

***C. Lloyd  
Morgan***

***An Introduction  
to Comparative  
Psychology***

***Extract of essential statements***

**REdition Schmidt**

# **An Introduction to Comparative Psychology**

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# Preface

„Lloyd Morgan's contribution was indeed so outstanding as to warrant our considering him as one of the founding fathers of both comparative psychology and ethology. He wrote fourteen substantial books and we can do little more here than indicate very briefly the variety of topics which he illuminated and advanced by his studies. First, he had valuable points to make on the relations between the subjective and the objective approach. In short, he indicates that both are essential to the scientific method (*Introd. Comp. Psychol.*, 1894). Then he investigated the nature *versus* nurture problem, concluding (in opposition to Wundt) that from a biological point of view one should restrict the term ‚instinctive‘ to what is, to a greater or lesser degree, congenitally determined.

In this he strongly supported the view that instinct is fundamentally species-specific behaviour (*Habit and Instinct*, 1896). As to the evolution of behaviour, his advice was 'stick to Observation and leave theorizing about the *process* of evolution to "armchair philosophers" ' (*Life, Mind and Spirit*, 1925). This was remarkable when we consider that his basic approach was that of a philosopher. He stressed the need for operational definitions, that is, he emphasized the importance of stating definitions specifically, and if possible operationally, since lack of such care can lead to misinterpretation and misconception (*Habit and Instinct*, 1896).

He invented the term 'trial and error' as applied to learning, although for a while he spoke of 'trial and failure' and ‚trial and practice‘; he also made original observations on the behaviour of dogs and it was upon these that his conclusions, set out in *Animal Behaviour* (1900) and *The Animal Mind* (1930), were based.

*From: Thorpe, W. H. (1979) „The origins and rise of ethology.“*

C. Lloyd Morgan, born in London on February 6, 1852; died on March 6, 1936 in Hastings, was a British zoologist and psychologist and is considered the founder of experimental animal psychology and ethology.

Authors who, from today's perspective and in the face of current research, were far ahead of their time were often misunderstood or simply ignored by their contemporaries. And even if an excerpt from an extensive work is always subjective, it still offers a middle ground between subsuming under a catchphrase on the one hand, and intensive preoccupation with the author and his work on the other. If you want to deal intensively with the work, please refer to a reprint.

AN INTRODUCTION  
TO  
COMPARATIVE PSYCHOLOGY.

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*WITH DIAGRAMS.*

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PATERNOSTER SQUARE.

1894.

# From PROLEGOMENA.

First of all, I accept *a monistic theory of knowledge*. The dualist starts with the conception of a subject introduced into the midst of a separately and independently existent objective world. For him the problem of knowledge is how these independent existences, subject and object, can be brought into relation. In the monistic theory of knowledge it is maintained that to start with the conception of subject and object as independent existences is false method, and that the assumed independence and separateness is nowise axiomatic.

Starting then from the common ground of *naive* experience, it contends that, prior to philosophizing, there is neither subject nor object, but just a bit of common practical experience.

It is only when we seek to explain the experience that we polarize it in our thought into subject and object.

But what logical right have we to say that the subject and object, which we can thus distinguish in thought, are separate in existence? No doubt it is a not uncommon, and a not unnatural, fallacy to endow with independent existence the distinguishable products of our abstract and analytic thought.

The distinguishable redness and scent of a rose may thus come to be regarded as not only distinguishable in thought, but also separable in existence. But, until it shall be shown that "distinguishable in thought" and "separable in existence" are interchangeable expressions, or that