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Integral perspectives on happiness

A happiness science has emerged amidst, and spans, the social sciences. This research, despite the long philosophical tradition on happiness, is in its infancy and a robust theory of happiness is called for. I will review parts of the literature and some of the main happiness theories using Ken Wilber's Integral approach. I will concentrate largely on Aristotle's *eudaimonia,* as that has re-emerged into the centre of happiness discussions as a possible contender for the prevailing subjective happiness theories. The Integral approach seems to provide valuable insights into many happiness theories, juxtapose them in a comprehensible way, pinpoint deficiencies, and propose enhancements. Amongst other things, I will propose a new happiness theory combining John Kekes' happiness theory with ecological ethics and I will conclude that enlightenment proves to be a good candidate for the ultimate good, or *summum bonum*, I will enlarge on Aristotle's theory and propose that Wilber's theory provides an 'Integral road map towards *eudaimonia* enhanced, the enlightenment'. I will argue that *eudaimonia* and enlightenment, though superficially dissimilar, accord in surprising ways, to a great extent. I will discuss whether the discussion of happiness and morality is critically biased, and I will discuss the societal implications that Wilber's conception of the human might have through its implications for happiness theories.

1. Introduction

There have been calls for a rigorous, philosophical theory of happiness to shed light on the empirical happiness literature that has emerged lately in Western social sciences. 'Philosophers … will find it unsurprising that if you rush to look for empirical measures of an unanalyzed "subjective" phenomenon, the result

will be confusion and banality' (Annas 2008: 238). Wilber's AQAL-model, spanning human experiences and hundreds of thinkers from both East and West, is a noteworthy candidate for a theory on happiness, or, at least, something that should not be disregarded in the pursuit of knowledge on happiness.

The implications of Ken Wilber's Integral theory for the literature on happiness abound. In the following I shall explore a few implications. I will mostly concentrate on Aristotle's *eudaimonia*. The first section here, however, discusses John Kekes' (2008) theory of happiness. It is related to Aristotle's happiness, *eudaimonia*, in the sense that it also contains objective standards of happiness. By objective standards of happiness is meant here the conditions that have to be met for a happy life, regardless of what the person himself thinks.

Although over 2,000 years old, Aristotle's theory on happiness, *eudaimonia*, has re-emerged at the centre of academic inquiry. It is at the centre of the new happiness sciences. These happiness sciences span more or less all of the social sciences. Happiness research has emerged, or re-emerged, at least, within psychology, economics, sociology, and philosophy. Recently, researchers have tried to operationalize *eudaimonia* and clarify it (see, e.g., Ryff and Singer 2008, Ryan *et al.* 2008, OECD 2013). It is seen as a possible challenge to, or, at least, to be providing an additional perspective on happiness regarding the currently dominant Subjective Well-Being (SWB) approach. SWB is purely concerned with one's subjective experiences and assessments of one's own life. More concretely, it relates to one's satisfaction with life, to emotional well-being, or to a composite indicator of the two (Diener 1984). So, *eudaimonia* can be seen as challenging the purely subjective happiness

approaches. It entails objective assessments of one's happiness and requires a more rigorous theory behind it.

Another novelty in psychology, and the social sciences in general, is the increasing tolerance of Buddhist conceptions of well-being and happiness. Buddhism seems to be making inroads into Western academia, not only as a topic of cultural or religious inquiry, but as a worthy source of knowledge on human well-being and happiness (see, e.g., Wallace and Shapiro 2006, Tomer 2011). After the first section, I will enquire more deeply into *eudaimonia* and the Buddhist conception of happiness – enlightenment – with the help of Wilber's Integral approach.

2. The Integral view, Kekes, and environmental sustainability

The distinction of four 'quadrants' or viewpoints on the universe and the human proves valuable in the discussion of happiness and in the conceptualization of happiness (Wilber 2009: Chapter 5). In what follows, I will at times reinterpret some parts of the Four Quadrants approach. When this is the case, I will give an explanation.

Kekes (2008) discusses happiness at the individual level. He states that a subjective satisfaction with life is a necessary condition for happiness, but not in itself sufficient. Subjective satisfaction with life belongs to the Upper-Left quadrant (ULQ).

Kekes proposes that an outsider may point to deficiencies in the person's assessment of his own life, in particular, with regard to the existence of a plausible 'life plan'. This involves an outsider's judgement of another person's subjective assessment of his own life. This seems to belong to the Upper-Right quadrant (URQ). Kekes proposes that the existence of such a life plan is another necessary, but not a sufficient condition for happiness. He proposes that together these conditions, if met, are sufficient for happiness. So, Kekes actually claims that conditions from both upper quadrants are necessary for happiness.

Note that here I possibly re-interpret Wilber's idea of URQ: instead of understanding it in terms of behavioural psychology, I take it to include any outsider perspective on another person's life, also possibly normative viewpoints.

However, Kekes does not highlight the societal aspect of happiness. Here, Wilber's theory proves valuable because it highlights missing aspects. Kekes'

definition of a life plan is that it is a three-tiered structure of values that guide one's actions and goals. He does not discuss, however, how the life plan, and its inherent values, are affected and influenced by the surrounding society, nor does he take any normative stance on what value contents and goal contents are good. Nor does he adopt a consequentialist approach on what value contents and goal contents prove themselves best in terms of their consequences for happiness or a good life.

Here, I re-interpret Wilber's theory of Four Quadrants. I conceptualize the Lower-Right quadrant (LRQ) to mean any outsider's perspective on a society. I conceptualize LRQ not only to include the material and institutional structures of a society, as Wilber does, but also to include a normative stance on its values and customs. Re-interpreting the Four Quadrant approach, we may derive the following notions:

- Society influences the value systems, or life plans, of its members;
- Inspired by Wilber's LRQ, we may scrutinize the desirability of a society's values and other structures, for example, its levels of usage of materials;
- Based, for example, on Kant (2008) and deriving from his theory the duty to do to others as you would like to be done to yourself, we may scrutinize society's values and structures from the point of view of the ecological limits of our globe.

This all amounts to saying that, taking into account the limits of the Earth, a good life or a happy life cannot be one which involves values leading to consumption that exceeds a fair ecological footprint. Here, a fair ecological footprint means an ecological footprint that does not exceed the ecological limits of our globe while being generated equally by all humans. Also, it amounts to saying that a society which does not encourage ecologically desirable values and not actively opposing ecologically detrimental values cannot be a good or a happy society.

Note that this notion of a 'happy' society is based on the philosophical discussions on happiness that draw on Aristotle's theory of a happy life. Aristotle says that a person might not know what a happy life is and that an outsider may judge one's life as happy or not by objective standards. Here, what is new is the idea that an ethical or a normative approach may

be involved in the assessment of the standard of a happy life. For example, Kekes (2008) can be seen as relevant to this literature of an objective standard for the assessment of a happy life. I will return to this section in the section 'On happiness and morality', after a fuller discussion of Wilber's theory.

3. On happiness as enlightenment

On *summum bonum* and how to recognize it

If there can be found an element of human life, the satisfaction or fulfilment of which provides self-sufficient, self-contained happiness, that is, it is alone sufficient for happiness without the need for anything else and it is such that nothing is missing from one's life, then, I argue, all would choose that over a happiness that requires multiple elements to be sustained. All those who would not choose that, it seems, would be fools. This aspect on human life, which implies that a life lacks nothing, has been called *finis ultimus* or *summum bonum* in Western classical philosophical writings on happiness.[1]

If there exists in life a *finis ultimus* or *summum bonum* towards which a life can be directed, it clearly is such that, when reached, all other things, all other possible ends in themselves, become secondary, non-necessary, or are reached through attaining the *finis ultimus*. It is important to recognize that they are experienced as secondary only after the *finis ultimus* is attained or reached. Obviously, before reaching it, one cannot be sure that the proclaimed *finis ultimus* truly is such a *finis ultimus* or *summum bonum*. This would explain the variety of goals people have in their lives.

Enlightenment as *summum bonum*

Aristotle asks what is the essential property of a man? Just as a good screwdriver is a screwdriver that does its job well, a human living a good life is a human realizing and doing well what is essentially human. For Aristotle, the essential property of a man is reason and, thus, a good life must include the skilful use of reason. Aristotle lived within and was informed by his cultural sphere. Perhaps there are other spheres of human potential which were unknown to Ancient Greeks. Ken Wilber has amassed knowledge on human experience and potential from various cul-

tures while formulating his theories. Here, we may take Aristotle's arguments about the good life as the realization of human potential and apply them in our search for knowledge about possible human potential through Ken Wilber's works, informed by the world's different cultures which were unnoticed in Ancient Greece.

One key aspect of human potential that can be extracted from Wilber's works is the potential for the realization of the highest states of consciousness and the self. He refers to causal and nondualistic traditions as containing knowledge of the highest states of consciousness and the self. Examples of causal traditions are Theravada Buddhism and yoga schools based on Samkhya philosophy (Wilber 2009: 341) and examples of non-dualistic traditions are Vedanta Hinduism, Mahayana, and Vajrayana Buddhism (*ibid.* 342).

Plato and Aristotle, or Philosophy. Lucca della Robbia, 1437–9. Marble panel from the North side, lower basement of the bell tower of Florence, Italy. Museo dell'Opera del Duomo.

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1   Such a conception of the highest good can be found for example in Aristotle (2008).

Wilber explains that in the causal traditions enlightenment is understood as a mental state wherein all 'form' disappears. Here 'form', it seems, refers to all experiences and understandings of the world as separate entities, such as a chair, me, you, this and that, while the enlightened state of mind is one of emptiness, lacking thoughts relating to separate entities. Instead, what is left is unity (Wilber 2009: Chapter 13).

By contrast, in non-dualistic traditions, it is understood that unity, or emptiness, can be found from any form in this world. Thus, enlightenment is not a state of mind of emptiness; but instead, it is the ability to see emptiness, or unity, behind or in all form. Thus, as Wilber explains, enlightenment in these traditions is a continual process of realizing emptiness or unity in all form that is constantly remoulding itself into new forms (Wilber 2009: Chapter 13).

'Buddhism promotes an ideal state of well-being that results from freeing the mind of its afflictive tendencies and obscurations and from realizing one's fullest potential in terms of wisdom, compassion, and creativity' (Wallace and Shapiro 2006: 691). Also, Buddhism seems to promise some kinds of joy or positive feeling as well as freedom from suffering and fear.[2] So, some kind of positive affect, positive feeling, and lack of negative affect, negative feeling, is promised, although, as discussed in later sections, it is not clear in what way this is to come about. It is suggested that enlightenment may include fearful thoughts while at the same time one is free from their hold.[3]

This suggests nearly all possible ends in themselves being contained in enlightenment. Many works on happiness based on Aristotle include a notion of the realization of a certain type of human potential or an individual's personally specific potential as a necessary condition of happiness (see, e.g., Kraut 2008, Taylor 2008). Aristotle (2008) argued that the exercise of reason coupled with emotions supporting the actions proposed by reason is a human potential the realization of which forms part of the happy life.[4]

2   For example: 'They who would escape the hundreds of life's sorrows, who would end the anguish of living creatures, and who would taste hundreds of deep delights, must never surrender the Thought of Enlightenment' (Shantideva 1947: 38, 5–9).
3   See the section on 'The holarchical view of happiness' here.
4   For a discussion of the meaning of virtue in Aristotle's Greece see, e.g., Annas (2008).

Richard Taylor (2008) argued that happiness consists in exercising creative intelligence. Hedonists, for example Epicurus (2008a, 2008b), Jeremy Bentham (2008), and John Stuart Mill (2008) along with Aristotle, argued that the attainment of pleasure, or positive feelings and emotions over negative feelings and emotions, is an end in itself and thus a possible condition of *finis ultimus*. Epicurus (2008a, 2008b), and Augustine (2008) argue that freedom from fear also is a necessary condition of happiness. This can be understood and agreed to easily without the ancient sages as well.

Thus, it seems that enlightenment might be a good candidate for a *finis ultimus*. It contains the realization of several different potentials inherent in humans and it can be argued that the development of consciousness and the realization of the highest states of consciousness are, in themselves, essential human capacities, or potentials -– essential in the sense that self-perceiving consciousness and reason are, according to current knowledge, most highly developed in humans within the sphere of living beings known to date.

The holarchical view of happiness

If it is the case, as Wilber argues, that the development of the consciousness and the self is a holarchy, which is to say that it proceeds through steps, each of which always contains the previous step, but is something more than the previous step, then, it is the case that the latest step is richer than the previous step. The new step contains more potential to experience things, more varied experiences, as well as new abilities themselves. Now, it is easy to see that a person being content with a step that is not the highest step is foolish, since he can have the abilities and the experiences of the step where he is, but also more.

Ken Wilber argues that the highest level of the consciousness or the self is the step that introduces non-dualism, also known as enlightenment according to some traditions.[5] According to him, this level not only is free from the chains of pain, unsatisfied wants, objects, space and time itself; but it also contains them. It is this condition to which the name 'non-dualistic' also seems to refer. At the same time that one is free from pain, one still experiences it, for

5   Examples of non-dualistic traditions are Vedanta Hinduism and Mahayana, and Vajrayana Buddhism (Wilber 2009: 342).

example. As B. Allan Wallace and Shauna L. Shapiro note, the type of happiness promoted by Buddhism

> …is not a matter of choosing well-being instead of hedonic pleasures, some of which, like the joys of friendship and worthwhile accomplishments, may be very meaningful. The enjoyment of such transient experiences is not in opposition to the cultivation of positive attitudes and commitments or the cultivation of the types of mental balance that yield inner well-being (Wallace and Shapiro 2006: 692).

Thus, we see that this final step seems to, indeed, contain all previous steps, and include more than the previous steps and so if enlightenment truly is what Wilber, along with the various traditions, claims and the development of the mind truly is a holarchy, the person not striving for enlightenment is foolish.

4. The Integral road map to *eudaimonia* enhanced, enlightenment

Let us focus next on the fundamental conceptions of the human mind that the two authors, Aristotle and Wilber, have, in order to juxtapose their theories more effectively. Any theory of happiness must be based on an implicit or an explicit conception of the human. Those things which a theory acknowledges as being part of the human mind define and limit the possible conceptions of happiness the theory may present.

Aristotle described the domain of the soul as one which contains passions, faculties, and states of character. The passions are, for example, 'appetite, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, friendly feeling, hatred, longing, … and in general the feelings that are accompanied by pleasure or pain'. Faculties are 'the things in virtue of which we are said to be capable of feeling' passions. States of character are 'the things in virtue of which we stand well or badly with reference to the passions, e.g., with reference to anger we stand badly if we feel it violently or too weakly, and well if we feel it moderately' (Aristotle 2008: 25).

Thus, we can interpret that those states of character are unconscious, non-phenomenological mental structures which determine the emotions and desires as well as their appearance and strength.

Aristotle sees virtues to be the crux of a happy life and of the development towards the happy life. He identifies that virtues are states of character. Those elements, as discussed before, are reason and emotion, or intellect and morality. They dispose the individual to feel appropriately and to be capable of wise reasoning. On the reason element of virtue Aristotle (2008) states that 'intellectual virtue in the main owes both its birth, and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time)' (p. 23). Referring to emotion or the element of morality, Aristotle states: 'It makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather all the difference' (Aristotle 2008: 24). So, Aristotle saw virtues to be the crux of a happy life. Because virtues are states of character which seem to actually be unconscious, mental structures that determine the flow of our experience, this can be interpreted as saying that Aristotle saw those unconscious, mental structures to be the crux of a happy life.

Interestingly, Wilber also identifies non-phenomenological, unconscious structures of the mind as the crux of human development and life (and of the universe in general, with the human as the last link). '[W]ithin the broad states of consciousness, there exist various structures of consciousness … within which there exist various states of mind' (Wilber

Wikimedia Commons

Happy Union, Allegory of Love, IV. Paolo Veronese, circa 1575. National Gallery.

2000: 287n14.21) The broad states of consciousness are waking, dreaming, and deep sleep (*ibid.* 1). The structures of consciousness are the aforementioned holarchical steps of development of consciousness which consist of developmental lines and the self (*ibid.* 5–12, chapters 2–4). From now on, I will not mention the more detailed structures of the developmental steps as they are not required for the arguments I am making. However, it should be noted that Wilber conceptualizes the holarchical steps of development as consisting of developmental lines and that he conceptualizes the self as a 'navigator' of the steps and the developmental lines (*ibid.* Chapter 3) The states of mind refer to 'phenomenal states' which can be directly experienced. These are, for example, 'joy, happiness, sadness, desire' (Wilber 2006: 13) and 'joy, doubt, determination' (Wilber 2000: 287n14.21).

It seems that Aristotle approached what Wilber conceptualizes today. Both Wilber and Aristotle identify that the crux of life and development lies in mental structures that unconsciously determine the flow of phenomenological experience; both the thoughts, reason, and the passions, feelings, impulses, and emotions. The

> …structures [the holarchical developmental steps][6] do indeed constrain and implicitly mold all of the states of mind that occur within them (e.g., a person at concrete operational thinking will have most of his thoughts – and states of mind – arise within that structure… . (Wilber 2000: 287n14.21)

Thus, it appears that, while Wilber accords with Aristotle on the crux of life and development as those things which unconsciously form the stream of phenomenological experience, Wilber fills out, gives further structure, and additional content to Aristotle's conception. Wilber, deriving concepts from contemporary Western psychology, philosophy, science, and ancient wisdom traditions, structures the unconscious, non-phenomenological side of consciousness which is the crux of Aristotle's happy life as well. Interestingly, it can be said that Wilber's theory combines Aristotle's ideas of the good life with contemporary developmental psychology (amongst other things).

What additions does Wilber's theory bring to Aristotle's conceptions? Wilber's proposal adds for example, the self, lines of development, the holarchical nature of development, broad states of consciousness, peak experiences, altered states of consciousness, and the ideas of enlightenment from the Eastern and Western wisdom and religious traditions. Also, Wilber's theory contains the idea that at each broad level of development the individual has a different worldview, set of morals, sense of self and identity, and sense of what is good (Wilber 2009: 224; Wilber 2000: 46). Related to this, interestingly, he suggests that each level of consciousness has a different epistemological 'eye' which can see different planes of the world, each of which are ontologically true (Wilber 2000: 236n8.2).

What does the structure added to Aristotle's conception of man imply to his idea of the development of man towards a good life? Aristotle's conception of human development seems to be closely related to the nurture-nature dichotomy. He thinks that moral development is merely a process of forming a habit and that of the intellect is but a matter of teaching (Aristotle 2008: 23, 24). He seems to come close to the conception of a man as a slate which is blank until culture, virtues and intellect are painted onto it.[7] It can be seen that this conception of development misses culture-independent states of development, culture-independent transition processes over the states of development, and culture-independent directions of development, which are at the centre of Wilber's theory.[8]

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6   Wilber uses 'structure', 'wave', and 'level' interchangeably to denote the unconscious, holarchical developmental steps of the self or consciousness (Wilber 2000: 7). I will denote them as 'steps' of the self.

7   Although Aristotle's conception of man and his development seems to come close to the conception of man as a blank slate and the nurture-nature dichotomy, his theory of happiness has been used as a basis for universal ethical theories. See, e.g., Nussbaum (1988). Also, as discussed later, when examining closely his fundamental conception of the mind, we may see that it allows for theories beyond the nurture-nature dichotomy.

8   Note that Wilber's theory contains both culture-dependent and culture-independent, universal features and so it does not claim the obviously untenable proposition that there are no cultural differences in states or development processes (Wilber 2000: 221n1.7).

All in all, it seems that Aristotle identified that the crux of human development towards happiness lies in unconscious mental structures. Wilber, amassing knowledge from the West and the East, tries to expose and detail these unconscious mental structures. Combining Wilber's theory with that of Aristotle, we seem to get a modified version of Aristotle's theory: the highest level of virtue is enlightenment and, in order to reach the highest level of virtue, one needs to proceed through the holarchical, partly culture-independent developmental steps of consciousness in Wilber's work. So, it can be said that Wilber's Integral theory provides a detailed road map to *eudaimonia* enchanced, enlightenment. If Wilber got it right, it seems that the Aristotle's archer (Aristotle 2008: 19), aiming at happiness, should set as his target the unconscious developmental steps and structures of the mind outlined in Wilber's works.

5. *Eudaimonia* versus enlightenment
Although Aristotle's and Wilber's Buddhism-inspired ideas seem to cohere well together, there appear to be striking differences. Aristotle's conception of a happy life is often seen to be one of social engagement and it is often seen to be judged by objective standards and not to concern subjective experience. By contrast, the Buddhist idea of the highest good, enlightenment, is thought to be characterized by freedom from social engagements and to be inherently a subjective realization.

Again, Wilber's Integral approach seems to be of use in discussing this apparent clash. In terms of Wilber's quadrants, the problem restated seems to be as follows: Aristotle's conception of a happy life belongs to the URQ and the LLQ, the third-person view and the interpersonal, moral dimension. It is seen not to involve components in the ULQ, the subjective sphere. The state of enlightenment, on the other hand, seems to belong purely in the ULQ, the subjective sphere with an explicitly stated detachment from social engagements (LLQ).[9] So, Aristotle's conception concerns ULQ and LLQ, and enlightenment concerns ULQ.

In the following, I will juxtapose the theories one quadrant at a time. Are there differences in the subjective spheres of the two happiness conceptions? There have been claims that Aristotle's theory is not only a third-person view on an evaluative account of happiness, but also includes subjective satisfaction with life (ULQ) (Kraut 2008). Thus, both the Aristotelian conception and the Buddhist conception involve a subjective component (ULQ). He 'who attains Eudaimonia is necessarily happy with his life. His deepest desires are being satisfied, and realizing this, he has an especially affirmative attitude towards himself and his life' (Kraut 2008: 204). As discussed in the earlier sections, enlightenment seems to be such a state that all goals are indeed satisfied. The quality of the subjective experiences in these final states of the two traditions are likely to be different; but both do contain the subjective component and both entail the experience of satisfaction with one's life.[10]

How about the interpersonal, moral dimension (LLQ)? The final stages of the Mahayana path are described as including impartial, global compassion. When contrasted with Aristotle's theory, it seems that, the most visible difference is the 'moral span' (Wilber 2000: 116), the scope of those who are 'deemed worthy of being included in the decision in the first place' (*ibid.* 116). Aristotle (2008) explicitly defines the good life to be such that it is good, not only for the individual, but also for 'parents, children, wife, and in general for his friends and fellow citizens, since man is born for citizenship' (p. 21). Thus the moral span of the happy man in Aristotle's theory seems to be his city state. Where Mahayana happiness entails impartial compassion for all beings, Aristotle's happiness entails moral conduct to fellow citizens. So, both theories contain components in the interpersonal domain (LLQ), but the moral span is different.

The condition of enlightenment is also said to be a state of mind which is free of any attachments, including social ones. Aristotle's is said to be one which is intrinsically about social bonds. Is there a contradiction here, ultimately? The answer seems to be no. The Mahayana enlightenment is claimed to be free

9   For example, the following quotation seems to state freedom from social engagements: 'As soon as one undertakes to free himself from the unbounded realms of living beings, he concentrates his mind with steadfast thought' (Shantideva 1947).

10   Then again, it is not clear what satisfaction means in a nondual state which seems to merge opposites, amidst all other things, into one. Thus, satisfaction and dissatisfaction are the same? (Wilber 2009: chapter 13)

Buddha, resisting the demons of Mara, who are attempting to prevent him from attaining enlightenment, as the angels watch from above. Lithograph, 1800–1900.

of attachments while apparently including impartial compassion. This seems to mean that the individual is free of attachments, but as a consequence of compassion, voluntarily acts for the benefit of all beings. The key here seems to be voluntary choice. Scrutinizing Aristotle's conception, we find that it also requires voluntary choice. 'The agent must be in a certain condition when he does them [virtuous acts]; in the first place he must have knowledge, secondly he must choose the acts, and choose them for their own sakes, and thirdly his action must proceed from a firm and unchangeable character' (Aristotle 2008: 25).[11] So, the moral conduct in both of the conceptions of happiness is based on voluntary, autonomous choice. By autonomous, I mean voluntary, 'reflective endorsement of one's actions' (Ryan *et al.* 2008: 157).

Additionally, not only are the moral actions of the two traditions voluntarily endorsed, but they

11 See Ryan *et al.* (2008) for an extensive discussion on the issue.

are driven by 'a firm and unchangeable character' (Aristotle 2008: 25). Enlightenment is, at least according to Wilber and the Mahayana, seen to be a stable level of development, that is, an enlightened person also has a 'firm and unchangeable character' of being enlightened. And this points to the similarity in the final quadrant discussed, the URQ, for in Buddhism either it is not enough for the person to say he is happy; he must be enlightened to be happy. This is an objective assessment (URQ). Also, many traditions have a custom of assessing the level of development of any given person by a group of experts, that is, from a third-person point of view, objectively. This echoes the objective evaluation nature of Aristotle's theory.

Although *eudaimonia* and enlightenment seem contradictory in important ways at first, they appear to be very alike after a more careful scrutiny using the Integral perspective. It is not the case that *eudaimonia* is purely an objective assessment of one's happiness (URQ) in terms of one's excellence in fulfilling social engagements and societal norms (LLQ) where

enlightenment is purely a subjective experience (ULQ) without social concerns (no LLQ). Rather, it seems that both contain components in each quadrant and both are based on voluntary, autonomous moral action driven by a 'firm and unchangeable character'. It actually appears to be the case that Aristotle's theory fits well into Wilber's framework: it seems to arise from a lower level of development than enlightenment (which is the highest level).[12]

All in all, looking at the differences of *eudaimonia* and enlightenment using Wilber's All-Quadrant, All-Level (AQAL) approach, we seem to be left with the conclusion that *eudaimonia* is a concept of good that arises from a lower level of development than enlightenment; otherwise, they are alike.

6. On happiness and morality

The first section here discussed Kekes' theory of happiness with the help of Wilber's Four Quadrant approach and presented the view that happiness theories can be combined with an extended objective valuation of an individual's life as well as the norms of a society in total. It combined a societal perspective with the individual-focused theories of happiness. We return to this issue on the subject of happiness and morality. Here, the first section on Kekes and the latter sections on enlightenment and Aristotle's happiness based on virtuous, moral living come together.

This combination of ecological ethics and one's happiness may seem frivolous: why would a happy man care about the views of others on his life which he experiences as and judges to be good? If there is no relation between the subjective states of mind and subjective judgements of a man and the ethical and normative views presented here, can it be said that those views are required for a happy life?

There is a long-standing debate between how one should live one's life from the point of view of a good life: should one live morally, or eudaimonistically, or should one live hedonically?[13] Wilber's conceptualization, if true, seems to clarify the debate. Phenomenal experiences such as pain, joy, thoughts, and morals, are all guided by unconscious mental structures. Different levels of development entail different phenomenal experiences as well as different morals. Higher developmental steps entail a more satisfactory life. The implication of this seems to be that concentration on hedonia, pleasure and pain in one's life might inhibit one's advancement to higher levels of morality and thus one's overall development. This, in turn, according to the theory, would lead to suboptimal hedonic or subjective experience as well. So, the case would appear to be the following: the 'happy immoralist' (Cahn and Murphy 2008: 262) thinks he is happy, but he would be happier were he on a higher developmental step.

But that sounds rather baseless; what does it mean to say that a person is on a higher developmental step? The moral span of a person is related to the notion of developmental steps (Wilber 2000: 116). The people on the highest, transpersonal steps of development identify not only with the form we commonly recognize as an individual human being but instead with a greater group of beings (Wilber 2011). Thus, 'his' well-being seems to be inseparably linked with 'other beings'. Therefore, for such a person, the points made by, for example, Christine Vitrano (2008) are meaningless. They are based on a different identification of the self, that is, on a different developmental step. If it is the case then that developmental steps are in

12 Interestingly, the Integral re-interpretation of *eudaimonia* also nicely clarifies the discussion on whether Aristotle's theory is only an objective, evaluative account of happiness (Haybron 2008: 174) or whether it is also a subjective account of happiness (Kraut 2008). Simply put, the objective measures relate to the unconscious structures, the holarchical steps of human development, which manifest themselves in all of the quadrants (I will not discuss the LRQ here): the subjective, the behavioural, and the moral. It would be interesting to see where Aristotle would fit in Wilber's developmental states. Aristotle (2008) discusses the virtues in the context of how different actions or states of character are seen and appreciated amongst the people of his culture (p. 23–30, or Book II). Wilber's theory contains the idea that at each broad level of development the individual has a different worldview, morals, sense of self and identity, and a sense of what is good (Wilber 2009: 224; Wilber 2000: 46). On the other hand, he highly esteems reason as the inherent potential of a human being, and the emotions are subjected under the rule of reason. Thus, it seems that Aristotle sees the world from somewhere around 'role' and 'formal' broad levels of development (Wilber 2000: 197c1A). Wilber links nation states to the formal levels (ibid. 2, 3).

13 See, e.g., Plato (2008), Aristotle (2008), Butler (2008), Sidgwick (2008), Cahn and Murphy (2008), and Vitrano (2008).
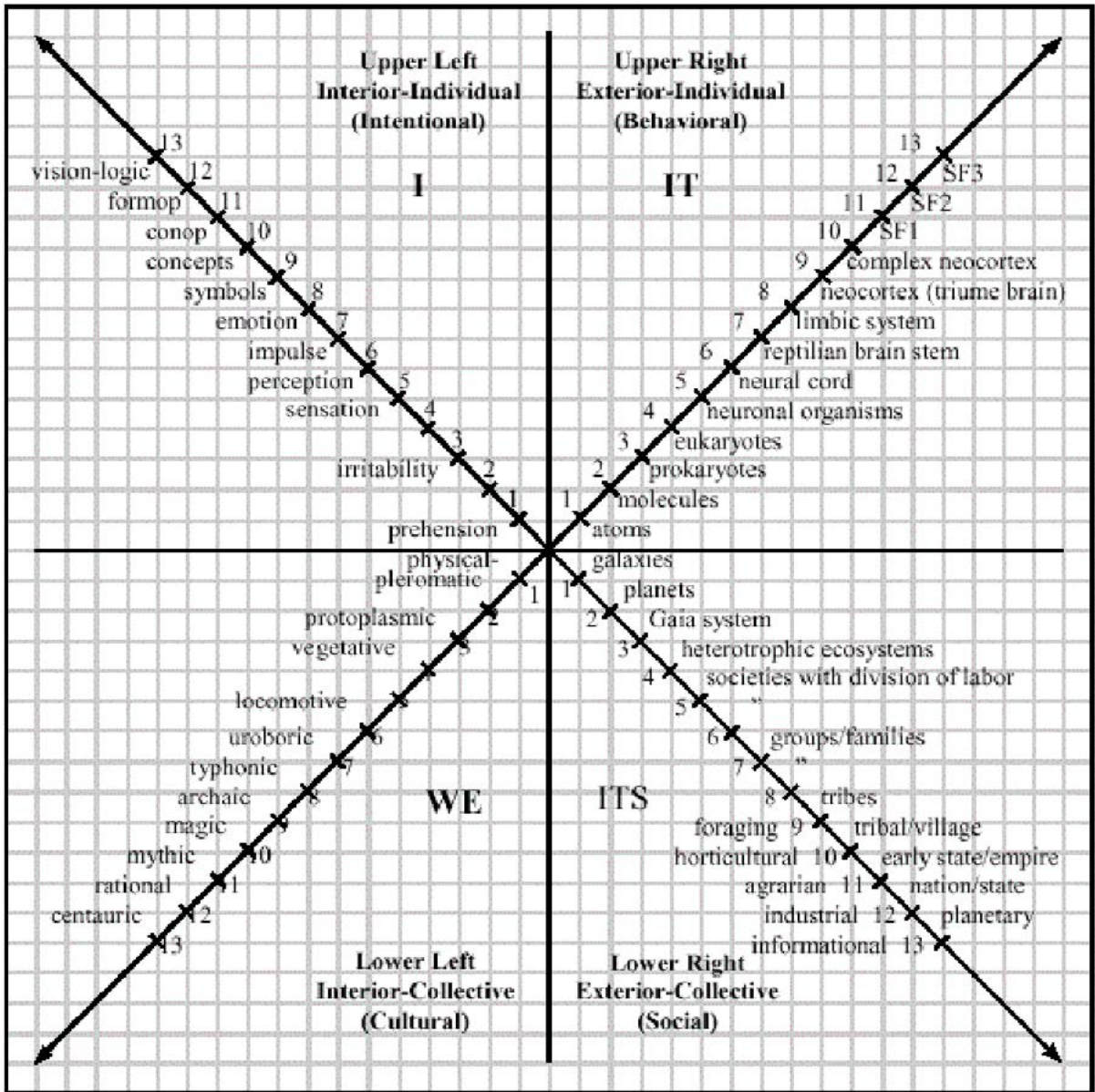
The Four quadrants in Ken Wilber's Integral Theory. The ladders in each quadrant represent the holarchical developmental steps, development being movement away from the center towards the corners. According to Wilber, the developmental steps manifest themselves in each quadrant simultaneously. Thus, for example, the 10th step actualizes in each quadrant simultaneously. Although any culture contains individuals being in different developmental states, the majority of them in this example would hover around the 10th developmental step.

some sense real and that higher developmental steps entail higher phenomenal quality as well, the 'happy immoralist' truly has not attained the best possible happiness.

Therefore, if Wilber's theory has truth in it, it seems that a lot of the discussion on how happiness and morality interact is biased. It is based on an incomplete understanding of the human being, that is, it misses the developmental aspect of the human consciousness which Wilber highlights.

A troubling implication seems to also be that the discussion of happiness and morality is conducted by individuals who are not themselves on the highest step of development, but who then criticize the claims made by people possibly on higher developmental levels who have tried to verbalize the importance of morality on the path towards true well-being – that is, the advancement towards enlightenment and the highest good available.

Wilber's idea of a holarchical development of the

self provides a new viewpoint also on the empirical results on the superiority of the eudaimonic lifestyle,[14] related to the aforementioned theoretical debate on the relation between happiness and morality: what are the exact sources of the superior well-being outcomes? Is it the eudaimonic actions themselves, as seems to be often assumed in this literature, or is there a component related to the steps of the development of the self themselves or some other aspect of those states that creates the additional well-being outcomes? For example, Wallace and Shapiro (2006: 693–4) state that the basis of the Buddhist theory of well-being is that true well-being relates to the state of mind which pertains before sensory or conceptual stimulation. Thus the state of mind that is the developmental step of consciousness, itself determines well-being, not the external stimuli such as life conditions or the realized actions themselves.

On the other hand, the aforementioned idea that true well-being relates to the state of mind before sensory or conceptual stimulation, might yield an empirical tool for assessing the validity of Wilber's model presented in this article as well. Are the developmental steps something more than just concepts superimposed by Wilber on the human mind; in other words, are they something real? If the people on higher developmental steps were to rate their well-being, following the question 'Imagine all of the external supports for your present sense of happiness and security suddenly disappearing. What sense of well-being remains?' (Wallace and Shapiro 2006: 699), more highly than those on lower developmental steps, this would suggest that the developmental steps truly are something existent and relevant.[15] This, then, would have powerful implications for the theoretical literature on happiness (for example, the debate on the relationships between happiness and morality), as well as the contemporary societal structures of our nations, as discussed in the following section. It would also imply the importance of long-term moral development for the benefit of the individuals as well as the societies.

14 See, e.g., Steger *et al.* (2008), McMahan and Estes (2011), Peterson *et al.* (2005), Park *et al.* (2009), Ryan and Deci (2001), and Waterman (1993).
15 For a discussion on the validity of Wilber's conceptualization of the mental structures see, for example, Karhu in this publication.

7. The Integral view on the conception of the human and well-being

In the following, I will briefly discuss how Wilber's and Aristotle's conceptions of the human position them in the contemporary social sciences and what are the possible implications of their ideas for the social sciences and society.

The value-relativist, culture-relativist, and extreme constructivist conceptions of human life have been questioned lately. I will denote anything opposing the extreme value-relativist and culture-relativist conceptions of man as simply non-relativist and anything embracing those ideas as relativist. Theories that challenge relativist conceptions of human life also bear on the question of happiness and well-being and have a potential for radical changes in our conceptions of the good life and, thus, the contemporary societal structures that are supported by the relativist conceptions of human life.

John Tooby and Leda Cosmides (1992) identify and describe the 'Standard Social Science Model' (SSSM) of humanity that has reigned in the social sciences. It is a 'set of assumptions and inferences about humans, their minds, and their collective interaction … that has provided the conceptual foundations of the social sciences for nearly a century' (*ibid.* 23). They claim that a new, better model does not treat the human being as a blank slate in accordance with the nurture and nature dichotomy; but instead understands also that human development involves both nurture and nature components inseparably intertwined (*ibid.* 24, 49–50). They provide guidelines for such a better conceptualization of man and name it the 'Integrated Causal Model' (ICM) (*ibid.* 24).

Theories challenging the value-relativist conceptions of man have a potential for greatly revolutionizing our academic theories as well as those societal structures that are supported by the old theories. One example of this is economics. Many of the contemporary societal structures and aims – for example the gross domestic product as the aim of development, and free markets as the key to development – are supported by the SSSM-type theories. It seems that SSSM-type theories have also enabled economics to become such a powerful science in terms of how influential it is in the contemporary world. This is because the conception of well-being in contemporary economic theory is largely based on unconditional preference satisfaction. Thus, whatever your preferences are, as long as you get them satisfied, you are happy. Such

a view requires value relativism. This, then, leads to the conclusion that, the more resources one has, the more one can satisfy those preferences. And it seems that markets have been very powerful in yielding us resources. Now, a theory saying that the *content* of preferences matters may change drastically the way we think about issues in today's world.

Although Aristotle's conception of development of man seems to be closely allied to the nurture-nature dichotomy, careful scrutiny of his writings suggests that his conception of man might have been open to more non-relativist ideas on the development of man. 'Neither by nature … nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit' (Aristotle 2008: 23). So, it seems, that his theory is open to the view that, not only does nature lay the foundations on which nurture builds the virtues, but also that nature directs the ways in which nurture works and can work. As shown earlier, the two theories can be combined so that Wilber fills out Aristotle's theory with new advances in Western sciences as well as applying knowledge from ancient traditions of wisdom such as Buddhism.

Wilber discusses how subjective reality – that which according to extreme constructivists is fully malleable – and the objective realities are related in perception: 'Even Wilfrid Sellars … maintains that, even though the manifest image of an object is in part a mental construction, it is guided in important ways by intrinsic features of sense experience' (Wilber 2000: 163). But perception is clearly already an important building block in the development of the mind. Moreover, the holarchical developmental steps, developmental lines and so forth are nothing other than intrinsic, developmental features of the human mind.

Another example of a new theory that contrasts with SSSM is Edward Ryan and Richard Deci's Self-Determination Theory (SDT)[16] in psychology. It provides ample empirical evidence against the relative social science theories. It shows that well-being truly is such that the content of the preferences themselves matter. In other words, the goals in one's life matter for well-being, not only the extent to which they are accomplished.

Interestingly, Wilber's theory and SDT seem to be complementary.[17] I will discuss this very briefly. SDT leaves the exact structures of the development of consciousness and the human being open and, instead, focus on the role of the interplay between the individual and the environment in the progression of the life path. SDT highlights the environmental factors supporting personal growth while Wilber's model proposes the mental structures of development ranging from prenatal states to ego development to enlightenment and yields a map of possible points of intervention and the tools for those interventions which support development. So it might be that SDT provides Wilber's model with those conditions of the environment that are required and support progression through the levels of development, while Wilber's model lays out the intrinsic developmental structures of the mind.

All three theories, Aristotle's, Wilber's, and Deci and Ryan's, thus point towards non-relativistic conceptions of the human being which challenge the old conceptions which still underlie many social science theories and contemporary societal structures and aims.

8. Concluding remarks

I proposed a new happiness theory combining normative judgements, particularly on ecological sustainability, and Kekes' theory: an individual or a society cannot be deemed happy if they exceed their fair share in ecological destruction and pollution. I then clarified the concept of the ultimate good, *summum bonum*, and discussed the possibility of enlightenment as a good candidate for *summum bonum*, based on both Aristotle and Ken Wilber's theories. Section 4 proposed a novel combination of Aristotle's and Wilber's works and claimed that Wilber's theory fills gaps in Aristotle's understanding of the human being. Aristotle's archer aiming for happiness should set as his target the unconscious mental structures outlined in Wilber's theory. Section 5 discussed apparent conflicts between Aristotelian *eudaimonia* and Buddhist enlightenment and claimed that they are only apparent and do not withstand deeper scrutiny.

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16   For a good overview, see Ryan and Deci (2000).

17   Which might not be that surprising given that they are both about human development and thus build on, amidst other things, Western developmental psychology.

The All-Quadrant, All-Level approach suggests that the two theories match, the only difference being that *eudaimonia* is a lower-level concept of happiness than enlightenment. Section 6 returned to my combination of Kekes with ecological ethics and discussed the implications of the Integral approach on the long-standing discussion of happiness and morality. It concluded that the discussions of happiness and morality are based on an incomplete picture of the human being and are, thus, biased. Section 7 discussed Aristotle's and Wilber's conceptions of the human being and positioned them with respect to the contemporary social sciences. It suggested that they belong to a new wave of theories that challenge the old, value-relativist conceptions of the human being.

If Wilber's theory is correct, it would raise controversial implications for theories of happiness. These implications range from Aristotle's *eudaimonia* being merely included in a more holistic theory of happiness – the Integral Theory, to questions of happiness and morality being based on an incomplete conception of the human being. As explained in section 7 more generally, Wilber's theory and its implications for happiness possess the potential for serious implications for the social sciences and for our societal structures.

Section 6 outlined a possible means of empirically examining the validity of the developmental steps, thus outlining a possible future research direction. If answers to the question 'Imagine all of the external supports for your present sense of happiness and security suddenly disappearing. What sense of well-being remains?' (Wallace and Shapiro 2006: 699) is found to correlate with other indicators related to developmental steps, it would provide evidence in support of the validity of Wilber's conceptualizations of the developmental structures of the mind.

Wilber's theory seems to detail various happiness theories, yield a relatively rigorous framework enabling the juxtaposition of different happiness theories in an comprehensible manner, point to the deficiencies a given happiness theory has, and propose enhancements to the theories. Given its explanatory power, it seems, that Wilber's Integral Theory deserves attention with regards to happiness and the social sciences in general. ∎

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