experience of diverse range of Americans. This shift grew largely out of the rise of social movements and the growth of social history in the

academy, though Congress was supportive of the widening scope as well (Miller, 1984). With the NEH's mandate that scholarly input shape NEH-funded museum exhibitions and interpretations of historic sites, shifts in the academy fostered more diverse narratives in publicly oriented institutions (Kulik, 1989, p. 27).

The NEH was not alone in this trajectory. During the 1960s and 1970s, the Smithsonian brought contemporary social history scholarship into its exhibitions to create more pluralistic narratives and invited diverse communities to present their living cultural traditions in Washington. Congress called on additional agencies to encourage engagement with more diverse histories and cultures. Amendments to ESEA in 1974 funded ethnic heritage centers that emphasized local culture in classroom instruction, acknowledging the histories and contributions of a broader range of Americans than had traditionally been integrated into the curriculum. The 1970s reauthorizations of the 1964 Library Services and Construction Act ensured that a wider range of Americans had access to libraries and materials that resonate with their cultural identities by calling for programs and materials to better serve disabled patrons, incarcerated citizens, Native Americans, and poor rural and urban areas (Fry, 1975; Fuller, 1994).

As the postwar policy landscape took shape, some lawmakers opposed the federal government's growing involvement in education and culture. Beginning in the 1980s, this opposition led to multiple efforts to defund humanities programs. Nonetheless, these programs have garnered enough support to survive, in large part due to their efforts to reach an ever broader group of Americans. Support for the language and area studies programs established under NDEA (and now authorized under Title VI of the Higher Education Act) wavered as the exigencies of the Cold War subsided, but received a boost after the attacks on September 11, 2001. Still, as immediate threats seem to recede, cuts have followed, including a 30 percent cut from the Obama administration in 2010 and a call to eliminate the programs from the Trump administration. The programs have survived largely because they have been reconceptualized to train a broader citizenry for productive global engagement, rather than a select group of experts for national security (Wiley, 2001).

The NEH and the NEA have been more frequent targets. In 1981, the Reagan administration proposed drastic cuts to both agencies. While Reagan was only able to implement smaller cuts, members of Congress have occasionally called for either deep cuts or elimination of the agencies. The Trump administration, for its part, called for the shutdown of the agency in each of its budget requests, though Congress ultimately increased funding for the agency each year. One claim animating attacks on the NEH is that it allows government bureaucrats to determine which grants are funded. This argument has been undermined by the actual grant-making structure, which is rooted in peer review and oversight by a presidentially appointed and Senate-confirmed National Humanities Council and a similarly appointed and confirmed chairman. State humanities councils further ensure that decisions for a growing portion of NEH funds are made outside of Washington.

Detractors also claim that government funding crowds out private funds, which would be adequate to support the programs that public audiences enjoy. But as Congress has boosted funding for the NEH in recent years, it has commended the agency's role in communities that are underserved by private funding: praising the NEH for leveraging private funding, fostering civic dialogue across differences, revitalizing cultural heritage, and ensuring that the stories of underserved communities are part of a complex and multifaceted national narrative.

Conclusion

Across all the arenas in which the humanities have thrived in American life, there has been a progressive, though uneven and at times slow, movement toward greater inclusion and participation since the Early Republic. The founding generation looked to an education grounded in the humanities to cultivate the capacities of citizenship and leadership. In schools, libraries, colleges, and universities, they envisioned an education that would give agency to individuals to make their own lives and to help to shape their communities. Following the Civil War, humanities research, discovery, and public engagement also came to play central roles in America's self-fashioning at new museums and historic sites. Like debates over education and citizenship, this too was entangled in questions of access, inclusion, and, indeed, racism, as public representations of the American experience privileged narratives of progress that excluded the experiences of many. These narratives have shifted progressively with broader trends over the last century and through more recent investments in the humanities: in higher education, at the NEH, the Smithsonian museums, and historic sites across the country. This process continues every day, as state, local, and federal policies empower new generations and communities to flourish through the humanities.

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CHAPTER

38 The Contribution of the Arts to Flourishing and Health

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Abstract

Between 2015 and 2017 in the United Kingdom, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing explored the health and well-being impact of participating in creative activity and attending cultural events. This yielded a substantial report, *Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing*, which was launched in the UK Parliament in July 2017. Acknowledging a reciprocal relationship between health and well-being, *Creative Health* makes the case that engagement with the arts aids human flourishing and relieves pressure on health services. This chapter revisits some of the evidence referenced in *Creative Health* to consider more closely the relationship between arts engagement, flourishing, and health. It takes as its starting point a conceptual model of the role of the arts in flourishing, proposed by the editors of this volume, which prompts consideration of immersion, embeddedness, socialization, and reflectiveness. This enables the relationship between arts engagement, flourishing, and health to be better elucidated.

Key Words: Parliament, health, well-being, arts, inequalities, flourishing

Background

In 2015 in the United Kingdom, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing (APPGAHW) initiated an inquiry which comprised a series of expert meetings and sixteen round-table discussions in the Palace of Westminster that brought parliamentarians together with health and social care commissioners, clinicians, people with lived experience of physical and mental health conditions, artists, researchers, and activity providers.[1] These wide-ranging discussions addressed the health and well-being benefits of engaging with the arts (in the broadest sense) at different life stages.

[1] At the time of writing, there are 685 all-party parliamentary groups registered in the UK Parliament on topics from Afghanistan to Zoroastrianism. As the name suggests, they include representatives from the main political parties, and they span the House of Commons and the House of Lords. These groups meet informally to pursue their particular areas of interest, and they vary in their levels of activity. One such group, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing (APPGAHW) was set up in 2014 by Lord

In partnership with King's College London (KCL), meetings and round-table discussions were combined with reviews of the literature on pertinent policy and evidence, alongside a call for examples of practice. This iterative process gave rise to a substantial report, *Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing*, which was drafted by KCL Research Fellow Rebecca Gordon-Nesbitt (coauthor of this article) and launched in Parliament in July 2017 (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing [APPGAHW], 2017).

Flourishing in *Creative Health*: Policy and Research

Foresight project teams work with UK government departments to inform policy. In 2008, the Foresight Mental Capital and Wellbeing Project positioned mental well-being on a continuum between flourishing and disorder, noting that many of the people who occupy a position on this continuum and use primary care or other frontline services, "could benefit greatly from having access to interventions to improve their wellbeing" (The Government Office for Science, 2008, p. 61). In 2016, the final report for the Arts and Humanities Research Council Cultural Value Project noted, "The recognition that wellbeing has irreducible dimensions which can be measured [. . .] presented an opportunity for the contribution that arts and culture make to human flourishing to be acknowledged" (Crossick & Kaszynska, 2016, p. 37). Taken together, these two reports posit flourishing as the highest state of well-being and confer a role on the arts and culture in achieving it. *Creative Health* makes the case that the "arts have a significant part to play in improving wellbeing, thereby relieving pressure on front-line public services" (APPGAHW, 2017, p. 18). However, this is complicated by persistent inequalities in well-being, health, and access to the arts.

Creative Health explores the relationship between arts engagement, health and well-being through the prism of factors identified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the social determinants of health:

> The poor health of the poor, the social gradient in health within countries, and the marked health inequities between countries are caused by the unequal distribution of power, income, goods, and services, globally and nationally, the consequent unfairness in the immediate, visible circumstances of people's lives—their access to healthcare, schools, and education, their conditions of work and leisure, their homes, communities, towns, or cities—and their chances of leading a flourishing life. (Commission on the Social Determinants of Health, 2008, p. 1)

Expanding on this, the chair of the WHO Commission on the Social Determinants of Health, Professor Sir Michael Marmot, prefaced a review of health inequalities in England with the observation that "[p]eople with higher socioeconomic position in society have

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Howarth of Newport (coauthor of this article) to take stock of, and inform developments in, the fast-growing field of arts, health, and well-being.

a greater array of life chances and more opportunities to lead a flourishing life. They also have better health. The two are linked: the more favoured people are, socially and economically, the better their health" (Marmot et al., 2010, p. 3). In a similar vein, the Taking Part survey—conducted by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in partnership with Arts Council England, English Heritage, and Sport England since 2005—has consistently shown that both attendance at cultural events and participation in creative activity are disproportionately undertaken by prosperous, well-educated people (Inglis & Williams, 2010).

By controlling for socioeconomic factors, studies show that the health benefits of arts engagement are not confined to affluent audiences (Sundquist, Lindström, Malmström, Johansson, & Sundquist, 2004; Hyyppä, Mäki, Impivaara, & Aromaa, 2006). In direct contrast to the normal demographics of publicly funded arts, people accessing arts activities through health routes tend to be experiencing poor health. In a reciprocal relationship, the arts provide a route to better health and well-being, while health provides a route to the arts that can help to overcome persistent inequalities of access.

A section of *Creative Health* dedicated to environmental adversity examines ways in which the negative stress (distress) that accompanies chronic deprivation "debilitates and hampers human flourishing" (APPGAHW, 2017, p. 28). Specifically, the report describes how, "[a]t a molecular level, socio-economic disadvantage—and the chronic distress it causes for both children and adults—has negative effects on biological pathways and cellular functions" (APPGAHW, 2017, p. 28). By contrast, *Creative Health* argues that environmental enrichment can mitigate distress at molecular and cognitive levels. Drawing on the work of Swedish epidemiologist Lars Olov Bygren (2013), the report frames arts engagement as a form of environmental enrichment that can lead to better health and enhanced well-being.

In "The Role of the Arts and Humanities in Human Flourishing: A Conceptual Model," Tay, Pawelski, and Keith (2018) take account of various "modes of engagement" (what we refer to in *Creative Health* as "creative participation") and "activities of involvement" (what we call "cultural attendance") to suggest that human flourishing may be enhanced through immersion, embeddedness, socialization, and reflectiveness (p. 217). By expanding on evidence referenced in *Creative Health*, these four mechanisms will be explored to elaborate a discussion of ways in which arts engagement can aid human flourishing and contribute to improved health.

Immersion

Tay, Pawelski, and Keith (2018) draw upon a body of research which suggests that absorption in creative activity—and the sense of "flow" that attends this—"may enhance human flourishing directly, through positive physiological and psychological reactions and increased hedonic well-being" (p. 217). In his 2004 TED Talk, *Flow: The Secret to Happiness*, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi suggested that immersion in creative activity engages

most of our capacity to process information. The UK-based political commentator Andrew Marr (2016), who rediscovered a love of painting while recovering from a stroke, described how "[t]he mind is completely engaged in something that is both difficult and absorbing—'pure' problems of tone, harmony, line and so forth. The body is working, the mind is at full stretch, time disappears and out of it all comes—well—something or other."

For Csikszentmihalyi (2004), immersion—or flow—leaves the body incapable of registering physical or psychological pain. A study of the effects of improvised somatic dance on children and young people recovering from surgery or brain injury found that 92 percent of participants experienced a reduction in pain (Dowler, 2016). Adults recovering from acquired brain injury also demonstrate a reduction in pain and an increase in well-being through exposure to live music (Live Music Now, 2014).

A multidisciplinary team in Finland has investigated music as a complex and versatile stimulus that engages emotional, cognitive, and motor processes in the brain. They have found that listening to music "activates a wide-spread bilateral network of brain regions related to attention, semantic processing, memory, motor functions, and emotional processing" (Särkämö et al., 2008, p. 866). Going beyond mere distraction to aid recovery from neural damage, listening to music daily shortly after a stroke "can improve auditory and verbal memory, focused attention, and mood as well as induce structural gray matter changes in the early poststroke stage" (Särkämö & Soto, 2012, p. 266). Several initiatives in the United Kingdom respond to such evidence, including Live Music Now, Strokestra, and Stroke Odysseys, the latter of which integrates singing and dancing.

Tay, Pawelski, and Keith (2018) also propose that "immersion in the arts and humanities may enhance human flourishing indirectly, through physiological and psychological reactions that are unpleasant in themselves but that ultimately serve to broaden experience, promote emotional breadth and depth, and increase eudaimonic well-being" (p. 217). For Aristotle, the purpose of tragedy was to arouse pity and fear, leading to catharsis of these emotions. Gillie Bolton (2008)—who played an early role in the British Association for Medical Humanities—notes that the arts may disturb us, but "neither powerful arts products nor therapeutic effects are gained solely with ease and enjoyment" (p. 18).

Evidence is emerging that people of all ages who have experienced trauma can be more comfortable communicating their experiences through arts therapies than through verbal therapies. A three-year research project in two special schools in London found that traumatized young people engaging in art, music, and drama therapies felt safe communicating their experiences in this way and showed significant improvements in their social, emotional, and behavioral development (Cobbett, 2016). Adults experiencing post-traumatic stress do not always respond to the cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) recommended in clinical guidance (Harvey, Bryant, & Tarrier, 2003; Spinazzola, Blaustein, & van der Kolk, 2005). A small-scale randomized controlled trial offered group music therapy to people with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) who had already

completed a course of CBT. Over ten weeks, improvisation sessions led by the Music Therapy Department of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama—accompanied by optional verbal reflection—led to a significant reduction in the symptoms of PTSD (Carr et al., 2012). In military veterans suffering from PTSD, group drumming has been found to provide an outlet for rage and a way of engendering positive emotions such as openness and connectedness (Bensimon, Amir, & Wolf, 2008, 2012).

In their list of possible outcomes pertaining to immersion, Tay, Pawelski, and Keith (2018) include endocrine and immune responses. A team spanning the Centre for Performance Science at the Royal College of Music, the Faculty of Medicine at Imperial College, the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at University College London, and Tenovus Cancer Care in Cardiff found that cancer patients and caregivers taking part in hour-long sessions of group singing experienced not only positive affect, but also significant reductions in cortisol, beta-endorphin, and oxytocin levels. This led to the preliminary conclusion that "singing improves mood state and modulates components of the immune system" (Fancourt et al., 2016, p. 1). Related research showed that attendance at live concerts lowered stress by reducing secretion of glucocorticoids and the ratio of cortisol to cortisone. The same study indicated that levels of the steroid hormone dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA)—which counteracts stress hormones and leads to positive emotional responses—went up as cortisol levels went down (Fancourt & Williamon, 2016).

Embeddedness

When considering embeddedness, Tay, Pawelski, and Keith (2018) refer to the "set of socio-cognitive psychological processes that underlie the development of particular perspectives, habits, or skills"—including mastery, self-efficacy and autonomy—which "may be activated through engagement with the arts and humanities and can lead to positive outcomes that remain with us and enrich other domains in our lives" (pp. 217–218). Research suggests that learning to play a musical instrument helps the brain to encode sound (Hallam, 2015), enhancing listening and aural processing in a way that lasts into later life (White-Schwoch, Woodruff Carr, Anderson, Strait, & Kraus, 2013). Similarly, close listening to the grammatical explorations of Shakespeare has been found to activate the brain in areas beyond those typically associated with language processing (Davis, Keidel, Gonzalez-Diaz, Martin, & Thierry, 2013).

Singing—which is thought to create connections between the parts of the brain responsible for hearing and motor function (Kleber, Veit, Birbaumer, Gruzelier, & Lotze, 2010)—has been found to alleviate the symptoms of Parkinson's disease. The ability to speak is often impaired by Parkinson's, but singing has been shown to aid the intensity and articulation of speech (Haneishi, 2001; Di Benedetto et al., 2009). Researchers at the Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health have published case studies of

extant singing groups for Parkinson's in the United Kingdom and tips for setting up new ones (Vella-Burrows & Hancox, 2012).

A similar body of research and practice is accumulating in the United Kingdom in relation to dance and Parkinson's. Balance and gait are adversely affected as dopamine cells in the brain deteriorate. Studies show that music and rhythm help to improve general motor function and to regulate walking in people with Parkinson's (Pacchetti et al., 2000; Elston, Honan, Powell, Gormley, & Stein, 2010). A study of a twelve-week dance for Parkinson's project at English National Ballet (ENB) found that regular dance sessions increased improvements in balance, stability, and range of movement, while generating positive psychological impacts. A three-year mixed-methods study commissioned by ENB from the University of Roehampton found that, while bodily strength improved through dance, physical benefits were no greater than with other forms of exercise and secondary to psychosocial benefits. The researchers concluded that "dancing is a good and challenging mental workout for people with Parkinson's and allows some participants to cope better with symptoms and disability" (Houston & McGill, 2015, p. 39).

In England, an estimated one in five visits to the family doctor is made for psychosocial, rather than medical, reasons (Dixon & Polley, 2016). As a result, National Health Service (NHS) England is championing social prescribing, which looks to the community beyond the clinical environment for solutions to psychosocial problems. This might involve a health professional referring someone to an organization that offers access to advice, education, exercise, gardening, self-help, volunteering, or arts activities. The most common outcomes of such community referral schemes are: increases in self-esteem and confidence; a greater sense of control and empowerment; improvements in psychological well-being; and reductions in anxiety and depression (Thomson, Camic, & Chatterjee, 2015). South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, which set up Creative Minds to promote engagement in creative activities to improve health and well-being, estimates a social return on investment of £4 for every £1 invested in the arts.

Socialization

Tay, Pawelski, and Keith (2018) take socialization to mean the adoption and diversification of roles, identities, and relations that can give rise to personal enrichment and resilience. Endorsing *Creative Health*, Martin Green, chief executive of Care England, noted that "[a]ccess to arts and culture is vital to maintaining a sense of identity," and Eva Okwonga, Peer Support Advisory Board Member for Mind and Music, observed, "Artistic self-expression gives participants an identity beyond illness. I have seen the arts build confidence and community and provide hope in the midst of suffering." *Creative Health* offers examples of arts engagement engendering a sense of identity in marginalized communities and older populations, and helping to overcome stereotyping and stigma.

Creative Health also brings to the fore a discussion of personhood in people with dementia. This rejects the idea that the mind is predominant in defining the self and reclaims

the emotional and social capacities of people with dementia (Beard, 2012). A systematic review looking at the value of person-centered participatory arts to people with dementia found evidence of increased confidence, self-esteem, and social participation and observed that "[t]he arts have a unique application for uncovering and communicating the interior worlds of those living with a dementia" (Zellig, Killick, & Fox, 2014, pp. 18–19). To take just one example, qualitative research into interventions involving the recitation of poetry and new compositions being produced as an exchange between performers and people with dementia accentuated the expressive potential for participants (Swinnen, 2016).

When it comes to resilience, research shows how this might be improved through arts engagement at all stages of life. A study of primary school children in Wales identified resilience as a key component of academic functioning, emotional health, and well-being and recommended programs to prevent or reduce emotional difficulties (Banerjee, McLaughlin, Cotney, Roberts, & Peereboom, 2016). An independent evaluation of the Art Room—which offers school-based therapeutic creative interventions to children and young people with emotional or behavioral difficulties—showed that sessions significantly reduced emotional and behavioral problems and increased pro-social behaviors, especially within pupils' peer groups (Eaude & Matthew, 2005). A study of post-retirement adults found that participants who actively produced art over ten weeks showed greater functional connectivity in the brain, which was related to stress reduction and psychological resilience (Bolwerk, Mack-Andrick, Lang, Dörfler, & Maihöfner, 2014).

In addition to resilience, the Mental Wellbeing Impact Assessment—developed by a group involving the Local Government Association, New Economics Foundation, and South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust—identified the determinants of well-being to include control, participation, and inclusion (Cooke et al., 2011). We have already seen that increased control is among the outcomes of social prescribing initiatives. It also enters the literature in relation to a lack of control over one's illness, treatment, or bodily functions, as compared to the mastery of oneself and one's materials when engaging in creative activity (Dobbs, 2008). The second of the six Marmot principles for tackling inequalities reads: "Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives" (Marmot et al., 2010, p. 15).

When it comes to participation and inclusion, Age UK (2018a, 2018b) reports that 1.9 million of the 3.6 million older people living alone in the United Kingdom often feel ignored or invisible, and 1.4 million are chronically lonely. Social participation in older age is considered more beneficial for health than giving up smoking (Marmot, 2015). Research suggests that "frequent engagement with certain receptive arts activities and venues, particularly museums, galleries and exhibitions, may be a protective factor against loneliness in older adults" (Tymoszuk, Perkins, Fancourt, & Williamon, 2019, p. 1). Studies also show that the social contacts of older people are improved through participatory arts activities (Victor et al., 2018). For example, learning music in older adulthood can enhance social interactions both within and beyond sessions, not only

providing opportunities to meet and socialize with new people, but also enabling new forms of interaction with family members and friends (Perkins & Williamon, 2014). The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (2016) recommends the provision of group or one-to-one creative activities to older people on the basis that such activities build or maintain social participation.

Reflectiveness: Insight, Critical Thinking, Meaning, Purpose

Tay, Pawelski, and Keith (2018) identify reflectiveness as a conscious process of self-analysis, abetted through engagement with the arts, which promotes "critical thinking and perspective taking," as well as "an evolution of the self and enhanced meaning and purpose" and the "development of a greater moral compass and the questioning of current social practices, triggering civic engagement and social change" (p. 218).

A chapter of the final report for the aforementioned Cultural Value Project gives detailed consideration to the "ability of arts and cultural engagement to help shape reflective individuals, facilitating greater understanding of themselves and their lives, increasing empathy with respect to others, and an appreciation of the diversity of human experience and cultures" (Crossick & Kaszynska, 2016, p. 7). Research conducted as part of that project shed light on many aspects of reflexivity, with arts engagement producing a safe space in which to challenge preconceptions through both cognitive and emotional processes.

The Centre for Research into Reading, Literature and Society (CRILS) at the University of Liverpool has partnered with The Reader, an organization that promotes shared reading, discussion, and subjective response in a range of locations. The research team has found that the act of reading aloud creates a non-judgmental, compassionate space in which moments of personal reflection can occur (Longden et al., 2015). Participants in a shared reading group talked about "what may be happening within themselves as individuals (in terms of reflections about personal feelings and thoughts, opinions and experiences, for example) as an articulated and evolved response to the shared reading of the text and wider group discussion" (Dowrick, Billington, Robinson, Hamer, & Williams, 2012, p. 15). This was seen to lead to a reduction in depressive symptoms.

In the criminal justice system, health inequalities are well above the national average, with an estimated 90 percent of prisoners having mental health problems—including anxiety, depression, and substance misuse—and rates of self-harm and suicide being at an all-time high. In conjunction with the National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance (NCJAA), the APPGAHW (2017) hosted a round-table discussion on Arts, Health and Wellbeing in the Criminal Justice System at which we heard many compelling examples of arts practice in prisons and detention centers. A former prisoner powerfully conveyed the reality of prison life:

> [. . .] pockets of trapped individuals with limited skills in terms of coping mechanisms, in an environment where it's not socially acceptable perhaps to talk about their feelings. So

> expressing these things is really important. For me, my art became a way of externalising certain emotions, certain thoughts, almost stabilising them. So, once I got them out there onto a canvas, it felt like that took up less space in my head perhaps. And there was a physical distance between me and them, and that made it much more easy to manage them (p. 110).

The NCJAA evidence library contains evaluations of creative and cultural projects in the criminal justice system, several of which point to increased reflexivity, alongside impacts such as self-esteem and self-efficacy, the encouragement of pro-social behaviors, and a reduced likelihood of re-offending.

A chapter of *Creative Health* considers the accumulating body of literature about arts engagement at the end of life. Largely centered on case studies, this demonstrates the abiding nature of the creative impulse. In an introduction to a co-edited volume, Hartley and Pyne (2008) at St. Christopher's Hospice in London describe how the "arts bring with them possibilities: possibilities for motivation and growth, for coping and change, for self-actualisation and self-realisation" (p. 14).

And finally, in seeking to embed the arts in the widest range of aspects of healthcare, we look at how the arts can enhance the training of medical and nursing students (Perry, Maffulli, Willson, & Morrissey, 2011). Performing Medicine is a charitable organization set up to deliver creative training opportunities to healthcare students and practitioners. It focuses on both verbal and nonverbal communication and seeks to stimulate collaboration, critical thinking, and self-care.

A 2009 review of health and well-being in the NHS found that NHS organizations which valued staff health and well-being had better outcomes, higher levels of patient satisfaction, better staff retention, and lower sickness absence (Boorman, 2009), and the Royal College of Physicians (2015) has made explicit the relationship between staff health and patient care. Performing Medicine (n.d.) has developed a framework called Circle of Care, which helps healthcare professionals to think about and practice the skills involved in compassionate care.

Summary and Conclusion

It seems clear from this consideration that engagement with the arts has a significant contribution to make to human flourishing. Immersion in creative activity engenders a sense of flow that can diminish pain and help injured brains to recover and trauma to be overcome. Mastering an art form can yield enduring benefits, alleviate the symptoms of degenerative conditions, and help communities to flourish. Arts engagement can confer a sense of identity, heightening personhood and increasing resilience. Both participation in creative activity and attendance at cultural events can help to overcome loneliness, bringing tangible mental and physical health benefits. Creative and cultural activity can offer us new insights about ourselves and the world around us while promoting self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-care.

In summary, we believe the evidence on the links between the arts and human flourishing demonstrates important potential in preventative care and in healthcare approaches that provide a supplement, or indeed an alternative, to expensive conventional treatments.

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