

to understand my emotions and
 es me what I am and what they
 a computer that allows me to
 ication, the limitation of which,
 nstallations that are sensitive to
 onal integrity. Technology that

M.M. Bakhtin, edited by M. Holquist.

y C. Emerson. Minneapolis: University

Crossings, and Ethics. Princeton:

w Media. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT

r. Beverley Hills: Silman-James Press.
 ilifornia: University of California

Experiences. Boston Mass.: Harvard

nt of technology. In J. Coote and A.
 endon Press, pp. 40-63.

Flamingo.

ight (eds), The Zizek Reader. Oxford:

MARK BLYTHE AND MARC HASSENZAHL

CHAPTER 8

THE SEMANTICS OF FUN: DIFFERENTIATING ENJOYABLE EXPERIENCES

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last 20 years repeated attempts have been made in HCI to put enjoyment into focus. However, it is only recently that the importance of enjoyment, even in serious applications, has been widely recognised by the HCI community.

Typical of a relatively new area of investigation is the lack of an agreed set of terms: enjoyment, pleasure, fun and attraction are often used interchangeably. But do they really refer to the same experiences? Of course, in common speech pleasure, enjoyment and fun are almost synonymous and this is not an attempt to fix the language. None of these terms are reducible to single definitions but for the purposes of this chapter we will propose a difference between pleasure and fun in an attempt to delineate distinct forms of enjoyment.

The chapter begins with a consideration of the psychological account of peak experiences and how this might relate to less intense activities. After exploring the semantic and cultural connotations of the word fun the chapter goes on to consider the historical and political construction of leisure in the West. The final sections outlines distinctions between "fun" and "pleasure". It is argued that pleasure is closely related to degrees of absorption while fun can be usefully thought of in terms of distraction. The distinction has important implications for design. It is argued that repetitive and routine work can be made fun through design while non-routine and creative work must absorb rather than distract if they are to be enjoyable.

2. PLEASURE FROM A PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE: FLOW

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) study of "flow" is one of the few psychological accounts of pleasure. After studying diverse groups, such as rock climbers, chess players and dancers, who were engaged in self motivating activities, Csikszentmihalyi discovered a common characteristic of their experiences. "Flow" was a term used by the participants themselves to describe a peak experience of total absorption in an activity. Csikszentmihalyi identified the conditions for flow as: a close match between skill and challenge, clear goals and constant feedback on performance. It was characterized by a decrease in self-consciousness and time

distortion in that an hour might seem like a minute (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). Flow experiences may be experienced in non-leisure and serious contexts.

The term "micro-flow" was coined in order to catalogue small periods of activities which are not necessary, yet are engaged in routinely, for example, chatting, doodling and stretching. These activities are intrinsically satisfying, although they do not induce the deep and intense experience of flow. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) suggested that these apparently unnecessary activities are in fact vital to our well-being. Doodling, for example, may aid concentration in a dull meeting. However "micro-flow" is a less well defined concept than flow and does not adequately account for less intense experiences.

Flow addresses a "deep" kind of enjoyment which may be only rarely achieved (and actually called for). To experience flow, we have to go beyond our own limits. This, however desirable from a humanistic view, is not the type of enjoyment most people choose. Most of the time, more superficial, shallow, short-term and volatile "pleasures" are in the fore. Or as Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) put it:

"Why do we choose to watch television over reading a challenging book, even when we know that our usual hedonic state during television is mild dysphoria while the book will produce flow?" (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000)

The answer to this question may be, in part, political. The next section considers the history of the word fun and offers an account of the leisure industry and mass media in relation to their development in the West.

3. THE POLITICS OF FUN

An examination of the changing uses of the word "fun" as illustrated in the Oxford English Dictionary demonstrates that fun, meaning - diversion, amusement, jocularity - appears relatively late in the language. (The following citations are all taken from the OED <http://dictionary.oed.com/>). In the earliest records, its meaning is - to fool, to cheat or hoax: "She had fun'd him of his Coin" (1685). Although this usage continued it was superseded in the eighteenth century "Tho he talked much of virtue, his head always run upon something or other he found better fun" (1727). In the mid eighteenth century Samuel Johnson described it as a "low cant word", its disreputable aspect continued into the nineteenth century "His wit and humour delightful, when it does not degenerate into 'fun'" (1845). The use of the word in the phrase "to make fun of -" also appears in the eighteenth century: "I can't help making fun of myself" (1737). Similarly, fun as in exciting goings on appears relatively late: "The engineers officers who are engaged in carrying out some of the Sirdar's plans get much more than their fair share of 'the fun'" (1897).

It was, then, at the turn of the eighteenth century that the language required and developed the word fun in something like its current form. It is not fanciful to relate this semantic development to the industrial revolution. When British society was industrialised and class relations came to be organised around production and labour rather than feudal ties, a "low cant word" appeared which signified the absence of seriousness, work, labour. When production is mechanised, when labour processes

are rationalised, when appears as its correlat was there at the mon dimension. It still retain the workplace, the fun both as a resistance to means of reproducing t

The rigid division b are relatively recent pl fifties, Adorno and Ho in which leisure and w cultural industries exac of life: "Amusement u Although amusement i determines the produ experiences are "inev Adorno and Horkheime as a hegemonic device

These members of that leisure was structu days of alienated labo argued that the entertai spectacle" which encha spectators of our own li consume, something tha we are seeking to esca work of the cartoonist F

Bill Griffith's chara hopefully "Are we hav

kszentmihalyi, 1975). Flow is contexts.

atalogue small periods of in routinely, for example, re intrinsically satisfying, ise experience of flow. unnecessary activities are nay aid concentration in a ed concept than flow and

be only rarely achieved go beyond our own limits. e type of enjoyment most w, short-term and volatile ihalyi (2000) put it:

ing book, even when we phoria while the book

next section considers the industry and mass media

illustrated in the Oxford diversion, amusement, following citations are all est records, its meaning " (1685). Although this "Tho he talked much of d better fun" (1727). In a "low cant word", its "His wit and humour use of the word in the century: "I can't help ng goings on appears rrying out some of the (1897).

language required and s not fanciful to relate n British society was production and labour nified the absence of hen labour processes

are rationalised, when time is ossified to demarcate work and leisure, the word fun appears as its correlative. As EP Thompson (1963) pointed out, the working class was there at the moment of its own making. The word fun then has a political dimension. It still retains its "low" associations. Fun remains a form of resistance in the workplace, the fun of "the laff", the piss-take (Willis, 2000). Fun can be seen both as a resistance to the rigid demarcation between work and leisure and also as a means of reproducing that dichotomy.

The rigid division between work and leisure and the rise of the cultural industries are relatively recent phenomena. Writing on the cultural industries of the nineteen fifties, Adorno and Horkheimer (1986) pointed to the similarities between the ways in which leisure and work time were structured and monitored. For these authors, the cultural industries exacerbated the artificial division between enjoyment and the rest of life: "Amusement under late capitalism is the prolongation of work." (Ibid: 137). Although amusement is sought as an escape from mechanized work, mechanization determines the production of "amusement goods" with the result that leisure experiences are "inevitably after-images of the work process itself" (Ibid). For Adorno and Horkheimer, the cultural industries then encouraged passivity, operating as a hegemonic device and a means of mass deception.

These members of the Frankfurt school and other Marxist writers pointed out that leisure was structured to meet the demands of capitalist production and working days of alienated labour (Rojec, 1985). The Situationists of the nineteen sixties argued that the entertainment industry and mass media had formed a "society of the spectacle" which enchants, distracts and numbs us, transforming us into the passive spectators of our own lives (Debord, 1995). Fun is something we buy, something we consume, something that ultimately reproduces the situations of alienated labour that we are seeking to escape. This somewhat bleak view of fun can be related to the work of the cartoonist Bill Griffiths (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Zippy The Pinhead

Bill Griffith's character Zippy wanders through consumer landscapes asking hopefully "Are we having fun yet?" There is something tragic about the look of

these cartoons and about the question itself. The question suggests at once a promise and a betrayal. Like Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi's dysphoric TV viewers Zippy is probably not having fun even when he is told that he is.

Marxist analyses of the cultural industries and leisure are, of course, deeply unfashionable and have been criticized for their pessimism and elitism. Empirical studies on the actual uses of cultural products have shown that consumption is not passive: private and individual meanings are invested in leisure activities despite hegemonic intent (Willis, 1990). We do not watch TV solely because we have become the numbed spectators of our own lives, passively and joylessly consuming spectacles as "cultural dupes". Dysphoria is not the only result of watching TV. The experience may not be the intense peak that Csikszentmihalyi's chess players would call flow or Adorno might approve of but it is nevertheless in some sense rewarding. We believe that Csikszentmihalyi's humanistic and Adorno's pessimistic views can neglect the psychological reality of individuals - their need to be *absorbed* sometimes and to be *distracted* at others.

4. CONTEXT DEPENDENCY

It is important to consider enjoyment as a context dependent and relational phenomena. Enjoyment is never guaranteed. Think of activities associated with enjoyment: sex, dancing, riding, swimming, taking drugs, playing a game, talking, joking, flirting, writing, listening to music, looking at a painting, reading, watching a play, movie, or other entertainment. Each of these activities is enjoyable or not depending on the situation that the activity is embedded in. Each situation is a unique constellation of a person's current goals, previous knowledge and experiences, the behaviour domain, and applicable social norms. A ride on a roller coaster can be enjoyable, but maybe not after an enormous dinner. Activities or objects normally appreciated by a person do not necessarily or deterministically lead to enjoyment. What may be enjoyable in one context (watching a soap opera with friends) might be utterly dull in another (watching a soap opera alone). A game we enjoyed playing yesterday might completely bore us today. Activities associated with enjoyment offer potentials for enjoyment rather than enjoyment itself (see Hassenzahl elsewhere in this book).

Enjoyment is, in the widest sense, context specific. Indeed the American philosopher John Dewey argued that all emotions are grounded in particular contexts of experience:

"There is no such thing as the emotion of fear, hate, love ... The unique character of experienced events and situations impregnates the emotion that is evoked" (Dewey, cited in Jackson, 1998, p. 11).

In this sense enjoyment doesn't exist in and of itself. It's a relationship between ongoing activities and states of mind.

Is it then impossible to define or categorise different forms of enjoyment? Can there be a body of knowledge about enjoyment, a "pleasure-based human factors," (Jordan, 2000), a "funology" (Monk et al., 2002)? In Matt Groening's *Futurama*

cartoon show there are theme parks which are hilarious. How could fun be enjoyed which on the face of it, seems pre-emptive of enjoyment as there are people in the audience who assume the character of a man who is not enjoying it. It may or may not be the case that the author is in no more a position to judge the author. But the existence of theme parks suggests that there is a degree of commonality in the experience specific though they may be.

5. THE EXPERIENCE

There are connotational and experiential differences which have quite specific and differential implications for the problematic. It is, like enjoyment, a specific use of the term to discuss pleasure as a specific type of experience. This distinct use of the term is as sense stimulation through action. Pleasure as "the perfect actualisation of their proper objects" operating on their proper objects" is self-actualisation is echoed in the importance of appropriate levels of stimulation. In the remaining sections then pleasure is discussed in terms of intensity and its relation to action. Pleasure can be thought of as experience of absorption (see Table 1 for an analysis) which suggests a polar dichotomy and it

Table 1. *Experiential and*

Fun / Distract
Triumph
Repression
Speculation
Transgression

During the fleeting and amorous moment of self-definition, our consciousness is distracted from the conscious world. It is meant to imply that fun is unimpaired by short-livedness and is a psychological need.

In contrast, pleasure is a deep experience. Pleasure and fun is its focus.

cartoon show there are theme parks on the moon designed by "fungineers". The idea is hilarious. How could fun be engineered? Taking enjoyment seriously is a paradox, which on the face of it, seems pretentious or simply silly. There are as many kinds of enjoyment as there are people in the world. In the novel *My Idea of Fun Will Self* assumes the character of a man who finds murdering tramps enjoyable (Self, 1994). It may or may not be the case that psychopaths experience violence as enjoyment and we are in no more a position of authority in this matter than the grandiloquent author. But the existence of theme parks, and indeed all popular culture, suggests that there is a degree of common ground in our ideas of enjoyment, culturally specific though they may be.

5. THE EXPERIENCE OF FUN AND PLEASURE

There are connotational and experiential differences between fun and pleasure. Fun has quite specific and differential everyday meanings. Pleasure as a term is more problematic. It is, like enjoyment, a superordinate term. In the following sections we discuss pleasure as a specific type of enjoyment rather than as a superordinate category. This distinct use of the word can be related to Aristotle's view of pleasure as sense stimulation through action. Commentators have argued that Aristotle saw pleasure as "the perfect actualisation of a sentient being's natural capacities, operating on their proper objects" (Honderich, 1995: 688). This notion of pleasure as self-actualisation is echoed in Csikszentmihalyi's work and his emphasis on the importance of appropriate levels of challenge as a condition for flow. In the remaining sections then pleasure is thought of as distinct from fun in terms of intensity and its relation to action. More specifically we argue, that fun and pleasure can be thought of as experiences that generally differ in terms of distraction and absorption (see Table 1 for an overview of specific differences). This is not to suggest a polar dichotomy and it must be stressed that these experiences are fluid.

Table 1. *Experiential and cultural connotations of fun and pleasure*

Fun / Distraction	Pleasure / Absorption
Triviality	- Relevance
Repetition	- Progression
Spectacle	- Aesthetics
Transgression	- Commitment

During the fleeting and amorphous experience of fun, we are distracted from the self. Our self-definition, our concerns, our problems are no longer the focus. We distract ourselves from the constant clamour of the internal dialogue. This is not meant to imply that fun is unimportant or by any means "bad". Its ability to distract with short-lividdness and superficiality satisfies an important underlying psychological need.

In contrast, pleasure is a deeper form of enjoyment. The main difference between pleasure and fun is its focus on an activity and a deep feeling of absorption.

Pleasure, in this sense, is not short-lived. It may not even be spontaneous. It happens when people are devoted to an object or activity. It happens when people try to make sense of themselves – explore and nourish their identities. The objects or activities an individual is absorbed by make a connection to his or her self. They become important, relevant.

It has been argued that the dichotomy between work and pleasure originates in the protestant work ethic (Willis, 2000). Clearly it is a false dichotomy: work can be a pleasure, it can be absorbing. But is it fun? The workplace can be the site of fun but it is generally in the context of a break from work. Fun cannot be serious and if it is then it ceases, in this sense, to be fun.

It is likely then that repetitive and routine work based tasks and technologies might be made fun through design but non-routine and creative work must absorb rather than distract if they are to be enjoyable. The infamous winking paperclip in word is clearly intended to be fun but most people find it annoying. It distracts rather than aiding concentration or absorption. A cute graphics approach may be appropriate to making repetitive or mundane tasks more enjoyable and Hohl et al describe a good example of this in their chapter for this book. But such an approach can be hazardous if the experience that is being designed for should be pleasurable rather than fun.

In the following sections we discuss differences between fun and pleasure in more detail.

5.1 Triviality and Relevance

The word fun in English carries cultural connotations of frivolity and triviality. Fun is an antonym of serious. In this sense science and art are not fun. Where there is an association with these endeavours and fun, it is with education. Occasionally pedagogues attempt to “make” science and art fun. The implication of this is, of course, that they are not already intrinsically fun themselves. Thus early educational software incorporated games to make the learning less serious, less unpleasant. But there is something uncomfortable about the yoking together of fun and serious applications. The fun elements in educational software can appear as bribes when they are not totally integrated (Laurel, 1993, p. 74). They are confidence tricks; they are the spoonful of sugar that helps the bad medicine go down.

It may be that where learning and high art are enjoyable it is when they are totally absorbing in and for themselves. Opera, ballet, classical music, poetry, do not carry cultural connotations of fun but of pleasure. “High” art is not a distraction, indeed if our powers of concentration are not up to it they may actively bore us and cause anxiety. Art demands absorption and we are not necessarily prepared to commit that much of our attention to it. Fun may be banal and in some respects morally suspect. It can be malicious – I was just having a bit of fun. Game shows, quiz shows, reality shows are increasingly absurd and surreal and those that decry a “dumbed down” mass media are accused of elitism. In this sense, fun can function as a moral imperative – western hedonistic culture frequently tells itself to - lighten up, live a little, get a life, have some fun.

Jordan distinguishes between discontentment to contentment, appreciation pleasures, where so level of contentment, drinking wi

“The important thing to note, elimination of, or absence of, pa (Ibid: 15).

Fun is not necessarily the absence of seriousness. An activity does not make a strong connection relevant and meaningful. Distracted is fun, it dazzles the senses, but you might realise that you have a very hidden aspect of your personality in order to overcome strong personality. This is also an example of the relevant that are absorbing, are personally definition. They are long-lived, activities.

But how does relevance come mentioned: opportunities for personally can be self-revealing. For example because of the insights one gains. Questions like 'How do I feel about How does it feel to give up my change ways of thinking about on watching a second rate Sci-Fi movie self is at the fore. It is important activity or object *per se*. What see others. A second source for relevant personally relevant meanings attached source of pleasure. Imagine a couple them of their first rendezvous. But the song, pleasant memories are t This again, differs very much from while doing the daily household the latter is a welcome distraction relevance is anticipation. Here fact happen are a source for pleasure commitment to and focus on the a

5.2 Repetition and Progression

Popular culture is based on repetition music the repetition is focussed

be spontaneous. It happens
ens when people try to make
ies. The objects or activities
s or her self. They become

work and pleasure originates in
false dichotomy: work can be
place can be the site of fun
un cannot be serious and if it

based tasks and technologies
l creative work must absorb
amous winking paperclip in
t annoying. It distracts rather
graphics approach may be
re enjoyable and Hohl et al
book. But such an approach
ed for should be pleasurable

between fun and pleasure in

f frivolity and triviality. Fun
re not fun. Where there is an
ith education. Occasionally
he implication of this is, of
lves. Thus early educational
serious, less unpleasant. But
together of fun and serious
can appear as bribes when
y are confidence tricks; they
down.

joyable it is when they are
assical music, poetry, do not
gh" art is not a distraction,
ey may actively bore us and
not necessarily prepared to
banal and in some respects
g a bit of fun. Game shows,
urreal and those that decry a
this sense, fun can function
iently tells itself to - lighten

Jordan distinguishes between needs pleasures, which move a person from
discontentment to contentment, drinking a glass of water for example, and
appreciation pleasures, where something is pleasurable no matter what the current
level of contentment, drinking wine, for instance (Jordan, 2000: 14)

"The important thing to note, then, is that pleasure can be thought of both as the
elimination of, or absence of, pain and also as the provision of positive, joyful feelings"
(Ibid: 15).

Fun is not necessarily the absence of pain or even the provision of a joy it is the
absence of seriousness. An activity or object that is fun is trivial in the sense that it
does not make a strong connection to the self. It is not necessarily personally
relevant and meaningful. Distraction from the self requires this. A roller-coaster ride
is fun, it dazzles the senses, but it is not revealing. After a roller-coaster ride you
might realise that you have a weak stomach, but you are unlikely to uncover a
hidden aspect of your personality. (However, if you take the roller-coaster ride in
order to overcome strong personal fears then you will rather experience pleasure.
This is also an example of the relational nature of experience.) Activities or objects
that are absorbing, are personally meaningful. They become a part of one's self-
definition. They are long-lived, i.e., people tend to stick to these objects and
activities.

But how does relevance come about? One source of relevance has already been
mentioned: opportunities for personal growth. Activities (and sometimes objects)
can be self-revealing. For example, playing a part in a play may be a pleasure,
because of the insights one gains while trying to relate to the figure in the play.
Questions like 'How do I feel about the figure? Would I act the same or differently?
How does it feel to give up my own personality for a while?' have the power to
change ways of thinking about oneself. This is very different to the fun we get out of
watching a second rate Sci-Fi movie such as *Barbarella*. Here distraction from the
self is at the fore. It is important to note, that relevance does not depend on the
activity or object *per se*. What seems to be a silly movie to us can be very relevant to
others. A second source for relevance is memory. Every object or activity can have
personally relevant meanings attached to it that go beyond the obvious. This can be a
source of pleasure. Imagine a couple listening to *their* song – the song that reminds
them of their first rendezvous. Besides the actual enjoyment of merely listening to
the song, pleasant memories are triggered. These memories will add to the pleasure.
This again, differs very much from listening to a radio playing in the background
while doing the daily household chores. The former requires focus and absorption;
the latter is a welcome distraction from an otherwise boring task. A third source of
relevance is anticipation. Here fantasies about activities or objects that are about to
happen are a source for pleasure. Both memory and anticipation require a high
commitment to and focus on the activities and objects involved.

5.2 Repetition and Progression

Popular culture is based on repetition. Although there is repetition in "classical"
music the repetition is focussed towards progression: the gradual change and

development of themes and movements; pop music as a form, is based on repetition that does not necessarily progress: the alternation between verse and chorus and the relentless emphasis of a regular beat (Adorno 1991). The mainstays of popular entertainment are largely formulaic. Soap operas, sitcoms and game shows are all based on the repetition of particular themes. When sitcoms break the formulae – Niles finally getting together with his unrequited love in *Frasier* for instance, the show is rarely as popular. All popular sporting events endlessly repeat the same scenarios. Within all of these forms there must be infinite possible combinations which produce new events: the new pop song, the new episode of *Friends*, the next game of *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*, the next world cup and so on. High culture may also depend on certain kinds of repetition, genre for instance, but it is not concerned with creating formulae. There could be no *Hamlet II*. High art is concerned with complete experiences. Popular culture is concerned with cycles of sameness, endless variation within self-replication. Games, whether physical or virtual, also depend on variable repetition. Consider the number of physical games that involve bouncing a ball, or the act of bouncing a ball itself. There is a comfort and a joy in the act. In computer games there is not only the physical repetition of hitting buttons on a keyboard or a joy pad but also the repetition of virtual action on the screen: running, jumping, hitting, shooting, dying.

Pleasure can be thought of in terms of progression rather than repetition. Progression stimulates, it makes us think, it surprises. Surprise marks the central difference between satisfaction and pleasure. Satisfaction is the emotional consequence of *confirmed* expectations, whereas pleasure is the consequence of *deviations* from expectations. For example, a meeting with an important client that went better than expected or an unexpected pay rise. Here, the source of pleasure is not the actual outcome of the meeting or the size of pay rise – it is its unexpectedness. The notion that surprise may lead to pleasure, has an important implication, which can be circumscribed by the metaphor of a "hedonic treadmill" (Brickman & Campbell, 1971, cited in Kahneman, 1999). A novel object may be pleasurable but reactions to novel objects are not stable. The individual will adapt and the likelihood of pleasure derived from the novelty of a certain object will decrease. As Aristotle noted, pleasure decreases because the mind becomes less active, less stimulated as it becomes familiar with the novel object or experience. Instead of having fun by repeating familiar patterns, the pleasure-seeker will constantly explore new regions and domains in her pursuit of pleasure. Csikszentmihalyi's flow also depends on progression in this sense. It requires a close match between ability and challenge. Progression seems to be a necessary precondition for challenge; a challenge can only be set up, when there are things to do and it is clear what hasn't been done yet, pleasure involves the setting of plans and actions to meet these goals. Without the possibility of generating new and challenging goals pleasure, in this sense, is unthinkable.

5.3 Spectacle and Aesthetics

During fun the senses must be c
luminous colours of children's toy
the explosions of light and sound
fun. Attention is "grabbed", we
society is also the society of the
signify fun. Subdued pastels do n
and fleeting, it bursts at the eye lik

Aesthetic pleasures are more a
1999). The Gestalt of objects and
solidness reassures us. There is a
now, more or less accepted in the
universal or timeless but historic
2001). However, within given cul
long time as examples of "classi
Thus, aesthetic values are somethi

To return to the distinction bet
result of the *intensity* of perceptua
with the *quality* of perception

5.4 Transgression and Commitment

What, is the "fun" of the practical
appropriation of a situation? The
transgression, albeit temporary and
Goffman (1972, p. 59) describes
another. Perhaps then, transgression
in a temporary deviation from seri
some writers on comedy, to c
independent frames of reference
laughter; the essential basis of co
satire to be "a social sanction ag
Cleese, 1993) The transgressions
bites" (Bateson, 1972). They are
boundaries.

Again, in relation to fun a
transgression can be fun but com
activity requires - first of all - a g
the basic assumptions and rules ur
a game. For the first the game is
context of the game. She accepts
and using the rules absorbs her. Sh
the game boring, but wants to obli
the boredom she finds a way to ch

as a form, is based on repetition between verse and chorus and the (1991). The mainstays of popular sitcoms and game shows are all in sitcoms break the formulae – love in *Frasier* for instance, the events endlessly repeat the same in infinite possible combinations. In a new episode of *Friends*, the next world cup and so on. High culture is a genre for instance, but it is not like *Hamlet II*. High art is concerned with cycles of time. Games, whether physical or not, are the number of physical games is a ball itself. There is a comfort in not only the physical repetition of the repetition of virtual action on the screen.

Transgression rather than repetition is central. Surprise marks the central element. Satisfaction is the emotional reward. Pleasure is the consequence of playing with an important client that is. Here, the source of pleasure is the size of pay rise – it is its proximity to pleasure, has an important metaphor of a "hedonic treadmill" (1999). A novel object may be desirable. The individual will adapt to the novelty of a certain object will because the mind becomes less interested in the novel object or experience. In terms, the pleasure-seeker will continue in her pursuit of pleasure. In this sense. It requires a close attention seems to be a necessary set up, when there are things to do. It involves the setting of plans and the possibility of generating new and interesting.

5.3 *Spectacle and Aesthetics*

During fun the senses must be engaged, there must be spectacle. The bright and luminous colours of children's toys, the gaudy kitsch sets of the popular game show, the explosions of light and sound in popular film are instances of the spectacle of fun. Attention is "grabbed", we demand increasingly violent distraction; the leisure society is also the society of the spectacle. Spectacle and wild colour signal and signify fun. Subdued pastels do not. If there is an aesthetic of fun then it is gaudy, and fleeting, it bursts at the eye like a firework.

Aesthetic pleasures are more abstract and orderly (Duncker, 1941, cited in Rozin, 1999). The Gestalt of objects and activities, their regularity, symmetry, shapeliness, solidness reassures us. There is a danger of confusing aesthetics with *tastes*. It is now, more or less accepted in the field of Aesthetics that judgements of taste are not universal or timeless but historically, culturally and socially specific (Devereaux, 2001). However, within given cultures some aesthetic values can endure for a very long time as examples of "classic" architecture, sculpture and painting indicate. Thus, aesthetic values are something people share.

To return to the distinction between pleasure and fun, the fun of the spectacle is a result of the *intensity* of perceptual stimulation, whereas aesthetic value is concerned with the *quality* of perception.

5.4 *Transgression and Commitment*

What, is the "fun" of the practical joke, the wind up, the "piss take" the unexpected appropriation of a situation? The fun of the "laff" in the workplace involves a transgression, albeit temporary and playful, of accepted forms of work behaviour. Goffman (1972, p. 59) describes this as the "flooding out" of one social frame to another. Perhaps then, transgression can be thought of as an element of fun, if only in a temporary deviation from seriousness. The mechanics of the joke are reduced by some writers on comedy, to category mistakes or the coming together of independent frames of reference creating a conflict or tension which is relieved in laughter; the essential basis of comic devices then, is conflict. Bergson considered satire to be "a social sanction against inflexible behaviour" (cited in Skynner & Cleese, 1993). The transgressions of "fun" like those of satire are "bites that are not bites" (Bateson, 1972). They are safe transgressions within particular contextual boundaries.

Again, in relation to fun and the distinction we are trying to outline, transgression can be fun but commitment may be pleasurable. Being absorbed in an activity requires - first of all - a general acceptance of the activity, a commitment to the basic assumptions and rules underlying this activity. Imagine two people playing a game. For the first the game is appealing. She figured out strategies to win in the context of the game. She accepts the game. The activity of playing, understanding and using the rules absorbs her. She will experience pleasure. The other person finds the game boring, but wants to oblige the first person. In order to distract herself from the boredom she finds a way to cheat, to bend the rules. By doing this, she ridicules

the game but she may now have fun playing it. Both players enjoy themselves but their experiences will significantly differ in quality.

6. CONCLUSION

To summarise, this chapter has argued that although words like fun and pleasure are closely related and may each function as a superordinate category for the other, there are experiential and cultural differences between them. Fun has been considered in terms of distraction and pleasure in terms of absorption. This is not to suggest that pleasure is a more worthy pursuit than fun, it is rather an attempt to delineate different but equally important aspects of enjoyment. It is possible to appreciate Shakespeare and still acknowledge that *The Simpsons* is the greatest achievement of western civilisation. Both offer rich and fulfilling experiences but they are very different kinds of pleasures. As Peter Wright and John McCarthy argue elsewhere in this book, it is not possible to design an experience, only to design *for* an experience; but in order to do this it is necessary to have an understanding of that experience as it relates to and differs from others.

7. REFERENCES

- Adorno, T., & Horkheimer, M. (1986). *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. London: Verso.
- Bateson, G. (Ed.). (1972). *Steps To An Ecology of Mind*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1975). *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety: The Experience of Work and Play in Games*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers.
- Debord, G. (1995). *The society of the spectacle*. New York: Zone Books.
- Devereaux, M. (2001). *The Philosophical Status Of Aesthetics*. Available: <http://aesthetics-online.org/ideas/devereaux.html>.
- Goffman, E. (1972). *Encounters : two studies in the sociology of interaction*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Jackson, P. (1998). *John Dewey and the Lessons of Art*: Yale University Press.
- Jordan, P. (2000). *Designing Pleasurable Products: An Introduction to the New Human Factors*: Taylor and Francis.
- Kahneman, D. (1999). Objective happiness. In D. Kahneman, E. Diener, & N. Schwarz (Eds.), *Well-being: The foundations of hedonic quality* (pp. 3-25). New York: Sage.
- Laurel, B. (1993). *Computer as Theatre*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Monk, A. F., Hassenzahl, M., Blythe, M., & Reed, D. (2002). *Funology: designing enjoyment*. Paper presented at the CHI. p.p. 924-5
- Oxford English Dictionary. Available at: <http://dictionary.oed.com/entrance.dtl>
- Rojec, C. (1985). *Capitalism and Leisure Theory*. London: Tavistock.
- Rozin, P. (1999). Preadaption and the puzzles and properties of pleasure. In D. Kahneman, E. Diener, & N. Schwarz (Eds.), *Well-being: The foundations of hedonic psychology* (pp. 109-133). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Self, W. (1994). *My idea of Fun*. London: Penguin books.
- Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive Psychology: An Introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55, 5-14.
- Skyner, R., & Cleese, J. (1993). *Life And How To Survive It*. London: Methuen.
- Thompson, E. P. (1963). *The Making Of The English Working Class*. London: Gollancz.
- Willis, P. (1990). *Common Culture*: Open University Press.
- Willis, P. (2000). *The Ethnographic Imagination*. Cambridge: Polity Press.