

Davies, William. *The happiness industry: how the government and big business sold us well-being*. Verso, 2015. 314p index ISBN 9781781688458, \$26.95.

In 1971, the Swedish Academy of Art and Sciences awarded a Nobel Prize to economist Simon Kuznets for a significant contribution: the construction of national income accounts, or what some refer to as GNP (or GDP). Later, others tweaked this generic concept to produce the Human Development Index (a United Nations creation), the Happy Planet Index (the British hat in this ring), and other measures of well-being. In the last 20 years, scholars from different disciplines, vantage points, and continents have tossed in their two cents' worth on what one might term "happiness research." Into this ideological morass now steps Left-leaning English writer Davies (Goldsmiths, Univ. of London) with an indictment of business and government for the way they traffic in emotional and psychological appeals; chapter titles in the book suggest the author is not immune to this approach himself: "The Price of Pleasure," "In the Mood to Buy," "The Psychosomatic Worker." More subjective than most, Davies's work lacks references to the relevant debates of the last half century. Though the book is largely about unhappiness, it is nevertheless worth a perusal—just not around sharp objects or from a great height. Summing Up: Recommended. Undergraduates through professionals and practitioners; general readers.