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INCENTIVE AND BEHAVIORAL CONTRASTS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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This study has been designed to reconcile two divergent literatures; Crespi's 1942 study on incentive contrast and G.S. Reynolds' 1961 study on behavioral contrast. These two phenomena seem to be related, but have never been explicitly reconciled. Our hypothesis is that it should be possible to simultaneously obtain both results if looked at from the correct perspectives. Rats were initially trained with 16 food pellets in each arm of a radial arm maze. Then, the number of pellets was decreased to 4 in half of the arms. Our hypothesis is that the rats will run faster in the unshifted arms (behavioral contrast), and slower in the shifted arms (incentive contrast). The results of this study are reported here.