General Education

An Education for Happiness

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Abstract

We argue that general education is an education for happiness. We proceed by discussing a view of happiness prevalent among philosophers and social scientists. We then discuss recent findings of social scientists to the effect that (1) there is a strong correlation between education and happiness, and (2) intellectual and cultural engagement are primary constituents of happiness. We then argue that general education is the sort of education that provides the prerequisites for intellectual and cultural engagement. We conclude by noting that general education also contributes to or enhances the components of happiness.

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Essay

As near as we can ascertain, the term 'general education' was first used in something akin to its current sense by John Stuart Mill in his "Inaugural Address at St Andrews" in 1867. Each year the University of St Andrews elected as honorary president a distinguished public figure whose duties were mostly ceremonial. One of those duties was to deliver a lecture to the assembled university community and Mill chose general education as his topic. In that lecture Mill draws a sharp distinction between what he calls professional and general education. Professional education is characterized as the type of education necessary for a person to perform successfully in a particular profession: medicine, engineering, law, and architecture are explicitly cited in the lecture. General education Mill characterizes as the type of education conducive to living well, living full, rich, meaningful lives, whatever one's profession. Since 'happiness' is Mill's synonym for 'living a full, rich, meaningful life,' general education is an education for happiness.

Any view of what sort of education is necessary for happiness or living well is predicated upon a view of what constitutes living well and Mill articulates such a view which we by and large endorse. In *Utilitarianism* Mill concludes his criticisms of a life dedicated to the hedonic pursuit of sensual pleasure with his oft quoted observation that "Human beings have faculties more elevated than the animal appetites and, when once made conscious of them, do not regard anything as happiness which does not include their gratification."[1] For Mill, flourishing or living well, i.e. happiness, requires the development and exercise of distinctively human faculties and needs. The intellect, an aesthetic sense, moral sensitivity, a facility and need for private affections, a need to conceive of oneself as a valued member of a wider community, a need to be creative and/or productive, and a need for autonomy all occur on, but do not exhaust, Mill's list.

For Mill, the objective of general education, an education for happiness, is to cultivate and develop these essential human traits and at one point he characterizes the recipient of such an education as a person with a cultivated mind. A cultivated mind is defined as

> any mind to which the fountains of knowledge have been opened, and which has been taught, in any tolerable degree, to exercise its faculties...[such a mind] finds sources of inexhaustible interest in all that surrounds it: in the objects of nature, the achievements of art, the imaginations of poetry, the incidents of history, the ways of mankind, past and present, and their prospects in the future. (14)

Embedded in this short passage are three important points to which we will return. Not listed in Mill's order they are: first, one task of general education is to "open minds", make individuals receptive to learning; second, general education should introduce people to some of the sources of "inexhaustible" interest: and, third general education should develop the faculties requisite for life-long engagement with those sources of interest.

We agree with Mill: the most meaningful, satisfying life is one which essentially includes a life-long engagement with learning. We also believe that his short list of examples, ranging over the natural sciences, the humanities, social sciences and the arts, is apposite. Finally, we agree with the view that the major task of general education is to provide the knowledge base, skill set, and intellectual dispositions requisite for living the happiest, most satisfying life possible.

Lest one be tempted to suppose that these assertions about happiness and meaningful lives simply represent the armchair musings of a couple of wooly headed philosophers out of touch with the real world, a brief excursion into the world of social science may be appropriate. Research into happiness is a burgeoning area in contemporary social science. One of the outcomes of that research has been the unconscious endorsement of Mill's conception of happiness. Happiness is not episodic; it is not a transitory feeling of joy or intense pleasure or an emotional high. As Mill emphasized, happiness is a quality of a life or, at least, a significant stretch of a life; it is a full, rich, meaningful life—a life well lived. Contemporary research into happiness shows that the constituents of such a life are many and varied and neatly map on to Mill's list: economic security, rewarding work activities, meaningful loving relationships, social engagement, health, autonomy, creative or productive activity, and intellectual and cultural engagement are all routinely cited by subjects as constituents of happiness. These are not listed in any order of importance because there is no such order. Individuals vary greatly in needs, interests and dispositions. One person's greatest source of happiness might be a circle of loved ones while for another it is artistic creation, and any particular person's sources of happiness may change during a life span. Happiness, a life well lived, consists of a proper balance of a preponderance of the above where a proper balance is relative to the individual.[2] We think that Mill would be amused to see his 1861 account of happiness being confirmed by contemporary research, even though we have not encountered any mention of him in the current research.

In addition to clarifying the nature and constituents of happiness, this research has established a significant positive correlation between

happiness and education: the greater the level of education, the greater the degree of happiness. Don't take our word for this. Simply google 'correlations between happiness and educational levels' and randomly select and read some of the studies. The consensus, exemplified by the following quote from a study by Olena Stryzhak is "[m]ore educated people generally feel happier than less educated people...[e]ducation makes an individual's life happier."[3] Unfortunately, results of this research tend to appear in specialist academic journals and are not widely disseminated in the popular press. For that reason, the conclusion should be emphasized: there is a strong positive correlation between education and happiness.

Given that correlation does not entail causation, one might initially suppose that the correlation between education and happiness is an incidental correlation resulting from a more significant correlation between income and happiness. According to this line of thought, more education is positively correlated with higher income and it is the increase in income that accounts for the increase in happiness. This response, however, is only partially supported by research. It is true that at lower income levels there is a significant positive correlation between increases in income and increases in happiness; economic insecurity certainly is negatively correlated with happiness. At higher income levels, however, increases in income are less positively correlated with increases in happiness and quickly reach a point of diminishing returns and then a point where further increases in income are not correlated with further increases in happiness. The point of diminishing returns is surprisingly low; once an income level capable of sustaining a moderately comfortable middle-class lifestyle has been reached there is, at best, a marginal positive correlation between further increases in income and happiness. Again, we invite the skeptic to verify these claims: simply google 'correlations between income and happiness.'

Once a moderate level of economic security has been attained and increases in income are not strongly correlated with increases in happiness, other factors play a much more significant role. Prominent among them are intellectual, cultural and aesthetic engagement. Once again we encourage you to verify this. There are innumerable studies online all pointing to the same conclusion aptly summarized by Xiang, Hughes, and Alexander: "happiness is positively correlated with engagement in intellectual self-care" where intellectual self-care is defined in terms of activities engaging critical thinking, expanding one's current knowledge, stimulating the mind, and having an enduring interest in ideas, thinking, learning, and creativity.[4] The primary value of general education lies in its contribution to such a life of the mind.

Traditionally, intellectual and cultural enrichment was the primary value of a college education but, whether he was aware of it or not, Mill was fighting a rearguard action in arguing that a university is "not a place of professional education." Although fascinating, the history of the transformation of universities over the last one hundred and fifty years will not be pursued here. Suffice it to say that classes in professional education began appearing in the curriculum in the latter part of the nineteenth century, began to proliferate in the first two decades of the twentieth century, and by the nineteen fifties the general public thought of college education primarily as career preparation. We are not quixotic enough to argue that universities should discard professional education at the undergraduate level and return to some illusory golden age of education; there is no going back and it was not a golden age. We do, however, believe that one of the functions of a college education is to prepare students to live full, rich, meaningful lives regardless of their careers. This crucial value of a college education is being marginalized and is in danger of being completely abandoned.

Currently most college/university students devote most of their time and course work to professional or career-oriented courses and these courses are not intended to develop the skills, interests or knowledge base that constitute an education for happiness. This is not intended as a criticism; the objective of those courses is to prepare students for performing well in a certain profession and that in itself is a major undertaking. Also, as one of Mill's contemporaries, Karl Marx, repeatedly emphasized, people have a need to be creative and productive and when that need is frustrated they suffer serious psychological trauma; he called it alienation. Consequently, preparing individuals for meaningful careers can be an important element in an education for happiness. It just is not the whole story. Freely admitting or emphasizing the role career satisfaction plays in a happy meaningful life and the consequent value of professional education is consistent with also emphasizing the significance of intellectual and cultural engagement in a meaningful, happy life. Preparation for this constituent of happiness is the purview and primary value of general education.

Incidentally, there are good pragmatic reasons for a university to emphasize the non-tangible value of a college education. We mentioned above that there is a positive correlation between education and income and this is true. What we did not mention is that the average income of college graduates is partly determined by the "high earners": physicians, accountants, engineers and attorneys, to name a few. College graduates pursuing careers in education, social services, the arts, or, with the exception of physicians, the health care industry tend to

earn less than the college graduate average. For such individuals, the financial return on the investment is still positive but it is marginally positive. If financial return is their only consideration, they might be better served by attending a vocational program and becoming an electrician, plumber, heating/air conditioning technician, or aircraft mechanic. As this information is more widely disseminated, marketing a college education primarily on the basis of economic benefits will become increasingly difficult. It might be prudent for universities to give personal development and quality of life considerations more press; i.e., focus more on general educations' contribution to happiness.

Having claimed that intellectual engagement is a critical component for happiness and that a primary value of general education lies in preparing individuals for such engagement, a few remarks on how it does so may be in order. First, general education classes can, and frequently do, in Mill's, terms open the mind or make it receptive to limitless possibilities of interest. Eighteen or twenty-year olds have no idea of what their interests will be when they are forty or sixty or eighty. This is not a matter of under-developed intellect or immaturity; even eighty-year olds are unable to predict what their interests will be at ninety. Our interests are shaped by our experiences and we cannot foresee what our future experiences will be. This is the voice of experience speaking. At the age of eighteen one of us thought it would be a good idea to enlist in the Marine Corps and did so but serendipitously stumbled upon a copy of Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* while serving in a location where there was little to do for recreation but read. Most adults can relate similar stories of how certain experiences unexpectedly engendered life-long interests. Since none of us can predict where life experiences will lead or what interests will be acquired, it is a good strategy to acquire the broadest educational base one can.

Not only are most students not in a position to know what their interests will be in twenty or forty years, most also are ignorant of great tracts of the intellectual landscape. They have no conceptions of great swaths of learning: philosophy, archeology, Ming pottery, Mayan architecture, molecular biology, Renaissance painting, genetics, astronomy, African history, and Japanese literature, for instance, all tend to be terra incognita. One obvious value of general education lies in distribution requirements introducing students to a broad range of areas of potential interest. Not only do those courses introduce students to various areas of learning, ideally they provide a secure foundation for further work in the area by focusing on what is best in a particular area, of lasting importance or most critical to know for future work.

While important, the content of those courses is of secondary im-

portance. The primary value is opening minds and laying foundation for meaningful work in an area. Whether a general education course in epic poetry covers *The Iliad* or *The Aeneid*, *The Song of Roland, Beowulf,* or *The Lay of Igor* is largely immaterial. Any of them can open a person's mind to the pleasures of epic poetry. And, if the course succeeds in opening a student's mind to epic poetry, that person can go on to study the others independently, perhaps even include *The Divine Comedy*. The overriding value of the course is opening minds to the pleasures of epic poetry and cultivating the interpretative and aesthetic sensitivities requisite for future engagement.

Speaking of cultivating interpretative and aesthetic sensitivities introduces Mill's third point: one needs to be taught to exercise one's intellectual faculties. It sometimes is maintained that the primary goal of general education is to teach the critical thinking skills essential for serious work in the major. Aside from the condescending attitude towards disciplines other than one's own, this is indicative of an impoverished view of education. While general education may enable one to perform better in the major and while that is valuable, this is not the primary objective or value of general education. Being a broadly educated person is inherently valuable and the primary value of general education is to provide the foundations for precisely that. Nevertheless, we endorse the emphasis on critical thinking, so long as 'critical thinking' is understood in a broad sense.

Proponents of critical thinking all too frequently assume that there is a specific set of critical thinking rules or techniques that can be taught in a class and that those rules or techniques can then be applied in any setting. In addition to being false, there are two problems with that pervasive view. First, one will never become a serious thinker simply by taking a course in critical thinking and, second, anything that could seriously be called critical thinking is much more complex and multifaceted than is generally realized.

Starting with the first point: borrowing and updating an example of Aristotle's, one becomes a guitarist by playing the guitar. One does not get a book entitled something like *How to Play the Guitar*, read it, practice intermittently for three or four months and thereby become a guitarist. Aristotle's point is that it takes consistent practice over an extended period of time to become a guitarist. Also, becoming a guitarist is best achieved by playing under the tutelage of an accomplished guitarist prepared to critique and guide one's performance. Here adverting to Gilbert Ryle's distinction between knowing that and knowing how may be useful. Knowing that is a matter of being cognizant of facts while knowing how is a matter of being able to perform. One can know a lot of facts

about equestrianship and not be able to stay on a spirited horse; one can know a lot of facts about playing the guitar and not be a guitarist. Likewise for critical thinking: one can know a fair deal about the principles and rules of critical thinking and not be a critical thinker. To be sure, a course in critical thinking can be somewhat useful. It can introduce students to basic patterns of reasoning in both formal and informal logic, provide a rudimentary acquaintance with statistical reasoning, and some familiarity with common fallacies. But, like playing the guitar or controlling a spirited horse, unless those basic skills are utilized on an almost daily basis they will be lost. Furthermore, the rudimentary abilities acquired in a critical reasoning course need to be further developed if one is to become a critical thinker in any serious sense. One will never become an accomplished guitarist if one plays only the pieces included in something called *My First Guitar Book*.

In this connection, there is an old adage that says we learn from our mistakes. Like most old adages, this is only partially true. We learn from our mistakes only if we recognize that we have made a mistake and can identify it. In some areas of endeavor this is not difficult: the bruised and bloodied novice equestrian lying on the ground knows that something went awry and probably has a good idea of what it was; the beginning guitarist knows when a mistake has been made –it does not sound right. This is not generally true of novice learners. They do not immediately see the fallacies in their arguments, why the experiment did not turn out right, why their criticisms are misplaced, or why their interpretations of a literary or historical work are misplaced. Here the aid of a sympathetic critic is invaluable.

We stated above that there are two problems with the popular understanding of critical thinking. The second is this: it is too narrow. The intellectual prerequisites for an appreciation of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* differ dramatically from those necessary for an appreciation of Mozart's *Requiem* and neither are akin to the logical and analytical reasoning skills essential for either constructing or evaluating a philosophical argument. Furthermore, none of these neatly map on to the abilities necessary for intelligently assessing the evidence for climate change, evaluating the efficacy of covid vaccinations or following the latest research on gene splicing. The creative imagination that enables one to conceive of and design an experiment in the physical or social sciences differs radically from the observational skills of a field biologist or anthropologist. And the talents necessary for assessing the plausibility and objectivity of the latest work on the U.S.-Mexican War differ from all the above. We could go on but this should suffice. There is no single set of rules or procedures which constitute critical thinking

the mastery of which will prepare one for a life-long engagement with learning. Serious critical thinking, the kind required for lifelong intellectual engagement, involves innumerable talents of diverse sorts. Fortunately, there is, as Wittgenstein would put it, a family resemblance among these intellectual talents and traits. That family resemblance is sufficiently strong that they augment and reinforce each other and development in any given area facilitates development in others. General education, with its emphasis on work in a wide variety of disciplines, develops a wide range of talents, skills, and approaches. This, of course, is a major value of distribution requirements.

An ancillary value of those requirements is worth mentioning, even though it is a slight digression. Individuals are encouraged to, as the colloquialisms express it, "think outside the box" or "bring a fresh perspective to the table". Being a creative, original thinker certainly is a valuable trait. The giants of intellectual history all were creative, original thinkers: Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Darwin, Stravinsky, Picasso, Freud, and Einstein, for instance, were not boxed in; they all looked at things from new perspectives. Not to get bogged down in the examples, but Newton was so far outside the box that he jettisoned a fundamental tenet of seventeenth century science—that all genuine explanations in science are mechanistic; Darwin explicitly acknowledged that the principle of natural selection was suggested to him by his reading of economics; Freud's greatest contribution, the emphasis on the role of unconscious or subconscious desires, needs or motives, was suggested to him by the study of nineteenth century German philosophers—Fichte, Schopenhauer and, especially, Nietzsche; and much of Picasso's best work was inspired by what at the time was called "primitive" African art. The great thinkers of intellectual history all had wide ranging and diverse interests that enabled them to approach problems in novel and creative ways. The narrower one's intellectual framework, the less likely one will be a creative, original thinker. It is true that very few of us can be a Newton, or a Freud or a Picasso but we all have opportunities for small-scale creative thought and solving even (relatively) minor problems in creative original ways is a great source of human satisfaction. But doing that requires already having different perspectives. Paradoxically, the persons who admonish others to think outside the box, to look at things from a different perspective, fail to mention that thinking outside the box requires *being* outside the box, that viewing things from a different perspective requires *having* a different perspective. Being a creative thinker requires having a sophisticated and appreciative understanding of a wide variety of subjects.

Also, there is more to thinking critically and creatively than mas-

tering a set of approaches and being broadly educated. Equally important are the cultivation of epistemic virtues. Healthy skepticism, for example, is critical. We suggested above that one verify our claims regarding happiness research; we could, intentionally or unintentionally, be misrepresenting it. Reasonable skepticism is merely one example of an epistemic virtue. The disposition to seek out, recognize and objectively evaluate competing views, an awareness of one's own biases, blind spots and limitations, a commitment to truth and respect for facts, a recognition of and respect for reasoned disagreement, a tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty, a realization that not all questions have definite answers, the recognition that types and standards of explanation differ among disciplines, inquisitiveness, carefulness, thoroughness, fair-mindedness, and a feel for relevance are a few of the epistemic virtues studied by virtue epistemologists. It is important to emphasize that one does not develop or deploy these virtues by following a set of rules. There is no set of rules the following of which will teach one how to, for example, be careful or recognize irrelevancies. Recognizing the irrelevance of an objection or a bit of purported evidence is not like recognizing a fallacy of affirming the consequent. But though the acquisition and application of these virtues is not rule-governed, they can be cultivated and they are best cultivated by grappling with a wide range of sophisticated material under the supervision of accomplished thinkers prepared to offer constructive feedback.

Providing the foundations for a life of intellectual engagement certainly is one of the primary values of general education, but, just as certainly, not the only one. Whenever Mill discusses the constituents of a happy life he tends to cite intellectual development first. He nowhere explicitly states why he does this but we suspect that it is because he recognizes that intellectual development belongs in Plato's second class of goods. In the *Republic* Plato distinguishes between things good only as means, things of intrinsic value but also valued as means to other goods and things good only in and for themselves. Mill clearly thinks of intellectual development as something of intrinsic value but also as an important means or constituent in other valued ends. One of those is autonomy.

Like Mill, subjects in happiness research routinely cite autonomy as an important element in happiness. Actually, they do not use that term beloved by philosophers ever since Kant. Rather, they report valuing being in charge of their own lives, being independent, or being in a position to make their own decisions but researchers gloss this as autonomy. Fair enough, 'autonomy' captures the core idea of being able to make one's own decisions and act on them. Being a broadly educated

person with well-developed intellectual faculties enhances autonomy and to the extent that we value autonomy we must value what expands and facilitates it.

Philosophers who consider autonomy routinely distinguish between formal and substantive autonomy. The distinction is easily drawn via some examples. If a mugger holds a gun to one's head and orders one to hand over the money, one's choice to do so is not autonomous; it was not a free choice. Admittedly, extreme libertarians might respond that yes it was; one could have freely chosen to take a bullet to the brain. But most of us would agree that the individual's choice was not autonomous, not a free choice; the mugger brought so much undue pressure to bear that the victim could not act according to preferences. Being able to choose and act independently of overt physical pressure is formal autonomy. But there are ways to infringe a person's autonomy short of overt physical pressure. Substantive autonomy consists in being able to choose and act on one's preferences in the absence of deceit or manipulation. Misrepresenting situations or outright lying to individuals to induce them to choose one option when they would have chosen a different option had they been correctly apprised of the facts infringes the individual's autonomy as much as the mugger. Individuals who engage in emotional blackmail limit the autonomy of the person blackmailed. Advertisers who attempt to instill in the minds of young men the impression that if only they owned this particular car or drank that particular beer they would be irresistible to attractive young women are attempting to influence choices by instilling false beliefs.

Infringes of substantive autonomy can be disastrous. Over 200,000 unvaccinated persons died of covid after covid inoculations were freely available. Once again, feel free to check this online. Furthermore, we will never know how many vaccinated, but high risk, individuals died after being infected by these unvaccinated persons. When interviewed, uninoculated victims offered various reasons for not being inoculated: the vaccine was dangerous, that it was ineffective, that the vaccination campaign was just a mass experiment being conducted by the government, that there was no covid epidemic—that this was just a government hoax, that they did not trust science. These people were doubly victims: they were the victims of covid but also the victims of intentional manipulation which violated their autonomy by preventing them from making informed decisions. In this case, some of them paid for their susceptibility to manipulation with their lives.

Persons with broad intellectual backgrounds and more intellectual tools in their mental toolboxes are less susceptible to manipulation and assaults on substantive autonomy. They are disposed to seek out

and recognize objective data and have the talents to assess it; they are in a better position to make decisions about how to respond to the risk, and they are less likely to be influenced by spin doctors, misleading reports, ungrounded conspiracy theories, charismatic influencers or clever, but empty, slogans. In this connection, there was a significant disparity in covid death rates between college educated and non-college educated persons. Non-college educated persons died at a significantly higher rate than college educated persons. Once again this data is readily available online.

Initially one might think that this was because college educated individuals tend to have higher incomes and, consequently, are in a better position to access high quality health care. This, however, is not borne out by the statistical evidence. The disparity in death rates was most pronounced in the first year of the epidemic prior to the availability of covid medications, reliable treatment or vaccines. Given that there was no effective treatment, the disparity in death rates cannot be explained by the fact that college educated persons had better access to quality health care. Here the first-year disparity seems to be the result of college educated persons being better informed about the risk, more knowledgeable about ways to minimize the risk, and not drinking bleach.

This, incidentally, sheds some light on another interesting correlation. There are hundreds of studies reviewed online establishing that college educated persons live longer, healthier lives than non-college educated persons. There are several factors here and bracketing them out and weighting them individually is not an easy task. Proposed relevant factors include: college graduates tend to have higher incomes and can more easily afford quality health care; college graduates tend to work in positions that have quality health insurance benefits; college graduates tend to live in urban or suburban areas with access to major medical centers; college graduates tend to be better informed about health issues and are in a position to make better health-related decisions. The first year covid experience suggests that the latter factor may be more significant than previously anticipated.

The unnecessary covid deaths is not the only instance of an abridgement of autonomy resulting in tragic consequences. Millions of Americans sincerely, but mistakenly, believed that the 2020 election had been stolen. We now have mounting evidence that the perpetrators of this false belief knew that it was false but continued to promulgate it for political purposes. The January 6 insurrection was a direct consequence. It is certainly true that some of the insurrectionists knew the beliefs were false and participated for other reasons. But many of the people involved were sincere in their belief and thought that they were

fighting to "save America." But the belief which motivated the behavior resulted from a violation of substantive autonomy. Unable to distinguish empty rhetoric from substantive argument, not being disposed to seek out and examine contrary views, not being reasonably skeptical, being unable to distinguish evidence from groundless opinion, not having a high regard for facts and truth, they were easily misled. There is a reason authoritarians of all ilk are hostile to genuine education.

Speaking of authoritarianism, political autonomy is of paramount value to many individuals. The freedom to participate in public debate, actively campaign for positions or candidates, and through voting, influence decisions that affect them is an essential component in their happiness. A broadly educated electorate capable of critical thinking is essential here. In an 1816 letter to Charles Yancey, Thomas Jefferson wrote "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free...it expects what never was and never will be."[5] Back in the sixties when we were in college it was common to characterize a liberal arts education as an education for democracy. One does not hear that so much anymore. Nevertheless, Jefferson had a point: democracies will survive only if they have an educated electorate. There are a couple of reasons for this. First, the best defense against clever demagogues is an electorate comprised of broadly educated critical thinkers. Such an electorate will see through misrepresentations and empty rhetoric, skeptically check factual claims, critically evaluate arguments, and make informed decisions based on evidence. Second, and this is even more acute today than it was when Jefferson wrote that letter, today's problems are incredibly complex. One needs some scientific literacy to intelligently discuss global warming or environmental degradation; sensitively considering race relations requires some minimal understanding of slavery, reconstruction, Jim Crow and the civil rights movement; it is impossible to discuss abortion intelligently without some minimal grounding in ethical theory and reproductive science; to consider immigration policy requires some familiarity with history, economics, sociology, and politics. The examples are endless but this should suffice. When leaders are elected to implement the will of the people, it is imperative that the will of the people be well informed and well-reasoned. A prerequisite for democracy is a broadly educated electorate with well-developed reasoning skills. As the general educational level of the electorate declines the risk to democracy rises.

To draw some conclusions from this rambling essay. Many individuals view intellectual engagement as a critical component of happiness and college education, especially that provided by general education, develops the resources for that engagement. But the broad critical ed-

ucation provided by general education also enhances other valued components of happiness. We have specifically mentioned autonomy and health. Furthermore, while we will not pursue the point here, a little reflection will show that such an education also enhances other aspects of a happy life: social engagement is enriched by such an education; there are numerous studies establishing that college educated persons have more stable, long lasting marriages than non-college educated persons – while there are many factors involved here, the fact that college educated people tend to have more nuanced views about relationships and responsibilities, more developed tolerance for disagreement and more developed ways of resolving disagreements seems to play a significant role. The bottom line is: if you want to be happy, get the broadest education possible.

Endnotes

[1]John Stuart Mill. (2001). *Utilitarianism,* ed. George Sher. (see p. 8). Hackett Publishing Company. Subsequent references to this work area provided as page numbers in the text.

[2] We say 'preponderance' because none of these constituents is necessary for happiness.

[3] Olena Strynhak. The relationship between education, income, economic freedom, and happiness (pp. 3-5). Internet address http://repository.hneu.edu.ua/handle/123456789/23615

[4] Meiqing Xiang, Jennifer Hughes, & Chandice T. Alexander. Intellectual self-care, education, happiness, and life satisfaction among employed individuals. *The Onyx Review: The Interdisciplinary Research Journal*, *2*(1), 49.

[5] Thomas Jefferson to Charles Yancey, 6 January 1816. In *Founders Online*, https//founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-02-0209.