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The Artist's Dilemma; A Philosophical Analysis of “Selling Out” and Its Impacts on Well-Being In the Music Industry

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CLAREMONT MCKENNA COLLEGE

**The Artist's Dilemma;
A Philosophical Analysis of "Selling Out" and Its Impacts on Well-Being
In the Music Industry**

SUBMITTED TO

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AND
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BY

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for

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Abstract

Beginning with a discussion of a concept referred to as “The Artist’s Dilemma,” my thesis discusses the common criticism of artists in the music industry that they can “sell out” by changing their sound, appearance, and jeopardizing their artistic integrity in exchange for financial or celebrity gain. Furthermore, it attempts to search for a universal guide by which artists in the music industry could circumnavigate this “artist’s dilemma” in order to ensure a meaningful career without over-playing their role as a celebrity, nor under-playing their role as a musician. In order to evaluate this topic, I consider multiple “real world” examples of both artists who have been traditionally labeled as “sellouts,” and those that have managed to maintain artistic integrity throughout their career. Next I move to acknowledging philosophical perspectives on the topic of well-being (e.g. Hedonistic, Desire-Satisfaction, and Objective List theories) in attempts to gain outside perspectives on what constitutes a meaningful life for an individual, and how it can be achieved. Then I attempt to evaluate the “artist’s dilemma” through the lens of each previously mentioned philosophical perspective on well-being. My thesis concludes that, more often than not, “selling out” in the music industry will not result in an increase to overall well-being across the course of a career or lifetime. However, this conclusion is provided under the stipulation that determinations on this matter are ultimately subject to preferences and desires of the individual artist, and by which of the three philosophical perspectives of well-being they find themselves most compelled.

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Acknowledgements and Introduction

The following thesis is the culmination of my education in Philosophy and Economics at Claremont McKenna College, as well as my experiences throughout my life so far. Across my education at three different universities (Chapman University, University Honors College at Oregon State University, and Claremont McKenna College), I have been able to develop and cultivate my interests, skills and personality to the extent that I was capable of producing this work. So first, thank you to Coach Jeff Phelps, without whom I never would have found the determination and persistence necessary to get into Claremont McKenna College. Thank you to the brothers of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity - Oregon Alpha chapter, the CMS Men's Water Polo team, and the other organizations that have shaped my collegiate experience. Within the realm of academia, thank you to Bart Millar and Russell Peterson for your roles in initially developing my interests in philosophy. Most importantly within academia, I would like to thank Dr. Alex Rajczi for his continued mentorship, support, and rationality throughout my time at Claremont McKenna College. Without his incredibly valuable insight, both academically and personally, I would not have finished this thesis, nor my degree. Furthermore, it has been a legitimate honor to work under the tutelage of a philosophical mind as strong as his.

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Chapter One – Framing the Artist’s Dilemma

The notion of maintaining one’s own personal identity and values in the face of temptation is an archetypal ideal that most of humanity attempts to adhere itself to. Additionally, it is an ideal that faces unavoidable conflict as we are presented with seemingly daily situations that call for us to determine and re-assess our values. Further, as the world has progressed since early examples of such scenarios (e.g. Adam, Eve, and The Snake, etc.)¹, temptations and manners in which we can abandon morality, identity, and values have transcended societal development and found their way into virtually every facet of our collective being. While many would expect these value-questioning conflicts to occur in realms that are already societally associated with corruption and ambiguous morality such as politics, investment banking or military employment, they have an equal if not greater role in areas that shape culture, rather than society. However despite the broad range of areas in which these compromising instances occur, one notable commonality among them all is that the individual is rewarded for their compromise with superficial goods such as money or social status.

In recognition of the complexity of these value-questioning conflicts, the vast array of realms and the seemingly infinite number of manners in which they can occur, any discussion on the matter must be restricted to a specific realm of culture or area of human life. Considering the development of culture from a historical perspective, a trend that has existed since the dawn of man within virtually every culture in the world is music. Furthermore, as this trend and activity has grown to become more and more

¹ *Holy Bible* . New International Version (NIV). Biblica, Inc. , 2011. Web. 9 Oct. 2014.
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+2%3A4-3%3A24&version=NIV>

incorporated into aspects of culture, it has been at least partially responsible for the fostering of other aspects of cultural identity which cultures worldwide hold dear to them in the present day (e.g. dance, performance, costume, celebrity status, etc.). Due to the universal impact music has had on cultures around the world, as well as the vast amount of information (both academic and “opinion”) chronicling instances in which moral or value-based conflicts have occurred within it, the music industry seems an appropriate realm in which to restrict our discussion.

While the problem of compromising values, morals, or identity within the music industry may seem counter-intuitive to some due to the “free” and “expressionistic” nature associated with the act of creating and performing music, the music industry is arguably the most highly criticized realm of art and entertainment. The primary issue taken against the industry is the manner in which artists will sometimes “sell out” to attain more money or a greater fan base. Note that this criticism is not as simple as someone disliking the sound of an artist’s music, truly it doesn’t have much to do at all with the actual sound of the music, rather it is concerned with the decision to change in order to appeal to newer trends and audiences in search of greater success. Those withdrawn from the world of art and artistic integrity may see no problem here in the sense that working hard with financial motivation is not necessarily a bad thing, however the factor that creates conflict within this specific realm is the manner in which artists must sometimes, more or less, give up their artistic integrity and vision in order to reach a certain level of fame and notoriety. Generally this process manifests itself by artists simply not producing what they believe to be the highest quality or most self-expressive music possible, and tailoring their songs to sound like whatever is popular in the

mainstream (e.g. Billboard Top 100 ©, etc.) in hopes that it will make them richer or more famous. However, it can and has appeared in other manifestations, such as artists succumbing to financial pressure placed upon them by record or promotion companies, as well as corporate sponsors. In the following pages, we will conduct a more in depth discussion of this identity, morality and value-questioning conflict within the music industry and how an artist can circumnavigate it. In order to do so, we will examine general trends in criticisms of this nature within the music industry, as well as a few case examples of past artists who have encountered this conflict, which will be henceforth referred to as “The Artist’s Dilemma.”

Before moving any further with a discussion of the artist’s dilemma, we must first clarify a few things on the topic of selling out in order to determine exactly what it is artists are being criticized for. First and foremost, the act, which many would refer to as reprehensible, is more or less a modern day adaptation of succumbing to temptation, however it generally carries the connotation of having financial or celebrity motivation. *Merriam Webster* defines a sellout as “someone who does something that does not agree with [their] beliefs or values especially in order to make money.”² Within the music industry, this definition addresses the financial aspect of personal gain, though as we will see, can refer to increasing one’s public exposure and stardom as well (regardless, financial gains usually tend to come as a result). Ultimately, within the context of our discussion, we will refer to financial gain and celebrity gain as a similar entity in the sense that they both represent a goal and benefit that are exclusively relevant to the

² “‘sellout’ - Definition." *Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Merriam-Webster Online*. Web. 3 Sept. 2014. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sellout>

individual who receives them. An additional aspect to the act of selling out is the manner in which criticisms against it are generally subjective, and thus it becomes virtually impossible to completely quantify, with 100% certainty, whether or not an artist has sold out. There is a plethora of evaluative information in the world regarding which artists have sold out, and which ones have been able to attain massive stardom, success and acclaim without earning such a label, however a significant portion of it becomes convoluted and even contradictory at certain points. Among matters that commonly tend to complicate the discussion are the amounts of time those claiming an artist have sold out have been familiar with their music. In many instances, fans that follow an artist from their early stages – commonly referred to as the “underground stages” – tend to be the most outspoken critics due to dissatisfaction with changes or decisions an artist makes in their career. As a result, this bias formed by dissatisfaction can in some instances over-populate the written domain and influence collective thought on the matter of whether or not an artist has sold out. Beyond this specific type of complication, sources will sometimes state that an artist has sold out after a formerly unpopular artist begins making large public appearances outside the realm of music (e.g. guest appearing on talk shows, making cameos in movies, endorsing products, etc.). Such criticisms generally accompany the previously described set of criticisms relating to fan dissatisfaction. However in this set, rather than applying to a change of sound, it applies to a change in public knowledge through which original fans are no longer in the minority. Upon first glance, criticisms purely regarding an increase in the publicity of an artist bear a superficial connotation in the sense that they ultimately relate back to fan dissatisfaction. Further, on the other end of the spectrum, such criticisms could appear senseless due to

the implications they hold that artists would need to deliberately avoid any increases in publicity to remain true to their craft and avoid scrutiny. With that being said, on a second level, they also shed light on a potentially larger problem relating to the motivation behind an artist in the music industry. Given the absurd nature of simply criticizing an artist because more people listen to their music, it would seem this latter problem of an artist's motivation would be a better criterion by which to further our discussion.

One of the most clearly re-occurring themes within the discussion of “sellouts” vs. “artists” is the dichotomy between two distinct types of musicians and their motivations; those who are in the music industry for the love of the music itself, and those who are in the music industry to become famous. While this dichotomy alone is surely not adequate criteria by which to evaluate the whole of the issue of the artist's dilemma, it does identify one large population within the music industry that can be described as, at the very least, more prone to sell out. Further, it would seem that those driven by fame actually fully embody the term sellout in the sense that they are literally going out of their way to compromise their artistic integrity and market themselves in whatever way will gain the most attention. A potential problem that arises within this dichotomy is that surely it would be possible for there to be artists who create music because it is what they truly love to do, however they also wish to be able to reach greater exposure and make money because those are reasonable wishes for an individual. Moving forward, we will embark on greater discussion of ends worth pursuing in order to find the greatest possible well-being in one's life, and as an artist. However for now, we will continue with the notion that artist's motivated more by selfish gains such as fame

and money, rather than making music they believe to be the best possible and most-expressive, will be the definite mark of a “sellout” within the context of the artist’s dilemma. Additionally, this distinction does not necessarily mean that an artist is always on one side of the dilemma or the other, which is to say, it is entirely possible for an artist’s motivations to switch or become subject to exogenous influence (for better or for worse) across the scope of their entire career. Most likely, individuals would argue that upon attaining success and stardom, an artist could or would have their motivations change from the music that got them there, to maintaining their place in the spotlight (or maintaining their newly attained celebrity status). On the other side of the spectrum, it is theoretically equally plausible for an artist to begin making music because he/she wanted to become famous, and then found that it was the music all along that made them happy, thus relinquishing their role in the spotlight and retreating to a more humble means of artistry and musicianship for the remainder of their career. In both instances of change, artists would clearly have been subject to the factors of the industry around them, as well as factors ultimately reducing to individual motivations and desires.

Now with a greater understanding of the issue of selling out, we can move forward to a discussion of the artist’s dilemma as a whole. Before going any further, we should shy away from making encompassing statements such as “at any point between learning to play an instrument and attempting to become a musician, the artist faces a dilemma between staying true to himself and selling out” because we have already shown the issue to be more complex than that. The fact of the matter seems to be that the artist’s dilemma regards the trajectory of the artist’s career, and decisions they make informed by motivations and values that will be shown to be subject to change over time. These

changes, and choices to change, are additionally reflective of the motivations behind the manners in which artists circumnavigate the “artist’s dilemma,” and moving forward we will consider a few “real life” examples which illustrate the struggles and conflicts artists have actually encountered within this context. Further, we can do so with the understanding that the true dilemma that the artist encounters (and of which we are inquiring) is in how to go about a career of making music in the spotlight without overstepping one’s bounds as a celebrity or under-stepping one’s bounds as an artist.

In the first of our “real world” case examples, we arrive with an artistic ensemble that has been fittingly criticized for decades as one of the most overly marketed (successful) and “sold out” musical groups in history; KISS. In addition to their moniker as one of the most oversold bands in history, they have reached an additional title as one of the richest bands in history, grossing over \$500 Million across their 30+ year career³. Observing historical trends, their financial success came as a result of them constantly redefining and making their image more marketable. KISS started in New York City in the early 1970’s attempting to gain popularity in the up-and-coming “Hard Rock” movement which had begun some few years prior. While the founding two members, Paul Stanley⁴ and Gene Simmons⁵, were both musicians, both biographical and

³ Waddell, Ray. "Masters of Merch: KISS Has Rocked Merch For 35 Years - And Now The Band Is Continuing Its Dynasty With Walmart ." *Billboard: The Sensational Spectacular* 3 Oct. 2009: *Google Books*. Web. 28 Sept. 2014.

[http://books.google.com/books?id=nGoIniELKvcC&pg=PT21&lpg=PT21&dq=KISS+\\$500+million&source=bl&ots=C190RLg5SB&sig=ypRwzDL1JIlvYLYZxhPpv-82Mm8&hl=en&sa=X&ei=CB1nVMLMGI2aigKsioDoCg&ved=0CDIQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q&f=true](http://books.google.com/books?id=nGoIniELKvcC&pg=PT21&lpg=PT21&dq=KISS+$500+million&source=bl&ots=C190RLg5SB&sig=ypRwzDL1JIlvYLYZxhPpv-82Mm8&hl=en&sa=X&ei=CB1nVMLMGI2aigKsioDoCg&ved=0CDIQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q&f=true)

⁴ Wardlaw, Matt. "KISS Frontman Paul Stanley Addresses Controversy Surrounding Band's Hall Of Fame Induction." *Scene & Heard*. Scene Magazine Midwest, 9 Apr. 2014. Web. 29 Sept. 2014.

<http://www.clevescene.com/scene-and-heard/archives/2014/04/09/kiss-frontman-paul-stanley-addresses-controversy-surrounding-bands-rock-hall-induction>

autobiographical anecdotes cite the two as speaking heavily of looking for the right components so that their band would be “famous” rather than “really good” From the beginning, KISS attracted fans to their shows with theatrical antics, stage make-up, and intense sounds, which were more than enough to gather a cult following behind them which was (and is) referred to as the “KISS Army.” However, after three tours with their initial visuals and theatrics, KISS, under the supervision of their label-appointed manager Bill Aucoin, began to change their image slightly in 1976 in order to attract the younger, “teenie-bopper” audience, as well as in order to establish more of a sex appeal associated with their image. As a result, the band began releasing more “softcore” singles such as the acoustic track “Beth,” which in turn earned them 6 platinum records between the years of 1976 and 1979, and additionally saw their net worth skyrocket. While it was at this point that the success of KISS really started to take off, it was also this decision to tone down their “heavy” image in attempts to attract younger, female fans that first drew criticisms of “selling out”. Furthermore, it is worth noting that it is decisions such as this, and the circumstances behind them that generally outline the “artist’s dilemma” (e.g. artists are faced with the decision to continue with their artistic styling with potentially lesser success or shift to what would be more popular with the guarantee of greater success). By the end of the 1970’s KISS had attained an entirely new fan base, and had reached an unprecedented level of international exposure. If their change in musical sound to appeal to the teenage girl audience was not a move indicative of “selling out,” the self-marketing decisions that followed certainly were. Within the following twenty years, KISS marketed itself through everything from Marvel © Comic Books, to

⁵ Topel, Fred. "Gene Simmons - Exclusive Interview." *Ultimate Classic Rock*. N.P., 18 Aug. 2014. Web. 20 Sept. 2014. <http://ultimateclassicrock.com/gene-simmons-2014-interview/>

Condoms, to even changing their style of music in order to produce a disco record entitled “I Was Made For Loving You”⁶ While KISS would continue on to reach financial and celebrity success essentially up until the present day, their willingness to adapt to the market, change their sound, change their look, and market themselves shamelessly has earned them somewhat of an asterisk next to their name in the record books of musical history. Surely no one could doubt the quality of their music in the sense that it surely was good enough to reach massive success in a number of different genres, and that virtually everyone has celebrated, at least once, to the tune of “I Wanna Rock N’ Roll All Night.” However the means by which they were able to establish their longevity in the music industry stands as an inhibitor to their being fully appreciated and admired as they possibly could have been without printing their faces on condoms.

In our second “real word” example, we turn to an artist on the polar opposite end of the spectrum from a group like KISS, which was focused primarily on reaching financial and celebrity success. In this second example, we look at the 1990’s grunge rock band, Nirvana, and specifically their front-man Kurt Cobain. The group found its roots in the anti-mainstream punk that came as a result British influence toward the late 1970’s and 1980’s. Rather than seeking out bandmates that would put together a titanic stage presence and sell records, Kurt Cobain founded the band Nirvana with his friend and bassist Krist Novoselic due to the manner in which he used music as a means of self-expression while dealing with depression, bi-polar disorder, and the divorce of his

⁶ Eddy, Chuck. "KISS Biography." *Rolling Stone: The Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock & Roll*. Rolling Stone, 2001. Web. 9 Sept. 2014. <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/artists/kiss/biography>

parents. After multiple years of playing with his group at the height of Seattle, Washington's grunge scene, Nirvana was signed to Subpop records (a division of *Interscope*), and released their first successful album, *Nevermind*, in 1991. Rather than be a contributing factor to the anti-establishment and anti-mainstream movement that his music was influenced by, Cobain and the rest of Nirvana were shocked by the manner in which *Nevermind* reached almost unprecedented success and essentially turned them into overnight millionaires⁷. As a result, the band began touring internationally, and their album made it all the way to number #1 on the Billboard Top 200 © list in 1992⁸. It was at the point of reaching this #1 ranking that Nirvana began to draw criticisms from the original grunge community as "sellouts," despite fervently attempting to avoid doing so. As Nirvana's popularity increased, and as Cobain continued to struggle with mental illness, he became more and more overwhelmed by the notion that his music was being used for the wrong purposes by the media. This rising stress, and the aforementioned factors led to Cobain developing a heroin addiction as a means of coping with his new life, and the realization that his lyrics were being misinterpreted and misused by record companies and the audiences they were being played for. His ultimate problem was that he was attempting to speak out against conformity, mainstream oppression, and social problems such as gay-rights, racism and gender-equality; however his songs were being played by those who conformed to the mainstream and oppressed things like gender-equality and gay-rights. Essentially, Cobain felt as though he was being, more or less, forced into selling out given that he had little control over how his music was being

⁷ "The Money Will Roll Right In." *The Internet Nirvana Fan Club*. Nirvana Fan Club, N.D. Web. 14 Oct. 2014. <http://www.nirvanaclub.com/index.php?section=info/general&file=money.htm>

⁸ Serpick, Evan. "Nirvana Biography." *The Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock & Roll*. 2001 ed. *Rolling Stone*. Web. 8 Oct. 2014. <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/artists/nirvana/biography>

distributed or in what ways. As Nirvana's career moved forward, they continued to gain more and more success and celebrity status as they released their next album, *In Utero*, in 1993. In this album, the band actually tried to return to a grungier sound that they were more comfortable with, and as a result saw even more success from *In Utero*, as it debuted at number 1 on the Billboard Top 200 ©. Cobain continued to tour with Nirvana as their success sustained, all the while growing increasingly less and less satisfied as he saw his *In Utero* album used in the same manner as the first and noting many times that he felt more and more like a "sellout." Eventually, the mixture of pressures from his perceptions of "selling out," bi-polar and depression related mental illnesses and drug abuse brought him to commit suicide on April 5th, 1995⁹. Ultimately, both Nirvana and Kurt Cobain are viewed from a historical perspective as some of the greatest influences on modern music within the last century, and interestingly enough, they did so by being somewhat perpetually afraid of selling out. In constantly trying to maintain integrity to their sound, and at times attempting to literally avoid what other bands were doing, they were able to present a truly unique sound which still stirs feelings of anarchy in western youth today. However, the tragedy of the industry which has come to unfold within the artist's dilemma, is that by the standards Cobain (as well as other musicians) held for himself, reaching major international success was unavoidably going to be at least an implicit form of "selling out" because his sound would by definition be in the mainstream media for much larger audiences to observe. With that being said though, it was not the fact that his music had made it into the mainstream that pushed Cobain over the line, it was the fact that he felt he had sold out when he gave the mainstream permission to use

⁹ "Kurt Donald Cobain." *Bio*. A&E Television Networks, 2014. Web. 21 Nov. 2014.
<http://www.biography.com/people/kurt-cobain-9542179#troubled-youth>

his music, and then watched as it in turn was used to support the conformity and oppression he had fought so adamantly against.

In our third case example, we turn to an artist who has been heralded across the better part of the last century as one of the greatest and most influential musicians of all-time; Sir Paul McCartney. Sir Paul's success stems not from the amount of money that he made, or the amount of fans that he gathered across the years (which would be arguably more than anyone else in history), but the fact that as a musician, he pursued pure musicianship throughout his career and fought tirelessly to continue producing new works, in new ways, just to expand his love and understanding of music. Admittedly, Sir Paul McCartney's ability to freely pursue music was supported by his unbelievable success attained while playing with *The Beatles*, however there have been countless other bands that have reached high levels of success and none of their members did much of anything once the band stopped touring. Many have suggested that this true love of music attributed to Sir Paul stemmed from the manner in which Sir Paul used music as a coping mechanism after the death of his mother during his adolescence, and then carried it forward with him as his primary means of self-expression. As a younger man, Sir Paul McCartney would often play jazz and blues by himself in small shows until he met John Lennon, at which point the two formed an early band, and eventually picked up George Harrison on guitar in addition to a studio drummer that would later be replaced. In 1961, the band decided to hire a manager (Brian Epstein) due to the fact that they simply were not successful enough, and could hardly afford to continue making music as they were. As a result of this managerial decision, the band changed some of their rougher, flashier on stage antics and instead switched to the clean-cut appearance that made them famous.

While many looking back would have labeled this as a “sellout” thing to do, the fact of the matter was that *The Beatles* were not aspiring to look any more mainstream, or appeal to an already iconic image of Rock N’ Roll, because the movement itself was more or less just getting started, thus they appeared more as pioneers than “wannabes.” As time would progress, *The Beatles* would make their presence felt in the United States, as “Beatlemania!” and “The British Invasion” began. For the next decade, *The Beatles* grew to become one of the most, if not the most, massively popular musical acts of all time, releasing countless hits and growing almost daily both in financial success and stardom. However in 1969, the band’s manager, Brian Epstein, died and shortly thereafter *The Beatles* lost their creative focus, which in turn eventually led to the mutual decision to disband and pursue different musical outlets. Despite the dissolving of *The Beatles*, Sir Paul McCartney launched his first solo project with his new band *Wings*, which reached immediate success in 1969 when his album won two Grammy’s, and “Maybe I’m Amazed” came in at number 1 on the Billboard Top 100 Chart ©. In the next decade, Sir Paul McCartney saw his celebrity status change from that of a simple famous musician, to that of a famous and loved personality as he began arranging large philanthropic projects powered by his stardom and access to other famous people, such as his Cambodian benefit concert with Elvis Costello in 1979. As he transitioned into the 1980’s and 1990’s, Sir Paul McCartney went into a semi-reclusive state following the death of John Lennon, during which he began focusing on individual musical projects he had been previously unable to explore, such as writing classical pieces for the “Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society” and “The Liverpool Oratorio”, many of which were

written both for choir and orchestra.¹⁰ Within the most recent fifteen years (following the end of the century), Sir Paul McCartney has continued on with his musical projects, making continued appearances at live events, as well as on recordings with some of the world's "best" musicians, and has been able to continue enjoying his status as one of the greatest musicians of all-time. As previously alluded to, his status (which, it's worth adding, has been able to avoid a large percentage of the criticisms most other major artists receive) has stemmed from his dedication to the pursuit and understanding of music, and sort of ceasing to stay content with the work he has produced and the manner in which people hear music. Recently, Sir Paul McCartney said in an interview that he would soon be writing a ballet, and on the subject expressed a quote that encompasses how and why he has been able to reach and sustain his respective success, he said "I am always interested in new directions that I haven't worked before"¹¹. While some would find this to be a generic, or even archetypal quote from a musician discussing new work, more likely one should be able to observe the beauty in the simplicity of his statement, and the extent to which he has been able to embody it throughout his life. His adherence to his practice as a musician has truly earned him the respect, stardom, and \$1.2 Billion fortune that he resides with in the present day¹². Furthermore, despite his status as having not sold out, it is potentially worth questioning whether or not his career and status would have been possible without being an instrumental member of arguably the most famous Rock band of all time.

¹⁰ "Sir James Paul McCartney." *Bio*. A&E Television Networks, 2014. Web. 21 Nov. 2014. <http://www.biography.com/people/paul-mccartney-9390850#related-video-gallery>

¹¹ "Paul McCartney Writing Original Ballet Score." *Billboard Magazine* 24 Feb. 2014: Web. 13 Oct. 2014. <http://www.billboard.com/articles/news/472898/paul-mccartney-writing-original-ballet-score>

Across our first three examples, we restricted “real world” instances of the artist’s dilemma in the music industry within the genre of Rock N’ Roll music, as well as “Pop” in the general sense of the word. Moving forward, we look to two equally, if not more successful genres of mainstream music in the modern day; Rap and Electric Dance Music (which will be referred to henceforth as “EDM”). Continuing now with an example from the world of EDM, we look to the career of prolific DJ and Producer, David Guetta. Born into the French Euro-Techno scene, David Guetta acquired a strong interest in EDM from a young age. In 1987, David Guetta discovered what is commonly referred to as “House Music” (a derivative form of EDM which is very popular today), and was so drawn to it that he began attempting to produce it himself, as well as hosting night club party events which all revolved around the genre of music. Additionally, in the early 1990’s, David Guetta was drawn to producing background music for Rap musicians as well, given the manner in which he enjoyed producing music which was contingent upon sound alone, rather than lyrical content which he believed in many cases should be added later. By the turn of the millennium, EDM was growing in popularity on an international scale after many years of success within Europe. In 2001, Guetta founded *Gum Productions*, which launched his first album of house music. This album sold over 300,000 copies and brought Guetta to realize the success that he could attain by continuing to produce house music. In 2004, David Guetta released *Guetta Blaster*, and then in 2007 released *Pop Life*, both of which essentially recycled the house music sounds he had initially produced. However, as they grew in popularity, Guetta’s style of House Music became a standard against which the mainstream would hold itself. In 2009, David Guetta was heralded as

¹² Paul McCartney Net Worth." *Celebrity Net Worth*. Web. 18 Oct. 2014.
<http://www.celebritynetworth.com/richest-celebrities/rock-stars/paul-mccartney-net-worth/>

the “Best House DJ” in the world by *DJ Awards*, and further was named #3 in the Top 100 DJ’s poll by *DJ Magazine*, however it was at this point that criticisms began to circulate regarding the manner in which David Guetta had essentially continued his same, successful method of House Music over and over again without any variation¹³. In the present day, David Guetta has continued to produce EDM and House Music that reaches international success, earning him a net worth of roughly \$45 Million¹⁴. Further, his work has even launched a wave of artists attempting to copy his mainstream conception of house music. In terms of analyzing the moves made by David Guetta in the artist’s dilemma, it appears he initially began making music because it was his passion, and as he came to realize which types of his songs were making money and which ones weren’t (Rap vs. EDM, Hip-Hop vs. House Music, etc.), he came to consistently produce his exact sound in house since it made the most. While many would attempt to argue that David Guetta would not be an example of “selling out” because after reaching his successful model for songs, he did not alter it to cater to the mainstream. However such arguments are ignorant of the manner in which David Guetta changed his music to sound more like House within the realm of EDM, then upon finding a very specific way in which to do it, many came to observe that the rest of his work offered very little innovation or musical exploration, and instead he resigned himself to simply “giving the people what they want.”

¹³ "David Guetta Biography." *AceShowBiz.com*. 2014. Web. 18 Oct. 2014.

http://www.aceshowbiz.com/celebrity/david_guetta/biography.html

¹⁴ "David Guetta Net Worth." *Celebrity Net Worth*. N.D. Web. 16 Oct. 2014.

<http://www.celebritynetworth.com/richest-celebrities/richest-djs/david-guetta-net-worth/>

In our final case example of the artist's dilemma from the "real world," we look to the career of Andre "Dr. Dre" Romelle Young, who is commonly associated with the foundation of one of the more intense underground genres in music, "Gangsta Rap," and is additionally associated with its breaking into the mainstream, among some other niche areas of modern culture. Since a young age, Andre developed a strong interest in music and would often turn to it as a means of coping with the rough environment he was raised in (Compton, CA). In 1984, Andre was given a music mixer, and from that point forward was able to pursue creating beats, producing music and DJ'ing. Roughly a year later, Andre Young, with the help of now famous names in the industry such as Eric "Eazy E" Wright, Lorenzo "MC Ren" Patterson, and O'Shea "Ice Cube" Jackson founded the infamous and foundational Gangsta Rap group known as NWA (Niggaz With Attitude) in 1985. Upon founding the group, Young and his group mates focused on developing an intense sound reflective of the hard upbringing and lifestyle they had grown accustomed to in South Central Los Angeles. Among some of their more initially popular singles were songs such as "Straight Outta Compton" and "F*ck The Police," both of which fostering a very strong cult following as they addressed issues and struggles common to those growing up in impoverished America. As Andre Young and N.W.A. grew in popularity, so too did the "Gangsta Rap" genre, so much so that Andre eventually started his own record label with the assistance of the infamous Marion "Suge" Knight. Shortly after creating his new label, Andre disbanded from N.W.A. and released his first solo album entitled *The Chronic* in 1992, which eventually made it to a ranking of triple platinum. As Andre "Dr. Dre" Young continued with his musical style of producing and writing lyrical content for Gangsta Rap, the general genres of hip-hop, and rap were

fostered close by and grew to become more commonly associated forms of music in the mainstream. As a result, Andre was able to expand his musical interests and style in alternate directions than one would have expected his original, purely Gangsta Rap repertoire would have taken him. With that being said, Dr. Dre was able to maintain his credibility and “Gangsta” reputation due to the monumental work he had accomplished in the past, and the overall success of his solo work with *The Chronic*. Acknowledging this past success, Dr. Dre released his second solo album entitled *2001*, in 1999, which reached comparable success to *The Chronic*. Following the production of his second album, Andre turned almost entirely to producing music for other artists, and was able to build his name further in the music industry as a mogul capable of launching careers for other artists as well (e.g. Snoop Dogg, Eminem, etc.). Upon retreating from the microphone and focusing more on the recording studio (transitioning from rapping to producing), Dr. Dre received a fair amount of initial criticism as original fans felt that he was no longer a vocal or salient representation of the messages, ideals and images of “Gangsta Rap.” Despite criticisms that he was no longer the rapper that he once was or claimed to be, Dr. Dre continued to find success in the hip-hop and rap genres, as well as maintaining steady financial success from other ventures in the music industry. In 2008, Andre “Dr. Dre” Young founded the company *Beats By Dre* ©, which was known for producing flashy, high-end headphones which were sold in the United States at over \$300 per pair initially¹⁵. At this point in his career, Dr. Dre began to draw significant criticism as a “sellout” due to the manner in which he had more or less created a company with the intention of branding himself in order to make money. Surely there are arguments to be

¹⁵ "Andre Romelle Young." *Bio*. A&E Television Networks, 2014. Web. 21 Nov. 2014.
<http://www.biography.com/people/dr-dre-507628#personal-life>

made for celebrities doing endorsement deals, however what made Dr. Dre's case fall under such heavy criticism was the manner in which he seemingly went out of his way to further distance himself from the "Gangsta Rap" music and image that created his career, and instead chose to make more money by becoming a supporter of the mainstream. Regardless of criticisms against Dr. Dre, in 2014 he sold *Beats By Dre* © to *Apple* © for \$3 Billion, rising his overall net worth as a person to roughly \$780 Million and making him the richest rapper of all-time¹⁶. Andre Young's instrumental role in the foundation of Gangsta Rap and Hip-Hop music has earned him a somewhat indisputable spot in history as a respected figure within the industries, however the manner in which he managed the latter portion of his career still falls under scrutiny today. Ultimately, this case would seem to serve as an example of the manner in which an artist's interests can change with their personality over the course of their career. Further, it serves as an illustration of how an artist expanding their brand recognition within the corporate world, rather than the musical world (although admittedly, the lines are sometimes blurred) can result in the fostering of negative opinion from the perspective of a fan base.

Considering the case examples of artists in the real world who have been faced with the artist's dilemma, it is clear that this problem can manifest itself in a number of different ways, as well as bring about a number of different consequences. Prior to discussing these case examples, we moved forward with the understanding that the decisions made by artists would be reflective of their motivations, and thus an adequate means by which to evaluate their standing within the artist's dilemma. In the first of our

¹⁶ "Dr. Dre Net Worth." *Celebrity Net Worth*. Web. 29 Oct. 2014.
<http://www.celebritynetworth.com/richest-celebrities/richest-rappers/dr-dre-net-worth/>

case examples, KISS, we witnessed multiple decisions throughout their career at which point they would have been able to continue making music the way they were, but instead chose to alter their image, change their music and appeal to new audiences. Most importantly among them were the 1976 switch to appeal to younger girls, as well as the decisions to produce a Disco record and to eventually release an album/tour for which they did not wear their makeup. In these instances, the artist's dilemma that they faced occurred at every point prior to the decision to change, and as we saw, was responded to by the choice to cease making music and presenting themselves in the way they were in exchange for increased fame and financial gains. In the second of our case examples, Nirvana, we observed as Kurt Cobain and his band were essentially forced into selling out as their music was mishandled by record companies and the media. It could be said that Nirvana faced their version of the artist's dilemma after viewing the success of their first album and deciding how to progress from that point in the way most artistically genuine to them. As a result, they tried to produce an edgier, less-mainstream record with *In Utero* and slide away from the celebrity status they were being forced into (essentially choosing not to sell out). However, regardless of their decisions and intents, the band ultimately felt the same results came from the second album due to reasons beyond their control, which (in addition to other factors) brought about Kurt Cobain's suicidal response to the artist's dilemma. In our third case example, Sir Paul McCartney, we saw an artist who was more or less able to avoid garnering criticisms as a sellout by continuing to produce music that he believed sounded good, and generally taking his artistic direction wherever he saw fit. It could be argued that he faced the artist's dilemma upon his shared decision to disband The Beatles, which resulted in an end to the exact

form of music he had grown popular for creating. However, rather than making the shared decision to disband The Beatles because he thought he could make more money or become more famous outside of the band, Paul McCartney and the rest of the group did so in order to further themselves as musicians and pursue different avenues. In the fourth of our case examples, David Guetta, we viewed a different form of the artist's dilemma as Guetta was faced with the decision to produce a broad range of music which many would argue would have led to his development as an artist, or continue producing the style of House Music that was already extremely popular and making him money. As we saw, Guetta opted to move forward with the style of music that was making him the most money, and generating the most celebrity gains. Admittedly, it may seem bizarre to consider his complacency in the genre as a "sellout" response to the artist's dilemma, given the manner in which we have associated "selling out" with changing one's sound/image to make more money. However, this instance seems to serve as an example of the manner in which the artist's dilemma truly concerns itself with motivations, and that it was the choice to do that which would make him the most money, rather than the best music, that resulted in his being criticized as a sellout. Finally in the last of our case examples, Andre "Dr. Dre" Young, we saw an additionally bizarre manifestation of the artist's dilemma. Throughout his career, it could be argued that Dr. Dre ultimately did what he believed would create the greatest music, whether it was via rapping or producing, and therefore was able to avoid falling into the "sellout" side of the artist's dilemma. However, given our concern with motivational intent, it would seem his true dilemma occurred when debating whether or not to create the *Beats By Dre* © company. At this point in his career, he had already attained musical respect and credibility, and

rather than continue to expand upon this and keep his focus on producing high quality music, he chose to incorporate and market himself toward a \$780 Million fortune.

From a reflection on commonalities in these five, very different case examples, we come to find that in most (though not all) instances of the artist's dilemma, it presents itself to artists who are either just starting out, or are facing a down point in their career. Further, we have been able to outline the parameters that define the artist's dilemma as defined by the switch of motivation from creating the best possible music, to doing that which will bring the greatest personal benefit (money, celebrity, etc.). Now, after reaching a full understanding of the problem and reviewing examples of how it has been handled in the past, we find ourselves in the position to evaluate the artist's dilemma in general, and how best an artist could hope to handle it. In order to do so, we will consider the philosophical concept of well-being, and its three primary interpretations (hedonistic, desire-satisfaction, and objective-list theories of well-being). Moving forward, we will attempt to apply each of its three interpretations to the issue of the artist's dilemma and gain outside insights as to how an artist *should* conduct themselves while pursuing a career in the music industry.

Chapter Two – Theories of Well-Being

Within the realm of human concern, aside from superficial factors such as survival, generally the greatest anxiety occurs over how one should spend one's life, and to what pursuits one should apply oneself. Across the timeline of humanity, philosophers and the like have offered their best hypotheses and conclusions in attempts to find answers for both themselves and their species, however (barring adherence to religious doctrine) we are still left in the present day without a concrete answer, thus we continue our quest for self-knowledge. Among the more popularly circulated theories on the matter are concepts such as "Virtue Ethics" (as well as deontology, consequentialism, etc.) and "Well-Being." The former concepts concern themselves primarily in matters of moral, rather than prudential value, thus their immediate impact (beyond guiding one's manner of thinking in general) in providing practical guidance proves to be less useful than the concept of "Well-Being." This comes as a result of the concept of well-being's use in philosophy as a means of quantifying that which is "non-instrumentally or ultimately good *for* a person" (Crisp, Sec. 1), which may carry some ambiguity, but essentially refers to objectives not necessarily of achievement, but of things that will bring greater value to one's life overall¹⁷. In the following pages, we will discuss three primary interpretations (i.e. hedonistic, desire-satisfaction, and objective-list theories) of well-being and the manners in which these respective interpretations would attempt to guide one's general course of action in life. Ultimately we will be left with a better understanding of prudential theories of well-being in general, and moving forward we

¹⁷ Crisp, Roger. "Well-Being." Substantive Revision Wed. May 8, 2013. 2001. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Web. 5 Sept. 2014. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/well-being/>

will attempt to apply them to the artist's dilemma in order to gain multiple philosophical perspectives on how one *should* circumnavigate it.

Prior to embarking upon a discussion of individual theories of well-being, it is worth clarifying that, despite some confusion, an individual's well-being is not necessarily interchangeable with that individual's happiness. Happiness generally refers to an emotional state, one which can overcome an individual even when that same individual is anything but content with their life overall. Further, well-being is meant to apply to the general trajectory of one's life, weighing in all the ups and downs to evaluate whether or not an individual has done right by oneself in the sense that one's actions, choices and values have taken one to where one wants to be. Additionally, well-being is a concept that must be discussed in some generality since the human experience is filled with infinite factors that differ from individual, thus it will seldom give explicit advice as far as exact steps to take toward well-being (e.g. wake up at 6:00am, wear a blue suit everyday, etc.). As a result, conversations of well-being generally break down to suggestions of pursuits and objectives to seek out, find and develop in attempts at finding the greatest meaning and utility in one's own life. Now, with a more clear understanding of well-being, we may progress on to conversations of specific interpretations.

First and foremost, we begin with arguably the oldest interpretations of well-being; hedonistic theories of well-being. As their moniker implies, hedonistic theories ultimately revolve around superficial motivations which could be considered hedonistic in the modern era, and are regarded as being oriented around achieving the greatest balance of pleasure over pain in one's life. In his early work, *Introduction to the*

Principles of Morals and Legislation, Jeremy Bentham attempted to explain that “nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure*. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do” (Crisp, Sec. 4.1)¹⁷. Philosophies such as Bentham’s have guided much of the discussion conducted around hedonistic theories of well-being. From notions such as Bentham’s, one is able to see the clear message implied by hedonistic theories of well-being; pursue that which makes one the happiest or brings the greatest pleasure, and avoid anything that brings one pain. Such thoughts surely carry merit in the sense that purely pursuing pleasure and activities that make one happy is guaranteed to produce some happiness, which could in turn result in an increase to overall well-being. Additionally, attempting to avoid negative aspects such as pain could result in happiness as well in the sense that one seldom would interact with unpleasurable agents, which could also in turn result in an increase to overall well-being. However, despite the seemingly obvious logic behind hedonistic theories of well-being, they still garner criticisms from some in the philosophical community.

Among the greater criticisms against hedonistic theories of well-being is Nozick’s “Experience Machine” objection, first submitted in his 1974 work, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. Under his “Experience Machine” objection, he questioned if you could be plugged into a machine that gives you experiences which you personally would believe to be the most valuable or enjoyable, and further you would have no idea that you were hooked up to the machine after becoming so, would you choose to become connected to

¹⁷ Crisp, Roger. "Well-Being." Substantive Revision Wed. May 8, 2013. 2001. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Web. 5 Sept. 2014. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/well-being/>

the machine for the rest of your life?¹⁷ He argues that one would not due to the manner in which humans want be able to experience reality, rather than a man-made reality.

Extrapolating this theory, Nozick would argue that we would subsequently not want to live in a world motivated only by pleasure, because he has already argued that in a hypothetical world where all of our pleasures were superficially given to us and fulfilled, they would have less meaning. The implication of this extrapolation would be then that there is potentially pleasure to be gained in the pursuit of pleasures, as well as in actually attaining the pleasure itself. Further criticisms (namely posited by Roger Crisp) have noted a problem in hedonistic theories of well-being in the sense that they rest upon the assumption that nothing else could benefit an individual other than personal pleasure.

While again, this rationale seems obvious on a superficial level, it also seems to discount the benefits that humans receive from altruistic behavior. While, in theory, one could derive personal pleasure from acting altruistically, and thus that altruism would be encompassed by an individual's hedonism, that altruism would be motivated by personal desire for pleasure, and thus it seems as though it fails to be altruistic altogether. In recognition of the problem in assuming that there is nothing greater in life than personal pleasure, and the manner in which hedonistic theories of well-being attempt to build upon themselves from this false-start, it appears clear why they are seldom endorsed in the philosophical community, and further why individuals living in the world today seldom employ them.

¹⁷ Crisp, Roger. "Well-Being." Substantive Revision Wed. May 8, 2013. 2001. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Web. 5 Sept. 2014. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/well-being/>

However, there are also outlier examples where individuals have employed variations of hedonistic theories of well-being in which they simply put themselves first, gave little to no care to others, pursued only their personal pleasures, and were able to achieve some of the greatest feats in the history of humankind. A prime example of a hedonistic leader who was able to attain massive success via his approach to life was Genghis Khan. Known in the modern era as arguably the greatest military leader of all time, Genghis Khan was somewhat infamous for his, at times, brutal approach to leadership and conquering. In many instances, Genghis Khan committed acts (such as rape of a significant percentage of the living female population in Asia at the time, as well murdering some of the members of his family) that would be judged as inexcusable, morally reprehensible, and extremely illegal. However, regardless of the horrendous means by which Genghis Khan lived his life, he is still regarded today as “great”, and made an impact on humanity arguably more significant than individuals whose names did not make it into the history books. This is due, at least partially, to the manner in which he essentially disregarded the needs or feelings of others around him, and remained hell-bent on conquering the known world (i.e. focusing solely on that which he knew would bring him the greatest possible pleasure in life). Certainly this outlier example provides a somewhat exaggerated instance of hedonism, and certainly not all hedonists would commit themselves to such strategies as employed by Genghis Khan, however it does at the least attest to the possibility for success in employing hedonistic theories of well-being. Acknowledging this outlier, and disbanding any inherent criticisms of hedonistic theories due to their superficial nature, it is possible to at least allow for the plausibility of

their guiding an individual (under the appropriate circumstances/fitting the right personality) to the best possible outcome, or the greatest possible well-being.

Moving on to the second theory of well-being, we arrive at a discussion of the desire-satisfaction theories of well-being and the insights they would give to an individual. In Roger Crisp's account of well-being, he describes the development of desire-satisfaction theories as a consequence of dissatisfaction with hedonistic theories as he states that "pleasure and pain are inside people's heads, and are also hard to measure – especially when we have to start weighing different people's experiences against one another. So economists began to see people's well-being as consisting in the satisfaction of preferences or desires, the content of which could be revealed [only] by their possessors" (Crisp, Sec. 4.2)¹⁷. Acknowledging previous criticisms of hedonistic theories, desire-satisfaction theories revolve entirely around the amount of an individual's desires that can and the extent to which they can be fulfilled, rather than aiming entirely at pleasure. While on a superficial level, one might infer that this theory hardly differs from the former, later, more comprehensive definitions clear the air; "what matters to a person's well-being is the overall level of desire-satisfaction in their life as a whole" (Crisp, Sec. 4.2)¹⁷. Rather than jumping from pleasure to pleasure, desire-satisfaction theories seem to focus on the manner in which one's life is made better by being able to satisfy and measure the amount of desires you were able to satisfy across a lifetime. In terms of practical application, manifestations of this account would remain somewhat similar to those of the hedonistic theories in the sense that individuals are still ultimately

¹⁷ Crisp, Roger. "Well-Being." Substantive Revision Wed. May 8, 2013. 2001. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Web. 5 Sept. 2014. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/well-being/>

working towards that which makes them the happiest. However, the manner in which the account acknowledges that desires can be achieved, fulfilled, and accounted for across the course of a lifetime seems to add a more realistic understanding of the way the world works, and that one cannot pragmatically be experiencing pleasure or working toward pleasure at every second of one's life. Continuing on this notion, in his work *Well-Being*, James Griffin explains that individuals are especially fond of this theory because "actual desires are often revealed in choices and 'revealed preferences' are observable and hence a respectable subject for empirical science" (Griffin, 10)¹⁸. Further, this more realistic understanding also seems to allow for the incorporation of others and their general well-being into one's life. Some would infer that given that one's ultimate goal is satisfying one's personal desires (dependent on desires), it would seem as though the roles of others are only instrumental. While in many cases, this may remain true on some level, there is also the argument to be made for individuals who solely wish to make another individual happy, thus pleasing them would fulfill their desire on the greatest level. In these instances, it could still be argued that pleasure is ultimately derived from the instrumentality of the person you are pleasing. However, equal counter arguments could be made for the exogenous benefits to both parties that come from increasing one's overall well-being by satisfying the desire to please another person (if pleasing this other person is truly the act that will result in the greatest possible pleasure). Ultimately it would seem that no matter how one views the situation, a desire-satisfaction theorist would choose to please someone else if they so desired, regardless of motivation,

¹⁸ Griffin, James. *Well-Being: Its Meaning, Measurement, and Moral Importance*. Oxford, Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1986. Print.

therefore the instrumentality of others seems to be a matter of morality, rather than prudential value.

Further criticisms of the desire-satisfaction theories of well-being have revolved around the fickle nature of subjective opinion, and whether trusting an individual to their desires will ultimately yield that which is best for them. Many would argue that individual autonomy is the only way to make long-term decisions, and that his autonomy is guided by our individual desires, therefore following them without exogenous guidance would be the best manner in which to approach life. However, in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle acknowledges problems with such reasoning as he explains that ‘desire is consequent on opinion rather than opinion on desire’, to which Crisp follows up by explaining that “we desire things, such as writing a great novel, because we think those things are independently good – we do not think they are good because they will satisfy our own desire for them” (Crisp, Sec. 4.2)¹⁷. In these criticisms, Aristotle and Crisp note that human opinion, which in turn generates human desire, can often be impacted by exogenous factors. Further, they explain the manner in which humans tend to aspire to, and set desires for things that they think are cool or desirable simply because they are highly regarded in the public domain, or they think they will bring happiness for the wrong reasons (which it seems clear would not result in an increase to overall well-being). In either instance, this vulnerability to being fickle in our desires presents a potential problem to the idea of living our lives abiding by the desire-satisfaction theory. With that being said, allowing for our desires to be subject to change with the world is

¹⁷ Crisp, Roger. "Well-Being." Substantive Revision Wed. May 8, 2013. 2001. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Web. 5 Sept. 2014. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/well-being/>

hard to fully condemn in the sense that the world possesses few constant qualities, and thus adapting one's desires and motivations with the change of the world could potentially provide for a more pragmatic life plan. Ultimately, like the hedonistic theories of well-being, the desire-satisfaction theories present multiple potential problems, however they come with the added benefit of presenting a more comprehensive and realistic manner in which to view the world.

Finally we come to the last of our three theories of well-being; the objective list theories of well-being. Rather than focusing on strict pursuit of one's pleasures or desires, the objective list theories of well-being propose a much more universal approach. Objective list theories are oriented toward suggesting aspects, goals and states to be achieved and developed throughout one's life. So, rather than suggesting that an individual pursue whatever is pleasurable in life, objective list theories would suggest that an individual pursue knowledge and friendship throughout one's life, and as a result they would find greater overall meaning and value in their life, thus resulting in the greatest overall well-being. James Griffin best explains that the objective-list theories "rest on a distinction between, on the one hand, things that we aim at simply as normal human beings rather than as the particular human beings we are, things that are both necessary to and sufficient for a recognizably human existence, and, on the other hand, things that, as the individuals we are, we choose to go for" (Griffin, 53)¹⁸. Essentially Griffin amplifies the magnitude of the notion that we are compelled by things that we need and things that we want, and to complement this, the objective-list theories identify

¹⁸ Griffin, James. *Well-Being: Its Meaning, Measurement, and Moral Importance*. Oxford, Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1986. Print.

the concepts we actually need to be happy. The philosophy behind the objective list theories is that there are elements of life worth attaining that will generally improve one's overall well-being. Elements such as friendship, knowledge, and achievement are often heralded as some of those that will bring the maximum value to one's life, as pursuit of these elements is supposed to develop an individual and their understanding of the world.

While it may seem obvious upon first consideration, philosophers throughout history have dedicated their works to explaining the concept that our betterment and well-being in life comes both from the objectives we complete, and the process we endure in completing them. Roots for this philosophy can be found in Aristotle's virtue ethics, documented in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, as he explains that pursuit of virtue, and habitual committing of virtuous action, will result in the development of the virtues that an individual needs to be improve overall well-being or attain *eudaimonia*. Whether or not one subscribes to Aristotle's virtue ethics is a different matter entirely, however his lasting impact on conversations of well-being is impossible to ignore. Furthermore, in terms of assessing the practicality of well-being, one could infer that objective list theories require more translation when attempting to act in the real world. Such inferences would be correct given that one would need to recognize an objective such as attaining knowledge, friendship or achievement, and then would need to take the adequate steps necessary in order to complete such an objective. However, as previously acknowledged, the extra steps taken could potentially be required to achieve a greater long-term well-being.

Regardless of deliberations on the matter, across many scholarly works citing elements of the “objective-list,” arguably the most important factors are the items actually on the list. In general, the factors of the “objective-list” are supposed to be objectively and universally applicable, which leads to the inclusion of concepts such as “love” or “achievement.” However, when restricting our discussion to the scope of the music industry, it would seem as though the “objective-list” would need to be amended, at least slightly, in order to better fit the scenario. In Guy Fletcher’s work *A Fresh Start for the Objective-List Theory of Well-Being*, he acknowledges that the most crucial items to the list are “Achievement, Friendship, Happiness, Pleasure, Self-Respect, [and] Virtue” (Fletcher, 214)¹⁹. Again, while these elements could and should certainly bring about an overall increase in well-being when applied in a universal sense, the music industry seems to require additional factors in order to increase the overall well-being of the artist within the “artist’s dilemma.” Translating some of these previous items to our example of the “artist’s dilemma,” it would seem as though the item of “achievement” would be a term relative to the individual and whether or not they believed achieving musical perfection or celebrity status/financial success to be the true definition of achievement. For the sake of discussion, we will assume that it would be impossible to quantify this motivation, and instead will seek to measure achievement as the satisfaction of one’s personal goals (financial, celebrity, musical, or otherwise). Further, for the sake

¹⁹ Fletcher, Guy. "A Fresh Start for the Objective-List Theory of Well-Being." *Utilitas* 25.02 (2013): 206-220. *Cambridge Journals* . Web. 20 Oct. 2014. http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2F6096_BB6382876A3B7E4D92C695C4E1FFF5D4_journals_UTI_UTI25_02_S0953820812000453a.pdf&cover=Y&code=1748d030a36ef258b810d4d41529542f

of simplifying the objective list within the context of the music industry, we will group the items of “self-respect” and “virtue” into a new item labeled “artistic integrity.” This is due to the manner in which both of the previous terms loosely refer to the notion of not jeopardizing oneself or one’s ideals/morals in instances of temptation, and further refer to asserting oneself and one’s ideals/morals in instances that require it. Within the music industry, the parameter of temptation that we have clearly outlined is the temptation to “sell out,” and jeopardize one’s artistic integrity in order to achieve greater financial or celebrity gains. While it is true that failing to maintain one’s artistic integrity could potentially result in succeeding within the category of “achievement” if one’s goals were to make money, we will discuss the concept of “trade-offs” within the objective list at a later point. Moving to another item from Fletcher’s list, the items of “pleasure” and “happiness” seem to be somewhat redundant given the re-definitions we have already used in refining this list for consideration within the music industry. Pleasure, it would seem, has been encompassed by our new definition of the term of “achievement,” and happiness ideally would be the short-term product of engaging in any activity that was beneficial to one’s life (whether it’s the superficial satisfaction of pleasure, “achieving” something long-term, or even avoiding harm). Therefore, it would seem that including either of the former two items would be somewhat unnecessary. In order to account for this redundancy, we will instead include the objective list item of possessing a legitimate “love and passion for music,” as attaining this particular item should generally ensure a fulfilling, if not also financially successful career in the music industry. Furthermore, the inclusion of this need for a love and passion for music in order to attain greater overall well-being as an artist comes with connotation that achieving this element of the

objective list will more or less result in a successful navigation of the artist's dilemma. This successful navigation comes back to the question of motivation, and that if an artist has a legitimate love and passion for music, they will be guided by this in their career rather than by financial or celebrity motivations. In the final unaddressed item from Fletcher's list, we find the item of "friendship," and the instrumentality of maintaining personal relationships to finding fulfillment as a person. Certainly every human being, even those in the music industry, must require these personal relationships in order to maintain a sense of humanity, and of one's role in relation to those of others. Therefore, it would seem appropriate to include the item of friendship to the objective-list within the scope of the artist's dilemma.

Moving forward, we will consider the artist's dilemma through the interpretation of our three previously mentioned theories of well-being. We will begin with a discussion of hedonistic theories of well-being, proceed to desire-satisfaction theories, and will end with our newly amended "objective-list" theories (which reference the objective-list as including the items of achievement, artistic integrity, a legitimate love and passion for music, and friendship). Ultimately, through developing interpretations of how to navigate the artist's dilemma through these three different philosophical perspectives on well-being, we will arrive with a better overall understanding of how an artist can survive their dilemma with the greatest overall well-being and fulfillment in their life.

Chapter Three – Interpreting the Artist’s Dilemma

With a better understanding of the three prudential theories of well-being (i.e. hedonistic, desire-satisfaction, and objective-list theories), as well as the manner in which they can offer practical advice toward achieving the greatest overall outcome for one’s life, we are now in an appropriate position to begin interpreting them within the context of the artist’s dilemma. Prior to interpretations, we must first present an exact situation within the artist’s dilemma to be evaluated by the three theories. Given the prudential value to be found in theories of well-being, rather than value in guiding one’s overall morality, it would seem as though these theories must be applied to the artist’s dilemma expectationally. This is to say, that in any real world scenario the future would be impossible to determine, as would the state of an individual’s desires, preferences and goals. The term “expectationally” originates in mathematical jargon and refers to the concept of expected value calculation. Within this concept, there is some uncertainty of the future, however one attempts to hypothesize what will occur in the future as a result of assuming the highest probable outcome. Therefore, in applying these theories of well-being to the artist’s dilemma, we are left to make inferences about how an artist would respond to a situation with no knowledge of the future.

For the sake of presenting a scenario to be approached by the three different perspectives, let us move present the agent “Band X” for evaluation. Let us assume that Band X is a relatively new musical act coming from a healthy underground Rock N’ Roll scene in Portland, Oregon (a pioneer location in the “independent music” scene). Further, let us move forward with the understanding that after reaching initial success in the

Portland, Oregon underground scene, Band X has been offered a recording contract deal with a major record label which would stipulate that Band X adopt a new manager, and essentially change their creative image and sounds in order to be more easily marketed by the label. We will assume that in accepting the offer with the record company, Band X would be guaranteed at least a minor increase in their amount of money and celebrity exposure, and in rejecting the offer, the results would be uncertain (e.g. could potentially reach even greater success than would have been possible with label, could potentially result in no progress in the career of Band X whatsoever, etc.). We make the assumption that accepting the record deal would result in at least a minor increase in the amount of wealth/celebrity exposure for Band X given that they currently operate under an independent contract, and are a relatively new band (therefore it would be virtually impossible for them to have reached a massive celebrity status or to have attained great wealth this early in their career). Essentially the scenario we have presented is the full embodiment of the “artist’s dilemma,” as it shows a group which was of enough musical proficiency to present the potential for a lasting career in the music industry (this potential for a lasting career is implicitly validated by the record company extending an offer to them). Further, it depicts the actual decision thrust upon them to embark upon an uncertain career in which they would be allowed to (ideally) pursue whatever musical direction they thought best, or to accept what they know would result in increased wealth and celebrity status in exchange for hindering themselves musically (i.e. selling out). It is worth noting, however, that simply because this instance reflects joining a record company as a piece of selling out, does not mean that joining a record company or signing a deal is generally reflective of selling out. Rather, the inclusion of the record

company is more to accentuate the manner in which exogenous influences in the music industry (e.g. promotion companies, record companies, managers, image consultants, etc.) will often attempt to force the hand of budding artists and change their image, sound, or both in exchange for potentially greater profits. Moving forward, we will consider the previously outlined scenario and attempt make inferences as to how each theory of well-being would suggest an artist handle it.

One problem that arises in our current scenario is the manner in which one of the options (i.e. Band X choosing not to sign to the label and pursue their future independently) presents a future of uncertainty. In acknowledging this uncertainty, we are brought to a preliminary discussion of human nature and how it responds to instances of risk or uncertainty. Generally, it could be argued that human nature is drawn to the concepts of assurance and certainty, which is to say that humans are naturally inclined to protect themselves and opt for whichever action would result in minimal risk and greatest reward. However, with that being said, there are also instances of human nature leading individuals to seek out greater risks in exchange for rewards that may not have been otherwise available. This latter instance of human nature seems to be especially applicable within the context of the artist's dilemma, as artists pursuing a career in music generally assume a greater risk than individuals working in other fields. This increased risk within the music industry comes from the fact that if the public does not receive one's music well, or if there is not enough support behind an artist in general, then their career can essentially come to an end (at least as far as the "professional" side of their career goes). Furthermore, in the corporate world, an individual could find oneself without a job and be able to apply for and pursue alternative opportunities. In the instance

of the artist, this luxury is not necessarily provided, assuming that the artist has spent the majority of his/her life cultivating talents in the field of music that would lead to their success in the industry. Continuing with this notion, it could be inferred that the artist is already a “risk-seeker” (i.e. drawn to instances that involve high risk, and high reward), and therefore would not shy away from instances such as refusing the record contract. Regardless of reflections on human nature in general, let us assume that the nature of the artist at the very least risk-neutral, and thus the fear of negative outcomes in this instance would not provide so great a hindrance that it would prevent the artist from making decisions that would lead them to betray themselves or their values. Some could counter that artists, upon choosing to embark upon a career in the arts (specifically the music industry) engage in an already great deal of risk, therefore decisions within this framework would be more risk-averse in order to ensure their livelihood. Additionally, as we have seen, there have been abstract instances of artists engaging in this risk-averse behavior such as David Guetta reaching a level of complacency through his brand of House music within the EDM scene. However, ultimately it would seem as though the general trend of artists, even upon displaying instances of risk-averse behavior, would generally be classified (partially according to stereotype) as risk-seeking. Moving forward with our conceptualization of the artist as risk-seeking, rather than risk averse, we are in the appropriate position to begin reflecting on the artist’s dilemma from the perspective of hedonistic, desire-satisfaction, and objective-list theories of well-being.

Looking first to interpret the artist’s dilemma presented to Band X from the perspective of hedonistic theories of well-being, we are reminded that these theories are concerned primarily with the maximum balance of pleasure over pain. In an ideal

circumstance, we would stipulate the items that would generate the maximum pleasure, and the items that would generate the maximum pain for Band X, and then attempt to identify manners in which Band X could plan their careers to pursue and avoid pleasures accordingly. However, as previously identified, the future, as well as knowledge of what will result in the maximum balance of pleasure over pain, is essentially impossible to stipulate or predict for Band X. Therefore, we are left to reflect on the current pleasures and pains experienced by Band X, and how they would progress from their current situation.

First and foremost, within the perspective of the hedonistic theories of well-being, one could naturally assume that given a desire for the maximum balance of pleasure over pain, Band X would attempt to pursue whichever route would result in the greatest personal reward (e.g. monetary and celebrity successes). However, while these items are superficially associated with pleasure, and while many would indeed assert that this would be the path of the hedonist, there are concepts within hedonistic theories of well-being that would lead an individual to believe otherwise. Namely among them, is the concept of the “hedonic treadmill” which was originally presented by Brickman & Campbell in their work *Hedonic Relativism and Planning the Good Society*. In reflecting on this concept, Shane Frederick made summarizing statements about the hedonic treadmill, identifying the manner in which it refers to individuals pursuing only money and social status, attaining them, and finding no increase to their well-being whatsoever. Furthermore, he notes that this occurs because as one’s wealth and celebrity status

increase, so too do their obligations, responsibilities and requests for aid from others²⁰. Therefore, according to the hedonic treadmill example, pursuit of only money and celebrity status would result in an unfulfilling life, and thus not the greatest overall well-being. Some could argue that the inclusion of the rationale presented in the hedonic treadmill would defeat the purpose of presenting a scenario in which the agent involved has no knowledge of the future in the sense that the agent would be aware of how certain decisions will affect their overall well-being. However, such arguments could be countered if the artist was pursuing strictly musical excellence in their career, given that pursuing musical excellence would tacitly endorse the idea that music is behind the motivation of the artist, rather than celebrity and monetary motivations. Going further, it could be additionally argued that an artist could simply be aware of the fact that the superficial motivations featured in the hedonic treadmill would not result in the greatest overall well-being as an individual, because the artist as an individual understands the superficiality in working solely for money or social status. Without pre-supposing the knowledge of the artist, or their motivations, we must move forward from the perspective of the hedonist in general. Further, given the complimentary nature of the hedonic treadmill to a comprehensive understanding of the hedonistic theories of well-being, we will move forward with the assumption that being a hedonist in this instance, Band X would not solely opt to pursue fame and money. However, the fact that Band X would not only pursue celebrity or financial status does not necessarily mean that they would choose not to accept the record deal.

²⁰ Frederick, Shane, Roy F. Baumeister, and Kathleen D. Vohs. "Hedonic Treadmill." *Encyclopedia of Social Psychology* (2007): 419-420. *Yale University Database*. Web. 7 Oct. 2014. <<http://faculty.som.yale.edu/ShaneFrederick/HedonicTreadmill.pdf?subject=Please+mail+a+hard+copy+of>

Framing this issue from the perspective of the hedonist, it would seem that the pleasures Band X would attain in accepting the record deal would be at least minor increases to celebrity status and wealth, in addition to the pleasures of achieving (at some level) the goal of supporting oneself via a career in music. Additionally, success with the record label could have the potential to foster the longevity of Band X's career, which would essentially allow for the continuance of the previously listed pleasures. However, accepting the record deal would come with the pains of bequeathing their artistic integrity to the record label in allowing them to alter their image and sounds, which, as we have noted, is generally a devastating blow to an artist. Further, as acknowledged in the hedonic treadmill, it is entirely possible that additional pains could arise with the increase of their wealth and celebrity status. On the other end of the spectrum, in refusing the record deal, Band X would gain the pleasure of maintaining their artistic integrity, additionally they would be free to navigate their career in the music industry (at least in the immediate future) without feeling the need to do anything in specific. Further, given their initial success in the Portland, Oregon underground scene, it could be inferred that they would maintain the pleasure of being able to at the very least support themselves financially in the immediate future. Acknowledging the pains that would come from refusing the record deal, and in turn refusing to sell out, Band X would be faced with the uncertainty of not knowing whether or not they would ever increase in celebrity status or wealth. Further, as was the case in accepting the record deal, were Band X's wealth and celebrity status to increase after not accepting the record deal, it is possible that there could be additional pain in the subsequent lifestyle changes (e.g. being treated differently by people, having more obligations, etc.). Considering the balances of pleasure over pain

associated with the decisions at each end of the spectrum, as well as the previously determined “risk-seeking” nature of artists in general, it would seem as though the hedonist would choose not to accept the record deal, and thus avoid selling out in the artist’s dilemma. While this conclusion may seem absurd to some, given the lack of superficiality associated with its outcome, the rationale for the hedonist choosing not to sell out lies in the massive potential for pain associated with selling out and accepting the record deal. In accepting the deal, Band X would have lost their artistic integrity, and would have only been guaranteed a minor increase to celebrity status and wealth, which could potentially be a negative in the long-run. In refusing the record deal, the only guaranteed pain that Band X was set to face was the uncertainty of not knowing the remainder of their career, how they would fair financially, or being able to make any inferences other than those previously outlined about their future. However, we noted that the risk-seeking nature of artists would not necessarily deter them from this uncertainty, meaning that it hardly seems to act as a pain as significant as giving up one’s artistic integrity.

Moving next to the desire-satisfaction theories of well-being, we find that we must continue to approach the situation expectationally, however with a different conceptual mindset than that of the hedonist. Recall that rather than focusing on the greatest possible balance of pleasure over pain in one’s life, the desire-satisfaction theorist would aim instead to fulfill the maximum number of desires and preferences throughout their life. Within the context of applying desire-satisfaction theories to the artist’s dilemma, one would hope to simply identify and quantify all of the desires and preferences of Band X and stipulate as to the extents to which they would be fulfilled

given the decision to either accept the record deal (i.e. “sell out”) or deny it and pursue an autonomous career in music in the immediate future. However, such a process would tacitly assume that the desires of Band X would not change over the course of their career and lifetime, which seems to be an obvious fallacy given that surely one does not desire exactly the same things at age 20 that one desires at age 60. Therefore in order to account for this uncertainty in desire, we will move forward by considering only desires in the present tense that will be impacted by the scenario. Which is to say, acknowledging the uncertainty associated with choosing not to accept the record deal, as well as the limited knowledge of outcomes in choosing to accept it, we will attempt to restrict the consideration of desires to those which factor in on the decision.

Moving to further analyze the parameters of this perspective within the artist’s dilemma, in our earlier discussions of desire-satisfaction theories of well-being, we mentioned the manner in which desires are sometimes superficially or falsely founded, meaning pursuit of them would not result in an increase to well-being. However, given the fact that Band X is being placed into this scenario with no knowledge of the future, they will continue with no knowledge of whether or not pursuing certain things will result in the desired outcome (i.e. the fulfilment of their desire or preference). Therefore in order to account for this, we must allow for the possibility of Band X to be drawn to both superficial and unfulfilling desires, as well as desires that will result in an overall increase to well-being. Additionally, we previously acknowledged the comprehensive nature of desire-satisfaction theories of well-being in comparison to hedonistic theories, and the manner in which they allow for the consideration of others (e.g. family members, friends, lovers, etc.) in satisfying the desires or preferences of an individual. In order to account

for this in our scenario, we will move forward with the assumption that the only individuals who bear consideration in this scenario will be the members of Band X and their relationships with each other. Further, moving forward with our assumption that the future will remain to be unpredictable, we are unable to infer as to how the decision to accept the record deal or not will affect relationships within the group. Therefore, for the sake of presenting a logical application, we will move forward excluding the consideration of others within this account.

Looking now to progress into our actual interpretation from the perspective of the desire-satisfaction theories of well-being, we are left to quantify the present-tense desires and preferences that would be impacted by the decision to accept the record deal (“sell out”) or not. Among potential desires to be impacted by this scenario, perhaps the greatest at hand is the desire on the part of Band X to be able to support themselves with a career in music. In this instance, we know that Band X would encounter an increase to fame and wealth in accepting the record deal, meaning that at least within the immediate future (and for a period of time arguably longer than would be guaranteed in taking the alternative option), Band X would be able to fulfill this desire. However, we know that given their initial success in Portland, Oregon, Band X would be able to support themselves in their early stages, albeit to a lesser degree than would have been immediately possible in accepting the record deal. Going further with desires that would be impacted in this instance, there is obviously the desire on the part of Band X to maintain their artistic integrity. Given the parameters of our scenario, were Band X to accept the record deal, we know that they would forfeit the possibility of fulfilling this desire in the short-term (due to exogenous forces in the music industry influencing Band

X to change their image and sound). Moreover, we know that were they to refuse the record deal, they would at the very least be able to maintain their artistic integrity (if nothing else). In another desire similar to the ability to support themselves via a career in music, come the actual desires for being famously recognized for their musical talents, as well as for greater financial status. As we have identified in previous discussions, these desires are ultimately superficially and falsely founded as we know that in the long-term, they have the potential to actually decrease one's overall well-being. However, given the inability of Band X, or us as speculators, to predict the future, we must move forward with the assumption that Band X will indeed be drawn to these desires. Therefore, in accepting the record deal, Band X would be able to, with certainty, increase their fame and wealth at least by a minor degree, which would in turn satisfy these desires in the present-tense. Furthermore, given the inability to factor in the future, it is understandable that Band X, from the perspective of the desire-satisfaction theorist, would be urged toward fulfilling whatever desires they believed they could fulfill as the opportunities presented themselves to them. Translating this, it is understandable that the desire-satisfaction theorist would be inclined to accept the record deal and embark upon a career of satisfying as many desires as possible over the course of their lifetimes. The rationale behind this decision is that within the present-tense, having no knowledge of the future, Band X would be presented with the ability to immediately begin fulfilling a number of different desires (e.g. being able to be professional musicians, making more money, becoming more famous, etc.) which they would not be guaranteed that they could fulfill otherwise. This may seem counter-intuitive given the previously described "risk-seeking" nature of artists in general during instances of uncertainty, however given that desire-

satisfaction theories are concerned with desires, rather than strictly with human nature, it would seem as though it is possible for the artist to be both risk-seeking in nature, and to accept the decision which we previously acknowledged as “risk-averse.” This is due to the manner in which the risk-seeking behavior of the artist in general urges them toward desires that would be of a high reward if attained, but require a high level of risk in the pursuit to achieve them. Earlier we pointed out that desires such as becoming a famous musician, and making a large amount of money in a realm other than the “traditional job” are already both of a risk-seeking nature, given that they acknowledge a less-safe path than the average American takes in joining the ranks of corporate America. Therefore, the artist would implicitly be engaging in risk-seeking behavior in maintaining or pursuing any of the previously described desires, from either end of the spectrum. Due to this clarification, it would seem as though Band X (from the perspective of the desire-satisfaction theorist) opting to accept the record deal and “sell out” would be the guaranteed manner in which to satisfy the maximum number of desires and preferences over the course of their career.

In acknowledging potential problems with our interpretation of desire-satisfaction theories of well-being to the artist’s dilemma, one could argue that a complete account of desires and preferences on the part of Band X was not presented given the failure to account for the development and changes of desires and preferences over time. Such arguments would be valid in identifying the manner in which our solution was reached without 100% certainty as to how the desire-satisfaction theorist would truly react in the instance of the artist’s dilemma. However, given the impossibility of measuring desires and the extent to which they would change over the course of one’s lifetime, and

remaining withdrawn enough from the scenario that we did not dictate the course of future events, it would seem as though our conclusion was the only possible one at which to arrive. Moreover, returning momentarily the concept of human nature, it could be argued that in attempting to account for future desires which are uncertain in the present tense, one would hope to put oneself in a future position through which one would have the opportunity to pursue whatever desires arose. Which is to say, that in order to satisfy any desires in the future, regardless of what they are, one must maintain the ability to fulfill them and not preclude oneself from being able to do so. Applying this logic to the desire-satisfaction interpretation, it would appear that accepting the record deal and selling out would be the most certain way to guarantee an increased number of professional opportunities in the future. This would, more or less, translate to an increased ability to allow for the pursuit of additional desires in the future, and thus would serve as further rationale behind Band X choosing to accept the record deal within this philosophical perspective.

Moving now to the final of our interpretations, we look to analyze the artist's dilemma, as we have described it in the instance of Band X, from the perspective of objective-list theories of well-being. Recall that objective-list theories of well-being involve the selection of objective items to be attained and developed over the course of one's life, rather than looking to pursue the fulfillment of the maximum number of desires and preferences, or achieve the maximum balance of pleasure over pain. In our earlier discussions of objective-list theories of well-being, we were able to identify the four items of the objective-list most relevant to Band X in the artist's dilemma: (1) achievement, (2) artistic integrity, (3) love and passion for music, and (4) friendship. In

order to determine the course of action for Band X from the perspective of objective-list theories of well-being, we must consider the four items of the artist's objective-list and determine the extent to which accepting or denying the record deal would enable Band X to achieve them. Further, given the manner in which we are unable to determine the future, we must restrict our considerations of the extent to which a given decision would impact attaining items on the objective-list to the present-tense, rather than considering the course of their career as whole.

Earlier, we noted that the item of "achievement" on the objective-list refers to the achievement of one's personal goals. This individual component is very much similar to the general concept of desire-satisfaction theories of well-being, however it remains to be only one component rather than the focus of the theories themselves. Further, the nature of achievement being quantified by the extent to which an individual was able to satisfy their goals seems to point us toward the idea that rather than attempting to quantify goals over the course of a career, we must look at the goals and desires for Band X in the present-tense. Presumably, the primary goal for an artist early in their career would be to continue their career, which would involve continuing to receive financial compensation as well as maintaining some type of fan base. Therefore, implicit in the goal of maintaining their career would be the goal of making enough money, and generating enough fans to support themselves. Further, the extent to which this objective item should be pursued generally comes down to a matter of individual preference over how the artist defines their goals (i.e. the dichotomy between choosing financial/celebrity motivations as a goal, or choosing the production of the best music possible as a goal). As previously noted, it is more or less impossible to determine these motivations within Band X,

therefore we will look at which decision would represent the greatest objective achievement and fulfillment of goals in the short-term. Given the propensity for uncertainty associated with refusing the record deal, it would seem that the best manner in which to guarantee the maximum achievement in one's life, or at least the immediate fulfillment of the maximum number of goals would be to accept the record deal. However, achievement is but one of four factors involved in the artist's objective-list theories of well-being, therefore conclusions cannot yet be reached.

Following the item of achievement on our new objective-list, artistic integrity presents a different facet of well-being to be aspired to by Band X. In general, the maintenance of one's artistic integrity results in the autonomy to choose the general directions an artist takes in their career. Given the parameters we have outlined for the artist's dilemma, we have acknowledged that to accept the record deal would be to forfeit artistic integrity on the part of Band X. Further, we have acknowledged that in accepting the record deal, Band X would be able to maintain their artistic integrity in the immediate future, and would gain the added benefit of being able to plan their next moves in the music industry. Additionally, the item "artistic integrity" was included to account for the manners in which Guy Fletcher had listed "self-respect" and "virtue" on his conception of the objective-list. Given the connotation that Band X maintaining their "artistic integrity" would essentially translate to their not jeopardizing their values or identities, this item seems to garner a paramount importance when considering impacts on overall well-being. Therefore, were Band X wishing to maximize the potential for maintaining their artistic integrity, it would seem as though the obvious decision would be for Band X to refuse the record deal.

In the third component of the objective-list theories of well-being restricted to the scope of the artist, we arrive at “a legitimate love and passion for music.” While some would argue that this item goes hand in hand with maintaining artistic integrity, rather than existing to ensure that the artist stay true to themselves, this item is included more for the purpose of determining the extent to which an artist can achieve a fulfilling career. If the artist were to be able to attain a legitimate love and passion for music, then it could be argued that financial and celebrity motivations would be of a lesser impact on determining the decisions of Band X. Moreover, if this is not compelling enough, possessing a legitimate love and passion for music would, at the very least, ensure that Band X would be able to increase their overall well-being due to the constant happiness that would hopefully be generated from a lifelong career in creating and playing music. Were Band X wishing to maximize the potential for a love and passion for the music, it would seem as though Band X would refuse the record deal and seek to pursue an autonomous career in music. Some could argue that this conclusion is counter-intuitive given the manner in which Band X would still be able to do something that they loved (i.e. play music) if they signed with the record label, and further would make more money in the short-term doing so. However, such arguments fail to account for the manner in which the possession of a legitimate love and passion for music would likely prompt an individual to develop their passions in music in the way that seemed best to them, rather than accepting the influence of an exogenous factor.

In the final component of our objective-list, we find the item of “friendship.” As we noted earlier, the consideration of other individuals in impacting the decisions of Band X is more or less futile given that we have no idea how their individual

relationships would progress and change in the future. However, without quantifying or considering these individual relationships, we are able, at the very least, to identify the manners in which accepting or denying the record label would allow for the potential to develop future relationships. We will draw our considerations from the previously outlined parameters of the artist's dilemma, and the manner in which accepting the record deal and selling out would limit the autonomy of Band X in their career. Presumably, having a limited autonomy in career decisions would additionally present a limit in one's ability to work with and develop relationships with whomever one wants. Further, in refusing to accept the record deal and maintaining this autonomy throughout their career, Band X would be free to pursue whatever personal and professional relationships they so choose in the immediate future. Therefore, it would seem as though if Band X wished to attain the maximum possible value from the item of "friendship," they would refuse the record deal offered to them.

Up until now we have identified what each item on the objective-list would look like if it were pursued to a maximum degree, and further how it would impact the decision to sell out or not. An important thing to remember is that the objective-list urges individuals to attain, develop and complete each of the items on the list, rather than choose one and push it all the way. Furthermore, as we have defined some of the items on the objective-list, it is entirely possible that pursuits of multiple items simultaneously could present contradictory advice, therefore we must consider the possibility for trade-offs within the objective-list. This is not to say that we will consider valuing any one or two values and exclude the others, but rather that we will reflect upon the extent to which they contradict and bear influence upon each other. On an initial level, it would seem as

though the items of achievement and artistic integrity have the potential to present conflicting ideals. Were an artist to place their goals in achieving money and celebrity status alone, and at the same time seek to maintain their artistic integrity, pursuits of the two simultaneously would prove to be impossible. Therefore, it would seem as though in attempting to pursue achievement as well as artistic integrity simultaneously, Band X would need to be willing to curtail their expectations for satisfaction of superficial goals that would prevent them maintaining their artistic integrity. In this solution, Band X would still be allowed the potential for achievement, as any of their goals other than the strict pursuit of money and fame could still be achieved, and the added bonus of doing so without jeopardizing artistic integrity could potentially result in a significantly greater increase to well-being than would have been possible under the alternative option. As far as what this trade-off would look like upon manifesting itself in our scenario, it would result in Band X refusing the record deal. Considering additional trade-offs that would be present in this scenario of the artist's dilemma, it is entirely possible that pursuing achievement could conflict with the pursuit of friendship and other personal relationships. Acknowledging this trade-off, we recall that choosing the record deal would limit friendship and increase achievement. Further, in addition to our consideration of the role that artistic integrity plays in this scenario, it would seem as though in order to maintain all three of these objective-list items, Band X would need to again curtail the extent to which they pursue superficial achievements in order to ensure the potential for development of personal relationships, and more importantly, the maintenance of their artistic integrity. Additionally, it would seem as though the possession of a legitimate love and passion for music would be supplementary to the roles of the other three

objective-list items in reaching a solution. Therefore it would seem that in considering the scenario of the artist's dilemma as we have outlined it, and acknowledging the potential for trade-offs among objective-list items, that Band X would be inclined to refuse the record deal when operating from the perspective of objective-list theories of well-being.

Chapter Four – Conclusions

Upon beginning this discussion of the artist's dilemma, theories of well-being, and their applications in guiding an artist through the dilemma, we set out with the goal to identify three different potential paths the artist could pursue. Further, we sought to reach a comprehensive understanding of the parameters of the three different paths prior to their interpretations, so as to present a full account on their behalf in determining the actions of Band X. Now finally, we are left to reflect upon the conclusions we have drawn. In the instance of hedonistic theories of well-being, we were able to discern that they would advise Band X to refuse the record deal due to considerations of the potential for greater pains in selling out than would have come from uncertainty. In the instance of desire-satisfaction theories of well-being, we were able to conclude that Band X would accept the record deal as it would allow them to satisfy the maximum number of their desires and preferences in the immediate future, further, it maintained the potential to be instrumental to the satisfaction of additional desires in the future. In the instance of objective-list theories of well-being, we acknowledged the manner in which they present ideal objective items to pursue and attain in life, and the extent to which these ideal items of pursuit could present decisions for trade-offs in the music industry. Finally we settled with the notion that in attempting to pursue all of the objective-list items, some would be pursued to lesser extents, and some to greater extents. However, ultimately it would have resulted in Band X refusing the record deal in hopes of achieving greater overall well-being by allowing for the inclusion of all the items on the objective-list into their lives, rather than in strictly favoring one over the others.

The concept of whether or not an artist should “sell out” to achieve a greater overall well-being in their life is one that will continue to generate controversy regardless of the conclusions of this paper. However, we have been able to more or less conclude, within our scope of the artist’s dilemma, whether or not selling out would result in an increased overall well-being given the perspective on well-being possessed by Band X. Were they hedonistic, selling out would not achieve the desired result of an increase to well-being. Were they desire-satisfaction theorists, selling out would indeed achieve the desired increase to well-being. Finally, were they objective-list theorists, selling out would not increase their overall well-being. Given our conclusions on these three matters, looking to apply our insights to the real world, the artist would need to possess a self-awareness great enough to identify which of the three perspectives on well-being most adequately resembled their personal philosophy, and then simply follow the navigational plan respective to it within the artist’s dilemma. Generally speaking, it would seem that more often than not, the artist would be advised against selling out given the propensity to damage their artistic integrity, however as we have seen and will continue to see, this advice can easily be drowned out by the value-compromising temptations presented within the music industry.

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