

Mind

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The psychologists say that consciousness is the essential attribute of mind; and that purpose is only a special modification. I hold that purpose, or rather, final causation, of which purpose is the conscious modification, is the essential subject of psychologists' own studies; and that consciousness is a special, and not a universal, accompaniment of mind.

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To begin with the psychologists have not yet made it clear what Mind is. I do not mean its substratum; but they have not even made it clear what a psychological phenomenon is. Far less has any notion of mind been established and generally acknowledged which can compare for an instant in distinctness to the dynamical conception of matter. Almost all the psychologists still tell us that mind is consciousness. But to my apprehension Hartmann has proved conclusively that unconscious mind exists. What is meant by consciousness is really in itself nothing but feeling. Gay and Hartley were quite right about that; and though there may be, and probably is, something of the general nature of feeling almost everywhere, yet feeling in any ascertainable degree is a mere property of protoplasm, perhaps only of nerve matter. Now it so happens that biological organisms, and especially a nervous system are favorably conditioned for exhibiting the phenomena of mind also; and therefore it is not surprising that mind and feeling should be confounded. But I do not believe that psychology can be set to rights until the importance of Hartmann's argument is acknowledged, and it is seen that feeling is nothing but the inward aspect of things, while mind on the contrary is essentially an external phenomenon. The error is very much like that which was so long prevalent that an electrical current moved through the metallic wire; while it is now known that that is just the only place from which it is cut off, being wholly external to the wire. Again, the psychologists undertake to locate various mental powers in the brain; and above all consider it as quite certain that the faculty of language resides in a certain lobe; but I believe it comes decidedly nearer the truth (though not really true) that language resides in the tongue. In my opinion it is much more true that the thoughts of a living writer are in any printed copy of his book than that they are in his brain.

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Mind has its universal mode of action, namely, by final causation. The microscopist looks to see whether the motions of a little creature show any purpose. If so, there is mind there. Passing from the little to the large, natural selection is the theory of how forms come to be adaptive, that is, to be governed by a quasi purpose. It suggests a machinery of efficiency to bring about the end - a

machinery inadequate perhaps - yet which must contribute some help toward the result. But the being governed by a purpose or other final cause is the very essence of the psychical phenomenon, in general. There ought, therefore, one would think, to be under the order of psychonomy, or nomological psychognosy, a suborder which should seek to formulate with exactitude the law of final causation and show how its workings are to be traced out.

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The hypothesis suggested by the present writer is that all laws are results of evolution; that underlying all other laws is the only tendency which can grow by its own virtue, the tendency of all things to take habits. Now since this same tendency is the one sole fundamental law of mind, it follows that the physical evolution works towards ends in the same way that mental action works towards ends, and thus in one aspect of the matter it would be perfectly true to say that final causation is alone primary. Yet, on the other hand, the law of habit is a simple formal law, a law of efficient causation; so that either way of regarding the matter is equally true, although the former is more fully intelligent. Meantime, if law is a result of evolution, which is a process lasting through all time, it follows that no law is absolute. That is, we must suppose that the phenomena themselves involve departures from law analogous to errors of observation. But the writer has not supposed that this phenomenon had any connection with free will. In so far as evolution follows a law, the law of habit, instead of being a movement from homogeneity to heterogeneity, is growth from difformity to uniformity. But the chance divergences from law are perpetually acting to increase the variety of the world, and are checked by a sort of natural selection and otherwise (for the writer does not think the selective principle sufficient), so that the general result may be described as "organized heterogeneity," or, better, rationalized variety. In view of the principle of continuity, the supreme guide in framing philosophical hypotheses, we must, under this theory, regard matter as mind whose habits have become fixed so as to lose the powers of forming them and losing them, while mind is to be regarded as a chemical genus of extreme complexity and instability. It has acquired in a remarkable degree a habit of taking and laying aside habits. The fundamental divergences from law must here be most extraordinarily high, although probably very far indeed from attaining any directly observable magnitude. But their effect is to cause the laws of mind to be themselves of so fluid a character as to simulate divergences from law.

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...a *mind* may, with advantage, be roughly defined as a *sign-creator in connection with a reaction-machine*.