

APA Newsletters

Volume 05, Number 1

Fall 2005

NEWSLETTER ON PHILOSOPHY AND LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER ISSUES

FROM THE EDITOR, CAROL QUINN

FROM THE CHAIR, MARY BLOODSWORTH-LUGO

CURRENT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

FEATURED ESSAYS

MARK CHEKOLA

“Lives and Loves that Dared not Speak Their Names:
Well-Being and LGBT Persons”

RAJA HALWANI

“Mark Chekola’s Happiness”

CLAUDIA CARD

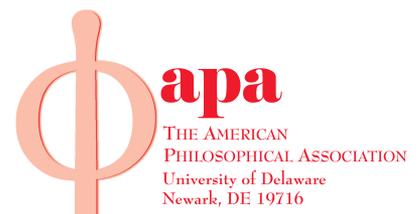
“Beyond Tragedy to What?”

ANITA SILVERS

“Singularity and Community: An Appreciation of Mark Chekola”

CAROL V. A. QUINN

“Honoring Mark Chekola”





Philosophy and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Issues

Carol Quinn, Editor

Fall 2005

Volume 05, Number 1

FROM THE EDITOR

Carol Quinn

University of California–Los Angeles

On March 24, at the most recent Pacific Division meeting, the APA's Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People in the Profession, cosponsored by the Society for Lesbian and Gay Philosophy, held a special session at the Maxwell Hotel honoring the irreplaceable Mark Chekola. The session was a wonderful success. In what follows, the reader will enjoy Chekola's paper, as well as those by commentators Raja Halwani, Claudia Card, Carol Quinn, and Anita Silvers.

Contributions Invited

The Editor encourages contributions to the *Newsletter*, especially essays that might fall through the cracks elsewhere for being untraditional in scope or content. Pieces may range from opinion pieces to book reviews to short articles. Commentary on issues important to professional life—teaching, research, and service—is especially welcome. Early contact with the Editor is strongly encouraged. Please contact Carol Quinn at cvaquinn@aol.com.

FROM THE CHAIR

Mary Bloodsworth-Lugo

Washington State University

My first year as chair of the APA Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People in the Profession has been very rewarding. During Spring 2005, we cosponsored two sessions at the Pacific Division meeting in San Francisco. The first session, which included the papers contained in this *Newsletter*, focused on honoring the work of Mark Chekola. The second session, held with the Commission on the Status of Women and the Inclusiveness Committee, engaged the topic of same-sex marriage. At the Central Division meeting in Chicago, we cosponsored a session with the Society for Lesbian and Gay Philosophy (SLGP) on LGBT issues and bioethics.

The Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People in the Profession will be holding a session at the Eastern Division meeting in New York in

December 2005 on the theme "Intersections of Race and Sexuality." Rita Alfonso, Donna-Dale Marcano, Ladelle McWhorter, and Ronald Sundstrom have agreed to participate in this important session. The Committee will also hold sessions at the 2006 Pacific and Central Division meetings, although we are still planning the topics and the participants for these sessions.

During the 2004-2005 academic year, I was contacted by a number of philosophy departments welcoming LGBT applicants for available positions, and I forwarded these notifications to our email list. During the summer of 2005, I prepared my first Annual Report to the APA Board regarding the on-going activities of the Committee. The LGBT Committee held one reception this year (for Committee members, session participants, and audience members) at the Pacific meeting. The reception followed the evening session that honored Mark Chekola and offered an additional venue for celebrating Mark's work. The Committee also conducted a business meeting during the Pacific meeting in order to discuss possible future conference sessions and the direction of the Committee more generally.

Thanks go to Carol Quinn, once again, for serving as editor of the *Newsletter on Philosophy and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues*. The Committee is grateful that Carol has agreed to continue in this capacity. Her service to the Committee is, as always, greatly appreciated.

CURRENT COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Mary Bloodsworth-Lugo, Chair, Washington State University, bloodswo@wsu.edu

Marcos Bisticas-Cocoves, Morgan State University, mcocoves@morgan.edu

Talia Bettcher, California State University—Los Angeles, tbettch@calstatela.edu

Raja Halwani, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, rhalwa@artic.edu

Julie Klein, Villanova University, julie.klein@villanova.edu

Richard Nunan, College of Charleston, nunanr@cofc.edu

Margaret O'Connor, Gustavus Adolphus College, poconnor@gac.edu

Ex officio: Carol Quinn, University of California–Los Angeles, cvaquinn@aol.com

FEATURED ESSAYS

Lives and Loves that Dared not Speak Their Names: Well-Being and LGBT Persons

Mark Chekola

Minnesota State University–Moorhead

I am very pleased to be honored at this session, cosponsored by the Society for Lesbian and Gay Philosophy and the APA Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People in the Profession. It has been important to me in my career as a teacher of philosophy and as a gay person to be involved in working on promoting the field's addressing and dealing with issues faced by LGBT people. It is fitting that we happen to be meeting in San Francisco, one of the geographical centers of LGBT liberation, and one of the places where LGBT people did very early in the movement for liberation speak their names and loves.

Irish writer Colm Toibin, author of the recently published novel about Henry James titled *The Master*, in his book *Love in a Dark Time and Other Explorations of Gay Lives and Literature* confesses, in remarking why he finds Thom Gunn's book of poetry, *The Man With Night Sweats*, outstanding, that part of it seems to be "because they [the poems] satisfy in me an urge to have gay lives represented as tragic, an urge which I know I should repress."¹ His book focuses mostly on writers, showing a "tentative history of progress" in openness about gay lives. In his discussion of gay writers and artists, he is interested in "the tension between the fearless imagination and the fearful self."²

When I first read it, I found Toibin's confession about his urge to have gay lives represented as tragic shocking but plausible. Things are better now than they were in the past, better, certainly, than they were for Oscar Wilde, Roger Casement, James Baldwin, and others whom Toibin discusses. But we live in a world that, for the most part, does not embrace and support the well being of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. It leaves in place many impediments to the well being of people. And, unlike other oppressed groups, we lack a history, community, and a tradition that can help us to locate ourselves. Greater openness has made it possible for some young people to understand and affirm their difference more easily, but many still have to go through the sometimes painful self-discovery and the somewhat risky revelations of themselves to others, even friends and family.

We now have same-sex marriage in one state. But, in that same state, a children's show was produced, "Postcards from Buster," featuring an animated rabbit traveling around the United States and a bit in Canada and Mexico, visiting diverse people living different sorts of lives. When, in that state, an episode was aired on a public television station in which the rabbit, Buster, visits a family including children and a same-sex female couple in Vermont, it was attacked by U.S. Education Secretary Margaret Spellings and others. The head of PBS ordered an internal review of the show.³ While our fearless imaginations are delighted with successes such as the recognition of same-sex marriages in one state, the furor over showing children examples of same-sex relationships in a television show focused on diversity awakens our fearful selves, suggesting that perhaps tragedy is, at some level, inevitable in the lives of LGBT persons. I am proud and happy

to say that the PBS affiliate in my region will be airing the episode in question in several weeks.

LGBT people "grow up alone; there is no history," Toibin notes. "It is as though, in Adrienne Rich's phrase 'you looked into the mirror and saw nothing'." Organizations such as the Society for Lesbian and Gay Philosophy and the APA Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People in the Profession exist, in part, to seek a future in which philosophers and the students they teach can look in the mirror and see something and will not assume that LGBT lives are inevitably tragic.

One of the writers Toibin covers is F. O. Matthiessen, a teacher at Harvard and author of the very influential book *The American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman*, published in 1941. He quotes Matthiessen, writing about his relationship with his lover Russell Cheney:

Of course this life of ours is entirely new—neither of us knows a parallel case. We stand in the middle of an uncharted, uninhabited country. That there have been other unions like ours is obvious, but we are unable to draw on their experience. We must create everything for ourselves. And creation is never easy.⁴

Matthiessen and Cheney were path breakers. And we have lived through a period of continued path-breaking. There is something noble and exhilarating about having that kind of role, and it allows some to act with notable strength and courage. But not everyone has such strength and courage, and, while trying to make their way in this uncharted and often hostile country, many have suffered and been broken.

I am interested in addressing issues of well being related to LGBT people. My examples will be, for the most part, lesbian and gay persons, but what I have to say applies, with the appropriate changes, to bisexual and transgender persons, whose lives are also affected by the societal expectations with regard to how men and women should behave and live. In discussing how we think of the well being of lives, Ronald Dworkin in "The Foundations of Liberal Equality" distinguishes between two models often used in evaluating lives, the model of impact (the impact one's life has had) and the model of challenge (a good life as a kind of skillful performance). While explaining the model of challenge, Dworkin considers how issues of justice relate to this model. Dworkin says:

If living well means responding in the right way to the right challenge, then a life goes worse when the right challenge cannot be faced. That explains why injustice, just on its own, is bad for people. Someone who is denied what justice entitles him to have leads a worse life just for that reason....⁵

Dworkin is writing about resources. And he seems to have in mind resources thought of in terms of a share of wealth. However, I think we can regard self-respect and support of relationships as resources, too. And, as I will be discussing, the denials of these to LGBT people, while making for a challenge that some may meet with courage and nobility, still makes for their lives going worse than they might. And this extra challenge, brought about through injustice, keeps us from some other challenges it would be better for us to use our nobility and strength to face.

The plan for the rest of the paper is this: I will take a look at some claims that social scientists make about happiness and well being on the basis of empirical studies and discuss implications for how we see the way injustice affects the well being of LGBT persons in our society. After that, I will use a

recent philosophical article about happiness and despair to further examine injustice's effects on LGBT persons' well being. I will conclude with some interesting suggestions from social scientists about some issues related to justice improving well being overall in the whole society. I will use both terms "happiness" and "well being" and will not say anything by way of analysis and definition of those terms. Much could be said, but that is for another time.

Some Social Science Research and Its Implications

Psychologist Evelyn Hooker played a significant role in bringing about the review and eventual rejection of the view that homosexuality was a psychological disorder. Her well-known study asked psychiatrists to review a collection of files with psychological information about a number of men and distinguish the homosexuals from the heterosexuals on the basis of this psychological information. They were unable to do so.⁶ She, almost fifty years ago, brought attention to the fact that there is nothing intrinsically disordered about homosexuality. It would seem to follow that the happiness and well being of lesbians and gays, and bisexual and transgender persons as well, should not be essentially different from other human beings. The conditions that correlate with their well being and ill being should be the same.

I have been doing some research looking at empirical studies of happiness and well being in the social sciences, and I want to pick out several claims that are regarded as well supported by empirical data and indicate implications I see these as having with regard to the lives of LGBT people. In particular, I shall be looking at the social institution of marriage and at two aspects of personality: self-esteem and neuroticism.

a. Marriage

Now, of course, not everyone is an advocate of marriage, and on this panel we have Claudia Card, who has written a powerful critique of marriage. In this paper, I want to bypass questions about the social institution of marriage as a whole and, instead, take the data reported by social scientists and ask what they imply with regard to the way society treats LGBT persons. These investigators report that there is a significant correlation between marriage and happiness and that, for many, marriage contributes significantly to greater well being. Ed Diener, a psychologist who is one of the leading people in studies of happiness and well being, in his article "Subjective Well-Being" reports that, in many studies, marriage "was the strongest predictor of SWB [subjective well being] even when education, income, and occupational status were controlled."⁷ Now this is a claimed correlation, and there is, of course, the question as to what is the direction of the causation: are happier people more apt to marry, or does marriage contribute to happiness? Diener and others claim that there's sufficient evidence that marriage itself contributes to greater subjective well being.

Same-sex marriage is now possible in the United States only in Massachusetts. The current political hysteria about same-sex marriage in this country certainly indicates that many people in this country are not in favor of marriage for same-sex couples. Their hostility to even unspecified same-sex relationships, such as the two female couples in Vermont in "Postcards from Buster," shows that same-sex couples are not finding strong support for their relationships, marriage or not. As a matter of fact, they are facing downright hostility. Consider the common claim that same-sex unions are "an insult to marriage." That's about as hostile as one could get.

If marriage is something that often contributes to the well being of people, denying it to LGBT people in same-sex relationships is denying them an important source of well being. And most people would agree that strong couple

relationships, even if not marriage, are a source of happiness to many. The lack of support and denigration of same-sex relationships in our society then amounts to an insulting and vicious barrier to LGBT people and their well being. No wonder these loves hesitate to speak their names.

b. Self-Esteem

Now let us turn from a social institution to some aspects of personality and claimed correlations with well being, self-esteem, and neuroticism. First self-esteem. Diener notes that with regard to subjective correlates with subjective well being (as opposed to correlates with objective conditions, such as being married), "The highest correlation was with satisfaction with self, suggesting that people must have self-esteem to be satisfied with their lives."⁸ John Rawls in his *Theory of Justice* claims that self-respect (or self-esteem) is "perhaps the most important primary good." He defines it as having two aspects: (1) "a person's sense of his own value, his secure conviction that his conception of his good, his plan of life, is worth carrying out" and (2) "a confidence in one's ability, so far as it is within one's power, to fulfill one's intentions."⁹

LGBT persons' having solid and secure self-esteem is a challenge in a society that continues to be often uncomfortable and sometimes hostile to open admission of being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. And if our relationships are regarded as fundamentally different from those of heterosexuals, and if it is believed that legalizing them would be an "insult to marriage," we have to ourselves have a strong sense of the value of these relationships and not count on wide support. Patricia Illingworth and Timothy Murphy in their article "In Our Best Interest: Meeting Moral Duties to Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Adolescent Students"¹⁰ argue that the discrimination against LGBT adolescents is a serious public-health issue, and the unwillingness of the educational system to take on these issues in both the formal curriculum and in schools' "hidden curriculum"—"its day-to-day environment and lessons about what is valuable in human life"—is a serious failure on their part in duties with regard to public health. With regard to self-esteem, they quote an article by A. Grossman:

[t]he self-esteem and self-worth of lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are frequently impaired by experiences related to cognitive, emotional, and social isolation. ...As a result, feelings of inadequacy, humiliation, guilt, embarrassment and failure become merged into a general feeling of shame. Shame becomes permanently imbedded in the lesbian and gay individuals' feelings about themselves.¹¹

What are we to say, then, in the face of what Illingworth and Murphy identify as a serious public health issue when U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings attacks the segment of "Postcards from Buster," where Buster encounters some female couples in Vermont, apparently lesbian?

And, of course, this is not only an issue for adolescents. F. O. Matthiessen wrote in a letter to his boyfriend in 1930:

My sexuality bothers me, feller, sometimes when it makes me aware of the falseness of my position in the world. And consciousness of my falseness seems to sap my confidence of power. Have I any right to live in a community that would so utterly disapprove of me if it knew the facts? I hate to hide when what I thrive on is absolute directness.¹²

We may admire those who have successfully negotiated these challenges to self-esteem. But how many have not successfully negotiated them? And, to go back to Ronald

Dworkin's point, facing this sort of challenge of injustice may keep someone from "the right challenge."

c. Neuroticism

In the social science literature on well being, there is some interest in the relationship between personality and subjective well being. The aspects of personality focused on the most are extraversion and neuroticism. Extraversion is reported to have a positive correlation with well being, and neuroticism is reported to have a general negative correlation with well being. Australian researchers Bruce Headey and Alex Wearing claim, "Differences in well-being and psychological distress are partly accounted for by differences in personality. ... People who rate high on neuroticism report lower levels of well-being and greater psychological distress than people who rate low on neuroticism."¹³

One of the major assessment tools for personality traits is the NEO-PI: Neuroticism, Extraversion, and Openness to Experience Personality Inventory, developed by Costa and McCrae.¹⁴ The facets of neuroticism listed by them, and which are tested for by their inventory, are anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability.

There is, of course, the particular personality of the individual and its effect on that person's well being to be considered. However, it seems to me that one could argue that the negative views of and hostility toward LGBT people promotes what I shall call situational or environmentally-induced neuroticism. Consider the environment for LGBT adolescents that Illingworth and Murphy write about. Consider the quote from Matthiessen writing to his boyfriend. He's asking, "What if people found out?" and "Do I have a right to live in a world that would so disapprove of me?" Virtually every LGBT person finds situations where self-consciousness, anxiety, and feelings of vulnerability are necessary. Might depression and angry hostility be quite appropriate reactions to having to face these things? LGBT people often fear for their reputation, their jobs, and even their physical safety. They often hide their relationships in ways that heterosexuals almost never would. How could one be LGBT in contemporary American society without being situationally neurotic? My department is currently carrying out a search for someone with an AOS or strong AOC in feminist philosophy. Some of the CVs of people who have applied include work on LGBT and queer issues. This is refreshing and exciting, given that in the past people would have often avoided working on these topics, or, if they were working on them, not included them in their more public CVs. Insofar as minority groups are sometimes forced by society into this kind of neuroticism, it seems to me that this is clearly another way in which society is impeding the happiness and well being of people.

Happiness and Despair

A recent article about ideals, happiness, and identity, "The Irrationality of Unhappiness and the Paradox of Despair," by Sarah Buss,¹⁵ provides some additional ways to see the importance of dealing with the injustices and impediments LGBT persons face. Buss is using a conception of happiness that focuses on judgments and emotions involved with regard to significant portions of our lives. She says whether one is happy has to do with whether there is a gap between our personal ideals, ideals with regard to our life as "to-be-realized" by us, and our attitudes about that. So unhappiness involves someone's recognizing that her life falls short of her "to-be-realized" life. Our ideals are part of our own good, "our conception of the good life for us."¹⁶ They are, then, a significant part of our identity. Things are fine when there is no significant gap between our ideals and how our lives are going. When

there is a significant gap, then one is unhappy. Unhappiness becomes despair when one "believes, in addition, that this gap cannot be closed any further."¹⁷

This despair depends on hope: having the ideal, one has hope of achieving it. Realizing that the gap cannot be closed while still holding the ideal is what results in despair. She refers to despair as a "paradox" because of the irrationality of having the ideal and hope along with the realization that it is unachievable. Having these personal ideals that bring with them the hope that can lead to despair is, she claims, something like what Kant refers to as "regulative ideals." They cannot be simply abandoned; without them, there cannot be rational action.¹⁸ These ideals involve the self we have identified with.

I think we can see how this plays out in the lives of LGBT people whose personal ideals include following the norms of the society, being seen as "straight," and marrying and having a family. It is becoming easier for young LGBT persons to have a clearer sense of their identities and adopt personal ideals suited to them. However, societal patterns and expectations are strong, and, for many, it is quite a struggle to not go along with them. I think we all know people (sometimes ourselves) who have married opposite-sex persons only to find out that it is a false life for them.

What do we do when we face despair, when we realize the gap between our ideals and the reality of the situation is wide and cannot be closed further?¹⁹ On the face of it, it would seem that the easiest thing is to abandon the ideal. However, since these personal ideals are such a significant part of our identity, this is not, and should not, be easy to do. A second possibility is to try to prove to oneself that the evidence indicating the ideal cannot be achieved is not conclusive—for instance, by arranging one's life to more fully pursue the ideal. Her example is someone who wants to write poetry and decides to switch to a less time-consuming job to be able to try writing more. A third possibility is resignation. Here, she writes of a woman's despair at the death of her son and how difficult it might be to fully give up the ideal of life with the child. Finally, there is modification of one's ideal and adoption of a new self-conception. Her example here is a gay man: "Think, for example," she says, "of someone who has despaired for years of his homosexuality and who finally adjusts his ideals to fit the contours of his possibilities as he perceived them."²⁰ This sort of modification of personal ideals is one that many of us have negotiated in our lives, and it continues to be something virtually every LGBT person goes through. An earlier ideal of a conventional life of heterosexual marriage might be modified into an ideal involving a same-sex relationship. An ideal of a vocation as a religious leader in a denomination not welcoming LGBT persons serving in such positions might be modified into a different vocational ideal.

In the last section of her paper, Buss briefly addresses oppression and personal ideals. Oppressors want little more than for us to give up our ideals to live our lives as flourishing LGBT persons. If we see some parts of these ideals as not attainable soon, what should we do? To give up the ideal, to settle, is to give in to our oppressors. She suggests that it makes sense to hold on to the personal ideal, even though the gap between the ideal and reality exists and may well not close soon. So, in that sense, we'll be unhappy. She reminds us, "Happiness is not the only thing of importance in life. Certainly rationality is not."²¹ So we keep the personal ideal at the expense of some unhappiness. And doing that is one way of keeping our motivation up for seeking change. So one reason to accept unhappiness in this situation is that "I do not want to be a collaborator. I *am not* a collaborator."²²

With regard to this last point, I want to address an issue raised by Richard Mohr, who was previously honored by SLGP and the APA LGBT Committee. He argued, with regard to the outing issue, that honesty about oneself is extremely important and should not easily be traded for avoiding difficulties. The way he put it was that dignity is more important than happiness.²³ Some have criticized Mohr for being unrealistic and overly demanding. They see him as suggesting that being out is more important than losing your job or losing custody of your children.

While Mohr is certainly very firm in his claims, I think his critics miss the heart of his point. As Buss notes, to simply give up our ideal in the face of oppression is to become a collaborator. The unhappiness involved is necessary for our sense of identity or, we might say, our integrity. I think some of Mohr's critics claim that if I must be closeted to avoid losing custody of my children, that's what I must do, and that's that. Now, it may be that, in this situation, in the end, this may in some sense be the "best" choice for me. However, it comes at a cost, and to not recognize that is to give up part of my identity. It would seem that one must be careful in such situations to be sure the cost is so great that one must "collaborate." It seems to me that this way of looking at it may amount to seeing such situations as examples of acting in a "gray zone," which Claudia Card has discussed in her book *The Atrocity Paradigm: A Theory of Evil*.²⁴

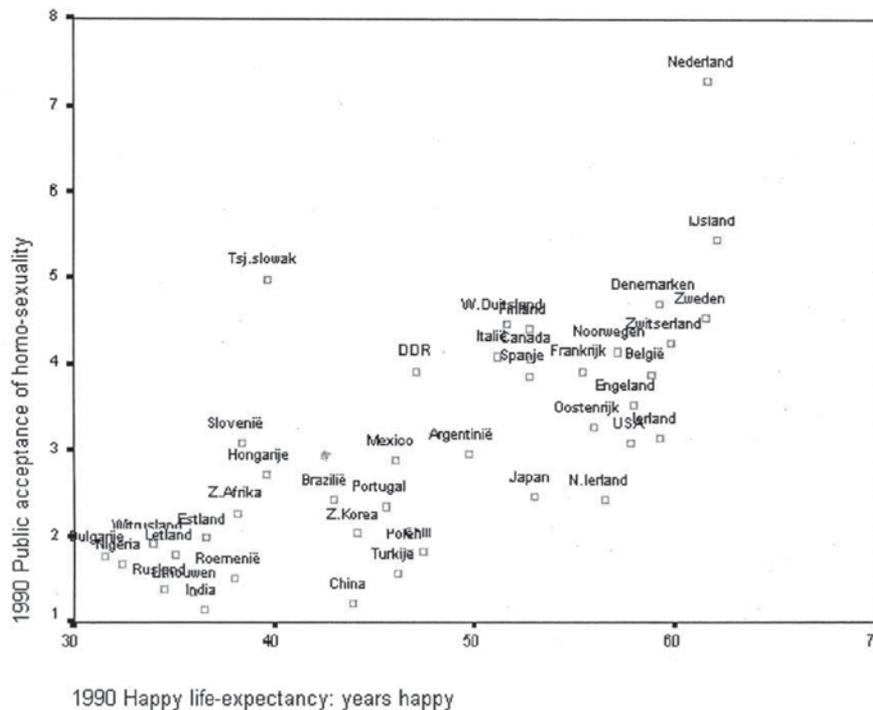
Conclusion: Maybe Morality Does Pay

I would like to conclude with highlighting a way in which empirical studies may be very helpful to us in our quest for social change. D. Blanchfower and A. Oswald, in carrying out a study of General Social Surveys in the United States over twenty years involving a sampling of 26,000 people, from 1976 to 1996, claim that there is evidence that inequality (in terms of earnings) reduces happiness (generally—not just of those who have lower earnings).²⁵ We can work up moral arguments for why inequality is wrong. But if empirical evidence can be presented showing that, in general, people overall in society

are worse off for there being inequality, this becomes an extremely powerful tool to dramatize not only the need for but the overall value of change.

Switching to LGBT issues, Ruut Veenoven, from Erasmus University in the Netherlands, who, along with Ed Diener, is one of the principal happiness studies scholars in the world, has published a paper whose title is, in English, "The Liberation of Sex."²⁶ It is written in Dutch and hasn't been translated into English, unfortunately. In it, he includes an interesting scattergram relating the public acceptance of homosexuality to happiness in various nations. The diagram follows. The vertical dimension, the *y*-axis, measures the public acceptance of homosexuality, and the horizontal dimension, the *x*-axis, measures what Veenhoven calls "happy life expectancy." "Happy life expectancy" is determined by taking the average life expectancy of the nation and multiplying it by the average happiness in that nation as determined by surveys. As one can see on the chart, it shows a positive linear relationship between public acceptance of homosexuality and "happy life expectancy." In other words, it indicates there is a correlation between the acceptance of homosexuality in a nation and the *general* happiness in that nation, not just the happiness of homosexuals. While we have many arguments to show the moral duty to respect LGBT people, it seems to me that if social scientists can provide evidence like this, empirical data that suggests that, in general, the *whole* society is better off when it respects LGBT people, our case is far more powerful and much more likely to be persuasive.

We want a future in which we don't find ourselves, like Toibin, expecting LGBT lives to be tragic. We want to identify with our fearless imaginations more than with our fearful selves. We as philosophers and teachers of philosophy, have a chance to do our part to make a difference. And the organizations sponsoring this session, the Society for Lesbian and Gay Philosophy and the APA Committee, exist to help us to do this. I am proud to have been involved in the work of both of these organizations.



Endnotes

1. Colm Toibin. *Love in a Dark Time and Other Explorations of Gay Lives and Literature* (New York: Scribner, 2001), 30.
2. *Ibid.*, 8.
3. "PBS Chief Orders Review of Children's Show," *Los Angeles Times*, reprinted in Fargo, ND-Moorhead, MN *Forum*, Feb. 11, 2005, A5.
4. Toibin, 14.
5. Ronald Dworkin. "The Foundations of Liberal Equality." In *Equal Freedom*, edited by Steven Darwall (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995), 260.
6. Evelyn Hooker. "The Adjustment of the Male Overt Homosexual." *Journal of Projective Techniques*, 12 (1957): 18-21, reprinted in *The Problem of Homosexuality*, edited by Hendrik M. Ruitenbeek (New York: Dutton, 1963), 141-61.
7. Ed Diener. "Subjective Well-Being." *Psychological Bulletin*, 95 (1984): 542-75, here p. 556.
8. Deiner, 552.
9. John Rawls. *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 440.
10. Patricia Illingworth and Timothy Murphy. "In Our Best Interest: Meeting Moral Duties to Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Adolescent Students," *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 35 (2004): 198-210, here p. 208.
11. *Ibid.*, 206.
12. Toibin, 16.
13. Bruce Headey and Alex Wearing. *Understanding Happiness: A Theory of Subjective Well-Being* (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1992), 11.
14. P. T. Costa, Jr. and R. R. McCrae. *The NEO-PI-R: Professional Manual* (Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources, 1992).
15. Sarah Buss. "The Irrationality of Unhappiness and the Paradox of Despair," *Journal of Philosophy*, CX (2004): 167-96.
16. *Ibid.*, 170.
17. *Ibid.*, 174.
18. *Ibid.*, 176.
19. *Ibid.*, 186-89.
20. *Ibid.*, 189.
21. *Ibid.*, 194.
22. *Ibid.*, 195.
23. Richard Mohr, "The Outing Controversy." In *Gay Ideas* (Boston: Beacon Press: 1992). See esp. pp. 31-34.
24. Claudia Card. *The Atrocity Paradigm: A Theory of Evil* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).
25. D. Blanchflower and A. Oswald. "Does Inequality Reduce Unhappiness? Evidence from the States of the USA from the 1970s to the 1990s." *The Paradoxes of Happiness in Economics Conference*, University of Milan-Bicocca, March 21-23, 2003.
26. Ruut Veenhoven. "Bevrijde Seks, Tijd, Cultuur en Geluk," *De Psycholoog*, 43 (2002): 377-82.

Mark Chekola's Happiness

Raja Halwani

School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Mark Chekola's contributions to the Society for Lesbian and Gay Philosophy, to the APA Committee on the Status of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender People in the Professions, and to other APA committees have been, and are, invaluable. However, my specific task in this presentation is to address Mark's philosophical work, focusing on a body of papers in which Mark turns his attention to the concept of happiness. The papers in question are "'But I'm Happy': Happiness and Oppression," "The Life Plan View of Happiness and the Paradoxes of Happiness," and "What Is Happiness? Answers from Philosophy and the Social Sciences."¹ I shall focus on the view found in the second and third papers, since it represents Mark's latest position on happiness, though I will touch on some points in the first paper. First, however, I would like to make two preliminary points.

I have known Mark for quite a while now. Whenever we are at an APA meeting, we always make it a point to try to get together for a drink and a chat. Our chats are usually gossip-laden, but we also often discuss philosophical issues. Anyone who knows Mark will no doubt have noticed one wonderful trait about him: he is a very patient and careful thinker. He takes his time in developing his philosophical views, and, due to this, the positions he arrives at are meticulously worked out and very plausible. This is evident in the papers under focus. Indeed, one can almost hear Mark speaking them. It is my contention that, despite needed tweaks here and there, Mark's position on happiness is clearly correct; what it needs is not overhauling but some adjustments here and there. I can only wish that my own philosophical views were in need of only *that*.

Second, it is not simply what Mark has to say about happiness that is important. Equally important is the fact that he attempts in his papers to bring his views to bear on social scientific discussions of happiness. This is important because the social sciences often employ a crude and, thus, false concept of happiness, often measuring it simply by using some subjective criterion of satisfaction. But because social scientific thinking often has a direct impact on our lives, building bridges between philosophy and the social sciences on such a crucial issue is essential; philosophers can then help immensely with how our lives are impacted by addressing such social scientific projects. For example, Mark states, "If we want data about whether people are living happy lives we do want, first of all, to be as clear as we can about what we understand to be the nature of a happy life" ("Life Plan View" 20). If philosophers can fruitfully work with social scientists to understand the nature of happiness, the latter field can be on a better track as far as making genuinely good contributions to improving people's lives. I have nothing to disagree with as far as Mark's difficulties with some social scientific concepts of happiness and as far as Mark's suggested improvements. These are all true claims. My focus will be solely on Mark's philosophical treatment of the concept of happiness.

Mark distinguishes between different senses of the term "happiness." The term could refer to feelings, moods, behavior, attitudes, and a life ("Life Plan" 3). He correctly focuses on the last, correctly claiming that it is the most important and the one that we must focus on "to be clear about the nature of happiness" ("Life Plan" 4). Mark advocates the "life plan view" of happiness, which focuses on the *nature* of happiness rather

than its causes, conditions, or determinants (“Life Plan” 1). To Mark, a happy life is one (1) in which the agent realizes his or her life plan (satisfies his or her higher-order desires); (2) has absent *both* (a) serious felt dissatisfaction and (b) an attitude of being displeased with or disliking one’s life; and (3) in which the agent is disposed to experience “favorable feelings and attitudes associated with the realizing” of his or her life plan (“Life Plan” 2). The second condition reminds us that sometimes even when one’s life plan is realized, one might still feel dissatisfied with it, say, if one suffers from depression. Moreover, for a life to count as happy, the agent, as condition (3) requires, must be disposed to experience favorable feelings about it.

The most crucial condition is the first because it embodies the notions central to Mark’s position, namely, those of a life plan and of higher order desires. Mark is clear that by “plan” he does not mean an elaborate blueprint of one’s life. The term “plan” refers to the agent’s goals or aims in life rather than the designs for achieving these aims. Some of these could be sketchy, while others detailed (“Life Plan” 7). Because, to Mark, the notion of a life plan is constituted by the higher order desires of the agent, it is important to unpack this notion. A higher order desire need not be one whose object is another lower level desire (and here Mark departs from Harry Frankfurt’s view). While a first order desire is one “whose object is a single or small group of things, states of affairs, etc.,” a higher order desire is one “whose object is not a single or small group of things or states of affairs” (“Life Plan” 8). The desire to write a book, for example, is a higher order desire because its object is “a complex set of activities that would occur over a relatively long period of time,” and, indeed, some objects of higher order desires are open ended, such as the desire for knowledge (“Life Plan” 8).

Mark offers three criteria by which to identify a higher order desire: permanence, comprehensiveness, and importance. “Permanent” means that the desires are relatively stable; “they don’t change rapidly or frequently.” Mark explains comprehensiveness as “affecting many of the lower order desires and ends of the person.” Finally, they are important: “elements of the life plan are important desires whose frustration brings serious dissatisfaction” (“Life Plan” 8). Mark claims that higher order desires typically “concern occupational goals, desires to have certain personal relationships, desires to be a certain kind of person, important avocational goals, etc.” (“Life Plan” 8).

As I said, I am in general agreement with Mark’s views. I do, however, want to take issue with two aspects of Mark’s account. The first I shall mention briefly and set aside. If Mark accepts a distinction between happiness and contentment, I wonder how he can maintain such a distinction, for his view of happiness can easily refer to both. Note here that condition (3), which requires the agent to have the *disposition* to feel favorable feelings and attitudes, won’t do the trick of distinguishing the two. Because it emphasizes the disposition of the agent, it cannot rule out contentment, since content people might very well have this disposition. On the other hand, were Mark to get rid of the disposition and speak of happy agents as *actually* experiencing positive feelings and attitudes, his account would be less plausible since not every happy person actually experiences such positive feelings. It might be that the distinction between contentment and happiness, though popular, cannot be maintained, or that it can be maintained only at a high price, such as advocating an implausible view of happiness. For example, John Stuart Mill accepts this distinction, yet his view of what a happy life is—a life as full of moments of pleasure as possible—might be wrong, and Mark has some excellent criticisms of such a view

(“Life Plan” 6).² In his earlier essay, “Happiness and Oppression,” Mark does accept the distinction: contentment “involves not being seriously dissatisfied,” while “happiness seems to involve something more positive (the satisfaction of some important wants or desires)” (66). But our intuitions on this distinction vary; one can claim that an agent can be content even if her major wants are satisfied, as long as no actual positive feeling of happiness is present. I leave the issue open.

The second point with which I take issue is more complicated and can be accessed using different entryways. Let me begin by discussing Mark’s criterion of importance. As I explained, one of the identifying criteria for a higher order desire is importance. Mark explains: “elements of the life plan are important desires whose frustration brings serious dissatisfaction” (“Life Plan” 8). Note that this formulation is ambiguous. While it is clear that the importance in question is the importance of the desires *to* the agent, beyond this, it could mean one of two different things: either these desires are important to the agent because they are central to her *personality* or because they are central to her *ideals*.³ When these two come apart, the agent might judge her life to *not* be good, and such a judgment is likely to mar the happiness of her life. It seems to me that Mark does not fully take into account such a distinction, and this has some negative, albeit not detrimental, repercussions for his view.

Consider someone who enjoys reading cheap romance novels (CRNs) and whose overarching goal in life is to spend as much time as possible reading CRNs and engaging in activities relevant to such reading. He works in order to make money in order to be able to purchase CRNs and so read them. The higher order desire of reading such books and engaging in relevant activities is important to his personality. But he also judges such a goal to not be worthwhile; his ideals embody more important goals. So the higher order desire to read CRNs is important to his personality, yet not to his ideals. Moreover, the agent need *feel* no serious dissatisfaction with his life nor need he have the attitude of being displeased or disliking his life. Also, he is certainly *disposed* to experience favorable feelings and attitudes associated with realizing his life plan of reading CRNs. So Mark’s view of happiness would pronounce his life a happy one. Yet, because this agent’s life plan goes against the agent’s ideals, one can claim that his life is not happy.

There are two options for Mark at this point. The first is to say that, given the case, the agent is happy. For if indeed he feels no dissatisfaction with his life, if he does not have the attitude of being displeased with his life, and if he is disposed to experience favorable feelings about his life, then we can easily claim that his purported ideals are a sham; he *says* he has these ideals, but he really does not believe in them (otherwise, conditions (2) and (3) would not be satisfied). If so, he is indeed happy, for his higher order desires do not go against any ideals that the agent really holds.

The other option is to accept that there is a sense in which this agent’s life is unhappy and to then adjust the life plan view of happiness. Before I argue why it is the second option that Mark should adopt, I should briefly comment on Mark’s rejection of the attitude view of happiness. This view states that a happy life is one that the agent in question is pleased with her life or likes her life (“Life Plan” 10). Mark notes that an attitude is “a complicated set of dispositions to have certain thoughts, feelings, emotions, etc. ... Thus, when the attitude view claims that happiness is being pleased with or liking one’s life that means roughly that happy people have a complicated set of dispositions to think about their lives fondly, to have feelings of pleasure with regard to important features of their

lives, to have no feelings of strong regret about their lives, etc.” (“Life Plan” 10). Underlying all of this, though Mark does not explicitly mention it, is the notion of judgment: a crucial component of the attitude view is that people are disposed to *affirm* or *judge* their lives to be good. This role of affirming one’s life to be good is not part of the attitude view as Mark explains it, but it can be built into it.

Mark criticizes this view on the grounds that the notion of “being pleased with” admits of a strong and of a weak reading and that neither succeeds as an analysis of the nature of a happy life. The strong meaning of “being pleased with” is being positively pleased with one’s life. This is implausible because some people are happy yet experience no such positive feelings. The weak meaning is “not being displeased” with one’s life. This also won’t do, according to Mark, because it allows people to be happy even though they are not, objectively. For example, a severely developmentally disabled person might not be displeased with his life, yet his life is not a happy one (“Life Plan” 10-11). But Mark construes the attitude view too narrowly by construing the notion of “being pleased with” too narrowly. He takes this to be basically about experiencing pleasure, but the expression, as is commonly used, could also be about judgments: to be pleased with one’s life is to be disposed to *judge* it as being good, to be disposed to *affirm* it. If we take the expression to be about judgment, then Mark’s criticisms of the view fail. Thus, the happy people who nonetheless do not experience positive pleasure can still be disposed to judge their lives to be good, and the case of the severely disabled person is handled on the grounds that such a person is incapable of making such judgments. So the attitude view, if construed properly, still competes with Mark’s own position.

Mark wants to rule out as happy a drugged life that feels good to its agent. But if he does not take seriously the distinction between the importance of higher order desires to one’s personality and to one’s ideals, he cannot easily rule out such a life. Suppose that the person taking drugs considers feeling good to be a higher order desire of his. He is a hedonist of sorts. If so, then Mark’s life plan view will pronounce his life to be happy: the agent, let’s call him George, *wants* to experience as many moments of pleasure as possible (and this higher order desire, by the way, could be as complex as the one whose object is writing a book); his life contains no serious felt dissatisfaction and no attitude of displeasure on the part of George with his life; and, finally, George is disposed to experience favorable feelings and attitudes associated with realizing his life plan. Yet something is seriously lacking in this life as far as its happiness is concerned.

Perhaps Mark would want to say that if this is indeed George’s plan, then his life is a happy one; so be it. But this rubs us the wrong way. Starting with this intuition, what criterion can we use to rule out the happiness of this life? I suggested earlier a distinction between the importance of higher order desires to one’s personality and to one’s ideals. This might take care of the George case were it not for one wrinkle. Suppose that George is unhappy because though feeling pleasure via drug taking is important to his personality, it is not important to his ideals. Depending on the case, this might do the trick. If merely feeling pleasure is not part of George’s ideals, then we know why the judgment that his is not a happy life is true. But what if such activities *are* part of his ideals? After all, George is a hedonist. One option would be to claim that such ideals are purely subjective and that all we can demand of an account of happiness is the coherence between one’s higher order desires and their importance to the agent’s ideals, with the latter understood subjectively.

But this is not so easily done. One cannot successfully *judge* one’s ideals to be good in a purely subjective manner. Briefly, judgments of goodness are judgments of value; they relate to what we, human beings, consider to be good.⁴ This goodness is objective. It might be objective in that the values in question correspond to some real aspect of the world, or, at the very minimum, it might be objective in that it is what we human beings tend to agree on to be of value. Such objectivity would be, basically, a form of inter-subjectivity. Even though it is ultimately rooted in our subjective values, it is nonetheless objective in that human beings cannot but find certain things to be of value. Note also what it is to judge an ideal to be good: it is not simply to judge it good by some arbitrary criteria that the agent chooses. For the criteria themselves have to be good. There are standards by which human beings judge certain ideals to be good, to be of value. Thus, an agent cannot judge just any ideal to be successful. The ideal must be considered worthwhile by *us*; and the criteria the agent uses to judge the success of her ideals must be ones that *we* also accept as good. Hence, the life of an ethnic cleanser is out, the life of the bottle-cap collector is out, and so is the life of the severely mentally handicapped. That is why it seems to me that the second option is more plausible, namely, the idea that the value of agents’ ideals are not purely subjective. An agent cannot simply judge his ideals of drug-taking to be good, period. They have to be assessed according to norms of rationality and goodness that are objective.

It is interesting to point out that Mark, in his essay “What Is Happiness? Answers from Philosophy and the Social Sciences,” mentions the worthwhile-ness of a life, a mention absent from his earlier essay (“Life Plan”). He states, “I believe there is a ‘logical core’ of happiness which consists of (a) its having to do with one’s life as a whole; (b) its being relatively long-lasting; (c) its making one’s life worthwhile; (d) its being desired by everyone” (14). Mark does not elaborate on his concept of “worthwhile-ness,” although his rejection of the life of drugs reflects his underlying concerns here. This goes against what Mark says on the issue in his earlier essay, “Happiness and Oppression”: “happiness is in one sense ‘subjective’: what my happiness will consist in is up to me, in terms of what I choose as my major wants and desires. But it is also ‘objective’: given the wants and desires I have, whether they are satisfied or are being satisfied or not does not depend only on me, and my judgments on that can be wrong” (65). In other words, Mark here accepts the idea that criteria for assessing the satisfaction of one’s higher-order desires are objective but rejects the idea that the content of such desires are also objective. But there is a tension here: we cannot simply equate a worthwhile life with a life in which an agent realizes her higher-order desires because the latter can embody aspirations that are not worthwhile. Thus, Mark must take into account *some* sort of distinction between desires that are important to the agent’s personality and to the agent’s ideals and connect the notion of ideals to an objective conception of goodness in order to be able to salvage the idea of a worthwhile life.

Thus, and to go back to the example of the CRN reader, the second option I outlined is the one Mark ought to take: *if* a life of reading CRNs is not a worthwhile one, then the agent cannot judge it to be a success; such a life goes against his ideals even if he feels no negative experiences due to this. If Mark wants to retain the notion of a happy life as being somehow also worthwhile, he needs to take the second option. And he *implicitly* opens his view up to this option. Felicia, the woman in Mark’s example in “Happiness and Oppression,” is married, receives unequal treatment because she is a woman and because of her marital status, knows this,

and yet claims that she is happy and that she wants to continue to live the way she does. Mark correctly claims that her judgment that she is happy might be mistaken for a number of reasons: “she may be unclear about the question or simply dishonest in answering it; or she might be misinformed or mistaken about the satisfaction of some important desires” (66). But note what is common to all of these reasons: they all block Felicia’s ability to *justifiably* affirm her life as a happy one. The issue is not her actually engaging in such an affirmation; she does so already, given the example. The issue is whether she can do so and yet have her affirmation be justified. But once Mark accepts, implicitly, this issue of justification, he needs to face the possibility that the *content* of our higher order desires and wants is now open to justification also. After all, an agent with nasty ideals would not be able to justifiably affirm his life either.

In his presentation today, Mark makes the strong case that issues of well being are connected to ones of self-esteem. Denying people self-esteem and self-respect makes their lives go worse than they might have (“Well-Being and LGBT Persons” 4). Now, *if* Mark sees a strong connection between well being and happiness, and *if* having self-respect and self-esteem is not simply a matter left up to an individual’s subjective ideals (whoever heard of a thoroughly servile person having self-respect, even if *he* somehow thinks so?), then whether one is happy cannot be a question divorced from the content of the ideals that one holds. To put it tongue in cheek, I am here pushing Mark to come out of the objectivity closet, or at least to face these issues squarely (or have I outed him?).

It might seem that my encouraging Mark to emphasize the notion of a worthwhile life collapses the distinction between a happy life and a moral one, a collapse that many would not accept. Yet this need not be so, for not all objective values are moral ones. People who devote their lives to being artists, chefs, athletes, etc. do so by having higher order goals that are nonmoral. Their lives, if the conditions relevant to happiness were satisfied, would be happy, even if the people themselves leave much to be desired in how they actually morally conduct their lives. Having said this much, however, there is also something to be said for the Aristotelian claim that a happy life is one essentially constituted by virtuous activity. Aristotle also included a list of external goods that a life must also have for it to be happy, and it is here that his view departs from some of those of his fellow Greeks, especially the Stoics. While Mark briefly explains Aristotle’s view (“Life Plan” 5; “What Is Happiness?” 6), he does not directly criticize it. In addition to the fact that his view contains no explicit mention of virtuous activity, Mark’s rejection of Aristotle’s view comes out clearly in his reply to the criticism that a view such as his is normative, not descriptive. Mark states, “We may judge one [life plan] as being better in certain ways (from perhaps a moral point of view, or the point of view of likelihood of success), but those are value judgments about the life plans, and not judgments about whether they are life plans” (“Life Plan” 13). It is clear that Mark wants to have no truck with a view of happiness that attempts to restrict the content of the higher-order desires.

However, restrictions may be necessary. Some recent virtue ethicists have defended the claim that being virtuous is one’s best bet for being happy.⁵ One of my favorite ways of explaining and defending this claim goes as follows⁶: if I want to lead a happy life, I had better be virtuous. The reason is that people not only prefer that I treat them justly, courageously, generously, etc. but they also prefer that I *want* to treat them in these ways. People prefer that others have the moral psychological make-up of desiring or wanting to act justly, generously, etc. because having such a make-up renders

people more reliable in their actions toward one another. But having the moral psychological make-up of desiring to act justly, generously, etc. is really nothing but possessing the virtues of justice, generosity, etc. Thus, if I want to be part of society, to be treated well, to have friends, etc., I had better cultivate in myself the virtues. There is also nothing cynical in this: to increase my chances of happiness, I cannot simply pretend to be virtuous; I really need to be so, and so I really need to have the actual, moral bling-blings that are the virtues. Since an important condition for a happy life might be its likelihood of success, and since such likelihood might hinge on having the virtues, neo-Aristotelians need not be way off in their insistence on being virtuous. One can, of course, get away with being happy *and* nonvirtuous, but the chances of this are slim.

I agree with the core of Mark’s view of happiness. My critical suggestions are motivated by my immense respect for him and his work, and they are meant to encourage him to think of possible objections to his view, thereby also encouraging him to make it stronger and more plausible by at least responding to such objections if not even incorporating them into his own position. I find these objections to not be antithetical to his view but to be compatible with it, though they might push him to take his view into a more normative direction. They simply demand tweaking Mark’s position more. And, as I often like to say in my more sober moments, the tweakier, the happier.

Endnotes

1. “‘But I’m Happy’: Happiness and Oppression.” In *Prairie Home Philosophy* (Moorhead, MN: Moorhead State University, 1987); “The Life Plan View of Happiness and the Paradoxes of Happiness in Economics,” presented at “The Paradoxes of Happiness in Economics” Conference, University of Milan-Bicocca, March 21-23, 2003; “What Is Happiness? Some Answers from Philosophy and the Social Sciences,” presented at Concordia College, Moorhead, MN, April 21, 2004.
2. Mill states, in his discussion of the general unwillingness of human beings to trade places with animals so as to have simple yet more easily satisfiable desires, “Whoever supposes that this preference takes place at a sacrifice of happiness...confounds the two very different ideas, of *happiness* and *content*” (*Utilitarianism*, Prometheus Books, Amherst, NY: 1987). Mill’s point is that because of dignity, human beings would not trade places with animals and can bear the imperfections of life and be at least content, if not even happy since, to many, dignity is part of their happiness.
3. I borrow this distinction from Lynne McFall, *Happiness* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 34.
4. What I say here is indebted to McFall, *Happiness*.
5. I have in mind especially Rosalind Hursthouse. *On Virtue Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), especially Part III.
6. I rely on McFall, *Happiness*, Chapter VI.

Beyond Tragedy to What?

Claudia Card

University of Wisconsin

Philosophers who reflect on the social situation of LGBTs usually find issues of justice or, more likely, injustice. Richard Mohr, for example, has written splendid entire books on that subject. When I reflect on the social situation of LGBTs, I find evils. But when *Mark Chekola* reflects on the social situation of LGBTs, he finds impediments to *happiness*. His focus is well being. How refreshing! almost a physical relief to filter issues through the prism of happiness, which never occurs to me. Mark builds his case for social change by appealing to a promise of greater happiness, eventually for everyone. He is right to refuse to be satisfied with less and to aim beyond the need to uphold personal dignity and integrity at great costs in happiness to create a society in which we can have it all: not merely dignity but downright happiness in long-term relationships, social support for our self-esteem, extraverted personalities, and a greatly lowered suicide rate for LGBT teens (there I go, highlighting evils—incurable!).

What is happiness? The title of Mark's paper uses the term "well being," although the paper itself more frequently mentions happiness. Well being seems the right concept. If well being is what is at stake, I have questions regarding the evidence used by studies that purport to show married people happier, that is, better off. "Subjective well being" suggests self-reports, ostensibly based on introspection. It also sounds like "contentment." But John Stuart Mill was right that happiness is not the same as contentment. Even if reports are sincere and as honest as the reporter knows how to make them, they are not reliable indicators of physical or psychological health (undeniably important to well being). More objectively determinable indicators of well being would include absence of severe disabilities, injuries, and illnesses; absence of convictions for crimes and misdemeanors; presence of job security; positions held and promotions (or elections) at work, in government, or in public service; connectedness with a larger community; and even such things as residence and recreation. Has anyone compared marrieds with unmarrieds who have a choice (I'll return to those who don't later) in such relatively objective terms?

Knowing what I do of marital abuse, I have to be skeptical of self-reporting by marrieds of how they *feel*. People unhappy in their marriages who think they have no better option are apt to report they are happy, when all they mean is things could be worse (they probably have been). You might be astonished at what women with low expectations report being satisfied with ("he brings home a paycheck," "he doesn't beat me," "he's not an alcoholic," "he doesn't bring home VD"). Divorces can be so difficult that married couples have a great investment in being as positive as possible about their marriage. Worse, abused partners are not free to report negative feelings but learn to say what they think their abuser would want to hear. Some identify with abusers in what is variously known as the "hostage syndrome," or the "Stockholm syndrome."

As to the relative unhappiness of unmarrieds, how many are irreparably soured by the experience of a past marriage? How many widowed and grieving? Happiest might be those who *never* married, which a study that looked only at current marital status would not show. As long as marriage is part of the basic structure of society, it is predictable that people arbitrarily excluded from participating in it will be unhappy *about that discrimination*. Of course, that does not mean they are less well off than marrieds, that they would be happier

married, or that marriage is what makes those who marry happier. It may be the social acceptability of marrieds that is responsible for their relative contentment, if indeed they are relatively contented. But that brings me to Mark's second indicator of happiness, namely, self-esteem.

This indicator is more plausible. But there is a relevant complication not reflected in Rawls's discussion of self-esteem. To the extent that who we are is not determined simply by genetics combined with our own individual choices but is also, in part, socially constructed, our identities are partly dependent on social practices, most of which we have not chosen. Hostile practices can disfigure us. The problem then is not simply that others fail to respect us. They have a hand in determining who we are. They do us substantial harm by making us into beings that are, for example, ridiculous. Our response should not be to take pride in a ridiculous identity but to change that identity, which is not just a matter of correcting a false appearance but requires changing social practices that partly construct us. So-called "internalized homophobia" is a rational fear of being disfigured by others. The right response is to stop them from disfiguring us. That requires collective action to address social practices. We need to be able to have selves that are worthy of esteem, whether our own or others'. The self-esteem we should want requires not just that others value and affirm us, as Rawls said, but also that they construct us and help us to construct ourselves in positive ways. We become who we are in community, not separately.

I was taken with Mark's quotation from Ronald Dworkin about evaluating lives on the challenge model, responding to the right challenge in the right way. Our ability to do that can depend on others' willingness to join in collective action. Lacking that cooperation, many try to protect themselves from public disfigurement by "passing" and closets. But, of course, closets construct us, also. The result is no less disfigured, although that may be less apparent to others.

I am reading Nicola Lacey's biography of the British philosopher H. L. A. Hart. Hart's book *The Concept of Law* was a text in seminars the year I started grad school. His articles on punishment were influential on my dissertation. His book *Law, Liberty, Morality* and classic essay "Are There Any Natural Rights?" (highly influential on Rawls) struck a chord with me as an undergraduate eager to protest social interference with consensual sexual behavior among adults. Lacey's book reveals that Hart regarded himself, from an early age, as a "repressed homosexual" (Hart's language). Aware of his orientation, he developed also what seemed then to be a good sexual relationship with a woman, whom he married and with whom he had children. But he lost interest in sex after the first child and did not cease to ruminate on his sexual orientation. I am not yet halfway through the book, but this theme is one to which the author continually returns, quoting from Hart's letters and diaries. Learning these things gave me a new appreciation of Hart's philosophical concerns. It also gave me a heavy heart to think of Hart, who left such a marvelous philosophical legacy, unhappy. More selfishly, it would have been so validating to me as an undergraduate to know that this philosopher, whom I admired so much, was also gay!

How many other Herbert Harts are out there in our philosophical communities, whom we may never know about—to all appearances highly successful, major contributors, profoundly admired, but either personally in turmoil or constantly having to guard against an exposure that could bring the rest crashing down? Simone de Beauvoir never came out publicly during her lifetime. Neither Hart nor Beauvoir was able to face the right challenge in the right way because they lacked the kind of community that would make it possible

to combat social disfigurement (never mind being able to keep a job in one's chosen field of endeavor).

I recently watched, in the space of a week, the entire first season of the Showtime TV series "The L Word" (now out on DVD). As with "The Sopranos," I was completely sucked in, stayed up way too late watching episodes, and am hooked into watching the current season on TV. It's always on after the children should be in bed (so I stay up much too late those nights), and, of course, it's not on a network channel (so I pay way too much for cable service). I have to be suspicious of my fascination with this show. It's a fantasy, of course. But is it a good one? Or just a seductive one? There are problems with the way it constructs lesbians. It does so the way the media tries to construct all American women: as ultra-thin (except for one African American character), mostly yuppies, incredibly beautiful, and obsessed with sex and/or marriage and/or having children. There is certainly an improvement here in the direction of justice over an earlier era's portrayals of us as weird, immoral, sick, or obviously ridiculous. But there is a price paid in assimilating lesbian life to the American dream of a high-end house in the suburbs, yuppie parties, and attempts to produce a family. Were real lesbian life to approach that ideal, no doubt others' esteem for us would rise, we would no longer appear disfigured; we might even be more extraverted and no more neurotic than our heterosexual neighbors (although surely no less). But would we be better off? Better off than what? What should be our benchmark?

Mark begins by asking how injustice affects our well being or happiness, an interesting question not usually asked. Comparisons with heterosexuals may suggest wrongly that because they do not suffer the same discriminations, they do not suffer from injustice, which needs only to be stated for its falsity to be evident. In aiming for well being, we should aim higher than equality with any existing group. We may need a *new* set of social practices rather than assimilation into existing ones.

Thank you, Mark, for your decades of dedicated work in bringing gay and lesbian philosophy to university students, in SLGP and the APA Committee on the Status of LGBTs in the Profession, and for your activism and insistence on the importance of undergraduate teaching. You contribute effectively to the changes we need in social practice. And I'm happier for knowing you.

Singularity and Community: An Appreciation of Mark Chekola

Anita Silvers

San Francisco State University

Part I. Meeting Mark

I first met Mark Chekola in the early 1980s in a bar in Washington, D.C. To most of you, that remark sounds like an ordinary reminiscence. But Mark is looking puzzled, as I expected he would. That's because he knows he and I never sat and talked together in a bar in Washington, D.C., in the 80s. We've done so in a Boston bar in the twenty-first century. We've done so in a Chicago bar, and in a Moorhead, Minnesota, bar, as well. But not in Washington, D.C., and surely not in the '80s.

I'm using "know" here in its honorific philosophical sense, meaning that Mark's belief about not having first met in the 1980s is true. It was nearly two decades later that we started working together on APA projects. And when we did so, I

both understood and appreciated what I had learned about him when I met him in that bar in Washington, D.C., in the early '80s. Back in that bar, I was sitting with a good friend of mine, a colleague on the National Council for the Humanities. My friend was a long-term president of a state college. Through his eyes, I could see what a college looks like when observed from the top down, rather than from my usual viewpoint from the bottom up. And he was much taken that day with concern about one of his philosophy faculty members, who had been talking in public about being gay.

Not, as my friend the Minnesota college president reflected, that this philosopher was strident. Nor defensive. He was just matter of fact. But what would happen now, my friend the president worried, in the small town America climate of Fargo-Moorhead.

From my San Francisco perspective, I supposed dismissively that if this president had nothing more to worry about than a philosopher who was talking to the community about being gay, his college must be in remarkably good shape. But then I started listening more attentively. For my friend was reassuring himself that his philosopher would win over the community without (he said somewhat regretfully) even needing the president's protection and help. And the philosopher to whom his narrative was introducing me came through clearly as a remarkable person. His philosopher was widely admired, relied upon by circle upon circle of neighbors and friends, embedded in the community. In fact, his philosopher made community, cultivated community around himself. For the community, the philosopher's identity was the product of links already forged. So life would go on as before Mark had started to educate the Fargo-Moorhead community about being gay, my college president friend decided.

And that was Mark, when I first met him, in a bar in Washington, almost a quarter-century ago.

Part II. Another Link

Let me now quote from the wonderful paper Mark gave us tonight: "LGBT people grow up alone; there is no history." This observation is at the core of another link Mark has forged, a connection and bond to the disability community.

Many disabled people also grow up alone. Let me illustrate the aloneness of disability with a well-known aspect of growing up deaf. There are comparatively few deaf families. So most congenitally deaf children grow up in hearing families. Deaf children in hearing families often never meet a deaf adult. For that reason, some deaf children believe that they will be hearing when they are grown, as all adults they have observed are hearing. There are other deaf children who believe they will die before they are grown, for they've never encountered a deaf adult. Disabled children live their lives without experiencing themselves as tragic. They just live. A commonplace achievement for others may be a crowning one for them, yet make them just as happy. But it isn't long before they discover that their experienced self-image differs wrenchingly from who they are in the eyes of others.

Thus takes root the double whammy of the double consciousness W. E. B. DuBois identified in the victims of racism. This distortion of how one thinks about one's self is a familiar response to being stigmatized. First, one feels the prospective fear that one's life will be of lesser value because one won't achieve a "normal" life plan. Later, as life unfolds and opportunities pass one by, foreshadowing fear becomes retrospective regret. The double consciousness transforms social devaluation into personal devaluation, the latter magnified because so many life plan intentions are not to be fulfilled.

To escape the pitying and demeaning glance and touch, the disabled child passes by pretending. The child with low vision memorizes the answers and pretends he can see the board; the crippled child finds excuses to skip field trips so her classmates won't see that she can't climb stairs. Dissemble, stay apart, try to escape the schoolyard attacks that are provoked because you haven't been adept enough to closet your differences.

Part III.

You will recognize the terms of the description I've just given of young disabled people's lives. They echo the words of Mark's eloquent paper. Mark has realized, and acted with understanding of, the similar societal distancing of young LGBT and young disabled people. In his community-making, he has worked for a special sort of change, for social commitment that abandons not only the ideal of normalcy but the very idea of it.

In a news story dated June 1984, Mark wrote about how the then-mayor of Fargo refused to rescind his proclamation of Gay-Lesbian Pride Week, despite dissent and criticism from the rest of the city commission. That was the town climate that prompted the concern the president of Moorhead State felt for Mark. But Mark thrived in the Fargo-Moorhead community because he embraced all of it. When I visited Fargo-Moorhead twenty years later, I saw the community Mark has made over those decades since I first met him in the 1980s. For disabled students at Minnesota State University, for younger LGBT citizens in Fargo-Moorhead, as well as for LGBT people in the APA, Mark has been the center that holds. Now we hope he will be the same for disabled people in the APA. He will join the Inclusiveness Committee in July to provide expertise about disabled people. I think he will make a community for us in the APA as he has for LGBT philosophers.

I am so sanguine because Mark's heart, his commitment, his judgment, his wisdom enable him to link people so they don't see each other's lives as tragic. To use his own terms, Mark's public-mindedness contributes to the public's health. This quality is the one that reassured my friend, Mark's university's president, when he told me about Mark protectively, and with pride, two decades ago. Community emanates from Mark, making him of priceless value for people who have grown up alone.

Honoring Mark Chekola

Carol V. A. Quinn

University of California—Los Angeles

In his outstanding paper, Mark Chekola speaks of American hostility toward LGBT persons, which threatens their happiness and well being, preventing many from leading flourishing lives. Despite that many American LGBT persons have gone from being an invisible, vulnerable, often shame-filled minority to being a proud community whose members demand full legal and social equality and an end to injustices, many still face hostility, harassment, dismissal, and arrest because of their sexual orientation.

Change has been slow—turtle-slow. As Joyce Murdoch and Deb Price point out in their book *Courting Justice: Gay Men and Lesbians v. the Supreme Court*,

resting on the foot of lampposts outside the Supreme Court building are bronze tortoises, a symbolic reminder that justice moves slowly and cannot be rushed. In dealing with basic gay civil rights, most

justices have taken the turtle mimicry to extremes—pulling in their heads to ignore serious inequities and counting on the hard shell of life time tenure to shield them from confrontation with topics they wished to avoid. As a result, the court has often seemed to more closely resemble a lamppost tortoise than a live one that actually moves.” (9)

Here, I want to first briefly comment about damages to well being and self-esteem, relating Mark's comments to John Griffin's terrific work *Black Like Me*. The audience might also remember the end of the book, which talks about the progress and the promise of the movement to promote racial equality, which I hope provides insights for the LGBT cause. Above all, I want to find ways, as I am sure we all do, of effecting social change to permit flourishing lives for LGBT persons. Perhaps some of my comments, like Mark's, will work toward that end.

Next, I will speak about the neuroticism about which Mark discusses, relating it to work in the psychology and philosophy of trauma. I want to suggest that many LGBT persons (as well as other oppressed groups) experience symptoms of those suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and if we look at this disorder, we might find ways to help the LGBT community heal.

Finally, I want to say a few words about a disturbing trend in happiness and well being studies, one not mentioned by Mark and being promoted by Daniel Gilbert, a psychologist from Harvard. This trend is disturbing since it works against the promotion of social change, and I believe that the LGBT community has a responsibility to respond to it.

Hostility, Self-Esteem, and *Black Like Me*

Those familiar with *Black Like Me* will recall that John Griffin was a White journalist who, in the late 1950s, darkened his skin through medical treatments, thereby exchanging his privileged life as a southern White man for a despised, unemployed Black man in the Deep South. In speaking of the hostility, hatred, even the self-loathing and shame, Griffin begins in his Preface:

The Negro. The South. These are details. The real story is the universal one of man who destroy the souls and bodies of other men (and in the process destroy themselves) for reasons neither really understands. It is the story of the persecuted, the defrauded, the feared, and the detested. I could have been a Jew in Germany, a Mexican in a number of States, or a member of any “inferior” group. Only the details would have differed. The story would be the same.

The story would be the same. Because of the various roadblocks to well being, their possibility for a flourishing life seems impossible from the outset and, so, a lot of them “without even understanding the cause, just give up. They take what they can—mostly in pleasure, and they make the grand gesture, the wild gesture, because what have they got to lose if they do die in a car wreck or a knife fight, or something equally stupid.” Griffin speaks of the double problem for the Negro: “First the discrimination against him. Second, and almost more grievous, the discrimination against himself; his contempt for the blackness that he associates with his suffering; his willingness to sabotage his fellow Negroes because they are part of the blackness he has found so painful.” The story would be the same for any “inferior” group. Griffin's words ring stingingly true still today for many LGBT persons who still experience this self-loathing.

At the end of his book, Griffin talks about the fragmented individualism of the Black man who tried to make it in society: in order to succeed, he had to become an imitation White man—dress White, talk White, think White, express the values of middle-class Whites (at least when in the presence of White men). Implicit in all this was the hiding, the denial, of his selfhood, his negritude, his culture, as though they were somehow shameful. If he succeeded, he was an alienated, marginalized man (190). We see this now (or imagine it) in many LGBT persons who become imitation heterosexuals, hiding their true selves and alienating themselves from the strength of their culture and fellow LGBT community.

But many have not. Just as Black people deliberately stopped trying to imitate White men in dress, speech, and etiquette, and Blacks studied Black history and developed Black pride, and looked to community leaders for strength and support, many in the LGBT community are doing something similar. The result is that the nation is becoming polarized. It happened in Griffin's time, and it is happening now. But once the process begins, there is no reversing the move toward equality and liberation.

Neuroticism and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Mark speaks of the hostility toward LGBT people that promotes what he calls situational or environmentally-induced neuroticism. I see in many LGBT persons signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As psychologist Judith Herman explains in *Trauma and Recovery*, there is a wide range of traumatic disorders ranging from effects of a single overwhelming event (such as a rape) to the more complicated effects of chronically traumatized people who have experienced prolonged and repeated abuse, such as the battered woman, the incest victim, those experiencing the terrors of war, victims of hate crimes, those who are members of hated and persecuted groups. As Herman explains, people with PTSD have damaged selves. Symptoms include persistent dysphoria, explosive or extremely inhibited anger, compulsive or extremely inhibited sexuality, a sense of helplessness, shame, guilt, self-blame, a sense of defilement or stigma, a sense of utter aloneness and alienation, isolation, detachment, a disruption in intimate relationships, a sense of hopelessness and despair.

To recover from PTSD, survivors need the help of others in a supportive community to rebuild a positive view of the self, restore a sense of personal worth and self-esteem, and overcome feelings of fear, distrust, and isolation. As Herman says, if a survivor is lucky enough to have a supportive family, lovers, or friends, their care and protection can have a strong healing influence. This speaks to the need for a strong, supportive LGBT community to help those who all too commonly suffer in silence. We have many strong, caring leaders in the LGBT community, including Mark, whose leadership and determination help to heal those in our community.

On Daniel Gilbert's Happiness Studies and Its Negative Effects on Social Change

Much of Mark's paper discusses the implications of happiness and well being studies on LGBT persons, discussing how various injustices affect their well being. Dan Gilbert provides a theory of happiness and well being that works against social change. According to Gilbert, people possess what he calls a psychological immune system, which speeds their recovery from negative emotional effects. Regardless of the seriousness of the negative event or events, people quickly return to a baseline level of happiness, which allows them to pursue their goals emotionally unencumbered. This is because people rationalize or reconstruct the events to make them less painful.

According to Gilbert, people reduce the emotional power of events by making sense of them, a process called "ordinization." By turning the extraordinary into the ordinary, people rob events of their emotional power. It is to a person's evolutionary advantage to recover quickly from negative emotional events. Extreme states of either dysphoria or euphoria would make it difficult to engage in rational decision-making, it would be physiologically taxing, and so on. People create meaningful narratives to make sense of negative and painful events, making them less emotionally powerful, so we are able to return to normalcy. Emotional recovery (and a return to baseline happiness and well being) can be facilitated by ordinizing negative events. (See "Making Sense: the Causes of Emotional Evanescence.") The implications of this theory seem obvious. Never mind what harms, mistreatments, ongoing oppressions, or societal ills come our way, our bodies have bounce-back recovery systems that will keep us happily going along. There is, then, no incentive to work against injustices and for real equality for all. People are amazingly resilient and will quickly "get over it."

Thank you, Mark, for all your work in SLGP and LGBT. And thank you for the countless times you have helped and comforted me as editor. You have truly been a lifesaver.