

Introduction

The ideal of human happiness is doubtless as old as mankind itself and the history of this tradition is rich and varied.¹ However, across the globe, particularly in the post-industrial ‘developed’ world, people are preoccupied, perhaps more than they have been at any other point in history, with the “unquestioning certainty” that they should be happy.² This “duty to be happy”³ is reflected in the huge amount of research literature on the topic, carried out in diverse fields such as neurology, psychology, sociology and, particularly, in economics, where the number of scholarly articles has increased exponentially, especially in the early years of the twenty-first century.⁴ The heightened scientific interest in what makes happy individuals and happy societies, and in how such happiness is to be measured, certainly seems set to continue, as is indicated by international, longitudinal studies monitoring life satisfaction and ‘social well-being’. Initiatives such as the World Happiness Report, launched by the UN in 2012,⁵ or the OECD Better Life Index,⁶ the Happy Planet Index,⁷ or the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index⁸ collate data

¹ Darrin McMahon comments on this diversity, remarking that “the ‘happiness’ of yesterday bears only a scarce resemblance to the ‘happiness’ of today, though there are important connections”. *The Pursuit of Happiness. A History from the Greeks to the Present*. London: Penguin Books, 2006, p. xiv.

² Darrin M. McMahon: *The Pursuit of Happiness in History*. In: Susan A. David, Ilona Boniwell and Amanda Conley Ayers: *The Oxford Handbook of Happiness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013, p. 252-62, p. 252.

³ See Pascal Bruckner: *Perpetual Euphoria. On the Duty to be Happy*, trans by Stephen Rendell. Princeton, Oxford: Princeton UP, 2010.

⁴ US psychologist Martin Seligman is one of the key figures in the positive psychology movement, which has led the happiness agenda, whilst experts such as the Dutch academic Ruut Veenhoven, who is a founding director of the World Database of Happiness, has made a substantial contribution in the field of sociology. In the German-speaking world sociologist Alfred Bellebaum, who founded the Institut für Glücksforschung in 1999, has also been prolific in the field. The economics of happiness have been dominated by economists such as Richard Easterlin (US), Bruno Frey (Switzerland) and Richard Layard (UK). On the proliferation of research in the field of economics, Frey and Stutzer write: “The number of published articles referenced in EconLit in any given year that mention happiness, life satisfaction or subjective well-being in the title or abstract has increased from 3 in 1986-90 to 146 in 2011.” Bruno S Frey and Alois Stutzer: Introduction. In: Frey and Stutzer (eds): *Recent Developments in the Economics of Happiness*. Cheltenham, Northampton, MA: Elgar, 2013, p. ix-xix, here p. ix.

⁵ John F. Helliwell, Richard Layard and Jeffrey Sachs (eds): *World Happiness Report 2015*, New York: Sustainable Development Solutions Network. Available online at <http://worldhappiness.report/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/04/WHR15-Apr29-update.pdf> (last accessed 12.08.2015).

⁶ <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/#/11111111111> (last accessed 13.08.2015)

⁷ <http://www.happyplanetindex.org> (last accessed 13.08.2015)

relating to the well-being of people across the world.⁹ Such studies are a response to the perception that not only are traditional measures of progress and success – particularly GDP – no longer sufficient indicators of social progress, but the exclusive focus on such indicators has, in fact, fuelled developments that are not sustainable in the face of global challenges, such as environmental threats and demographic change. In focusing on happiness, the stated aim is to establish more well-rounded, sustainable metrics for future development:¹⁰ in some places, for example the UK, the results of happiness research have already had direct influence on government policy for some years.¹¹ In other countries, such as Germany, this process is just beginning.¹² Given the ubiquity and intensity of this interest in happiness and the likelihood that its influence on public policy at national as well as at supra-national level is set to increase, it is therefore important to reconsider what we understand by happiness in all of its culturally specific inflections. This present volume is a contribution to such debates, focusing particularly on cultural constructions of happiness in the German-speaking world.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines happiness – somewhat tautologically – as the “quality or condition of being happy”, and in turn outlines “happy” as the experience of “pleasure” or “contentment”.¹³ This definition emphasizes the common element of positive affect, but the reference to both pleasure and contentment also hints that such positive affect might vary greatly in quality, for example being either a momentary experience or more enduring; more centred on the body or on the pleasures of the spirit. Etymologically, as subsequent entries make clear, the root ‘hap’ (luck or chance) also points to the circumstances in which such positive affect might be attained, namely through good fortune.¹⁴ As studies on happiness generally point out, further light may be shed on the complexity of the

⁸ <http://www.well-beingindex.com> (last accessed 13.08.2015).

⁹ The 2015 World Happiness report, for example, features data drawn from 156 countries.

¹⁰ See John F. Helliwell, Richard Layard and Jeffrey Sachs: *Setting the Stage*. World Happiness Report 2015, p. 2-11, p. 5.

¹¹ In the UK, economist Richard Layard, whose research focuses on well-being and happiness has been very influential in advising the Cameron government. For some of Layard’s key ideas see, for example, Richard Layard: *Happiness. Lessons from a New Science*. London: Penguin, 2005.

¹² The authors of a 2010 SOEP (German Socio-Economic Panel) paper note that, until recently, policymakers have largely focused on measuring income and economic growth in order to assess quality of life in Germany, but as the title of the study itself indicates, there is now a move to develop social well-being indicators for the German context, which will, presumably, become more central to public policymaking over the coming years. Ulrich van Suntum, Aloys Prinz and Nicole Uhde: *Lebenszufriedenheit und Wohlbefinden in Deutschland: Studie zur Konstruktion eines Lebenszufriedenheitsindikators*. SOEP Papers, Berlin, January 2010, p. 2.

¹³ OED Clarendon Press 2nd edition 1989. Vol. VI, p. 1097.

¹⁴ McMahon points out that “[I]t is striking that in virtually every Indo-European language, the modern word for happiness is cognate with luck, fortune or fate.” (McMahon: *The Pursuit of Happiness. A History*, p. 10.)

concept by going back to the Latin terms, which refer more specifically to the various dimensions that have characterized the concept over its long history: *fortuna* (luck that befalls us and over which we have no control); *beatitudo* (the sense of a contentment with a life well-lived); and *felicitas* (success in life, love or work, which promises to bring about a state of happiness, and which is achieved by personal effort as well as luck).¹⁵ Happiness, it seems, is far from simple to define. In the German language, this is exacerbated by what Ulrike Tanzer describes as a certain reluctance to develop commonly used synonyms: hence the single term ‘Glück’ connotes luck, the momentary experience of happiness or pleasure, and the continued state of happiness or contentment.¹⁶

More recently, the commonly used lexis of happiness has been extended by the enormous academic – and popular science – interest in the topic, so that terms such as (subjective) well-being [(subjektives) Wohlbefinden] and life-satisfaction [Lebenszufriedenheit] are often used interchangeably with ‘happiness’.¹⁷ These terms are indicative of the synthesized approach, which well-being studies often aim to take in the measurement of happiness by combining self-evaluation of affective states – whether one feels happy or not at a particular point in time – with subjective evaluation of life satisfaction over the longer term, as well as taking into account data pertaining to key social factors that are considered to be important in the creation of happy circumstances.¹⁸ As the editors of the 2015 *World Happiness Report* explain, however, despite the wealth of terminology the term ‘happiness’ – and this is true also of the German term ‘Glück’ – frequently continues to be used as a placeholder for a multifaceted understanding of the phenomenon, not least because

¹⁵ Annemarie Pieper: Glückssache. Die Kunst gut zu leben, Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2001, see esp. pp 32-33.

¹⁶ Ulrike Tanzer: Fortuna, Idylle, Augenblick, Aspekte des Glücks in der Literatur, Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann: 2011, p. 18.

¹⁷ See van Suntum et al.: Lebenszufriedenheit und Wohlbefinden in Deutschland, p.3, footnote 4 on the frequently interchangeable use of these German terms and the term ‘Glück’, despite certain semantic distinctions. In the 2015 World Happiness Report, Helliwell, Huang and Shun explain that the term happiness – as opposed to other commonly used terms such as well-being and subjective well-being – is used in the title of report because of its powerful potential to attract attention, but also precisely because of its ambiguity, which captures a range of associated dimensions. John F. Helliwell, Haifang Huang and Shun Wang: The Geography of World Happiness. In: Helliwell et al.: World Happiness Report 2015, p. 12-41, p. 17.

¹⁸ The editors of the 2015 World Happiness Report show that the six most important variables are income, social support, generosity, freedom from corruption, healthy life expectancy, and freedom to make life choices, thus confirming that well-being and life satisfaction rest on a combination of material, social and interpersonal/ psychological factors, which the editors argue can help to generate a fuller picture of how to measure social progress. Helliwell, Haifang and Wang: The Geography of World Happiness, p. 21.

it has a strong attraction for recipients, an attraction borne out in the enormous hit-rate encountered in any brief internet search of the term.¹⁹

The current focus on happiness as an indicator of social progress is symptomatic of another important dimension to the concept, namely the longstanding question of the ‘good life’ and hence, the relationship between individually experienced happiness, morality, and the happiness of the public body. What begins in Ancient Greek civilization as *eudaimonia*, the idea that a good life is bestowed upon human beings by unpredictable supernatural forces²⁰ and evolves in the Christian tradition as the notion of happiness in an afterlife, a reward for Christian behaviour on earth,²¹ is transformed towards the end of the eighteenth century into the conviction that happiness is a human right, which can be attained in the here and now and is subject to human control. For Western tradition, this is undoubtedly a watershed moment: in Pascal Bruckner’s words: “The Enlightenment and the French Revolution not only proclaimed the erasure of original sin but entered into history as a promise of happiness addressed to humanity as a whole.”²² Jeremy Bentham’s maxim “the greatest happiness of the greatest number”²³ encapsulates this modern, rational approach to social well-being that continues to inform the widespread concern with happiness in our own period.

Although the notion of fostering individual happiness as a means of ensuring the greatest happiness of the greatest number seems unquestionably positive, it is certainly not unproblematic and indeed was accompanied, from the outset, by cultural and philosophical pessimism about the potential for human happiness as a product of modern social progress. Thus, modernity has conventionally been associated with unhappiness and alienation, and characterized by a paradoxical, precarious concept of happiness, existing symbiotically with unhappiness.²⁴ Today,

¹⁹ A cursory search for the term ‘happiness’ under the rubric ‘books’ on the Amazon.com website delivered 88,030 results. A similar search under ‘Glück’ on Amazon.de delivered 32,966 results, suggesting that the equivalent German term is also attractive and therefore continues to be a dominant term. www.amazon.com and www.amazon.de (last accessed 13.08.2015).

²⁰ The Greek term ‘eudaimonia’ refers to the notion that the happy man is one who is accompanied through life by good (‘eu’) spirit (‘daimon’). See McMahon: *The Pursuit of Happiness. A History*, p. 3-7.

²¹ For St. Augustine, genuine, eternal happiness can only happen in a life beyond this earth and he argued that “diesseitiger Besitz aber ohne Hoffnung auf das Jenseits ist falsches Glück und großes Elend” (cit. in Pieper: *Glückssache*, p. 264).

²² Bruckner: *Perpetual Euphoria*, p. 28.

²³ In the preface to his 1776 text *A Fragment on Government* Bentham wrote “it is the greatest happiness of the the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong”. Jeremy Bentham: *A Comment on the Commentaries and A Fragment on Government*, ed by J. H. Burns and H.L.A. Hart. London: Athlone Press, 1977, p. 393-551, here p. 393.

²⁴ Thomas Bulmahn highlights the conventional link made between modernity and unhappiness: “Towards the close of the nineteenth century it was commonly doubted that individuals could live happily in modern society. After a century of many catastrophes these doubts have given way to general pessimism. The question asked today is just how

although the countries in the wealthy regions of Europe and the developed world, rank among the happiest,²⁵ the combination of a sophisticated multi-media marketing industry and the decline of meta-narratives that place happiness beyond the control of the individual – such as religious notions of happiness in an afterlife, or political ideologies, which seek to construct social utopias – have meant that precisely post-industrial, wealthy nations are often negatively affected by the performance-driven expectation that if one is not happy then one must be failing.²⁶ This supports the theory, known as the “Easterlin Paradox”, that above a certain threshold, increased wealth does not automatically mean increased happiness.²⁷ For Pascal Bruckner, what began as “a liberating principle of the Enlightenment, the right to happiness” has therefore been transformed into a “dogma, a collective

unhappy modernity makes the individual. Modernisation is equated with exclusion and disintegration, while anomie, unhappiness and dissatisfaction are considered structural features of modern societies.” As Bulmahn goes on to argue, the picture is, of course, more complex than this and life-satisfaction depends on the type and speed of the modernization process and the social supports put in place to accompany it. Thomas Bulmahn: *Modernity and Happiness. The Case of Germany*. In: *Journal of Happiness Studies* 1 (2000), p. 375-400, here p. 398. In cultural and philosophical terms, however, modernity has been characterized by the tendency to conceive of happiness only in relation to unhappiness and thus, the paradoxical and precarious concept of happiness has been dominant, particularly since the twentieth century. See for example Anja Gerigk: *Lesbarkeit des Glücks. Theoretische Grundfiguren*. In: Gerigk (ed.): *Glück Paradox. Moderne Literatur und Medienkultur, theoretisch gelesen*. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2010, p. 7-31.

²⁵ According to the 2015 World Happiness Report, the top ten happiest nations in the world are Switzerland, Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Canada, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, New Zealand and Australia. Of the 156 nations included in the report, Austria is ranked thirteenth and Germany lies 26th. Ireland occupies position eighteen on the scale. Of the bottom ten ranked countries eight are in sub-saharan Africa and a further two – Afghanistan and Syria – are currently experiencing war. Interestingly, Ireland’s relatively strong position in the world happiness table, demonstrates the importance of socially and culturally specific factors in (self-)perceptions of happiness. Hence, despite the huge impact of the recent economic recession in Ireland, which was operative within the timeframe of the results featured in the 2015 World Happiness Report, Irish respondents reported relatively high levels of life-satisfaction, which Helliwell et al. attribute in part to the sense of social support enjoyed in Irish society. By contrast, Greece experienced a drastic drop in life-satisfaction, which Layard et al. argue cannot be attributed to the economic crisis alone, but to its particularly detrimental effect on social structures, which were not robust enough to withstand the crisis. See Helliwell, Haifang and Wang: *Geography of World Happiness*, p. 33f.

²⁶ The editors of a collection of essays arising from a 2008 exhibition at the Deutsches Hygiene-Museum in Dresden, raise the issue of „welchen Glückszwängen sich der Mensch heutzutage aussetzt, um sein Leben als ein ‘gelungenes’ Leben bezeichnen zu können“. Beate Hentschel and Giesela Staupe: *Eine Einleitung – Keine Einleitung zum Glücklichsein*. In: Hentschel and Staupe (eds): *Glück – Welches Glück*. Munich: Carl Hanser: 2008, p. 23-26, here p. 23.

²⁷ See Frey and Stutzer: *Introduction*, p. xiii.

catechism”, even a “collective drug”.²⁸ Such a duty or compulsion can result in anxiety and shame if expectations of happiness are not met, which Hentschel and Staube associate with the fact that, despite the privileged lifestyles available to many in the first world, nevertheless, anxiety and depression continue to be rife.²⁹ Finally, the “rampant individualism”³⁰ of the happiest nations has facilitated the instrumentalization of contemporary concepts of happiness as a powerful “disciplinary technique”,³¹ used in the service of political and marketing campaigns alike. Most importantly, for critics such as Sara Ahmed, such campaigns of happiness may involve both masking the suffering and unhappiness of others and enforcing rigid social norms.

As she shows in her 2010 study *The Promise of Happiness*, happiness lends itself to such abuse particularly because, as its tautological dictionary definition suggests, it is circular in structure. Hence, Ahmed’s theory rearticulates the longstanding philosophical sense that happiness is unattainable or fleeting in the notion of happiness as a promise that works by conflating the means and the end: bluntly put, we look to achieve happiness by seeking out what we assume will make us happy. The *Promise of Happiness* interrogates the space between the idea of happiness as affect – as emotion – and as socially constituted experience: in other words how we know what is likely to bring us happiness and how our choices are steered. Ahmed shows that cultural constructions of happiness can be a powerful means of asserting social norms, inculcating conformity and cementing social hierarchies, making “certain forms of personhood valuable”.³² She contends that “the science of happiness could be described as performative: by finding happiness in certain places it generates those places as being good”.³³ These “good places” are consequently promoted as “goods” precisely because they are identified as causing happiness. This further instrumentalizes hierarchical and divisive ideas about what kind of happiness is best³⁴ and who should have access to these kinds of happiness. Such a perspective may critically illuminate the results of happiness research, such as that carried out by Layard.³⁵ To give one brief example, Layard argues that statistics

²⁸ Bruckner: *Perpetual Euphoria*, p. 5, p. 6.

²⁹ Hentschel and Staube: *Glück – Welches Glück*, p. 25.

³⁰ Ziyad Marar: *The Happiness Paradox*. London: Reaktion Books, 2003, p. 24.

³¹ Sara Ahmed: *The Promise of Happiness*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010, p. 8.

³² Ahmed: *The Promise of Happiness*, p. 11.

³³ Ahmed: *The Promise of Happiness*, p. 6.

³⁴ As Annemarie Pieper shows, the relationship of self – and social – control to the concept of happiness is a longstanding one, ranging from the Epicurean concern between the balance of physical and spiritual pleasure (*Glückssache*, p. 45-51), to Enlightenment taxonomies of happiness, (*Glückssache*, p. 45-51) which contrast the “*Schweineglück*” of the simple man, with the considered happiness of the civilized person (*Glückssache*, p. 97.).

³⁵ See Ahmed: *The Promise of Happiness*, p. 7 and also Layard: *Happiness. Lessons from a New Science*, 2005.

show marriage is an important source of happiness. He goes on to outline the “dangers” faced by marriage in contemporary society, for example from technologies such as contraception, which make extra-marital affairs “safer”.³⁶ Layard’s insistence that the measure of a society cannot be economic wealth alone and that the well-being of people and social networks must be promoted is, on the whole, very positive. However, the above example is indicative of the limitations of a circular logic in which “happiness is looked for where it is expected to be”³⁷ and which assumes that “what makes us happy is generally good for us”.³⁸ The logical step to protect and promote the identified source of happiness – for example by developing public policy such as a taxation system that favours married couples – shows how the happiness imperative can be used to perpetuate certain structures, reinforcing the value of certain kinds of personhood and social relationships and obscuring, or even excluding, more variegated, inclusive and flexible structures.

Such criticism of contemporary happiness research, as well as the contention that our current fascination with happiness is born of a desperate search to generate meaning in an environment of plural choice,³⁹ surely highlights the urgent need for a renewed and critical engagement with the discursive structure of happiness “goods” as they have developed through time in specific cultural traditions. In this context, an understanding of the way in which art, architecture, literature and philosophy have explored, and are continuing to explore, what we understand by happiness, is urgently needed. Despite this, however, cultural and literary studies have been more than a little cautious in approaching the topic. As Alan Corkhill notes, writing in 2012, “comparatively few of the 4,000 titles registered in the World Database of Happiness are concerned with conceptualisations and representations of happiness in the arts”.⁴⁰

This is perhaps all the more curious as philosophical debates, particularly those concerning human creativity and the appreciation of beauty, have, throughout history, been deeply concerned with possibilities for positive experience and emotion.⁴¹ Nevertheless, particularly since the Enlightenment, when human

³⁶ Layard: *Happiness. Lessons from a New Science*, p. 82.

³⁷ Ahmed: *The Promise of Happiness*, p. 7.

³⁸ Layard: *Happiness. Lessons from a New Science*, p. 224.

³⁹ This view is expounded by philosopher Wilhelm Schmid, who argues: “Was häufig gemeint ist, wenn nach ‘Glück’ gefragt wird, ist eigentlich ‘Sinn’. Glück kann ein Ersatzbegriff für Sinn sein. Es ist die Frage nach dem Sinn, die moderne Menschen in wachsendem Maße umtreibt.” Wilhelm Schmid: *Glück. Alles, was Sie darüber wissen müssen, und warum es nicht das Wichtigste im Leben ist*. Frankfurt a.M., Leipzig: Insel, 2007, p. 45.

⁴⁰ Alan Corkhill: *Spaces for Happiness in the Twentieth Century German Novel*. Mann, Kafka, Hesse, Jünger. Oxford, Bern: Lang, 2012, p. 1f.

⁴¹ Pieper’s survey looks at a range of philosophers and writers, including Kierkegaard, Kant, Camus, Nietzsche and Schiller, in which a recurring theme is the significance of creative activity in seeking to overcome the negative dimensions of human experience, particularly man’s disharmony with nature.

happiness becomes anchored in the here and now, loosening its connection with divinely ordained fate, it begins to suffer from the perception that it is actually a trivial matter and that it is rather unhappiness which is the proper subject of artistic endeavour and cultural criticism. In the case of literature, then, Peter J Brenner argues that “der Kanon weltliterarischer Werke kennt keine glücklichen Helden. Die Literatur liebt die Tragödie und die Melancholie”.⁴² This bias seems to hold particularly true in the German-language tradition, in which the “Glücksdiskussion” has often been beset by the prejudice that “das Glück ist nicht nur amoralisch, sondern langweilig, banal und trivial”.⁴³ Gerda Elisabeth Moser is critical of a German-language intellectual tradition, and established cultural mouthpieces such as the publications *Merkur* or *Die Zeit*, which, she argues, consider “Glück, Freude, Spaß und Vergnügen [...] apriori erklärungsbedürftig und verdächtig”. She makes the case for a split in happiness discourse between the natural sciences, which have been intent upon the task of developing strategies to promote a good life, and the cultural sciences, which are embedded in a tradition that is preoccupied with unhappiness as a driving force of human existence.⁴⁴ This tendency has, understandably, only been reinforced in the context of a culture of German guilt, shame and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in the wake of the world wars, a debate into which Austria and Switzerland have been increasingly implicated in recent years.⁴⁵ In popular terms, however, interest in happiness is high, as the huge amount of literature available indicates.⁴⁶ Moreover, contemporary studies, such as those by Meier and Thomä, suggest that perspectives on the topic are broadening in scope, to

⁴² Peter J. Brenner: Das Glück in der Literatur. In: Alfred Bellebaum: Glücksforschung. Eine Bestandsaufnahme. Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2002, p. 245-59, p. 247.

⁴³ Tanzer: *Fortuna, Idylle, Augenblick*, p. 53.

⁴⁴ Gerda Elisabeth Moser: Zur Theorie des Glücks – Post-Moderne Kulturtheorie und Ästhetik. In: Ulrike Tanzer, Eduard Beutner and Hans Höller (eds): *Das glückliche Leben – und die Schwierigkeit sie darzustellen. Glückskonzeptionen in der österreichischen Literatur. Beiträge des 14. Österreichisch-Polnischen Germanistentreffens*. Salzburg, 2000. Vienna: Dokumentationsstelle für neuere österreichische Literatur im Literaturhaus, 2002, p. 147-60, here p. 151f.

⁴⁵ Austria’s engagement with its complicity with National Socialism began somewhat later than the process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in Germany. In the last decades, particularly, Switzerland has also come under increasing pressure to account for its actions during World War Two, with the effect that “the image of Switzerland – comforting because neutral – has taken on a darker hue”. Roger Cohen: *The (Not So) Neutrals of World War II*. In: *The New York Times*, 26.01.1997 <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/01/26/weekinreview/the-not-so-neutrals-of-world-war-ii.html> (last accessed 14 August 2015).

⁴⁶ On the subject of self-help books and happiness in the German context see Ute Bergmann: *Glücksversprechen. Diskursive Formation einer Verheißung*. Göttingen: Cuvillier Verlag, 2013. The popular appeal of the topic is illustrated also by lavishly illustrated lifestyle magazines, such as the monthly publication *Happinez*, see www.happinez.de. (last accessed 17.08.2015).

include cultural dimensions.⁴⁷ Volumes focusing on literary aspects of the topic, such as those by Tanzer and Corkhill, as well as recent edited volumes by Béhar, Gerigk, Finklele, Aspetsberger and Moser, suggest that literary criticism in the German-speaking world, too, is now beginning to look at this theme.⁴⁸

The special thematic section of this year's *Germanistik in Ireland* seeks to contribute to the debate about what is understood by happiness in the German-speaking world; how such an understanding has developed historically; and how the idea – and the ideal – of happiness impacts upon contemporary society. The contributions consider happiness discourse in historical periods from the eighteenth century to the present, and focus on a range of fields including philosophy, cultural criticism, travel guides and prose literature.

In her article on Friedrich Schiller, Hannah DINGELDEIN confirms Moser and Tanzer's contention that happiness tends to be overlooked in cultural criticism as it pertains to the German-speaking world. Dingeldein argues that Schiller's theoretical reflections on beauty and the sublime should be understood in the wider context of the Enlightenment, when "Glückswissenschaft" (p. 25) begins to come into its own. She shows that Schiller's exploration of the rift between man and nature evokes art and literature as potentially compensatory moments, but that, ultimately, the sublime must be understood as "eine Art Antwort auf die Uneinlösbarkeit des Glücksversprechens durch das Schöne" (p. 32). Schiller's sense, already in the eighteenth century, that human happiness is confounded by the alienation of a modern world in which man is but a "kleines Rädchen in einem großen Getriebe" (p.

⁴⁷ In addition to Alfred Bellebaum's contribution to interdisciplinary happiness studies in volumes such as the previously mentioned *Glücksforschung. Eine Bestandsaufnahme, 2002*, or: *Glück und Zufriedenheit. Ein Symposium*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften: 1992, other recent German-language volumes offer an interdisciplinary perspective, incorporating positions which go beyond sociological or narrowly philosophical accounts to include broader cultural aspects. These include volumes such as Heinrich Meier (ed.): *Über das Glück. Ein Symposium*. Munich, Zurich: Piper, 2008; or Dieter Thomä, Christoph Henning and Olivia Mitscherlich-Schönherr (eds): *Glück. Ein Interdisziplinäres Handbuch*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2011. Dieter Thomä's *Vom Glück in der Moderne*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2003, explores the relationship between subjectivity, modernity and happiness.

⁴⁸ Pierre Béhar (ed.): *Glück und Unglück in der österreichischen Literatur und Kultur*, Musiliana 9. Bern: Lang, 2003; Simone Finklele (ed.): *Glück –Zufall – Vorsehung: Vortragsreihe der Abteilung Mediävistik des Instituts für Literaturwissenschaft im Sommersemester 2008*. KIT Scientific Publishing, 2011 (dealing with medieval and early modern literature); Anja Gerigk (ed.): *Glück Paradox. Moderne Literatur und Medienkultur, theoretisch gelesen*, Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2010; Gerda E. Moser et al. (eds): *Idyllen und Ideologien des Glücks in der Literatur und in anderen Medien*, Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 2006. See also Friedbert Aspetsberger and Gerda Elisabeth Moser (eds): *Leiden ... Genießen: Zu Lebensformen und -kulissen in der Gegenwartsliteratur*. Innsbruck: Studienverlag, 2005. See also Corkhill's earlier monograph:

33) and his concern for the disharmony between man and the natural world give his work increased resonance in a contemporary environment in which well-being and sustainability are key preoccupations and in which questions about hierarchies of happiness are politically apposite.

Hans HAHN's analysis of Joseph von Eichendorff's novella *Das Marmorbild* (1818) and Gottfried Keller's *Der Schmied seines Glückes* (1865) continues the exploration of hierarchical and variegated concepts of happiness by comparing literary treatments of the phenomena against the backdrop of competing discourses rooted in, variously, Christian, classical and Hegelian-materialist world views. Hahn shows that Eichendorff engages in a critique of Romantic writers who create "neue[] Mythen" (p. 40) and exposes the relative limitations of classical concepts of happiness. The analysis reveals the Christian concept of happiness underlying Eichendorff's text, which points towards the possibility of reaccessing the well-being associated with the lost innocence of paradise, a process in which, in Eichendorff's understanding, poetry may play a key role. By contrast, Keller's story, published in the second volume of his *Seldwyla* collection and, Hahn argues, often overlooked by critics, shows the strong influence of Ludwig Feuerbach. Hence, the text explores the modern contention that man is responsible for creating his own happiness. Hahn shows that it engages in a critique of the superficial happiness generated by material success, suggesting instead that effort and honest work are an important source of human well-being.

Nadine WERNER's contribution explores Walter Benjamin's thinking on the subject of happiness, particularly as expressed in his 1916 essay 'Das Glück der antiken Menschen' and in the later text *Hallesches Tor* (subsequently renamed *Winterabend*). Again, Benjamin is concerned with the alienation of man from nature and the wider cosmos, to the detriment of human happiness, which he argues, has shifted into an uncertain future. For Benjamin, the child offers a way out of such disunity, for it embodies a kind of "vorindustrielles Sein" (p. 53). Werner shows how Benjamin explores the potential of a childlike "reine[] Wahrnehmung" (p. 56) for memory, showing how important remembered happiness can be for the reflecting adult, who can no longer access childhood naivete: "Für den modernen Menschen" summarizes Werner, "scheint das Glücksvermögen nicht gänzlich verloren, wenn es ihm gelingt, sich zu erinnern" (p. 57).

Anja GERIGK's contribution addresses literary criticism's emphasis on unhappiness as the driving force of human existence. In response to Peter von Matt's contention that the modernity of texts depends precisely on their portrayal of happiness as precarious, she poses the question: "[G]erät man [...] zwangsläufig an unmoderne, triviale Beispiele, sobald die gestalteten glücklichen Zustände keine nähere Beziehung zum Unglück aufweisen?" (p. 64) With reference to texts by Austrian authors Thomas Bernhard (*Korrektur*, 1975), Peter Handke (*Versuch über den geglückten Tag*, 1991) and Heimito von Doderer (*Die Strudlhofstiege*, 1951; *Die Dämonen*, 1956), she suggests an alternative dynamic, which she terms "Exzentrik" (p. 64). She argues that this spatial figure, usually connoting "ein[en] Ort, der

außerhalb des Zentrums oder weit von ihm entfernt liegt” (p. 64), offers a useful way of considering “das vom Zentrum abgerückte Glück” (p. 76). In her analysis of the chosen texts, Gerigk shows how Exzentrik manifests itself in a variety of ways, such as in the recycled utopian figure of the “Kegel” in Bernhard’s *Korrektur* (p. 68), as a “Dynamik des Schreibens” (the line of beauty and grace in Handke’s *Versuch*) (p. 73) or – in less abstract form – in the spatially and temporally decentred figure of Paula Schachl in Doderer’s *Die Strudlhofstiege*. In this way, Gerigk argues, Exzentrik not only offers a critical reflection on the conventions of the idyll and utopia in a post-utopian age, but it also performs the poetic possibility of happiness independent of concepts of suffering and loss.

The question of how our expectations of happiness are discursively constructed, and how such expectations develop through time, is the subject of Tanja BAUMANN’s contribution. In a diachronic study of four German-language Baedeker travel guides to Italy, published in the years 1954, 1958, 1983 and 2013, Baumann employs a text-linguistic approach to analyse the “tautological” structure of mass tourism. The latter promises happiness by means of a horizon of expectations constructed in the “Anleitungen zum Urlaubsglück” offered by travel guides (p. 105). In this sense, Baumann’s contribution echoes Ahmed’s concern with the circularity of the promise of happiness and offers an example of the way in which a critical engagement with texts can reveal how the affective dimension of happiness is linked with socially and culturally constructed concepts. Baumann’s discussion charts the development of Baedeker travel guide narratives from an academic approach, oriented towards the educated middle classes and explicitly embedded in literary and art-historical traditions, to the more emotionalized tone of contemporary texts, which demonstrate a greater emphasis on the personal encounter with the foreign Other.

Petra BAGLEY’s essay also considers the longstanding association in the German-language tradition between happiness and the southern European climate and culture. She discusses two recent literary texts by author Birgit Vanderbeke, *Ich sehe was, was du nicht siehst* (1999) and *Der Sommer der Wildschweine* (2014), which draw on the author’s experiences of moving with her family to France in search of a happier life. The issues at the heart of Bagley’s discussion echo perennial questions about happiness, particularly the question of the disunity of man and nature – which features in both Dingeldein and Werner’s contributions to this volume. In Vanderbeke’s contemporary narratives this issue resurfaces in the author’s humorous yet thoughtful look at the problems encountered by the Berlin family, and other former city-dwellers, as they attempt to integrate themselves, and to find happiness, in the rural setting of their adoptive French home. Hence, Bagley shows that, for Vanderbeke, happiness is to be found in the reconciliation of digital technologies and traditional crafts as well as in the community-based rejection of ecological threats such as fracking. Moreover, Bagley’s analysis also chimes with Baumann’s assertion of the contemporary focus on an individualized, interpersonal/intercultural concept of happiness, which can arise from the encounter with the

foreign Other: in this case, argues Bagley, for Vanderbeke's protagonists the experience of the new, foreign, setting prompts self-discovery, the growth of personal relationships and a renewed engagement with community.

This year's general section features two articles, one on the subject of language pedagogy and the other on the discourse of nationalism in literature. Emma RIORDAN's contribution centres on the question on the use of the target language in the teaching of German in Irish secondary schools. Riordan outlines the results of her fieldwork, which aimed to ascertain how much of classroom "talk time" in her sample was conducted in German and to investigate some of the the social, attitudinal and educational factors motivating the use of both L1 and L2 by German teachers. Riordan's results, showing that a number of factors – including linguistic proficiency, socio-economic status of schools and the age of students – combine to influence the use of the target language, open up avenues for future research and suggest implications for the design and provision of teacher training and continuing professional development of teachers in Ireland.

Florian KROBB's contribution discusses Wilhelm Raabe's story *Keltische Knochen* (1864/65), a farcical and satirical treatment of "the collective mentality of a nation heading for political unification" (p. 125), which deals with the adventures of four nineteenth century tourists and their academic squabbles over the ethnic origins of bones discovered in a pre-historic burial site in the town of Hallstatt. Krobb shows how Raabe's story both draws on, and contributes to, nineteenth century scientific and cultural debates about the cultural and ethnic roots of the German people, particularly as they manifested themselves in opposing claims to either Germanic or Celtic origins. Krobb reveals Raabe's masterly achievement, which consists in illuminating within his short fictional text "the political implications, the connectedness of the scholarly debates to the processes of nation building and identity formation, the repercussions for the self-image of Germany", (p. 126) questions which have frequently evaded historians of the period. Krobb argues that Raabe exposes the competing Germanophile and Celtophile perspectives as a race to control the past, ultimately exposing the absurdity of this process and suggesting its irrelevance for, and ignorance of, the real requirements for the development of a nurturing human community.