



Ricerca

Happiness and well-being

Prof. Kevin Mulligan

Duration: 36 months

Description of the research: The topic of well-being and happiness has been the object of a great deal of recent research in many different disciplines - in economics, psychology, medicine, cognitive science and philosophy. Many different questions, empirical and conceptual, have emerged. The present project aims to investigate the conceptual questions which arise when one tries to understand the interrelations between happiness on the one hand, and pleasures on the other. What is the relation between the state of happiness and episodes of pleasure? More broadly, what is the relation between happiness, unhappiness, well-being and other lasting states and dispositions, on the one hand, and pleasures, unpleasures, pains, sufferings and other short-term hedonic episodes on the other? The philosophical literature on this topic has been dominated by reductionist proposals: either pleasure is analysed in terms of happiness, or, more standardly, happiness is analysed in terms of pleasure. The first part of this project aims at assessing such hedonic reductionist accounts of happiness. Despite some initial intuitive appeal, such approaches encounter important difficulties. In the second part of this project, we plan to assess and develop some, non-reductionist ways of accounting for the nature of happiness capturing the relations between pleasure and happiness.

Foreseen results: The results of the project will be submitted in the form of scientific articles to leading philosophical and interdisciplinary journals, such as *Emotion Review*, *Philosophy* and *Psychology*.

Researchers: Prof. K. Mulligan, Dr. Olivier Massin (Maître Assistant, UniGE, member of Interdisciplinary Centre in Affective Science).

International collaborations: The project would ideally involve close cooperation between the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Affective Science (NCCR, director: Prof. D. Sander), based in Geneva, of which Kevin Mulligan was the Deputy-Director from 2005 to 2011, the Geneva emotions group, *thumos*, established by K. Mulligan, and the group of philosophers working on suffering in Glasgow (Prof. M. Brady). The project can also count on the active participation of Prof. Clotilde Calabi (State University, Milan), one of Mulligan's PhD students, the author of numerous papers and books in the relevant areas.

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Published:

- 2014 [Review of 2011 T. Rønnow-Rasmussen, *Personal Value*, OUP], Vol. 26, 2 (June 2014), *Utilitas*, 221-223.
- 2015, "Secondary Meaning, Paraphraseability & Pictures", in *L'expression des émotions: Mélanges dédiés à Patrizia Lombardo*,
- Martin Rueff et Julien Zanetta (eds.), Geneva, 2015, URL:
- <http://www.unige.ch/lettres/framo/melangeslombardo.html>





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