Developmental Constraints on an Approach to Human Pleasure

Michael Kubovy

Developmental Lunch
October 18, 2004
Outline

1. The concept of pleasure
   - Uses of the word
   - Definition
Outline

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   - Uses of the word
   - Definition

2. A reorientation
   - Episodes
   - Their evaluation
   - Their depth
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3. Developmental constraints

- One’s choice

"I'm having Scotch, what's your pleasure?" Here 'your pleasure' = your choice.

"What's your pleasure, but you'd better be able to justify it." Applies only when the choice requires no justification.

"His pleasures are few." Here 'pleasure' = activities experienced.

- One’s choice
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- **One’s choice**
  - “I’m having Scotch, what’s your pleasure?”
  - Here ‘your pleasure’ = your $\{\text{choice, wish, decision}\}$. 

Sources of pleasure

"His pleasures are few." Here ‘pleasure’ = $\{\text{activities, experiences, situations}\}$ undergone.

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- Self-indulgence

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  - “Are you traveling for business or pleasure?”
  - Here ‘pleasure’ = diversion, pastime, amusement, entertainment, recreation, fun

- A ‘state of consciousness’

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  - ‘give pleasure’

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- Cognates

---

'*Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony is very pleasant.*'

'*The way John’s career is going is pleasant to his parents.*'

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    - *“The way John’s career is going is pleasant to his parents.”*
  - ‘pleasurable’ = “What gives or can give enjoyment.”

- **Synonyms**
  - 'Gratification'
  - 'Satisfaction'
  - 'Enjoyment'
  - 'Delight'
  - 'Joy'
  - 'Happiness'
  - 'Rapture'

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**Enjoyment =**

a positive attitude toward a present experience
The concept of pleasure
A reorientation
Developmental constraints

Uses of the word
Definition


**Enjoyment =**

- a positive attitude toward a present experience

I can’t enjoy today what I did yesterday will do tomorrow although I may enjoy reminiscing about anticipating it.

Does it make sense to say, “I enjoy my job, but the only thing I like about it is the Christmas bonus”? Judged to be right or wrong.

Involving desire striving.

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MK

Pleasure & Developmental Constraints
**Definition of pleasure** (D. L. Perry, *The Concept of Pleasure*, 1967)

**Enjoyment =**

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Involving desire, striving.
The argument

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What is narrative?

Narrative text
A narrative is a text in which an agent tells a story.

Story
A story is a fabula presented in a certain manner.

Fabula
A fabula is a sequence of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors.

Event
An event is a transition from one state to a subsequent state.

Actors
Actors are agents (human or not) that perform actions.

To act
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Evaluation of episodes: The research problem

- Kahneman’s approach
- The basketball example
- The child-rearing example
- Gilboa & Schmeidler’s *Theory of Case-Based Decisions* (2001)
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The argument

Figure: The Pleasure Box
The argument

Figure: The Pleasure Box
The four nested stages of the evolution of motivation

1. Autonomy
2. Secondary altriciality
3. Complex sociality
4. Scale of value
Pre-human motivations

- Autonomy
  - Exploration

- Secondary altriciality

- Complex sociality
  - Dominance
  - Submissiveness
  - Feuds
  - Reconciliation

Proto-culture: non-obligatory behaviors differ between groups and are socially transmitted

Proto-morality

MK Pleasure & Developmental Constraints
Pre-human motivations

Autonomy
- Exploration
- Curiosity

Secondary altriciality

Complex sociality
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**Complex sociality**
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Developmental stages of episode understanding & evaluation?

1. Nesting
2. Strands
3. Narrative
Developmental stages of motivation & episode depth?

1. Autonomy
2. Secondary altriciality
3. Complex sociality
4. Scale of value
THAT'S ALL FOLKS!\textsuperscript{a}

\textsuperscript{a}PDF presentation created with \LaTeX{} using free software.