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Pleasure, Freedom and Drugs: The Uses of 'Pleasure' in Liberal Governance of Drug and Alcohol Consumption

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ABSTRACT

The article explores the ways in which discourses of pleasure are deployed strategically in official commentaries on drug and alcohol consumption. Pleasure as a warrantable motive for, or descriptor of, drug and alcohol consumption appears to be silenced the more that consumption appears problematic for liberal government. Tracing examples of this from the 18th century to the present, it is argued that discourses of 'pleasure' are linked to discourses of reason and freedom, so that problematic drug consumption appears both without reason (for example 'bestial') and unfree (for example 'compulsive'), and thus not as 'pleasant'. In turn, changes in this articulation of pleasure, drugs and freedom can be linked with shifts in the major forms taken by liberal governance in the past two centuries, as these constitute freedom differently.

KEY WORDS

alcohol / drugs / freedom / government / liberalism / pleasure

Diverse sociological discourses have raised the question of 'disreputable pleasures' and examined the tendency of government to identify the pleasures of the lower classes and the poor as problematic to good order (e.g. Becker, 1965; Hagan, 1977; Miller, 1958). What seems to have been little explored is the extent to which disreputable activities that at a commonsense level might be regarded as the pursuit of pleasure or excitement – however

morally questionable or blameworthy – are not coded as ‘pleasurable’ at all. A number of quite diverse official discourses across a long time span, from the ‘beastliness’ of 18th-century vice to ‘social determination’ of modernist criminology, turn out to have one feature in common: problematic activities are managed and discussed in ways that deny or silence the voluntary and reasonable seeking of enjoyment as warrantable motives. Governmental discourses about drugs and alcohol, in particular, tend to remain silent about pleasure as a motive for consumption, and raise instead visions of a consumption characterized by compulsion, pain and pathology. Problematic substance use is said to be caused not by pleasure-seeking but by such things as the ‘slavery of the will’ characteristic of alcoholics (Valverde, 1998); by the ‘behavioural stimuli’ of many current psychological theories of ‘craving’; or by some other bodily, social or psychological failing or deficit that pushes people to act ‘unreasonably’.

Even governing discourses less addicted to terms of compulsion are normally silent about pleasure. Such a progressive source as Australia’s Royal Commission of Inquiry into Drugs (1980) – a proximate influence establishing harm minimization’s foundations in that country – makes no mention of pleasure among the many explanations provided for drug consumption. Instead, we find that ‘Man has used drugs over the centuries to alter the function of the body, to cure sickness, or for religious or cultural reasons’ (1980). More specifically, contemporary drug use is seen as the effect of ‘factors such as experimentation, peer group pressure, mood altering influences, family influences, cultural influence, availability, advertising and religion’ (1980). Although each of these is examined in detail in its turn, neither ‘pleasure’, ‘enjoyment’, ‘excitement’ nor any approximate synonym is mentioned. In the discussion of ‘mood altering’ uses, which offered the best opportunity in this respect, the discussion focused instead on relief from anxiety, boredom, tension, isolation and (predictably) the fact that some users ‘are not capable of looking at the actualities of reality’ (1980).

Of course, we are not proposing as a universal truth the idea that pleasure and drugs are always discursively dissociated. The commercial advertising of alcohol, for example, certainly promotes images of enjoyment – as for example in the Canadian wine and spirit industry’s recurring catchphrase ‘enjoy alcohol in moderation’. But even in this more positive discourse of civilized enjoyment, pleasure is made contingent on rational moderation: once alcohol consumption is rendered problematic, so too is enjoyment. This can be seen, for example, when drinking was rehabilitated in North America during the 1930s, after the acknowledged failure of Prohibition had stimulated the rise of new discourses about regulated consumption and civilized enjoyment. For two or three decades, drinking spirits was almost approved – along with cigarette smoking (as any sampling of Hollywood films from the 1940s and 1950s shows). This was not due to a sudden disappearance of Puritanism in favour of hedonism. As Daniel Robinson (2001) has shown, the leading North American spirits manufacturer, Seagrams, managed to resignify whisky (and later gin and other ‘white goods’) and validate their moderate use, successfully leaving behind the

taint of the saloon. But this was achieved only through the deliberate flooding of the North American advertising market with a campaign about 'moderation', largely designed by Seagrams' owner Sam Bronfman. Bronfman greeted the American public immediately after Prohibition's repeal with a series of 'moderation' ads designed to restrict the proper use of whisky. 'We who make whiskey say "Drink Moderately",' stated one 1934 heavy-print, picture-less advertisement. 'Whiskey is a luxury' said the same advertisement, in bold letters, followed by the following explanation:

Whiskey cannot take the place of milk, bread, or meat. The pleasure which good whiskey offers is definitely a luxury. The House of Seagram does not want a dollar that should be spent on the necessities of life We feel that you will agree with us that the desirable way of life is thoughtful, informed by experience, guided by common sense. Realizing this, we feel sure that you will prefer moderation in the enjoyment of the finest ... (quoted in Robinson, 2001)

Pleasure thus appears, but only when drugs are consumed responsibly, when 'necessities' have been looked after and 'luxuries' can be afforded. Pleasure here equates with a form of 'rational' and 'responsible' enjoyment.

In this article we wish to draw attention to a corollary of this observation. We focus on the selective ways in which discourses of pleasure as a warrantable motive for action are increasingly suppressed the more problematic that the behaviour appears. Focusing on the governance of drugs and alcohol, we present a truncated genealogy of discourses that problematize their consumption in liberal societies. Our focus on liberalism here comes partly because in these discourses there appears to be an elective affinity between freedom, good order and pleasure, and between disorder, compulsion and pain. This appears most clearly in discourses of addiction and craving. Nevertheless the previous two centuries are characterized by parallel characterizations of drug use in terms of 'beastliness', 'idleness' and 'vice' understood as the abuse, destruction or abandonment of the freedom that reason exemplified. Especially as the 19th century wore on, notions of social determination and deprivation arose alongside these discourses, which rendered users' freedom problematic and their pleasure either pathological or silenced altogether. By the 20th century, theories of chemical and psychological dependency went still further and transformed pleasure into pain.

We argue that such changes in the manner of representing and linking pleasure, drugs and freedom in official discourses parallel changes in governmental visions of what constitutes 'freedom', and in corresponding ways of governing 'free' subjects in liberal governance. Pleasure, especially as in the figure of the felicity calculus, is at the heart of liberal constructions of the rational and free subject. Pleasure and rationality are foundationally linked, precisely because the pleasure/pain couple is a given in the liberal constitution of rational calculation. At the same time, however, pleasure is a problem where its pursuit – as in the imagery of 'hedonism' – conflicts with other key requirements made of liberal subjects, notably 'responsibility', 'rationality', 'reasonableness', 'independence'

and so on. In this sense, for liberal governance pleasure is a construct that has to be handled strategically. On the one hand it is to be identified with those ends that government seeks, so that the wills of subjects can be aligned appropriately. On the other, it has to be dissociated from ends that government regards as problematic. Schematically, it is as though valorization of desired actions or ends as 'pleasant' means that these are accorded a positive value in the felicity calculus with the effect that 'rational' individuals will prefer these. Were the same actions designated as 'unpleasant', the calculus would tip the other way. Thought of in this way the silencing of discourses of pleasure with respect to unwanted activities, such as the inappropriate consumption of drugs, appears as a strategy integral to liberal government's attempts to 'govern at a distance' (Miller and Rose, 1990).

As many have pointed out (e.g. Rose, 1996, 1999) neither liberalism nor freedom are unities or constants, and their precise forms vary considerably. For example, the freedom of neo-liberalism's 'active' sovereign consumer of the late 20th century may be distinguished in many ways from the freedom of the labouring classes of the 1800s. In the latter, far more than today, freedom was understood (governmentally at least) to lie far more in productive labour and thrift, and in the independence these bestowed on individuals. In current forms of neo-liberalism, far more stress is placed on 'enterprise' as a form of autonomy, and on 'fulfilment' and 'lifestyle' in the domain of consumption. In parallel, the techniques adopted by liberal governments to maximize their subjects' freedom have varied. For example, recent constructs using 'markets' as a technique to generate 'freedom of choice', can be contrasted with the scientific social planning of the welfare state – developed to improve upon the distribution of 'freedom from want' delivered by market mechanisms. It is our contention that these kinds of shift in liberal governance are registered in varying articulations of the nexus between freedom, pleasure and drugs. In the remainder of the article, we have selected examples of the governance of alcohol and illicit drugs that are drawn from diverse periods of liberal government in order to examine these propositions.

Labour, Rationality and Freedom: The Spectre of Beastliness

In pre-19th-century Britain, ale – like red wine in France – was regarded not as 'alcohol' but as a 'victual' (Levine, 1978). In particular, a clear distinction came to be made between ale or beer as against spirits (especially gin) that *were* regarded as 'alcohol'. Government concern with the disorderly and debasing effects of gin led to the levying of taxes at an extremely high rate – in an effort to curb 'excesses' – something that seems never to have been regarded as necessary with ale. The polarization of victuals and vices is repeatedly reproduced in late 18th-century England, perhaps most famously in Hogarth's cartoons of 'Beer Street' and 'Gin Lane' (Figures 1 and 2).



Figure 1 Beer Street

In broad terms, Beer Street is a treatise on the pleasure of beer – for beer as ‘victuals’ could warrantably be seen as pleasurable, providing this was (like food) also a necessity for a healthy and productive life. As Hogarth himself saw it, in Beer Street ‘all is joyous and thriving, Industry and Jollity go hand in hand’ (in Uglow, 1998). The drunken woman in Gin Lane might also be regarded as enjoying herself (despite dropping her baby to a certain death and suffering from ominous and painful sores on the legs). But a reading of this as ‘pleasurable’ was even less available to Hogarth’s contemporaries than it is to us, and certainly this was not Hogarth’s intention (Uglow, 1998).

The salient distinction between the vision of beer as victuals but gin as alcohol thus appears partly in the gendered contrast between the fallen women of



Figure 2 Gin Lane

the gin palaces and the hearty male Britons and demure females of Beer Street. Note the contrast between Gin Lane's woman – her hand on the snuff tin, and Beer Street's principal woman – her hand on the keys to domestic security. It also appears in the stoutness, strength, amity and 'industry' of the labouring people in Beer Street as against the desperation, violence, destruction and death in Gin Lane. In the one cartoon independence and prosperity abound: the only sign of misery or squalor is the palsied hand of the pawnbroker reaching out from his derelict premises for a (very small) tankard of beer. In the other there are no signs of labour and production, the only trades visible being the gin seller, pawnbroker (buying the tools of tradesmen) and coffin maker. The signs of mirth are directly associated with the loss of familial virtue and economic wellbeing. The imagery is of a reversion to a 'savage' state: the mother drop-

ping her child, another mother feeding gin to her baby, a dancing man with a child impaled on a pike, a woman feeding gin to a man collapsed in a wheelbarrow. These are signs of 'luxury among the lower people' as Hogarth's friend Fielding (1988[1755]) put it – luxury here meaning the degenerate 'duelling, gambling, lewd and lascivious behaviour' that was the cause of the 'late increase' in crime.

Thus pleasure abounded where consumption was associated with the virtues of free labour, productivity and domestic order. For the undisciplined, unproductive and dangerous classes associated with the consumption of gin, there was reversion to the state of beastliness (what Webb and Webb (1903) later referred to as 'the carnival of bestial drunkenness'). In submerging reason beneath the desires of the body, the body itself became corrupted and unfree: pain and death are the rewards for abandoning rationality and the virtues of labour.

While this imagery of the contrast between freedom and animality has hardly disappeared, the concerns with freedom changed their character as liberalism became more clearly defined and differentiated from a general sense of 'enlightenment'. During the 19th century, the problems of freedom associated with drug consumption were increasingly linked not with the vicious subjection of reason to desire, but to new concerns with the social and economic effects of 'free' trade.

From Laissez-faire to Technocratic Freedom

For Webb and Webb (1903), at the turn of the 20th century, there was still a valid contrast to be made between beer as 'victuals' and spirits as 'alcohol'. However, while not opposed to beer consumption as such, their analysis begins to raise it as a problem. In major part this was because of the particular role played by the deregulation of pub licensing in the spread of laissez-faire liberal policies during the 19th century. The Webbs located a new danger, one inherent not so much in the abhorrence of animal excess but rather in the way in which beer as a 'necessity' of life was 'exploited' by brewers to create a 'free trade in beer'. For the Webbs, the curtailment in 1830 of the traditional authority of Justices of the Peace to supervise pubs closely and deny licences to publicans with disorderly premises was one of the worst examples of the social and moral disorganization that they felt was a necessary outcome of laissez-faire and free trade. Against this trend toward unregulated consumption, they note that no one asserted a need for a temperance policy (since beer was until the late 1800s not considered as truly alcoholic). And they typically expressed a great concern that the late 18th-century 'movement for the reformation of manners' had collapsed without giving rise to any successor.

The Webbs may have been reluctant to assail beer as such. But there is a marked contrast with Hogarth's vision of its consumption as the cornerstone of English productivity and strength. Indeed, about the same time, some British

temperance advocates began to widen the scope of criticism by erasing the discourse on beer as victuals and incorporating it under the category of alcohol, albeit as a lesser evil (e.g. Spence, 1896). The 1882 *Report of the British Association*, which emphasized 'luxury' and 'wastefulness', urged that 'expenditure on drink includes a large amount for beer, spirits and wines, only a small proportion of which, probably 20%, can be supposed to be necessary, the remainder being either pure luxury or sheer waste' (quoted by Ferguson, 1990: 134). Within a few years, this form of scientific austerity was being pushed further by others, such as Rowntree and Sitwell (1899), who built upon this shift in thinking to seriously erode beer's status as a necessity. They claimed that 'as things are at present, a large proportion of the working classes do not receive sufficient nourishment for *efficient* subsistence; and secondly that *a much larger proportion have absolutely no margin in their weekly incomes for expenditure upon alcoholic drinks*' (emphasis in original). Rowntree and other proponents of domestic working-class reform had little time for Hogarthian odes to traditional English customs. They highlighted the poor nutritional content of beer in the same rationalistic, calorie-centred discourses that also proposed an unpalatable but nutritious cuisine for the urban working classes.

Rowntree and Sitwell's discussion of alcohol and efficiency more generally encompassed the masculine pleasures of alcohol and tobacco – but pleasure here is raised as problematic because it was the source of wastefulness and inefficiency. Prefiguring later and more sophisticated discussions, the working class is increasingly regarded as suffering from a kind of pleasure deficit that is compensated for by these wasteful activities. That is, Rowntree and Sitwell argue, the 'effective causes of intemperance' emerge as three conditions: 'the monotony and dullness – too often the active misery of many lives; the absence of any provision for social intercourse and healthful recreation, ... (and the efforts) of those who seek to stimulate their consumption to the utmost'. Thus did brewers and licensees emerge as 'drug pushers' who exploited the miserable and unnatural condition of the masses, and in the case of each of these 'effective causes', the analysis brings us to pleasure only through pleasure's absence and pathology. The traditional English habit of going to the pub has suddenly become a false remedy for a social deficit created by the erosion of pleasure from some presumed 'natural' level that existed in the past and that presumably exists for other classes. In this, Rowntree and Sitwell anticipated today's alcoholism researchers, who almost invariably describe what others would call 'having a beer' or 'drinking champagne' with the peculiar scientific abstraction 'ethanol intake', an abstraction which very effectively elides pleasure-seeking. Even alcoholics have a favourite brand of whisky or type of beer, not of 'ethanol'. But measuring ethanol intake, instead of observing the drinking practices of culturally specific groups of people, allows researchers to forget to discuss pleasure seeking – just as the early 20th century's family-budget researchers neglected to reflect on the particular eating preferences or habits of particular groups when doing their counting of calories and vitamins.

Closely linked with this discourse of pathology, Rowntree and Sitwell began to erase further any hint of pleasure as a motivation to drink by suggesting that:

... the drinking habits of the poor are often provoked by non-nutrition; ill-nourished bodies *crave* the momentary stimulus which alcoholic liquors give, and that people are thus insensibly drawn into intemperance. That non-nutrition is often a cause, as well as an effect of intemperance, cannot be disputed. The evidence on the point is overwhelming. (Rowntree and Sitwell, 1899, emphasis added)

So what some American and Nordic psychologists later came to call 'craving' enters the scene, linked in the temperance literature with an even more radical exclusion of pleasure. Via this invention of craving and its theorization, consumption emerges itself as an effect and an intensifier of bodily misery. More than this, of course, the discourse of 'craving' here retains the traditional valorization of the excesses of the lower orders, but now codes their consumption of drugs as beyond their power. It is the effect of biosocial determination, not of the free-willed pursuit of pleasure.

Craving and Addiction: The Science of Freedom and Pleasure

Such technocratic developments were in many respects harbingers of the alliance formed between liberal governance and the positive human sciences: the formation that came to be known as the welfare state. Concerned to improve upon the imperfect freedoms and pathological inequalities delivered by the market, welfare liberalism enlisted disciplines such as psychology, social work and psychiatry into a veritable science of freedoms (Rose, 1996). Positivist and causal criminology, as a formative element in the rise of the 'welfare sanction' (Garland, 1981), soon developed and elaborated its own discourses of misery, compulsion and pathology. While pleasure is infrequently explored in criminological theory, where it has appeared it has been rendered suspect – for example in problematics of 'short-term gratification' or the excitements of 'lower class focal concerns' that are held to compensate for boring, subordinated and unrewarding lives (Miller, 1958). Usually, pleasure is tinged with pathology, and recoded as 'hedonism', 'seduction' and 'compensation'. However, for the most part in criminology – as Katz (1988) argues – pleasure as a warrantable motive for illicit action is silenced. This is especially true with respect to criminological analyses of illicit drug consumption, where discourses of 'abuse' and 'addiction' are associated in government with compulsion, misery, death and disease, and the end of individual freedom (Sedgwick, 1993). With the notable exception of the critical work of symbolic interactionists (whose representations of the pleasure of drug taking were almost as much a rebellious act against law as they were against positivist criminology), in most

of this literature the powers of the chemical properties of the drugs and of personality defects are so valorized that pleasure is eliminated almost totally.

More recently the compulsion of 'addiction', thought to be located in certain brain processes, has been joined by what ostensibly appears to be a proxy for pleasure – as 'craving' has taken the place of other 'impelling' forces. Craving, as a category, adds to compulsion the notion of obsession as an internal motivational force. As its advocates admit, craving is an 'elusive concept' (Anton et al., 1995) – something it shares with pleasure. But if pleasure tends to be governmentally constituted as healthy, voluntary and normal, craving is regarded as approximating an obsessive-compulsive 'illness' (Modell et al., 1992). Craving moves marginally beyond the level of innate desire and begins to emerge as 'thoughts' – even though these are subordinated to compulsion. With respect to alcohol, for example, cravings are 'recurrent and persistent thoughts about alcohol, the inability of the individual to resist these thoughts, the compulsive drive to consume alcohol, and the loss of control over that drive' (Anton et al., 1995). Within this framework, it might be anticipated that positive and pleasurable forms of desire could emerge in analyses – even if only along the lines of a 'seduction'. However, when operationalized, the vision is unremittingly negative. Questions forming the 'craving' indicator typically include:

- 'How much of your time when you're not drinking is occupied by thoughts, impulses, or images related to drinking?'
- 'How much distress or disturbance do these ideas, thoughts, impulses or images related to drinking cause you when you are not drinking?'
- 'How much does your drinking interfere with your work functioning?'
- 'How much does your drinking interfere with your social functioning?'
- 'If you were prevented from drinking alcohol when you desired a drink, how anxious or upset would you become?'
- 'How strong is the drive to consume alcoholic beverages?' (From Modell et al., 1992)

By aggregating answers, 'craving scores' can be generated. At no point, however, does a positive element of actively seeking pleasure or enjoyment enter the measurement and conceptual definition of craving, even though it would appear simple enough to have as an indicator something along the lines of 'How much do you enjoy drinking alcohol?' This is not to say that these accounts are in any easy sense wrong or inaccurate. Our point rather is to indicate how it is *that pleasure does not enter into the equation*. It is not that pleasure is considered and dismissed, but seems self evidently absent – so strong is the negative imagery of compulsion and obsession. Indeed, this is despite the fact that craving researchers very occasionally refer to drinkers having a 'favourite beverage' (Tiffany et al., 2000), which – even from within the discourse of craving – is at least suggestive of some idea of pleasure in consumption.

There are, of course, those critical of the discourse of cravings. Others prefer, for example, the category of 'urges' (Monti et al., 2000) on the basis that 'the term "urge to drink" is less ambiguous than "craving"', because 'urges' cover 'a broader continuum of degrees of desire'. Here again, however, pleasure fails to surface, although it is nearer to the surface than elsewhere, for the urge to drink is defined as 'a drug-acquisitive motivational state that can be associated with either positive or negative affective states'. In turn, while one set of factors regarded as increasing the motivation to drink is still 'boredom and depression', it is admitted that 'cognitions, such as expectancies about the reinforcing effects of alcohol' may be motivators (Monti et al., 2000). This is about as close as we get to pleasure.

Perhaps this near-surfacing of the problematic category of pleasure does provoke a response. In considering the nexus between obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and alcoholism, Modell and his colleagues (Modell et al., 1992) suggest that one difference is that 'unlike the repetitive urge of an individual with OCD to injure her child, ...the urge to drink in the alcoholic is less likely to be viewed by the individual as senseless and more likely to be seen as a need that begs to be satisfied'. They continue by arguing that the OCD child batterer does not admit to such 'needs' because 'society dictates that these feelings are unacceptable'. In contrast, however, 'we are rarely taught that the desire to drink is inherently bad, and our society often promotes drinking as desirable and glamorous, despite its well-known destructive potential' (Modell et al., 1992). Such 'intrusive thoughts or impulses' create cognitive patterns that differ from OCD manifestation: in a sense then, there is a refined vision of social pathology that now regards (what approximates) 'pleasure' in drugs as symptomatic of a dysfunctional cultural milieu.

While freedom was thus generated as the subject of science during the era of the welfare state, as the continued prominence of the craving and addiction models indicates, the influence of the human sciences has not diminished across the board. Nevertheless, certain elements of their take on freedom and responsibility do jar with the emergent sensibilities of neo-liberal regimes. The rise of penal incapacitation and related sentencing regimes that abandon the reformist project of modern criminology, for example, reflects in part a concern that scientific corrections lifted responsibility from the shoulders of offenders (Garland, 2001). The War on Drugs, likewise, has valorized the category of 'drug abuse' to restore the notion of moral culpability that was at risk in discourses of addiction (Matza and Morgan, 1995). In both instances, the offenders' freedom is restored, but with the lifting of social determination comes responsibility and with that comes increased exposure to pain and punishment. Yet the erosion of welfare liberalism has also registered in other ways on the nexus between pleasure and freedom. The emphasis on freedom of choice in neo-liberal politics has generated new approaches to the government of drug and alcohol consumption that bring the felicity calculus – and thus 'pleasure' – almost to the surface of regulatory politics.

Harm Minimization: Pleasure and Freedom of Choice

The rise of harm minimization approaches to the government of drug use seems likely to create problems for our general thesis. In many ways harm minimization renders licit and illicit drug consumption normal. The vision of harms incorporates all drugs – alcohol and tobacco, pharmaceutical drugs and illicit drugs – into a single functional category, and seeks to manage them by ‘amorally’ governing the risks and harms they generate. As well, it renders drug use governable by choice – even for the ‘drug dependent’ subject (see generally O’Malley, 1999). Discourses of addiction and abuse are replaced by references to the ‘drug user’ who is regarded as a consumer in a world of consumerism, quite capable of making rational choices and of discerning between advantageous and disadvantageous commodities and behaviour.

In this predominantly public health model, the risks and harms (ranging from overdoses and infections to political corruption and economic loss) are recognized not as inhering in the drug or the user, but in the situations in which they are brought together: ‘the consequences of substance use are a result of the interaction between the substance, the individual and the environment’ (National Campaign Against Drug Abuse, 1991). ‘Addicts’ and ‘alcoholics’, recoded as ‘users’, appear as ordinary people in a high-risk situation. This process of normalization has its origins in the importance attached to avoiding the demonization of drug users, a state decried because it amplifies the risks created through socially isolating users – particularly by disrupting their access to the provision of treatment and therapy.

In harm reduction programs, this governing strategy has been frequently inflected with a neo-liberal twist, as in policies in Australia and New Zealand. Existing users and potential drug users are often provided with information in order to make ‘informed choices’ about the risks of (licit and illicit) drug ‘consumption’. They are thereby ‘empowered’, and even ‘downside’ information about government programs (such as the impact of methadone on one’s freedom of movement) is conveyed to potential consumers so they may make such informed choices on the basis of full information (O’Malley, 1999).

Thus, it appears, the convergence of consumer society and neo-liberalism transforms the compulsion of addiction into a freedom of choice. But it should not be assumed that pleasure moves from the shadows into centre stage, for advice given to users and potential users invariably focuses on risks and harms. Why consumers want to use drugs, or what warrantable motives exist for such use, often remains unstated. At other times the question of motivation is subordinated to semi-coercive discourses of ‘peer group pressure’ and ‘advertising pressure’ (a reversion almost to Rowntree and the Webbs), to be countered by the building up of ‘self esteem’ or ‘knowledge of risks’. Pleasure again is not mentioned. Thus when Australia’s National Campaign Against Drug Abuse (1991) outlined a classification of types of drug use, this covered ‘unsanctioned’, ‘hazardous’, ‘dysfunctional’, ‘harmful’ and even ‘responsible’ usage, and each is specifically analysed. There is no reference to pleasurable use: at

best there is reference to consumption in keeping with 'an individual's personal and social needs'. But what these are is not mentioned, and the category of 'needs' seems redolent of necessity and thus compulsion.

In this harm minimizing discourse it is surely surprising that any relationship between drug use and pleasure appears to be ignored. The more or less explicit model of the subject deployed in harm minimization is that of the rational choice actor who will perform the felicity calculus. Almost by definition, rational choice implies a free selection on the basis of an anticipated excess of pleasure over pain. Compulsions – whether in the form of chemical compulsions, physical compulsions, social-environmental or cognitive and neural compulsions – thus not only vitiate freedom and the play of rationality, but for that reason also are associated with misery and pain rather than pleasure. *Liberal pleasure appears as intrinsically volitional, for one who has no control over desire could not perform the calculus that makes her free and rational.* Conversely, therefore, while we might understand the traditional elision or pathologizing of pleasure as a warrantable motive for unwarrantable activities, with harm minimization the silence on pleasure is puzzling.

One response to all this may well be simply that if a corollary of harm minimization's assumption of the rational user is the felicity principle, then even to mention pleasure might be to encourage use rather than 'neutrally' to inform choices. In this much perhaps, as Fox (1999) has suggested, pleasure is encoded as 'risk' in many contemporary public health discourses. This might also help explain why, in the closely linked governance of sexually transmitted diseases, 'safe sex' discourses likewise fail to raise the basic point that sex is – or at least can be – pleasurable, and that this appears to many as a warrantable motivational factor whether we are referring to safe or unsafe sex. Discouragement of any engagement in risky practices reduces risk.

Of course, it could be argued that this is inconsistent or irrational policy. For example, pleasure could be regarded as a constant both in 'responsible' drug use and 'hazardous' or 'irresponsible' drug use. And in any case harm minimization does not advocate complete abstinence from drug use, nor does it seek to promote this (National Campaign Against Drug Abuse, 1991). But such arguments assume that all governance is transparent and unambiguous, both to those who govern and to those who analyse governance. It is worth returning to the observation that rational choice models often engineer situations so that conformity to the preferred pattern appears 'rational' in terms of the felicity principal. For classical criminologists, this implied engineering situations to maximize certainty of capture and shaping justice so that the penalty would marginally exceed any anticipated benefit (pleasure) produced by offending. This would ensure that the rewards of offending were outweighed by the effort of offending and the risk of capture and punishment, thus shaping choices in the preferred direction. With harm minimization, the puzzling non-appearance of pleasure may indeed be intelligible in this way as part of engineering choice, for to mention the pleasures of consumption would be to load the scales of felicity in favour of an unwanted outcome.

While this seems a Machiavellian interpretation, elsewhere in the practices of the strategy there is clear enough evidence that both choice making and information provision are structured by relevant agencies in order to produce the 'right' outcome through 'free choice'. Thus in the Australian harm minimization context, evaluation techniques were applied to the operation of various schemes for presenting information to high school students, and the scheme that generated the greatest reduction in drug consumption was retained. Likewise, 'empowering' National Campaign Against Drug Abuse information to schoolchildren routinely included advice on how to make choices (understood as a 'skill') that focuses on how to resist peer pressure, how to recognize and deal with 'high risk' situations, and so on (O'Malley, 1999). This is the practice underlying the view that it is 'critical that students acquire knowledge and skills that will assist them in making informed decisions about their drug use and so minimize any harmful effects associated with that use' (Directorate of School Education Victoria, 1995). Harm *minimization* is, after all, the unambiguous aim of these programmes. Choice may be a technique for achieving this, but for this very reason choice – like all other elements of the programmes – must be aligned with the goal of reducing harms.

Overall then, as the 20th century wore on, spaces were opened up for differing conceptions of freedom and necessity. Lifestyle and choice have become new ways of exercising freedom in the world of the 'sovereign consumer'. As Rose has expressed it, these

... new technologies of citizenship formation were to gain their power through the subjective commitments to values and ways of life that were generated by the technique of choice and consumption. Consumption requires each individual to choose from among a variety of products in response to a repertoire of wants that may be shaped and legitimated by advertising and promotion but must be experienced and justified as personal desires. (Rose, 1990)

For some commentators, no doubt exaggerating the extent of change, it is a freedom in which 'impulse and pleasure alone are real and life-affirming' (Ferguson, 1990). Yet while it is difficult to deny some surface truth in this, neither rationality nor discipline have been abandoned. Rather the 'pleasurable' ethos of this freedom is well summarized in Featherstone's (1991) phrase, 'calculating hedonism'. Calculating hedonism implies actors still have a commitment to success and achievement in market terms but are encouraged to regard the enjoyment of the rewards of success as an integral part of their effort. It is a form of discipline in which 'fulfilment' and 'demand' have displaced 'necessity' and 'efficiency' as key words in relation to consumption. Seemingly it is also a form in which pleasure has been made much more salient and universal in its availability as a governing category. To ask an earlier question anew, this time in terms of 'freedom', why even in some of their more permissive policies do liberal governments not valorize pleasure in harm minimization?

Another, and related answer, is that this is also the era of the 'new prudentialism' in which individuals exercise freedom though taking responsibility for

their own security against all manner of risks (O'Malley, 1992). With respect to harmful risks, freedom of choice has a rather sharp edge, in which individuals are rendered more personally responsible for the governance of harm. Security is increasingly provided in market terms, in which the rewards of enterprise and productivity may include increased security, but in which individuals have to determine and cater for their own level of risk aversion (in this, especially, current liberal formations differ from classical and welfare liberalisms). In this new era of freedom, pleasure plays a much more unstable or variable role in the free governance of the self. A 'right' to pleasure as an incentive or reward is far more extensive in this culture of consumption, even where it may involve all manner of drugs. But this is distinct from the duty to govern avoidable risks – including those arising from the irresponsible use of drugs. It is perhaps this tension in the current era of liberalism, between a presumptive right to pleasure and a duty to govern risks, that is reflected most clearly in the policies of harm minimization.

Conclusion – Freedom, Drugs and Pleasure

In sum, pleasure can be regarded as not only constituent of liberalism and its freedom – exemplified in the figure of the felicity calculus – but also as a variable technique for governing free individuals. Discourses of pleasure would appear to be used governmentally in a selective and directional fashion. There is more here than the Enlightenment fear of the body and desire. In liberal governance, especially after the 18th century, it appears rather that 'pleasure' is deployed as a tactic or strategy. At the most general level we may say that pleasure is deployed, in the sense used here, only 'within reason'. Thus the addict is not driven by reason but by chemical dependency; the alcoholic by cravings; the lager lout by a kind of new-age beastliness; the working-class drinker by a pathological pleasure deficit.

While the emergence and ascendancy of each of these discourses that silence pleasure can be located in particular periods of liberal history, it is clear that once invented they rarely disappear altogether. Rather they remain as pervasive imageries, still available to be deployed in the government of drug consumption. Liberal government has thus accumulated a battery of pleasure-denying characterizations, each with its own discursive effectiveness, each linked with an appropriate set of governing techniques. Beastliness requires and justifies force and compulsion; dependency and addiction valorize and mobilize medical interventions; compulsive behaviours trigger and validate therapeutics; free choice consumers require and are provided with information and skilling. Thus does liberalism arm itself with a multiplicity of responses, becoming potentially ever more flexible and adaptable in its capacity to govern without pleasure.

But the moderate middle-class wine lovers, the cocktail set and the quiet toper in the rural pub can all warrantably be aligned with pleasure, in the quiet

enjoyment of their property. Pleasure is mobilized by liberal government as a discursive tactic: pleasure is Good and, warrantably, can only be assigned to the Good.

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