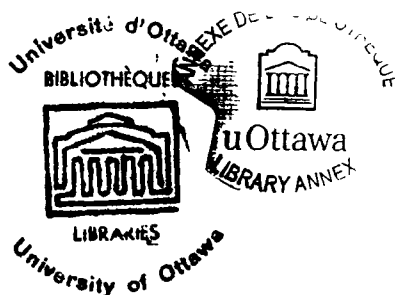


KNOWLEDGE IN HUMAN INSTINCT
IN THE
PSYCHOLOGY OF WILLIAM McDOUGALL

by Eileen McIlwaine, C. N. D.

Thesis presented to the Faculty
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of the requirements for the
doctorate in philosophy.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	page
INTRODUCTION	1
I. THE HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM	3
II. THE THEORY OF INSTINCT	36
III. THE CONATIVE-AFFECTIVE CORE	76
IV. THE COGNITIVE DISPOSITION	89
V. FUNCTION OF THE COGNITIVE	107
VI. THE SENTIMENTS	118
VII. PURPOSIVENESS	143
CONCLUSION	159
BIBLIOGRAPHY	186
ABSTRACT	198

INTRODUCTION

The problem of Instinct has been an enduring one in the history of psychology. It has recurred wearing various guises and bearing equally various names. The story of its development is characterized by controversies which have surrounded it from the days of the Arabic Philosophers to the present time.

Nor has this divergence of opinion been restricted to the professional psychologist and philosopher. It has likewise engaged the attention of students but recently initiated into the wonders of these fields. Such was the origin of this present work; it has been undertaken through an interest aroused by questioning students, confronted, at one and the same time, with the cognitive implications of the scholastic doctrine on Instinct and the theory of basic needs, impulses, and drives expounded in the educational and developmental psychologies to which they were exposed.

Within these theories of drives and impulses, the students had sensed an almost total absence of cognition and an almost complete denial of any conscious character. "Were scholastics alone exponents of cognition in Instinct?" was the question they asked. We have not set out in this thesis to evaluate their basic judgment, to refute it, or to uphold it. Rather, with their question in mind, we have put

INTRODUCTION

2

ourselves to the task of exposing and evaluating the theory of Instinct of William McDougall, a modern (1871-1938), a non-scholastic, and truly "an Instinctivist," with a particular view to ascertaining the nature and the role of cognition in his theory.

Various works have appeared in philosophical and psychological literature on the problem of Instinct. The sources and doctrine of the "vis cogitativa" of St. Thomas have been thoroughly treated in The Discursive Power by George Klubertanz, S.J. In Instinct in Man (International Universities Press, 1957), Ronald Fletcher re-examines the concept of Instinct in the light of recent studies in comparative psychology. In the course of his investigation, he gives a brief analysis and criticism of the theory of William McDougall. James Drever, in his work, Instinct in Man, (Cambridge University Press, 1917) discusses the question in terms of nineteenth and early twentieth century thought. Here, too, the work of McDougall is considered. However, we have not found any study entirely devoted to the theory of McDougall, nor have we come upon any detailed treatment of the cognitive aspect, its function, and its role. Consequently, in the body of this thesis, the references, with very few exceptions, are to the works of William McDougall himself.

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM

Although this work is not intended to be a history of the problem of Instinct, even incomplete, it will be nonetheless helpful to establish briefly the historical setting in which William McDougall mined the germinal idea for his work.

The notion of Instinct is found in both early Greek and Roman thought. The Stoics, awed by the successful adaptation of the animal to its environment, attributed this to the Logos, reserved in the writings of the earlier Greeks for the rational functions of the pneuma. This, "working, as we should say, unconsciously, directed all the movements of animals to the attainment of the more important ends."¹ Representative of Latin thought, Cicero speaks of animals as being endowed with the necessary powers to compass all the means of self-preservation. For him, the Logos was an infallible urge or desire to right action at the right time. The Romans, seeing in this directive force a "pricking" of the animal, called it "instinctus," a mode of behavior which serves a useful purpose without previous knowledge of ends.

¹G. S. BRETT, Psychology Ancient and Modern, New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1963, p. 119-22.

HISTORY

4

In the renewed efforts of men to understand man's own nature, Greek psychology became central. The Dionysian view made man a part of nature experiencing within himself forces "of the nature of blind strivings, insatiable cravings, restless urges towards goals unpredictable, ill-defined, and indefinable, forces at once destructive and creative...."²

Plato introduced a teleological viewpoint: there are certain desires and objects of desire such that their adaptation, one to another, is part of the order of the universe. He classified all desire as a movement of the soul from a state of want to a state of completeness, in some cases resting on experience. In other cases, there is a natural striving of the soul after its natural or real fulfillment. In The Republic, he shows the presence in the soul of spirit or passion, even in the case of young children and of those who may never attain the use of reason.³ Such passion is, in a sense, a unifying force, and Plato speaks of it as Eros, Desire. "Eros in Plato is the motive

²William McDOUGALL, "The Present Chaos in Psychology and the Way Out" in The Journal of Philosophical Studies, Vol. V, No. 19, July, 1930, p. 354-55.

³PLATO, The Republic, IV, 441b. Translation by B. JOWETT, in The Dialogues of Plato, New York: Pandom House, 1937, Vol. I, p. 705.

HISTORY

5

force beyond all human thought and action, the drive of longing after a good unattained which impels the soul on without rest till it is satisfied."⁴ This conception of Eros is, we shall note in the development of this thesis, closely akin to Instinct as viewed by William McDougall.

It is Aristotle who shows the way to the naturalistic direction of the modern psychology of the Renaissance period. He it was who gave sober and scientific formulation to the Dionysian view expressed above. Dissatisfied with the body-mind dualism of Plato, he aimed to discover the intimate relation of mental and physical processes. Though he does not posit precisely the existence of Instinct, he does suggest in II De Partibus Animalium a faculty of animal prudence to distinguish the useful and harmful elements of experience.⁵ He is led on to this suggestion by the need to find in the animal a faculty comparable to the intelligence in man. For he is aware that the motions of pursuit and avoidance by the animal are directed not only to that which is directly good or directly bad, but there is also a kind of planning for the attainment of remote pleasure

⁴A. H. ARMSTRONG, An Introduction to Ancient Philosophy, Westminster: Newman Press, 1949, p. 42.

⁵ARISTOTLE, II De Partibus Animalium, 2, 648a, 5-8.

and for the avoidance of remote pain. Yet the sensitive imagination possessed by the animal is capable of producing a pursuit and avoidance only of that which directly causes pleasure and pain. There must, then, be another faculty which acts upon the imagination of animals as the rational acts upon the imagination of man.

Likewise, in VI Ethics, he writes of animals as having a faculty of forethought, "This is why we say that some even of the lower animals have practical wisdom, viz., those which are found to have a power of foresight with regard to their own life."⁶ This faculty of prudence or forethought corresponds to the description of the Arabic and scholastic estimative. Thus, while some obscurity does exist in Aristotle's work on the internal sense powers, he does relate both sense and intellect to appetite and action.

"To sum up, then, and repeat what I have said, inasmuch as an animal is capable of appetite it is capable of self-movement; it is not capable of appetite without possessing imagination; and all imagination is either (1) calculative or (2) sensitive. In the latter all animals, and not only man, partake."⁷

⁶ARISTOTLE, VI Ethics, 7, 1141a, 28. Translated by R. McKEON, The Basic Works of Aristotle, New York: Random House, 1941, p. 1028.

⁷IDEM, III De Anima, 10, 433b, 26-30. Translated by McKEON, The Basic Works of Aristotle, New York: Random House, 1941, p. 599.

HISTORY

7

There would seem to be evidence, too, that the "vis cogitativa" of the Middle Ages had its inception in the works of Aristotle in spite of the absence of any adequate description of it in his authentic writings. Aquinas, in the II De Anima, attributes the cogitative power directly to Aristotle, evidence, it would appear, of a close association between his source and Aristotle.⁸ There is no uncertainty whatever about the place of conative action in Aristotelian philosophy. Throughout the whole range of animal and human action there is a striving after, an ever-present dynamic element, constant in its own nature but appearing in more complex forms as the organism develops.

The study of history and the development of the internal senses in the Islamic world is like the interpretation of a great concerto by a number of master violinists. Each philosopher makes use of all the senses as each violinist plays every note, but each does it in his own way. With the advent of the great Arabian philosophers, the problem of Instinct donned an air of controversy, climaxing in the thought of Avicenna and Averroes. Al-Farabi is the

⁸Richard DUMONT, A Perspective of the Cogitative Power, Ottawa: University of Ottawa, Faculty of Philosophy, 1955, p. 5.

HISTORY

8

first "to point out a definite faculty of sensory discernment of good and evil, and to call it the estimative sense."⁹ He does not, however, define it clearly but speaks of it as "the power which grasps in the sense objects something which was not itself sensed."¹⁰ Algazel defines the estimative in terms relative to the animal instinct. He sees it as a receptive faculty for qualities imperceptible to the senses and serving as the brute animal's intelligence by apprehending from exterior objects the intentions of hostility and beneficence.

Avicenna and Averroes both admit the power in the animal to apprehend the beneficial, the harmful and the useful. The point of disagreement is whether this power is, as for Avicenna, the "estimative" proper to animals, and, with due modifications, proper to humans also; or, as for Averroes, the "imaginative" which apprehends and judges without the need of intervention by any other power. Rather than deny to the estimative a legitimate place within the human soul, Avicenna adapts the estimative to man. In the process of this adaptation, Avicenna proposes several modes

⁹George KLUBERTANZ, The Discursive Power, St. Louis: The Modern Schoolman, 1952, p. 87.

¹⁰Ibidem, p. 88.

whereby the human estimative can be distinguished from the animal's. For example, he sees infused into man by God a natural cautiousness or prudence which gives rise to such inadvertent acts as that of the infant clutching at something to check his fall, or of the man screwing his eyes shut as drops are about to be put in. These acts, lacking as they do choice or mature reflection, can only be considered as human instinctive acts stemming from the estimative.¹¹

"Then sometimes we judge about sensible things by means of intentions which we do not sense, either because by their nature they are not sensible in any way, or because they are sensible but we do not sense them in the moment of judgment.... Therefore this power by which these things are apprehended is a different power, and is called the estimative.... Without doubt there is in us that power which is the judging power in the animal."¹²

Man's estimative power is not, however, as capable of discerning hostility as that of the brute which, when confronted with anything connected with its physical safety or survival, judges the object to be nocive or beneficial. On the other hand, Avicenna likewise maintains that the power in man similar to the animal estimative is called the

¹¹Richard DUMONT, A Perceptive of the Cogitative Power, Ottawa: University of Ottawa, Faculty of Philosophy, 1955, p. 20-24.

¹²AVICENNA, De Anima, quoted by George KLUBERTANZ in The Discursive Power, St. Louis: The Modern Schoolman, 1952, p. 98-99.

HISTORY

10

cogitative "because it is not a blindly instinctive reaction."¹³ This faculty of the cogitative is well-developed in his writings and is declared proper to the rational soul for "it is under the control of reason and so is found only in men."¹⁴

For Averroes there is no question of a human estimative; the cogitative power has taken over its duties and apprehends the "individual intentions" of things. This cogitative of the Averroian system is compounded of the Avicennan estimative and cogitative and, in St. Thomas's interpretation of Averroes,¹⁵ is responsible for the characteristic nature of man. Likewise does Averroes abolish brute estimative as a special faculty, for he contends that the Ancients do not mention it and that it was introduced by Avicenna. He conceives imagination to be adequate to discern the useful from the harmful, for it is a power of apprehension and necessarily judges, without needing the intervention of another power besides the imaginative power. He writes, "what a man performs by 'thought and deliberation'

¹³Etienne GILSON, History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages, New York: Random House, 1955, p. 201.

¹⁴George KLUBERTANZ, The Discursive Power, St. Louis: The Modern Schoolman, 1952, p. 106.

¹⁵AQUINAS, II Summa Contra Gentiles, c. 60, 1. Translation by James F. ANDERSON, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1956, p. 182.

HISTORY

11

animals perform by 'nature.' But that 'nature' has no special name; Avicenna, however, calls it 'estimation.'¹⁶ Yet in Averroes we find the same alternation of nomenclature as was evidenced in Avicenna. In the Collegit he says, "by this power (cogitative) man cogitates in those matters to which cogitation and choice belong until he apprehends what is more convenient. Therefore, this power is not found except in man, and to the brute animal there was given the estimative in place of it."¹⁷ Whatever be the terminology used, it is quite evident that both Avicenna and Averroes were of one accord on the presence of a faculty of discernment.

Returning to the Latin school, St. Augustine seems to have been the first to use the term "internal sense" which he considered to be the source of sensory consciousness and appetite, the judging and guiding power of the animal.¹⁸ Hugh of St. Victor includes as one of the four degrees of sense life "providence without the discretion of intelligence."¹⁹ Is this, perhaps, his way of describing

¹⁶Harry A. WOLFSON, "The Internal Senses in Latin, Arabic and Hebrew Philosophic Texts" in The Harvard Theological Review, Cambridge: 1935, p. 109.

¹⁷George KLUBERTANZ, The Discursive Power, St. Louis: The Modern Schoolman, 1952, p. 111.

¹⁸Ibidem, p. 49.

¹⁹Ibidem, p. 72.

the estimative? Only once in the works of Bonaventure is any reference to the estimative made. When speaking of the ascent of the mind to God, he names the estimative as one of many apprehending powers but does not designate its function.²⁰

Alexander of Hales shows himself a disciple of Avicenna where the cogitative is concerned. He adds a new dimension by claiming the existence of two estimatives: "the sensible dealing with intentions bound up with sensible forms; and the rational dealing with abstract intentions."²¹ But conceding that the intentions of the estimative are innate, he finds himself obliged to consider the estimative to be without an organ of its own, bound up, rather, in some way with imagination. Jean de La Rochelle is in agreement with him on the power of the estimative to apprehend material things but does not specify the existence of two estimatives.

Within the Arabic system can be found in embryo the "vis cogitativa" extracted by St. Albert the Great and refined by Thomas Aquinas. The position of St. Albert is such as to verify that philosophically one can follow two masters.

²⁰Ibidem, p. 77.

²¹Ibidem, p. 131.

Noted for his refutation of Averroes -- De Unitate intellectus contra Averroistas, nevertheless, in his work we find joined ideas on the internal senses that are reminiscent of Algazel, Avicenna, and Averroes. For the first time is explicitly expressed the theory that will dominate in later psychologies: the estimative is to be not wholly an apprehending power but also a motive power. St. Albert admits with Al-Farabi and Avicenna the existence of the estimative in both animals and men. Nevertheless, he maintains with Averroes the supremacy of the imagination among the senses. This he does by separating the retentive and the compositive imagination, identifying the first with estimation, which he sees as nothing more than an extension of the phantasy, which in man only is to be called the cogitative.²² In III De Anima, both human and animal estimative are seen to render value judgments, though of very different sorts. That of the animal estimative is a blind estimate; the human, acting always on the level of the particular, actually evaluates.²³

The aim of this thesis is not to present a developed analysis of the Thomistic theory. The synthesis which

²²Ibidem, p. 138.

²³Richard DUMONT, A Perspective of the Cogitative Power, Ottawa: University of Ottawa, Faculty of Philosophy, 1955, p. 40-41.

HISTORY

14

follows is but a precis of the positive teaching on Instinct inherent in the Thomistic system.

It would seem correct to say that Thomas accepts both the estimative and the cogitative, limiting the latter to man, but acknowledging the former in the very young or the complete moron as well as in the brute. In line with the Arabian thinkers, he establishes a need for a distinct power of estimation. "For the apprehension of intentions which are not received through the senses, the estimative power is appointed."²⁴ Since animals react to situations lacking elements of sense gratification or its opposite, there must be some other potency for this activity for all appetite is consequent upon apprehension. This potency, innately limited and determined to certain specific apprehensions, is the estimative, the highest faculty of the animal organism. By means of it, the brute apprehends the insensate intentions of nocivity or usefulness, and so it is for the animal a kind of practical knowledge. This practical knowledge is not arrived at by way of reflective judgment. It is, therefore, not a free judgment but a natural one, that is, not from a comparison but from natural instinct.²⁵

²⁴AQUINAS, Summa Theologica, I, Q. 78, Art. 4, Respondeo. Translated by the English Dominican Fathers, New York: Benziger, 1947.

²⁵Ibidem.

"Likewise, in brute animals the forms sensed or imagined which move them are not discovered by them, but are received by them from extrinsic sensible things, which act upon their senses and are judged of by their natural estimative faculty."²⁶

Such natural instinct is also in children. In these cases the human estimative manifests itself as a sense power. As an animal, man shares the essential sensitive nature: the indetermination, the potentiality, the internal sense powers. However, since the human sensibility is due to a rational soul, the acts of its powers will be different from those of the animal, the greatest difference being noted in the highest power. Thus, the human estimative shows itself to have only a very few innately determined judgments which lead only to a kind of generic activity. Under the guidance of reason, this power becomes the "vis cogitativa." "In man the estimative power...is replaced by the cogitative power, which is called by some the particular reason.... But this same particular reason is naturally guided and moved according to the universal reason...."²⁷ The activities of this power are characterized by their

²⁶ IDEM, II Summa Contra Gentiles, c. 47, 4. Translation by James ANDERSON, New York: Doubleday, 1956.

²⁷ AQUINAS, Summa Theologica, I, Q. 81, Art. 3, Respondeo. Benziger edition.

"quasi-syllogistic processes, their flexibility, their almost limitless applicability."²⁸

As in the case of the animal, so in man the movements of sense appetites presuppose a proportionate cognition. Now the activity of man is among concrete, singular, contingent things and so demands a faculty capable of apprehending the biological significance and the instinctive value of sensible objects. Such cognition Thomas denies to the external senses, to imagination, and to the intellect as well. The discursive power, the "vis cogitativa," is necessary to explain this singular cognition. Because of its proximity to the intellect, it fuses the sensitive and the intellectual, and, by means of a collation, perceives values as realized actually or potentially in particular things and situations.

"Now we must observe that as to sensible forms there is no difference between man and other animals.... But there is a difference as to the above intentions [not perceived by the senses] for other animals perceive these intentions only by some natural instinct, while man perceives them by means of coalition of ideas.... It compares individual intentions, just as the intellectual reason compares universal intentions."²⁹

²⁸George KLUBERTANZ, The Discursive Power, St. Louis: The Modern Schoolman, 1952, p. 279-82.

²⁹AQUINAS, Summa Theologica, I, Q. 78, Art. 4, Respondeo, Benziger edition.

HISTORY

17

It will, perhaps, be well at this point to reintroduce the term "instinctus" and to examine the meaning when Thomas says that the animal estimative works through a "natural instinct." In modern usage the word usually means "a natural aptitude which guides animals in the unreflecting performance of complex acts useful for the preservation of the species."³⁰ In St. Thomas, the term is more general and connotes a determinate, that is, intrinsic impulse. The activity which results can only be explained in terms of appetite and cognition. In such activity, the animal reacts to some known good which puts the sense appetite, a potency, into act. "For the appetitive power is a passive power, which is naturally moved by the thing apprehended."³¹ This known good is not had by way of the external sense but by the estimative specifically determined by the nature of the animal. Thus, the instinctive "drive" has its moving force in the sensory appetite. "Each power desires by the natural appetite that object which is suitable to itself."³²

Extra-philosophical factors have their way of impinging upon philosophy in regard to its subject matter, its

³⁰George KLUBERTANZ, The Discursive Power, St. Louis: The Modern Schoolman, 1952, p. 160-1.

³¹AQUINAS, Summa Theologica, I, Q. 80, Art. 2, Respondeo. Benziger edition.

³²Ibidem, Q. 80, Art. 1, ad 3.

emphasis on various themes, and the formulation of its problems in various eras. The centuries immediately following St. Thomas added little to the discussion of instinct or the estimative, but the ground for a reawakening of interest was being laid by the gradual establishment of the new psychologies. During this time men such as Descartes, Leibnitz, Hume, Locke, and Hobbes, by their interest in the working of men's minds, made possible the later theories of Fechner, Wundt, Muller, Brentano, James, and McDougall among many others.

With the rise of Descartes, the dualism, once so fashionable with Plato, raised its head again, and man became a composite of thinking substance, immaterial and free, and of external substance, the body. Behavior was interpreted in a mechanistic way: habitual and automatic acts were brought about by the motion of the "spirits" within the nerve substance.

"We know...that all the movements of the muscles, as also all the senses, depend on the nerves, which resemble small filaments, or little tubes, which all proceed from the brain and thus contain like it a certain very subtle air or wind which is called the animal spirits."³³

³³Rene DESCARTES, Passions of the Soul, art. VII, Translated by Haldane and Ross, New York: Dover Books, 1955, p. 333.

A sharp cleavage was introduced between acts of a mechanical nature and those of a rational nature,³⁴ and the pineal gland became the seat of interaction, acting to transmit impulses from the soul to the body and to transmit physical stimuli to the soul.³⁵ The passions, too, became mechanized, explained as they were through motion in the brain, the blood, the "spirits," and the vital organs.³⁶ His conception of the animal reflex as a nervous and muscular reaction to sense stimulation by way of fixed channels became the key to future physiological explanations of many of life's more complicated activities.

Among the followers of Descartes, LaMettrie must be singled out as applying ruthlessly to man the Cartesian mechanistic interpretation of behavior. He saw no need of a spiritual soul intrinsically independent of the body. All forms of life depend ultimately on different forms of physical organization.

However, James Drever suggests that, among the followers of Descartes, it is Malebranche who contributes most to the study of the natural tendencies, inclinations, and passions. Malebranche frequently uses the word "Instinct,"

³⁴Ibidem, art. XXIV and XXV.

³⁵Ibidem, art. XXXIV.

³⁶Ibidem, art. XXXVI.

but with various meanings. He writes, "Le plaisir est un instinct de la nature."³⁷ And again, "C'est obéir à sa voix que de se rendre à cet instinct de la nature, qui nous porte à satisfaire nos sens et nos passions."³⁸ On the other hand, he says, "C'est par l'instinct du sentiment que je suis persuadé que mon âme est unie à mon corps, ou que mon corps fait partie de mon être; je n'en ai point d'évidence."³⁹ It is interesting to note that his classification and discussion of these tendencies and emotions includes many that McDougall was to consider in his works. We find reference, for example, to curiosity, to the self-regarding tendencies, including suggestibility and imitation, to the social tendencies, with a special predominance given to the inclination which McDougall was to call "primitive" passive sympathy.

By his insistence on activity as essential to substance, Leibnitz set the stage for the modern act theories with which McDougall may be linked. Though dualistic in his consideration of the relation of mind and body, the

³⁷MALEBRANCHE, De la Recherche de la Vérité. cited by James DREVER in Instinct in Man, Cambridge: The University Press, 1917, p. 27.

³⁸Ibidem, p. 27.

³⁹Ibidem, p. 27.

doctrine of an immaterial soul acting upon a material body was repugnant to him. Interaction was cast aside. All acts of the human body, as mechanical as those of an animal, had their explanation in known physical causes; mental acts, in terms of mental causes; each without any direct reaction upon the other. Any seeming interaction is merely the result of a pre-established harmony.

"Under this system [pre-established harmony] bodies act as though, "per impossibile," there were no souls: and souls act as if there were no bodies, and both act as if each influenced the other."⁴⁰

Spinoza's philosophical position logically has no place for the notion of Instinct for the intellect and the will are one and the same thing.

"...in the mind there exists no absolute faculty of understanding, desiring, and loving etc.... I must observe that by the will I understand a faculty of affirming or denying, but not a desire; a faculty, I say, by which the mind affirms or denies that which is true or false, and not a desire by which the mind seeks a thing or turns away from it."⁴¹

⁴⁰G. LEIBNITZ, Monadology, 81. Translated by Mary Morris in Philosophical Writings of Leibnitz, London: Dent, 1956, p. 18.

⁴¹B. SPINOZA, Ethics, Book II, Prop. XLVIII, schol. in J. Wild (Ed.) Spinoza, Selections, New York: Scribner, 1958, p. 195.

Yet the need to pass from knowledge to action required some inconsistency from him and the notion of each thing striving to persist in its own being was introduced.

"This effort [to persevere in its being],... when it is related at the same time to both mind and body, is called "appetite," which is therefore nothing but the very essence of man, from the nature of which follows those things which promote his preservation and thus he is determined to do those things."⁴²

His classification of the emotions, like that of McDougall, is in terms of primary and secondary emotions, and he, too, gives to sympathy much consideration.⁴³

In Hobbes we have the first of modern social psychologists. Mechanistic like Descartes and an anti-interactionist like Leibnitz, he drew the distinction between acts that are attributed to the innate constitution and specific activities which are the product of experience.

"Of appetites and aversions, some are born with men; as the appetite of food, the appetite of excretion, and of exoneration, which may also and more properly be called aversions,... The rest which are appetites of particular things, proceed from experience, and trial of their effects upon themselves or other men."⁴⁴

⁴²Ibidem, Book III, Pro. IX, schol. p. 217.

⁴³Ibidem, Book III, Prop. XXXI, Cor. p. 236.

⁴⁴Thomas HOBBS, Leviathon, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1947, p. 32.

In each individual can be found tendencies he wishes to satisfy and pains he wishes to avoid; it is these strivings which constitute human motives. Fear becomes, in his philosophy, not a blind impulse but a perception of pain inherent in an object causing withdrawal from it. Human nature is, then, objectively knowable, and analysis may make possible prediction and control. In these elements lie the basis for social organization and the mainsprings of social conduct.

Hume sees man gifted by nature with an instinctive power manifested in his ability to think and infer according to causal relations. This natural, blind, and powerful instinct is the means used to infer from sensuous perception the reality of an objectively real world.

"But though animals learn many parts of their knowledge from observation, there are also many parts of it, which they derive from the original hand of nature;... These we denominate Instincts, and are so apt to admire as something very extraordinary, and inexplicable by all the disquisitions of human understanding. But our wonder will, perhaps, cease or diminish, when we consider, that the experimental reasoning itself, which we possess in common with the beasts, and on which the whole conduct of life depends, is nothing but a species of Instinct or mechanical power, that acts in us unknown to ourselves; and in its chief operations is

HISTORY

24

not directed by any such relations or comparisons of ideas, as are the proper objects of our intellectual faculties."⁴⁵

Hume also uses the term Instinct to indicate an original impulse or tendency. Though he classifies emotions as direct and indirect, they might well be called primary and secondary. He approaches McDougall's concept of instinct as a motivating force for he writes, "Reason...is no motive to action, and directs only the impulse received from appetite or inclination by showing us the means of attaining happiness or avoiding misery."⁴⁶

Through the efforts of these men and others with them, psychology became more and more a matter of experimentation and observation as well as of academic thought. With this turn of the tide came the revival of interest in Instinct. Or rather should we say, the birth of interest in instincts, for the single faculty of the older theorists seems, during these years of semi-repose, to have multiplied. In a doctoral dissertation, Instinct in Man, Ronald Fletcher attributes the turning point to the work of Charles Darwin.

⁴⁵David HUME, An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, section IX, in The Harvard Classics, Charles Eliot, Ed., New York: Collier and Sons, 1910, Vol. 37, p. 395.

⁴⁶IDEM, An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957, Appendix I, p. 112.

"In the Origin of the Species, Darwin devotes a whole chapter to Instinct, not with the aim of giving a full account of Instinct, but in order to show that the facts of Instinct do not stand in the way of natural selection, but rather tend to support it...."⁴⁷

Writing of Instinct, Darwin says,

"An action, which we ourselves require experience to enable us to perform, when performed by an animal, more especially by a very young one, without experience, and when performed by many individuals in the same way, without their knowing for what purpose it is performed, is usually said to be instinctive."⁴⁸

Yet Darwin is quick to point out that "a little dose of judgment or reason,... often comes into play, even with animals low in the scale of nature."⁴⁹ Following on this acceptance of the interplay between intelligence and instinct, Darwin accepts the possibility of modification in instincts, even to the point of loss.

"It will be universally admitted that instincts are as important as corporeal structures for the welfare of each species under its present conditions of life.... As modifications of corporeal structure arise from, and are increased by, use or habit, and are diminished or lost by disuse, so I do not doubt it has been with instincts."⁵⁰

⁴⁷Ronald FLETCHER, Instinct in Man, New York: International University Press, 1957, p. 29.

⁴⁸Charles DARWIN, The Origin of the Species, London: Dent, 1951, p. 230.

⁴⁹Ibidem, p. 230.

⁵⁰Ibidem, p. 231.

HISTORY

26

Spencer, an associationist, caught up in these new theories of evolution, saw instincts evolving out of reflex actions repeatedly performed, and cognition and memory, in turn, evolving out of instinct. Organic differences among mental phenomena are non-existent. From the "nervous shock," the first unit of consciousness, evolve by way of mental evolution new factors. Often repeated associations become hereditary, leading to the formation of Instinct which, in the animal, is a form of lapsed intelligence. Thus, mental phenomena are mere stages in development.

Still more concerned was his fellow associationist, Alexander Bain, who, first among the psychologists to make elaborate physiological explanations, thought of instincts as inborn reaction tendencies which underwent modification through experience.

The importance of Instinct in the system of Freud will be easily recognized if one considers that the "id" is identified as the sum total of man's instinctive dispositions. Like the older theorists, he saw instincts as a bridge between the mental and the physical world; for him they represented the demands made upon the mind in consequence of its connection with the body. Always active, always present either consciously or unconsciously, the instinct as a certain sum of energy forcing its way in a certain direction sets all the major ends of human activity.

In a thesis not intended to be a history, it is not possible to include all who have in any way treated of Instinct since the nineteenth century. Mention, however, must be made of William James who was emphatic in his insistence of the presence of Instinct in man. In his Principles of Psychology he writes, "Man has a far greater variety of impulses than any lower animal; and any one of these impulses taken in itself is as 'blind' as the lowest instinct can be."⁵¹ He defines Instinct as a "faculty of acting in such a way as to produce certain ends, without foresight of the ends, and without previous education in the performance."⁵² From the last two phrases in this definition, it would appear that an instinct must be transitory, appearing only once in a lifetime, for after one appearance any instinctive action, in an animal with memory, would cease to be 'blind' and would be accompanied by foresight of its end.

As we approach the age of William McDougall, the work of Lloyd Morgan emerges on the scene. He defines instinctive behavior rather than instinct and sees it as

⁵¹Ibidem, p. 383.

⁵²William McDOUGALL, "The Present Chaos in Modern Psychology and the Way Out" in The Journal of Philosophical Studies, Vol. V, No. 19, July 1930, p. 353-63.

"comprising those complex groups of co-ordinated acts, which, though they contribute to experience, are, on their first occurrence, not determined by individual experience: which are adaptive and tend to the well-being of the individual and the preservation of the race; which are due to the co-operation of external and internal stimuli; which are similarly performed by all members of the same more or less restricted group of animals; but which are subject to variation, and to subsequent modification under the guidance of individual experience."⁵²

An interesting relationship between Instinct and Intelligence is set up by Morgan. Intelligent behavior depends on the modification of the nervous system through the acquisition of experience. But experience is born in the earliest instinctive acts,

"when there came what we may regard as the initial presentation, generating the initial responsive behavior, in the earliest instinctive acts, accompanied, we may presume, by the initial emotional tone, coalescent to form what I have ventured to call the primary tissue of experience."⁵³

And so the coalescence of the presentation, the emotional tone, and the instinctive act permits subsequent behavior to be intelligent. Such a view was the subject of controversy and drew upon Lloyd Morgan the criticism of Stout.

⁵²Lloyd MORGAN, cited by Ronald FLETCHER, in Instinct in Man, New York: International Universities Press, 1957, p. 43.

⁵³IDEM, "The Natural History of Experience" in The British Journal of Psychology, 1909, Vol. 3, p. 224.

The views of Hobhouse closely resemble those of Lloyd Morgan. He regards instinct as "the response of inherited structure to stimulus."⁵⁴ This notion closely resembles the notion of a reflex action, but Hobhouse by no means identifies the two. The "conative" element remains an important criteria of instinct and so the response is influenced by a persistent internal disposition. "The instinctive act is no longer one which follows with perfect uniformity from a certain stimulus. It follows from the stimulus only if it is appropriate to the setting of the organism at the time."⁵⁵ This suggests a hereditary structure capable of determining this tension necessary to provoke instinctive action.

James DREVER, on the contrary, finds repugnant any definition of Instinct expressed exclusively in terms of instinctive action. His own definition states that it is "an innate impelling force guiding cognition, accompanied by interest or emotion, and at least partly determining action."⁵⁶ Three factors appear in an analysis of this

⁵⁴L. T. HOBHOUSE, Mind in Evolution, London: MacMillan, 3rd ed., 1926, p. 53.

⁵⁵IDEM, cited by Ronald FLETCHER, in Instinct in Man, New York: International Universities Press, 1957, p. 43.

⁵⁶James DREVER, Instinct in Man, Cambridge: The University Press, 1917, p. 20.

definition: cognition of an object, conscious impulse in relation to it, and a feeling element, and each of these factors determines and is determined by the others. Nevertheless, in Drever's view, it is the feeling of worthwhileness dependent upon the whole relation of impulse to object that is the very core of the experience itself. This is not to say, however, that the role of cognition can be overlooked but we must bear in mind that Drever accepted that only "knowledge involved in perceptual consciousness" as characteristic of the operations of Instinct. For this reason, it was his firm belief that "the only possible interpretation of instinctive behavior seems to be in terms of specific impulse determining specific act, on presentation in perceptual consciousness of a specific situation."⁵⁷

Bergson's view of Instinct is found in the second chapter of his Creative Evolution. There he gives his attention to "two powers, imminent in life and originally intermingled."⁵⁸ It is his view, however, that in the course of evolution, growth "has taken place on two divergent paths, one of which led to instinct and the other to intelligence.

⁵⁷Ibidem, p. 107.

⁵⁸Henri BERGSON, Creative Evolution. Translated by Arthur MITCHELL, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911, p. 133.

HISTORY

31

"The cardinal error which from Aristotle onwards, has vitiated most of the philosophies of nature, is to see in vegetative, instinctive, and rational life, three successive degrees of the development of one and the same tendency, whereas they are three divergent directions of an activity that has split up as it grew."⁵⁹

Unlike his contemporaries already discussed, Bergson fails to give any clear-cut definition of Instinct but does suggest that it is no more than a faculty of using an organized natural instrument. It is, he says, "innate knowledge of a thing."⁶⁰ The theory he holds posits a characteristic difference between the knowledge represented in Instinct and that in Intelligence. The innate knowledge of Intelligence is the knowledge of form, that is, of relations set up between materials, relations such as that between like and unlike, between cause and effect, between container and content. The innate knowledge of the Instinct is, rather, the knowledge of a matter, that is, of what is given by the perceptive faculties in the elementary state. For this reason, "There are things that intelligence alone is able to seek, but which, by itself, it will never find. These things instinct alone could find; but it will never seek them."⁶¹

⁵⁹Ibidem, p. 135.

⁶⁰Ibidem, p. 150.

⁶¹Ibidem, p. 151.

In bergson, then, there is opposition but also complementarity between Instinct and Intelligence.

We would next consider Edouard Von Hartmann whom, with Arthur Schopenhauer, McDougall cites as one of the Fathers of Hormic Psychology. This is not surprising in view of Hartmann's contention that "one of the most important and familiar manifestations of the unconscious is Instinct and the conception of Instinct rests on that of purpose."⁶² He defines Instinct as "purposive action without consciousness of the purpose," and holds that it can be accounted for only as "a result of unconscious mental activity."⁶³ This unconscious knowledge which underlies Instinct manifests itself as a clairvoyant intuition which is not affected by "sickness or fatigue," and which does not hesitate, doubt, or err. He writes of

"an unconscious cognition of particular circumstances, the existence of an immediate knowledge without the intervention of sensuous perception and consciousness.... Lastly, all instinctive actions give the impression of absolute certainty and self-assurance, and there never occurs in them, as in conscious resolution, any delay, doubt, or hesitation, never any genuine error...; indeed this

⁶²Edouard VON HARTMANN, The Philosophy of the Unconscious. New York: Harcourt Brace, 2nd ed., 1931, Vol. 1, p. 43.

⁶³Ibidem, Vol. 1, p. 79.

feature of absolute accuracy is so characteristic, that it may pass for the only clear defining mark of action from instinct when compared with action from conscious reflection."⁶⁴

Instinct thus understood becomes the inmost core of every being and so is independent of previous experience. This aspect is especially significant when we realize that among the functions of the Instinct is preservation both of the self and of the species. To these usually accepted ends, Von Hartmann adds that of "the perfection and ennoblement of the species,"⁶⁵ for, with a taint of Schopenhauer, he claims that

"the progress of the human race, individual, social, and national, the appreciation of the beautiful, the development of science and philosophy, the satisfaction of the deeper spiritual needs of the heart, all derive their driving force, their interest and will, from the Will and Idea of the Unconscious."⁶⁶

But there are other men, too, who did not view Instinct so favorably. Helmholtz admitted their existence for his love for truth made it impossible for him to deny the presence at birth in some animals of specific knowledge

⁶⁴Ibidem, Vol. 1, p. 95-98.

⁶⁵Ibidem, Vol. 2, p. 56.

⁶⁶James DREVER, Instinct in Man, Cambridge: The University Press, 1917, p. 68.

HISTORY

34

certainly not acquired by experience. He dared not explore it further for this was enemy territory.⁶⁷

It was with John B. Watson particularly that McDougall was to do battle. In the course of development Watson's views on Instinct actually passed through three stages. In Behavior, an Introduction to Comparative Psychology (1914) he discussed Instinct using it as a series of joined reflexes which unfold as heredity dictates. In Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist (1919) he maintained that habit overlies such unlearned behavior so that it is found only in young infants. The final position expounded in his Behaviorism (1925) rejects all possibility of Instinct in man.⁶⁸

Steeped in Behaviorism as Watson was, he saw in Instinct no more than a few primitive patterns with endless conditioned responses built upon them, thus divorcing it completely from all conscious striving. All that was needed to account for the so-called instinctive reactions was a response secured through the animal's possession of native equipment.

⁶⁷H. G. BORING, History of Experimental Psychology, New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 2nd ed., 1957, p. 299.

⁶⁸Robert I. WATSON, Great Psychologists from Aristotle to Freud, Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1963, p. 303.

Writing in the preface to Body-Mind, Bruner depicts the situation at the end of the nineteenth century:

"The issue, in brief, was whether to understand behavior in terms of instinct and innate dispositions...or whether to understand it in terms of the effects of past experience and the results of adaptation. ...If McDougall had been unable to accept the mechanical causality of materialism and the fixed genetics of pure Darwinism, it was plain that the compounding of conditioned reflexes and associations would be unpalatable to him as an explanation of man's mind."⁶⁹

We shall not be surprised, then, to find McDougall, in a spirit of revolt, breaking with the dominant traditions of the past.

⁶⁹Jerome BRUNER, in William McDOUGALL, Body-Mind, Boston: Beacon Press edition, 1961, p. vii.

CHAPTER II

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

The work of William McDougall is dominated by his belief in the goal-seeking nature of man. In his own words:

"I had come to see more and more clearly that the main defect of the psychologies with which I had struggled in the opening years of the century was their acceptance of, or their compromise with, the mechanistic biology, and their consequent neglect of the purposive or teleological aspect of all mental life. I seemed to see clearly that, whatever theory of the relation of mind to matter...one might hold, any psychology that ignored or failed to bring out clearly, the fundamental purposive nature of mental activity was doomed to sterility. The most essential character of life processes seemed to be their goal-seeking nature."¹

This conviction led him to create a dynamic system of psychology as opposed to a one-sided intellectualism in which all "human conduct was rational and dependent on foresight of consequences."² His is a systematic psychology of purpose, a psychology of "motives" natural and hereditary, founded upon the doctrine of instincts. To it he himself gave the name "hormic," a Greek derivative, which means a

¹William McDUGALL, in C. Murchison (Ed.), A History of Psychology in Autobiography, Clark University Press, 1930, p. 215.

²Robert WOODWORTH, Contemporary Schools of Psychology New York: Ronald Press, 3rd ed., 1964, p. 338.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

37

vital impulse or urge to action. It is this "vital" impulse that offers the most challenging point in his theory, for he insistently maintains that the instincts are the great driving forces of human conduct, that, directly or indirectly, they are at the root of all human activity, not excluding the intellectual. That this is McDougall's belief is evidenced in his rebuttal of those who attribute our higher forms of conduct to reason. To these he says:

"...reasoning, like all other forms of intellectual process, is but the servant of the instinctive impulses; it does not prompt or impel us to action. By reasoning we discover new means for the attainment of our goals; and by its aid we envisage more clearly the nature and the further consequence of the goals we seek. But unless we seek or desire some good because it is our nature so to do, no reason can make us seek or desire it...."³

Thus only at the life-giving touch of instinct is man stirred to action, and all human progress can be explained only in terms of the "horme."

"living man -- yes, life in all its forms -- is something beyond that domain or nature upon which physical or chemical interpretation can be launched. The decisive sign of that transcendence is the purposive or goal-seeking nature of human and animal acts; it is that urge toward achievement which every normal human adult knows as the very gist of

³William McDougall, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 215.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

38

his selfhood and which in McDougall's opinion we may rightfully charge to all species throughout the animal kingdom."⁴

Hormic psychology is purposive or teleological in character. McDougall, in his Introduction to Social Psychology, describes it as:

"a psychology which claims to be autonomous; which refuses to be bound to and limited by the principles current in the physical sciences, which asserts that active striving toward a goal is a fundamental category of psychology, and is a process of a type that cannot be mechanistically explained or resolved into mechanical sequences; ...hormic psychology is not afraid to use teleological description and explanation. Rather it insists that those of our activities which we can at all adequately describe are unmistakably teleological, are activities which we undertake in the pursuit of some goal, for the sake of some result which we foresee and desire to achieve...."⁵

Accordingly, it conceives of all behavior as being undertaken in pursuit of some particular natural good towards which it is guided by an awareness, even though vague, of both the situation and the goal; and towards which it continues until the goal is attained. And this progress towards, and the attainment of the goal, is pleasurable while any thwarting of that progress or failure of attainment causes displeasure.

⁴A. L. ROBINSON, William McDougall, a Bibliography, Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1943, p. 5.

⁵William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, University paperback series, 1960, p. 446.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

39

We shall return in a later chapter to this question of purposiveness to investigate its nature and its operation. Let it suffice for the moment for us to distinguish, in an analysis of the above description, three essential aspects of all hormic activity: (1) cognition; (2) striving or conation; and (3) accruing satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

To posit such a system is to recognize at the same time instincts and the instinctive actions through which they express themselves for "the springs of purposive activity are the instincts."⁶ Common and generally accepted usage considers instinctive those actions which lead to a goal natural to the species. To initiate such action, man must have within him certain natural propensities which are "the primary grounds of all his strivings; ...the goals for which he strives are either the natural goals of his native propensities or are the means towards such goals."⁷ These natural propensities are the instincts proposed by William McDougall.

Some might wish to take issue with this identification of instinct with propensity for, in later editions of his Introduction to Social Psychology, McDougall seems to

⁶F. PATTIE, "William McDougall, 1871-1938" in The American Journal of Philosophical Studies, Vol. 52, No. 2, 1939, p. 304.

⁷William McDUGALL, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 8th ed., 1950, p. 26.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

40

have modified his views in order to keep the term 'propensity' for a very restricted but very important part of the instinct, the central core. He writes:

"It is this central part of the instinct, both affective and conative in function, which we need to distinguish and define as clearly as possible; and since we can properly and advantageously regard it as a functional unit of structure, we need for it some special designation. I have, therefore, proposed to speak of this central part of the innate disposition which is an instinct as a propensity."⁸

However, justification for this identification is to be found in other statements made by McDougall; in his almost total use of the term 'propensity' in the Energies of Men; in the nearly synonymous use of the two terms in his other works; and in the general acceptance of this identification by recognized commentators and historians.

Writing in An Outline of Psychology, McDougall says:

"while recognising in man some very simple instincts, ...they ascribe his more complex modes of behavior to what they are pleased to call 'innate propensities.' ...If they did so [define these propensities], they would, I think, find them to be identical with what we have called the instinctive tendencies. The word 'propensities' is a good one. There is no reason why we should not speak of instinctive tendencies as innate propensities."⁹

⁸William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 502-3.

⁹William McDUGALL, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 213.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

41

And elsewhere we read:

"The field-naturalists have asserted that human behavior is not at all instinctive and that the human species has no instincts.

"Others...have maintained that the life of man is just as truly rooted in instincts as that of animals.

"To this latter group I myself belong.... Recognizing now...the crux...of this divergence of opinion I propose to avoid the use of the term 'instinct' in defining the constitution of man, and to content myself with the term innate or native propensity. This change of usage does not imply any radical change of view."¹⁰

Thus, while McDougall proceeds to substitute the term 'propensity' throughout The Energies of Men, his description of it as, "a disposition...which when it is excited, generates an active tendency, a striving, an impulse or drive towards some goal,"¹¹ echoes the description of instinct in his earlier works.

These quotations, we propose, carry two implications:

(1) McDougall was ready to accept the terms 'instinct' and 'propensity' as synonymous before formally committing himself to the change; and (2) having decided upon the substitution, he gives warning that this does not imply any

¹⁰ IDEM, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 77-8.

¹¹ William McDOUGALL, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 117.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

42

radical change of view. If such is the case, and we maintain it to be, the identification made above¹² is valid.

We are supported in our theory by the evidence of McDougall's contemporary, F. Pattie, who, in his tribute on the occasion of McDougall's death, calls it a "verbal change."¹³ The historian Wolman underlines the reluctance with which McDougall relinquished the usage of the term 'instinct.'

"When McDougall substituted the term 'propensity' for 'instinct' he did it rather unwillingly under the pressure of criticism of his theory of instincts. Actually the list of propensities as published by McDougall in The Energies of Men is, with minor exceptions, the same as that published formerly under the heading of instincts in An Outline of Psychology and in the Introduction to Social Psychology."¹⁴

One cannot but sense that same reluctance in McDougall's own explanation:

"Such inborn tendencies are often spoken of as instincts; but since the word cannot be used without provoking controversy and needless difficulties, it is perhaps better to avoid it; and perhaps the best word to use here is the good old word 'propensity.'"¹⁵

¹²Present Work, p. 40.

¹³F. PATTIE, "William McDougall, 1871-1938," in The American Journal of Philosophical Studies, Vol. 52, No. 2, 1939, p. 304.

¹⁴B. B. WOLMAN, Contemporary Theories and Systems of Psychology, New York: Harper, 1960, p. 181.

¹⁵William McDUGALL, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 26.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

43

That McDougall showed himself loathe to abandon the term 'instinct' and 'instinctive action' is understandable, for, unlike some, he does not use them lightly. Some psychologists apply the term 'instinctive' to any human action lacking deliberate reflection; others think of it only as some mysterious faculty in the brute compensating for the absence of reason. For McDougall, however, it is more than this. He defined Instinct in the first editions of his Introduction to Social Psychology as:

"an inherited or innate psycho-physical disposition which determines its possessor to perceive, and to pay attention to, objects of a certain class, to experience an emotional excitement of a particular quality upon perceiving such an object, and to act in regard to it in a particular manner, or, at least to experience an impulse to such action."¹⁶

Fifteen years later, in An Outline of Psychology, he propounds that it is "an innate disposition which determines the organism to perceive (pay attention to) any object of a certain class, and to experience in its presence a certain emotional excitement and an impulse to action which find expression in a specific mode of behavior in relation to that object."¹⁷

¹⁶William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 25.

¹⁷IDEM, An Outline of Psychology, London, Methuen, 1924, p. 110.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

44

Keeping in mind the identification of 'instinct' and 'propensity' cited above,¹⁸ a third definition can be traced in The Energies of Men published less than ten years before his death. There we read, "a propensity is the name given in these pages...to any part of the innate constitution whose nature and function it is to generate upon occasion an active tendency."¹⁹ And in the same work, we come upon "inborn tendencies to strive towards goals and transmitted from generation to generation in all members of the species."²⁰

These quotations illustrate McDougall's thinking at various stages of his career. The wording may have changed slightly, the phrasing may have been juggled, but there is no denying the similarity of meaning within. As we explore beneath the surface of these definitions, we shall discover that there were modifications made; that the early doctrine of the first editions of the Social Psychology did develop, but, in this maturing of McDougall's thought, the basic concept of instinct remained a stable one.

¹⁸Present Work, p. 40.

¹⁹William McDOUGALL, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 64.

²⁰William McDOUGALL, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 26.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

45

A study of this basic concept spotlights certain features which recur constantly in the expression of his theory. There is always present: (1) a perception of some object or situation of the environment; (2) an emotional response to that perception; and (3) a persistently recurring impulse following upon the emotional response and leading to appropriate action.

Moreover, upon recognition of these features, we move forward again and see in instinct more than mechanized motor behavior. There is evidence of the three phases of mental process: cognition, conation, and affection.

Look first at mental life itself and we see in it a cyclic process of knowing, striving and feeling. In the first, more than a mere receiving of sense impressions, the subject recognizes some object, and so a search for the modification of the relation between it and the object is initiated and guided by this knowledge. This effort to effect change, whether it be bodily effort or mental, may attain its end, thus satisfying the impulse and terminating the activity. On the other hand, the effort, in spite of repeated trials and varying means, may meet with failure, may be thwarted and checked, in which case the whole activity is unpleasant.

We must take care in considering this activity of mental life to keep intact the essential unity among the

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

46

three aspects of knowing, striving, and feeling. Though conceptually distinguishable, these cannot be independently exercised. They are inseparable, and to speak of an act of one or other of them is merely to indicate that that particular aspect is most prominent at that precise moment. Whether these acts always succeed one another in the order suggested here might be debated, but it does seem to be the natural order of predominance for,

"conation...is immediately determined by cognition, and that pleasure and pain result from the conation, are determined by the striving; pleasure when the striving attains its natural goal or progresses towards it; pain, when striving is thwarted or obstructed and fails to achieve, or progress towards its goal."²¹

Further examination of McDougall's thought clearly reveals in every instinctive activity not only the presence of the cognitive -- "to perceive and pay attention to," -- the effective -- "to experience an emotional excitement" -- and the conative -- "to act in a particular manner," -- but also the importance which he brings to an acceptance of this fact.

"In view of this persistent tendency to ignore the inner or psychical side of instinctive processes, it seems to me important to insist upon it, and especially to recognize in our definition its cognitive and affective aspects

²¹William McDOUGALL, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 269.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

47

as well as its conative aspect. I...would say that any definition of instinctive action that does not insist upon its psychological aspect is useless for practical purposes, and worse than useless because misleading."²²

In every manifestation of instinctive behavior, some movement is excited by a sense-impression or combination of sense-impressions initiated by sense stimulation. This nervous excitation, travelling up the sensory nerves, traverses the brain causing the production of sensation or changes in the sensory content of consciousness. It is, therefore, not merely reflex but is rightly called cognitive. It cannot be divorced from the notion of conscious striving, and it is this cognitive character which separates it from reflex activity. Furthermore, this perception provokes an immediate and appropriate response which is unmistakably emotional or affective. Finally, it is the need of this emotional response to express itself which brings about the persistent striving which, as we shall see later, will not be easily arrested.

In order that these functions may be carried on, the instinct in its turn must be so structured as to have three corresponding parts: an afferent or sensory part, which explains why the individual pays attention to certain

²²William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 26 (footnote).

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

48

objects in his environment; a central part, responsible for the emotional excitement in the presence of that object; and an efferent or motor part, which causes the performance of certain movements to attain that object.

"Every instinctive process has the three aspects of all mental processes, the cognitive, the affective, and the conative. Now the innate psycho-physical disposition, which is an instinct, may be regarded as consisting of three corresponding parts: an afferent, a central, and a motor or efferent part -- whose activities are the cognitive, the affective, and the conative features respectively of the instinctive process."²³

Since this is true, and since instincts are gifts of nature, we must conclude that men are so equipped that they react to certain stimuli which excite in them characteristic emotions and lead them to definite striving which prompts specific motor behavior. And so, as McDougall says,

"Instincts are more than innate tendencies or dispositions to certain kinds of movements. There is every reason to believe that even the most purely instinctive action is the outcome of a distinctly mental process... involving psychical as well as physical changes...."²⁴

Earlier it was stated that with the years McDougall's thought matured and changes were made. One such modification must be introduced here. In the twenty-third edition

²³William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 28.

²⁴Ibidem, p. 22.

of his Social Psychology, published in 1936, there is included a Supplementary Chapter reporting a somewhat altered view of the instinctive disposition, but, again, without involving any radical change in the basic view. That the possibility of such a modification was in the mind of the author was first indicated in the Outline of Psychology (1923). There McDougall's description of the innate disposition speaks of "at least two principal parts" and raises the question "should we distinguish a third part?" He does not seem ready to provide a conclusive answer at that time. However, in 1936 he states decidedly that he no longer ascribes three distinct parts to instinct although he does maintain three distinguishable aspects of instinctive activity. He no longer separates the central and efferent parts, responsible in the past for the affective and conative features respectively, but now sees the central core functioning in both an affective and conative manner. What was, in his earlier doctrine, the efferent part of instinct now is looked upon as a "purely neural apparatus or motor mechanism" through which the excitement discharges itself. In his own words:

"I have been convinced that, in describing a typical instinctive disposition as consisting of three distinguishable parts, I was in error in one respect, namely, in drawing the line of separation between the second and third parts. As I now see there is no sufficient ground for regarding a conative part as distinguishable

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

50

from the emotional or affective part. In so far as a motor or efferent part may validly be recognized...this motor part may be properly regarded as a purely neural apparatus, or motor mechanism, through which the instinctive excitement discharges itself."²⁵

And further on he adds,

"We should regard the second or central part of it as both affective and conative in function, as responsible both for the emotional or feeling quality of the instinctive response ...and for the conative experience, with the setting of the goal, with the continued direction of the striving towards that goal, no matter what forms of bodily movement may be used in the course of such striving."²⁶

McDougall seems to have been led to this altered position by his study of the adaptability of instinctive action. Through this study, he became aware that animals deprived of the use of the innate motor mechanism for some particular instinct do, nonetheless, find means, other than those common to its species, of striving for that goal.

Not only does this lead him to the above position, but it likewise makes of him a staunch adversary of the theory that instinctive action is stereotyped action. Field naturalists, among others consider the stereotyped character to be of the essence of instinct. It is quite true that it is a most striking note of simple situations in which the

²⁵William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 495-6.

²⁶Ibidem, p. 502.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

51

organism, encountering particular circumstances, proceeds in routine fashion in an unvarying repetition of movements. But rather than a mark of instinctive behavior, this stereotypic quality is an indication of the low level of intelligence of the one acting. To see that this is so, one need only consider, as McDougall did, the movements involved in more complex instances of instinctive action, particularly those in which obstacles interfere with the attainment of the desired goal. Though there is persistent striving in such cases, the kind and direction of movement is not constant but varies again and again, bringing into use such motor mechanisms as the circumstances of each moment require. Moreover, upon the recurrence of a similar situation, the action is not repeated in identical fashion. There is instead an improved performance, an increased efficiency due to better adaptation of means.

"As we review the scale of increasing intelligence from insect to man, we see activities inspired and sustained by instinct become less and less stereotyped and more and more varied in adaptation to special circumstances."²⁷

If we must choose an adjective as characteristic of the essence of instinct, our choice should fall, not on stereotyped, but on adaptable. This modification in no way radically alters his earlier views. It is still true that all

²⁷William McDougall, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 499.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

52

three phases of mental activity are present and can be distinguished in abstraction, though the conative and affective are now said to be one in function.

In the definitions of instinct, our attention is drawn to the terms 'innate,' 'inborn,' and, in one case, even 'inherited.' It is McDougall's view that instincts have their origin, not in experience and learning, but in the very nature of the species. They are not acquired but are transmitted from generation to generation, and so the psychological equipment of man becomes in great part hereditary.

"Where an animal under particular circumstances encountered by it for the first time in its life, proceeds smoothly and without hesitation to some natural goal, we speak of purely instinctive action...such purely instinctive action implies a native propensity to such action linked with appropriate native abilities...and...such a system of linked dispositions provided by heredity and reaching a readiness for action by spontaneous maturation constitutes...an instinct."²⁸

This demand for instinct as a 'native' capacity is made necessary by the existence of actions performed before time and opportunity have allowed for an accumulation of experience. It becomes the common principle of interpretation for unlearned activity. As indicated in the last cited quotation, instincts mature in the course of individual development.

²⁸William McDOUGALL, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 335.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

53

Most human instincts are undeveloped in the first months of life; "they ripen and become capable of functioning at various periods throughout the years from infancy to puberty."²⁹

To propound instinct as an 'innate' or 'native' capacity is not to deny any modification in behavior, for, as we shall see in a later chapter, these dispositions are modifiable and do allow for change under varying conditions. It is precisely as a tendency that instinct is innate. As a psycho-physical disposition, it is a potency that will be made actual by some present situation, and that will express itself in a variety of ways, depending as well upon past experience and future needs.

From the innate and inherited nature of the instinct, one can conclude to its presence in all members of the species. It cannot be eradicated from human or animal nature, but this is not to say that its manifestation is displayed in identical fashion by every human being, nor that it will persist in any set way throughout the life span of any one individual. Since environment plays its part in the presentation of the object which initiates sense perception, and, consequently, is, in some way, responsible for the

²⁹IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 21.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

54

arousal of the instinct, it could even be that any one instinct would lie latent, even though the innate disposition is necessarily present. Whatever be the modifications wrought by experience, instinct continues to be the main-spring to action. "Human activities, both mental and bodily, are only to be explained or understood by tracing them back to a number of innate dispositions, tendencies...which manifest themselves in each normal individual of the species."³⁰

Before moving into a detailed consideration of each of the three aspects of the instinctive process, we wish to sum. up here what we have found to be the features of every instinct.

1. It is inherited, not acquired.
2. It is common to all members of the species.
3. It persists, though often modified, throughout the lifetime of the individual.
4. A psycho-physical disposition, it has both physiological and mental elements.
5. It involves a particular significant perception of, and a particular emotional excitement towards, an object.
6. It involves an urge to act in relation to this perceived object.
7. It very frequently leads to appropriate action.

³⁰William McDOUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 331.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

55

We shall consider now the characteristics of the behavior which results upon the stimulation of the impulse. It consists in some movement, or train of movements, initiated by a sense-impression and leading to a special result, end, or goal. Consequent upon the sense-impressions are sensory excitations which spread throughout the nervous system, along motor nerves to the muscles and other executive organs. This implies some innate organization of the nervous system and motor mechanisms which gradually mature taking the shape common to all members of the species.

Is instinctive action, then, no more than the activation of these pre-formed motor mechanisms? We answer in the negative for two reasons: (1) two or more such motor mechanisms are at times employed in a series of actions impelled by one instinct; and (2) two or more instincts may impel the creature to use the same motor mechanism. Nor are these actions automatic. They are guided by perceptual activities involving a synthesis of many sense-impressions. The presence of a plasticity is noted whenever unusual circumstances disturb the routine performance, and the actions are all directed to some particular end or goal. Moreover, instinctual behavior of a particular kind cannot always be evoked even by the most perfect application of the specific object. Though the mechanism is present, without the needed impulse no action takes place. Such activities imply a

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

56

complex nervous organization which will permit the reception of sense-stimuli, the spreading of consequent sensory excitations, and the coordinated movements involved in the total activity.

"Each mode of instinctive activity requires ...the cooperation of all parts and organs of the body...for an instinctive action is essentially a 'total reaction' and the processes of every part of the body are subordinated and adapted to aid or supplement the actual movement of limbs or other parts which immediately contribute towards the attainment of the natural goal."³¹

This physiological mechanism is brought into play with the excitement of the instinct and with an intensity proportionate to the intensity of the instinctive impulse. Essential to such a process is the liberation and direction of energy, with the amount of energy needed depending upon the form of the activity. McDougall speaks of it as "energy directed to a goal,"³² but is not definite as to its nature or source. One possibility which he suggests is that in each instinct there is a store of potential energy which can be discharged and transformed into any other type of energy. This conversion takes place when the specific perception 'releaser' activates the receptory correlate which it 'fits.' This liberates and directs into proper channels the stored

³¹William McDOUGALL, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 321.

³²IDEM, The Energies of Men, London, Methuen, 1950, p. 50.

potential energy which then appears in that restlessness which is characteristic of striving. A second alternative presents itself: that several instincts draw upon a common store of reserve energy. Whichever be the case, it is quite certain that in some way potential energy, stored in the tissues in chemical form, is converted into some active form. We can rightly speak of the energy of the instinct and "we may regard the felt strength of the impulse to action as in some sense a measure of the flow of such liberated energy."³³

The actions which enter into this train of movements are not isolated actions but each is, in some way, related to, and dependent upon, those which come before and those which follow it. In this way there is a wholeness and continuity achieved. Furthermore, such movement or train of movement seems to be performed independently of any prior experience, for it is performed with equal success by the animal growing up in solitude and by those who have enjoyed the instruction of their parents. It is performed by all members of the species in very much the same way and is of such a nature that it furthers the welfare of the species or of the individual. The action proceeds smoothly and

³³William McDOUGALL, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 107.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

58

without hesitation and it is as successful on the first occasion as on each succeeding one.

These actions, then, are not purely mechanical, and the profound difference between them and the reflex action appears most clearly in instances where routine specialized behavior does not suffice for the attainment of the natural goal. In such situations they display an adaptability to environment that is not found in the reflex action. In the philosophy of McDougall, the reflex is a mere response to a stimulus, owing nothing to consciousness or experience but secured solely through native equipment. Other differences to be noted are in the spontaneity of movement, beginning from within in instinctive behavior, but completely lacking in the reflex where there is instead a specific reaction to a specific stimulus. Again, instinctive behavior may persist after the effects of the stimulus have ceased, but it necessarily ends when the particular change towards which it was tending has been brought about. The duration of the reflex action depends entirely upon the stimulus, persisting unchanged while the stimulus is applied and ceasing when it is removed. Finally, the total reaction of the organism needed for instinctive behavior is replaced in the reflex by the response of a specific part; and, since there is no adaptability to environment in reflex action, there is no improvement either.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

59

In this connection McDougall strongly emphasizes the ability of the instinct to be modified, slightly in the case of lower organisms but considerably in the higher animals and man. It is questionable, indeed, whether the behavior of any animal is completely determined by unmodified instincts. "In lower insects this power of adapting instinctive movements to special circumstances is very slight: that is the mark of their low position in the scale of intelligence...Yet there is good ground for believing that some adaptability is always present...."³⁴ This aspect of adaptability, in the case of the animals, has been frequently overlooked in favor of the more readily observable aspect--the instinctive act as common to the species,--but, "in reality instinctive action everywhere displays that adaptability to special circumstances which is the mark of intelligence."³⁵

Though admitting modification, McDougall, nevertheless, insists upon the stable character of the central core and describes the change as taking place in the afferent and motor parts of the instinct. "All the principal instincts of man are liable to similar modifications of their afferent and motor parts, while their central part remains

³⁴William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 496.

³⁵Ibidem, p. 26.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

60

unchanged."³⁶ And elsewhere he says, "the cognitive processes through which any instinctive process may be initiated exhibit a great complication and variety; and the actual bodily movements by which the instinctive process achieves its end may be complicated to an indefinitely great extent."³⁷

In its cognitive aspect, instinct can be modified through learning and experience, and in this way may undergo very great elaboration and differentiation. At first, instincts are but little specialized, but gradually, establishing connections with situations that have elicited activity, they become more specialized, so that an experience which arouses an instinctive impulse without any hurtful effect is neglected on future occasions. In time, too, new afferent inlets are established as perceptions other than the original excitants of the instinct, as well as ideas of the natural stimuli, become initiators of instinctive reactions. Just how this is brought about McDougall does not say. One can see, perhaps, how indifferent objects could become instigators by association -- a "conditioning" of the instinct, so to speak -- but to explain how an original stimulus loses its ability to excite, remains a difficulty.

³⁶William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 26.

³⁷Ibidem, p. 29.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

61

Nevertheless, the acquisition of new perceptual inlets remains for McDougall the principal mode in which one learns from experience. "The instinctive actions become capable of being initiated, not only by the perception of objects of the kind which directly excite the innate disposition, the natural or native excitants of the instinct, but also by ideas of such objects, and by perceptions and ideas of objects of other kinds."³⁸

On the motor response side, too, instinctive behavior undergoes modification in the process of development and manifests this in situations where the goal is proving difficult to attain. The variations may be extremely simple and take the form of mere change of direction of locomotion; or the bodily movements through which the conative finds expression may be modified and complicated to an indefinitely great degree, bringing into play alternate modes of action, acquisition of skills, and a great range of motor capacities as the circumstances of each moment require. This is especially true in the human species. Since the instincts are not sufficiently ripe for functioning at the start of life, or even in the early years, they manifest themselves only when man has acquired some intelligent

³⁸Ibidem, p. 26.

control and imitation of movement. As a consequence, the efferent tendencies are displayed in their purely native forms only in a few of the most simple instincts; rather they are "from the first modified, controlled, and suppressed in various degrees."³⁹ Through these modifications, both cognitive and conative, new activity patterns result, yet McDougall continues to refer to these organized patterns as "instinct" and continues to name them by the original from which they were formed.

We must make brief reference here to a more complex modification that will occupy our attention more fully later, that is, the combination of instincts into sentiments. For it is McDougall's contention that "a pure instinct occurs only once, after which it is modified by experience and is better called a sentiment."⁴⁰

We have said that, in the study of instinctive behavior, the emphasis has been, for the most part, placed on the similarity of action in all members of any one species, while the adaptive variations have all too often been neglected. Yet, these variations do exist and are due to experience. Now, that action in which the agent employs past experience

³⁹Ibidem, p. 25.

⁴⁰J. BRUNER, in William McDougall, Body-Mind, Boston: Beacon Press, 1961, p. vii.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

63

to guide its present course of action is generally termed 'intelligent.' Does this imply a supplanting of instinct by intelligence at some point on the road of development? Not so; in the philosophy of McDougall there does not exist a dichotomy between instinct and intelligence as between two distinct principles. The separation insisted upon by some, Bergson, for example, has been effected by a process of abstraction through which we arrive at a conceptual distinction which makes these two radically different functions. This, however, is misleading unless we remain cognizant of the fact that this distinction is a purely intellectual one, not a real one, in the actual context of experience. "Instinct and intelligence represent neither two divergent lines of evolution nor two stages of evolution, but rather are always only two aspects of all mental life which we distinguish by an effort of abstraction."⁴¹

Instinct and intelligence are not mutually exclusive. There is between them a relation of intimate cooperation of one with the other. In all experience there is a mingling of instinctual and intellectual elements so that intelligence renders to instinct an essential service without which the instinct would be of no avail. Intelligence supplies the

⁴¹William McDUGALL, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 202.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

64

control which makes possible the minor adjustments made by the lower species in special circumstances. It is the instrument that adaptation employs enabling the higher species to grasp the relations between impulses, ends, and means. Intelligence, in the case of man, through reasoning permits the discovery of new means to the end and gives a clearer foresight of the nature and the consequences of his goals. As the intellectual powers develop, the successive actions employed in our goal-seeking become more numerous. They may be "indefinitely prolonged and renewed incessantly. The train of activity may take the predominantly intellectual form of thinking out means for the attainment of the end."⁴² Yet intelligence would be ineffective without instinct. This intellectual form of thinking is in the service of some striving towards an end, that is, of some conation springing from our instinctive tendencies. It is the natural impulses which lead us to seek or desire ends; they are, as it were, the 'activating energy' of intellectual activity. "Instinct requires and implies the cooperation of intelligence...and intelligence operates only and always in the service of the instinctive impulse to action."⁴³ We must not, therefore,

⁴²IDEM, An Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 151.

⁴³IDEM, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 92-3.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

65

consider instinct and intelligence as two separate and distinct principles of action but "as mingling modes of correlation; the one determined by heredity, the other coming into play during the course of individual experience."⁴⁴

This intelligent control, allowed for by the mingling of instinctive and intellectual elements, is inherited in varying degrees by different species. Among the lower species, we saw that this control permits only very minor adjustments in reactions involved in immediate activity. In man instincts generally become so dependent upon and so overlaid by intelligent control that their very existence is obscured from the eyes of man himself. Nor is McDougall alone in this contention. Hobhouse is in complete accord that these are but two aspects distinguishable by an effort of abstraction, and that the separation effected by this abstraction is entirely misleading. The presence of intelligence does not imply the absence of instinct. Both Darwin and William James maintain that there is no inverse ratio between instinct and intelligence. In the Descent of Man, Charles Darwin points out that among the insects those which possess the most wonderful instincts are certainly the most intelligent; and William James, in his Principles

⁴⁴Ronald FLETCHER, Instinct in Man, New York: International Universities Press, 1957, p. 294.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

66

of Psychology, says that man has more instinctive tendencies than any other species.⁴⁵ Though we may be strongly inclined to question this latter assertion, it does underline the fact that the presence of intelligence cannot be equated with the absence of instinct.

Following logically from our discussion of the relation between instinct and intelligence, we naturally move to a consideration of the influence of instinct in learning. More and more today, educators and psychologists alike are coming to a realization, and an acceptance of the idea, that learning, as a process in which the individual, guided by the affective elements of experience, accommodates himself to his environment, physical, social, and cultural, is not only a consciously controlled process of a purely cognitive and rational nature but is closely connected with, and directed and influenced by, the instincts. Some go so far as to maintain that,

"the most important core of learning which takes place in human individuals does not consist of conscious, conceptual, cognitive processes, but of affectively established attachments to or reactions against those objects, people, or symbols in the familiar

⁴⁵William JAMES, Principles of Psychology. New York: Macmillan, 1890, Vol. 2, p. 390.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

67

physical and social environment in the context of which the earliest instinctual gratifications were achieved."⁴⁶

The number and list of instincts has been a central point in the discussion of instincts. McDougall's awareness of the problem is evidenced in the several revisions his classification has undergone. In the early studies he made on the topic (1908) he described seven instincts which he regarded to be very varied in type. A quarter of a century later, after much controversy which he attributes to his use of the term 'instinct,' he revised both his terminology and his number, and speaks instead of 'eighteen propensities.' Finally, he reverts to the number posited in his early work and holds, as the core of his theory, seven 'primary instincts,' each conditioning some one kind of emotional excitement whose quality is peculiar to it. "...the affective quality of each instinctive process and the sum of visceral and bodily changes in which it expresses itself are peculiar and distinct...."⁴⁷ Thus, we find the instincts of escape, repulsion, curiosity, pugnacity, self-assertion, self-abasement, and the parental instinct; with

⁴⁶ Ronald FLETCHER, Instinct in Man, New York: International University Press, 1957, p. 320.

⁴⁷ William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 40.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

68

their corresponding emotions: fear, disgust, wonder, anger, elation, subjection, and the tender emotion.

Not ready to discard the 'propensities' of his classification of 1932, McDougall retains with this 'primary core' other instincts of "less well-defined emotional tendency" among which he lists gregariousness, acquisition, construction, and laughter. These lack some of the characteristics of the primary instincts but are native springs of action. Apart from these specific tendencies, there are also other innate propensities of a general type which differ from the basic instincts in as much as they give rise to broad non-specialized reactions. These general tendencies, and in this category we find sympathy, suggestibility, and imitation, are without specific emotional excitement; they have little or no urge character and no specific goal. The conditions stimulating imitation, for instance, may be of a wide variety and the behavior which results can express itself in many forms. Likewise with sympathy which may be aroused by virtually any human reaction and which may express itself in mild feeling or strong emotional and behavioral responses. McDougall shows considerable concern for the 'pseudo-instinct' of sympathy and is insistent that it be recognized for what it is -- a 'pseudo-instinct.'

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

69

"We must not say...that sympathy is due to an instinct but rather that sympathy is founded upon a special adaptation of the receptive side of each of the principal instinctive dispositions, an adaptation that renders each instinct capable of being excited on the perception of bodily expressions of the excitement of the same instinct in other persons."⁴⁸

The manifestation of the tendency involves "an interaction between at least two individuals, one of whom is the agent, while the other is the person acted upon or patient; and in each case the result of the process is some degree of assimilation of the actions and mental state of the patient to those of the agent."⁴⁹ This means to say, then, that a specific instinct and its accompanying emotion can be evoked "by the expression of the same emotion in another in virtue of a special congenital adaptation of the instinct on its cognitive or perceptual side."⁵⁰

Before turning from our consideration of the innate propensities, we must look, at least briefly, at the mode of their expression. The propensities work through such native abilities as the ability to have sensations, to perceive, to reason, and to act in ways conducive to the

⁴⁸William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 81.

⁴⁹Ibidem, p. 77.

⁵⁰IDEM, The Group Mind, London: Methuen, n. 25.

welfare of the individual or the species. While many species may be endowed with very similar propensities, the abilities through which they manifest themselves will vary widely both in nature and in number. In the lower species, such abilities are few and each is closely linked with one propensity. In man, the abilities are more numerous, and each works in the service of whatever propensity is excited by the situation at hand, for the connection between human propensities and abilities is loose and variable. Moreover, in the course of human development, these abilities become multiplied, differentiated, and enriched.

"New abilities are formed by growth and gradual differentiation of pre-existing abilities, and the new abilities...combine to function as parts of larger systems of which the parent ability remains an essential feature. Such groups of abilities of allied nature may be conveniently spoken of as complex abilities without unity either in their functioning or in respect of their hereditary transmission."⁵¹

To what did McDougall look in his efforts to define and recognize instinct? It is interesting to note that it was not to the movement in which it expressed itself but rather to the object and situation which evoked it, to the nature of the goal that it seeks. In his Outline of Psychology he writes, "An instinct is to be defined and recognized

⁵¹William McDOUGALL, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 99.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

71

by the kind of change of the animal's situation which its movements, whatever they be, tend to bring about and which, when it is achieved, brings the train of behavior to a close."⁵² Movements are exercised through motor mechanisms which are but the instruments of instincts, and every instinct can use several such instincts in its activity. Consequently, simple observation of animal movements will not reveal the nature of the instinct at work. Again, McDougall writes elsewhere,

"An instinct is not defined by the kind or kinds of bodily activity to which it impels the animal, but rather by the nature of the objects and situations that evoke it, and, more especially, by the nature of the goal, the change in the situation, in the object, or in the animal's relation to it, to which the instinct impels."⁵³

The insistence on the value of the object or situation and of the goal in the definition and recognition of instinct is an indication of the prominence given to the perceptual aspect in the theory of William McDougall.

We cannot speak of instincts and their modification without some discussion of sentiments. This would seem to be the natural place at which to inject such a discussion; however, we ask the indulgence of the reader at this time,

⁵²William McDOUGALL, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 119.

⁵³IDEM, An Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 416.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

72

for, because of the importance which McDougall ascribes to sentiments in the development of character and the conduct of life, we prefer to treat of this topic in a separate chapter.

Lest the indictment should be made against us that we have assumed the presence of instinct in man without any attempt to justify this assumption, we wish, before concluding this present chapter, to draw attention to some of the many specific points which McDougall makes concerning instinct and the instinctive in man.

In The Energies of Men, he classes himself with those who, "fixing their attention upon the general tendencies towards goals common to the species (rather than upon innate abilities) and regarding these as of the essence of instinct, have maintained that the life of man is just as truly rooted in instincts as that of animals."⁵⁴ He points out that the first movements of the infant, when they are not reflexes, are instinctive, and it is one of his main theses that the influence of the instinct prevails throughout life, both in the development of the individual personality and in social conduct. He says,

"Now as we review the scale of increasing intelligence from insect to man, we see

⁵⁴William McDOUGALL, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 77.

activities inspired and sustained by instinct become less and less stereotyped and more and more varied in adaptation to special circumstances. There is no point in this scale at which we can say that the activities of that level can no longer be said to be instinctive in some sense and degree."⁵⁵

Much criticism has been levelled against McDougall on the grounds that he has attributed all human activity to the instincts -- an accusation he does not entirely deny, for he claims "the charge has a certain truth."⁵⁶ Nor can we deny that McDougall insists upon a dynamic or driving energy rooted in instinct as an essential feature in human activity, for in his Social Psychology he writes,

"Human activities, both mental and bodily, are only to be explained or understood by tracing them back to a number of innate dispositions, tendencies to feel and to act in certain more or less specific ways, in certain situations; tendencies which manifest themselves in each normal individual of the species independently of previous experience of such situations, and which like the similar innate tendencies of the animals, may properly be called instinctive."⁵⁷

But what the critics have failed to remark is that equal insistence is placed on the role of intelligence as a modifying and controlling factor in this same activity. "In

⁵⁵William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 499.

⁵⁶IDEM, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 227.

⁵⁷William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 331.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

74

the case of the adult human being, this overlaying and obscuring (of instinct by intelligence) goes so far that we cannot appropriately describe the bulk of his actions as instinctive."⁵⁸

Earlier in this chapter we referred to the place of instinct in learning. This is a further point in support of the theory that instincts are present in man. As we noted, the learning process is no longer considered to be a purely cognitive one, rational, consciously controlled, but is likewise an affective process. In the light of the theory of instinct, Fletcher has this to say about learning,

"The fundamental core of the process of learning in all species including man can be regarded as the accommodation of the individual to the conditions of the physical and social environment in accordance with, or guided by, the affective elements of experience: (a) stemming from primary 'instinct-interests,' (b) developing into what we have called 'general instinctive tendencies,' ...and (c) in the case of man ...involving the establishment within the personality of 'secondary impulses' comprising inhibitions and aspirations."⁵⁹

A vast area of human experience, the formation of individual character, the energy supporting and making possible social life with its ties and its feelings, its conflicts and its strivings, are closely and significantly

⁵⁸Ibidem, p. 499.

⁵⁹Ronald FLETCHER, Instinct in Man, New York: International Universities Press, 1957, p. 320.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCT

75

related to instincts. The conclusion that we must draw places the roots of human activity in instincts and makes of instinctive experience an extremely important feature of human nature.

CHAPTER III

THE CONATIVE-AFFECTIVE CORE

In our consideration of the aspects of instinct, we have chosen to follow the pattern adopted by McDougall in his later writings of conceiving instinct as structured of two parts. Consequently, in this chapter we shall explore the central core of instinct in its dual function of the conative-affective.

Throughout his career, whatever other modifications he made in his work, on one point McDougall never varied -- the importance he brought to the conative dispositions. At all times he regarded these as the dynamos in human conduct, for it is through them that the ends of human action are determined, that goal-directed energy is released to initiate and sustain both bodily and mental activity in the pursuit of those ends.

In every instinctive action we find indication that the original nature must be endowed with an organization underlying perceptual and executive abilities. Yet it is also evident that these 'native abilities' become active only in due time and on appropriate occasion. We conclude, therefore, that such action likewise implies 'inborn propensity.'

THE CONATIVE-AFFECTIVE CORE

77

In the previous chapter we have seen that a propensity is a functional unit of organization present in the original human nature. As such it is not always active but rather it exists in a latent state until an appropriate time. At that appropriate time, the propensity or latent tendency is somehow made active and the actualization of the propensity results in an impulse towards a certain goal. It is this active felt tendency, this striving, that constitutes the conative experience. The road of these experiences may be smooth or rough, it may be straight or curved, but always there is a 'core of sameness,' always there is that striving, conscious or unconscious, towards a given end. The conative disposition may best be described, then, as a dynamic factor promoting a whole train of activity in the direction of a specific goal. "This whole train of activity making for the goal is called a conation."¹

The actualization of the latent tendency comes about through the release of an accumulated energy derived from the instinctive basis common to the human species. This energy is goal-directed and so initiates a mode of activity that will bring gratification. To do this it must activate the appropriate abilities, motor, intellectual, or both, in a succession which forms a natural unity, and which

¹William McDOUGALL, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 117.

THE CONATIVE-AFFECTIVE CORE

78

works in the service of the tendency as a means towards its goal. When we are stimulated to this effort, we feel within us a compelling need to act. At times it is possible to manifest this need through overt striving of some specific sort. But there are times, too, when, for one reason or another, we must defer or suspend action. It is on these latter occasions that we are really made aware of the conative tendency, for though it is impossible to act appropriately, we, nevertheless, contemplate the goal and feel ourselves being drawn towards it. It is at such times that the conative tendency asserts itself most clearly in consciousness; and we express this vocally, when, in common phraseology, 'we long for this or that.' This conscious craving for a foreseen goal assumes the character of an explicit desire or aversion.

There are times, too, when the 'something' for which we yearn is conceived but vaguely; times when the tendency is working within us subconsciously as an uneasy sense of want, a restlessness, a dissatisfaction which we cannot quite define.

"Each propensity, then, generates when it is stirred, stimulated, aroused, or excited, an active tendency which may operate at any level in the scale of consciousness or awareness, from the most acutely self-conscious level to

THE CONATIVE-AFFECTIVE CORE

79

one of which the most skilled and the most willing effort of introspection, or of retrospection, fail to render any account,"²

As we have seen, the mode of striving may take any one of a number of forms. It may express itself in immediate action or be checked by difficulties encountered or foreseen. But instinctive action is so structured that it terminates in a certain end, and so, until this end is reached, the creature, asserting itself against all distractions, persists in its conative efforts. At times we may seem to have shifted our efforts in some other direction, to have turned our energies elsewhere, but unless overcome by some strong urge, the unsatisfied striving remains subconsciously at work. Only when the end is reached does the activity cease.

McDougall justifies this assumption of the conative aspect because,

"All instinctive behavior exhibits that unique mark of the mental process, a persistent striving towards the natural end of the process. That is to say, the process, unlike any merely mechanical process, is not to be arrested by any sufficient mechanical obstacle, but is rather intensified by any such obstacle and only comes to an end either when its appropriate goal is achieved, or when some stronger incompatible tendency is excited, or when the creature is exhausted by its persistent efforts."³

²Ibidem, p. 119.

³William McDougall, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 24.

THE CONATIVE-AFFECTIVE COPE

80

Again, regardless of the form it takes, the original conation supplies the motive power by which all the activities of human conduct are carried on as a means to the attainment of the desired end. As such, they shape all the life of individuals and societies. In McDougall's words, "by the conative or impulsive force of some instinct (or of some habit derived from an instinct), every train of thought, however cold and passionless it may seem, is borne along towards its end, and every bodily activity is initiated and sustained."⁴ This principle is of "supreme importance for the understanding of the mental life and conduct of men."⁵

In speaking of conation as the motivating force behind all thought and action, we would draw attention to two points made by McDougall. The first concerns attention; the second, interest; both of which many consider to be part of the cognitive processes.

The fundamental condition of attention is striving, a striving to achieve fuller cognition of some object or situation. We see this in any examination of our own conduct. The greater the urge we feel to understand, the more attention we bring to the situation; and the more passive and inert we are, the less attentive do we become. Above,

⁴Ibidem, p. 38.

⁵Ibidem, p. 152.

THE CONATIVE-AFFECTIVE CORE

81

we described desire as a conscious craving for a foreseen goal. Now it is characteristic of desire to focus our thought on that which we strongly crave. However intently we may endeavor to drive from our minds all thought of the desired object, it continues to persist -- evidence again of the conative nature of attention.

Interest, too, is conative and we are drawn to those things that are capable of exciting any of our instinctive impulses. We have only to consider the attitudes and conduct of men who, after a lifetime of striving in some professional field for the support of their home and family, are nonetheless ready upon retirement to 'forget' all that had once been the centre of their interest. Certainly, in those cases, the systematic knowledge that the man had amassed remains, yet his interest has slipped away. That 'interest' wanes when the goal is attained is proof of its conative nature.

Between these two, interest and attention, there is a natural relation for "interest is latent attention; and attention is interest in action."⁶ When we are interested in an object, we are ready to give it our attention. But both attention and interest are traceable to instincts for

⁶William McDOUGALL, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 277.

THE CONATIVE-AFFECTIVE CORE

82

they can be reduced to a union of strivings concentrated upon a single object.

Although the nature and role of cognition are considered in another chapter of this work, it will be well to remind ourselves here that we do not deny a link between interest, attention, and cognition. There is an innate connection between cognition and every form of conation. Cognition is the instigator of conation either through the sense-impressions it forms or by a reproduction of an idea which once stimulated conation. Unless we admit the cognitive aspect, we cannot speak at all of striving or feeling. It is the recognition of some object or thing that gives rise to the impulse within urging us to action. It is cognition which gives meaning to conation.

We have said that an instinctive action may express itself in immediate action or be checked by difficulties encountered or foreseen. In the first instance, where we find ourselves taking successful steps towards our desired end, perhaps even attaining it, we experience pleasure and satisfaction. In the latter case, the continued obstruction arouses in us a tension, a certain dissatisfaction or displeasure, which becomes more intense as the difficulties become more insurmountable. In both cases, the intensity of the feeling is proportioned to the strength of the desire and striving, of the progress, or of the thwarting.

THE CONATIVE-AFFECTIVE CORE

83

"When we attain, or make good progress towards, the goal towards which we strive, pleasant feeling is prominent. When our striving is checked and thwarted, the whole activity is unpleasant; and it is the more intensely unpleasant, the stronger our desire and striving and the more complete the thwarting."⁸

Along with the conative, McDougall is justified in positing the affective aspect of instinct, for creatures exhibit in their behavior what can only be interpreted as symptoms of feeling and emotional excitement. "Each kind of instinctive behavior is always attended by some such emotional excitement, however faint, which in each case is specific or peculiar to that kind of behavior."⁹ Such symptoms may not be prominent in the case of simpler instincts, but let the principal powerful instincts be excited and the "felt" quality of each will emerge peculiar and distinct. In this excitement the bodily organs become more active -- a fact made necessary by the bodily adjustments evoked by the instinctive impulse. Since instinctive action is a 'total' reaction, its efficient execution requires the cooperation of all parts and organs of the body. This intensifies bodily sensations and gives the specific emotional tone to the whole experience.

⁸William McDUGALL, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 147-8.

⁹William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, -. 24-5.

THE CONATIVE-AFFECTIVE CORE

84

"The distinctive quality of each such emotional experience seems to be given it by the complex of relatively intense bodily impressions resulting from the many well-marked bodily adjustments which the impulse naturally evokes, evokes just as naturally as, and more inevitably than, it evokes your movements of pursuit or retreat." ¹⁰

Such emotions, resulting immediately and inevitably, are the subjective expression or correlations of the instinctive excitement. As such, they may be regarded as "clues to the instinctive impulses or indicators of the motives at work in us." ¹¹

The importance of this affective aspect which, in the theory of William McDougall, is the central core of the disposition cannot be denied. The detection and recognition of any instinct will be made with the greatest difficulty, if at all, without the clue supplied by the central emotional phase. For him this central core is the unchanging aspect, "the only part of the total process that retains its specific character and remains common to all individuals and all situations in which the instinct is excited," ¹² and this regardless of all learning and experience.

¹⁰IDEM, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 149.

¹¹IDEM, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 128.

¹²IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 29.

THE CONATIVE-AFFECTIVE COPE

85

"In the human adult, while the instinct may be excited by objects and situations that are not provided for in the innate disposition, and may express itself in bodily movements which also are not natively determined, or may fail to find expression in any such movements owing to strong volitional control, its unmodified central part will produce visceral changes, with the accompanying emotional state of consciousness, in accordance with its unmodified native constitution."¹³

Since this is so, the emotional excitement brings continuity to instinct. "An instinct, no matter how profoundly modified it may be in the developed human mind as regards the condition of its excitement and the actions in which it manifests itself, always retains unchanged its essential and permanent nucleus...."¹⁴

Although we have looked at two functions -- a conative role and an affective role -- we must, nevertheless, bear in mind that, in the mature years of his career, McDougall saw no sufficient ground for distinguishing one from the other as a 'part' of instinct. He regarded the central part as responsible both for the emotional or feeling quality of instinctive response and for the conative experience. He met with opposition from those who maintained that emotion is not always an accompanying factor in instinctive behavior. These latter believed that it was only in

¹³Ibidem, p. 36

¹⁴Ibidem, p. 77.

THE CONATIVE-AFFECTIVE CORE

86

instances where the natural activity was obstructed that emotion was evoked. Others admitted the pleasant or unpleasant tone quality of activity but they, too, refused to acknowledge the presence of specific emotions, such as fear, disgust, anger, etc., unless the activity was in some way inhibited. In answer to these, McDougall only replied by pointing out the inadequacy of our introspective powers to the task of recognising all degrees of affective consciousness. He writes in a footnote to his *Social Psychology*,

"The propriety of distinguishing between the conative element in consciousness, the impulse, appetite, desire, or aversion, and the accompanying emotion is not so obvious. For these features are most intimately and constantly associated, and introspective discrimination of them is usually difficult."¹⁵

The importance of this central core is underscored in the following:

"It is the conative-affective element of instinctive experience and behavior together with its underlying neurophysiological conditions which must be regarded as the most central distinguishing feature of instinct. It is this feature which, throughout the whole range of species, gives unity and persistence to the features of behavior which, whether rigidly correlated by heredity, or to some extent variously selected in the light of individual experience, are utilized attaining the appropriate end-state."¹⁶

¹⁵William McDougall, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 42, footnote.

¹⁶Ronald Fletcher, Instinct in Man, New York: International Universities Press, 1957, p. 294.

THE CONATIVE-AFFECTIVE COPE

87

In our discussion of the conative-affective core of the instinct, we saw that successful activity was identified with the pleasant, while failure was linked with pain or displeasure. In the face of continual difficulties or obstructions, we experience the painful feeling of frustration and dissatisfaction; while each step advancing us nearer to our goal brings with it a pleasurable sense of satisfaction. From this we might be tempted to conclude that McDougall's theory is a hedonistic one in which pleasure and pain are the motivating forces of man's actions. This is far from the truth. In his theory, pleasure and pain are not motivating forces; they are "nothing more than signposts, guides, indicators that instincts are successfully or unsuccessfully running their course."¹⁷ Acting as guides, they help us to select the means and to adapt our actions for the most effective striving. To assume that the actions of creatures are prompted by pleasure and pain is to invert the true ratio of feeling to conation, for pleasure and pain do not determine the striving but result from the conation.

Using this as his basis, McDougall sets up two fundamental laws concerning the relation of striving and feeling.

¹⁷Gardner LINDZEY, Handbook of Social Psychology, Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1954, p. 12.

THE CONATIVE-AFFECTIVE CORE

88

- "1. Pleasant feeling reinforces, sustains supports the striving process which gives rise to it, reacts upon it to intensify it, augments the energy of striving; and it favors the repetition of similar striving whenever on later occasions we find ourselves in a similar situation.
- "2. Unpleasant feeling checks and weakens striving, diverts it into other channels, leads us to modify our line of attack, to choose other means for working towards our goal; and it makes against the recurrence of striving along the same lines when any similar situation recurs."¹⁸

We would not have these interpretations looked upon as evidence of our belief that the various aspects we have discussed in the foregoing pages are separable parts of instinct. On the contrary, McDougall holds that knowing, striving, and feeling are conceptually distinguishable but inseparable. They "occur together in intimate interplay with one another."¹⁹ True, the concept of instinct can be analysed into its various component features, but this in no way detracts from its essential unity. Cognition, conation and affection must not be thought of as "special abilities but rather as implicit in and pervading all mental activity."²⁰

¹⁸William McDUGALL, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 138-9.

¹⁹Ibidem, p. 147-8.

²⁰Ibidem, p. 85-6.

CHAPTER IV

THE COGNITIVE DISPOSITION

Our analysis of the definition of instinct proposed by William McDougall made us cognizant of three essential and interrelated aspects: the cognitive, the conative, and the affective. In the previous chapter we attempted an examination of the last two named; it is our object in the remaining part of this work to penetrate into the nature of the cognitive, to determine its function in the total instinctive process, to relate it to the purposive nature of man, and to weigh its value in determining human conduct.

If the concept of instinct is to be used to its full potential, we must be aware of it as a cognitive-conative disposition which enables us to perceive certain objects and situations and likewise to behave adaptively towards them. According to McDougall, it is a common mistake of many authors to ignore the cognitive side of instinct and even to assume that instinctive actions are performed unconsciously. Herbert Spencer, for example, thought of instinct as a complex reflex which occurs as an immediate response to sensory stimulation without the interposition of consciousness. The Tropistic school makes instinct a purely physiological thing in which there is no cognition whatever

THE COGNITIVE DISPOSITION

90

on the part of the agent. All living matter reacts naturally to a stimulus, turning toward or away from specific objects in the environment. Professor Karl Groos leaves no uncertainty about his position for he says very categorically that "the idea of consciousness must be rigidly excluded from any definition of instinct which is to be of practical utility."¹ Claparede saw instinctive behavior as being "without knowledge of its aim nor of the relation which exists between this aim and the means employed to attain it."² Edouard Von Hartmann, for whom McDougall had great admiration, would seem to agree with Claparede to some extent. He has this to say, "the end of instinct is in each single case unconsciously willed and imagined by the individual, and the choice of means suitable to each special case unconsciously made."³ However, he adds a qualifying remark which links him more closely to McDougall; he indicates that it is his belief that the instinctive act itself is always vividly realized in consciousness.

In the theory which we are examining, the innate organization termed 'instinct' is a disposition, not only

¹William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 26.

²L. LITWINSKI, "Is There an Instinct of Possession" in British Journal of Psychology, July, 1942, p. 28-39.

³E. VON HARTMANN, The Philosophy of the Unconscious, New York: Harcourt & Brace, 2nd ed., 1931, p. 113.

THE COGNITIVE DISPOSITION

91

to act and to feel, but also to perceive the object of our action and feeling, "to perceptually discriminate those things towards which such reactions are demanded by the welfare of the species."⁴ It is a distinctly mental process. Among those who would agree substantially with McDougall, though there would be differences in detail, would be Hobhouse, Lloyd Morgan, James Drever, and in more recent times, Gordon Allport. Hobhouse proposes, albeit rather tentatively, two elements of consciousness: sensation, which is for him "the conscious accompaniment of a response to a stimulus by the nerve structure"; and feeling, "the conscious state associated with certain responses of the physical structure determined in the first instance by heredity."⁵ James Drever, writing in the same general period as McDougall, holds that instinct experience is essentially that of perceptual consciousness. He writes, "Psychologically, the only possible interpretation of instinctive behavior seems to be in terms of specific impulse determining specific act on presentation in perceptual consciousness of a specific situation."⁶

⁴William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 333-4.

⁵Ronald FLETCHER, Instinct in Man, New York: International Universities Press, 1957, p. 44.

⁶James DREVER, Instinct in Man, Cambridge: The University Press, 1917, p. 107.

THE COGNITIVE DISPOSITION

92

Our consideration of the nature of instinct showed it to be more than a mere reflex; consequently, this response to an object, indicated in the foregoing remarks, must be more than a crude sensation. It must involve distinct cognition in the form of sense perception. In any typical act of cognition, there is an impact made upon us by some object provided by our environmental situation, for any knowing or cognition is always a becoming aware of something. Crude sensation is effected by a mere response to a stimulus and leads to the apprehension of sensory qualities, such as, color, sound, texture, and the like. The response made in instinctive behavior, however, involves a synthesizing of many sense-impressions into a pattern through which the attributes of a unit object, event, or situation, become known. Such a synthesis is characteristic of perception. McDougall tells us that in a reaction invoked by some "complex conjunction or sequence of sense-impressions...we may infer...a synthetic activity which makes from a complex of sense-stimuli a unitary object."⁷

Through the conjunction of many sensations, the sensible object takes on a significance and becomes meaningful to us. It is as though a "psychical integration" correlates the perceived object with a feeling of

⁷William McDOUGALL, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 74.

THE COGNITIVE DISPOSITION

93

"worthwhileness." The stimulation of the sense organ has culminated in a spontaneous awareness that this is suited to our sensory nature, or that it is unsuited, and this is arrived at, not by way of judgment, but by an inner tension experienced by the organism at that time. Stimulus alone is not sufficient. There must also be some provision within to receive the impression. The nervous system must, therefore, be so structured as to condition such a conscious reaction.

Since the sense-impressions received must undergo a psychical elaboration and synthesis in order to be gathered into a synthetic unity, some pre-formed psycho-physical disposition, more or less complex, is necessary. In McDougall's system, this is an inherited innate neural organization that is held to prescribe both the form of the perception and the significance found in it. On the receptive side, the cognitive disposition, called the afferent inlet, consists of a system of neurons connected by sensory nerves with the external sense organ. Through this system, the unknown nervous energy flows in a pattern of waves up the sensory nerves, across the brain, and down the efferent nerves to the muscles and executive organs. It is a highly organized nervous mechanism that is especially adapted "to

THE COGNITIVE DISPOSITION

94

receive and elaborate the impulses initiated in the sense organ"⁸ by the external object.

But, we may object, many objects impinge constantly upon our sense organs without initiating instinctive behavior. This implies the capacity, then, of "attentively singling out and discriminatively perceiving objects or situations that demand instinctive reaction."⁹ Each species has its own perceptual world. In this perceptual feature is to be detected, therefore, a certain sensitivity to specific elements of the environment. Of a selective nature, the perceptual disposition is responsive to things appropriate to the instinctive experience of the moment, but remains relatively passive before other features of the perceptual world. Some internal condition must dispose the organism for its 'selective' responses which can be accounted for only if some appropriate perception directs the activity. To use McDougall's own words,

"The psycho-physical process...is initiated by a sense-impression which usually is but one of many sense-impressions received at the same time; and the fact that this one impression plays an altogether dominant part in determining the animal's behavior shows that its effects are peculiarly favored, that the nervous system is peculiarly fitted to receive and to respond to just that kind of impression.

⁸William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 28.

⁹Ibidem, p. 340.

THE COGNITIVE DISPOSITION

95

The impression must be supposed to excite... a sensation or a complex of sensations that has significance or meaning for the animal; hence we must regard the instinctive process in its cognitive aspect as distinctly of the nature of perception, however rudimentary."¹⁰

Thus there is established by nature an innate link between a propensity and a cognitive ability, so that the latter recognizes all members of a certain class which become the 'releasers' activating the impulse. "Instinctive perception is essentially the discrimination of objects only as representatives of their class or species."¹¹

While maintaining that this is definitely a perceptual experience, McDougall recognizes that it is to be distinguished from ordinary perception by the meaningfulness it has for the subject. Since this significance is experienced both by men and by animals, it is necessary that it be a sensory evaluation. He thought that a very simple kind of perception of the order of anoetic sentience anteceded the activation of the instinct. However, we must keep in mind that even the simplest act of perception is a mental act, and, as such, cannot exist independently of a mental impulse. Consequently, even in this simple knowing or perceiving, the instinct is already at work. This once

¹⁰William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 24.

¹¹IDEM, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 199.

THE COGNITIVE DISPOSITION

96

more emphasizes the inseparability in reality of the cognitive and the conative except in conceptual thinking. Moreover, the sense-impressions stir us to activity and we look upon them as signs of some thing. This activity may be the mere apprehension of the thing; or it may be a coming aware of the parts within the object so that we become cognizant of their relations to one another; and finally, we may see the relation between objects and by this bring into conscious focus other objects similarly related.

What can be said of this specific object? McDougall speaks of the object as stimulating perception and thus initiating instinctive action; "Clearly an animal is interested in all those things that are capable of evoking any of its instinctive impulses...interested in objects in so far as the objects are of kinds that evoke their instinctive impulses...."¹² He speaks of it, too, as the means of defining instinct. An instinct is defined "by the nature of the objects and situations that evoke it...."¹³ Yet always he is vague as to precisely "what" the object is. To begin with, the term 'object' must be understood in the widest sense so that it includes material things, organisms, and situations, for, in many instincts, there can be very

¹²William McDOUGALL, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 224.

¹³IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 416.

THE COGNITIVE DISPOSITION

97

different native excitants affecting different senses. These, usually indifferent at first, suddenly loom up as a desirable means of fulfilling a newly felt need, and the corresponding instinct is excited. As McDougall writes, a given instinct is excited "whenever the presence of an appropriate object coincides with the appropriate organic state of the creature."¹⁴

However, when describing the constitution and arousal of specific instincts, McDougall becomes somewhat more detailed in speaking of objects. Writing of the instinct of flight and its accompanying emotion of fear, for example, he says, "in man and most animals the instinct is capable of being excited by any sudden loud noise independently of all experience of danger or harm associated with such loud noises."¹⁵ He singles out, as the native excitant of curiosity, objects "similar to, yet perceptibly different from' the habitual objects of one's environment;¹⁶ while he attributes the provocation of the tender emotion not to the child but to the child's expression of distress. McDougall seems to use the word 'object' in a rather restricted sense in his discussion of the instinct of pugnacity which, he

¹⁴William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 27.

¹⁵Ibidem, p. 30.

¹⁶Ibidem, p. 52.

THE COGNITIVE DISPOSITION

98

says, has "no specific object or objects."¹⁷ This instinct is excited whenever the creature is obstructed in the free exercise of any other instinctive activity. The condition of its excitement is, we may say, a situation, and, as we saw earlier, the term 'object' interpreted loosely includes situations. Paradoxically, McDougall himself uses the term 'situation' as a native excitant of the instinct of self-display, "the situation that more particularly excites this instinct is the presence of spectators to whom one feels oneself for any reason, or in any way, superior...."¹⁸ Objects of this kind are the native excitants of the instincts.

Now, while McDougall cites some specific objects for certain instincts, he also indicates that this power of instigating action is not exclusively theirs. Writing in his Introduction to Social Psychology, he says,

"The instinctive reactions become capable of being initiated not only by the perception of objects of the kind that directly excite the innate disposition, natural or native excitants of the instinct, but also by ideas of such objects and by perceptions and by ideas of objects of other kinds."¹⁹

¹⁷William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 51.

¹⁸Ibidem, p. 54-55.

¹⁹Ibidem, p. 27-28.

THE COGNITIVE DISPOSITION

99

This is possible only because the perceptual feature is not rigidly established by heredity but is highly modifiable. Let us look next at the various ways in which our tendencies become associated with many originally indifferent objects.

The first acquired excitant is the idea of the native stimulus. The perception of the idea of a food one likes may arouse the instinct just as effectively as the food itself if it were present. The second way is by cognitive accumulation. As a result of experience, many associations are formed which become capable of activating instinct. Objects or situations which are themselves indifferent have been associated with a native excitant. In time, because of this contiguity, these objects acquire the power of directly exciting the instinct even without reproducing the idea of the original excitant. For instance, the instinct of aggression is aroused by injury. Now, the injury was inflicted by some specific person whose visual impression was indifferent as regards the instinct. However, by association with the injury, the visual impression of that person becomes capable of directly exciting the movements and the emotion of the aggressive instinct. Moreover, this is done without any recall of the actual relation between injury and injured.

THE COGNITIVE DISPOSITION

100

A third method is to be found in the reproduction of similars. An object of a very different class, but having resemblances to the original stimulus, even if these be faint, may, in virtue of any one of those features, initiate an instinctive response. What is more, such excitement can take place even if one is not conscious of the similarity.

Finally, each instinct is rendered capable of being excited on the perceptions of the bodily expressions of the excitement of the same instinct in other persons. This, as we saw earlier, is the foundation of all sympathy. In his Introduction to Social Psychology, McDougall tells us that "each of the principal instincts has a special perceptual inlet (or recipient afferent part) that is adapted to receive and to elaborate the sense-impressions made by the expression of the same instinct in other animals of the same species."²⁰ In these ways new afferent inlets, independent of the innate afferent inlet, have been established.

The innate inlets are but little specialized and may also undergo change by way of specification. Through experience, creatures learn to discriminate among native stimuli those which are helpful or harmful and those which are not. In this way the inlet becomes more specialized,

²⁰William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 180.

THE COGNITIVE DISPOSITION

101

and creatures learn to neglect stimuli which are not accompanied by pleasant or harmful effects. As an example, we may consider the instinct of flight, which has as its native excitant any loud noise. However, many such noises bring no harmful effects in their wake. Through experience of this fact, the creature learns to discriminate and so to neglect those noises which have no harmful effects. Thus it would seem that a natural stimulus has lost its power to activate. It is one of the difficulties in McDougall's system and one to which he offers no solution, a strange attitude when we stop to consider, for he has written, "I wish especially to insist upon...the immediacy with which the emotional response follows upon perception, if the perceptual disposition involved is a part of the instinctive disposition or if it has become connected with its central part as an acquired afferent inlet."²¹

Furthermore, these new afferent inlets are capable of exciting instinctive action independently of the original inlet and of each other. "We may infer that such an instinct has several innately organized afferent inlets, through each of which its central and efferent parts may be excited without its other afferent parts being involved in the

²¹William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 45.

THE COGNITIVE DISPOSITION

102

excitement."²² On this account, it is to the possibility of acquiring such new perceptual inlets that we look for an explanation of the adaptation that comes about through learning.

"The acquisition of new perceptual inlets by instinctive dispositions...seems to occur abundantly...and to be the principal mode in which they (animals and men) profit by experience and learn to adapt their behavior to a greater variety of the objects of their environment than is provided for by their purely innate dispositions."²³

Consequently, as an outcome of such associations and modifications, perception may be considerably broadened.

This perceptual feature indicates a sensitivity to specific elements of the environment. But the impressions created by these elements must be more than passively received if they are to evoke a reaction. There must be a factor of meaning which enters in. In every perception, the object must be appraised as good, bad, or indifferent to the perceiver before it leads to action. "The impression must be supposed to excite, not merely detailed changes in the animal's field of sensation, but a sensation or a complex of sensations that has significance or meaning for the animal."²⁴

²²William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 32.

²³Ibidem, p. 33.

²⁴Ibidem, p. 24.

THE COGNITIVE DISPOSITION

103

It is through this meaningfulness that the instinctive impulse is released. The good and the bad can, but do not necessarily, arouse the appropriate instinct. Those which are judged to be indifferent or useless will arouse no impulse and the perceiver will move on to something else. An object usually indifferent may take on a desirable character when the organism experiences a need not felt before. Consequently, while instinct is an innate disposition, nevertheless, it requires an appraisal of a concrete object or situation as suited or unsuited to our nature. Now, this is not a property of ordinary perception. Yet, it must be a sensory power, for the estimate is a spontaneous awareness, a direct and immediate evaluation, not an intellectual apprehension of good or evil as such. We believe that the remarks of Klubertanz in this regard aptly describe the thought of McDougall on this ability. He says,

"We find in ourselves a spontaneous awareness of certain sensible objects as suited to our sensory nature, of others as unsuited. (This is not an intellectual apprehension of good, or useful, or evil as such.) This sensory cognition is not of the order of judgment; it is merely a conscious reaction conditioned by the very structure of our nervous system. Consequent upon this estimation of suitability or unsuitability are the feelings of desire, fear, satisfaction, which in their turn lead to action."²⁵

²⁵George KLUBERTANZ, "The Internal Senses in the Process of Cognition," in The Modern Schoolman, January, 1941, Vol. 18, No. 2, p. 28-29.

THE COGNITIVE DISPOSITION

104

It is our belief that McDougall includes such an ability to estimate in the cognitive aspect of instinct as a perception allied to, but not identical with, ordinary perception. Moreover, this cognitive disposition is innately linked with the conative disposition.

The assumption of such a discriminatory ability is necessary to explain the subsequent modification of behavior by means of intelligent control. Unless the subject is in some way capable of distinguishing what is harmful or harmless, any given object would always arouse an instinctive response or would never arouse one, as the case may be. Once we admit the existence of this estimation, however, modification by experience is readily understandable.

This element of cognition was one of the most controversial aspects of McDougall's theory. As was indicated in the first pages of this chapter, there were those who very much opposed attributing cognition in any form to instinctive action. To many, the positing of innate dispositions to perceive objects of special kinds carried with it a tone reminiscent of innate ideas. Nevertheless, McDougall finds support in others among his colleagues, some of whose ideas we would expose briefly.

William James, though somewhat more mechanistic in his approach than McDougall, declares that "in the animal,

it [the perceptual feature] is a particular sensation or perception or image which calls them [instinctive actions] forth."²⁶ Like McDougall, he introduces an element of cognition which is an awareness of the significance of the object for the organism at that moment, and to this cognition, too, he attributes the possibility of modification even in the animal. He goes still further when he accepts only the first instance of instinctive response as being without foresight of its end.

"Every instinctive act, in an animal with memory, must cease to be 'blind' after being once repeated, and must be accompanied with foresight of its 'end' just so far as that end may have fallen under the animal's cognizance."²⁷

While Lloyd Morgan looks at and defines instinct from a biological point of view, there are, nevertheless, psychological overtones implicit in his position. He is in accord with the theory that the arousal of instinctive experience is dependent partly upon internal factors and partly upon external stimuli. This is tantamount to saying that there must be some inner tension disposing the organism to react to appropriate perceptions. Like James, he speaks of the spontaneity of the instinctive reaction and inclines to the view that modification occurs through

²⁶ William JAMES, Principles of Psychology, New York: Macmillan, 1890, Vol. II, p. 384.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 390.

THE COGNITIVE DISPOSITION

106

experience on the second and subsequent performances.

Implicit in this is McDougall's theory that the object in instinctive action has 'meaning' for the individual, but it seems, too, to imply that that 'meaning' is acquired because of the 'felt-satisfaction' in the first experience.

For James Drever, there can be no doubt that instinctive experience has all the characteristics of perceptual consciousness: an apprehended object or situation gives rise to a feeling of 'worth-whileness' which initiates the impulse. He sees the element of interest as a feeling dependent upon the relation between object and impulse. His position concerning the relation between instinct and intelligence is in accord with that of McDougall: there is no dichotomy between instinct and intelligence. Experience always involves both but in varying degrees.

In words slightly different from McDougall, Edouard Von Hartmann offers the same explanation. He writes,

"Each instinct waits upon a motive, which... signifies the occurrence of appropriate external circumstances making possible the attainment of the end by those means which instinct wills.... The motive appears in the mind in the form of sensuous presentation...."²⁸

²⁸Edouard Von Hartmann, The Philosophy of the Unconscious, New York: Harcourt & Brace, 2nd ed., 1931, p. 83.

CHAPTER V

FUNCTION OF THE COGNITIVE

Having concluded, in our previous chapters, to the presence of a cognitive factor in instinctive action, and having examined its nature, we move now to a consideration of the precise role played by cognition in the functioning of Instinct.

Our attention is drawn first to cognition as an "initiator" of action. Instinctive action is the result of a psycho-physical process in which meaningful sense-impressions initiate the action. As McDougall says, "Instinctive action is normally initiated by an activity of perception, more or less complex...."¹ The same thought is expressed in his Social Psychology in which we read that "the cognitive processes through which any instinctive process may be initiated exhibit a great complication and variety...."² In the same work, he claims that "Mental process seems to be always a process of striving or conation initiated and guided by a process or act of knowing, of

¹William McDUGALL, Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 2nd ed., 1924, p. 99.

²IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, University Paperback series, 1960, p. 29.

apprehension;"³ Finally, and very categorically, in the same work he writes, "the function of cognition is to initiate action and to guide it in detail."⁴

These statements may seem to imply that the sense-impressions of themselves evoke action, thus making of the whole sequence a purely mechanical event. If such were the case, we would rightly question the whole concept of instinctive action as distinct from reflex activity. Plainly, the stimulus of itself does not account for the resulting bodily behavior. We are faced at various times with the same object and, consequently, with the same sense-impression, yet action in no way follows. "Instinctive behavior of a particular kind cannot always be evoked even by the most perfect application of the specific key.... Only at certain times do the specific objects...excite the instinctive responses."⁵ There must be some internal condition which makes the organism responsive to certain objects. This same opinion is held by some modern psychologists, among whom we may cite Gordon Allport who maintains that "the urge quality of the instinct is self-contained

³William McDougall, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, University Paperback series, 1960, p. 308.

⁴Ibidem, p. 310.

⁵IDEM, Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 2nd ed., 1924, p. 101-2.

within the organism (not resident in the stimulus instigator...)."6

Between stimulation of the sense organ and ensuing action, there must be intermediate conditions, one of which is the presence of the conative tendency. "It is probable that all instinctive action depends in some degree on appetite...."7 It is by arousing this conative tendency that cognition initiates action.

"The subject recognizes or thinks of some object. This evokes in him an impulse to effect some change, if only fuller cognition, which either satisfies the impulse (when the process terminates) or fails to do so, when the subject continues to strive, varying the direction and nature of his efforts...."8

The question then arises as to the manner in which a sense-impression stirs the conative tendency into action.

"At some point there is a spark or flash of perceptual experience, a psychical relating or integrating of particular impulse and sensation determined by the situation at the moment."9

Here we must be mindful of the fact that each instinct is so structured as to include dispositions of a perceptual sort

⁶Gordon ALLPORT, Becoming, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955, p. 16.

⁷William McDOUGALL, Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 2nd ed., 1924, p. 101-2.

⁸Ibidem, p. 265-66.

⁹James DREVER, Instinct in Man, Cambridge: The University Press, 1917, p. 96.

FUNCTION OF THE COGNITIVE

110

by means of which stimuli adequate for the arousal of the instinct receive attention. Implicit in this concept is an ability to assess things, to select from an environment those objects appropriate to the actual experience, spontaneously apprehending each as suitable to nature.

"The structure of an instinct generally involves one or more perceptual distinctions which render the possessor of the instinct capable of attentively singling out and discriminately perceiving objects of the kind that demand the instinctive reaction."¹⁰

The analysis of the cognitive aspect of Instinct which was carried out in the last chapter showed it to be of the nature of perception. But McDougall recognized a functional difference between this and ordinary perception, the distinction resting in the realization -- in instinctive perception -- that the object or situation is significant or meaningful to me. Now, in Aristotle's terms this would be sensation, nothing more, for he regards it as a capacity for discrimination, "a form of organic response which enables the creature to make the distinction necessary for its various adaptations."¹¹ However, in the refinement of philosophy since the time of Aristotle, sensation has "lost" its estimative power. The senses are not now thought to be capable

¹⁰William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, paperback series, 1960, p. 29.

¹¹G. S. BRETT, Psychology Ancient and Modern, New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1963, p. 3.

FUNCTION OF THE COGNITIVE

111

of evaluating their own functioning. Consequently, we must postulate some function to mediate the appraisal of an object directly and immediately. This is a function of the cognitive in instinctive behavior.

"Instinct is not only an innate disposition to act and to feel in a more or less specific manner, but is also an innate disposition to perceive or perceptually discriminate those things towards which such reactions are demanded by the welfare of the species."¹²

Nor is this assessment reached by way of intellectual judgment.

"This sensory cognition is not of the order of judgment; it is merely a conscious reaction conditioned by the very structure of our nervous system. Consequent upon this estimation of suitability or unsuitability are the feelings of desire, fear, satisfaction which in their turn lead to action...."¹³

From this we can conclude that the organism is internally disposed to react to specific objects in its environment with definite characteristics and emotions. Each sense perception, therefore, is capable of culminating in an appetitive reaction, "each sense-presentation thus becomes capable of arousing some emotional and cognitive excitement"

¹²William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 333-4.

¹³IDEM, Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 98-9.

FUNCTION OF THE COGNITIVE

112

but each will do so only if a factor of meaningfulness has entered in to release the impulse.¹⁴

But meaningfulness is not arrived at in a single sensation. It requires a sequence of sense-impressions synthesized into an orderly whole. It is the influence of this orderly whole on the internal state of the organism that supplies the driving power in setting up and directing action. "Many sense-impressions (simultaneous and successive)...are gathered up in some synthetic unity within which they all play their parts in the guidance of action...."¹⁵

And so behavior is rightly said to be,

"not merely a response to a stimulus; it is an action guided by an appreciation of the (shape) of the object, an appreciation gained through a series of sense-impressions... synthesized and related into an appreciation of the whole."¹⁶

And so with McDougall we may conclude that "The final synthesis or unification is the function of a 'cognizant' power which discriminates objects only in their relation to us...."¹⁷

¹⁴William McDOUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 32-3.

¹⁵IDEM, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, 8th ed., p. 44.

¹⁶IDEM, Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 75.

¹⁷Ibidem, p. 98-9.

FUNCTION OF THE COGNITIVE

113

Once the meaningfulness of an object or situation has been established, how is the impulse released? The answer would seem to lie in a manifestation of energy. As was seen in a previous chapter, latent energy in chemical form is stored within the tissues. In the absence of appropriate releasing situations, this energy has been building up in the central nervous system, accumulates there, and a tension is felt. The nature of this energy is such that it is capable of conversion into some active form. The perceptual process is equipped with "receptory correlates" which match the various sense perceptions. When the energy has been built up, the specific sense perception activates the "receptory correlate," the potential energy is transformed, guided into appropriate channels and the particular instinct is released. "Each instinctive action has its own releasing mechanism which is activated by a sign-stimulus or releaser."¹⁸

Thus, behavior is a discharge of energy, the dynamic factor in all human activity. It is the liberation and direction of this energy that seems to be the essence of instinctive activity, and the stronger the impulse to action, the greater is the flow of such liberated energy.

¹⁸ Ronald FLETCHER, Instinct in Man, New York: International Universities Press, 1957, p. 282.

In The Energies of Men, McDougall describes this energy as

"not merely energy in general or a special kind of energy but an energy which is directed to a goal, which works towards that goal and is brought to rest only in the attainment of it; an energy which activates the ability and brings it into the service of the tendency as a means towards its end or goal."¹⁹

That this energy which activates is an energy directed towards a goal cannot be seriously questioned if one considers the total absorption of the organism and the persistence of its efforts to reach that goal. We must, however, determine the direction of the energy. Our first impulse might be to seek an explanation in the efferent or motor abilities. But how, then, could one account for the diverse executive abilities used on different occasions to reach one and the same goal? The answer must be sought elsewhere and we suggest that it lies in the cognitive abilities. "The cognitive system that grows up from instinctive roots serves to direct the energies that spring from these roots...."²⁰ We noted above that energy is guided into channels in such a way that the goal is approached. We maintain that this guidance is effected through cognitive

¹⁹William McDOUGALL, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 86-7.

²⁰IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 443.

awareness. McDougall states that,

"the movements are guided by perceptual activities that imply cognitive abilities of greater or less complexity and involve the synthesis of many sense-impressions and relations between them."²¹

Through this synthesis, we interpret the sense-impressions as signs of something; we become aware even though vaguely of the situation and of the goal. The more detailed and full is the awareness of the goal, the more specialized and adjusted will be the behavior. Where appetite alone seems to arouse instinct, activity is no more than a random search for an object adequate to direct true instinctive behavior. McDougall leaves us no doubt concerning the guiding role of cognition in his theory. In both the Outline of Psychology and the Introduction to Social Psychology, he formulates his position clearly: "The hermetic theory asserts that conation...is immediately determined by cognition."²² And "We may validly regard our cognitive systems as directive agencies...."²³

Finally, it is a function of the cognitive to make possible the modification of the instinct. The cognitive

²¹IDEM, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 115-6.

²²IDEM, Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 267-9.

²³IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 443.

FUNCTION OF THE COGNITIVE

116

factor may undergo very great elaboration and differentiation. Innate dispositions provide for response to specific objects, but, as was seen elsewhere,²⁴ these original afferent inlets may undergo specialization and new perceptual dispositions may be acquired. Reaction to a greater variety of objects of the environment results as objects and situations which in virtue of inborn organization did not activate an instinct come to do so. Thus, it is through changes in perceptual inlets that experience becomes profitable and behavior adaptable.

"The instinctive reactions become capable of being initiated not only by the perception of objects of the kind which directly excite the innate disposition, the natural or native excitants of the instinct, but also by ideas of such objects and by perceptions and by ideas of objects of other kinds."²⁵

Though the "sentiment" will be treated fully in the following chapter, still it seems proper at this point to indicate that here also cognition is recognized as the instigator: "The sentiment, like instinct, consists of a propensity linked to a cognitive ability through which it is brought into play."²⁶ As instigator, then, it brings into play the propensity and engenders the emotional tendency.

²⁴Present work. Chapter IV, p.100-101.

²⁵William McDOUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 27.

²⁶IDEM, The Energies of Men, London, Methuen, 1950, p. 206.

FUNCTION OF THE COGNITIVE

117

From the investigation we have carried out, the only possible interpretation of the function of cognition in instinct as seen by William McDougall is that of initiator and guide.

CHAPTER VI

THE SENTIMENTS

William McDougall has frequently been criticised for explaining all human behavior in terms of instinct. However, while insisting that the instincts cannot be eradicated, he does not hold that they persist throughout the life-time of the individual in their original form. In answer to his attackers, he has pointed out that in his Social Psychology he taught that

"few of the activities of the adult man spring directly from his native propensities; the great majority derive their energy only indirectly from those sources by way of the sentiments within which the propensities are organized."¹

Therefore, before moving on to our final chapter and its examination of the purposive nature of all action as elaborated in McDougall's Hormic Psychology, we shall first give our attention to these sentiments.

The theory of sentiments which McDougall proposes is one in which the propensities become progressively organized into systems, that is, sentiments, which, in turn,

¹William McDUGALL, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 227, footnote.

THE SENTIMENTS

119

are responsible for whatever consistency, continuity, and order are found in the appetitive and emotional life.

"Sentiments give steadiness and consistency to conduct."²

Each sentiment, he writes, "is an organized system of emotional dispositions centred about the idea of some object."³ Expanding this definition in a later chapter of the same work, he describes the sentiment as

"a system in which a cognitive disposition is linked with one or more emotional or affective-conative dispositions to form a structural unit that functions as one whole system...."⁴

Three elements can be noted in this definition:

(a) the functional unit; (b) the linkage of the instinctive and cognitive dispositions; and (c) the particular object.

The specific structure of the functional unit will be explored shortly. For the moment we would show only that this is a "functional" unit. The link between the cognitive and conative dispositions is such that the perception of the particular object mentioned in (c) above brings the conative tendency into play so that the individual experiences certain feelings and wishes in regard to the object.

²Ibidem, p. 225.

³IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, University Paperback Series, 1960, p. 137.

⁴Ibidem, p. 437.

THE SENTIMENTS

120

"A sentiment involves an individual tendency to experience certain emotions and desires in relation to some particular object."⁵

In McDougall's concept of sentiment, we see again the importance given to the cognitive which he regards as the centre of the sentiment: "The centre of any such system (of any sentiment) is the cognitive ability or disposition corresponding to the object of the sentiment."⁶

This cognitive disposition is the essential link between the various propensities, each of which is directed towards the one object. We have an illustration of this in the sentiment of hatred.

"Where two or more emotional dispositions become conjoined in the structure of one sentiment, as when fear and anger are combined in the sentiment of hate, we have to regard these two dispositions as connected not directly with one another, but only indirectly through the association of each with the particular object, of this particular sentiment of hatred."⁷

This one object may be any one of a number of things: persons, places, material things, abstract, and general objects, even sentiments themselves. In fact, "anything that

⁵ IDEM, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 419.

⁶ IDEM, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 223.

⁷ IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, preface, p. xi.

THE SENTIMENTS

121

can be thought of as a distinct object may become the object of a sentiment."⁸ It is only necessary that it evoke in us conative tendency and emotional excitement. Moreover, any conative disposition may be linked with, and brought into play by, varied cognitive dispositions but "each sentiment for each object is unique."⁹

Earlier in this work¹⁰ we examined the various modifications which instinct undergoes and we listed among them the combination of instincts into sentiments. The question arises as to the origin and structure of the sentiment. Is it innate? Inherited? Acquired? McDougall is most explicit in proclaiming it to be an acquired unit but one which is derived from the instincts in the course of individual experience. "Sentiments are complex mental growths peculiar to each individual begotten of innate constitution by circumstance."¹¹ And a sentiment does not suddenly emerge as a developed reality. It appears gradually, building up slowly through many emotional experiences and activities until it has become a functional unit of the mind.

⁸IDEM, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 228.

⁹IDEM, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 431.

¹⁰Present work, Chapter II, p.62

¹¹William McDUGALL, Frontiers of Psychology, London: Nesbit & Co., Ltd., 1934, p. 156.

THE SENTIMENTS

122

The basis on which the development of this fundamental unit rests is, McDougall writes, "a system of nerve paths by means of which the disposition of the idea of the object of the sentiment is functionally connected with several emotional dispositions."¹² It would be well for us to note that "the disposition of the idea of the object" mentioned here is precisely that disposition which McDougall elsewhere names "the cognitive disposition."¹³ This new unit is not, we must bear in mind, a link between a single conative and a single cognitive disposition. Such a structure would be simply an instinct in McDougall's terminology. Rather more than one conative-affective disposition become related to the same person, object, or situation, repeatedly evoking emotional response, and through the union of these originally separated tendencies, the development of the sentiment takes place.

The two dispositions, the cognitive and the emotional, are so related that the latter remains, as in any instinctive reaction, the driving force or energy sustaining life and activity. However, this conjoining of two or more emotional dispositions is not brought about directly by connection

¹²IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 108.

¹³IDEM, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 419.

THE SENTIMENTS

123

with one another but, as we have seen, indirectly by association with the specific object. "The conative dispositions of the two instincts are not directly connected with one another; they become parts of one system only because each becomes connected with the same cognitive disposition."¹⁴ It is this cognitive ability that makes each sentiment a unique formation for its uniqueness corresponds to the uniqueness of the object. For this reason, it is rightly said that the cognitive ability is the essential nucleus and distinctive feature of any sentiment.

The number of such structural units that can be found in any individual mind is indefinite, for the relation of conative dispositions with any particular object in no way inhibits their linkage with any other cognitive disposition.

"The structure of the normal adult mind comprises many such sentiments of all degrees of strength and complexity from what is called a passing fancy or aversion to strong, enduring and highly complex sentiments of love and hate."¹⁵

Each such object which brings the conative-affective disposition into play can form, as we saw above, a distinct and separate sentiment, unique in its composition. "Each sentiment is a unique formation, which, whether it be relatively

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 420.

¹⁵ IDEM, Psychology, London: Methuen, 1912, p. 120-1.

THE SENTIMENTS

124

simple or highly complex, is a structural and functional unit of the total organization we call the mind."¹⁶

Once the sentiment has been developed, the links set up become permanent features of the mind "which though subject to further growth or decay may endure throughout life."¹⁷

Let us, then, examine the course of this growth and of this decay. It is possible for any formed sentiment to remain latent and such disuse weakens it. On the other hand, the more frequently a sentiment is put to work, the stronger it becomes. Constant contact with an object leads to the incorporation of more and more propensities which, in turn, results in a more complex sentiment. This may be illustrated by an example, used by William McDougall in his Outline of Psychology, in which a small dog becomes the object of the sentiment of love.

"In this instance, the tender impulse of the protective or parental instinct is first directed to the object in the forms of pitiful ministrations, and is evoked by the same object again and again. The affective-conative disposition from which it springs becomes in consequence firmly linked with the growing cognitive system of knowledge and belief about your little friend. But the system becomes more complex by the linkage to it of other conative dispositions.

¹⁶IDEM, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 223.

¹⁷Ibidem, p. 222.

THE SENTIMENTS

125

Especially your responsibility for the dog requires you to exert authority over him; and his submission to your commands gratifies your self-assertive impulse; so that this disposition can hardly fail to enter into the sentiment. Again the dog's companionship brings into play and gratifies your need of company, that is to say, your gregarious impulse; and his unfailing responsiveness to your emotions and moods sets up between you the relation of active sympathy."¹⁸

But it is not only through the propensities that a sentiment grows. The cognitive disposition, too, may become one of great complexity. Because of a sentiment, a person could well develop so strong an interest in an object that he would be continually occupied in trying to build up a rich system of knowledge about it.

"This cognitive disposition may (and in case of any strong and enduring sentiment is likely to) grow into an extensive system of abilities (a system of knowledge or 'ideas' concerning that object.)"¹⁹

In this way, one acquires a large differentiated cognitive system, a system which McDougall likens to a tree which "springing from a few roots...may grow very large and complex, sending out many branches, twigs and leaves."²⁰

¹⁸ IDEM, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen 1924, p. 422-3.

¹⁹ IDEM, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 223.

²⁰ IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 438.

THE SENTIMENTS

126

The life-history of the sentiments built up by any one person is such that while some are dying away for lack of stimulus, others are decaying slowly, and yet still others are taking on new strength. With this richness of development, these last assume new dominance which makes of them master-sentiments capable of determining "the trend of a man's whole life and activity, constantly growing stronger through use."²¹

The increasing strength of the instinct is, perhaps, more readily acceptable than its decline, especially if one thinks of the enduring quality McDougall assigns to it. Nonetheless, it is, like any other living organism, susceptible to decay, and inhibition is one means of bringing this about. The interplay of the sentiments, with their accompanying impulses and desires, is a factor to be reckoned with in human conduct. A master-sentiment often gains such dominance that it completely inhibits opposed impulses. In doing so, it increases its own strength by absorbing some of the energy of the weaker impulse. Deprived of this driving force, the latter is generally reduced and falls into a state of decline. Likely, it is this process of inhibition which allows men of character to live in a manner consistent with the high ideals that are so much a part of them.

²¹IDEM, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 225.

THE SENTIMENTS

127

Although the variety of our sentiments is inexhaustible, there are three main classes into which they fall; the concrete particular, the concrete general, and the abstract sentiments. As one would expect, the concrete particular are the first and most readily developed. The growth of sentiments for abstract and general objects follows upon the same pattern and lays the foundation for what we shall later see as moral conduct.

The above categories are established with reference to the object of the sentiment. We can also classify sentiments according to the nature of the emotional dispositions they contain. In naming them in this way, however, we must bear in mind that several very different sentiments may involve the same emotional dispositions and so such terms are necessarily very general. "Each stands for a large class of sentiments of varied, though similar composition."²² This system of nomenclature enables us to denote as "love," "liking," "affection," those sentiments in which the fundamental tendency is to seek the object, finding pleasure in its presence. Similarly, the names, "hate," "dislike," "aversion," signify the sentiments which turn us away from objects whose presence causes pain. Apart from these two

²²IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 138.

THE SENTIMENTS

128

main classes, McDougall recognizes a third variety which he says is "primarily the self-regarding sentiment, and is, perhaps, best called respect."²³

In a work of this nature, we cannot enter into a detailed study of each of the many sentiments that play a part in the life and conduct of man. We shall write briefly of some of the more typical and we presume upon the indulgence of the reader when and where our presentation may seem incomplete.

Typical of the sentiments is that of love with the tender emotion and protective impulse that are its principal elements. Other constituents, however, enter into its composition so that in various situations it may include not only joy, but even fear and anger, should the loved object be threatened. This is possible because the sentiment by its very nature

"generates a great range of emotional experiences and sustained effort of the most varied kind, all having in common one feature only, and they are all connected directly or indirectly with the one object and...are directed to promote the welfare of that object."²⁴

²³Ibidem, p. 138.

²⁴IDEM, Introduction to Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 226.

THE SENTIMENTS

129

What we are saying, then, is that love is an enduring tendency which makes us liable to experience, in the presence of the loved object or when faced with the idea of it, emotions varying with the environmental circumstances. Once a sentiment has developed, the affective states we experience may become rather complex through the fusion of different emotions. Anger tempered by the tender emotion results in reproach, and this is particularly the case where the sentiment of love is thought to be reciprocated. A state of anxiety or solicitude is realized where the threat of injury to the loved object gives rise to pain which mingles with the tender emotion. Jealousy is excited when a third person serves as a check to the regard one wishes for oneself, for rarely does love not demand reciprocation.

Much of what has been said of love can be applied analogously to hatred, another typical sentiment. Here, anger, fear, or disgust is the dominant constituent leading us to shrink from the object of our sentiment. The tender emotion essential to love has no place in the sentiment of hatred. Nevertheless, as McDougall says,

"the object of these two very different sentiments love and hatred may arouse many of the

THE SENTIMENTS

130

same emotions, and that the two sentiments comprise emotional dispositions that are in part identical...."²⁴

The fusion of emotions within the sentiment of hatred can produce such complex emotional states as those of vengeance or contempt.

Just as it is possible to build up a sentiment around some material object, so, too, one can organize the emotional and conative dispositions about the self, and the importance of the sentiment thus formed cannot be overlooked. "It is the main source of some of our most vivid emotional experiences, of our most intense and sustained efforts, and of our most acute satisfactions and sufferings."²⁵ This sentiment of self-regard has as its essential constituents the self-assertive and submissive impulses.

The development of self-regard can only take place within the social context. We do not have a fully-formed innate concept of "me" but rather one which becomes enriched under the guidance of those we trust. The system of beliefs about the "self" must be interpreted to include the many objects and events that have been injected into the very fibre of our being. Nor is it only the cognitive

²⁴IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 107.

²⁵IDEM, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 233.

THE SENTIMENTS

131

disposition. that has social implications. The conative disposition, too, is fundamentally social, for it is evoked not merely by the contemplation of self but by every social contact in the interplay between self and society.

"We are apt to be very sensitive to the collective voice of society, of the group, of public opinion, however expressed.... To have the sentiment [self-regard] in any form is 'ipso facto' to be sensitive to public opinion."²⁶

The establishment of proper balance between the self-assertive and submissive impulses is productive of self-respect, wherein positive and negative self-feeling are rightly blended. The term "self-respect" does not imply the exclusion of respect for another. McDougall admits the possibility of the latter, viewing it as a "sympathetic reflection of his self-respect,"²⁷ for only those who display self-respect become the object of our respect. It does not always happen that this balance is attained and such states as pride and vanity result. Nor is the balance easily achieved. Positive and negative self-feeling are opposed emotions between which there is a struggle rather than a fusion -- a struggle which could conceivably have as its end result the states of bashfulness or shame.

²⁶IDEM, Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 431.

²⁷IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 138.

THE SENTIMENTS

132

Another class of sentiment emerges from the attraction or aversion we experience for abstract objects, for the various qualities of conduct and character, and these are the moral sentiments. These sentiments are acquired in either of two ways. In the first place, the actions of those about us repeatedly evoke in us various emotional responses. Gradually we recognize particular qualities in those actions, at first as qualities of the person acting, but soon as abstract qualities which become capable of moving us however they are thought of or encountered. Sympathetic contagion is the other principal way of developing moral sentiments. The emotional reactions of those persons whom we respect or admire evoke, by emotional contagion, similar responses in us.

"No man could acquire by means of his own unaided reflections and unguided emotions any considerable array of moral sentiments; still less could he acquire in that way any consistent and lofty system of them...."²⁸

Since moral sentiments are acquired in this manner, the moral tradition built up in any nation or group takes on prime importance. This tradition has been formed by the influence of the moral leaders of the group over the course of history and continues to live on in the moral leaders of

²⁸Ibidem, p. 188.

THE SENTIMENTS

132

the day. The vast majority of men absorb from it, in varying degrees and strengths, their own moral sentiments.

Moral sentiments have a quality peculiar to them -- they are likely to be bipolar. Temperament and personal experience play a major role in determining whether the positive sentiment of love or the negative sentiment of hate is to predominate. Even if we love one quality, we usually learn to hate, at least in some measure, its opposite, and the manifestation of this hatred is apt to be more energetic than our positive efforts on behalf of esteemed qualities.

Through the development of the abstract moral sentiments, the individual's moral development is effected and his moral principles are formed. McDougall considers the ideal of character to be "the synthesis or harmonized system of moral sentiments."²⁹ He sees this harmonious system as an essential condition of strong character, which is so structured that the cognitive systems of both concrete objects and abstract qualities are joined to the conative-affective dispositions of the instincts, as is also self-knowledge linked with the impulse to self-assertion and submission.

²⁹IDEM, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 441.

THE SENTIMENTS

134

In order to bring this systematization about, some one sentiment must acquire that predominance by which it becomes capable of motivating conduct in the direction of one end, to the extent that all conflicting motives are powerless in its presence. "Well-developed character, I would say, is an integrated system of sentiments, a system that is a hierarchy dominated by a single master-sentiment and integrated by that dominance."³⁰ The system which will best generate moral character is a strong self-regarding sentiment combined with an ideal of moral conduct. The conative tendencies within this sentiment can supply motive power sufficiently strong to enable man to prevail over his own primitive nature and to escape dependence on the regards of other men.

"In the absence of a strong self-regarding sentiment, the idea of the self, no matter how rich and how accurate its content, can play but a feeble part in the regulation of conduct, and can exert little or no influence in moral choice."³¹

It is, of course, self-control, a special aspect of the self-regarding sentiment which plays the dominant role in volition, for through it one is enabled to act in accordance

³⁰IDEM, Introduction to Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 433.

³¹Ibidem, p. 213.

THE SENTIMENTS

135

with the moral principles one has deliberately and responsibly adopted, whatever may be the opposition one encounters.

Volition, then, as McDougall would define it, is "the supporting or reinforcing of a desire or conation by the cooperation of an impulse excited within the system of the self-regarding sentiment."³² This seems to leave little place for the will or conscience in his theory. But this is not so. However, these are not for him new factors but special modes of character. The will is "character in action" while conscience is character formed under moral guidance so that, in every moral issue, the sentiment of self-regard leads us to consistently decide and to act according to the moral sentiments.

Lest we seem to give to character a purely affective nature, it is well for us to remark that Reason has its function, for through it we acquire our moral code and determine how we may best realize what we have established as our ultimate goal. But reason cannot supply the motive force to sustain us in our conflicts. "Self-regarding sentiments are the key to those sustained and persistent activities to which we give the term 'will'...."³³

³²Ibidem, p. 214.

³³Gardner MURPHY, An Historical Introduction to Modern Psychology, New York: Harcourt & Brace, 1938, n. 405.

THE SENTIMENTS

136

In summation, then, we may say that the value of the sentiments must not be underestimated. We have tried to see at some length their importance in the formation of character and in the conduct of individuals and society. Through them our emotional life and our consequent social relations are fashioned into a consistent orderly whole. To return to the thought of our opening paragraph of this chapter, all but very few of our actions are rooted in the sentiments.

"In the man of developed character very few actions proceed directly from his instinctive foundation: perhaps an occasional start of fear or sudden gesture of anger; but all others proceed from his sentiments, that is to say, from the complex interplay of the impulses and desires springing (as regards their energy) from the conative dispositions incorporated in his sentiments, and guided (as regards the lines of their expression and action in striving towards their goals) by the whole system of acquired knowledge both of the object of the sentiment and of its relation to the world in general."³⁴

If both instincts and sentiments can be described as the source of all our actions, are we to conclude that the sentiment and the instinct are identical? What is the relation of sentiment to emotion? to passion? to attitude? These are the questions which now remain for us to answer.

³⁴William McDougall, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 438-9.

THE SENTIMENTS

137

Our analysis has shown that a sentiment responds to some particular object and that the link between the cognitive ability and the propensity is acquired through experience. In the instinct, however, this link is innate and the response which is made is made to all objects of a given class. The latter, then, is inherited, while the former is derived from the instinct under the influence of circumstance and experience.

"We shall have the word 'sentiment' as the most general term to denote all acquired conative trends; ...while instinct remains our name for directed conative trends which are given as such in our innate constitution."³⁵

Nor is the motivating power assigned to each to be construed as an indication of identity. We must keep in mind that McDougall sees the instinct as "directly" motivating very few actions, but "indirectly" motivating many through the sentiments. The type of motivating power assigned to each is quite different and argues against, rather than for, identity between the two structures.

The distinction between emotion and sentiment is one on which McDougall writes insistently. The difference which he proposes is that a sentiment is a fact of mental

³⁵IDEM, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 417.

THE SENTIMENTS

138

structure, and emotion is an experience or activity determined by that structure. He regards the emotions as

"events or partial aspects of conscious events and in very many instances our emotion is an event in the life-history of a sentiment; that is to say, the nature of the emotion is conditioned by the nature of the sentiment from which it springs...."³⁶

This implies, then, that emotion is a fleeting experience, while the very nature of the sentiment would demand that it endure.

Between sentiment and passion the distinction seems to be not so much one of nature or structure but of the degree of intensity of the emotions engendered. As we saw above, the word 'sentiment' is the general term for acquired conative trends. When these trends excite to violence or give rise to impulses of great intensity, they are best designated by the name 'passion'.

The dispositions men acquire may be conscious and benign or they may be morbid and repressed. In the first case, they become the sentiments; in the latter, they build up to complexes, pathological to some extent. The term 'attitude' can be used of either type and so it is a still more general term than 'sentiment'. As McDougall explains,

³⁶ IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 435.

THE SENTIMENTS

139

"The word 'attitude' literally means some particular expressive position of body and limbs; and when used metaphorically of the mind, it can only mean some particular actual, incipient, or potential reaction."³⁷

To conclude this short exposition of the various relationships into which sentiments enter, we would present the place of tastes which, like the sentiments, determine our likes and dislikes. The sentiments give rise to attractions and aversions for objects -- concrete or abstract, individual or collective; the tastes impel us towards or draw us from certain modes of activity. In this way, through our tastes, we select a particular way of acting as a means towards a goal or purpose, but we are sustained in that activity by the sentiments which served to determine our goal.

The presence of the cognitive has no doubt been in evidence throughout the exploration of the sentiment undertaken in this present chapter. However, before bringing this part of the work to a conclusion, we would point out, somewhat more precisely, the nature and the role of the cognitive in the sentiment.

McDougall is very much aware that the indictment has been made against him of conceiving the sentiment as a

³⁷ IDEM, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 224-5, footnote.

THE SENTIMENTS

140

purely emotional system, an accusation he clearly and firmly denies. He attributes the charge to a loose expression of his thought which he rectifies as follows:

"I should have written: 'A sentiment is a system in which a cognitive disposition is linked with one or more emotional or affective-conative dispositions to form a structural unit that functions as one whole system....the system which is the sentiment in my view, comprises (as its essential center that links together the group of emotional dispositions) a cognitive disposition corresponding to the object of the sentiment....'"³⁸

He is consistent in maintaining that, as an instinct, the cognitive system serves as a directive force for the energies furnished by the conative disposition. The very existence of the sentiment in the mind of the individual will guide his interest in the direction of the object of the sentiment, so that the knowledge he acquires is rich indeed. He goes so far as to say that it is only in as much as something becomes the 'object of a sentiment' that we recognize its individuality and become capable of interpreting its meaning.

"The acquirement of meaning and the formation of the sentiment are but two aspects of one process of growth and organization, a process which is advanced on every occasion on which we recognize and emotionally react to any such object."³⁹

³⁸ IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 437.

³⁹ IDEM, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 230-1

THE SENTIMENTS

141

We have written of the function of the sentiment in character, and we would now note the specific part played by the cognitive disposition in this area. First, let us recall that character is a system of sentiments that has been organized in two stages. "The first stage is the formation of the sentiments. The second stage is the building of the sentiments into a harmoniously cooperating system."⁴⁰ Within this system, the conception we have of the self, the self-regarding sentiment, and especially of the relation of the self to others, is the foundation for the integration of personality. Moreover, from this sentiment springs voluntary control. "The will" is not to be considered as a separate faculty distinct from the rest of the personality. It is, as we have seen,⁴¹ character in action. McDougall defined it as the "supporting or reinforcing of a desire or conation by the cooperation of an impulse excited within the system of the self-regarding sentiment."⁴² It is not surprising, then, that inhibition is considered by McDougall to be a function of the cognitive. It is his contention that, where the conception of self is adequate and personality is truly integrated, inconsistent tendencies in unlike sentiments will be inhibited through their

⁴⁰Ibidem, p. 188.

⁴¹Present work, p.135.

⁴²William McDOUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 214.

THE SENTIMENTS

142

cognitive parts. For it is through the cognitive parts alone that the conative dispositions of the two opposed impulses become directly connected.

"These inhibitory processes are possible only insofar as the whole personality is integrated. Integration and the inhibitions in which it manifests itself are functions of the relations between the cognitive dispositions of the various sentiments; for it is only through their cognitive parts that unlike sentiments are functionally related. Thus, as regards their conative-affective disposition, a sentiment of hatred and one of love have nothing in common; but if you hate a certain man, and understand that he is dear to another whom you love, you may inhibit the impulse of your sentiment of hatred....

If, on the other hand, you fail or refuse to recognize your hatred for what it is, fail to establish adequate cognitive relations between its system and the rest of your personality, then you suffer from the state technically known as repression. ...You become the seat of a brute conflict of impulses, having no voluntary control of your repressed sentiment of hatred; the cognitive connections through which alone control might be exercised, not having been established."⁴³

⁴³Ibidem. p. 441-3.

CHAPTER VII

PURPOSIVENESS

McDougall has been called a 'purposivist' because his writing is dominated by his conviction that all behavior is purposive and that this purposive striving is a fundamental category of psychology. His belief that man is a purposive being, always striving to attain a goal, emphasizes the fact that, for him, the most important characteristic of life was purpose in any or all of its many possible manifestations. In keeping with this, his central idea is that there is an end or purpose that goads us to action, and the 'horme' or urge to live becomes his basic construct. Nor can this purposive striving be reduced to mere mechanism.

"living man...is something beyond the domain of nature upon which physical and chemical interpretation can be launched. The decisive sign of that transcendence is the purposive or goal-seeking nature of human and animal acts; ..."¹

In his autobiography, he expresses for us the origin and the essence of his chief scientific message. He writes:

¹A. POBINSON, William McDougall, A Bibliography, Durham: Duke University Press, 1943, p. 5.

PURPOSIVENESS

144

"I had come to see more and more clearly that the main defects of the psychologies with which I had struggled in the opening years of the century was their acceptance of, or their compromise with, the mechanistic biology, and their consequent neglect of the purposive or teleological aspect of all mental life. I seemed to see clearly that...any psychology that ignored or failed to bring out clearly, the fundamental purposive nature of mental activities was doomed to sterility.... The most essential character of life processes seemed to be their goal-seeking nature."²

First we shall inquire into the nature of the purposive act. The above introduction links it with striving, with goal-seeking. Is it, then, a conscious activity, a deliberate searching for an end? If so, can it truly be said of animal action?

In The Energies of Men, McDougall seems to look upon purpose as a conscious desire which leads to a deliberate effort to attain the coveted object. He writes: "A purpose, then, is a desire accepted and approved after self-conscious deliberation."³ The mere contemplation of an object as desirable is not sufficient for purpose, there must be self-conscious resolve to attain that goal. Interpreting this definition in the strict sense, one would probably deny all purposive action to the brute animal.

²William McDUGALL, in C. Murchison (Ed.), History of Psychology in Autobiography, Clark University Press, 1930, p. 215.

³IDEM, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 136

This, however, is not in keeping with McDougall's view. He sees the conscious apprehension of the goal -- and we shall speak of this again -- as characteristic of purpose in its fullest sense, but he admits that "wherever action is directed towards a goal foreseen, however imperfectly, there we may properly speak of purposive action."⁴ Thus it is legitimate to describe animal action that is clearly goal-seeking as purposive, since it does manifest a sequence of behavior towards the natural end of the activity. In such actions, the animal, aware of its goal and attracted or repelled by it, does manifest a certain degree of consciousness. Elsewhere, in the Outline of Psychology, McDougall describes purposive action as

"action that seems to be governed or directed in some degree by prevision of its effects, by prevision of that which still lies in the future, of events which have not yet happened, but which are likely to happen, and to the happening of which the action itself may contribute."⁵

It would seem, then, that a purposive action combines foresight and desire, with the latter playing the key role.

Since purposiveness is central to McDougall's theory of behavior, he has enumerated distinctive traits by which it can be distinguished from mechanical reflex action.

⁴Ibidem, p. 137.

⁵IDEM, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 48-9.

PURPOSIVENESS

146

1. It has to show some degree of spontaneity and be, at one and the same time, independent of, yet responsive to, environment.
2. Starting under the influence of a momentary stimulus, it must, nevertheless, be persistent, continuing after the stimulus has ceased.
3. Despite this persistence, motor behavior must be variable so as to overcome any obstacles that may be encountered.
4. Only when the end is reached does the activity cease.
5. The movement of the first part of a behavior series prepares the way for the next.
6. After much repetition, the varied behavior may take on definite form.
7. The activity is a reaction of the whole organism.

Though we have listed seven criteria, McDougall holds that in any human activity, the presence of the first five is sufficient to label it 'purposive'. The reason for this discrepancy can be found in two points:

1. A single instance of behavior can be purposive even though the action is never repeated. In such a case the sixth criterion would be missing.
2. The possibility of questioning the need for the seventh criterion is admitted by McDougall himself in his Social Psychology.

"It may perhaps be questioned whether this last character can properly be asserted of all heroic processes, but it seems to be

PURPOSIVENESS

147

true of those which are conative in the sense defined by Professor Nunn, or truly purposive in that they involve or imply foresight of the goal to be achieved."⁶

and, in listing these same criteria in his Outline of Psychology, he himself omits the final mark.⁷

These marks seem to McDougall to set some activities apart as being "distinct in kind from all processes of the inorganic world and as expressive of mind, of heroic or purposive striving."⁸ A careful examination of the above criteria discloses an element of freedom and of effort in purposive behavior which is "indicative of mind," as opposed to the determinism of inorganic processes with their necessary conditions and causes. It is a tenet of the heroic theory that all instinctive behavior meets this requirement and qualifies as purposive action. Reflex action, on the contrary, does not. It is dependent on the stimulus, and, like habitual action, is itself incapable of determining goals, serving only as the instrument of our purposes.

The goal-seeking activities of purposive behavior display an energy that is "energy towards, directed energy;

⁶ IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 412.

⁷ IDEM, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 46.

⁸ Ronald FLETCHER, Instinct in Man, New York: International Universities Press, 1957, p. 56.

PURPOSIVENESS

148

energy directed to a goal,"⁹ which can be traced to the inborn dispositions or tendencies we call the instincts. Thus, instincts are the dynamic units with which we are equipped by heredity to achieve purpose. They could rightly be defined as purposeful behavioral tendencies for

"These are the primary grounds for all his strivings; the goals for which he strives are either the natural goals of his native propensities, or are the means towards such goals...accepted, after experience of them, as goals in themselves."¹⁰

McDougall argues that

"instincts being goal-directed consist of the liberation of energy that guides the organism toward a goal....the activity towards the goal tends to continue until the goal is reached; then the activity is terminated by success...."¹¹

And this persistence until the goal is reached marks the activity as teleological.

A little reflection, however, soon leads us to realize that all such actions are not purposive to the same degree. In some, the goal and the means to attain it have been deliberately weighed and chosen from among various possibilities. In other instances, although we see clearly the end and the means, there is no deliberation and no

⁹William McDUGALL, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 50.

¹⁰Ibidem, p. 26.

¹¹E. G. BORING, History of Experimental Psychology, New York: Appleton Century Crofts, 2nd ed., 1957, p. 718.

choice. Still other actions are performed in which the goal or the means or both remain vague, if not unforeseen, as in impulsive actions. In this last case

"we cannot give any retrospective account of our experience which would include the foreseeing of the goal of the action, we see that the action is such that, if we had acted a little more slowly and deliberately we should have foreseen the goal we sought or proposed, and perhaps the steps of the action we actually took."¹²

For this reason, in his Outline of Psychology, McDougall describes seven stages of purposive striving:

- "1. Vague, almost undifferentiated, striving of the animalcule in pursuit of his prey.
2. The striving of animals in which the instincts are sharply differentiated and directed towards specific goals that are vaguely anticipated by the creature.
3. The instinctive strivings of primitive man toward goals more fully imagined and anticipated; the strivings of instinctive desire.
4. The strivings of men prompted by desire for instinctive goals, but directed also to goals which are conceived and desired only as a means to the instinctive goal.
5. Conduct of the lower level; that is instinctive desire regulated and controlled in the choice of means by anticipation of rewards and punishments.

¹²William McDOUGALL, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 48.

PURPOSIVENESS

150

6. Conduct of the middle level, that is, the same instinctive impulses regulated in the choice of goals and of means by anticipation of social approval and disapproval.
7. Conduct of the higher level; that is, striving regulated in the choice of goals and means by the desire to realize an ideal of character and conduct, a desire which itself springs from an instinctive disposition whose impulse is turned to higher uses by the subtle influences of organized society embodying a moral tradition."¹³

In even the lowest of these phases, there is a manifestation of purpose in the striving in the pursuit of prey. As we mount the scale of evolution through insects to brute to rational man, we are aware of a continual development of the purposiveness into a richer and more organized behavior. As we reach the stage of full-fledged purposive acts, two elements emerge as distinctive: desire and foresight, though the two do not always appear together. In the hormic theory, desire is primary since man's constitution, as that of the animal, is such that the perception of certain objects under proper conditions will give rise to desire even without previous experience.

"He is born to desire, born with latent capacities for desire, which require only

¹³Ibidem, p. 448-9.

the spark of circumstance to flare cut into conscious desire and active striving for the natural objects of desire...."¹⁴

Throughout this section, reference has constantly been made to the goal of the action. By goal is meant "the natural end foreseen and desired or consciously chosen and intended."¹⁵ and the attainment of that goal is the purpose of our action. Now it is necessary for us to realize, as our examination of the stages of purposive behavior have shown, that this end may be more or less clearly anticipated or foreseen. In a typical case of purposive action, that is, of a purposeful action of the highest type, our foresight of the end is very clear and definite, as is our resolution to attain it. In these instances, the various steps necessary to carry the action through to successful completion may be equally clear and deliberate, for action of this sort is dominated, up to a certain point, by the foresight of its consequences. This is an example of the ability of the mind, guided by past experience, to direct present action according to the foresight that is fundamental to its nature.

¹⁴ IDEM, Frontiers of Psychology, London: Nesbit & Co., 1934, p. 218-9.

¹⁵ IDEM, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 47.

PURPOSIVENESS

152

"The essential nature of mind is to govern present action by anticipation of the future in the light of past experience; to make, in short, effects precede and determine their causes.... We may fairly suppose that, as the process is repeated, this anticipation becomes more definite as also anticipation of the various steps of action by which the goal is reached."¹⁶

However, in many of our voluntary actions, our anticipation is of a most general sort only, lacking much in the way of concrete detail, and so we cannot assume that a "clear and full anticipation or idea of the end is an essential condition of purposive action."¹⁷ Very often it is only as we proceed that the goal and the means lose their vagueness.

"In these more primitive forms of striving the goal of action is not clearly envisaged, but there is, nevertheless, some conscious reference to some goal, there is some germ of desire directed to the future; and since the strivings we experience range in a series without breaks or sharp difference in kind from those that are purposeful or purposive in the fullest sense to those that have only this vague direction towards a goal scarcely defined in consciousness, we may validly extend the term 'purposive striving' to cover the whole series."¹⁸

¹⁶Ibidem, p. 195.

¹⁷IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 309.

¹⁸Ibidem, p. 407.

Von Hartmann, whose Philosophy of the Unconscious, has done much to bring to light clearer notions of the unconscious processes, maintains that instinctive behavior is purposive, but, in two definitions which he offers, the purpose is unconscious. He defines instinct first as "purposive action without consciousness of the purpose,"¹⁹ and later as "conscious willing of the means to an unconsciously willed end."²⁰

At times we even act so rapidly and impulsively that deliberation is impossible, yet this does not prevent us from considering such actions purposive. The action is vaguely directed towards a goal, even though this may be outside the field of consciousness, and so can scarcely be defined. We may best sum up in McDougall's own words:

"Purposive action is, then, action that seems to be governed or directed in some degree by prevision of its effects, by prevision of that which still lies in the future, of events which have not yet happened, but which are likely to happen, and to the happening of which the action itself may contribute. Purposiveness, in this sense, seems to be of the essence of mental activity; and it is because all actions

¹⁹Edward VON HARTMANN, The Philosophy of the Unconscious, New York: Harcourt & Brace, 2nd ed., 1931, p. 79.

²⁰Ibidem, p. 88.

PURPOSIVENESS

154

which have the marks of behavior seem to be purposive, in however lowly or vague a degree, that we regard them as expressions of Mind."²¹

The question may again be raised: is this foresight true of animal activity? Is the animal not impelled by nature to act as he does at each step along the way? It is no doubt true that nature does impel the animal which foresees at most the immediate consequences of its acts, not the remote ends which these subserve. But its actions are not mere responses to stimuli. There is in each of them some more or less vague reaching out for a goal, an anticipation which becomes more definite with each repetition of the process. And there is in all their actions that "persistent direction towards their proper ends in spite of all obstacles and difficulties, with variation in detail of the modes of activity."²² Such variation in the manner of acting implies foresight of some sort and supposes in the animal some knowledge of the goal. McDougall tells us in his Social Psychology that "the animal psychologists have begun to realize that any description of animal behavior which ignores its goal-seeking nature is futile, and

²¹William McDOUGALL, Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 48-9.

²²IDEM, Psychology, The Study of Behavior, New York: Henry Holt, 1912, p. 150-1.

any explanation which leaves it out of account, fictitious, and any experience which ignores motivation, grossly misleading...."²³

We must not, however, fall into the error of believing that this foresight of the end is the cause of our purposive action. This is essentially a cognitive process. As such, it is only the instrument of our purposes, for, as we have already seen, the intellect is not itself a source of energy. Of itself, it will not evoke action, as personal experience will attest. How often do we imagine possible actions and goals without any desire of following them through, perhaps even with dread lest we should have to pursue them. Or again, at times, appropriate action is impossible even though we experience the desire. "We contemplate the goal towards which we are impelled, the object towards which the tendency sets, and in contemplating it, we are aware of the tendency towards it."²⁴

There is, to be sure, a unique relation between the subject striving and the object for which it seeks, but this relation will result in action only when the latent tendency is brought into play. "When, then, any creature

²³IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 444-5.

²⁴IDEM, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 117.

strives towards an end or goal, it is because it possesses as an ultimate feature of its constitution what we can only call a disposition or latent tendency to strive towards that end...."²⁵ This tendency is the energy directed to a goal and, as such, is characteristic of instinctive behavior. This directed energy sustains both bodily and mental activity until the natural end is reached at which time it terminates abruptly. Even should obstacles be met in the course of action, the striving continues, varying the means and the movement until the obstacles are overcome.

"...all instinctive behavior exhibits that unique mark of mental process, a persistent striving towards the natural end of the process. That is to say, the process, unlike any merely mechanical process, is not to be arrested by any sufficient mechanical obstacle, but rather is intensified by any such obstacle, and only comes to an end when its appropriate goal is achieved...."²⁶

There is only one conclusion possible: the teleological nature of hormic psychology, for

"hormic psychology insists that those of our activities which we can at all adequately describe are unmistakably and undeniably teleological, are activities which we undertake in the pursuit of some goal, for the

²⁵ IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 310.

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 24.

PURPOSIVENESS

157

sake of some result which we foresee and desire to achieve. And it holds that such activities are the true type of all mental activities and of all truly vital activities."²⁷

We contended, at the outset of this chapter, that William McDougall was a purposivist. We have endeavored to analyze the nature and the meaning of purposeful action in order to identify instinctive behavior with it. We would conclude with McDougall's own evidence concerning this identification.

"For all the strivings to which we are compelled by the urging of our instinctive constitution are of the same nature as those strivings which are purposive in the fullest and most unmistakable sense, those in which our activity is guided by our thinking of a goal which we desire to attain and of the course of action by which we hope to attain it."²⁸

²⁷Ibidem, p. 446-7.

²⁸Ibidem, p. 407.

CONCLUSION

EVALUATION OF WILLIAM McDOUGALL'S
THEORY OF INSTINCT

From the beginning William McDougall had to struggle against critics who condemned him because he was an "instinctivist" and judged him wrong because he was a "purposivist."¹ As a result, his work is but little known and little understood today, save by those who, whether through a genuine interest or mere curiosity, become involved in the study of Instinct. Whether he was right or whether he was wrong, one fact remains certain: the appearance of William McDougall marked a turning point on the psychological scene. His break with the established traditions of the past was complete; his new theories were stimulating; and science advanced, as it ever does, through the challenge he offered to others to expose, to advance, to defend, or to refute his assumptions.

As we set about evaluating McDougall's work, we are reminded of the remarks made by Jerome Bruner in his preface to McDougall's Body-Mind. There he writes,

¹Robert WOODWORTH and Mary SHEEHAN, Contemporary Schools of Psychology, New York: Ronald Press, 3rd edition, 1964, p. 343.

"It would be in the epic style to record that McDougall was right. But such was not the case. The true case is perhaps more interesting. What is true is that he was often more interestingly wrong, suggestive in his dissent, and startlingly contemporary in the problems that he posed. ...As for his well-conceived theory of Instinct, much of what he had to say is again relevant.... The work of Tinbergen, Lorenz, Beach and others suggest that McDougall may be correct in many respects, particularly in his insistence upon a perceptual or releaser aspect in instinctive behavior...."²

The present work is concerned only with the Instinct theory and so it is on this aspect alone that our evaluation of McDougall will be based.

It would no doubt be true to say that McDougall is more often criticized for his manner of presentation than for the matter it contains. Rarely does he bring his reader to the hypothesis he is proposing through a logical reasoning process in which each step is made evident along the way. Instead, he introduces his theory in sweeping and dogmatic generalizations that are difficult to substantiate and equally difficult to refute. The following paragraph from his Introduction to Social Psychology affords us an excellent illustration of such an assertion.

²Jerome BRUNER, in William McDougall, Body-Mind, Boston: Beacon Press edition, 1961, p. vii-viii.

"The instinctive impulses determine the ends of all activities and supply the driving power by which all mental activities are sustained; and all the complex intellectual apparatus of the most highly developed mind is but a means towards these ends, is but the instrument by which these impulses seek their satisfaction....

Take away these instinctive dispositions with their powerful impulses and the organism would become incapable of activity of any kind.... These impulses are the mental forces that maintain and shape all the life of individuals and societies, and in them we are confronted with the central mystery of life and mind and will."³

Turning to the "debit" side of the ledger, we find that William McDougall can be indicted on charges of vagueness and insubstantial evidence on certain points of his theory. The very existence of the instinct -- and he talks of instincts, not Instinct -- seems assumed rather than factually proved. As innate, inherited tendencies from which all behavior is derived, instincts come "ready-made" so to speak. This would seem to imply a sterility, a finality, about the basic principle of human behavior. The implication, though, is not supported if one examines the theory thoroughly. Not only is instinct an innate tendency, but it

³William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 38.

is also a psychophysical disposition which "tends to express itself in a variety of ways, according to past experience, present situations, and future needs."⁴

McDougall himself was forced to admit the presence in man of another motivating force -- the sentiment -- to supplement the instincts. This ready admission of the sentiment formed, as we have seen, through the force of learning and the compounding of basic instincts, was not relevatory in his eyes of any inconsistency in his thought or in his theory. But, if the sentiment is a motivating force as McDougall maintains, must not some behavior be derived from it? And if it is formed through the force of learning, can it ever be inherited, innate?

To answer the first question, William McDougall would no doubt point with insistence to the fact that the sentiments are not the ultimate units of behavior. Only the instincts are ultimate. His answer to the second question is again an assumption, not a verified fact. He proposes the transmission by heredity from generation to generation of acquired modes of behavior. In no other way could he justify his claim that all human behavior is

⁴Robert BRENNAN, History of Psychology from the Standpoint of a Thomist, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1945, p. 208.

determined by innate propensities. Only in this way could the static, inflexible character of the original instinct become the modified, adaptable, dynamic unit of behavior. But, and we are supported by Wolman in our conclusion, "as things stand now, it seems that the heredity of acquired traits was never proved by McDougall or anyone else...."⁵ However, we propose that failure to prove the inheritance of behavior patterns is not damaging to McDougall's theory, provided that there does exist an innate tendency to serve as the primary motive force. Instinct satisfies this demand.

McDougall's definition is not of Instinct but of "an instinct." There is a certain lack of precision in his conception of what the nature of Instinct really is. He seems rather to describe the experience accompanying and underlying instinctive behavior than to penetrate to the very essence of the instinct. Nor does he present any clear or precise statement to specify the relation between Instinct and the instinctive act. The compilation of the lists of instincts appeared to be arbitrarily carried out, a point to which we shall return shortly. These two facts, taken together, lead one to ask whether each instinct is a separate

⁵B. B. WOLMAN, Contemporary Systems and Theories in Psychology, New York: Harper Brothers, 1960, p. 180.

entity and the whole organism merely the aggregate of these parts of experience and behavior. At times McDougall does give this impression, particularly when he treats of the instincts as determining forces, but this, we believe, is due to the vagueness of language in which all too frequently he cloaks his thought. To consider the instincts as separate entities would not be to advance beyond, but rather to revert to, the ideas of "Faculty Psychology" dressed in new terminology. "The instincts as dynamic mental atoms took the place of old static impressions and ideas; individuals as organizations of innate behavior tendencies took the place of individuals as passive containers of ideas" is a criticism launched against the instinct theory.⁶ That such was not William McDougall's intention becomes evident if one reflects upon the variations in type of instincts, the possibility of modification, and the diversity in the resulting actions. His portrait of the human person is most certainly a unified one.

"...all parts, all features and functions of the developed personality play their part in that integrated unity which is the person, make some contribution however slight towards determining the unique quality and flavor of that complex totality.... Personality should

⁶R. S. PETERS, Brett's History of Psychology, London: Allen and Unwin, 1953, p. 707.

then be used to imply that totality: not the sum of the distinguishable features and functions which by analysis we discover in it, but rather the synthetic unity of all features and functions in their intimate interplay."⁷

McDougall's classification of instincts shows some inconsistencies. As was noted in an earlier chapter,⁸ he first (1908) listed twelve human instincts, of which seven were considered major. However, with the first publication of The Energies of Men in 1932, he had changed his nomenclature from 'Instinct' to 'Propensity' and increased his number to eighteen. Finally, he reverted to "seven primary instincts" as central to his doctrine.

Distinguishing as he does between primary and secondary motives, McDougall had to watch lest any of the latter creep into the former category. This grouping of instincts into major and minor, primary and secondary, superior and inferior was based on the function of each instinct in the life of man. William McDougall appears to have considered that primary instincts are fundamental motives, natural and inherited, from which secondary and acquired motives derive their force. Consequently, since instincts

⁷William McDougall, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1932, p. 368-9.

⁸Present work, Chapter II, p.67.

are common to all members of the species, such a classification seems to us to imply that the motivating role of various instincts is identical in one individual and in the next. Such an implication makes it difficult for us to accent his distinction in grouping.

His list must necessarily be comprehensive for in it had to be found adequate motives for all human behavior. Considering himself opposed to the old "Faculty Psychology," he had to take heed lest he merely replace "faculty" by the "instinct" by assuming an instinct for each human activity. Yet man possessed other innate tendencies which McDougall failed to list as instincts but classified rather as innate tendencies of a general sort. Ronald Fletcher compares two of these, Play and Curiosity, to question the validity of McDougall's selection.

"Play is not regarded by McDougall as an instinct because there are many varieties of play and not all of these have the same permanent nucleus of emotion (which is, in McDougall's terms, a necessary criterion of instinct), nor do they embody an innate impulse to some specific end. But, we might argue, is not curiosity also directed to a variety of situations, often with various ends in view, and often accompanied by different emotional tone? Why, then, should curiosity be regarded as an instinct and play not?"⁹

⁹Ronald FLETCHER, Instinct in Man, New York: International Universities Press, 1957, p. 49.

EVALUATION

166

Could not a similar question be asked concerning sympathy or imitation, both of which are general tendencies?

In a supplementary chapter in the 23rd edition of his Introduction to Social Psychology (1936), McDougall reserved the term 'propensity' for the conative-affective core of instinct.

"It is this central part of the instinct, both affective and conative in function, which we need to distinguish and define as clearly as possible; and since we can properly and very advantageously regard it as a functional unit of structure, we need for it some special designation. I have, therefore, proposed to speak of this central part of the innate disposition which is an 'instinct' as a 'propensity'."¹⁰

This new use of the term 'propensity' points out to us the need for caution in reading McDougall. We see here that he uses the term in two senses: (1) as a synonym for 'instinct' and (2) as denoting the conative-affective core alone.

Similarly, the word 'instinct' itself appears ambiguous in McDougall's writings. At times, particularly in his earlier works, the term is used to refer to behavior patterns in which a series of innate actions become synthesized into a whole by a common end. Such patterns are

¹⁰ William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen and Co., 1960, p. 502.

EVALUATION

167

natural to the species and are characterized by a definite emotional tone. McDougall writes that,

"The successive actions...constituting the train of instinctive behavior are not isolated actions; each may be in a sense a response to a sense-stimulus...but there is a wholeness and continuity in time of the whole train of activity; each action depends upon and implies, has some causal relation to, those that precede and follow it. As each of many simultaneous sense-stimuli contributes something to the synthetic whole of the perceptual activity of any moment, so all the many successive sense-impressions and movements are...taken up into a larger whole of activity that continues (even though it may suffer interruption) through a continued period."¹¹

To show that this synthetic unity stems from one instinct we shall go to the following passage from the Outline of Psychology,

"The most interesting problem presented by food-seeking is this: are the various activities involved in the unlearned search for food by any one creature to be attributed to one instinct or to several? That such activities are instinctive is shown by their peculiarities proper to each species and common to all members of the species. In herbivores, such as the sheep, ...the food-seeking of the adult animal is...simple in the extreme; though even here there are two phases, first, of wandering in search of pasture; and secondly, the actual cropping of herbage when found. Those who

¹¹IDEM, The Energies of Men, London: Methuen, 1950, p. 52.

EVALUATION

168

identify instincts with reflexes must attribute these two phases to two distinct instincts. Others will confidently assume that the same appetite, the same impulse, sustains both phases."¹²

He continues the discussion by considering the relation between the food-seeking of the young and of the adult animal and concludes with the following question and reply:

"Shall we say that at a certain age a new instinct ripens in the lamb, an instinct to nibble the grass, and that this gradually supplants the sucking instinct? Surely not; surely it is the same appetite that seeks and attains satisfaction in these two ways by means of these different motor mechanisms."¹³

The conclusion that we draw from these statements is that McDougall is considering the whole train of activity when he speaks of the instinct of food-seeking. Yet, on the other hand, when McDougall recognizes that instincts can be modified by combining them into sentiments, the combination is certainly not one of behavior patterns but of emotional dispositions. Here, then, the identification is made of the conative-affective core with 'instinct.' However, we would not be doing justice to McDougall were we not to recognize the adjustments he made in later statements

¹² IDEM, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 145.

¹³ Ibidem, p. 145.

of his theory -- though we are inclined to ask whether this was always through conviction and a maturing of thought, or whether, perhaps at times, as in this instance, for example, it might not have been for convenience, to remove what he saw had become a cause of uneasiness for some and of confusion for others. He speaks in later works of "native abilities" geared to a "native propensity." The former category would most certainly include the sensory and motor aspects, the behavior pattern of the instinctive action, while the latter term would care for the emotional impulse or core.

One modification in theory which McDougall undoubtedly made through conviction concerns this emotional core. At the outset of his work, he proposed the conative and affective aspects as distinct phases of the instinctive disposition. After years of study and involvement that controversy always brings, he united these two because, he says,

"I have become convinced that in describing a typical instinctive disposition as consisting of three distinguishable parts I was in error in one respect, namely, in drawing the line of separation between the second and third parts. As I now see, there is no sufficient ground for regarding as conative part as distinguishable from the emotional or affective part."¹⁴

¹⁴ IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 495.

Moreover, this emotional impulse had such importance for McDougall that he ascribed a specific emotion to human instinct and saw it as a criterion of distinction. "Each of the principal instincts conditions, then, some one kind of emotional excitement whose quality is specific or peculiar to it";¹⁵ and fifteen years later he is of the same opinion, for, referring to the rejection by some psychologists of the relation he establishes between instinct and emotion, he says, "Yet I hold fast to the scheme as essentially on the right lines."¹⁶

Nevertheless, essential and relatively unchanging as was this core, "the central part persists throughout life as the essential unchanging nucleus,"¹⁷ we find little evidence of it -- and McDougall himself was aware of this -- in certain of his instincts. Speaking of the gregarious instinct, which he classes among the principal instincts, he writes, "the affective aspect of the operation of this instinct is not sufficiently intense or specific to have been given a name."¹⁸ And again, "The excitement of this,

¹⁵Ibidem, p. 40.

¹⁶IDEM, An Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 128.

¹⁷IDEM, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 29.

¹⁸Ibidem, p. 71.

the pre-eminently social instinct, is accompanied by...no specific emotion of well-marked quality."¹⁹ And so our dilemma: how essential is this emotional core and how truly is it a specifier of instinct? Or is the error, perhaps, in classification? Are the gregarious, the constructive tendencies, and others like them, really principal instincts?

With this same problem in mind, James Drever, in his work Instinct in Man, questions whether emotion is so primary and fundamental in Instinct, and suggests instead that the instinct-interest be considered to be the affective element. He sees emotion as secondary and offers the following as an alternative hypothesis to McDougall's.

"The affective element in instinct-experience becomes emotion only when action in satisfaction of the interest is suspended or checked, when...interest passes into 'tension'. If impulse immediately realizes itself in the appropriate action towards the situation, then there is no emotion in any strict sense of emotion."²⁰

William McDougall rejects this suggestion in the preface to the 14th edition of his Social Psychology. There he writes,

¹⁹Ibidem, p. 146.

²⁰James DREVER, Instinct in Man, Cambridge: The University Press, 1917, p. 157.

"If the instinctive disposition is so constituted as to be capable of generating the appropriate emotion when its impulse is denied immediate satisfaction, it is difficult to see any theoretical ground for denying it this capacity when its activity is unobstructed; nor does inspection of the facts seem to me to yield any more evidence in support of this view than the theoretical considerations of the possibilities. Surely, it is merely a matter of degree of intensity of the emotional excitement!"²¹

Still later, in 1936, in a supplementary chapter which he entitles "A Rectification, a Difficulty, and an Addition," McDougall discusses that same objection, but holds firmly to his earlier position that emotional excitement accompanies every instinctive action. We find McDougall's handling of the difficulty interesting but not convincing. Interesting, because it appears to us that he indicts his opponents on a charge of the very weakness that he seems so completely oblivious to in his own theory -- the lack of any substantial argument in its support; unconvincing because, like his opponents, he asserts but does not put forward any strong defense of his doctrine.

He offers, as answer to his critics, the inadequacy of our introspective powers to analyse experience and to recognize the subtler and feebler shades of consciousness.

²¹William McDUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. xiv.

But does he himself not arrive at his conclusions through just such an analysis? He argues, too, that the difficulty of establishing evidence, in certain cases, to support the correlation between instinct and emotion is not an adequate refutation. However, he makes an effort to justify himself by claiming that the position of his opponents -- the emotional quality is present only in activity that has been obstructed -- can be refuted by establishing even one indisputable instance of unobstructed activity in which emotion is undoubtedly present. Logically, it is quite true that a particular assertion is sufficient to contradict -- and so to refute -- a universal statement of the opposite quality. But this law of contradictories holds true for all universals, whether negative or affirmative. McDougall cites personal experience to confirm his position and uses 'fear' as "affording the clearest possible evidence of this kind." He tells us,

"I allege that on many occasions I have experienced instantaneous and unmistakable fear on starting back, recoiling in perfectly unimpeded fashion, from some sudden alarming impression, in many instances an impression of a very trivial kind."²²

But we suggest that this is just such an analysis of experience which he has above denied to our introspective powers.

²²Ibidem, p. 506.

It is true, nonetheless, and Drever is quick to support him in this, that in 'fear' and in the 'combative instinct', emotion is the predominant characteristic.

We would return to make one brief remark concerning Drever's suggestion that 'instinct-interest' be considered the affective element. Since McDougall not only acknowledges but even insists on the conative nature of interest, and since, in his more mature thought at least, he recognizes the unity of the conative-affective impulse, we suggest that it might have been possible for him to make use of Drever's criticism without admitting the need for obstruction and so without radically altering his own theory. It is his belief that "we are interested only in those things that evoke in us one or other (or several) of the instinctive impulses."²³ He implies that this interest is in proportion to the strength of the impulse. The characteristic which McDougall considers to be essential to emotion, namely, the affective relationship to an object, and the appeal of special actions as a result of this relationship, are likewise characteristics of the interest accompanying instinctive action. In our judgment, nothing, therefore, would be lost by adopting this suggested position. Could it not be, then,

²³IDEM, Outline of Psychology, London: Methuen, 1924, p. 276.

that interest is the affective element expressing itself as emotion not only in those instances where activity is impeded, but also in those instances where the impulse is strong. In spite of the difficulties implicit in McDougall's treatment of the relation between Instinct and Emotion, it remains one of the more valuable points in his theory.

Passing now to what we consider to be positive contributions less encumbered with 'problem tones', we maintain that William McDougall's insistence upon the purposive nature of instinctive activity is one of the major and more permanent values of his theory. We recognize that, at the outset of this chapter, we declared that McDougall had been judged wrong because he was a purposivist. In the early years of his career, the very notion of teleology, of behavior directed toward ultimate goals, was, due to prejudice or lack of understanding, unacceptable to the psychological world. From the time of Comte "scientific" had become the magic word, and teleology was not scientific. But William McDougall understood this distrust; he saw that it stemmed from the fact that for centuries "final cause" had been the answer to every question.

"It was asked: in the solar system, are volcanic eruptions, lightening and the flow of rivers purposive? The question meant: Are these things designed, constructed, or set in action, as our machines are, in order

EVALUATION

176

to serve some purpose?The same question was asked of the structures and processes of the animal body. And for a long time science accepted the positive answer, regarded the animal body as a machine cunningly designed to realize the purpose of its Designer and Creator. Then came the Darwinian theory: and science saw that it was no longer necessary to regard the structure of each animal species as the product of a designing Creator and said: the structure and movements of the animal body are not teleological or purposive."²⁴

It is to McDougall's lasting credit that he persisted in the face of great and worthy opposition. The idea of man as goal-seeking has survived and studies of motives and of goals rank high in the psychological works of today.

McDougall saw that the concept of 'purpose' was essential to the concept of human behavior, characterized as it is by goal-seeking. Mechanical terms alone could not suffice to explain an individual's behavior for "man is a volitional purposive being, and his conduct is the expression of his desires and of his will."²⁵ Over and above this, and this is probably the sensitive point, McDougall holds that the instinctive behavior of animals is likewise

²⁴IDEM, "Men or Robots" cited by M. B. Arnold and J. Gasson in The Human Person, New York: Ronald Press, 1954, p. 284.

²⁵IDEM, "Purposive or Mechanical Psychology," appendix to A. CASTELL, The Self in Philosophy, Toronto: Macmillan, 1965, p. 109.

purposive. This in no way meant that he was assigning to the animal "intelligence" in the popular sense of the word. For him, to ascribe purposive behavior to the animals simply meant to uphold in their conduct the presence of an objective design. It was not to say that the animal or, for that matter, man, in his purely instinctive acts, was conscious of that end, or even if there was knowledge of it, that the animal reflected upon it or upon the means to achieve it. Herein lies precisely the difference between instinctive and reasoned behavior. For in the latter not only is there knowledge of the end but also of the ways to attain it; there is deliberation and selection; there is reflection. But such reflection on such "conscious apprehension" of the action is not necessary in purposive behavior. The term "purposive" does not imply causality -- in the sense of efficient causality -- but is only descriptive of a certain sequence of actions in which the animal persists in its conative efforts until the end is reached. To describe behavior as purposive, then, is to emphasize the aspect of striving.

In our chapter on purposiveness we have already attempted to show that McDougall does not insist upon the consciousness of the end, on foresight as such. But since

he has been charged²⁶ with making this prevision a criterion, we wish to quote again certain passages to vindicate him of this charge. For example, let us consider the following statement:

"We know what it is to desire to attain a goal, to feel impelled to seek and to strive towards a goal -- a goal which we may conceive either clearly and definitely or with varying degrees of vagueness, down to the extreme vagueness of those instances in which we merely know that we want something but cannot say what it is we want."²⁷

This most certainly does not make "consciousness of the end" a criterion of purposive conduct. It is true that McDougall does state that "in the more primitive forms of striving, the goal of the action is not clearly envisaged, but there is nevertheless some conscious reference to some goal, there is some germ of desire directed towards the future."²⁸

Such a statement, however, must be clearly understood within the context of the total passage, which, in this case, explicitly states that the term "purposive striving" extends to those actions that are "purposeful or purposive in the fullest sense to those that have only this vague direction

²⁶ R. S. PETERS, Brett's History of Psychology, London: Allen and Unwin, 1953, p. 703.

²⁷ William McDOUGALL, Introduction to Social Psychology, London: Methuen, 1960, p. 406.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 408.

towards a goal scarcely defined in consciousness."²⁹ It is, then, in this sense of "direction to" that McDougall describes instinctive behavior as purposive and considers the means-end relationship as proof of this fact. By the added criterion of prevision of the end, an action is purposive in the fuller sense of the word.

Objections to McDougall's teleology have been raised, for the most part, by psychologists who are empirical rather than philosophical in their approach. For the former, empirical methods alone are valid, and there is ample evidence of impulsive behavior, especially in animals and during early childhood, in which actions cannot be attributed to any clear purpose. To label such instances "purposive action" is to explain the observable by means of the unobservable. For the philosopher, however, the activity of any agent is for the sake of an end, though not necessarily consciously and immediately directed to it.

And so while McDougall may seem at times to balance precariously between prevision of the ends and persistence towards goals as his criterion of purposive behavior, it is our contention that his interpreters have placed more insistence upon subjective foresight than was his intention.

²⁹Ibidem, p. 408.

Man's nature as a purposive being is, by and large, taken for granted on the contemporary scene, and the reality of the unconscious is deemed less questionable than its motivational role. McDougall emphatically asserts the essential role of the instincts in our motivational structure, laid down once and for all in our innate constitution.

"The instinctive impulses determine the ends of all activities and supply the driving power by which all mental activities are sustained."³⁰

This assertion has created, in the minds of some, an impression of McDougall's "man" as one of static character, determined by the basic instincts, and completely lacking in modifiability and adaptability through learning and experience. But this is not what McDougall actually affirmed. He recognized the dynamic nature of man, the diversification of instinctive behavior, and the modification of instinct through changes in the perceptual disposition under the influence of learning and experience. He did, however, hold that despite such modification the motive power in behavior always remains the same. Further evidence of McDougall's belief in the dynamic nature of man is found in his theory of sentiments discussed in an earlier chapter

³⁰Ibidem, p. 38.

of this work. There can be no question about the reality of the motivating force of these complex factors of character.

Woodworth states the problem well when he writes,

"McDougall, then, did not say, as he is sometimes supposed to have said, that adult human behavior is directly motivated by instincts. What he said was that human behavior is motivated by sentiments derived from the instincts and still possessing the emotional striving of the instincts. Behavior, he said, is not driven by purely rational considerations but by love and hates, interests, zeals, rivalries, enthusiasms, all of which have an emotional and impulsive character derived ultimately from the native propensities of mankind."³¹

We need only recall to mind the basic structure of Instinct as it appears in McDougall's thought to see how "modification" and "permanence" can be reconciled. In his thinking, each instinct has aspects conceptually distinguishable but functionally dependent. Thus, the sensory and motor parts are subject to modifications through learning and new behavior patterns result. The conative-affective core, however, remains unchanged. Because of this, the motive force behind any sentiment is the emotional-impulsive center of the instinct from which it is derived, though the

³¹Robert WOODWORTH, and Mary SHEEHAN, Contemporary Schools of Psychology, New York: Ronald Press, 3rd ed., 1964, p. 343.

behavior exhibited under the motivation of this sentiment may be truly learned.

It is the cognitive aspect of instinct in McDougall's theory which seems to us to be most satisfactorily expounded and the least open to serious questioning. That he recognizes the reality and the value of this phase of the instinctive process is in evidence in each of his major works and this we have shown in earlier chapters of this thesis.

McDougall, in his acceptance of a cognitive process within the instinctive structure, recognizes it as a perceptual one, allied to ordinary perception though distinct from it. There is in it the added note of meaningfulness or significance by means of which is established a relationship of beneficence or harmfulness between the object and the perceiver. And in his treatment of it he remains consistent. Not only does this recognition happen in man, but it occurs, too, in the animals which, without reflection, seek what is good and shun what is not. It is, then, in both a sensory estimate.

William James and McDougall are close in thought on this point. James sees in instinct-experience not only perception but also what he identifies as cognition, which is a primary awareness of the significance of the perception or the object for the organism at that time. James Drever takes

a similar position and insists that instinct-experience is essentially that of perceptual consciousness. Commenting on McDougall's position, Brennan writes, "McDougall's point (instinct cannot be divorced from conscious striving) is well taken since, obviously, if consciousness is not admitted, then, from a strictly behavioral angle, there can be no grounds for distinguishing between a reflex and an instinct."³²

There are, however, aspects of his treatment of the cognitive phase which we would like to see improved. For example, he broadens the influence of objects so that those not naturally determined can nevertheless arouse an instinct. In explaining this by association as he does, he faces the danger, it seems to us, of falling into the mechanistic theory he has been so adamant in opposing. Moreover, even accepting the possibility of connecting different objects with an instinct by means of association, there still remains unanswered the question of the natural object which loses its power to incite to action. It has been said that

"It is a commonplace of all metaphysics that active powers have a natural inclination to go into activity when their object is present and the conditions are favorable. This

³²Robert BRENNAN, The History of Psychology from the Standpoint of a Thomist, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1945, p. 208.

inclination is not something added to these functions but is in their very nature, for it is related to their act and object."³³

How, then, is this modification brought about? Must the loss of power be permanent? If not, how could the object regain its force of attraction once having lost it? Such questions remain unanswered in William McDougall's work.

Finally, in the light of our Thomistic background, we find it somewhat taxing to accept, as McDougall suggests, the cognitive as the responsible factor in the process of inhibition. In our thought, the nature of the will makes it undoubtedly the power whenever inhibition occurs. However, we find nothing inconsistent nor reprehensible in this position in the total context of William McDougall's theory. Were it the purpose of this thesis to investigate thoroughly the structure of character he proposes, we might take issue with him on his definition both of character and of will, and in so doing question the relative value of will over knowledge as an inhibiting force. This, however, was not the task to which we set ourselves.

In conclusion, we affirm that William McDougall saw clearly and valued highly the aspect of cognition in

³³M. B. ARNOLD and J. CASSON, The Human Person, New York: Ronald Press, 1954, p. 176.

Instinct. We hold, too, that his conception of the cognitive and its role is one of the most acceptable points in his theory. It is our belief that he ranks high among the contributors to thought not primarily because his theory of Instinct has proved to be correct, but because he has aroused interest in Instinct and has challenged others to investigate this all too little known and appreciated aspect of the nature of man.

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192

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193

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104

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195

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196

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ABSTRACT

198

The suggestion that there is more to Instinct than an urge, that there is knowledge and purpose, is not easily reconciled with certain modern views. To some it seems unfounded; to some, outdated; to others, "Thomistic." It has been our purpose to show that William McDougall, philosopher and psychologist, a leading Instinctivist, has found it, not only possible, but even necessary to recognize the essential role and value of knowledge in Instinct and of purpose in instinctive action.

In the opening chapter we explored the historical background of the problem from the age of the Greeks to that of William McDougall. Early Greek thought was concerned with reaching out towards a fundamental understanding of all that is natural: the world, the brute, man. The search led to the discovery of the appetites, of forethought, and of prudence. In the Christian centuries, philosophers made it their task to determine whether these new-found powers were the same in man and beast. There was general agreement on the presence in man of a faculty of discernment, but its precise nature was not so easily perceived. By the end of the Middle Ages, men had come to accept Instinct, an intrinsic impulse involving appetite and cognition. In the next few centuries, the investigation of the crucial "body-mind" relationship and of the problems of knowledge and of will indirectly sustained the interest in Instinct. During the

ABSTRACT

199

nineteenth century, the work of Charles Darwin reopened the question, and, with the advent of Freud, Instinct gained ground as a determinant of man's activity. McDougall and certain of his contemporaries became its strong proponents, but with the School of Behaviorists, it found no favor at all.

The general exploration of the second chapter unfolded the dynamic nature and hormic character of McDougall's psychology. Examination of his definition of Instinct presented evidence of recurring features of perception, emotion, and impulse to action. McDougall insistently claims for Instinct more than a mechanistic nature. The emphasis on mental activity is so strong that Instinct must be structured to permit cognitive, conative, and affective aspects, though later expressions of his theory unite the last two as one function. Recognizing the modifiability of Instinct on both the cognitive and motor sides, McDougall became a stalwart foe of instinctive action as stereotyped behavior. In his philosophy there is not a dichotomy between Instinct and Intelligence as between two distinct principles, but an ever-willing co-operation, with Intelligence offering control and discovering new means to the ends which Instinct, as the root of human activity, leads us to seek.

We moved on to a detailed consideration of the conative-affective core, the dynamo of human conduct. As an active felt tendency, it is a striving towards a given end,

ABSTRACT

200

at times, manifested overtly; at times, of necessity controlled; but always persistent, subconsciously at work until the end is reached. Conation, the motivating force of man's thought and action, is always accompanied by emotional excitement. Since instinctive action can be expressed or checked, pleasure or pain may follow, the latter becoming more intense in direct proportion to the difficulties encountered. In the face of much opposition McDougall remained adamant in his contention that the conative-affective core was the central feature of Instinct.

Our investigation was next directed on the nature of the cognitive disposition. Since Instinct is more than a mere reflex, crude sensation does not suffice to stimulate it to action. Sense perception is required. Not all that is perceived arouses the Instinct, and so the perceptual disposition must display sensitivity to things appropriate to the experience of the moment. This involves an appraisal of the object as good, bad, or indifferent to the perceiver, a sensory evaluation not found in ordinary perception. A pre-formed psycho-physical organization is required to receive and elaborate the impulses, that the object may become meaningful, provoking in the organism an inner tension and awakening it to the suitability of its object.

The role of the cognitive is, first, that of an "initiator" of action, working through the mediation of the

ABSTRACT

201

conative tendency. As a perceptual disposition, it synthesizes the many sense impressions into a whole and immediately forms a direct appraisal of the object in relation to the subject. The cognitive also directs the energy, transformed and released, guiding it into channels leading to the goal. Finally, it makes possible modifications in Instinct, for the cognitive factor itself can undergo elaborate differentiation through specialization and the acquisition of new perceptual dispositions. In this way experience becomes profitable and behavior adaptable.

Closely related to the study of the cognitive aspect is the study of the sentiment. This new mental growth does not suddenly emerge as a developed reality, but builds up slowly, during the course of experience, as the cognitive links various propensities directed to one object. The sentiment is not conceived by McDougall as purely emotional. Not only is the cognitive a directive force, but through it inconsistent tendencies in unlike sentiments are inhibited and the conative dispositions of the two opposed impulses become connected. Sentiment and Instinct are distinguishable by the nature of the link between the cognitive ability and the propensity, a link acquired through experience in the sentiment, but innate in the Instinct, and by the motivating power assigned to each.

ABSTRACT

202

Central to McDougall's psychology is his belief in the purposive nature of man. He looks upon purpose as a conscious desire leading to a deliberate effort to attain a coveted object. Purposive activities are marked by an element of freedom and of effort which sets them apart from the determinism of inorganic processes. Nevertheless, McDougall does not deny purposive action to animals for there is variation in the degrees of purposiveness. At times, the goal and the means are deliberately weighed and chosen; at other times, they are seen clearly but there is neither deliberation nor choice; at still other times, the goal and the means are vague, even unforeseen. Now some animal actions are clearly goal-seeking and manifest a sequence of behavior towards the natural end of the activity. Such goal-seeking activities, whether of men or animals, are traced to those dynamic units, the Instincts.

In our evaluation we have noted weaknesses of language, assumed generalizations, ambiguities, and inconsistencies which are sometimes apparent. Nevertheless, the positive contribution which William McDougall has made to psychology is without doubt considerable. His emphasis upon the emotional phase of instinctive action and his discussion of it remain one of his major contributions. His justification of, and his insistence upon, the purposive nature of such action and his study of the cognitive process within

ABSTRACT

203

the framework of the instinct structure are clear and consistent. We conclude, therefore, that William McDougall recognized the role and the value of knowledge in Instinct and of purpose in instinctive action.