

Instinct everywhere works as with the conception of an end, and yet it is entirely without one. Nature implants instinct where the acting individual is not capable of understanding the end, or would be unwilling to pursue it. Consequently, as a rule, it is only given prominently to animals, and in particular to those of the lowest order, which have the least intelligence. But it is only in such a case as the one we are at present considering that it is also given to man, who naturally is capable of understanding the end, but would not pursue it with the necessary zeal--that is to say, he would not pursue it at the cost of his individual welfare. So that here, as in all cases of instinct, truth takes the form of illusion in order to influence the will....

All this, however, on its part throws light upon the instinct of animals. They, too, are undoubtedly carried away by a kind of illusion, which represents that they are working for their own pleasure, while it is for the species that they are working with such industry and self-denial. The bird builds its nest; the insect seeks a suitable place wherein to lay its eggs, or even hunts for prey, which it dislikes itself, but which must be placed beside the eggs as food for the future larvae; the bee, the wasp, and the ant apply themselves to their skilful building and extremely complex economy. All of them are undoubtedly controlled by an illusion which conceals the service of the species under the mask of an egotistical purpose.