SYNERGY — SYNTHETIC

Synergy: Ger. Synäres; Fr. synergie; Ital. sinergia. The union of partial or lesser movements or processes in a whole, giving a larger process or movement.

The term is applied especially to the motor functions of the brain, which unite in intervenergizing a group of muscles; but it is also sometimes used for the muscles themselves, which are thus correlated in a single function or group of functions.

The theory which holds that mental synthesis and unity are due to the union of motor processes has been called the synergy theory (see James, Psychoch. Sci., III, March, 1909). (J.M.B.)

Synthesis (Gr. σύνθεσις, acceptance). A part of term signifying the union or union of a presentation as true. The theory was very near to the modern view of judgment, which makes it an act of acceptance or understanding a presentation. See Eisele, Wackel & philos. Begriffe, "Bildung". "Synthetisismus" for citations. (J.M.B.

Synthesis: see SYNTHESIS ("Synthetic").

Synthetic: see MIMICRY (in biology), CONVERGENCE (in biology), and cf. REMNANCE (table).

Synthesis (Gr. σύν + θέσις, to set): Ger. Synthese; Fr. synthèse; Ital. sinthesis. The method, process, and function of putting things together, to the results: the opposite of analysis. See the various topics SYNTHESES, and SYNTHETIC.

In education: synthesis applies to the subject-matter itself, as to the logical processes involved, or more generally and vaguely to the chief direction of the mental activity. Thus, in illustration of the last, Zeller called the presentation of new matter in a lesson a "synthetic" step, since the mind in appreciating unites the new to the old; it "synthesizes" present and former experience, for similar reasons he called preparation an "analytic" step, since the contents of the child's mind are analyzed so that the ideas most needful for appreciating the new lesson shall be in the forefront of consciousness. See ANALYSIS, SYNTHESIS, SYNTHETIC, FORMULATION, FORMATIVE STEPS, and METHOD (in education).


Synthesis (chemical): see CHEMICAL SYNTHESIS.

Synthesis (mental or psychic): Ger. psychische Synthese; Fr. synthèse mentale (or psychique); Ital. sintesi mentale (or psichica). (1) A mental combination in which the components are not so far distinguishable as to be opposed to intuition (q.v., in psychology). (2)

The idea of synthesis has assumed great importance in the view of the growing tendency to substitute some such principle for the law of association of ideas in many cases in which the latter has proved inadequate. Synthesis views many factors, as in the theories of ABSTRACTION, ASSIMILATION, SYNERGY, and mental ACTIVITY (see these terms). (R.M.B., R.E.B., J.M.B.)

(3) That unification or combination of the contents of presentation whereby they become qualifications of the same objective whole, CI. INTUITION (in psychology), 2.

Thus the correlation of the data of different factors in the perception of a single material thing is a synthesis (1). Similarly, the correlation of different colour sensations so as to form a single qualitative series is a synthesis (2) at a higher level. At a yet higher level, we have the synthesis which Newton effected by his discovery of the law of gravitation. (R.M.B., J.M.R.

Synthesis (of Abstraction, Ex, Kant): see ABSTRACTION, ed. fin. Kant distinguishes between "mathematical" and "dynamical" synthesis (Critique of Pure Reason). (J.M.B.)

Synthetic (a): Ger. synthetisch; Fr. synthétique; Ital. sintetico. (1) A term used to denote the producing of a SYNTHESIS (q.v.). (2) An argument, inference, reasoning, &c. An argument whose conclusion is a fact the being of which is given in the premises, so that the conclusion could not be false as long as the premises are true, analytically; any other mode of argument is synthetic.

A synthetic argument may be a fallacy. In such a case, it may be of the nature of an argument not to be an argument but to be a fallacy. In any other sense than that it professes to be so. But if it is an argument (as commonly happens) the real argument is either inductive or prescriptive in its nature. These are the two types of synthetic argument.

Synthetic judgment: see ANALYTIC AND SYNTHETIC JUDGMENTS, KANT'S TERMINOLOGY (Glossary, "synthetische Urtheile"), HEGEL'S TERMINOLOGY (Dialectic, III, IV), SYNTHETIC PHILOSOPHY, and SYNTHETIC (different topics).

Synthetic method (in logic). What is common, very confused, made by a synthetic method is a progressive deductive method.

SYNTHETIC PHILOSOPHY — SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

The confusion between analysis and synthesis is so great (cf. ANALYTIC AND SYNTHETIC JUDGMENTS), and the distinction is founded upon such false views of logic, that it is perhaps best to abandon the words altogether in logic.

Synthetic Philosophy (the): Ger. die synthetische Philosophie; Fr. la philosophie synthétique; Ital. moralismo sintetico. The term is applied to the series of treatises by Herbert Spencer, in which his philosophical system is built up as a `unification of knowledge' drawn from various sciences. See the topics cited under SPENCERIANISM. (J.M.B.)

System (in education). A term used by Herbert to designate the organisation of knowledge into a system; hence a stage in the method, namely, that of "generalisation". See vertical steps, and METHOD (in education).


System (mental). The mental life considered as a progressive organization of parts or elements in a System (q.v.), SYNTHESIS (mental), SELECTIVE THINKING, and SELECTION (in psychology).

Systematic Theology: Ger. systematische Theologie; Fr. doctrine systématique; Ital. teologia sistematica. That department of general THEOLOGY (q.v.), which treats of the system of religious doctrine and its organisation into a logically coherent discipline; more especially, the system of the doctrine of the Christian religion.

The whole body of theology is ordinarily treated in four divisions: historical, interpretative, systematic, and practical. Systematic theology is either dogmatic or speculative, and includes such topics as the following: (1) those proper (abstract, logical, &c.); (2) anthropology; (3) axiology; (4) anthropology; (5) sociology; (6) methodology; (7) psychology; (8) sociology; (9) philosophy.

Literature: see THEOLOGY. (A.T.B.)