

THE INTERBEHAVIORIST

A Quarterly Newsletter of Interbehavioral Psychology

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QUOTATION

There is no escape from philosophy. The question is only whether a philosophy is conscious or not, whether it is good or bad, muddled or clear. Anyone who rejects philosophy is himself unconsciously practicing a philosophy.

- K. Jaspers, (1954)

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The Interbehaviorist is a quarterly publication of news, information, discussion, journal and book notes, book reviews, comments, and brief articles pertaining to interbehavioral psychology -- a contextualistic, integrated-field approach to the natural science of behavior.

The newsletter publishes professional communications that fall between informal correspondence and colloquia, and formal archival publication. As such, the newsletter supplements contemporary journals dedicated to basic and applied research, to the history and philosophy of the behavioral sciences, and to professional issues in the field. The newsletter strongly encourages submission of notes about current professional activities of its subscribers, news and observations about interbehavioral psychology and related perspectives, comments on journal articles and books of interest, more extended book reviews, and brief articles. All submissions should be sent in triplicate to the editor and should conform to the style described in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (3rd edition).

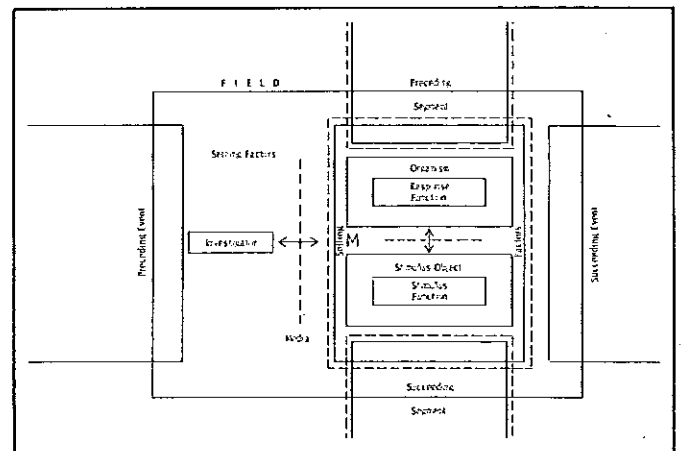
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THE AGORA

We would like to thank all of this year's resubscribers to the newsletter for having done so in such an expeditious fashion. In addition, though, we would also like to represent more subscribers in the material we publish. Please feel free to offer submissions for any of the regular columns we publish, as well as for articles and book reviews. The newsletter is a forum for readers, not a publication outlet for the editor's and editorial staff's idiosyncrasies. A few fresh and freshly wizened faces would be welcome.

The ABA Convention

Once again, interbehavioral psychologists will be actively participating at the annual (and upcoming) meeting of the Association for Behavior Analysis. The convention will be held in Philadelphia, May 27-30 at the Wyndham Franklin Plaza.

Judging from the program, a number of symposia and papers may be of special interest to newsletter readers. First, the mini-theme of the convention is the history of behaviorism, around which much of the program has been planned. Second, a number of interbehaviorally-oriented contributions will be represented in these and other matters. Among the symposia are:

- An Introduction to Interbehavioral Psychology (Bryan D. Midgley, Chair)
- Mountjoy, Paul T. "Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How?"
- Morris, Edward K. "The Interbehavioral Field"
- Hayes, Linda J. "Interbehavioral Philosophy"
- Bijou, Sidney W. Discussant
- Psychological Linguistics: Examples of Research and Theory (Sidney W. Bijou, Chair)
- Williamson, Phyllis N., & Lyons, Charles, A. "Interactional Components of Psychotic Language"
- Ghezzi, Patrick M., Bijou, Sidney W., & Chao, Chia-Chen "Developing Social Language Interactions with Retarded Youth"
- Morris, Edward K. "Contextualism and Language Behavior"
- Bijou, Sidney W. "Theory of Language Development"
- Hayes, Linda J. Discussant

Among individual papers of possible

interest are:

- Hayes, Linda J. "The Psychological Present"
- Ray, Roger D. "A Behavioral Systems Model for Industrial/Organizational Research and Development"

These above-mentioned participants, as well as other newsletter subscribers, will be represented on the program in still other ways. Among the subscribers are Louis D. Burgio, Barbara C. Etzel, Robert P. Hawkins, Philip N. Hineline, Emilio Ribes, Susan M. Schneider, Wanda L. Smith, James T. Todd, and W. Joseph Wyatt.

In addition to these interbehaviorally-related presentations, the ABA Special Interest Group (Linda J. Hayes, Chair) will hold its annual open meeting on Saturday, June 28, 6:00-6:50pm.

Readers interested in attending the convention should contact Shery Chamberlain, Department of Psychology, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI 49008 about registration and housing (616-383-1629).

Operant Subjectivity

Steven R. Brown, editor of Operant Subjectivity: The Q Methodology Newsletter, informs us that he published a paper by Parker E. Lichtenstein, given originally at the November meeting of the Institute for the Scientific Study of Subjectivity (University of Missouri-Columbia). The article's title is "Interbehavioral Psychology and Q Methodology." Its abstract reads as follows:

Interbehavioral psychology rests entirely upon naturalistic foundations. So-called mental events are continuous with overt behavior, and all behavior has an objective character. Subjectivity means simply uniqueness of occurrence. Stephenson's emphasis upon self-reference brings another dimension to Kantor's interbehavioral approach, and Q methodology makes possible an objective, nonmentalistic handling of subjectivity.

The newsletter is available from Professor Brown (Department of Political Science, Kent State University, Kent, OH 44242-0001) on a per volume basis for \$5 (individuals) or \$7 (libraries and outside North America).

Theoretical and Philosophical Issues

A special interest group on Theoretical and Philosophical Issues has been formed within the Association for the Advancement of Behavior Therapy. Among the group's board of advisors are newsletter subscribers Robert Hawkins and Dennis Delprato. Interested readers should contact the SIG chair, Irwin S. Goldfarb, Department of Psychology, Auburn University, Auburn, AL 36849.

From AI to Zeitgeist

The Greenwood Press announces the impending publication of N. H. Pronko's From AI to Zeitgeist: A Philosophical Guide for the Skeptical Psychologist (ISSN 0736-2714). Their advance flyer reads as follows:

This book is a reflection of a growing awareness among philosophers and psychologists of the inescapable entanglement of psychology with its philosophical underpinnings. It deals with the dissection of the assumptions that control contemporary inquiry into psychological events, and it offers a preliminary examination of the consequences for understanding behavior that different assumptions provide.

The broad scope of topics provides a number of bases from which to view problems and questions bearing on the philosophy of science for psychology. Pronko examines how guiding postulates determine the outcome of inquiry, raises new questions and new possibilities regarding old problems, and stresses the importance of seeing known facts in a new light and describing new theories.

A distinctive feature of this work is its rejection of the traditional transcendental metaphysics which have for centuries been imposed upon psychological data. As an alternative, a naturalistic philosophy is proposed for interpreting the same data, which derives from observations of living organisms, objects, or happenings, and which advocates no general assumptions, presuppositions, or postulates imported from extraneous metaphysical sources. The radically different understandings of psychological events resulting from application of the two philosophies are compared and contrasted in an extensive variety of topics that make up the body of the book.

This thought-provoking and scholarly work will be of great interest to psychologists and philosophers, as well as to students and researchers in theoretical, advanced general, systematic, and philosophical psychology.

The Greenwood Press address is 88 Post Road West, P.O. Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881 (203-226-3571).

The Kantor Memorial Fund

We have appreciated all past donations to the Kantor Memorial Fund. This year, special thanks are extended to William M. Gardner and Parker E. Lichtenstein for their contributions through the "little extras" they included along with their subscriptions.

The function of the fund is to promote special projects and to cover journal costs during periods of shortfall. We will likely have a shortfall this year, and hence will borrow from the fund in order to publish all four issues. In addition, we will likely have to raise subscription rates next year to cover our increasing costs -- probably \$7.50 for regular subscriptions and \$5.00 for students, with an increase in other categories as well. Just a forewarning we are unhappy to report.

Notes from the Field

Jesus Gil Roales-Nieto has published "Blood Glucose Discrimination in Insulin-Dependent Diabetics" in Behavior Modification (1988, 12, 116-132). Karen Simpson is now Karen S. Callaway (LaMesa, CA). Robert G. Wahler is co-author, with Jean E. Dumas, on a paper to be published in the Psychological Bulletin, entitled "Attentional Problems in Dysfunctional Mother-Child Interactions: An Interbehavioral Model.

Readers are encouraged to send titles, reprints, and other notices to the editor for inclusion in this column.

New Subscribers

Lisa A. Romano (WMU)
Darlene D. Vanden Hoek (WMU)

Quotation

The full citation to the quotation on the front cover is: Jaspers, K. (1954). Way to wisdom: An introduction to philosophy. New Haven: Yale University Press.

COMMENTS

THE DEATH OF INTERBEHAVIORAL PSYCHOLOGY

This commentary's thesis is that interbehavioral psychology is dead -- dead as a school of psychology. Or, if not dead, it should be. Although many of the newsletter's readership may be surprised by this thesis, it is actually consonant with Kantor's proposal for a naturalistic science of psychology. To wit:

The second description of behaviorism, the one we may regard as the scientific one, is much more significant. It is not based upon a scientific technique or department of study but upon the enterprise of investigation. (Kantor, 1968, p. 151)

and

We propose that Behaviorism is best envisaged as science itself. All scientists are students of specialized types of behavior. (Kantor, 1963a, p. 500)

and

In psychology as well as in other sciences behaviorism is basically Interbehaviorism. (Kantor, 1971, p. 519)

For Kantor (1963a), "Behaviorism is... science itself" (p. 500). Physicists, chemists, astronomers, biologists, and psychologists all study behavior, the specific type being a detail (cf. Kantor, 1946). The term "interbehavior" is superior to "behavior" only in its emphasis on the field-like character of all events. More to the point, the interbehavioral perspective is not a philosophy of a science of psychological behavior, but rather, is a systematic point of view that relates to all natural events.

As should be apparent, the thesis of this commentary is actually somewhat of a misstatement because Kantor never intended for interbehavioral psychology to be another school in the first place, although interbehavioral psychology is sometimes seen as just that.

An important step in arguing for the progressive, non-cultish nature of interbehavioral psychology is to demonstrate its relationship to other contemporary developments in the sciences. To argue that interbehavioral psychology is unique and independent of other scientific developments only perpetuates

cultism (see Delprato, 1988). More positively, the argument for the integrative potential of interbehavioral psychology follows directly from Kantor's own historical analysis of the development of scientific thinking (Kantor, 1946, 1963b, 1969; see Delprato, 1986; Ray & Delprato, 1987, for examples of fruitful integration).

Perhaps another, easier, step toward escaping cultism and advancing toward more integrative practices is to retire the label "interbehavioral psychologist." I propose something like "behavioral system scientist" or "integrated-field theorist." What is your opinion?

Bryan D. Midgley
University of Kansas

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NOT NATURAL, YOU SAY. WHAT IS IT, THEN?

"Glucose is a natural sweetener,

whereas Nutrasweet is not."

"I don't think that person is a natural blonde."

"Oranges are a natural source of vitamin C."

A colleague of mine, when confronted with statements such as these, characteristically responds, "Is Nutrasweet a supernatural sugar?", "Are there supernatural blondes?", and "What are supernatural sources of vitamin C?" Usually, the speakers give wearisome looks and go about their business.

"Natural" is a word that is bandied about quite a bit, even by individuals who should treat it with more respect -- scientists. We realize, of course, that statements such as, "I don't think that person is a natural blonde," are not meant to imply that supernatural blondes exist. Such statements, however, do imply that some sort of human intervention resulted in the person's blonde hair. In fact, human intervention into some event appears to be the defining feature that leads events and their products to be labeled as nonnatural -- so called "man made" products (e.g., lawn fertilizer).

The use of the word "natural" to distinguish things developed without human intervention from things developed with human intervention is telling of our transcendental cultural heritage. The implication is that human participation and intervention result in non- or supernatural products. The further implication is that humans (and human behavior) are somehow nonnatural, which of course takes us into the realm of the supposedly extant soul, mind, or consciousness.

Note that we could also discuss at length the use of the phrase "human intervention." This phrase seems to imply that humans come into a "naturally occurring" situation of which they are not a "natural" part, and to modify it in some fashion or another. Perhaps "human participation" would be a more accurate phrase and would not set humans and their behavior off from other natural events.

What is glaringly lacking in our culture is the appreciation that humans are part of the natural world, and human behavior can be described with respect to its own principles. Although many psychologists appreciate this postulate, especially those who see behavior as a worthy subject matter in its own right,

Kantor, by way of his "interbehavioral continuum" (Kantor, 1959, pp. 42-52), explicitly discusses the locus of humans with respect to the rest of the natural world.

Bryan D. Midgley
University of Kansas

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BOOK NOTE

James, H. (1920). The letters of Henry James (Vol. 1). Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press.

William James and Wilhelm Wundt were known for their antipathy towards each other's work. James, though, was the better wordsmith, and more than once took up his pen against Wundt. The following depiction of "the professor" by James has is not only a case in point, but it has also a too modern and common a ring to it. Since there must be professors in the world, Wundt is the most praise-worthy and never-too-much-to-be-respected type of the species. He isn't a genius, he is a professor -- a being whose duty is to know everything, and have his own opinion about everything, connected with his [department or specialty].... He says of each possible subject, "Here I must have an opinion. Let's see. What shall it be? How many possible opinions are there? three? four? Yes! just four! Shall I take one of these? It will seem more original to take a higher opinion, a sort of Vermittelungansicht [mediating attitude] between them all. That I will do, etc., etc." So he acquires a complete assortment of opinions of his own; and, as his memory is so good, he seldom forgets which they are!...He has utilized to the utmost fibre every gift that Heaven endowed him with at his birth, and made of it all that mortal pertinacity could make. He is the finished example of how much mere education can do for a man. (pp. 263-264)

(Edward K. Morris, University of Kansas)

PSYCHOLOGISTS IN A FOG

H. L. Mencken

The so-called science of psychology is now in chaos, with no sign that order is soon to be restored. It is hard to find two of its professors who agree, and when the phenomenon is encouraged it usually turns out that one of them is not a psychologist at all, but simply a teacher of psychology. Even the Freudians, whose barbaric raid first demoralized and scattered the placid experts of the old school, now quarrel among themselves. Worse, the same psychologist frequently turns upon and devours himself. The case of Dr. William McDougall, late of Harvard, comes to mind at once [see Footnote 1]. Every time he prints a new book, which is very frequently, he changes his list of instincts. Some of the others go much further: Dr. McDougall, indeed, is a conservative. The gay boys, at short intervals, throw overboard their whole baggage. There are psychologists in America who started out with the classical introspective psychology, abandoned two-thirds of it in order to embrace Freudianism, then took headers into Behaviorism, and now incline toward the Gestalt revelation of Kohler and Koffka. Some say one thing and some another. It is hard for the layman to keep his head in this whirl. Not even anthropology offers a larger assortment of conflicting theories, or a more gaudy band of steaming and blood-sweating professors.

Nevertheless, certain general tendencies show themselves, and in the long run they may lay the foundation of a genuinely rational and scientific psychology. The chief of them is the tendency to examine the phenomena of the mind objectively, and with some approach to the scientific method. The old-time psychologist did not bother with such inquiries, some of which are very laborious. He simply locked himself in his study, pondered on the processes of his own pondering, and then wrote his book. If, as an aid to his speculations, he went to the length of mastering the elements of physiology, he regarded himself as very advanced, and was so regarded by his customers. Basically, he was a metaphysician, not a psychologist. His concepts of the true were constantly mellowed and ameliorated by concepts of

what ought to be true. These old-time psychologists, like the metaphysicians, had a great gift for inventing terminology, and their masterpieces still harass in the more backward seminaries of learning. Most of them, again like the metaphysicians, believed that they had sufficiently described a thing when they had given it a name.

But the psychology of today is mainly experimental. Its professors do not attempt to account for the thought processes by introspection, but by observation. Their learning is not on philosophy, but on physiology. So far, it must be confessed, they have failed to solve any of the fundamental problems of psychology -- for example, the problem of consciousness -- but they have swept away a great mass of futile speculation, and unearthed a large number of interesting, if often embarrassing facts. Here the Behaviorists, who are relatively recent comers in the field, have done some good work. Being psychologists, they are of course inclined to nonsense, and so one finds them plunging into doctrines that war upon common observation -- for example, the doctrine that the qualities of the mind are never inherited, but spring wholly out of environmental causes -- , but they have at least cleared off the old view of the mental machine as a mechanism working in a sort of vacuum, with no relation to the other organs of the body. These Behaviorists have proved, what should have been obvious long ago: that a man thinks with his liver as well as with his brain -- in brief, that the organism is an actual organism, and not a mere congeries of discordant units. In their studies of children, in particular, they have got at some simple and useful facts, and so disposed of a formidable accumulation of idle speculations. But their formula is too simple to be wholly true, and they seem very likely to ruin it by trying to get more work out of it than it is capable of.

So with the Freudians. So with the Gestalt enthusiasts. So with the endocrine psychologists. So with all the rest. Why don't they get together as the pathologists, physiologists and other scientists get together, pool their facts,

scrap their theories, and so lay the foundations of a rational psychology? Messers. Coleman and Commins hint at the reason. No professional kudos is to be got by pooling facts. The one way to make a splash in psychology is to come out with a new and revolutionary theory. In other words, public opinion among psychologists is not yet genuinely enlightened. They paddle around in what ought to be a science, but they are not quite scientists. Some day, perhaps, they will make the grade, and so become brothers to

the pathologists. But at this moment they are nearer the osteopaths.

Footnote

1. McDougall left Harvard for Duke in 1927. He died in 1938.

Reprinted from the American Mercury, 1927, July, pp. 382-383. A review of L. R. Coleman & S. Commins (1927). Psychology: A simplification. New York.

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