



## CHAPTER 2

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# Why Be Euphorically Queer? An Ecological Model of Euphorias' Influences & Impacts

**Abstract** Expanding on psychological and individualist frames emphasising transgender and gender diverse (TGD) experiences; this chapter supplies a new ecological model of potential influences on the development of euphorias to assist in service applications, everyday lives, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) research. The model adds culturally embedded psycho-social accounts of affect and development from Bronfenbrenner, Erikson, Ahmed, and Butler. It shows euphorias as potentially influenced by what is privileged in individuals' developmental stages and systems of social and institutional engagements, policy contexts, and cultural norms over time. The chapter argues for being *euphorically queer*—using erasure, overplay, and transference of happiness onto non-traditional identities and bodies, towards energising responsiveness to LGBTIQ+ and other othered groups' needs, and against conforming contentedness which stagnates activism.

**Keywords** Euphoria • Theory • Model • Psychology • Queer • Feminism

### *Key Points*

- Euphoria has mainly been constructed in clinical and psychological frames, or individualist narratives.

- This book's ecological model frames potentials for euphorias' evolutions according to what is privileged in individuals' development stage, institutional and social community engagements, policy context, and cultural norms.
- The model underlines the likely importance of objects, meta-emotions and the identities and bodies groups move towards for euphorias.
- LGBTIQ+ activism can be stagnated by conformity drives within economies of happiness and the invisibility of othered others' unhappiness.
- The 'euphorically queer' may subvert these economies by foregrounding unhappiness erasure, or overplay and transference of happiness onto non-traditional bodies.

## INTRODUCTION

*Being happily queer (rather than being a happy queer) does not necessarily promote an image of happiness that borrows from the conventional repertoire of images ... The queer who is happily queer still encounters the world that is unhappy with queer love, but refuses to be made unhappy by that encounter. I have argued that the risk of promoting happy queers is that the unhappiness of this world can disappear from view. To be happily queer can also recognize that unhappiness; indeed to be happily queer can be to recognize the unhappiness that is concealed by the promotion of happy normativity (Ahmed, 2010, p.115) [1].*

Critiques of research on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer (LGBTIQ+) people's experiences highlight the lack of appropriate theoretical frameworks and methodological stances [2]. The previous chapter showed that euphoria has so far mostly been studied in clinical approaches and psychological frames [3, 4], or addressed sociological and individualist definitional narratives or experiences [5–7]. The studies modelled euphorias for therapies and individuals. However, this book encompasses curiosity about how euphoria is typically experienced by populations in institutional (education and health) contexts and across development in the younger years—addressing gaps identified in Chap. 1. It seeks to account for feminist and queer concerns about the cultural politics around LGBTIQ+ and other 'othered' bodies and identities, and how happiness operates upon and around them towards serving normative or disruptive functions for socio-cultural hierarchies [1, 8, 9]. Therefore, a model

framing cultural, psychological, and social influences on euphorias is required. A new critical ecological model is offered in this chapter framing the psycho-social development of individuals’ emotions over time, including influences on their possibilities for developing and experiencing euphorias. This chapter details the model, including its cultural, institutional, relational, and then individual foci.

### FRAMING PSYCHO-SOCIAL ECONOMIES OF EMOTIONS

Ecological Development Theory has been contributed to primarily by Uri Bronfenbrenner’s seminal work [10, 11]. It answers the nature versus nurture debates in developmental psychology by integrating staged theories of individual development, with acknowledgement of the influences of socio-cultural relationships and contexts. Taking heed of this combination of influences can potentially strengthen our understanding of, interventions around and research on the development of our own and others’ euphorias. Firstly, it can overcome the problem of a lack of a theoretical framework in consideration of LGBTIQ+ lives [2]. Secondly, it can help to avoid potential biases or heteronormative assumptions implicit in some alternate theories of development [12]. Depicted in Fig. 2.1, the ecological model situates considerations for the conceptualisation of how

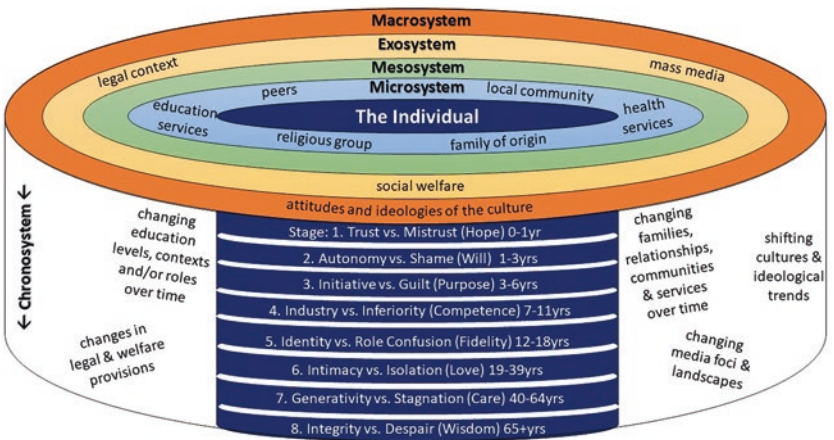


Fig. 2.1 An ecological model of potential influences on euphorias in the psycho-social development of individuals

euphorias are supported and negated within what existing research suggests as the potential influence(s) in psycho-social development at many levels in the combination(s) of individuals' multiple stages and contexts of development. Potential influences on one's psycho-social development and its allowances for euphorias include for example individuals':

- psychological conditions and personal motivations and characteristics;
- social and relational conditions including experiences of relationships, parenting styles and subjection to social engagements and meta-social engagements about their social engagements;
- institutional conditions and experiences;
- cultural conditions and exposures; and
- how all these conditions variously develop and change over time.

The model (Fig. 2.1) and the book's considerations in applying it combines core concepts from the psycho-social models of Uri Bronfenbrenner, Erik Erikson, and other psycho-social psychologists' work with ideas from critically situated Queer theorists/post-structural and education feminists including Sara Ahmed and others.

The over-arching structure of this model employs Bronfenbrenner's ecological development model [10]; considered beneficial in informing minority-inclusive frameworks for policies and practices and LGBTIQ+ studies [13]. It theorises an '**Individual**' as centred in their development as autonomous and socio-cultural beings in their relationships to their sex characteristics, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliations, mental health, and other personal characteristics (Fig. 2.1 expands the stages of development for the individual, and we will return to these stages shortly in another sub-section of this chapter). The Individual and their characteristics and developmental stages sit at the core of five broader surrounding ecological systems, including:

1. **The 'Microsystem'**—institutional and social contexts individuals are frequently and repetitively directly exposed to. Transgender, cis-gender, and non-binary survey and therapy participants have described 'gender euphoria' as influenced by social context influences, peers, and family members for example [3, 6].
2. **The 'Mesosystem'**—this includes interactions across Individuals' Microsystems which they only indirectly experience. Relations

between LGBTIQ+ people's familial, religious, health, educational and/or employment communities can for example be especially intertwined for those in ex-gay and ex-trans conversion therapies making covert exploration of their identities difficult for example [14]. Research shows health or education providers and parents can have interactions surrounding interventions into enabling or restricting their LGBTIQ+ people's sex characteristics or gender expressions [15–18], that don't involve them directly but may impact their wellbeing.

3. **The 'Exosystem'**—this includes broader institutional influences on Individuals and their Microsystems (media contexts, legal contexts, welfare contexts, and so forth). There have been major changes in LGBTIQ+ Australians' exosystems likely impacting their potential experiences of euphoria, such as the marriage equality plebiscite [19], religious schools being given the right to discriminate on the basis of gender identity and sexual orientation [20] and so forth.
4. **The 'Macrosystem'**—surrounding cultural attitudes and ideologies (including religious and LGBTIQ+ sub-cultural ideals). LGBTIQ+ people have both benefited and been harmed by cultural debates on their marriage and education rights for example [21, 22]. A study comprising 13 in-depth semi-structured interviews with transgender and gender diverse (TGD) participants showed that options presented to them for socio-cultural redress for factors blocking their gender euphoric desires, only included the linear journey from one binary gender category to the other, when socio-cultural barriers like transphobic attitudes were the main influences restricting euphorias [4].
5. **The 'Chronosystem'**—the time periods within which all systems shift and change. This influences and changes the development of the individual alongside their experiences of variations in their conditions, communities, institutions, contexts, and cultural nuances.

For Bronfenbrenner the Microsystem is most directly influential on individuals' development including gender and sexuality in their early years. However, the individual's self-development of autonomy is most core and must be reconciled to their engagements with all systems' influences over time.

### *Cultural Politics of Emotions*

In theorising the **Macrosystem** surrounding the Individual and their communities and structures, Sara Ahmed's theory of the cultural politics of emotions offers the argument that some bodies/individuals are given greater value than others in cultural economies of emotion [9]. Thus, popular cultural ideologies and attitudes align with these identities/bodies or 'other' them as outsiders [9]. Ahmed argues 'the promise of happiness' is a cultural construction set up as implied reward and actual rewarding processes in which pleasure is associated with, allowed for and enabled for inhabiting particular (privileged) and performing their idealised identities and life scripts/actions [1]. Ahmed's arguments suggest we might most expect happiness to be associated with and promised for more privileged bodies to higher degrees of intensity and regularity within a particular institutional or social space [1]. Indeed, loved ones and institutions may use the expressions of the seeming desire for people's happiness to control people—the mode of 'just wanting happiness' for LGBTQ+ people can be in some instances be an argument made to stop them from living out queer lives in contexts where these will not be rewarded (*we don't want you to wear that/date this person and be bullied; we just want you to happy*). She shows that in culture and media queer stories are often only told in a context of one partner dying, barriers to identity achievement for trans people and general unhappiness; reinforcing this unhappiness allocation. Ahmed asserts that a series of other lesser privileged and normative bodies and identities (beyond the happy norms) may be sometimes culturally afforded happiness contingent to conditions and actions that may be temporary or to lesser degrees dependent on their positions in social hierarchies; or within sub-cultural norms where their enactments or resistances to idealised presentations and behaviours for which happiness is the reward [1]. Ahmed argues that attending to emotions in research allows us to understand that 'actions are reactions' and that what we do and how we do it is shaped by the contact that we have with other people [9]. Ahmed frames the affective exchanges that happen between people as shaping the very surfaces of bodies within the exchanges, which take shape through the repetition of actions over time, as well as through orientations towards and away from others.

Ahmed's model of the cultural politics of emotions provides a broader framing for McKinney's recursive understanding of gender dysphoria beyond individual models, as the outcome of a process by which gender euphoric desires are filtered through cis-normative cultural lenses

resulting in dysphoric distress [4]. Meyer's [23] model of minority stress helps to further explain how the relationship of social stressors, as well as their associated physical and mental impacts, leads to LGBTQ+ health disparities. Research across a variety of countries and methodologies consistently demonstrated various LGBTQ+ populations including in education settings are subject to greater stigma, prejudice, and discrimination than heterosexual cisgender people and related to mental health and health disparities [24, 25]. This relationship can be a further perpetuating factor in Ahmed's notion of the restrictions on happiness for minorities in the cultural politics of emotions; as mental and physical health outcomes themselves lower identities and bodies' positionings in cultural hierarchies around happiness. Notably however, Ahmed pushes a refusal of any distinction between happy and unhappy endings in queer stories because they are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and are generative (2010, p.89):

*We must resist this literalism, which means an active disbelief in the necessary alignment of the happy with the good, or even in the moral transparency of the good itself. Rather than read unhappy endings as a sign of the withholding of moral approval for queer lives, we must consider how unhappiness circulates within and around this archive, and what it allows us to do [1].*

Both happiness and unhappiness then can potentially enable sex, gender, and sexuality minorities to do important work within themselves and their relationships and within institutions and cultures more broadly. However, for Ahmed there is a need to be wary of happiness obtained at a cost [1]. Particularly Ahmed warns against happiness obtained by a conforming stagnation within the dominant culture's ideals or some comfort zone within broader personal or LGBTIQ+ discomfort. Ahmed also warns against happiness for conditional recognitions of rights or identities such as access to marriage rights and husbandry/wifery or limited access to gendered categorisations; where these are functioning to encourage stagnation of wider progress for the individual, their work towards their own and other othered sub-group's socio-cultural standing and rights, or revolutionary generativity for ethnically/culturally diverse sex, gender, and sexuality groups broadly (2010. pp. 106-115):

*The implication of such a description is that queers can now come out, be accepted, and be happy. Those of us committed to a queer life know that forms of recognition are either precariously conditional, you have to be the right kind*

*of queer by depositing your hope for happiness in the right places (even with perverse desire you can have straight aspirations), or it is simply not given. Not only is recognition not given but it is often not given in places that are not noticeable to those who do not need to be recognized, which helps sustain the illusion that it is given [1].*

Ahmed's contributions suggest being *euphorically queer* (rather than happy and queer) does not necessarily promote an image of happiness, which can function to stagnate one's push for revolutionary sex, gender, and sexuality or other rights progress.

### *Institutional Politics of Emotions*

In framing **Exosystems** affecting individuals' development, LGBTIQ+ people's exosystems collectively around the world have in the last decade seen major fluctuations in their supportive and harmful treatments and influences. The United Nations have recognised the right to non-discrimination on the bases of sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and intersex variations [26, 27]. There has been a proliferation of regional, international, and state-level legislative and policy protections in areas like de-criminalisation, discrimination, relationships, education, health-care, employment, and service rights in many contexts; and surrounding these there were debates often negatively impactful on LGBTIQ+ people's mental health and wellbeing [28, 29]. Further there have also been legislative and policy rescindments, restrictions and punitive approaches leading to criminalisation of certain corporeal and speech acts for LGBTIQ+ people depending on jurisdiction and institutional setting; as politicians perceive the value of 'political homophobia' and 'gender ideology' (anti-transgender and anti-woman sentiments) and anti-intersex sentiment for authoritarian and populist state building [30, 31]. These may be harmful influences weighing LGBTIQ+ bodies down with negative sentiments and potentially influencing or restricting potentials for euphorias.

In considering how **Exosystems** and **Microsystems** interact in ways affecting individuals' development, Ahmed's (2004, 2010) and other sociologists' theories of emotional politics have been applied to education and health legal debates, institutions and classrooms in ways that suggest the importance of institutional politics of emotions [32–34]. Noddings theorised that education centred around emotional community connection was key to creating a sense of belonging in schools [35]. Schutz and



Pekrun [32] particularly applied the notion that emotions are not private but are socially organised to the classroom, in a small study of students' emotions. This institutional organisation of emotions fits how Benested pitched gender therapy aimed at enabling euphoria not at changing clients' perception of self, but at changing their surroundings' perception of the client—targeting social and institutional organisations of emotions [3]. Similarly, many transgender and gender diverse informants argued health provider and other service provider institutions have roles to play in relieving dysphoria and engendering more positive emotions in their social approach to transgender people [34].

Schutz and Pekrun applied the idea of affective economics; that emotions become attached to *material objects* that join some people together while separating others [32]. This relates to the concept of the importance of hair and its removal for transgender women in joining together or separating from identity groups and categories towards enabling euphoria [36]; however, in Schutz and Pekrun's work, the objects, community memberships, and attendant emotions are institutionally promoted or demoted. Institutionally focussed examinations of euphoria do not exist in the emerging euphoria research. However, there is a strong suggestion that increased sense of membership in a sub-group or community within institutions is linked to improved wellbeing and mental health outcomes for people in psychological research [37]. Further, studies show community memberships within formal or informal LGBTIQ+ identity groups including gay-straight-alliances (GSAs), meet-up social groups and online networks improves wellbeing [38, 39]. Both happiness and unhappiness then may potentially be linked to a sense of institutional and community memberships and social treatment therein, including sub-group memberships within communities.

### *Relational Politics of Emotions*

Another relevant concept to contemplate in the economy of emotions is the relational politics of emotions, operating both in the **Microsystem** where individuals interact with people, and in the **Mesosystem** where interactions are had about the **Individual** in their absence. Research has shown both support and rejection for LGBTIQ+ youth, teachers and parents' identity disclosures by individual school community members can have concrete impacts on their emotional experiences, educational and wellbeing outcomes [16, 40–42]. Gray uses Ahmed's notions of affect

through emotional engagements between people in education settings which move teachers and students both towards and away from each other, to discuss how four queer teacher educators understood the affective dimensions of the work that they do [33]. Gray argued that teaching from a place of difference towards socially just aims enables a pleasure in a kind of joyful difference that comes from acknowledging the chaos, crisis, and injustice before the teacher educators and coping by continuing to imagine a more liveable alternative. Gray notes that there is a cruelty inherent to such optimistic imagining, without experiential outcomes.

However in thinking about euphoria in school, health, religious, family settings and other structured settings, it can be useful to go beyond consideration of primary emotions to consider ‘meta-emotions’—the affective pedagogical role of parents and adults in the lives of youth through their attitudes and emotional responses about and to youths’ emotions [43]. Meta-emotions also include adults’ ‘secondary emotions’ about emotions as concepts and in children’s or adults experiences of (initial) emotions (anxiety concerning one’s anger). Gottman et al. [43] posited adults—particularly parents—have different philosophies in their meta-emotional approach to youths’, others’ and their own emotions. These potentially block, enable, or impact their own and others’ euphorias, including:

- **An emotion-coaching philosophy** wherein adults are aware of their emotions and the emotions of others and see them as opportunities for growth. They connect and empathise with the negative emotions and experiences of children and discuss and help children understand and express or problem-solve around emotions.
- **A dismissive philosophy** wherein adults feel as though emotions could be harmful and that their primary job is to alleviate harmful emotions as quickly as possible. They ignore, disconnect from, down-play, deny or promote distraction from emotions; and teach children negative emotions will not last or matter.
- **A disapproving philosophy** wherein adults view children’s negative emotions as attempting to manipulate or control others. They reprimand or discipline children for any unwanted (even appropriate) emotional expression, teaching children to frame emotions as inappropriate and invalid, engendering difficulty with emotion regulation.

Some euphoria studies emphasised the importance of relational/interactional influences on euphoria for transgender and gender diverse (TGD)

people [4]. Relational emotions and meta-emotions are important to contemplate in investigating possibilities for euphorias in institutional or social settings where adults and youth interact.

### *Individual Politics of Emotions*

Economies of emotions in education institutions can finally also be impacted by **Individuals'** motivations and emotional development, returning to the core of the ecological model of psycho-social development (Fig. 2.1). Past survey-based research has shown transgender, cis-gender, and non-binary people described 'gender euphoria' as influenced by internal factors and identity-related motivations [6], and individual practices in pursuit of these motivations like hair removal [36] or drag and painting [5]. Whilst there could be many intersectional framings of individuals' emotions and development useful to reflect upon here capturing their changes across their **Chronosystem**/time, emphasising the different life stages across and within educational institutions using developmental theories is most congruent. Erik Erikson's model of psycho-social development is useful firstly for being one of the most widely known by educators and education psychologists, making the potential for LGBTQ+ euphorias more legible to education stakeholders. Secondly, Erikson's model especially considers the role of parents and culture enabling confluence with Bronfenbrenner's work (for extension to Bronfenbrenner's model that aligns with affordance for the **Micro, Macro**, and related **systems'** influences). Erikson not only offers culturally endorsed and rewarded psycho-social developmental foci motivating different developmental life stages, but also their opposites (those identity and action emphases which are *negated* at different stages). In considering euphoric potentials using Ahmed's work on the cultural politics of happiness, framing identities and actions which do not align with endorsed ideals as culturally and institutionally devalued against what Erikson asserts as the motivation of individuals by stage, is important. This Erikson's 'crises' (frustrated motivations) offer likely sites of euphoria blockages, and possible euphoric or dysphoric values. Thus, the Erikson eight-stage psycho-social and emotional development model's inclusion of both culturally rewarded motivation achievements and negated crises, then, provides clues suggestive for how *certain* euphorias might be more available and endorsed at various developmental stages depending on context and relational factors, above others. Thirdly, the fact that Erikson's model considers adult psycho-social

and emotional development as ongoing was especially relevant to our desire to include LGBTIQ+ adults in education and health, not just youth.

Erikson's eight-stage model of psycho-social development expanded Freud's theory of childhood and adolescent psychosexual development by emphasising the importance of culture in parenting practices and the motivations core to different stages, and adding three stages of adult development [44, 45]. Erikson's model frames people as motivated by core psycho-social tasks or crises in predetermined stages such as the need to develop one's identity fidelity, love, and care; influenced by socio-cultural settings and cultural emphases. These eight stages are positioned at the centre of the Chronosystem and as moving 'The Individual' across changes to their ecological psycho-social development over time. Progress through each of the eight stages is partially affected and determined by one's achievements in all the previous stages for Erikson, affecting one's overall personality and potential for happiness and euphorias. Critiques have been offered for the model in terms of the variability of individuals' ageing versus staging, and differences in gendered trends not represented by Erikson's testing of his theories via longitudinal analyses on the lives of 'great men' [46–48]. James Marcia and others since have noted that identity formation can be more prolonged as teens and young adults live with parents and continue their educations for longer, and then again undergo different types of identity development requiring different settings like sexual orientation versus religious versus professional identity development into their early twenties [46–48].

Further, females, LGBTIQ+ and ethnically diverse people were not the main source for Erikson's modelling, so we propose stages should be considered potentially recurrent or revisited at different points in life (such as identity formation for gender and sexuality) whilst maintaining an awareness of what is held up as 'Erikson's norm' as a point of comparison. This is important since although sexual and gender diverse identity disclosures most often occur in puberty as suggested in Erikson's model this can also take place earlier or later; and may involve rejection of established or promoted identity or role models promoted in one's culture or more identity fluidity than that endorsed in Erikson's original model [16, 40, 49]. Stages also potentially vary in occurrence and length across sub-cultures and ethnic cultures privileging other identity ideals and milestones; and affected by different parenting dynamics enabling or providing barriers to particular milestones and expressions [50, 51]. Research has shown that in Western majority cultures youths within mainstream ethnic majorities

tend more towards identity foreclosures whilst those in ethnic minorities tend more towards lengthened identity explorations and delayed identity achievements [50]. It is likely that euphorias are affected by how much the achievement of motivations for development occur in line with Erikson's norms however, as Ahmed says norms can be rewarded in ways leading to queer activist stagnation and deviation from norms may be culturally devalued such that happiness is less accessible, even via gate-keeping [1]. Erikson's [44, 45] eight stages are thus re-appropriated in Fig. 2.1 as *indicative though not prescriptive* in age-based application, order and cultural consistency. They expand inside the middle of the ecological model to give a stronger sense of how opportunities for 'successful achievement' of the motivations can be influenced by surrounding socio-cultural systems. Individuals' eight developmental stages include:

- **Stage 1. Trust versus Mistrust (Hope), Birth to 1yr:** infants dependent on adult care-givers develop trust in adults to meet their basic needs for survival. Ideally, care-givers are responsive and sensitive making the world a safe, predictable place; neglect or abuse may engender anxiety, fear, and mistrust.
- **Stage 2. Autonomy versus Shame (Will), 1-3yrs:** toddlers working to establish less dependence on adults explore their world and preferences, and learn about autonomy. Ideally, adults support toddlers' inputs into basic choices. Denying or shaming toddlers' choices, engenders their doubt in their abilities and bodies.
- **Stage 3. Initiative versus Guilt (Purpose), 3-6yrs:** preschool children begin initiating activities and asserting control over their social interactions and play. Ideally care-givers enable exploration within limits encouraging a sense of purpose. If initiatives misfire or are stifled, it engenders guilt.
- **Stage 4. Industry versus Inferiority (Competence), 7-11yrs:** elementary/primary-school children compare their industrious efforts to their peers'. Ideally, they develop pride and accomplishment in school, sports, and social life. Culturally negated setups feature feeling inferiority and inadequacy.
- **Stage 5. Identity versus Role Confusion (Fidelity), 12-18yrs:** children, adolescents and young adults in high-school, higher-education or vocational settings especially develop their self, social, sexual, professional, and political roles. Identity 'moratoriums' (identity exploration towards commitment), and 'achievements'

(commitment to identities after exploration) are culturally rewarded ideals [46, 47]. Identity ‘diffusion’ (lack of exploration or commitment) or ‘foreclosure’ (commitment to one’s own or others’ pre-formed ideals without exploration) are negated as inauthentic, causing weak self-hood and role confusion [46, 47].

- **Stage 6. Intimacy versus Isolation (Love), 19-39yrs:** young adults are concerned with establishing intimacy in romantic, familial, platonic, and/or other relationships. In cultural ideals, individuals have a strong sense of self informing their development in successful intimate relationships. In negated scenarios, people struggle developing and maintaining successful relationships with others in line with their needs or values, engendering loneliness, and emotional isolation. Theorists posited this relates to earlier development issues, like role confusion [44-47].
- **Stage 7. Generativity versus Stagnation (Care), 40-64yrs:** in middle adulthood, the core motivational concern is generativity—contributing to one’s life work and/or the development of others in the next generation or generally. Cultural ideals include volunteering, mentoring, and raising children; or engagement in meaningful and productive work which benefits society. Culturally problematised scenarios include lacking connection to others, productivity and/or self-improvement, or meaningful impact, or submitting to stagnation.
- **Stage 8. Integrity versus Despair (Wisdom), 65+yrs:** late adulthood centres reflection about one’s life-span and development of overall satisfaction or failure. Culturally endorsed ideals across life engender a sense of integrity about the life lived and one’s development and happiness across it, pride, and few regrets. Culturally problematised scenarios engender bitterness, depression, and despair.

These stages suggest that euphorias may ‘reward’ identity establishment, intimacy, and generativity across adolescent and adult stages. However, the model also suggests potential for culturally negated scenarios to block euphorias or be complicating influences. For example, frustrated will, role confusion, or despair may have dysphoric value across some LGBTIQ+ people’s evolving lives and contexts.

Returning to individuals’ potential for happiness given the broader cultural context negating their motivations, bodies and identities, Sara Ahmed [1] declares the importance of aiming to be ‘*happily queer* (rather than

*being a happy queer*)' (2010, p.115). This involves resisting the conformity drives inherent in all stages and systems' economies of happiness, and developing psycho-social and cultural motivations endorsing visions of happiness challenging conventional repertoires of motivations. Ahmed's work suggests euphoric value in opportunities to *inhabit queer identities, bodies, and lives wilfully and euphorically 'beyond the straight lines of happiness scripts'* (2010, p.115) whilst maintaining a clear-eyed view and denouncement of harmful mainstreaming scripts. Other post-structuralist feminist/Queer work also contributes ideas that imply LGBTIQ+ euphorias may have destabilising or stagnating political qualities and outcomes. Judith Butler particularly offered three subversive possibilities of queer gender identities [8, 52, 53]. Butler argues these identities can erase or refuse identity norms (e.g. non-conforming people and bodies, asexuality, non-binary expressions), overplay or exaggerate norms (femme lesbians, butch gay men, cartoonish hyper-traditionalism) or transfer norms onto non-traditional bodies (butch-femme play on same sex couples' bodies, transgender and intersex embodiments, fluidity and so forth)—questioning normalising ideas of 'authenticities'. One can theorise by extrapolation that LGBTIQ+ euphorias have subversive value in Butlerian lenses towards [8, 53]:

- exposing **the 'erasure'** of unhappiness for LGBTIQ+ and other othered people around motivations, stages, bodies and identities presumed normative through the '*dissonant play of attributes that fail to conform to sequential or causal models of intelligibility*' (Butler, 1990, pp.23-32);
- representing **the 'overplay'** of happiness and feelings of rightness for normative motivations, bodies and identities revealing '*it is all impersonation, whether the [identity] underneath is true or not*' (Butler, 1990, p.163); and/or
- enabling **the 'transference'** of happiness onto non-traditional bodies, identities, and motivations; where it usually only rewards cis/heteronormative endosex identities, bodies, and achievements; and '*does not assume that there is an original which such parodic identities imitate ... the parody is of the very notion of an original*' (Butler in Leitch et al., 2001, p. 2498).

Therefore, whilst making LGBTIQ+, black people's or women's unhappiness visible fruitfully highlights problems; Queer revolutions lack

misery mandates. Happiness and euphorias *over being in LGBTIQ+, black Indigenous or female identities and ‘other’ bodies*, whilst recognising their structural and socio-cultural marginalisation, can be radically subversive robust strategies. This is especially so where the euphoric or happy feeling does not represent the contented stagnation around personal and group rights progress Ahmed warns against [1]; but contributes towards valuing identities or bodies in ways expanding socio-political awakening and action. Appropriations of Butler’s work suggest one-off or ongoing acts may contribute to subversive thinking, experiencing, and (re)ordering of bodies and identities. Such disruptions may be temporary, periodic, or continuous. They may generatively energise people and movements feeding into and sustaining future revolutionary works whilst alleviating current exhaustions or the off-putting nature of necessarily unhappy activist efforts and difficult experiences.

Therefore, both the motivations behind individuals’ development stages, and how the cultural positionings of queer lives can complicate or subvert motivations and ‘staging’, are important considerations in exploring enablers and blockers to euphorias in research—and everyday life. Euphorias could be radical politicised experiences, subverting associations of happiness with particular norms and challenging psycho-social and cultural orders internally for Individuals and across the systems in which they live. Or, they could have stagnating functions rewarding relative compliance with suppressive norms across ones’ systems, stages, and social orders. Thus, in research and practice we should privilege ‘being happily/euphorically queer’ in ways that energise recognition of and response to unhappiness for LGBTIQ+ and other othered groups; above those euphoric experiences that merely render difficulties invisible or stagnate efforts towards rights progress, refinements, and defence.

## CONCLUSIONS

The ecological model proposed in this chapter for understanding euphorias has applications in individuals’ lives, clinical settings, and wider institutional and socio-cultural research. It suggests psycho-social inquiry into euphoria across the life-span should consider cultural, institutional, and relational systems’ regulatory or subversive influences upon individuals (Macrosystems, Exosystems, and Microsystems including their attending Mesosystems) and vice versa. The model emphasises achievement of individuals’ own development stage-based motivations (including autonomy,



intimacy etc.) as likely rewarded in socio-cultural economies of happiness; yet stagnating where inauthentically achieved or feigned. Stage-based crises should be considered for euphoric and dysphoric values, alongside happiness associations in institutional economies moving towards (and recoiling from) particular bodies, identities and/or objects. Since emotional politics are co-constructed continually, euphoric patterns may also be impacted by the coaching, dismissive, or disapproving meta-emotions of individuals and their surrounding systems. Exploring generative or disruptive intergenerational influences thus appears worthwhile. Being *happy and queer* can engender stagnation where this requires subordination within economies of happiness privileging cis/heteronormative endosex lives; ignoring other others' plights. Being *euphorically queer* contributes immediately and/or generatively to new and revolutionary happiness embodiments, without losing responsiveness to the difficulties othered groups face. Exposing unhappiness erasure and overplaying and transference of happiness for LGBTIQ+ identities and bodies offer revolutionary potential. The next chapter considers such potentials for LGBTIQ+ identities and bodies in education settings.

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