



Hunger and Appetite

LAST YEAR at one of the Macy Conferences in Princeton at which Dr. Fremont-Smith encourages interruptions at all times, the main speaker of the day in his first few sentences used a word that someone wanted defined. This started off a discussion and argument that lasted over half of the day.

Today we could easily get into a similar discussion about the two words, "hunger" and "appetite," and something would undoubtedly be gained by a few definitions, but the time is too short. Yet it is well to keep in mind that the speakers may not all be using these terms in the same sense. The topic of this section is concerned in one way or another with an important aspect of behavior of animals and human beings—the taking of nourishment. How much attention *should* be paid in feeding animals and ourselves to the sensation of hunger and to appetite? There are at least three different points of view:

The first is represented by individuals who believe that much attention should be paid to hunger and voluntary dietary selection or appetite; that these are safe and reliable guides to the satisfying of dietary requirements. These individuals believe that beneficial selections of food-stuffs are largely made on the basis of taste—that, when needed, food-stuffs have an attractive taste; when not needed, an unattractive taste; that sensations of satiety are reliable in telling when to stop eating.

The second point of view is represented by individuals who likewise think that animals and human beings are capable of regulating their dietary needs but that they do so on the basis of sensations experienced after the ingestion of food-stuffs, which involves a conditioning process.

The third point of view is represented by individuals who do not believe that animals or human beings are capable of regulating their dietary needs on the basis of any sensation of hunger or appetite; they believe that diets must be prescribed, that we must be told when to eat, and how much. The representatives of this view pay little attention to the taste of food-stuffs or the sensations derived from their ingestion; they may go so far in eliminating any possible regulation through taste as to recommend giving food-stuffs in capsules.

Our speakers may throw light on the validity of one or the other of these viewpoints.

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