What's Missing from Positive Psychology? Thoughts Including a Lesson From Historical Paintings

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Abstract
Memento mori, a historical style of art that includes reminders of death, hints at a failure in positive psychology. In particular, this art can remind us that positive psychology's research and rhetoric have promoted a narrow vision of the good life. In contrast, empirical research, Aristotelian philosophy, and even historical art suggest a broader vision. A corrected vision of the good life includes an array of eudaimonic constructs. Furthermore, wisdom and virtue, although central to the historical concept of eudaimonia, are relatively neglected even among the subset of positive psychologists promoting a eudaimonic perspective. Throughout his life, Paul Wong has been disseminating messages that have helped correct all these errors.

What's Missing from Positive Psychology? Thoughts Including a Lesson From Historical Paintings

A surprising number of historical paintings include images of skulls. At times, the inclusion makes obvious sense, such as when the dominant subject matter references death or medicine or religious themes or when the artist seeks shock value. In those cases, the inclusion of a skull can fit with the obvious theme of the painting. In many cases, however, the inclusion of a skull might seem incongruous with the theme of the paining. In one notable example, Frans Hals completed a painting in the 1600's that is now called *Young Man Holding a Skull* (Hals, 1628). The youthful subject of the painting holds a skull even though he appears to be healthy, perhaps expensively dressed, and by no means emotionally upset or distraught. No other elements in the image portray or represent death. His cheeks have color. He looks lively. The youth's gaze looks away from the skull. He appears preoccupied with another matter, gesturing as if engaged in a conversation. He appears not in the least disturbed or even distracted by the presence of the skull.

Many other paintings in this genre depict still life scenes. At times, the images represent work desks or tables stacked with books, writing tools, and other elements, but somewhere in the image is a skull, sometimes prominently, and other times less prominently. Others, called *vanitas* (vanity) paintings, include not only the skull(s), but also flowers or other symbols of life, such as in Adriaen van Utrecht's (1642) image entitled *Still Life with Bouquet and Skull*.

To the unfamiliar observer, these skulls could create the impression that home decorators in the Middle Ages and early modern era simply idealized the beauty of skulls. As modern decorators are able to purchase throw pillows or candle-holders to add an attractive aesthetic, it might seem that these historical decorators found skulls beautiful; perhaps, it might seem, they could pick up a skull or two at the local home decorating shop.

In reality, the artists probably intended to convey a number of messages, including providing reminders of the brevity of life, but for positive psychology, the images might hint at an error in early positive psychology. To get at that error, there is value in briefly reviewing some of the historical background of positive psychology and mentioning the occasion of this manuscript.

The current manuscript is written to be included as part of a Festschrift for Paul Wong. Though Paul's work will not be the central theme of this manuscript, the importance of his work to the overall message here will become obvious. His work not only helped motivate some of these realizations among us and many others, but some of these errors would have been missed if Paul's ideas had been heeded early in the history of positive psychology.

Early Positive Psychology: Happiness as a Major Focus

When Martin Seligman became president of the American Psychological Association (APA) at the end of the 1990's, he decided that his primary aim would be to develop a field called *positive psychology* (Seligman, 1999). Readers who know about his earlier history in research would know that such a move was surprising. In his early research, Seligman studied depression, and he conducted research on animals, some of which in retrospect might sound quite cruel and shocking (e.g., Seligman, 1975; Seligman & Beagley, 1975), and so this turn to champion the importance of happiness was a significant shift.

He claimed that an incident with his daughter made him realize that he was grumpy and needed to change (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Also, a chance encounter with Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi on a holiday led to some valuable conversations that affected both of their lives (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). These and other events propelled him to the founding of positive psychology.

Admittedly, many others had engaged in forms of positive psychology prior to that date, including Paul Wong and his collaborators (e.g., Reker, Peacock, & Wong, 1987; Wong, 1989). Sometimes that earlier work was done under other disciplinary titles, such as *psychofortology* and the more widely known *humanistic psychology* (for a review of earlier exemplars of positive psychology, see Strümpfer, 2005). However, Seligman still deserves significant credit because he so successfully rallied others to join his cause and because he marketed the field both to scholars and the general public.

Problematic Rhetoric

That founding era under Seligman was an exciting time. One of the authors of this current piece is old enough to remember the pleasure of receiving issues of the *APA Monitor* newspaper during Seligman's presidency and looking for Seligman's column to hear the latest word on advances in positive psychology (e.g., Seligman, 1998). Seligman brought much of value to the field. As with any new field getting its legs (and there were debates about whether the field had durable legs (Lazarus, 2003)), there were shortcomings (Leong & Wong, 2003).

For the purposes of the current discussion, one major problem relates to the rhetoric of positive psychology. Seligman's (2002) groundbreaking popular book exemplifies the problem. The book was entitled *Authentic Happiness*. A close reading could clarify that Seligman valued many outcomes beyond mere happiness, but the dominant rhetoric created a different impression. That widely selling introduction did not merely have one chapter devoted to happiness among chapters on other valued life outcomes. On the contrary, *Authentic Happiness* was devoted to the topic of *happiness*. Seligman and Csikzentmihalyi (2000) had originally defined positive psychology as the study of positive states, positive traits, and institutions that enable those, but in practice, the rhetoric of Seligman and many others created the impression that all that positive psychology valued was individual happiness. Perhaps the focus on happiness is understandable given the public appetite for the topic. Perhaps the interests of journalists and the public drove the early positive psychologists to this emphasis out of desire to better market their field. Nonetheless, the rhetoric was and continues to be a problem because other valued life outcomes, such as elements of eudaimonia, were relatively neglected, and as will be discussed, the rhetoric may have promoted an unstable form of well-being, less able to cope with the rigors of life.

Problematic Measurement

The rhetoric was not the only source of imbalance. Within research on positive psychology, measurement strategies exacerbated the problem. The heart of this confusion lies in the split between hedonia (pleasure) and eudaimonia (excellence and virtue). Historically, hedonia refers to outcomes related to pleasure and absence of pain, but eudaimonia refers to a broader set of outcomes, such as virtue and achievement of excellence (Aristotle, c. 330/1980).

Both hedonia and eudaimonia seem to contribute to a full life (Huta & Ryan, 2010), but positive psychologists have most typically measured hedonic outcomes (e.g., happiness) or used measures that conflate hedonia and eudaimonia and underrepresent eudaimonia. In particular, positive psychology researchers frequently implement measures of subjective well-being (SWB), a construct defined as high positive affect, low negative affect, and life satisfaction (Ed Diener, 1984). In these studies, SWB often serves as an indicator of whether the good life is being lived or whether some other behavior has value in contributing to the good life.

Problematically, however, SWB, this outcome measure in many positive psychology studies, underrepresents eudaimonia. In particular, high positive emotions and low negative emotions, the first two elements within SWB, represent pure indicators of hedonia, meaning that at least two thirds of SWB is hedonic. The third element within SWB is life satisfaction, which

overlaps with both hedonia and eudaimonia (Proctor, Tweed, & Morris, 2015), suggesting that approximately an additional sixth of SWB is hedonic. A little rough math would suggest then that SWB is approximately 5/6 or 83% composed of hedonia. Considering the subscores separately would fail to solve the problem, because none the three components are pure measures of eudaimonia, so no relatively pure measure of eudaimonia is included and using weighting to increase the importance given to eudaimonia would be difficult.

It might seem that another widely used measure of well-being, the scales of psychological well-being (PWB; Ryff & Keyes, 1995) could solve this problem because these were designed to broadly sample different elements of well-being, including autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. However, PWB may similarly fail to provide a distinct measure of eudaimonia (see Disabato, Goodman, Kashdan, Short, & Jarden, 2016), and the same applies to another alternative measure, the flourishing scale (Ed Diener et al., 2010) which also shows significant overlap with hedonia (Proctor et al., 2015). In spite of the excellent theory and interesting research with which these scales have been involved, these scales may have been part of the problem rather than a solution.

Given this emphasis on hedonia and the problematic representation of eudaimonia (i.e., confounded with hedonia) in many positive psychology studies, it is not surprising then, that both hedonia and eudaimonia are more recently referred to as two distinct but related types of happiness (hedonic happiness and eudaimonic happiness, e.g., Joseph & Hefferon, 2013; Nikolaev, 2016). Eudaimonia is not equivalent to happiness from either a historical perspective (Aristotle, c. 330BCE/1980) or the perspective of at least some modern theorists (Huta & Waterman, 2013), though eudaimonia may facilitate happiness. If researchers use impure measures of hedonia, such as SWB, and impure measures of eudaimonia, such as PWB, then the constructs will overlap and appear indistinct. Thus, the two constructs may seem redundant. However, our research suggests hedonia and eudaimonia are distinguishable (Proctor et al., 2015). Our structural analysis of measures of well-being provided evidence that the hedonic indicators separated from the more eudaimonic indicator.

Why Include a Focus on Eudaimonia? What Memento Mori and Other Evidence Suggests

The artists who created the *memento mori* pieces believed they were contributing to the well-being of humanity and their methodology hints at the relevance of eudaimonia to positive psychology. In particular, they believed that reminders of death could have a positive impact on their viewers.

However, awareness of death and reminders of tragedy can be largely incompatible with the happy feelings that have been idealized by positive psychology. Few if any people could consistently maintain the ideal of positive psychology – that is, happiness and other indicators of hedonia – during moments of tragedy and/or reminders of coming tragedy. Thus, *memento mori* art reminds us that the dominant ideals of positive psychology are incompatible with the reality of life lived amidst reminders and realities of current and impending tragedy. Thus, to live the ideal of positive psychology, at least the ideal portrayed by some of the dominant rhetoric and measurement, one needs to be privileged enough to avoid tragedy or instead perform psychological tricks to distract oneself from the realities of life.

Misguided rhetoric and measurement will lead to misplaced effort. This truth is not unique to psychology; it has been recognized in the field of organizational studies as well. The business world can offer lessons on this. Doerr's (2018) bestselling book describes cases of organizations that missed out on success because they measured the wrong outcomes. For example, companies that use sales volume as their measure of sales staff success, and then

determine pay based only on sales volume may have high sales in the short term, but without measurement of other outcomes such as follow-up, service, and satisfaction, the company to fail because staff will neglect these outcomes that are essential to long-term success. Positive psychology could learn from those type of examples. In early positive psychology, hedonia became the major focus in both rhetoric and measurement, overshadowing the importance of eudaimonia and the relationship between the two. This could cause consumers of positive psychology to undervalue and fail to develop eudaimonia.

In contrast, a focus on eudaimonia, in addition to bringing an ideal of well-being potentially compatible with more domains of life, may also provide a more stable foundation for well-being than does hedonia, as shown by several studies. Huta and Ryan (2010) showed that an intervention nudging participants toward a eudaimonic orientation caused an increase in well-being 3-months later, while a nudge toward a hedonic orientation, though possibly offering short-term benefits, did not have the same longer-term effect. Furthermore, in other research (Steger, Kashdan, & Oishi, 2008), hedonic behaviors failed to contribute to eudaimonic outcomes, thus indicating that merely promoting hedonia will not effectively promote eudaimonia. In contrast, in that same study, eudaimonic behaviors contributed to both eudaimonic and hedonic outcomes. Furthermore, a eudaimonic orientation may also contribute not only to well-being for the self, but also well-being for others, though this was not true for a hedonic orientation (Huta, Pelletier, Baxter, & Thompson, 2012).

This realization that a complete psychology needs to propose ideals of well-being realistically attainable by people facing difficulty is something Paul Wong has been acting on and promoting both recently (e.g., Wong & Tweed, in press) and also earlier in his career (e.g., Wong, Reker, & Peacock, 2006), so had Paul's messages been heeded, these errors might have been avoided. This message has relevance not only for clinicians, but also for researchers. Measurement of eudaimonia is possible. We have provided a review of existing instruments that researchers can used to assess eudaimonia (Proctor & Tweed, 2016), and even though further expansion and improvement in the available measures would be desirable, good quality measures do exist.

Qualification: Eudaimonia Not Completely Absent from Positive Psychology 1.0

A qualification deserves mention here. The preceding material may give the impression that early positive psychology completely ignored eudaimonia, but the issue is one of balance, rather than one of complete absence. For example, Csikszenmihalyi (2014) was involved in positive psychology from the beginning, and he gave attention to virtue (e.g., Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, 2001) and other eudaimonic variables (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Even, Seligman himself collaborated with Peterson on a book discussing character strengths, and their definition of character strengths maps closely on to traditional definitions of virtue (see Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Nonetheless, a number of writers (e.g., Ehrenreich, 2009) have criticized positive psychology for an unbalanced focus on happiness, and as the current manuscript suggests, many of their criticisms have been well-founded.

Some Major Figures in Positive Psychology have More Recently Moved Toward a Greater Focus on Eudaimonia

Furthermore, some major figures within positive psychology have moved toward greater focus on eudaimonia. Seligman (2011) admitted the error of his early focus on happiness, and developed his PERMA (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Accomplishments) acronym representing a list of components of well-being. That list included

more eudaimonic outcomes, such as meaning, engagement, and achievement, but by that time, the early form of positive psychology had already been defined.

Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving **(CIT; Su, Tay, & Diener, 2014)**. In line with Seligman's focus moving from primarily hedonia to more inclusion of eudaimonia, Ed Diener who is known for his groundbreaking work on life satisfaction and SWB (Ed Diener, 1984; Oishi, Kesebir, & Diener, 2011), has more recently has contributed to the Comprehensive Inventory of Thriving (CIT; Su, Tay, & Diener, 2014). This measure incorporates, elements of basic needs (self-determination theory; Ryan & Deci, 2000), psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989), subjective well-being (Ed Diener, 1984), optimism (Scheier & Carver, 1993), meaning (Wong & Wong, 2012), and elements of PERMA (Seligman, 2011) – thereby representing constructs from many major theories and conceptualizations of well-being.

One Strategy for Elevating Attention Devoted to Eudaimonia: The Eudaimonic Activities Model (EAM; Sheldon, 2016, 2018)

Kennon Sheldon's Eudaimonic Activities Model (EAM; 2016, 2018) provides one possible resolution to this minimal attention to eudaimonia. Though not identifying himself as a positive psychologist, Sheldon has a history of involvement in research relevant to the field (e.g., Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2007). His eudaimonic activities framework suggests that eudaimonia is valuable in and of itself, regardless of hedonia, but he also proposes that the defining feature of eudaimonia is that it will increase one's subjective well-being (SWB). In other words, one can recognize whether a particular construct is in fact eudaimonic by assessing whether increases in that construct promote SWB. He operationalizes SWB like many other researchers as frequent positive affect, infrequent negative affect, and life satisfaction (cf. Steger, Kashdan, Oishi, 2008).

The EAM (Sheldon, 2016, 2018) raises the profile of eudaimonia in one sense because this model provides good reason for measuring eudaimonia: Eudaimonia contributes to SWB and for that reason deserves study. In fact, Sheldon asserts that any purported components of eudaimonia are merely pretenders if they fail to contribute to SWB. Any constructs failing to contribute to SWB are not real forms of eudaimonia. Sheldon's idea deserves attention, especially given that life satisfaction is the key existential variable – satisfaction with our lived life, both past, present, and future (i.e., cognitive evaluation of life as a whole; Diener, 1984).

However, in the short term, some components that clearly meet both Aristotle's definition of eudaimonia (virtue and excellence) and meet modern psychometric definitions (Huta & Waterman, 2013) may fail to produce SWB. For example, imagine a situation in which a person gives up their freedom for others and goes to a tortuous prison unjustly. That person will not necessarily experience hedonic well-being either momentarily or on a regular basis, however their overall behavior is still eudaimonic – an expression of and exercising of multiple virtues, such as justice, fortitude, and prudence. Thus, in some cases, eudaimonia may be genuine, but not promote hedonia in the self, at least not in the short-term. Thus, hedonia within the self is a fallible indicator of eudaimonic acts and perhaps has the greatest fallibility with acts that are demonstrations of the greatest steps toward eudaimonia.

Admittedly, Aristotle argued that eudaimonic acts (e.g., self-discipline) may be painful in the short-term, but once the virtue (of temperance for example) is fully attained, the eudaimonic act will come naturally and not bring pain, but in fact pleasure (i.e., hedonia). Because the eudaimon life will never be completely achieved, there will always be some acts of excellence that will bring short-term pain. Thus, the eudaimonic activity model has value, but is incomplete. Some eudaimonic acts will not produce measurable increases in hedonia in the self; they may instead contribute to SWB of others, or may even fail at that and may be attempts to contribute to

the well-being of others that ultimately fail. For example, a person could give themselves up to an enemy in an effort to save others (this being an expression of eudaimonia), but if the actions are futile, this may fail to produce SWB in the self or in the others even though the underlying eudaimonic intention is genuine. Eudaimonia is a process, not a destination, and the hedonic consequences of eudaimonia may be unfaithful indicators of what is truly a step toward eudaimonia.

Definitional Issues

We have a warning for those interested in theory and research related to eudaimonia, but before discussing that, some definitional issues deserve attention. Without an agreed upon definition of eudaimonia as it pertains to us today, a return to Aristotle's conceptualization can provide guidance. The true nature of Aristotle's eudaimonia, can be lost in the muddied water of the positive psychology 1.0 literature. First and foremost, Aristotle wanted to espouse that life needed to be about some ultimate function – it needed a purpose, and that purpose he proposed was eudaimonia. The difficulty is that eudaimonia is a process that cannot be completely achieved, but he argued that it can be worked towards to improve the experience of our lived lives. It is a way of living well and experiencing more personal flourishing than languishing, once we undertake the lifestyle of the *eudaimon life*. This lifestyle involves exercising and pursuing that which is best in us, good moral and intellectual activity. Unfortunately, for everyone, at times, living the eudaimon life involves some difficult and at times painful changes. Indeed, learning to do things at the right time, for the right purpose, with the right motive, and in the right way, takes some work. Coming to an understanding of virtue and how to exercise it wisely, takes decided effort. As Aristotle clearly pointed out, many acts that appear good or moral, if they are not done for good or moral reasons, such as to gain popularity or look good, then they are not an exercising of one's virtue. However, on the flip side, in order to habituate and/or get used to "doing good" we need to practice, and so at first, we may perform "good acts" without having achieved the virtue we aspire to. Moreover, in "practicing" we will likely experience pain, the kind of pain you might have felt as a child when your parent "made" you say thank you to someone or the kind of pain experienced when one is working towards self-control and temperate moderation – such as, in over eating or drinking. The point is, Aristotle is saying that if we don't try living into the virtue, by using it over and over again, we cannot begin to acquire that character trait in our personhood. Thus, although there is value in unpacking and examining acts as being either hedonic or eudaimonic in nature, neither conceptualization is completely accurate for determining the attainment of a virtue which is indicated not merely by the act, but by the way in which the acts becomes a reliable part of character – and even once attained, we can always work and improve on what is best in us because eudaimonia is never fully completed.

Eudaimonia is a process of pleasures and pains associated with the actions and passions of life (Proctor & Tweed, 2016). Therefore, feelings of pleasure enhance our experience of activities and can at times indicate when we have moved towards attainment of a virtue – for example, taking pleasure in being able to be temperate without feeling pain in doing so. Indeed, Aristotle intended for us to understand that in the long run, moving into virtue towards eudaimonia would result in a more fulfilled and pleasurable life – giving meaning to being by exercising that which is best in us (Fowers, 2005, 2012a, 2012b), in spite of the fact that particular eudaimonic acts may not directly contribute to hedonia.

A positive psychology that includes a focus on eudaimonia is a fuller positive psychology because this approach to well-being is compatible, not only with positive social conditions, but

also with life amidst tragedy. Further, this ideal of well-being can be compatible with a worldview that need not fear *memento mori*, but could potentially exist even among reminders of death and other tragedies because progress toward the eudaimonic life need not rely on immediate feelings of happiness.

Paul Wong (Wong, 2007, 2011) has long argued that positive psychology needs broader relevance to people facing tragedy, and a focus on eudaimonia can be part of that more complete positive psychology. He did not always use the word "eudaimonia", but his emphasis on concepts such as tragic optimism has long made clear, that the ideals of well-being among positive psychologists need to be adjusted to be relevant to people amidst tragic conditions.

What's Missing from Research on Eudaimonia

We are not alone in arguing for a focus on eudaimonia (e.g., Vitterso, 2016), yet even among those who argue for a focus on well-being, two elements seem largely absent or at least underemphasized, and once again, as with ideals of well-being, if the work of Paul Wong had been heeded, these lacunae may not have occurred.

Virtue. In our review of existing measures of eudaimonia (Proctor & Tweed, 2016) , we suggested that even positive psychology scholars devoted to the topic of eudaimonia seldom include measures of virtue. This inattention is surprising given that the concept of virtue is essential to the traditional idea of eudaimonia. Aristotle portrayed eudaimonia as a combination of excellence and virtue. The very etymology of the term eudaimonia suggests the role of virtue. The word begins with the Greek prefix "eu" and those that have heard of the concept of "eustress" can make a guess at the meaning of the first element of eudaimonia. Eustress refers to stress that is good or beneficial, such as practicing self-discipline or receiving feedback from a helpful mentor. These experiences are called eustress because the experience can seem stressful, but it is good and beneficial stress. The modern word "demon" gives a hint at the root of the second part of eudaimonia. The second part of the word comes from a term related to spirits or deities. Thus, people who have eudaimonia, are not only receiving desirable experiences, they are in some sense *good* in a way that relates to some transcendent element (or "activity of soul"; Aristotle, c. 330 BCE/1980, p.14).

Admittedly, virtue will be difficult to operationalize for research purposes. Self-reports of virtue can be untrustworthy. People who think they are virtuous, may or may not be. This realization is not new: The historical classic book *The Pilgrim's Progress* (Bunyan, 2003) suggests this fact with its vast array of people claiming to be good, who are not.

However, research for the purposes of applied psychology in the workplace has something to offer to researchers interested in assessing virtue. For years, personality tests have provided helpful, but relatively weak predictive power for hiring of employees (Barrick & Mount, 1991). IQ testing has value too (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998), but may be perceived as distasteful for a variety of reasons. Big advances were made when psychometricians developed tests to assess integrity. These types of tests contributed very significantly to prediction of employee success on the job (Ones, Viswesvaran, & Schmidt, 1993). They didn't necessarily predict who would be most adept at the job, but they helped assure the companies hired people who would be less likely to cause problems. As the name denotes, integrity tests are measures of virtue, but with a twist.

One of the most interesting features of integrity tests is that they do not actually work very well at identifying the applicants with the most integrity, and in some case the extremely honest applicants might even fail the tests by admitting to minor past infractions that the merely quite honest people would hide. The tests instead function to identify the individuals with the

least integrity. In others words, these tests are labelled as measures of virtue, but actually they measure the opposite, absence of virtue, and through this they provide valuable predictive power. Thus, in order to assess virtue, they actually assess the opposite, evil, and this strategy provides one of the better predictors of employee outcomes (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). A similar outcome has occurred in the field of forensic psychology. Measures of virtue have not received wide use, but self-reports of its opposite have emerged, and have value (Shaffer et al., 2016). Perhaps eudaimonia researchers could learn from the findings of personnel researchers and forensic researchers, and rather than measuring virtue, use reversed scores from some commonly used measures of negative traits, such as the dark triad (Jones & Paulhus, 2014) or dark tetrad (Chabrol, Bouvet, & Goutaudier, 2017), as indicators of the virtue component of eudaimonia. Integrating these measures of virtue's absence into positive psychology studies could make the studies more consistent with theory on eudaimonia.

Is the Study of Virtue Aversive? Did Aristotle Miss Something? One can wonder why modern positive psychologists so seldom connect the ideas of eudaimonia and virtue. Is there something that positive psychologists find aversive to this aspect of Aristotle's thought? We are limited to speculation here but will nonetheless make a suggestion. Aristotle pointed out that eudaimonia is never achieved, so we can speculate that for many people this awareness of imperfection will be painful. Aristotle, however, failed to provide a means for restricting the human tendency to distract oneself from one's own failures, and thus, left eudaimonia as a topic from which many people will avert their attention. People often distract themselves from recognizing their own moral shortcomings by redirecting their attention to dimensions allowing downward moral comparison (e.g., "My neighbor may devote much money and many hours to unfortunate others, but I'm better than him because he's a…"). Alternatively, they may simply choose not to think about virtue. Religious and philosophical perspectives may also provide psychological means of coping with awareness of imperfection (e.g., belief in divine forgiveness, belief that any failures are due to environmental factors). For a helpful and more complete discussion of responses to upward social comparison see Monin (2007).

Furthermore, elevating oneself as a virtue researcher could open oneself up to attack by others who seem somehow surprised that the virtue researcher is far from achieving the end of virtue. Thus, positive psychologists have reasons for avoiding the topic of virtue.

Perhaps positive psychologists and others would be more open to this topic of virtue if Aristotle had provided a means for dealing with the psychological pain of imperfection, the pain of realizing eudaimonia is never complete. The modern concept of self-compassion might help (Bluth & Neff, 2018). Self-compassion enables awareness of one's limitation while reducing self-judgement and increasing consciousness that the failings in oneself are endemic to the human condition. The failures one sees in oneself, according to this perspective, merely show that one is like others. Moral excellence can be sought, but failure is expected and should not create undue moral pain. If positive psychologists accompany discussion of virtue with discussion of self-compassion, perhaps researchers and others will be more open to the virtue aspects of eudaimonia, though at this point, this suggestion is speculative.

Wisdom. Wisdom is the second relatively unattended element of eudaimonia, at least among positive psychologists. This inattention to wisdom is surprising because others outside of positive psychology have made significant strides in research on wisdom (Gluck, 2017), and some of that research supports the notion that both performance measures of general wisdom and self-reported measures of wisdom are associated with well-being (Zacher & Staudinger, 2018) possibly because wisdom provides guidance for how to adjust behavior for different situations.

Within psychology, there exists a long tradition of research on how to cope with stressors (e.g., Folkman, Lazarus, Dunkel-Schetter, DeLongis, & Gruen, 1986), yet in some ways the messages from this body of research can seem confusing because no single coping strategy will always work. In some situations, active problem solving may serve one best, but in other situations, distraction or even giving up may have the most value (Miller & Wrosch, 2007). Thus, discussions of good and bad coping strategies are often drastic oversimplifications. Consistent with this perspective, a Google Ngram search suggests that mentions of "coping research" in books rose consistently beginning in the 1960's, but then precipitously declined starting in the 1990's. Wisdom may be different and may have more universal relevance than discussion of coping strategies because wisdom relates to knowledge of how to adjust behavior for a variety of situations.

Many historical figures have asserted the value of wisdom. Aristotle, discussed both *sophia*, which has been translated as "philosophical wisdom" and also *phronesis*, which has been translated as "practical wisdom". He said eudaimonia is facilitated by both. In particular, *phronesis* enables right choosing which in turn enables eudaimonia. About *phronesis*, he said "for virtue makes us aim at the right mark, and practical wisdom [*phronesis*] makes us take the right means" (Aristotle, c. 330 BCE/1980, vi.12.2, p. 155). *Sophia*, he also reported, produces eudaimonia as well. He saw both forms of wisdom as central to the task of doing the work of being human and achieving the good life. That assertion of the value of wisdom is echoed by many historical figures. For example Cicero (44 BCE/1887) praised wisdom as the greatest virtue, argued that it is much more than knowledge, and is the opposite of recklessness.

Wisdom may seem too esoteric for applied research, but a few researchers have gathered evidence that wisdom can be operationalized and studied. The Berlin wisdom paradigm (BWP) defines wisdom as broad and deep expert knowledge about life and human nature that is acquired through long-term practice (Zacher & Staudinger, 2018). Wisdom, from this perspective addresses pragmatics of life and death, and moral dilemmas. Following this theoretical framework, wisdom is measured in the BWP by assessing oral responses to open-ended questions concerning difficult life problems (Kunzmann, 2004). Trained individuals subsequently evaluate the responses for features such as procedural knowledge and recognition of uncertainty.

Ardelt's (2003) 3-Dimensional Wisdom Scale (3D-WS) involves a 39-item self-report scale, later shortened to 12 items (Thomas, Bangen, Ardelt, & Jeste, 2017), whereby participants state their level of agreement with various statements reflecting three dimensions of wisdom. The three components of wisdom in the 3D-WS are reflective (taking different perspectives), cognitive (yearning for understanding and truth), and affective (compassion and care for others' needs and problems). High scores in all three dimensions indicate a high level of wisdom (Gluck, 2017). The 3D-WS has been found to be positively related to mastery, purpose in life, forgiveness, and wellbeing, and negatively related to depression, economic pressure, death avoidance, and fear of death (Glück et al., 2013; Zacher & Staudinger, 2018). Thus, this operationalized conceptualization of wisdom seems to be associated with positive states.

Grossmann's conception of wise reasoning focuses on manifestations of wisdom within particular life situations (Grossmann, 2017). The responses to these situations are scored for features such as intellectual humility, dialecticism, recognition of other perspectives, and integration of various perspectives. He has measured wisdom using observers' scoring of participant responses (Grossmann, 2017) and also using a self-report scale called the Situated Wise Reasoning Scale (Brienza, Kung, Santos, Bobocel, & Grossmann, 2017).

Common to each of the characterizations of wisdom reviewed here (Grossmann, 2017; Thomas et al., 2017; Zacher & Staudinger, 2018) is a willingness to show intellectual humility. The concept of intellectual humility is also being explored in fascinating ways by Lilienfeld (2018).

Because Aristotle suggests somewhat convincingly that wisdom has a role in eudaimonia and because wisdom has relations to well-being (Zacher & Staudinger, 2018), wisdom deserves more attention within positive psychology. Furthermore, the discussion above suggests that several researchers have made progress in operationalizing wisdom and its components, thus enabling others to conduct research on this topic.

For much of recent history, the English-speaking world demonstrated as declining interest in wisdom. In particular, Google Ngram suggests that mentions of "wisdom" in books in English drastically declined from the early 1800's until approximately 1980 when a slight increase began. Psychology, a field which emerged during this era of declining interest, is consistent with this trend by taking relatively little interest in wisdom, a tendency also repeated within positive psychology. Since 2004, however, a Google Trends analysis suggest that internet searches for wisdom have been fairly steadily increasing in the U.S.A., Canada, the U.K., and Australia. It may be disappointing that positive psychologists are following the crowd if they move on to a greater focus on wisdom. Leading would have been better, but late is better than never.

Paul Wong has been ahead of his time in all the major domains discussed in this manuscript. If his example had been followed for each of the major themes discussed so far, some of the errors of positive psychology might have been avoided. He has written extensively about responsible action and the need to attend to virtue (Wong, 2011).Paul has not, to our knowledge directly studied the concept of wisdom, but it is interesting that at least one researcher looking for an indicator of wisdom to use in validating her wisdom scale (Ardelt, 2003), chose Paul's Death Attitude Profile (Wong et al., 2006), and found that wisdom was associated with higher scores on that scale.

Conclusion

As we survey the state of positive psychology, we see much of value. The emphasis on happiness and well-being has provided a helpful focus, but the focus has been incomplete. In order to provide a resilient form of well-being, a well-being that can remain even when considering tragedy and death, and need not fear *memento mori*, we recommend a greater focus on eudaimonia. Admittedly, some researchers already focus on eudaimonia, but even within that domain, two particularly important constructs, virtue and wisdom, tend to receive surprisingly little attention.

This manuscript has been written for a Festschrift in honor of Paul Wong. Throughout this discussion, in each major consideration, Paul was ahead of his time. Each of these correctives might not have been needed had the field of positive psychology more closely followed the example of Paul. We are grateful for the strength and effort he exerted and continues to exert, sometimes against the tide, in standing out for these important themes. Paul has contributed much to the field.

In addition to the important theoretical contributions relevant to this paper, Paul has given much else on a more personal level, and several features illustrate this. First, he has consistently been welcoming. He has welcomed us into his friendship not only academically, but on a more personal level. Second, Paul has been persisting. Even when he lost money running a meaning conference and faced health challenges, Paul continued organizing conferences that have been

enlightening and encouraging, and that consistently attract impressive lists of presenters. Paul will never be justifiably accused of being a person who gives up easily. Third, Paul has facilitated networking. At gatherings with Paul, a familiar sight is to see Paul waving at a newcomer to come join his conversation, not just because he enjoys their company, but because Paul helps newcomers meet others who welcome them and possibly eventually collaborate with them. Perhaps the most interesting feature Paul has contributed to research on meaning has been his willingness to welcome and work with people who hold a wide array of theoretical perspectives. He has helped the "meaning community" to encompass and welcome people who have divergent and even opposing life perspectives, and yet Paul has facilitated civility in these enlightening encounters.

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