

really need and confidently await, is that with all our powers at our command, and the goal before us, we may continue to hope and strive—in Browning's phrase, 'ride, ride together, forever ride.'

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## THE RELATION OF FEELING AND INTEREST

INTEREST has so often been called feeling, that it seems worth while to inquire whether in a state of interest feeling is ever the predominating factor and whether interests and feelings are ever identical. In two earlier articles<sup>1</sup> an attempt was made to define clearly the word interest, and in discussing interest and feeling it will be necessary to state in what sense the word feeling has been used when identical with interest. Feeling is a term which has run the whole gamut of psychical experiences, so we shall not attempt anything but the briefest description of what it means to-day in the common usage of men and what it stands for in some psychological writings.

In general, feeling is regarded as the consciousness which is subjective, which belongs to the self experiencing it without the possibility of its being reproduced in another. Different times and different men have considered an experience to be feeling which later times and keener thinkers have classified as sensation, and the tendency at present is to reduce all feeling to some sort of organic sensation. Emotions are now analyzed into organic sensations, idea complexes and the simple affective elements which are sometimes called affection, simple feeling or feeling tone. But the bit of consciousness which is present when men say, 'I feel I ought to do this,' 'I feel it a pleasure,' 'I feel a real concern,' etc., is what I wish to consider in this paper; emotion will be the term employed where the organic sensations are noticeably prominent, and feeling tone for those irreducible, unanalyzable elements of consciousness which refuse to be objectified.

Let us compare for a moment the two expressions, 'I feel this to be true' and 'I know this to be true.' In the latter case we are prepared with a definite idea, which is the object, we say, of our knowing; not only this, but there is ready a number of definite ideas bearing the relation of proof to the first idea which can reenforce the first idea, making up an argument or chain of reasoning which we can give to the world about us with the conviction that they will

<sup>1</sup>'The Attitude of Mind Called Interest' and 'The Psychical Complex Called an Interest,' this JOURNAL, Vol. I., No. 16, and Vol. II., No. 25.

reappear in the consciousness of other individuals in substantially the same form in which they left ours. So sure are we of this similarity of ideas that we have named them, and they are so much objective, so far as our attitude towards them is concerned, that some philosophers consider them as possessing the only reality there is. Thus the consciousness back of the expression 'I know' has the characteristics of objectivity, definiteness, a logical relation to other ideas and communicableness. It is explicit to the knowing self, and the 'I' falls into the 'Gegenüberstehen attitude,' as Lipps has called it.

On the other hand, when we say, 'I feel it is so,' we often add, 'though I can't tell why.' There are ideas present in this case as surely as in the other, and we believe our idea which we feel is true corresponds to some objective fact. This 'true' idea is not vague, and while it has connections characterized with considerable warmth with hosts of other ideas which give it a substantial foundation, no train of ideas separates itself from the rest of consciousness and allies itself with our 'true' idea as a necessary adjunct of it. We feel it is true for us because our whole consciousness is in harmony with it, but we can not deny that the same idea in another consciousness may find that it is out of harmony with the contents of this other consciousness, and hence would be felt as false. We can not set it off from the rest of our consciousness, for it is implicit in the self, and as we can not transfer our consciousness *en masse* into that of another person, we feel that it belongs to us and that it is incommunicable; hence we call it subjective, and our consciousness feeling. And so we have just the opposite characteristics to the state of knowing, namely, subjectivity, vagueness, chance relations with other ideas and incommunicableness. There does not seem to me to be any hard and fast line between the two; it is only a matter of degree, and the problem of interest is just this passing from the 'I feel' state to the 'I know' state. We seek constantly to make our vague subjective, implicit ideas, objective, definite and communicable to the other selves about us. Perhaps it is more correct to say that the problem of interest is to keep the mind alternating from one state to the other. The true student finds that no sooner has he settled a problem and put his conclusion in the objective form of common knowledge, than that perhaps this very conclusion has awakened in him the feeling that some other problem has a solution of whose truth he feels sure, but which he is impelled to prove true and make objective, and so he goes on in his eager, endless quest.

It is in this sense that Hegel uses feeling when he says,<sup>2</sup> "Feeling is the non-objective content itself and is only the lowest degree of

<sup>2</sup> 'Encyclopädie der Philosophischen Wissenschaft,' Introduction, p. xx.

consciousness, yet a form of the soul common to beasts.' From this state follow all the higher degrees of intelligence by a gradual process until the highest state of knowing is attained. This is the vague consciousness from which instinctive actions spring, and today we in common speech call it instinctive feeling. We are all familiar with Professor James's stream-of-thought theory with its substantive and transitive parts, and it is worth while to notice that he uses the word feeling for this transitive part. For example, he says:<sup>3</sup> "*If there be such things as feelings at all, then so surely as relations between objects exist in rerum naturâ, so surely, and more surely, do feelings exist to which these relations are known.* There is hardly a conjunction or a preposition, and hardly an adverbial phrase, syntactic form, or inflection of voice, in human speech, that does not express some shading or other of relation which we at some moment actually feel to exist between the larger objects of our thoughts." Again, he calls the psychic fringe with which objects before the mind are surrounded feeling, sometimes, indeed, an intense feeling. He endeavors to reinstate the 'vague and inarticulate to its proper place in our mental life.' This is cognitive, but it differs from the distinctly known topic or interest around which the fringe of relations plays, and so he says the relation is felt, and the particular relations usually felt are those of 'harmony and discord, of furtherance or hindrance of the topic.'

When, therefore, an idea is present in consciousness with this vague, inarticulate setting, we say we 'feel' in regard to it. In a state of interest, the interesting idea or topic is active in arousing and controlling consciousness with a view to ultimately finding those related ideas which will form a chain of reasoning and allow a new conclusion to be reached. But in the initial stages the idea seems almost swamped in this vague inarticulate fringe and mass of relations, and so the state in its origin seems to be one of feeling. If we follow it on as it rejects idea after idea from the struggling mass striving for recognition, we see the fringe disappear gradually, relations become harmonious, the accepted ideas become clear-cut, and ranging themselves on the side of the original idea, strengthen and enrich it until it seems to occupy the whole of consciousness, and feeling is entirely absent. And yet no one will say that interest was not the last state as truly as the first. It is, perhaps, no less true that the final stage of a state of interest is enveloped in feeling, for when the conclusion, the end so long sought, can be uttered in a *Eureka* phrase, the long train of ideas held rigidly in a tight grasp is released and flows harmoniously back into the vague and inartic-

<sup>3</sup> James, 'Psychology,' pp. 162 ff.

ulate, and consciousness experiences the delightful feeling of satisfaction.

Taking feeling in this sense, we can answer our first question by saying that feeling is often the predominating factor in the initial stages of interest. To be sure, the interesting idea is the *sine quâ non*, but if it finds no response in the rest of consciousness it dies of inanition, and so it is that the vague and inarticulate decides which ideas shall appeal to us and causes that upheaval of consciousness which characterizes a state of interest. In other words, that which we have already experienced, or that inherited experience of ours, instinct, determines what new thing shall become a part of the present experience, and it is the material out of which the interesting idea fashions that meaning or conclusion which is the purpose of our thinking. The born teacher is the one who knows what the pupil may be able to bring to bear upon any new topic, and the man of tact can foresee what effect his words will have on the minds of his hearers, and chooses accordingly.

As to the other question, are feelings and interests identical, we must answer, no. A feeling may develop into an interest, since the idea which is to lead in the quest for a chain of reasoning and its conclusion may arise from the vague sort of consciousness above described. On the other hand, feeling may develop into an emotion in which, contrary to the development of an interest to clearer intelligence, it deteriorates into a mere mass of organic sensations ending in blind impulse to action. Too often emotional feeling has been mistaken for the feeling which accompanies a true interest, and public speakers and teachers have deceived themselves by thinking that the amusement or excitement which they have succeeded in arousing is that feeling of eagerness to know more, so essential to the awakening of a genuine interest. Although emotions and interests are very far apart in their final stages, yet since they sometimes have a common origin we must inquire whether there is not a little something in common all the way along. The first tends more and more to inarticulateness, to subjectivity, to vagueness and to unreasonableness, while the latter is striving in the opposite direction, but both are alike in that they are trying to find a satisfactory conclusion, and there is a certain excitement or tension present; emotion finds its outlet in physical expression, and interest in intellectual.

Accepting in a general way Wundt's theory of feeling, do we find there is one class of feeling or a feeling tone which is the invariable accompaniment of interest? If we employ the three classifications of attention with their opposites mentioned in the first article cited above, the following scheme of accompanying

feeling and the different forms of attention including interest may be useful, though as our states of mind are rarely pure we can not expect unmixed feelings to appear often.

Involuntary attention.....	Pleasantness.
Vacuity or distraction.....	Unpleasantness.
Interest .....	Excitation.
Indifference .....	Repose.
Voluntary attention.....	Strain.
Inattention .....	Relaxation.

The limits of this paper forbid any elaboration of this scheme, and an appeal to one's own introspection is, of course, its best verification, but one fact in regard to excitement or excitation is of considerable importance. Interest, this article has declared, is the exact opposite of emotion, in that internal organic sensations are quite lacking. In my own experiments<sup>4</sup> as well as in those of several others regarding the vaso-motor changes which take place while different feelings are present, it has been found that the vaso-motor variations are less marked during the excitement-depression classes of feelings than in any others. Thus, while one's own introspection tells one that the feeling is one of excitement, or of being keyed up for action, and while one is conscious that no organic sensations of moment are present when one is interested, we find a corroboration in this fact, that it is exactly this feeling of excitement which careful experiments show to be freest from organic or bodily disturbances.

This brief article closes a modest attempt to make the word interest stand for something more definite in psychology and pedagogy than it has hitherto done. This definition from Lipps,<sup>5</sup> for example, really says very little, and yet interest is a word much used by him: "We understand under interest, when we take the word in this sense, everything which contributes to or is concerned in the activity which a psychical process brings about in me; in a word, all of the factors of the operative power, etc." The simple definition I would suggest is this: Interest is that form of attention when some one idea or train of ideas is prepotent in arousing and controlling consciousness; an interest is a train of thought having a central idea which seeks to organize relevant ideas into a logical relation to itself; interest is never to be identified with feeling, though it may take its rise in feeling as used for the vague and inarticulate consciousness, while its peculiar feeling tone, excitement, has the least emotional taint.

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<sup>4</sup> Boggs, 'The Physiological Accompaniments of Feeling,' *Psychological Review*, Vol. XI., Nos. 4-5.

<sup>5</sup> Lipps, 'Fühlen, Wollen und Denken,' p. 30, Leipzig, 1902.