

2.11 Sexual desire as essence of life

Recent research has implicated chemical imbalances in the nucleus accumbens in the occurrence of depression. This makes sense, as the nucleus accumbens is the seat of motivation in the mammalian brain. And depression, after all, is a lack of motivation.

But depression also is a disease of affluent Western civilizations, and less common in archaic societies, so there clearly is an environmental component. A person who has to find shelter in order not to stand in cold rain, or somebody longing for shade and water in a desert, doesn't face debilitating questions about what we are living for as does somebody in a heated apartment with a full refrigerator. A person standing in cold rain or lost in a desert feels very directly what he wants. Some shelter from immediate discomfort. His motivation is directed to a short-term improvement of his condition.

Motivation beyond the immediate escape from discomfort is more complex. Motivation in a long-term strategy isn't so much about avoiding a negative condition but rather about pursuing a positive one.

Nature has equipped everyone of us with a long-term positive motivation: the strive for sexual satisfaction.

That one is encoded very deeply in all animal life. It also explains why we should elect to be alive rather than dead. It does so not logically, but emotionally.

I have never discovered a logical reason why I should elect to be alive, rather than dead. But I still hope for the best sex ever. And that answers the question.

I have always found depressed people in modern societies to be overly domesticated. But a lot of things in modern societies are irrational and outright negative. I cannot identify with their value scales, and I don't mind if intercultural warfare destroys Western civilization. I am a rebel, and I have a cause, and it protects me from depression, in spite of all logic that tells me that life is a terribly useless nonsense.

Brain interpretation nowadays receives most attention if it is attempted from the corner of computer programmers. While it is true that information storage, information retrieval, and information processing in the cerebral cortex has similarities to how computers work, and while, furthermore, it is true that computers defeat average humans in intellectual tasks ranging from arithmetics to playing chess, all of this touches the essence of life no more than the capability of lifting a 100 kg barbell.

Dumb transhumanists may dream of downloading their brains onto a computer hard disk. For what? Go ahead and press the Reformat button.

Because our lives, and our brains, are not essentially in the domain of cybernetics, they are in the domain of biochemistry.

At the very beginning of life, long before any consciousness appears, and long before the first neuron with an electrical action potential makes it to the scene, there already is unconscious motivation for replication, which, if more complex, is termed reproduction.

And this heritage is still at the core of human existence. If you want to understand life, and what you are, focus not on schemes that explain the brain as a computer, but familiarize yourself with the neurochemical pudding that your midbrain is, with the thalamus, the hypothalamus, the hippocampus, the amygdala, and, most importantly, the nucleus accumbens.

Computer scientists will have a hard time to tackle depression, which, more than anything else, is a lack of motivation, especially sexual motivation. Neuropharmacologists can deal with it. To them, it's all just a matter of chemical neurotransmitters. But the action of serotonin reuptake inhibitors is crude. And reward circuit-focussed dopaminergics are disappointing if motivation isn't there in the first place. Hormonal interventions, on the other hand, have wide-ranging systemic implications, and apart from that, are subject to negative feedback regulation, and therefore prone to a diminishment of their effects.

Hormonal modulators, such as tongkat ali (*eurycoma longifolia*) have the potential to increase sexual motivation, and thereby not only to

ameliorate depression, but to also give users a stronger sense of what life is about: optimal sexual experience.