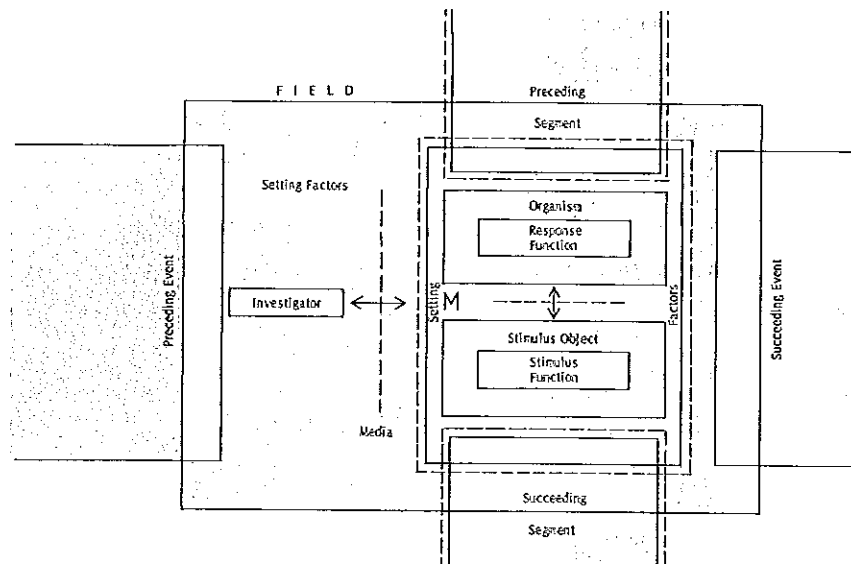


THE Interbehavioral Journalist



A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF INTERBEHAVIORAL PSYCHOLOGY

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To localize a problem in a person and then even further in the brain of a person, is a scientific mistake. Behavior does not arise exclusively or mainly in a single individual, but rather in the larger social system of which he is a part.

* * *

Psychology takes the conception of the individual as its central focus. . . the social context is taken as relevant and perhaps influential on the individual. But, reciprocal feedback relationships among the biological, psychological, and social aspects of existence are not taken seriously.

Stephan Chorover, 1980. Excerpt from an interview for the APA Monitor, July-August 1980.

THE INTERBEHAVIORIST

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The Agora

Some personal reflections on the September American Psychological Association Convention in Montreal:

This year's convention renewed my excitement about interbehaviorism and renewed my hopes that our discipline may yet cast away its reductionistic and self-actional metaphysic. My renewal was partly a result of attending the interbehavioral symposium chaired by Edward Morris. The three papers were well-conceived and well-received, William Verplanck's commentary was outstanding, and the aftermath provided a rare opportunity for an informal gathering of interbehaviorists--too brief to be satisfying, but much better than none at all. For me, however, a number of other meetings attended at the convention were the most important sources of renewal of my enthusiasm and hope for an interbehavioral psychology. For example, a recurring theme at the convention (nicely articulated at the "Future History of Psychology" Symposium sponsored by Division 1) was the widening rift between humanistic psychologists convinced that the last century of scientific psychology has been a grand mistake, and "hard-headed" psychologists convinced that the greatest threat to psychology is the growing tide of anti-objectivism exemplified by the humanistic revolution. Clearly the interbehaviorist is in an excellent position to see the merits of both views and to offer a solution to the rift. Psychology may indeed have taken a wrong turn a century ago when it embraced the elementarism, mechanism, and reductionism of the 19th century physical sciences, but the antidote is not to turn away from science, but rather to chart a different scientific course, adopting an interactional perspective that achieves the goals of objectivism and naturalism and yet would likely be more palatable to the humanist than the current dominant perspectives.

Although interbehaviorism may offer a synthesis that would heal the growing schism between humanists and mainstream scientific psychologists, I believe that there is little hope that interbehaviorism will be perceived as helpful un-

less interbehaviorists adopt a positive tone in their writings. While we must, of course, clarify points of disagreement with the traditional perspectives, we must emphasize common goals and potential solutions to commonly recognized problems. For example, we need to point out to humanists that interbehaviorism is not just another scientific "bad guy", that we agree with their point that the last century of psychology has not been satisfactory, and that an interbehavioral psychology would attain many of their desired goals. Similarly, we need to demonstrate to mainstream scientific psychologists other than our behaviorists cousins that interbehaviorism offers not just metatheory and criticism, but also some very specific prescriptions for how to run the everyday business of psychology more effectively.

Other sessions at the Convention offered encouragement that the ranks of psychologists who are singing the praises of interactional psychology (although they may know little of interbehaviorism) are growing. A good example was the "Defining a New Psychology" paper session, and especially Thomas Cassell's paper on "The Trajectory of Coupled Organisms", a compelling, example-filled indictment of reductionism, organocentrism, and the separation of the observer and the observed. Another example was the address given by John W. Atkinson, recipient of the 1979 Distinguished Scientific Contribution Award. Atkinson made it clear that the contributions to the fields of personality and motivation for which he received the award were a result of breaking the conceptual and methodological shackles of two generally accepted "bifurcations of nature" that interbehaviorists recognize to be arbitrary: the separation of situational from personal determinants of behavior; and the separation of one behavior segment from preceding and succeeding ones.

So it appears that interbehaviorists are "out there," even though they don't know they're interbehaviorists! This suggests another communication goal: not only should we try to communicate more effectively with those who are not our direct intellectual kin, but also we should do a better job of reaching those who are our kin but know little of Kantorian interbehaviorism and do not receive this newsletter. To that end, one of my goals this year is to tap new sources of potential subscribers by placing material concerning the newsletter in several journals which frequently publish articles reflecting a commitment to interactional premises. Also, Edward Morris recommends that readers of The Interbehaviorist send out subscription forms (available upon request) with the reprints they distribute, and reprints to authors cited in papers appearing in this publication.

On the other hand, I am not recommending that our aim ought to be to "convert" those with similar ideas to interbehaviorism. I suggest that such a parochial goal would be naive and counterproductive. Perhaps it is obvious to read-

ers, but if the psychology we desire is to come about, it will almost certainly not come about under the banners of "interbehaviorism" or any other provincial banner for that matter. It is highly unlikely that the size and structure of modern psychology will allow our small group of interbehaviorists to lead a revolution analogous to the behavioristic revolution spearheaded by John B. Watson. It is more realistic to expect a gradual evolution (perhaps already in progress) toward a less self-actional, reductionistic, elementaristic psychology. This evolution will be the result of the work of psychologists like Cassell and Atkinson who speak different languages, but who in their own work have discovered the advantages of an interactional psychology. As interbehaviorists, our goal ought to be to make sure we are an integral part of the evolution by being productive psychologists who can interact with and give support to others with different labels but similar convictions.

The Editor

Your written reactions to my comments will be most appreciated.

* * *

N. H. Pronko's Psychology From the Standpoint of An Interbehaviorist (Brooks-Cole) was published this fall. It is written for the introductory psychology student with the aim of "providing my readers with a strategic perspective for working out their eventual orientation." In my view, its rejection of the incoherent eclecticism characteristic of most introductory texts is a major strength. I urge you to consider it carefully for possible adoption. Peter Holmes (Department of Psychology, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI, 48197) is constructing 150-175 multiple choice items to go along with the text. He would be happy to send a copy (along with point biserial correlations and percent correct data) to anyone interested.

* * *

Dennis J. Delprato of Eastern Michigan University and Edward K. Morris of the University of Kansas have agreed to serve as Associate Editors of The Interbehaviorist. In the last two years, they have been consistent contributors and have made many helpful suggestions, and we look forward to their continuing support. The editor also wishes to quash the rumor that we now have more editors than subscribers.

* * *

Edward Blewitt, a past contributor to The Interbehaviorist, has now completed his doctoral studies at University College, Cardiff, Wales. He is looking for an opportunity to conduct collaborative research in the experimental analysis of developmental retardation in naturalistic settings. He is also interested in investigating the implications of interbe-

haviorism and radical behaviorism for problems in philosophy and politics. His address is: 51 Pen-Y-Lan Road, Roath, Cardiff CF25H2, U.K.

* * *

Noel Smith alerts readers to a segment under "Research News" in the December 12, 1980 issue of Science (Volume 210) entitled "Is Your Brain Really Necessary?"

The three-page report by Roger Lewin summarizes the work and conclusions of John Lorber, a British neurologist who claims that a substantial proportion of hydrocephalic patients with severely reduced brain tissue show no intellectual or other functional impairment. Among other examples, Lorber recounts the case of a university honors student in mathematics with an IQ of 126 who has "virtually no brain." It is suggested that Lorber's findings are not as unusual as one might assume, but that such findings are generally given short shrift because they are inconsistent with our dominant assumptions about the role of the brain in behavior.

* * *

Noel Smith also reports that "the volume of original interbehavioral papers that we were trying to publish through 'Paths In Psychology' was returned with the statement, 'We tried to interest a number of publishers in publishing your book, but none of them felt that there was a sufficient market for them to make a profit.' I have returned the papers to the authors with the recommendation that they seek independent publication." A bibliography from the proposed volume will appear in a future issue of The Interbehaviorist.

* * *

Of interest to interbehaviorists is an article appearing in the Fall 1980 issue of The Psychological Record (Volume 30, Number 4) by John R. Knapp and Dennis J. Delprato entitled "Will power, behavior therapy, and the public." Dennis Delprato has provided an abstract:

465 respondents completed a questionnaire that was presented as a "survey to determine the extent to which individuals perceive will power (or inner strength) as necessary for individuals to successfully overcome various problems." 24 problem behaviors of a variety of types were included on the questionnaire and the respondent rated the importance of will power for overcoming each problem on a 7-point scale.

Will power was rated as more necessary for overcoming certain problems (e.g., alcoholism, smoking) than for overcoming others (e.g., inability to swim, poor mathematical ability). Of special interest were the findings that rated agreement of the necessity of will power was unrelated to years of education, whether or not the respondent ever

attended a college, particular college attended, and number of psychology classes completed. The authors state, "... the absence of a relationship between adherence to will power and a variety of variables pertaining to respondents' formal education indicates that scientific psychology has had little impact concerning this particular traditional, culturally transmitted explanatory concept. This finding supports the assertions of Kantor (1963, 1969, 1971) and Skinner (1971, 1974) that the views of scientific psychology are often subsidiary to those that individuals glean from their broader culture. It is perhaps most discouraging that, for the present sample, adherence to will power was not related to the number of psychology classes completed even though a variety of different colleges and universities were represented. This result leads one to wonder what students are learning in psychology classes if they complete such classes still holding to will power "theory" when tested outside of the classroom setting. It appears that behavioral psychology has far to go toward overcoming traditionally held assumptions regarding human behavior.

Also appearing in the Fall 1980 issue of the Record are three other articles with an interbehavioral orientation: "Theoretical Psychology: Where Is It Headed?" by Parker E. Lichtenstein; "On Behaviorism and Private Events" by Jay Moore; and "Exploratory Behavior in Infants and Animals" by Sidney W. Bijou.

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Research Fellowship History of Psychology Foundation

The Research Fellowship, funded by the History of Psychology Foundation and awarded by the University of Akron, is intended to promote research in the history of psychology through the granting of stipends of up to \$750 to aid scholars wishing to utilize the primary resources of the Archives of the History of American Psychology, Bierce Library, University of Akron. The stipend is intended to defray travel and living expenses and the recipient is expected to reside in Akron while using the materials of the Archives.

Candidates should submit a prospectus of the work planned, a vita, and two letters of recommendation. It is particularly important that there be evidence that the Archives is the most suitable place for the work to be undertaken. Preference will be given to advanced graduate students and younger post doctoral scholars.

Applications should be completed by March 1, 1981. The award will be announced not later than April 15th. Applications should be sent to the chairman of the University of Akron awards committee:

Mr. John V. Miller, Jr.
Director of Archival Services
University of Akron
Akron, Ohio 44325