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Several considerations about Philosophic and Anthropologic aspects of Addiction

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In the beginning I want to make some statements. As you may know according Goethe great German poet
«Alles war gesagt, doch alles bleibt zu sagen!» — Everything was said, but everything remains to be said!

I make a small change to this phrase - Everything was said, but everything must be understood anew!

As you correctly mentioned Dr. Carbon, terminology problems are important because of their different understanding.

For this reason I want to talk on the level of handbooks, textbooks and vocabularies. To me this is the deepest level of acceptance of concepts. And I think this is the main constipation on the way to progress. As it was mentioned by Thomas Kuhn scientific paradigm became the “straitjacket” for development because of its deepest acceptance.

So, what is addiction?

“Addiction is a psychological and physical inability to stop consuming a chemical, drug, activity, or substance, even though it is causing psychological and physical harm.

The term addiction does not only refer to dependence on substances... A person who cannot stop taking a particular drug or chemical has substance dependence. Some addictions also involve an inability to stop partaking in activities, such as gambling, eating, or working. In these circumstances, a person has a behavioral addiction.”

This is very common and popular explanation.

The main question to me: where is here the pleasure?

Does this concept, concept of pleasure, have no meaning for this problem?

What is the “pleasure”?

Merriam Webster dictionary

- [pleasure](#), [joy](#), and [enjoyment](#) mean the agreeable feeling that accompanies getting something good or much wanted. [Pleasure](#) is used for a feeling of happiness or satisfaction that may not be shown openly. So, we can consider “pleasure” as something passive, not achievable, but obtainable.

Maybe the problem in historical approach to this concept?

Sigmund Freud names the “pleasure principle” as a performance principle of id. So, Merriam Webster dictionary explains the “pleasure principle” as “a tendency for individual behavior to be directed toward immediate satisfaction of instinctual drives and immediate relief from pain or discomfort”.

But on the levels of ego and superego Freud does not mention the concept of “pleasure”. Instead, he said “Obeying these rules leads to feelings of pride, value, and accomplishment.” From my point of view this is also the pleasure.

So, if pleasure is connected with instinct we can assume that it is one of the main attributes of Life.

What is Life in its very common sense?

It is consuming of organic material and energy substrate from environment, destroying of it, building of organic material of itself and relies of remains. So, Life is energetic relationship (interaction) with environment. From this point of view the goal of Life is to obtain energetic equilibrium with environment. And, we can say, that pleasure, in energetic sense, is the energetic equilibrium with environment. Because of changing nature of environment (and Life itself) this state cannot be achieved in full. So, we have asymptotic aspiration to pleasure. And this can be considered as a driving force of Evolution as in vertical, so in horizontal (diversity) directions.

So, from this discussion we can conclude that pleasure is common for Life. And what is the difference with Human?

Human can manage the pleasure. This is the main difference of Human from other Life.

If Human can manage its pleasure it means, that Human can make or create such conditions which can help to obtain pleasure. And repeat it permanently.

And Human does it!

Alcohol, opium, tobacco, coca, mushrooms, this is some examples of creation of the conditions to obtain pleasure. But permanent pleasure is

killing. So, as we can observe, in consuming societies addiction is not a social problem. Because there are restrictions for consuming. This is common knowledge, obtained by society and prescribed as rules to save the members of the same society from death from pleasure. In tobacco and mushroom societies there were strict restrictions in use of these alkaloids. In opium societies alcohol restricted by religion. We know the negative impact when alcohol invades tobacco and coca societies and when tobacco comes to alcohol societies. So, in very common sense, we can conclude that culture is a tradition of restrictions of Human pleasure. It means to not allow the pleasure to become the “pleasure principle”.

So, from my point of view it will be very helpful to introduce the concept of pleasure in the concept of addiction as – pathologic aspiration to obtain pleasure. This point of view is changing the center of addiction from out to in. This means that addiction is not “to stop consuming a chemical, drug, activity, or substance” but the inner problem when pleasure became the “pleasure principle”. Maybe it will support to change some approaches and methods in this field.

Conclusions:

- pleasure is the common attribute of Life;
- asymptotic aspiration to pleasure is one of the driving forces of the Evolution;
- Humans differ from other Life by ability to manage its own pleasure;
- culture is the tradition of restrictions of Human pleasure;
- addiction is pathologic aspiration to obtain pleasure.

Some final words:

For me, assuming the pleasure as an attribute of Life and the part of Human is one step forward in understanding of Human intelligence, because intelligence is the ability of Human to react on the environmental challenges. This consideration will help in the difficult process of creation of Human like Artificial Intelligence. Contemporary approaches to this problem are very simplistic and can be described as “how Human can react on this challenge”. But different approach can be assumed as “how Human creates his decisions”. And there are many questions to be answered:

What a difference between conclusion and decision?

What are the main motifs of Human decision?

How this motifs shape the incoming information, which became the base for Human decisions?

And more, and more...

But this maybe the issue of another discussions.

