

ASCAP NEWSLETTER

Across-Species Comparisons And Psychiatry Newsletter
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Hedonic Anathetic (but sometimes Catathetic) Psalicyology

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For the goals guiding this newsletter and for keys to the above boxed neologisms, see footnotel , page 5. Newsletter aims;

1. A free exchange of letters, notes, articles, essays or ideas in whatever brief format.
2. Elaboration of others' ideas.
3. Keeping up with productions, events, and other news.
4. Proposals for new initiatives, joint research endeavors, etc.

Editorial: Paul Gilbert illustrates beautifully in this issue's essay what he means by "hedonic science" and at the same time he is provocative about the neologisms ASCAP uses. He will stimulate readers and deserves response.

Letters to the Editor:
January 22, 1988

... about the newsletter ..I think it is excellent. We now seem to be going through a phase in which we are trying to establish a network of those who are interested in these issues, you no doubt received .. the circular from Randolph Nesse .. compiling a list of names and addresses .. through our presentations and publications we always try to network [with] those with whom (we) can share ideas, and one way of maintaining this network is through a newsletter.

One idea .. worth exploring is political. I think now of the attack on Wilson that appeared in the letter by a group to the NY Review of Books. An evolutionary approach does not just boil down to .. survival of the fittest. Darwin himself focussed on cooperation as a survival factor. Similarly, focus on the "selfish gene," (Dawkins) overlooks that help

given to relatives may be loving. I [argue] even further that the concept of social justice can be derived from ethological principles ... as when one applies some of these notions to Family Therapy (2).

[Later].. 2nd ASCAP newsletter [just] arrived. I thought this issue was great and I particularly enjoyed John Price's literary contribution. ...I am planning a trip to China around the end of May under the auspices of the "American Marital and Family Therapy Association. We may have the opportunity to make formal presentations and, if I have the chance, I would like to present [an evolutionary] model of family systems. How [will] the Chinese react to a model based on agonism and hierarchy formation, [perhaps] more meaningful to them than a model derived from psychoanalytic theory - or cybernetics[?]

March 1, 1988

.. just received the February ASCAP Newsletter and found it most stimulating. • just what one needs in order, by repetition, to familiarize people with concepts like PSALIC and develop an active collaborative group. ..[Might] failure of resolution of the conflict between dominant and submissive tendencies in the same individual .. contribute to [his/her] psychopathology[?] I wonder whether mixed anathetic and catathetic messages would create confusion and possibly emotional disturbance for a recipient who does not know where he/she stands.

Leon Sloman, Clarke Institute of Psychiatry, Toronto, Canada

January 12, 1988

... most important, looking at your equations derived from J. Price, I suddenly realised that I'd seen something like this before.

Now let me make a leap, which I know you will take as scientists at play -- I have not worked this out fully.

These equations are very similar to various investment equations and market economy models. ... I think if we can get hold of a good economist who is up in investment economics, then we might be able to jump ... ahead. These ... have been working out sophisticated mathematical modelling for these kinds of behaviour. In these models .. are variables like expectations of return (success), risk preference (an important variable in your model I think) and so on to mention but two. ... we [may] not need to battle to work out complex mathematical models; I think they already exist but need to be adapted. There are even computer programmes for predicting investment behaviours. If we say dominance seeking is a kind of investment behaviour then we have got a real lead - what do you think?

Paul Gilbert, Pastures Hospital, Derby, England

The following quote from from John Maynard Smith(3) notes reciprocal idea-exchange on game theory in economics and biology:

...Paradoxically, it has turned out that game theory is more readily applied to biology than to the field of economic behaviour for which it was originally designed ... the theory requires that the values of different outcomes (for instance, financial rewards, the risks of death, and the pleasures of a clear conscience) be measured on a single scale. In human applications, this measure is provided by 'utility' -- a somewhat artificial and uncomfortable concept: in biology, Darwinian fitness provides a natural and genuinely one-

dimensional scale. ...the concept of human rationality is replaced by that of evolutionary stability.

Is it true, as JMS states, that having a single dimension only is important? If so, then perhaps John Price's resource holding potential (RHP or R) might be a more definite variable than "utility" for humans and useful on a time scale shorter than "Darwinian fitness." Further, for the purposes of this newsletter's aims, being generalizable beyond humans would be also useful. Of course, R could apply easily either to economics or to biology more generally (economics are an emergent property of human biology). R may not be easily quantified, but should we try? I feel R is a concept not usefully restricted to ritual agonistic behavior only. The unitary dimension JMS notes is needed may ultimately be R's greatest value. RG

Hold on Guvs and Lasses: Don't throw out psychology without visiting our market stalls. Paul Gilbert

Let me first offer my congratulations to Russell not only for his ingenious ideas on PSALICS but also for making available a very important arena for the communication across disciplines. Humans still tend to be highly territorial as we well know and crossing disciplines is not always easy or positively reinforced. My idea of a hedonic science is that we should encourage and reassure each other by mutual respect and valuing, rather than competing with each other as to who has the better view, or is the most scientific. Science is as much about generating alternatives as it is hypothesis testing and sadly we often try to engage the latter before working on the former. The generation of alternatives arises from the complex discourses of questioning, answering and desiring to know, not only how it looks from our side, but

recipient. Most clinicians will have experienced that even the most friendly signals we try to give to some patients invoke hostility which activate in us our own dominance behaviour. Horowitz and Vitkus (198G) are very interesting on this aspect.

Having made the suggestion that John's catathetic and anathetic signals confound two independent dimensions, let me focus on, what for me is his outstanding contribution. He has eloquently argued that the yielding subroutine is quite possibly a model for depression. Furthermore, that this is operative from within the yielder. For example within the yielder, there is a response which literally informs the yielder to "give up and behave like a loser." Now, there is increasing evidence that the brain consists of a number of special purpose processing systems to do particular jobs (Ornstein, 1986) (5). Elsewhere (6) I've argued that these can be regarded as special purpose mentalities. Okay, let's play with this speculative idea for a moment. Suppose (say) that the yielding mentality becomes the lens through which a significant proportion of incoming stimuli are evaluated. In such a situation the individual is caught in a "state" where other more appropriate mentalities appear to have little influence. Now the exciting possibility is that in psychiatric difficulties the yielding subroutine (to take this example further) may (in humans) be experienced as an "inner voice" giving instructions. In a fascinating paper, Firestone (7) has tried to comprehend the inner voice in suicides. In one case a patient experienced this voice as

I tell myself things like: "Just be quiet. Don't say anything. Don't bother people with what you have to say. Just stop talking. Shut up. Just don't say anything, okay? Just don't bother me, okay? I don't want to hear anything from you." (p443)

So maybe our "inner voices" reflect the activity or activation of mentalities whose origins lie deep in the past; we can experience the instructions arising from these mentalities as "inner voices". This line of thinking leads us into the role of language in the construction of conscious thought, a fascinating journey we must bypass here.

Summary

To sum up then let us ask two questions: First to what extent can concepts of catathetic and anathetic signals be shown to advance our understanding of agonistic behaviour? Catathetic signals would it seems to me relate to hostile dominance. It is not so much the term that is the problem here but rather that these behaviours and interactions are covered by the term hostile dominance. The advance in our thinking is in linking these behaviours with the sociobiological concept of resource holding potential. This grounds it in biology. It is not that psychologists have neglected agonistic behaviour but rather have developed ideas and models from a different direction.

Second as we begin to articulate the basic psalics of primates and humans, what does (will) this tell us about the structures of human mentality? How far does a psalic have the potential for the construction of personal meaning? The implications of this approach to the science of (human) behaviour are potentially profound. Those who are familiar with the work of Maturana (8) will be aware that he has stressed over and over the fact that cognition is a biological question! Each species knows how to exist in its domain of existence.

In one domain of existence the time has come to share what we know, to pool our knowledge, and to reassure each other so that the many, rather than the few, can become contributors in the pursuit of understanding.

The next (April) issue features a discussion of data on renal function for individuals in situations that have agonistic versus hedonic tone.

I'm sure no-one is forgetting the annual Ann Arbor meeting on Evolution and Human Behavior in early April but let's underline it here as it is a major event for those with the interests of this newsletter (See February ASCAP Vol.1 #3 page 1 for details.)

1. Philosophy and goal: High scientific importance rests on comparing animal behaviors across-species to understand better human behavior, knowing as we do so that evolutionary factors last be considered for understanding properly such behaviors. To accomplish these comparisons, very different new ways of viewing psychological and behavioral phenomena are required. This in turn explains why we need new words to define and illustrate new dimensions of comparisons across species. We expect that work is natural history biology in combination with cellular-molecular biologic research will emerge as a comprehensive biologic basic science of psychiatry. Indeed, this must happen if we are to explain psychiatric illnesses as deviations from normal processes, something not possible now. Compare to pathogenesis in diseases of internal medicine.

Neologisms, as in the boxed beading, that hopefully help implement these goals are those of:

- 1) Michael B. A. Chance: "hedonic" (and "agonistic") refer to relaxed and fun-loving versus competitive monkey groups and to human groupings as well (first initiated with CJ Jolly in 1970, this term is referenced fully in Issue No. 1, Footnote 1.)
- 2) John S. Price: "anathetic" (versus "catathetic") are new terms to describe a classification of communications between conspecifics (members of a same species). Catathetic messages are "put-downs" whereas anathetic signals "build-up" the target individual.
- 3) Russell Gardner, Jr.: "Psalic" is a 2 way acronym: Propensity States Antedating Language in Communication and Programmed Spacings And Linkages In Conspecifics. These describe communicational states conjecturally seen in psychiatric disorders and in normals (humans and non-human animals), such as alpha psalic seen in manics, high profile leaders and dominant non-human animals. Eight psalics have been described.

All of the above new or renewed terms are initiated or elaborated in Chance, MSA (Ed) Social fabrics of the Mind, due out in early 1988, published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hove and New York.

2. Sloman L, Gardner R and Price J: Biology of family Systems and Mood Disorders. Unpublished manuscript
3. Maynard Smith J: Evolution and the Theory of Games. Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1982, p.vii
4. Leary T (1957) Interpersonal diagnosis of personality, New York: Ronald Press
5. Ornstein B (1986) Multimind: A New Way of Looking at Human Behavior. Macmillan
6. Gilbert P (In press): Human Nature and Suffering. London: Lawrence Erlbaum
7. Firestone RW (1986) The "inner" voice and suicide. Psychotherapy 23: 439-44
8. Maturana HR (1983) The Biological foundations of Self Consciousness and the Physical Domain of Existence. Unpublished manuscript.