

A SAMPLING OF HUMAN INSTINCTS¹

Fear	<p>Consider this earliest of human instincts at Genesis</p> <p>Genesis 3: ⁸When they heard the sound of the Lord God walking about in the garden at the breezy time of the day, * the man and his wife hid themselves from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.^d ⁹The Lord God then called to the man and asked him: Where are you? ¹⁰He answered, “I heard you in the garden; but I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid.”²</p>
Anger	<p>Anger is a stopping Instinct: “Here, but no farther!” It pushes back with whatever force (physical expression; physical action; noise) is necessary to stop the advance of something threatening. Hatred is something related to anger in this way: <i>Anger is instinctual; hatred is personal.</i></p>
Shyness and Sociability	<p>Withdrawal vs. Engagement; being alone vs. being with others</p>
Curiosity and Secretiveness	<p>Cf. Lonergan’s “the unrestricted desire to know”</p> <p>Desire for adventure vs. desire to remain inconspicuous – “many persons feel an ineradicable impulse to conceal their plans, their actions, and their character behind a screen of non-committal silence and reserve.”</p>
Acquisitiveness	<p>Cf. “Thou shalt not covet....”; “Thou shalt not steal”.</p> <p>“Certainly the distinction between MEUM and TUUM is one for which every child betrays a remarkable precocity, although the precocity is commonly much more evident in the emphasizing of MEUM than in the recognition of TUUM.”</p>

¹ https://brocku.ca/MeadProject/Angell/Angell_1906/Angell_1906_p.html - Found in James Rowland Angell. "The Important Human Instincts", Chapter 16 in *Psychology: An Introductory Study of the Structure and Function of Human Consciousness*, Third edition, revised. New York: Henry Holt and Company, (1906): 294-309.

* *The breezy time of the day*: lit., “the wind of the day.” Probably shortly before sunset.

^d Jer 23:24.

² *New American Bible*, Revised Edition. (Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), Ge 3:8–10.

Rivalry	<p>“Closely connected with acquisitiveness is the instinct of rivalry, or emulation. It is intimately allied to play and imitation in its origin, and it easily runs to excess in anger, hate, jealousy, and envy.”</p>
Jealousy and Envy	<p>“Viewed merely as natural impulses, jealousy and envy are sufficiently alike to render a separate mention of each unnecessary. Envy is generally applied to our covetousness of the prosperity or possessions of others. This covetousness is often accompanied, as in jealousy, by more or less malignity. Jealousy we commonly apply to a similar feeling toward persons who are our supposed rivals, whether actually successful or simply feared.”</p> <p>I prefer to speak of <i>jealousy</i> as both the covetousness one feels towards something that another person has and the malignant desire to take that from him or her. I prefer to speak of <i>envy</i> as a hatred felt towards another person to such a degree that he or she feels a malignant desire to destroy the existence of, or to permanently neutralize the excellence of, another person.</p>
Sexual Instincts	<p>Notice how in, for example, Catholic tradition, this particular Instinct, even as an Instinct (!), is moralized to a degree out of all proportion to the moralizing (or not at all) of the other human Instincts.</p>
Parental Love	<p>This is a particularly interesting “instinct”, because of how difficult it is for parents (at least at this time and in our contemporary American culture) to distinguish between an <i>instinctual love</i> (actually this is an oxymoron, when love is understood as the highest capacity of a person) and <i>virtuous love</i> of or for their children. E.g., parents regularly confuse these two in relation to the schools to which they send their children to be educated. Teachers or Administrators cannot, and do not wish to, instinctually love their students as their parents do. Rather, they will seek to virtuously love their students.</p>
Play	<p>I have my office right next to St. Ignatius Grade School and its playground. Every school day I hear the sound of children at play. It is obvious to me that they are not choosing freely to play; they just do ... because instinctually they must. Grade school teachers must allow for recess, in order to acknowledge the instinctual need for the children to play.</p>
Imitation	<p>Children learn by imitating. Later in life, we see imitative instincts at work in the way the Media (Marketing, News, etc.) manipulates the “mob” or “clique-propensity” instincts of human beings, getting in “underneath” the person and his or her freedom to weigh the value of things.</p>
Constructiveness vs. Destructiveness	<p>The instinct to “make” or to “build” ... and also in boys to “blow up” things just built. Also, the instinct for “make-believe”.</p>