

WHAT'S THE POINT OF PLEASURE?

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PHILOSOPHERS AND CRUDE FUNCTIONAL ANALYSES

Philosophers have a tendency to understand mental states in terms of rather crudely drawn functional states. Desires are states with one direction of fit (compare 'revealed preference' in economics); beliefs are states with the other. In recent years some awareness that things might be more complicated: intentions seem to have a different functional profile; perhaps self-control is a separate system. But even when we have one broad functional class there may be distinct systems working, giving rise to unobvious functional differences. Consider memory: short and long term; procedural, semantic, episodic. We suggest the same goes for desire.

FIRST: DISTINGUISHING WANTING AND LIKING

A now familiar story from Berridge and Robinson: we (or at least rats) can want without liking, and like without wanting. Behaviourally and neurophysiological distinct.

Behavioural differences. Wanting: motivation to get. Liking: indicated by facial responses. Dopamine depleted rats have liking without wanting; addicts have the opposite.

Physiological differences. Wanting: dopamine, opiate and cannabinoid triggered in NAC, VP, OFC etc. Liking: opiate and cannabinoid (but not dopamine) triggered, again in NAC, VP, OFC etc. but at different sites.

Two aspects to this wanting: (i) immediate attraction; (ii) laying down of long term attraction sensitivities. The wanting is, in philosophers' terminology, *intrinsic*. It is not that the intrinsic desire is for pleasure and the food is desired instrumentally for that. The food is intrinsically desired.

There are immediate philosophical consequences (e.g. hedonistic v. desire satisfaction in utilitarianism). But a bigger hanging question: why have the liking?

ONE EXPLANATION: CABANAC ON COMMON CURRENCY

Frequently different possible acts are substitutes: there might be different things want to do, but we can only do one of them at a time. So we have to trade off, and that requires a common currency. Pleasure provides it. But why not just use the stronger wanting? And anyway it doesn't work: as the addict shows, we can act without liking.

A BETTER EXPLANATION

Berridge was only talking about one kind of wanting. We have at least two sorts. Pleasure works to bring them into line.