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PLEASURE AND INSTINCT

A Study in the Psychology of Human Action

A H BURLTON ALLEN

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PLEASURE & INSTINCT

A STUDY IN THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HUMAN ACTION

PART I

INTRODUCTORY

SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL THEORIES OF PLEASURE AND UNPLEASURE. QUESTIONS OF NOMENCLATURE

IN the present work an attempt is made in the first place to define the nature of "feeling", that which in ordinary language is called "pleasure and pain", or in more technically psychological terms "the affective side of the mental life". In the present state of psychology, however, there being little enough agreement on general principles, it is practically impossible to treat any one part of the mental life as a closed-off department, separate from the rest. This is particularly the case in regard to the feelings, and we shall in the course of our enquiry find ourselves carried on to consider a somewhat wide range of general psychological questions, particularly those connected with instinct.

Let us begin by giving a summary of the more important views hitherto held on the nature of pleasure and pain (or as we shall usually say) "unpleasure". It is impossible to attempt to be exhaustive. We can only indicate the chief types of theory. Theories we shall find fall into two main classes: (1) those which consider the feelings an order of mental facts different in kind to sensations, to the cognitive elements of mind; and related to the *form* of the psycho-physical process; (2) those which

treat them as essentially akin to sensation and having their own organs or brain-centre.

Under (1) there is in the first place the school which we may consider as deriving from Butler, who maintained that the primary fact is the existence in man of particular passions and appetites, but that pleasure or unpleasure arise according as these are successful or unsuccessful. "The very idea of interest or happiness consists in this, that an appetite or affection enjoys its object."[1] As the chief modern representatives of this view we may mention Stout and McDougall. It follows logically from it that these feelings must be held to appertain to the subjective side of the mental life, to be modifications of the self-state, arising in a secondary or epi-phenomenal manner in dependence on the course of conative activity.

The Hedonist school holds, it is true, that the relation of feeling to conation is the reverse of that first mentioned, i.e. it believes that conation and desire are determined by pleasure, not that pleasure is dependent on the result of conation. Yet this school does appear to hold that the connection between feeling and conation is necessary and indissoluble. For Mill has stated that desiring a thing and finding it pleasant, aversion to it and thinking of it as painful, are two parts of the same phenomenon,[2] and Spencer that for the word pleasure we can substitute the equivalent phrase—a feeling which we seek to bring into consciousness and retain there, and for the word pain, the equivalent phrase—a feeling which we seek to get out of consciousness and keep out.[3] Further, the adherents of this school do, it would seem, agree generally that pleasure and unpleasure are facts of the mental life which arise in dependence on the *form* of the psycho-physical process, i.e. are not independent mental facts of the same order as the cognitive elements of consciousness. This at least would appear to be involved in Herbert

[1] Butler, "Preface to Sermons", Selby & Bigge, *British Moralists*, I, 192.
[2] See *Utilitarianism*, c. IV.
[3] *Principles of Psychology*, I, 280.

Spencer's view that pleasure is the concomitant of medium activities, beneficial to the organism, and pain the concomitant of either excessive or deficient activity, injurious to the organism ;[1] and we may find the same exemplified in the two principles stated by Bain, i.e. firstly that pleasure is connected with an increase and pain with an abatement of some or all of the vital functions, and secondly that pleasure accompanies the moderate discharge of nervous activity up to a point not exceeding the powers of reparation possessed by the organism.[2]

There are a number of other theories which agree in general that pleasure is the accompaniment of successful or easy vital activity, but endeavour to define the neural conditions more accurately. Lehmann in his elaborate work on the feelings gives the view that unpleasure occurs when the capacity for work of a nerve centre is lowered by its activity, and that pleasure accompanies an activity of the neurone which takes place without decrease of the capacity for work, but is greater according as the activity is greater ; or in other words unpleasure occurs when dissimilation is greater than assimilation, and pleasure occurs when they balance, but pleasure is greater according as both factors, assimilation and dissimilation, are greater.[3] According to Marshall pleasure occurs whenever the stimulus affecting an organ occasions the use of surplus stored force, unpleasure when the stored force is insufficient to the demands of the stimulus.[4] Störring holds a view closely similar to this.[5] Many more recent physiological theories agree in relating pleasure and unpleasure to the form or pattern of the neural activity. J. C. Herrick writes as follows: "The normal discharge then of definitely elaborated nervous circuits resulting in free unrestrained activity is pleasurable, in so far as the reaction comes into consciousness at all (of course, a large

[1] *Id.*, I, 272–9.
[2] Bain, *Senses and Intellect*, 303–17.
[3] Lehmann, *Die Hauptgesetze des menschlichen Gefühlslebens*, esp. 163–8.
[4] *Pain, Pleasure and Æsthetics*, 204 and 324.
[5] *Psychologie des menschlichen Gefühlslebens*, 70–72.

proportion of such reactions are strictly reflex and have no conscious significance). Conversely the impediment to such discharge, no matter what the occasion, results in a stasis in the nerve centres, the summation of stimuli and the development of a situation of unrelieved nervous tension which is unpleasant, until the tension is relieved by the appropriate adaptive reaction."[1] The view of W. M. Marston is similar to this, but he lays stress on the consciousness going with motor impulse, and finds the essence of pleasure and unpleasure in consciousness of mutual facilitation or antagonism between motor impulses.[2] W. B. Cannon has suggested that feeling is the result of certain patterns or combinations of neural activity (occurring it is true only in sub-cortical centres), which fix certain forms of reaction and bodily posture.[3]

(2) We have now to contrast with the foregoing those theories in which pleasure and unpleasure are assimilated to sensations, i.e. to the cognative contents of the mind. Of these we can distinguish two classes: (*a*) those which regard these feelings as organic sensations or complexes of such sensations, (*b*) those which regard them as mental elements distinct from other sensations but of the same order, and as arising from the excitation of a separate "feeling centre" in the brain. As an example of (*a*) we may take the following statement by R. B. Perry: "Feeling can be regarded as a sensory experience referred vaguely and diffusely to the body itself and immediately initiating responses of prolongation or rejection. Feeling in the broadest sense is any organic sensory complex in proportion as it is immediate and non-discriminatory. Feeling in the narrower sense in which it is associated with the duality of pleasure and pain is any such sensory complex, together with the interest taken in it for its own sake. Pleasures are non-discriminatory organic sensations which are immediately liked, pains

[1] Herrick, *Introduction to Neurology* (1927), 298.
[2] Marston, *Emotions of Normal People*, chapter V.
[3] W. B. Cannon in *Feelings and Emotions* (Wittenberg Symposium), 266–7.

non-discriminatory organic sensations, immediately disliked."[1] He would apparently hold that the acts of prolongation or rejection are reflexes which in the course of evolution have been established in relation to favourable or unfavourable bodily conditions.

The theory of the "sensational" nature of pleasure and unpleasure is, however, more often held in the form (*b*). We may take Stumpf as giving a clear version of this.[2] He has maintained that sensory pleasure and pain are in fact sensations. As such they can exist independently of other sensations (e.g. cutaneous or internal pain). But in the case of many of the senses, especially sight, touch, and hearing they are excited through the medium of those sense organs, and therefore only exist as "Mit" or "Annexe-Empfindungen".[3] In both cases a feeling-centre is involved, in the one class affected direct, in the other through medium of the other senses. They belong, therefore, not to the subjective (zuständlich) part of consciousness, but to the objective (gegenständlich), not to the functions, but to the matter of consciousness, in the same way as colours, sounds, etc., are reckoned.[4] There is therefore no necessary connection between these "feeling sensations" and conation. They do in fact constitute the primary motives of accepting or rejecting behaviour,[5] but Stumpf's explanation why this should be so is not very clear; apparently he would hold that somehow in point of fact a connection has become established in the course of evolution between pleasure and well-being of the organism, pain and ill-being. The treatment by Wohlgemuth in his article in the *British Journal of Psychology* (Vol. 8, 1915–17), "Feelings, their neural correlate and Pain," and his monograph, *Pleasure—Unpleasure*, is avowedly incomplete. But we seem to be justified in concluding that in general principle he would

[1] Perry, *General Theory of Value*, 284.
[2] *Zeitschrift für Psychologie*, Vol. 44 (1906–7), 1 ff.; Vol. 75 (1916), 1 ff.
[3] Vol. 44, 29–30.
[4] Op. cit., 40.
[5] Op. cit., 15–16.

agree with Stumpf. For though he distinguishes pleasure and unpleasure from sensations, yet he seems to regard them as filling the same sort of function in mental life as sensations, and as amenable to the same psychological laws; and he holds that they are connected with the excitation of a feeling-centre in the brain. Others who hold that a feeling-centre exists are Thalbitzer[1] and Head and Holmes.[2] For all writers who take a view such as this, there cannot, it would seem, logically be any question of a necessary connection between feeling and action, based on psychological grounds. If it is admitted that such a connection exists, it can only be grounded on the physiological fact that at a point in the "reflex arc", i.e. somewhere in the passage from stimulation of a sense organ to motor discharge, a certain brain centre is usually affected, the excitation of which is accompanied by the conscious phenomena, which we know as pleasure and unpleasure.

In the present work, it is proposed to present a version of the theory, mentioned in the first place above, which it is hoped may avoid some of the difficulties and contradictions hitherto felt to be involved in it. Inasmuch as pleasure and unpleasure are held to be dependent on the success of conation, our task, we shall find, will carry us on to describe, as accurately as may be, the nature of the main conations which run through both the physical and mental life; and thus we shall have to discuss in some detail the nature of instinct. We shall ultimately be led, it may be hoped, to form a more definite idea of the whole mental life of man as a striving process.

A note should perhaps first be made on the question of nomenclature. The generally recognised procedure now is to use the word "pain" to denote a particular sort of sensation derived from the skin or internal organs, and the word "unpleasure" as the general term to denote the feeling which is opposed to pleasure. This practice is

[1] *Emotion and Insanity*, 89–91.

[2] Brain, Vol. XXXIV, 1911, 102–254; see especially the conclusions, 180–2, and 190–2.

followed in this essay, though, as will doubtless be observed, it involves certain expressions which sound awkward and unusual to the ordinary reader. In particular the word " unpleasure " may appear to describe something which is a mere negation of pleasure, and to be inadequate to the more acute forms of suffering, in which the feeling certainly appears *primâ facie* to include a positive element, something more than a mere privation. Unless however a positive term can be found, which at the same time will not be confused with the bodily sensation of pain, there seems to be no choice but to follow the present practice in psychological writings. As a further point in nomenclature it may be observed that provisionally we shall use the word " feeling " as an equivalent for " pleasure and unpleasure." This course is convenient for the sake of brevity, and in accordance with the general view that pleasure and unpleasure are the only cases of " feeling ". We do not however wish necessarily to imply concurrence with this view. The question whether there are varieties of " feeling " other than pleasure or unpleasure is one which we shall have to refer to later.

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PART II

SENSORY PLEASURE AND UNPLEASURE

CHAPTER I

THE QUESTION STATED

It would seem that the theory of feeling, which we have described as that derived from the teaching of Butler, must start by admitting a *primâ facie* distinction between two classes of feeling. Firstly there are the pleasures and unpleasures which appear to arise directly from bodily conditions, such as the feeling excited by the scent of a rose or by a prick on the skin, by a warm bath, or by severe muscular fatigue. Secondly there are pleasures and unpleasures connected with such instinctive tendencies as ambition and self-assertion, gregariousness or love of society, curiosity or desire of knowledge. Thus Prof. McDougall states that "living beings are natively endowed with dispositions or tendencies to strive towards certain goals proper to the species,"[1] and that pleasure and unpleasure are bound up with the success or the thwarting of such strivings. This is true *primâ facie* of the main instinctive tendencies, such as those mentioned above; and the theory which connects pleasure and unpleasure with the success of conation has based itself in the first place on these facts. It meets however with a difficulty when it attempts to explain on the same lines those feelings which appear to arise directly from bodily conditions. We propose to consider in the first place, this class of feeling, which for short may be termed "sensory", dealing later with the pleasure and unpleasure connected with the main instinctive tendencies.

[1] *British Journal of Psychology*, Jan. 1927, 171, etc.

The unpleasantness of a prick on the skin or of a noisome smell, the pleasantness of a sweet taste or of the scent of a rose, all appear at first sight to arise as immediate accompaniments of the given sensations and to be not at all dependent on the success or non-success of a pre-existent conation. The difficulty has long been recognized by all those who treat psychology purely as an analysis of the facts of consciousness. Stout, in the concluding chapter of his *Analytic Psychology*, admits (and to some extent justifies) the failure of psychology to analyse the simple sensory feelings, and hands over the matter to physiology. The Herbartian school, as represented by Nahlowsky, admitted the distinction so far as to refuse the name of feelings (Gefühle) to what we have termed sensory feelings.[1] Sweet tastes or unpleasant odours are termed "Betonte Empfindungen". Their "tone" is due to the fact that they work in either a furthering or inhibiting way on the functions of the nerves concerned, as well as on those of the central organs and those of the vegetative life. But in such sensations it is said the soul itself is not directly concerned, though they may give rise to feeling, in the proper sense of the term, by causing changes of mood in the soul. Feeling in the true sense is the result of the interplay of ideas present in the soul, inasmuch as the ideas are the forces working in the soul.

The question then arises whether psychologists, at least those of the general school referred to above, are bound to admit the existence of two orders of feelings, to which the same theory does not apply. McDougall, in his article referred to above, has endeavoured to bring the pleasures and unpleasures of sense under the terms of a "conational", or as he terms it "hormic", theory. Taking taste as an example he states that a sweet taste in itself (as a cognitive fact) promotes the conative impulse to consume the food which has been taken in the

[1] See Nahlowsky, *Das Gefühlsbeh* (1862), 29 and 30, as well as other passages.

mouth, and that the total process is then pleasant in so far as the conative impulse is intensified and satisfied. It seems to me that here there is an endeavour to obtain more from psychological analysis than it can possibly yield. The fact, so far as given in consciousness, seems to be that the pleasure is given as an independent psychical fact existing in its own right, and that a conation to maintain the total pleasant experience arises coincidently with it. It is not possible from introspection to ascribe priority to either the pleasure or the conation (as indeed Prof. McDougall quotes from Stout). We have some justification in cases of this sort in appealing to the ordinary use of language, with which men have done their best to describe their mental experiences. In a case of an unexpected sweet taste or sweet perfume, (and, of course, the unexpected pleasant experience is here the crucial instance), the ordinary man has always said and continues to say: "Contrary to my expectations I found the taste or the scent" (or other sensation) "quite pleasant, and so I continued to enjoy it as long as I could." He would be puzzled and fail to recognize the description if he was told that he really found the taste pleasant for the sole reason that he wanted to have it. At least he would say that the pleasantness arose independently of his consciously wanting the experience. Similar considerations will apply to the examples which Prof. McDougall gives of unpleasant sensations. A painful prick or puncture of the skin does not appear as unpleasant simply for the reason that we fail to withdraw from it in time. It appears as unpleasant, if it lasts long enough to be perceived as a pain sensation. I hardly think we know of any instance in which a stimulation of pain nerves, sufficiently intense to reach the point of unpleasure, yet fails to be unpleasant, because of the speed with which it is terminated by withdrawal. And certain odours appear to us unpleasant if they last long enough for their peculiar character to be recognized, however speedily we may be able to get away from them. Nor is it easy

to follow Prof. McDougall in his view that the pleasurableness of single colours or tones is entirely due to the success with which they can be discriminated from their surroundings or background. It is no doubt true that every sensation is conditioned and affected by the relation in which it stands to other sensations. But no theory of cognition can possibly hold that the whole being of every perception is constituted by these relations.[1] So surely should it be also with the feelings that accompany perceptions. In paying tribute to the results of the "Form psychology" we must not push the doctrine of relativity too far. A general or diffused brightness seems to us ordinarily pleasurable in itself; a diffused gloom unpleasant and depressing. Many of us have our "favourite colour", which we are inclined to prefer as a rule in all the different surroundings in which it may be found, even though certain contexts and surroundings may sometimes be found which "kill" it. The less-developed minds, savages and children, are said to show such a general preference for the colours at the red end of the spectrum. It can hardly be said that this is due to the intellectual satisfaction of distinguishing these colours from their background. In regard to tones the pleasantness, if any, which accompanies a pure tone, free from overtones, is so slight that it is difficult to base any argument on it. In regard to harmony it has no doubt been held that the pleasure of a harmonious chord is due to the ease and completeness with which it can be grasped as a complex whole of relations.[2] But I should hardly think this theory has been generally accepted as proved. The pleasure of a harmonious chord does not appear to immediate introspection to be of the same nature as that involved in the understanding and mastery of a

[1] Alles in der Welt steht in Verhältnissen, besteht aber nicht daraus. Ward, *Psychological Principles*, 89, quoting Stumpf (Everything in the world stands in relations, but does not consist of them).

[2] Watt, *The Foundations of Music.*

complex pattern, i.e. the satisfaction of a purely intellectual impulse. It seems rather to include the " warmth " of a directly sensuous element. The same may be said of the unpleasure of a discord; it seems something different from the bafflement of an intellectual impulse.

CHAPTER II

THE SPECIAL SENSES AND THE GENERAL BODILY PROCESS

THE question then is how we are to think of the connection between conation and the feelings that arise from bodily causes. We have argued that we cannot regard such feelings as conditioned by the conations of the conscious self. The purpose of the first portion of this work will be to enquire whether we may not find an analogue of conation in the sense organs and the body generally which may condition the appearance of bodily pleasure and unpleasure.

Let us look first at the facts which physiology has described under the word "tonus". Thalbitzer has recently written as follows: "In the course of time it became clear not only that tonus is characteristic of muscle cells, but that all cells, so long as they are living, are functioning to some extent, and have a certain tonus; living cells never stand still, but always show a certain degree of their specific function."[1] To which we may add the following from Verworn: "This important fact [i.e. that different varieties of stimuli produce in the same object wholly similar reactions] shows that in every form of living substance there must exist an extraordinary inclination toward a specific series of processes. This sequence is continually present in slight degree and finds its expression in the spontaneous vital phenomena, but the slightest stimuli of all kinds augment the discharge of the processes always in the same characteristic sequence for each specific variety of living substance, just as the nitroglycerine molecule can always be made to disintegrate into the same constituents by mechanical, gal-

[1] Thalbitzer, *Emotion and Insanity*, 116.

vanic, or thermal influences."[1] Verworn seems careful here to exclude the appearance of any psychical implication in his use of the word "inclination". But it has often been felt by others that this permanent state of activity must, in certain organs, be held to include something in the nature of a "striving" towards a further functioning. In regard to the muscular system Bain long ago stated this categorically in his theory of spontaneous movement. "The muscles never undergo an entire relaxation during life. Even in profound slumber they possess a certain degree of tension or rigidity. This state is excited through the medium of the nerves. The inference is that at all times a stream of nervous energy flows to the muscles irrespective of stimulation from without." "As the battery of the torpedo becomes charged by the mere course of nutrition and requires to be periodically relieved by being poured upon some object or other, so we may suppose that the jaws of the tiger, the fangs of the serpent, the spinning apparatus of the spider, require at intervals to have some objects to spend themselves upon."[2] In regard to the sense organs Thalbitzer writes: "In order that a sensation may arise there is need not only of a stimulus, of an impression from the outside world, but also of a certain activity, a movement towards the impression, of a readiness for it, without which no sensation at all can arise."[3] That this activity exists in the form of a craving has been more definitely stated by Groos, and the view is indeed fundamental to his whole theory of human play. "Thus, as Jodl maintains in agreement with Beaunis and others, every sensory tract not only possesses the passive capacity of receiving and working up certain stimuli, but also it presents itself from the first in the form of desire for satisfaction with appropriate stimuli."[4]

It would seem as though in the unstimulated sense organ (the appropriate brain centre of course included)

[1] Verworn, *General Physiology*, 474.
[2] Bain, *Mental and Moral Science*, 14 and 17 (shortened).
[3] Thalbitzer, op. cit., 27, cf. 122.
[4] Groos, *Spiele der Menschen* (1899), 5 (translated).

there must exist a state describable as tension, or *nisus*, towards the discharge of its peculiar function, a tension which will be increased, according to the state of nourishment of the organ, and the length of time during which it has remained unstimulated, within the limit at which atrophy through disuse may commence. If such tension has any effect on the main stream of consciousness, it will take the form of certain somewhat indefinite sensations in the organs concerned, accompanied by restlessness and an impulse towards their fuller activity. This impulse, by reason of its quality and localization, will not be entirely blind, but will naturally yield some awareness of the direction towards which it tends, though fuller knowledge of the end to be attained will be given in as far as there is memory of past satisfaction. It would be easily intelligible that this local restlessness or tension would, in general, not become focal for consciousness, but would fall into the general mass of the bodily sensations forming the constant background of the mental life. A mental factor, which is either constant or in process of gradual change, would naturally tend to be marginal for attention. On the other hand, the abrupt change that occurs when the craving of the sense organ is satisfied, would naturally force itself into the focus of attention and the feeling of satisfaction accompanying the change would be noticed, though the previous state of want had not been noticed. This explanation of the facts is as old as Plato. " Things which experience gradual withdrawings and emptyings of their nature and great and sudden replenishments, fail to perceive the emptying but are sensible of the replenishment, and so they occasion no pain but the greatest pleasure to the mortal part of the soul, as is manifest in the case of perfumes."[1]

If we examine the actual course of some unexpected

[1] *Timæus*, 65 (Jowett's Translation). The quotation is used in illustration of the view given above, though it must be admitted that Plato himself does not maintain it consistently. In the *Philebus* (51 and 52) he classes the pleasures of smell with the so-called pure pleasures, those which are not necessarily preceded by any craving.

pleasant experience, we shall I think find this view substantiated. Suppose that a pleasant sweet taste is experienced, which has been preceded by no conscious desire. The first moment of the sweet taste does seem to occur as the satisfaction of a need. We can detect an implied thought, which if put into words would run: "This gives me something which I was just wanting." The awakened craving is not as a rule satisfied by this first moment, which appears as something incomplete. The energy of the craving prolongs itself and seeks to maintain and intensify the sensation, while the experience lasts, while the sweet, for example, is being dissolved in the mouth. This continues until satiety is felt as attained, and this we must believe to be due to the fact that the tension of the nervous elements concerned has now been worked off and removed. During the process thus described movements are often employed to intensify the sensation, or reinstate it, as it appears to fade away; for example, shifting the position of the sweet in the mouth. The process no doubt finds its natural end in the act of swallowing. But this is because the sweet sensation acts also as a sign for the satisfaction of a further impulse, one of the nature of hunger.

The existence of cravings in a subconscious form is, as I think, further substantiated by the facts of desire. It has always been difficult to see how from the mere idea of a possible pleasant experience active desire should be awakened, for in itself the idea of a pleasant experience should itself be pleasant, and we should tend to rest in it without effort towards change. Desire, so it has often therefore been held, does not come into existence without the *vis a tergo* of a pre-existent felt need, which, at least if sufficiently intense, is unpleasantly toned. But on the other hand it seems a fact of ordinary experience that the suggestion of a pleasant sensation, say, the eating of a sweet, provokes immediate desire, though no need was felt beforehand. This difficulty appears to be satisfactorily solved by the theory that the want existed

previously in a subconscious form. When, after a state in which we are conscious of no desire for a sweet, the eating of a sweet is suggested, and becomes an object of desire, it seems to me that an actual craving is experienced in the sense organ ; and it seems natural to believe that what has happened has been the evocation of the need for stimulation from a subliminal stage and its intensification in consciousness. Primarily this stimulus-hunger would exist in the nerve endings of the tongue which mediate the sensation of sweetness ; but often also, no doubt, in the case we are using as an example, the physiological need of the organism as a whole for sugar might translate itself into consciousness as an element in the felt craving. We shall, however, deal further on a little more fully with the psychology of the " desire for pleasure ".

We may now endeavour to pass in review the main departments of sense in order to see what confirmation is obtainable of the general view thus stated. In regard to smell, which Plato used as his example in the quotation above, it is possible to say very little owing to the little that is known physiologically on the subject. No satisfactory classification has been made of the different olfactory sensations ; nor is it known whether there is any difference in the nerve endings which are active in different sorts of smell. It would seem highly probable, however, that the feelings going with the olfactory sensations are connected much more with the general organic effects than with the special form of the activity in the organ itself. Closely related as this sense has been in the past history of our mammalian ancestors with the nutritive functions and also to some extent with the reproductive functions, it would seem that a close connection between it and other bodily activities has been established, and that the feelings both of pleasure and unpleasure which occur with smells are the result mainly of these other bodily activities which they elicit. This is perhaps as much as we can say with regard to the reasons why one smell is pleasant and another unpleasant. We do, however,

find that a certain craving for strong flavours does exist in connection with food. Flavourless foods appear insipid, and particularly amongst the less cultured there is a demand for such strong flavours as garlic with their food.

As regards taste we have already used sweetness as our example above.

The other main forms of taste sensation, salt, sour, and even bitter, are undoubtedly pleasant at low degrees of intensity as ingredients in dishes, and as affording variety they are liked. With increasing intensity they become soon unpleasant.[1] Külpe states that according to the experiments of Kiesow on tastes the course runs regularly from pleasure to unpleasure if the intensity of the stimulus increases.[2] It is, however, the special characteristic of taste sensations that they have a dual rôle. There is a pleasure due to the stimulation of the taste nerves themselves. And also, doubtless owing to connections established in racial history, these sensations act as excitants to the craving of hunger. Tasteless foods are usually uninteresting, and salt and other condiments are used to correct this.

It might be thought that the sensations given by the pain nerves afford an argument against the view taken here, being unpleasant at all degrees of intensity. It can, however, now be regarded as accepted that the slight stimulation of " pain spots " yields a sensation which is not unpleasant. The following description is given by Titchener.[3] " The sensation obtained from the pain spots then occurs in three stages : first as a bright, itchy sensation, secondly as prick or wiry thrill, and thirdly as punctiform pain." These sensations, at low intensities, are often noticeably pleasant. The stinging sensation of bay rum on the skin after a shave is distinctly gratifying.

[1] See, as regards sourness and bitterness, Wohlgemuth, *Pleasure—Unpleasure*, 25 (Expt. W. 27) ; 30 (Expt. W. 55) ; 83 (Expt. X. 81) ; 99 (Expt. X. 162) ; cf. p. 88 (Expt. X. 110), where the observer states that though a bitter taste was unpleasant, " in its extension it has something satisfying about it, due, I should say, to the faint stimulation of a number of end organs."

[2] Külpe, *Vorlesungen über Psychologie* (1920), 262 (though I have been unable to trace these experiments recorded).

[3] *Text Book of Psychology*, 152–3.

It is probably due to slight stimulation of pain nerves. So, too, are the burning sensations given by pepper and mustard, which, like a salt taste, are sought as remedies against insipidity. Children often seem to find injuries, apparently painful in character, rather interesting and exciting than unpleasant and seek to have them repeated.[1] Wohlgemuth in his experiments finds on a number of occasions that pain sensations of a slight character are adjudged to be pleasant by his observers.[2] Amongst these are the pricking and burning sensations given with the taste of acetic acid, and those yielded by a bristle prick or coarse sand-paper applied to the skin. In ordinary life, too, we are well acquainted with the pleasure often obtained by rubbing with a rough towel or hard brush and from scratching. Undoubtedly sensations from the pain nerves as well as tactual sensations form a part of these experiences. In the case of pain, as in that of certain tastes, we cannot explain why the point of overstimulation is reached apparently so much earlier in certain nerves than in others. It can only be taken as a fact in the physiological make-up of the organism that the nerves mediating sweet taste, for example, are able to endure stronger stimulation than those mediating bitter tastes. For an explanation, if such exists, we should probably be driven back to the facts of racial history.

It must also be admitted that very rarely if ever are we conscious of any craving for stimulation of the pain nerves, comparable in any degree to the craving, say, for a sweet taste. This, however, need not appear strange. We may perhaps assume it as a physiological fact that the energy of discharge in the well-nourished organism drains towards certain organs in the body rather than towards others, and that normally there exists little activity of tension in the unstimulated pain nerves. When, however, the pleasantness of such stimulation has

[1] Shinn, *Notes on Development of a Child*, I, 149–51. Sully, *Studies of Childhood*, 221–2.

[2] Wohlgemuth in *British Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 8 (1915–17), 450; *Pleasure—Unpleasure*, 165 and 217.

been once experienced, there does arise a desire for repetition; and on our view this can only be interpreted as the coming to consciousness of a pre-existent tension or craving.

The pleasures connected with the temperature senses are very largely due to secondary organic effects. Thus the result of a warm bath is to open and cleanse the pores, so that the healthy action of the skin is promoted, and also to induce a dilatation of the blood vessels at the periphery, so that circulation is made more rapid, the tissues, etc., receive a richer alimentation, and the general nutritive changes are speeded up. At the same time, however, we cannot doubt that here, too, the satisfaction of a craving for stimulation also plays a part. In our climate the temperature of the air is nearly always below that of the body, and the end-organs for warmth are stimulated far less than those for cold. Hence, when at intervals, for instance by a warm bath in cool or cold weather, they receive due stimulation, this will naturally give rise to a pleasure of its own. A further source of the pleasure in a warm bath, we may add, is probably the gentle, almost "caressing", stimulation which the cutaneous nerves of touch receive from the surrounding water.[1] It is doubtless the coincidence of these satisfactions from various sources which goes to make up the very high degree of physical pleasure which we experience in a warm bath.

In passing to the other senses more directly concerned with cognition the same principles may be found to apply, though under somewhat different conditions. These senses, especially sight and hearing, are in our ordinary life constantly in receipt of stimulation; and it might be thought that the impulse to discharge their specific functions might be thus continuously satisfied. Similar cravings are, however, to be found if we look at the facts in more detail, especially at the earlier stages of life. It is well established that one of the first facts observed in

[1] This is remarked by Groos, *Spiele der Menschen*, p. 15.

the new-born infant is a "general expression and behaviour of contentment in mild light, and sometimes of discontent at its withdrawal".[1] Very soon, as early as the third week, according to Miss Shinn, there are observed movements which tend to bring recurrence of the gaze to favourite spots (bright patches of colour and illuminated surfaces). Miss Shinn believes these to be conditioned by a craving of the sensory cells for light stimulus.[2] "There seems to be from the first in the developing sense cells not merely the capacity of receiving stimulus, but an actual craving for it, a tension and discomfort in its absence which stimulates motor reaction. There is thus a movement, a ranging to and fro of the eye, which is thus steadily directed by the pleasure feeling, at first automatically, and then by an easy development becomes voluntary movement, determined by association with pleasant experiences."[3]

It is thus highly probable that the craving of the eye for light stimulus is the most important factor in the early part of the process of development by which the child learns to perceive and know its external world. But whether or no we follow Miss Shinn in her detailed account of the process, there can be no doubt of the pleasure given in early life by the mere exercise of sight. "The pleasure in the exercise of vision at this stage is reported over and over by all observers—demonstrations of joy in glitter, in strong chiaroscuro, in moving and vibrating objects, and in the human face with its changing high lights."[4] In the early development of knowledge of the external world by touch sensations, it is possible to hold that the same principle plays an equally important part. "The original touch-organ of the suckling is not the hand but the mouth."[5] The persistent carrying of objects to the mouth which takes place in the first year of childhood cannot be explained by the desire to eat. "The mouth",

[1] Shinn, op. cit., II, 22.
[2] Shinn, op. cit., II, 53–4.
[3] Shinn, op. cit., II, 58.
[4] Shinn, op. cit., II, 62.
[5] Koffka, *Growth of the Mind*, 251.

says Stern,[1] "performs the task of explaining and confirming, by its more familiar and exact touch sensations, the new and indistinct impressions of the other organs (hand and eye)". And Miss Shinn explains the facts in the same way as for the development of visual perception. "The whole behaviour of the infant in the early months shows that the mouth does crave touch and muscular sensation, as the eye craves light; the highly charged cells of its sensory centres are in continual state of tension, which demands discharge by the appropriate stimulus."[2] It is impossible here to go into the development in detail. But according to Miss Shinn it is from the craving to have and reinstate touch sensations that the child is led on towards the most important part of its intellectual development, the correlation of sight and touch sensations. No doubt other accounts of the cognitive development of the child are given; but as far as I can see, unless the explanation given in Miss Shinn's work is adopted, no other can be given except in the form of the automatic maturation of nervous connections and compounding of reflexes, explanations which are in the last resort of the mechanical type.

In our ordinary life no doubt we are not conscious of any need for the stimulation of the senses mainly concerned in the cognition of the external world, sight, hearing, and touch. In the statement of one of the observers in Wohlgemuth's experiments on feeling, however, there occurs what seems an interesting exemplification of a view, similar to that here put forward, in regard to a craving for tactual sensation. The stimulus consisted in the particular case of the skin being rubbed with velvet first very lightly and then more heavily. Here is the observer's introspective report: "The first slightly unpleasant. The sensation consisted partly of slight tickling and partly of very light successive contact sensations, producing altogether an impulse to withdraw the hand.

[1] *Psychology of Early Childhood*, 115.
[2] Op. cit., II, 86, cf. the summary of development given on pp. 96–7.

An attitude of dissatisfaction towards it as something inadequate. The second slightly agreeable, less tickling, a more satisfying series of contact sensations, the attitude changing to one of comparative satisfaction at its adequacy. There is observable a kind of appetite in the skin for gentle stimulation, so that more of it can be more gratifying (a wish to go on)."[1] I think observation does confirm that this sort of attitude is not uncommon in ordinary life. A very slight stimulus (in other spheres of sense as well as in touch) does appear as inadequate and evokes an appetite for a stronger and more satisfying stimulation.

In the spheres of sight and hearing a craving of this character does undoubtedly become conscious, if, when the organism is well nourished and not fatigued, there is abnormal deprivation of the appropriate stimuli. In such circumstances complete darkness and silence are felt as irritating and " oppressive ". We should be tensely watching and listening for something ; and the occurrence of a stimulus would be felt as a pleasant relief. Intense glare of light and unusually loud noises are on the other hand very unpleasant, and so is unduly prolonged stimulation with the same kind of light or sound, which leads to unpleasant sensations of fatigue. Thus we are naturally led to the conclusion that there is a certain optimal degree of stimulation for which the nerves of these organs crave and in which a feeling of pleasure is experienced, and that beyond this degree unpleasure arises.[2]

In Grant Allen's work *Physiological Æsthetics* an attempt has been made to explain the sensory foundations of beauty on these lines. He points out that in nature the colours at the red end of the spectrum are much less common than those at the violet end ; and thus the rarer stimulants of reds and yellows are the more distinctly pleasurable in themselves as arousing function in seldom-

[1] Wohlgemuth, *Pleasure—Unpleasure*, 78, Expt. X, 52.
[2] This is not unlike the view of Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Psychology*, I, 273–7.