

Stereotypic Happiness of “American Dream”

Svilana LYUBIMOVA

PhD in Philology, Associate Professor,
Postdoctoral Researcher,
National Linguistic University,
Kyiv, Ukraine
elurus2006@gmail.com

Abstract: The starting-point and the goal of every human being is pursuit of happiness. Though varying individually, understanding of happiness is rather unified in the world. The purpose of this paper is to outline principal aspects of a stereotypic “American dream” in the frame of modernity. Since Jefferson outlined a well-being through “life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness”, the model of welfare, that was expressively named by Adams “American Dream”, has changed to obsession with heavy materialist acquisition and perpetual search for carnal pleasures, eternal youth and beauty. Perceived nowadays as a stereotypic pattern of happiness, “American Dream” comprises material comfort, consumer self-indulgence, conformity, and standardized beauty as well. The shift in significance of obtaining happiness occurred in prosperous “Jazz Age”, when American nation threw into extravagancy and indulgence of intense pleasures, attractively depicted in Hollywood films. Much criticized in mass media “American Dream” remains the utmost formula of happiness, as it embodies the ideal of prosperity, success, and an upward social mobility, achieved through a hard work.

Keywords: American Dream, stereotype, pattern of happiness, modernity, hedonistic values, consumerism, popular culture, mass media.

INTRODUCTION

Happiness is widely recognized as an absolute contentment. However, the problem of achievement of this blissful state are still unclear, vague, and eluding: “...all seek happiness, but few can find” (Boethius 1785, 83).

Despite some cultural differences, the meaning of the word *happiness* in major European languages conveys the idea of arbitrary force affecting human affairs to attain a blissful state. German *Glück*, Russian *счастье*, Polish *szczęście*, Ukrainian *щасття*, French *bonheur*, Italian *felicità* emphasize accidental and surprising coincidence of favorable circumstances in a situation that a person cannot influence. Berdyaev defined the word *happiness* as “the most empty and meaningful of all the words of people”

(Berdyayev 1931, 81), because happiness comes from a vague subjective sensation that does not have a clear expression and criteria. However, happiness also relates to a life satisfaction and pleasure, provided by prosperity and success, which is achievable through active pursuits of a person to attain wealth or fame. Such success gives the feeling of complacency and happiness, as “pleasantest is to win what we love” (Aristotle 1999, 13).

Boethius stated that multiple understanding of happiness comes from varied inclinations of people. Some believe that their happiness is in superabundance of wealth, others suppose their good lies in respect and honorable employments or supreme power. Happiness also includes physical state as strength, beauty and a fine shape distinguish a man agreeably (Boethius 1785, 128). “What a man wishes for, in preference to all other things; this he must esteem the supreme good” (Boethius 1785, 82).

A variety of realized wishes of a real person produces a psychologic state of happiness, while an ideal happiness is only a mental construct. “The first varies in degrees, the second does not. The first is “a human happiness,” and the second is “the happiness of the gods,” as Epicurus named it” (Tatarkiewicz 2011, 61). Thus, a human being cannot achieve ideal happiness, although it could be defined as a generalized pattern of satisfaction of “a beacon of affluence and prosperity” (Kellner 2016, 132).

MOULDING MODERN HAPPINESS

Debated for centuries a pursuit of happiness is ever-lasting issue, however each period of human civilization marks specific priorities in it. Rapid technical advancement and economic prosperity in the USA after the World War I proved to the Old World, which was recovering from warfare and social unrest, the values of modern industrial life. It became evident that America’s welfare grounded in satisfaction of needs of the majority. In the country of vast opportunities, relying on their own strengths and working hard, everyone could benefit not only for him/herselves, but also for the society, as “the happy man lives well and does well...” (Aristotle 1999, 12). The idea that happiness of the community in general depends on a happiness of a particular individual (Sidgwick 2017) became the blueprint for well-being of American nation that has strong conviction in the good of individualism.

Freedom for private enterprise and the policy of individualism contributed to the development of American economy. It seemed obvious, in the country of equal opportunities, relying on own abilities and working hard, everyone can benefit individually thus investing into the public good. As factor of a nation's prosperity, individualism affirms the idea that a person has an inalienable right to live as he/she wants, to act on his/her own judgment, and to pursue the happiness he/she has in mind (Biddle 2012). In terms of Foucault, individualism is "techniques of the self," that suggests or prescribes the models of living for individuals (Foucault 1997). Emphasizing individuality and freedom over authority, individualism supports a vanquisher mode of thinking and behavior. As "no living being can be happy or even exist unless his needs are sufficiently proportioned to his means" (Durkheim 2013, 246), American well-being was accepted as a general pattern of happiness. "High" standards of living set equal to a successful mode of contented by their life people. Conspicuous expenditure became honorific and integral part of a happy scheme of life. Modernity, "levelled by rationalism, liberalism, democracy" (Best, Kellner 1991, 22), cultivated a simplified view on happiness that is easy to achieve through equality of opportunities for self-sufficient people, ready to work for their success.

As Ford enabled a mass production of automobiles by assembly line, making them affordable for many Americans, the "corrosive effects of technology, rationalization and socialism" (Best, Kellner 1991, 22) contributed to generating philistine simplistic pattern of happiness, which was called "American Dream". Popular culture, defined by Jameson as "environment of philistinism, of schlock and kitsch" (Jameson 1987, 363), has been replicating a ready-made pattern of happiness in different variations by all recognizable means: films, songs, magazines, etc. Even criticism of "American Dream" in works of popular culture reinforces this concept as one of the possible ways to achieve contentment.

Born in the US and replicated by mass media around the world, the idea of "American Dream" became stereotypic. Recognized as intrinsic human ability to process information that comes from surrounding world, stereotyping assists in everyday life cognition, but hinders from right decisions in essential issues of life.

“AMERICAN DREAM” AS A PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

Known all over the world a trite metaphor “American Dream” embodies the credo of American nation that comprises a set of ideals of prosperity, success, and an upward social mobility, achieved through a hard work. Introduced by James Truslow Adams, the metaphor conveys a firm confidence in power of people to find fair success and deserved happiness: “...the dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement” (Adams 1931, 404-405). The phrase amazingly reminds Louis Blanc socialist principle “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs”. Paradoxically, the idea of socialist justice, used by Karl Marx and adopted by communists, laid the foundation of universal belief in the opportunity to become happy in a capitalist society.

The idea of “American Dream” was aspired by the Founding Fathers, who introduced the phrase “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” into the Declaration of Independence. It was acknowledged by researchers, that this memorable phrase of Thomas Jefferson was stemmed from John Lock’s “life, liberty, and property”. Substituting the word “property” by “pursuit of happiness” Jefferson showed that happiness is more embrative term than just property. Though enjoying the democratic rights that the Declaration guarantees, people themselves are largely responsible for their happiness (Vile 2018, 153).

Jefferson’s phrase was transformed into the right to “life, liberty, or property, without due process of law” stated in the Fifth Amendment of the US Constitution. The Amendment guarantees the enjoyment of all rights and freedoms by everyone, free enterprise and self-expression, which are necessary facilities to achieve personal success, associated with happiness in American society and accepted by the whole world. Since Jefferson outlined nation’s well-being, the model of welfare has changed to obsession with heavy materialist acquisition and perpetual search for carnal pleasures, eternal youth, and beauty.

Embodying the ideal of prosperity, success, and an upward social mobility, as well as self-sufficiency, eminence, and fame, marked by Boethius as necessary constituents of happiness, “American Dream” is most likely perceived nowadays as the myth of getting riches quickly. In philistine interpretation, the formula of “American Dream” has acquired

the meaning of receiving all kinds of material comforts in a “get-rich-quick” mode. As conspicuous consumption became indispensable attribute of a successful person, consumerism on the large-scale has become a model of happy living.

Another facet of “American Dream” implies the ideal of “self-made success” that can be achieved through persistence and a hard work in the society, which dominants are liberty, equality, and individualism. One way or another, “American Dream” refers to “from-rags-to-riches” pattern of life scenario describing transformation of a person from the bottom of society into whomever he or she wants, on condition of his or her persistence and diligence. Such a life mode is frequently described by popular culture.

The shift in significance of obtaining happiness through affluence occurred in prosperous “Jazz Age”, when American nation threw into extravagancy and indulgence of intense pleasures, attractively depicted in Hollywood films. Proved to be the major global influence in developing a notion of “a perfect life”, which is synonymous with “American Dream”, the USA has modeled the consumerist way of living, which aspires less developed countries.

THE HEYDAY OF “AMERICAN DREAM”

The belief that life is too short to miss available for the present moment pleasures was expressed by Horace in “*Carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero*”, which means “Make the most of today and do not trust in tomorrow. *Carpe diem* is the very nature of some pleasures that, if not obtained now, will not be available ever. The ancient saying “Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die”, quoted and endorsed several times in the Bible (Harris 1994, 108-109), became the credo of American flappers in the “Roaring 20s”, whose self-indulgent existence of alcohol, jazz, and petting parties shocked traditionalists. Recognizing life’s transience and fleeting of pleasures, American youth of the 1920s rushed to live “here and now”, not in the next world but in this one, enjoying good food, comfort, expensive things, which became available and desirable after the asceticism of the World War I.

Modern and young America promoted sexual revolution, “making love lightly, boldly and promiscuously” (Zeitzy 2006, 23). Many young women exhibited increasingly casual approach to romance and sexuality, which

was impossible earlier. For millions of young women this period offered an unprecedented scale of freedom for personal exploration and self-fulfillment. It was the first generation of Americans, who were raised on amusements rather than religion and restraint. They rejected the values of previous generations and redefined the pursuit of pleasure as noble goal unto itself (Zeitz 2006, 38-65).

Ethic of self-indulgence was a staple feature of the 1920s, the period of social optimism and material well-being, when “American Dream” seemed to be achieved. The gross national product skyrocketed, aggregate wages were rising steadily, the US became Europe’s largest creditor. Americans were eating better and cheaper, having more money left over for nonessentials, such as phonographs, furniture, radios, electric appliances, automobiles, and innovative leisure culture that cost money. “The whole country seemed given over to fads and frivolities that represented the gusto and confidence of the times” (Zeitz 2006, 55).

Gaiety and youth became cherished properties of success. Hollywood burst into the popular consciousness all around the world with stars flaunting their fabulous life to the public. Since that time, American celebrities spend their wealth throwing into extravagancy of indulgence and intense pleasures. Instantaneous wish fulfilment and surfeit with comforts compelled hedonists to seek for more exciting pleasures, irrespective of their cost or unlawful and morally wrong character. The prosperity of “Jazz Age” was associated with laissez faire capitalism and the Republican’s policy of rugged individualism, which was perceived as a mechanism ensuring the prosperity of the nation based on freedom of thought and action. Contrary to expectations that welfare of the nation had been achieved, controversial life style of unaffordable excess confronted the Great Depression. Destitution followed excessive consumption. The period of carefree gaiety finished, but it left awareness that prosperity gives happiness, achievable for everyone, who lives in a country of democratic freedoms.

CONSUMER SATISFACTION

Defining themselves not through their jobs, but rather through leisure and purchasing, Americans created a new ethic of consumption that validates the pursuit of happiness. This ethic persuades the nation to embrace the

principles of pleasure, self-fulfillment and success. In this view, advertising has become the new gospel of indulgence. Commercials, magazine articles urge people to enjoy life and find personal happiness.

The ethos of American consumer market glorifies self-indulgence and satisfaction, as well as personal liberty and choice. It proves that consumerism is essential driver of economy resulting in national well-being. Purchasing, as considered by Jeremy Bentham, gives people pleasures of “gain”, “acquisition”, and “possession”, which come directly from the pleasures of wealth. Affluence in itself could give some people the pleasure of “possession”, for others wealth means awareness in their aptitude to get any articles as instruments of enjoyment or security (Bentham 2017, 25). As consumption of more excellent goods is an evidence of wealth, it becomes honorific; and conversely, the failure to consume in due quantity and quality becomes a mark of inferiority and demerit (Veblen 2015, 36). That is why, “no class of society, not even the most abjectly poor, forgoes all customary conspicuous consumption” (Veblen 2015, 40). The consumption of valuable goods is the means to gain personal comfort, enviable reputation, self-respect and personal distinction.

In spite of enjoyment of purchasing improved and more elaborate products, people experience time scarcity, stress at work, and insecurity, if they buy on credit. The widespread system of credits keeps consumers in a state of permanent indebtedness causing financial difficulty, frustration and disappointment. The paradox is that, the more people buy, the more they should work to afford new purchases, the less they are happy because of the stress they experience trying to earn more. The consumer culture that has grown up around conspicuous consumption is resistant to non-commodified means of advancing well-being and personal fulfilment. It is backed by an unprecedented investment in branding, advertising, and other inducements to purchase. “Everything that should be central to human pleasure and well-being has become marginal, whether it be convivial time with family or friends, engagement in civic and political projects, the enjoyment of hobbies and educational activities, making music, reading, gardening, being in nature, or just idling. The hedonist deprivation of consumer culture is further compounded by an unhealthy reliance on fast food and very swift forms of transport” (Soper 2017).

The critique of rampant consumerism has taken shape of a new cultural theory – “Alternative Hedonism”. Coined by Kate Soper, concept defines

a new approach to thinking about human well-being, consumption, and the politics of prosperity, that challenges the monopoly of advertising over the depiction of “a perfect life”. The theory advocates “sufficient consumption”, involving satisfactory consumerism as a new paradigm of a “good life” and promotes environmentally conscious behaviors by advertising individual financial savings and focusing on intrinsic rather than extrinsic values of an individual.

PROMOTION OF “AMERICAN DREAM” AND ITS CRITIQUE IN POPULAR CULTURE

As “self-interest, happiness, etc. are somewhat vague and ambiguous” (Sidgwick 2017, 55), people experience much difficulty in recognizing their good and happiness. Ancient Greeks drew many of its founding orientations and guiding principles from poetry, arts, and philosophy. Modern people’s moral orientations are drawn from popular culture, spread by mass media. The examples of instructive movies that teach how to achieve “American Dream” are in abundance, among them “The Pursuit of Happyness” (2006). This inspirational movie, directed by Gabriele Muccino and written by Steven Conrad, is based on the true story of how Christopher Gardner faced many challenges while he was in pursuit to achieve success, stability and most of all, happiness that was obtained in reward for hard work.

Having lost everything, Gardner begins the journey “from rags to riches”. Through hard work and dedication to his son, he was able to achieve success to the extent of owning his own brokerage firm. “The future was uncertain, absolutely, and there were many hurdles, twists and turns to come, but as long as I kept moving forward, one foot in front of the other, the voices of fear and shame, the messages from those, who wanted me to believe that I wasn’t good enough, would be stilled”, Gardner described his way to happiness (“The Pursuit of Happyness”, 2006).

The movie gives a very precise example of the struggle in pursuit of “American Dream”. Though, the major part of production of “American Dream Factory” is aimed to instruct people what joys of life is worth to pursue, it is in itself epitomizes opulence and vice of spiritual emptiness. Exposed in Hollywood films lavish lifestyle may seem attractive, but more than anything else, exemplifies the illusory happiness. A dream about a

luxurious life attracts people by bogus values of wealth, fame, ever-lasting youth, and beauty, these temptations are unsurmountable for vulnerable people. The access to unlimited pleasures, comforts and luxuries did not help Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe, Curt Cobain, Michael Jackson, Whitney Houston and many other celebrities to find contentment. In this view, Hollywood is seen as the center of the detrimental universe for an individual.

Baneful influence of Hollywood over the people in search of carnal happiness is exposed in “Californication”, the Showtime’s series created by Tom Kapinos (2007-2014). In contrast to the pattern of self-made success shown in “The Pursuit of Happyness”, the series represents the story of personality downturn. A Mecca for creative people, Hollywood is ultimate aim for those, who is eager to achieve fame, wealth and satisfaction of “driving a Porsche through the promised land” (Californication, 2007-2014). It is the place, “where it turns out dreams actually do come true”. “American Dream right here. Your name’s gonna be up on the screen. You’ll be immortal” (“Californication”, 2007-2014).

The central figure in the show is a promising writer from New York, Hank Moody, whose “American Dream” was fame. In tempting atmosphere of Hollywood and Los Angeles, his personal loss was greater, than his success. Promiscuous relations, scandalous situations, alcoholism, drug-addiction, and overdose contributed to frustration and self-destruction of Hank. Aware of his complete devastation, Hank stated: “I’m disgusted with my life and myself, but I’m not unhappy about that” (“Californication”, 2007-2014). Thus, he was ready to exchange his love and personal dignity for carnal happiness. Hank’s surroundings are in hot pursuit of happiness and sensual self-indulgence that lead to amorality and complete personal devastation.

In popular songs, irrespective of their genre, “American Dream” is described as “a conformist dream” (Deardorff 2014, 29) and “a basic human condition of the contemporary age” (Deardorff 2014, 37). A natural human wish of a comfortable life turns to subjection to consumerism. Possession of prestigious items gives a feeling of comfort and happiness:

“And Mr. Green he’s so serene
He’s got a TV in every room ...”

Consumerism levels originality of dwellings and this does not bother people addicted to purchasing prestigious items not worse, than neighbors buy:

“Another Pleasant Valley Sunday (Sunday)
Charcoal burning everywhere
Rows of houses that are all the same
And no one seems to care...”
(*“Pleasant Valley Sunday”*. *The Monkees*, 1967).

External sameness leads to conformity of life style:

“And the people in the houses
All went to the university...
And they all play on the golf course
And drink their martinis dry
And they all have pretty children
And the children go to school
And the children go to summer camp
And then to the university...
And the boys go into business
And marry and raise a family
In boxes made of ticky-tacky
And they all look just the same...”
(*“Little Boxes”*. *Malvina Reynolds*, 1967).

Conformity nourishes ambitions to catch up with trends and to look not less successful, than other people of the surrounding:

“I’m so self-conscious
That’s why you always see me with at least one of my watches
Rollie’s and Pasha’s done drove me crazy
Then I spent four hundred bucks on this...”
(*“All Falls Down”*. *Kaney West*, 2004)

Despite stereotypic happiness, provided by consumerism and conformism, the wish to attain “American Dream” prompts to believe in person’s own strength and to act in order to achieve the desired:

“And so I learned to depend on me...
If I fail, if I succeed
At least I’ll live as I believe...”
(*“Greatest Love of All”*. *Whitney Houston*, 1977).

BEAUTY AS OBJECT OF A HAPPY POSSESSION

Giving pleasure sensation, beauty is a merit that stirs emotional response and sensuality, thus it becomes a life pursuit for the many. The precious commodity, beauty can be purchased as many other things that give people happiness. “For those who can afford it, the body is fully customizable and adaptable, whether through tattoos, piercings, branding, liposuction, or cosmetic surgery” (Wolputte 2004, 264). American pattern of happiness promotes looking young and beautiful as a way of being healthy, successful, and morally right. Conformity with beauty standards is essential for gaining success. Thus, there is the close relation between gender, production, and consumption of food and cultural questions of power and control. Female identities are embodied in food practices. Thinness is dominant in Western discourse, for it is promoted as a symbol of self-control and power (Wolputte 2004, 259).

Conceived as the constituent of happiness, attractive appearance is the subject of ardent desire. The beauty standards, though culturally determined, have become universal. Shapely figure, regular features of the face, youthful look make up generally accepted pattern of beauty, popularized by celebrities. The example of the pop star that moulded her attractive look is Madonna. Her digitally perfect heart-shaped face, trim figure, and blonde locks embody the pattern of modern beauty. As aging has a negative message, Madonna does not allow herself to grow older. She fights for her skinny figure and high-gloss face (O’Brien 2012, 30-31). Classic beauties look exactly the same way: “tanned and blond, uplifted in the right places” (Clements 2007, 75). This exaggerated catch up with beauty trends is attributed to Hollywood standards. “It’s what’s happening to the whole country: It’s this gloss. Everybody has become a youth impersonator”. People are “doing” movie stars, trying to look like them (Sherrill 1991). The stars set style in slim figure, and people eagerly take it up, worshiping slenderness.

The tough ideal is not only difficult to achieve, but even dangerous as it might result in anorexia. Admissibility of judgment that decrees something is beautiful or ugly is derived from the authority, as that of the medieval and Renaissance Church, the Flemish bourgeoisie of the seventeenth century, European monarchies, the industrial revolution’s

capitalist State, or the liberal Market of contemporary America (Onfray 2015, 76).

The beauty standards varies, as they are culturally specific and historically contingent. Nowadays, beauty is rather a product of vast beauty industry, than a natural form. The liberal market imposes standards and objectives, which are expensive and hard to achieve. Advertising convinces people of necessity to look younger, slender, and attractive. If we do not correspond beauty parameters, we feel discontented and unhappy. This leads to collision between the own not ideal “self” and “other”, imposed by beauty industry and popular culture. That is the clash of self-determination against heteronomy: imposed beauty standards force a person to reconfigure not even a physical body, but identity, thus this “self” is rather imitation, than natural personality. Considering this, it would not be wrong to admit that most of people is not happy today. Feeling comfortable with the body and self-respect should be precious values cherished independently and affirmed by popular culture.

CONCLUSION

The starting-point and the goal of every human being is a pursuit of happiness, but the ways to happiness, as well as understanding of it, may differ greatly. The most common perspective on happiness is “American dream”, which is the epitome of a human need in comfortable and secured life. Replicated by mass media around the world, a generalized pattern of happiness became a stereotype. Proved to be a global stereotype of “a perfect life”, “American Dream” imposes a model of a consumerist way of living, conformity of thinking, and standardized beauty.

Embodying the ideal of prosperity, success, and an upward social mobility, “American Dream” is most likely perceived as the myth of getting riches quickly. Discrepancy with a prevalent stereotype is accepted as conspicuous failure of a person in the society that extols upward social trajectory. Significance of obtaining happiness only in virtue of success and wealth moves away from achieving individual, not measurable by money happiness.

However, criticized and disregarded “American Dream” remains a readily accepted formula of happiness. The matter of realization of “American Dream”, one of the most auspicious modes of well-being of

modernity, is balancing between a natural lust for comfortable life and subjection to rampant consumerism, a pursuit of happiness and obsession with wealth.

References

- Adams, J. T. 1931. *The Epic of America*. New York: Blue Ribbon Books.
- Bentham J. 2009. *The Works of Jeremy Bentham. Principles of Morals and Legislation, Fragment on Government, Civil Code, Penal Law*. vol. 1. Edinburgh: William Tait, 1838–1843. <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/2009>.
- Berdyaev, N.A. 1931. *O naznachanii cheloveka*. Opyt paradoksalnoj etiki [On Destination of a Human Being. Experience of Paradoxical Ethics]. Parizh: «Sovremennye zapiski».
- Best, S., Kellner, D. 1991. *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations*. MacMillan.
- Boethius. 1785. *Consolation of Philosophy*. Transl. by P. Ridpath. London: C. Dilly.
- Biddle, C. 2012. “Individualism vs. collectivism: Our future, our choice”. In *The Objective Standard*, 7(1), 19–28.
- Clements, M. 2007. *Copper Thunderbird*. Vancouver: Talonbooks.
- Deardorff, D.L. 2014. *Bruce Springsteen: American Poet and Prophet*. Scarecrow Press.
- Durkheim, É. 2013. *Suicide*. A Study in Sociology. NY: The Free Press.
- Foucault, M. 1997. *Ethics. Subjectivity and Truth*. (Ed.) P. Rabinow. Vol. I. NY: The New Press.
- Jameson, F. 1987. “The Politics of Theory: Ideological Positions in the Postmodernism Debate”. In *Interpretive Social Science: A Second Look*. (Eds.) P. Rabinow, W. M. Sullivan, University of California Press. pp. 351–365.
- Harris, J. 1994. *Philosophy at 33 1/3 rpm. Themes of classic rock music*. Open Court: Illinois, Chicago & La Salle.
- Houston, W. 1977. Greatest Love of All. <https://genius.com/Whitney-houston-greatest-love-of-all-lyrics>
- Kellner, D. 2016. *Guys and Guns Amok: Domestic Terrorism and School Shootings from the Oklahoma City Bombing to the Virginia Tech Massacre*. NY: Routledge.
- The Monkees. 1967. Pleasant Valley Sunday. <https://genius.com/The-monkees-pleasant-valley-sunday-lyrics>
- O’Brien, L. 2012. “Madonna: like a crone”. In *“Rock On”: Women, Aging and Popular Music*. (Eds.) R. Jennings, A. Gardner. NY: Ashgate Publishing: 19–35.
- Onfray, M.A. 2015. *Hedonist Manifesto: The Power to Exist* (Insurrections: Critical Studies in Religion, Politics, and Culture). Columbia University Press.
- Reynolds, M. 1967. Little Boxes. <https://genius.com/Malvina-reynolds-little-boxes-lyrics>
- Sidgwick, H. 2017. *The Methods of Ethics*. (Ed.) J. Bennett. Early Modern Texts.
- Sherrill, M. 1991. “The man from ‘BAD’”. *Washington Post*.
- Soper, K. 2017. “A New Hedonism: A Post-Consumerism Vision”. In *The Next System Project*. <https://thenextsystem.org/learn/stories/new-hedonism-post-consumerism-vision>

- Veblen, T. 2015. *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. Essential Economics Series: Celebrated Economists. White Press.
- Tatarkiewicz, W. 2011. *Analysis of Happiness*. Springer Netherlands
- Vile, J.R. 2019. “The Declaration of Independence: America’s First Founding Document”. In *U.S History and Culture*. Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO.
- Van Wolputte, S. 2004. “Hang on to your self. Of bodies, embodiment and selves”. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33: 251–69, doi:10.1146/annurev.anthro.33.070203.143749
- West, K. 2004. All Falls Down. <https://genius.com/Kanye-west-all-falls-down-lyrics>
- Zeitj J. 2006. *A Madcap Story of Sex, Style, Celebrity and the Woman who Made America Modern*. NY: Crown Publishers.