

# THE INTERBEHAVIORIST

A Newsletter of Interbehavioral Psychology

Volume 23

1996

Number 3

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## THE INTERBEHAVIORIST

A Newsletter of  
Interbehavioral Psychology  
ISSN 8755-612X

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**THE INTERBEHAVIORIST** publishes 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 also 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 duplicate hard copy and a single computer disk copy (any major word processor; any Mac or IBM disk format) 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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## EL INTERCOMPORTAMIENTISTA

Una revista de  
Psicología Intercomportamentista  
ISSN 8755-612X

Emilio Ribes, Editor de Español  
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**EL INTERCOMPORTAMIENTISTA** publica noticias, información, discusiones, diarios, y notas de libros, análisis de libros, comentarios, y artículos breves en relación a la psicología intercomportamentista - un enfoque en el campo integrado de un contextualismo del comportamiento de la ciencia natural.

En la revista también se publican comunicaciones profesionales que caen entre la correspondencia informal y coloquial, y entre la publicación del archivo formal. Como tal, la revista suplementa los diarios contemporáneos dedicados para investigaciones básicas y aplicadas, a la historia y filosofía de la ciencias del comportamiento, y a los temas profesionales de esta área. La revista fuertemente alienta la sumisión de notas sobre actividades profesionales de sus suscriptores, perspectivas relacionadas, comentarios en diarios de libros, y artículos breves. Todas las sbmisiones deberán de mandarse al editor en un duplicado de papel impreso y en una copia en un disco de computadora (cualquier formato de disco de cualquier marca grande de procesador de palabras ;ya sea, de Mac o IBM) y deberá de someterse al estilo descrito en la Publicación del Manual de la Asociación Americana Psicológica (3ra edición).

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## The Agora

### Special Issue of JBTEP

The September 1995 issue of the *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry* (Vol. 23, No. 3) is devoted entirely to "Cognition, behavior, and causality: A broad exchange of views stemming from the debate on the causal efficacy of human thought." This special issue, edited by Leo L. Reyna, has provocative papers by Albert Bandura, A. Charles Catania, Kevin J. Corcoran, Patric W. Corrigan, P. Christopher Early and Amy Randel, John Garcia, Russell M. F. Hawkins, Steven C. Hayes and Kelly G. Wilson, T. V. Joe Layng, Christina Lee, Edwin A. Locke, Michael J. Mahoney, and William D. Spaulding.

### ABA '96 News

At the ABA convention in San Francisco there will be a symposium centering on the book, *Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children* by Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley. The participants and the topics of the symposium, titled "American parenting of language-learning children," are: Sidney W. Bijou on "Natural science in behavior analysis," Betty Hart on "What parents and families actually DO," Todd R. Risley on "The BIG variables of early family experience," John Mabry on "Implications of this natural science data set for advancing the debate in 'modern' psycholinguistics," and Jack Michael on "Implications of this natural science data for advancing the analysis of verbal behavior."

### Book Publication Notices

Yau, C. (1995). *Qualitative research in creativity*. Buffalo, NY: Creative Education Foundation (68 pp, \$14.95). Yau argues that the study of subjectivity must integrate both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. To order contact: cefpubl@aol.com.

Brown, J. (1996). *The I in Science, Training to Utilize Subjectivity in Research*. Dr. Judith Brown, with her husband, Professor Emeritus George I. Brown, conducted a four-year exploratory research project upon which much of the text is based. It describes components of a participatory, experiential, step-by-step approach in which the central role of the researcher is stressed. For more information contact: Scandinavian University Press North America, 875 Massachusetts Ave., Ste. 84, Cambridge, MA, 02139 (800-498-2877). European readers should contact: Scandinavian University Press, Book Department, P.O. Box 2959 Tøyen, N-0608 Oslo, Norway.

If you are interested in writing a book review on either of these publications or any other book that may be of interest to the readership of **THE INTERBEHAVIORIST** contact Linda Hayes, Dept. of Psychology, University of Nevada, Reno, NV, 89557-0062 or e-mail dwf@pogonip.scs.unr.edu.

### The J.R. Kantor Research Fellowship - Archives of the History of American Psychology - 1996

This Fellowship, offered to promote research in the history of psychology, is supported by the sale of books published by the Principia Press and distributed by the Archives. Proposals that draw on any of the resources of the Archives are invited, but since this award is in honor of Dr. Kantor, preference may be given to projects that deal with the topics that were critical in the history of interbehaviorism. The Fellowship will be offered annually in the amount of \$750. It is intended to assist the recipient in meeting travel and living expenses while procuring archival data. A fact sheet describing the Fellowship and giving deadlines

may be obtained from the Archives, write or call:

Dr. John A. Popplestone, Psychology Archives  
University of Akron, Akron, OH, 44325-4302,  
(216) 972-7285, FAX: (216) 972-6170, e-mail:  
RIJAP@VM1.CC.UAKRON.EDU.

### Conference Notice

The Annual conference of the Experimental analysis of Behavior Group will be held at University College, London, March 25-27, 1996. Topics will include stimulus equivalence, assessment and intervention in developmental disabilities, applications of behavioral techniques to clinical practice, associative learning, conceptual behavior analysis, behavioral pharmacology, and verbal behavior. For more information contact Susie James, School of Psychology, University of Wales, Bangor Gwynedd, LL57 2DG, United Kingdom (FAX: (44)1248382599, Email: pss082@bangor.ac.uk).

### J. R. Kantor Books

The estate of Helene J. Kantor (1919-1993) has given The Archives of the History of American Psychology the inventory and copyrights of The Principia Press, long the publisher of the works of J. R. Kantor (1888-1984). The Archives is now prepared to respond, as The Principia Press, to orders from the list of books in print and in stock written by J. R. Kantor.

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### Call for News

**THE INTERBEHAVIORIST** publishes news about subscribers' activities and information about others' activities that may be of interest to readers. If you have published an article, chapter, or book with an interbehavioral orientation, or have read one published by someone else, particularly if the source is obscure, please let us know about it.

### Llama para Noticias

El Intercomportamentista publica noticias sobre las actividades de sus suscriptores e información sobre otras actividades que pueden ser de interés para los lectores. Si usted ha publicado un artículo, capítulo, o un libro con orientación intercomportamentista, o ha leído una publicada por otra persona, particularmente si su procedencia es desconocida, por favor dejenos saber sobre eso.

## Article

## ECO-BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE (Also Known as ECOLOGICAL PSYCHOLOGY) INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

N.W. Smith  
S.U.N.Y. Plattsburgh

When we enter a store there are certain patterns that we engage in with respect to the merchandise in the store and with the clerks. In a grocery store we go during the hours it is in operation, obtain a shopping cart, move down the aisles selecting food items and placing them in the cart while avoiding running into other cars, get in line and wait our turn to be checked through, pay the cashier, and carry or cart away the groceries. The pattern is quite predictable. A description of our behavior in a post office, tennis lesson, basketball game, or workplace would be equally predictable. These are *behavior settings*. We follow the expected patterns of the setting; our personalities have little influence. Individuals with quite different personalities all follow similar patterns in any given setting. We even take measures to make sure that those patterns continue. For example, if we are attending a meeting at which there is no table for a slide projector that we wish to use, we will search for and bring in a table; this corrects the deficiencies of the *physical components* that would interfere with or fail to support those patterns. Similarly, we might try to modify non-conforming *behavioral components* by explaining to a newcomer in a coffee shop that one must go to the counter to place an order. These natural settings with their orderly and self-regulating character are the subject matter of ecological

psychology – now often called ecobehavioral science or the science of behavior settings – as developed by Roger Barker and his associates.<sup>2</sup>

### FUNDAMENTALS OF BEHAVIOR SETTINGS

#### Standing Patterns

Behavior settings, such as the grocery store example, are situations where human activity and physical conditions are in interaction. Here are some additional examples of behavior settings: classrooms, factory shipping rooms, pizza parlors, athletic events, dentists' waiting rooms, card games, court rooms, and auto repair shops. A behavior setting has several recognizable orderly characteristics. First of all it has *standing patterns of behavior*. These are behaviors that recur each time the behavior setting is in operation. In the classroom this includes the students' sitting down and facing the front of the room, the instructor in the front facing the students, the instructor's taking the lead in discussion or presentation, and the students' raising their hands to be recognized by the instructor in order to speak.

#### Synomorphs

The standing behavior patterns are closely tied to the environment, most of it inanimate. In the case of the classroom, there is a chalkboard and chalk, chairs for students, perhaps a table or lectern in front for the instructor, lighting, heat in cold weather, and walls that shut out distractions. These inanimate components are an integral part of the

<sup>1</sup> Editor's note: This article is an excerpt from Smith, N.W. (in press). *Current Systems in Psychology*.

<sup>2</sup> The term "ecological psychology" is still found in the older literature and continues to be used to the present by some writers.

behavior patterns, and in fact the behavior patterns cannot readily occur without them.

Barker refers to the co-relationship of behavior and physical objects as *synomorphs*, e.g. "same structure." A set of synomorphs comprise the structure of the behavior setting. The classroom behavior setting will illustrate these structures as examples of behavior patterns interconnected with objects: students sitting on chairs and taking notes with a pen on a tablet resting on the arm of the chair, instructor lecturing from notes placed on a lectern and writing with chalk on a chalkboard, and both within walls that shut out distracting sounds and views.

In an iron foundry the melting furnace and the pouring areas are different synomorphs within the same factory but are functionally interdependent and comprise a single behavior setting. But the shipping room that prepares iron castings for transport acts independently as long as it has a stockpile of castings. What goes on in the manufacture of castings has only limited effect on the shipping activities and vice-versa. They are separate behavior settings.

The synomorphs have a degree of interdependence with one another. An institution will attempt to schedule events in such a way that no serious time conflicts occur. For example, a department of a university will not schedule its classes during a designated period when faculty hold department meetings, and a foundry will not schedule maintenance and repair of equipment while production is occurring. Any synomorphs that are related in structure but function independently of one another must be parts of separate behavior settings. The criteria of structure and interdependence permit the differentiation of behavior settings from non-behavior settings. Because an iron foundry has functionally independent synomorphs, the whole foundry is not a behavior setting. Neither is a university or even a university department. It is usually easy to assess whether a situation is or is not a behavior setting, but Barker and his associates have developed rating scales for components of the situation that provide a quantitative means of assessment whenever doubt arises.

Because the physical sciences have avoided events that include behavior, and the behavioral sciences have avoided events involving inanimate objects, the interface between them has been ne-

glected by both. That relationship falls through the cracks, yet comprises a great deal of human activity.

### Environment

A behavior setting is also characterized by an environment that surrounds the behavior and delimits its geography. For a classroom it is walls. For a factory it is the work area. For a tennis game it is lines around the court. For skiing it is the marked trails along with the lodge and lift line areas but might include unmarked areas for the more daring skier.

The environment is a well organized arrangement of *nested assemblies* that are like layers of an onion. These layers are *circumjacent* to each other. Each assembly or unit contains some of the components of the assembly it is circumjacent to so that some interdependence occurs. The individual is one such assembly. Each of his or her biological organs is a component of the individual's body, and each in turn is another assembly. For example, the heart is a component of the circumjacent body and a cell is a component of the circumjacent heart. Going the other direction from the individual toward larger units, we find that the behavior setting is an assembly of which the individual is a component, and the behavior setting may be a circumjacent component of an institution such as a factory or a university with numerous behavior settings. Thus, what may be a component in one assembly can be environment in an assembly that is circumjacent to it. A unit, then, can be both circumjacent and interjacent.

There are mutual causal relations up and down the nesting series in which many environmental entities occur; the preperceptual environment is made up of systems within systems. An entity in such a series both constrains and is constrained by the outside unit that surrounds it and by the inside units it surrounds. This means that entities in nesting structures are parts of their own contexts; they influence themselves through the circumjacent entities which they, in part, compose (Barker, 1963, p. 23).

### Definition of Behavior Settings

A behavior setting consists of five characteristics. It must (a) have standing patterns of behavior; (b) be established in a particular environmental

context; (c) occur at a specific place; (d) consist of behavior and environment in synomorphic relationship; (e) involve an environment circumjacent to behavior (Schoggen, 1989, p. 52). Wicker and Kirmeyer (1976) list three more: (a) a hierarchy of positions or roles in the behavior setting with some having a more vital function than others (such as a dentist versus a receptionist in a dentists office), (b) the interchangeability of one participant with another (a replacement dentist or a replacement receptionist would allow the behavior setting to continue without much change) and (c) the control circuits described in the next section.

### Control Circuits or Mechanisms

A behavior setting has human components, non-human components, and *control circuits* or *control mechanisms*. The term "circuit" refers to the interchange or feedback loops among components as opposed to a straight line cause and effect sequence; some writers, however, refer to "mechanisms." The stability of settings with their behavior-environment relationships involves the operation of four types of circuits. These four are *goal circuits*, *program circuits*, *deviation countering circuits*, and *vetoing circuits*.

Every behavior setting must exist for some purpose: recreation, production of goods, sale of a commodity, acquisition of knowledge, and so forth. Such a purpose or goal is the behavior setting's *goal circuits*. The goal circuits involve procedures for reaching goals that are satisfying to the participants ("inhabitants", Barker calls them) of the setting. The participants must perceive the goals and the routes to them. When some participants leave, others take their places and receive whatever instruction is necessary for the role. The participants actively attempt to keep the setting operating because its goal provides them with satisfactions. If it fails to be satisfying, they will no longer strive to maintain the setting, and it will go out of existence. People relate to their setting through the pursuit of goal achievement and the satisfaction it brings.

People also relate to their settings through *program circuits*. Programs are the specifications of behaviors that the participants of the setting will carry out, such as rules for a game, production methods in a factory, and procedures for conducting a meeting. One or more participants must know the program and thereby control the se-

quence of events in it.

*Deviation countering circuits* occur when the participants recognize that some person or condition prevents the program of the setting from occurring and acts to remedy the situation. It may involve persuading someone to behave in a different or more effective manner ("if you don't hurry up we won't get this job completed by the deadline"). The previous example of explaining to the newcomer to the coffee shop that orders are placed at the counter is also deviation countering. Remediating some fault in the physical environment also falls into this type of control circuit. A speaker with a soft voice may need a microphone; a classroom may need additional chairs; a motor that runs an important piece of machinery in a machine shop needs replacing; a work situation needs a replacement for a person off work because of sickness.

When deviation-countering circuits are insufficient to bring behaviors into line with the needs of the setting and its goals, *vetoing circuits* come into play. A supervisor discharges an employee who does sloppy or incompetent work; a band leader requests the departure of a player who is high on narcotics; a teacher removes a noisy and disruptive pupil from the room. Inanimate components of the setting are also subject to veto: a new lighting device for a theatrical production that gives an unsatisfactory effect, loud music at a gathering that interferes with conversation, a machine check-out device for library books that is more cumbersome than the old method.

The control circuits change the components in anticipated ways that keep the schedules or programs on course. When one control circuit fails to induce the participant or other component to appropriately contribute to the goal of the behavior setting, the participants will activate another. The components and circuits operate as a homeostatic control to keep everything functioning in a predictable and prescribed manner. The foundry worker who is too slow at pouring molten iron into the molds will be pressured to speed up by the worker who is fast approaching with a huge bucket to resupply the pouring ladles. The person who is going too fast will be limited by the rate at which the molds on the conveyor belt reach him or her. any molds that are improperly filled will bring feedback to the pourers and result in correction (deviation countering circuits). The actions of the

workers, the physical environment, and the regulating circuits function together to produce a predictable program that meets a goal.

Barker (1963) holds that the behavior setting resides not in behavior or physical environment but "in the circuitry that interconnects behavior settings, the inhabitants and other behavior setting components" (p. 171). This circuitry enables the setting to be self-regulating.

*Behavior settings are self-regulating, active systems.* They impose their program of activities on the persons and objects within them. Essential persons and materials are drawn into the settings, and disruptive components are modified or ejected. It's as if behavior settings were living systems intent on remaining alive and healthy, even at the expense of their individual components. (Wicker, 1979, p. 12)

Still other mechanisms or circuits can be identified (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981). In order to accommodate more people rather than veto them, overstaffed settings often enlarge their setting. They may also limit admission of newcomers rather than admit people than veto them. Settings vary in their repetitions and continuity. Academic classes and factory work shifts have well defined durations. They both occur for a set time and repeat this regularly, but academic classes discontinue at the end of a semester while work shifts go on indefinitely. A birthday party may have a clear beginning and only a vague ending and no likely repetition. Some settings remain viable only as long as particular people, such as strong leaders or doers, remain active. Others are quite independent of any particular type of individual, and probably many are in between. The stability of a setting may be

threatened by pressing environmental conditions (competing settings, funding ended, present quarters no longer available, hostility of opponents). Unexpected termination can occur due to fire, hurricanes, or death of a key person such as a store owner. Settings vary in the way in which they anticipate and prepare for environmental change and crises and thereby whether they stand, fall, or become crippled when these events occur. Sometimes the participants change the patterns of the setting to prepare for such events; and sometimes they change them just to gain variety, be more efficient, upgrade the setting, or countless other reasons.

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## Abstracts 1995 Q-Conference

### Q METHODOLOGY AS THE FOUNDATION FOR A SCIENCE OF SUBJECTIVITY

Steven R. Brown  
*Department of Political Science,  
Kent State University*

William Stephenson's 1935 letter to the Editor of *Nature*, published 60 years ago, contains within its four short paragraphs all the essentials for a science of subjectivity. Focusing on two studies – on the controversies surrounding animal experimentation and of problem selection in policy analysis – illustrations are provided of the new phenomena brought to light through “inverted” factor analysis, and of the advantages of experimentation which Q methodology enjoys. A proposed study on food habits demonstrates how experimental probes can be made into the cognitive and orrectic aspects of nutrition and food choice. The conclusion is reached that Q methodology remains the foundation of the study of subjective behavior.

### PRESIDENTS IN THE PUBLIC MIND: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF BILL CLINTON

Larry Baas  
*Department of Political Science,  
Valparaiso University*

Dan Thomas  
*Department of Political Sciences,  
Warburg College*

This study seeks to add theoretically, substantively and methodologically to the growing body of literature on the “public presidency,” as well as to increase our understanding of the Clinton Presidency. First, we borrow Murray Edelman's perspec-

tive and view the Clinton Presidency – like most political events – as a spectacle, the meaning of which is ambiguous. Examined from this angle, attention is directed away from the search for a singular meaning, towards ascertaining the range of meanings and understandings which actually do exist. Secondly, we adopt what Jeffrey Tulis refers to as the “interpretative turn” in presidential studies by utilizing the presidency as a window through which to evaluate conditions in the culture and the larger political system. Thirdly, we employ Q methodology to ascertain the variety of meaning attributed by the mass public to Bill Clinton and his Presidency. Four factors result from this analysis indicating four distinct understandings of the President. Most persons in this study, however, are strongly loaded on one bipolar factor which illustrates how the Clinton Presidency has become a central symbol in the contemporary “Culture Wars.” The other factors are considered and the implications of these understandings is discussed.

### DIRECTING HEALTH MESSAGES TOWARD AFRICAN-AMERICANS: ATTITUDES TOWARD HEALTHCARE AND THE MASS MEDIA

Judith Sylvester  
*School of Journalism,  
Louisiana State University*

Q methodology is sometimes criticized because results are often based on small, non-random samples that cannot be generalized to a larger population. This study seeks to overcome these limitation by clustering a large group of randomly-selected telephone residents into Q types obtained from a Q sort. Specifically, this study isolates five Q types from the factor analysis of 56 sorts. The following Q types demonstrate that there are attitudinal differences between African-Americans and Caucasians that contribute to the discrepancies in health status between the two races. The Equalizers (59% African-Ameri-

can) are the most concerned about transportation to healthcare facilities. They do not believe federal policies help minorities. The Adjusters (80% African-American) believe that blacks are victims of the economic system, that rich people get better care than poor people and that minorities have not been taught to use the healthcare system. The Preventers (predominately Caucasians) have pride in the healthcare system. They believe the key to good health is to lead a clean, moral life. The Empathizers (all African-American) rank statements greater than other types that have to do with media bias and economic barriers. they also may avoid doctors. The Fixers (50% African-American) rank statements greater than other types that concern improving preventive efforts in disadvantaged areas and providing more black healthcare providers. These types are used to cluster 527 subjects (49% African-American) who responded to a telephone survey based on the Q-statements. The results are used to suggest possible marketing strategies to deliver healthcare messages to African-Americans.

### DISSOLUTION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY: THE EXPERIENCE OF SUBJECTIVITY IN TAIWAN

Timothy Ka Ying Wong  
*Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies  
and Department of Government*

Milan Tung Wen Sun  
*Public Administration,  
Chinese University of Hong Kong*

Taiwan society has long been haunted by the national identity problem, due to its special historical-structural status. The problem has captured significant academic interest in recent years. Yet, much work paid insufficient attention to the subjectivity of national identity discursive formation among Taiwan people in the present-day setting. This study attempts to reconstruct, from the subject's perspective, Taiwan people's national identity discourses. A specifically designed method – Q methodology – is used. We can identify five discourses through an intensive analysis of carefully selected Taiwan sub-

jects. The five discourses are Chinese nationalism, status-quoism, confused identity, Taiwan-prioritism and Taiwanese nationalism. We find that the discourses are intertwined and share some loosely defined viewpoints regarding Taiwan's present situation. Our findings are in sharp contrast with the preconstructed "reunification-independence" bifurcation or "reunification-status Quo-independence" trifurcation approach characteristic of the existing Taiwan national identity studies. The findings may be served as a new basis for constructing a more comprehensive analytical framework for future research.

### A STUDY OF THE PROFESSIONAL NURSING IMAGES OF NURSING UNIT MANAGERS: A Q METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Eun Ja Yeun and Sung Ai Chi  
*Department of Nursing, Chung-Ang University*

Hung Kyu Kim  
*Department of Mass Communication, Hankuk  
University of Foreign Studies,  
Seoul, Korea*

The purpose of this study was to scientifically analyze subjective schemata of nursing unit managers in order to promote our understanding of individuals' images of nursing as a profession. The study also sought to provide appropriate strategies for improving the image of nursing based on each individual's own characteristics and perceptions about the profession. A Q methodological approach was used in this study because the method effectively measures highly abstract and subjective concepts, such as personal experience and perception. The results, based on a study of nursing unit managers at five Korean university hospitals, revealed three distinct types of images of nursing as a profession: the views of the Proud, the Self-Conflicted and the Progressive manager. It was found that these three types could change continuously through interaction with their environment. Based on the findings, the study also suggested guidelines for constructing a desirable professional nursing image.

## Discussion

### Interbehaviorism On A Bulletin Board

The following e-mail exchange was submitted by Mike Kullman  
*Spectrum Center, CA*

Ken Wildman (Ohio Northern University) writes:

You ask: "Must we leave the study of thinking to cognitive psychology?", and I would answer: Yes. The issue, as I see it, is not whether these phenomena can be studied or not, but which methodologies are appropriate. I maintain that the methodology known as science requires certain criteria be met. One of these is public observability. This requirement is based on long experience with the fallibility of single person observations. If a goal of inquiry is to move us from less certainty towards more certainty, then increasing the number of observers increases the reliability of the observations. Individual variations (including personal biases, beliefs, and motives) are randomly distributed among the observers, and hopefully tend to cancel out.

Joe Parsons [University of Victoria] replies:

This sort of requirement of science serves to establish a dualistic universe along the public and private dimension, and then restrict study to one. I'd prefer a science that does not require such a dualism.

Mike Kullman takes up the conversation:

I agree with Joe's response. If we subscribe to truth by agreement we then also commit to a world which has both a physical and nonphysical nature. If this is our world view then the "laws" we have about the physical world do not hold in the nonphysical.

Reading this thread reminded me of an article that I read several years ago concerning the principle of psychological privacy by Observer (J.R.Kantor's nom de pume), so I retrieved it and re-read it. I think the article speaks to this topic - private events, dualism, verbal behavior, and concepts such as consciousness. Any quotes below are from the article (Observer, *The Psychological Record*, 1981, 31, 101-106.)

Kantor does not subscribe to dualism and notes its verbal origins. "One can not look into another person's mind because there is no mind to look and there is no mind to look into. The entire problem of minds is unadulterated verbal gossamer" (p. 228).

The major point of the article is that "private" is actually specificity. In other words every flight path of a falling leaf or rock is private in the sense that it is specific to that rock or leaf and the conditions for which it is falling at the time of the fall. Similarly,

"Those who hold that sensations of X's mind cannot be transferred to Y's mind simply are asserting that some quality or property of stimulus objects responded to belongs invariably to that object in a psychological interaction and to no other object" (p.228).

We do not speak of the private aspect of the rock or leaf and perhaps should behave the same way when it comes to humans.

I wonder if it is the fact that we can talk about the relation of the stimulus object with our own behavior (to ourselves and others) that leads us to talk about our private behavior. I also wonder if this phenomena is what leads to Ken's statement about Individual variations (including personal biases, beliefs, and motives). Kantor goes further than Skinner in his argument against dualism and privacy.

"The behaviorist does not realize that in a world where every event is "private," that is unique, there is no problem of privacy. Everything is public in the sense of being directly or inferentially available for observation" (p.230).

I think Ken would have trouble with the word "inferential" in the above quote. If I understood him however, he would be satisfied with verbal accounts about a private event. The verbal accounts are inferential in a sense. We have learned from a verbal community how to let others know "what it is we feel" – our unique interaction with the environment.

The end of this article notes the limitation of knowledge and is a good example of the extensiveness of field theory.

"What is known in part leaves room for the erroneous assumption of something strange and mysterious beyond. What is missing is the view that all authentic knowledge is only the initial approach to the nature of

things and events. But even the most cumulative and substantiated information never covers all and every phase of things and events" (p. 231).

Bill Verplanck [Knoxville, TN] responds in part:

And shouldn't behavior analysts be appalled when a "Behavior Analyst" proposes that research on remembering, perceiving, and so on, should be left to the cognitive psychologists? What kind of a science of behavior is it that would omit so much of what we and our fellow animals do? What, one wonders, if 19th century chemists had left what became "organic chemistry" to chefs, because they knew a lot about meat and veggies?

### Obituary: Israel Goldiamond (1919 - 1995)

One of the pioneers of behavior analysis, Israel Goldiamond, died at his home in Chicago of cancer on November, 19, 1995. He was 76 years old. At the time of his death, he was Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry and Psychology at the University of Chicago. Prior to his appointment at the University of Chicago in 1968, he held positions at Southern Illinois University, Arizona State University, and the Institute of Behavior Research in Silver Springs, Maryland.

Is, as he was known by his friends and colleagues, was one of the founders of the Association of Behavior Analysis and served as its president from 1977 to 1978. In recognition of his creative work and numerous publications in both basic and applied research, which included the treatment of weight control, smoking, stuttering and phobic behavior, he received the Don Hake Award from Division 25 of the American Psychology Association and in recognition of his service on the Board of Social and Ethical Responsibility in Psychology, he received a certificate of appreciation from APA's Public Interest Directorate.

An automobile accident in 1970 left him paralyzed from the waist down but he quickly resumed his professional work and became a powerful advocate for handicapped persons. He is survived by Betty, his wife of nearly 50 years, Two daughters, one son and four grandchildren. Is will be sorely missed by his many friends world-wide and his devoted students.

## Article

## Una teoría de la conducta: ¿por qué la necesitamos? A behavior theory: Why we need it?

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This paper attempts to show why a behavior theory is needed. Historical and philosophical backgrounds about behavior theory are briefly exposed. Statements from Skinner, Schoenfeld, Kantor and other behaviorally oriented authors stressing relevance and significance about progress of a behavior theory are reviewed. Every theoretical proposal should be useful in guidance of research programs. Some remarks addressed to call attention on interbehavioral perspective, as an example contributing to historical continuity in the construction of behavior theory, are added. A provisional conclusion may be summarized: theoretical efforts advocating a behavior theory should be considered as a progressive, gradual and dynamic process more than as a terminal outcome.

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¿Es posible hablar de una teoría de la conducta? Tal vez esta pregunta en su sentido más amplio sea difícil responderla sin caer en simplificaciones, omisiones y, en último caso también sin exageraciones; pero actualmente puede ser una pregunta válida para reflexionar alrededor de un problema vigente para aquellos quienes se interesan en los aspectos teóricos de una ciencia de la conducta. Hace algunos años Schoenfeld (1983) publicó una breve pero excelente revisión histórica, acerca de las condiciones empíricas y conceptuales que guarda la teoría de la conducta y cuales son sus perspectivas de desarrollo hacia el futuro. Después de la lectura de su artículo, uno puede quedar con la impresión optimista de que la teoría de la conducta en lo que va de este siglo, ha producido importantes avances desde la conceptualización de la conducta como objeto de estudio de la psicología. Sin embargo, no queda suficientemente claro el lugar que ocupa esta teoría entre muchos psicólogos para guiar sus propios programas de investigación.

Indudablemente, resulta discutible cualquier definición de lo que es una teoría. De acuerdo con Rychlak (1981) la palabra teoría en su raíz griega

significa el acto de inspección, de contemplación, o de consideración. Sin embargo, existen bastantes extensiones de la significación del término, por ejemplo: una creencia, una táctica, o un procedimiento propuesto como una base para la acción; un cuerpo de generalizaciones derivado de la experiencia o práctica en algún campo (como, en la teoría de la música); un cuerpo de teoremas matemáticos presentando una visión clara, redondeada y sistémica de un objeto (como la teoría de los números); un análisis sistemático, o la definición de un concepto; una entidad hipotética o hipótesis de trabajo, relacionando o explicando algún patrón de hechos observado, con o sin evidencia experimental en su apoyo, y cosas por el estilo. Las nociones de conjetura, especulación, y suposición también están ligadas a la definición de teoría.

En la psicología a su vez, coexisten diversos significados respecto a la definición de teoría. Podría decirse sin ningún temor a exagerar, que cada autor tiene su manera particular para definir lo que entiende por teoría. Como es de esperarse esto ha resultado poco fructífero en el desarrollo conceptual de nuestra disciplina. El objetivo del presente trabajo, es mostrar

de una manera sencilla, que efectivamente se requiere de una teoría de la conducta, que desde hace varias décadas ha entrado en vigor y que no es posible borrar o desconocer sus antecedentes históricos para evaluar sus alcances.

### *Antecedentes históricos*

Desde que Watson, en 1913, proclamó formalmente el nacimiento del conductismo, surgieron serios intentos por conformar un marco teórico adecuado, que permitiera eslabonar de manera lógica y congruente un mosaico de eventos y fenómenos que directa o indirectamente tenían que ver con la psicología. A partir de ese momento histórico, fue posible reinterpretar un conjunto de problemas, que, o bien se excedían en su explicación, o por otro lado, carecían de un rigor metodológico que hacían sospechar de su legitimidad. La virtud de las aportaciones de Watson, no radica tanto en su impacto inmediato – que dicho sea de paso fue bastante espectacular – sino lo que posibilitó y de hecho produjo en el futuro mediato. La renovación en el lenguaje que introdujo Watson a la psicología, permitió estructurar una postura crítica frente a todas aquellas aproximaciones psicológicas que se sustentaban en premisas de origen mentalista y de tipo ficticio, muy en boga por los inicios de este siglo. Antiguos problemas como el de la relación objeto – sujeto, o la dicotomía de eventos privados y eventos públicos, el papel de la conciencia, etc... fueron sometidos nuevamente a examen y reformulados en términos que pudieran ser abordados con una perspectiva menos especulativa.

El mismo carácter de la psicología para considerarse una ciencia fue polemizado y obligó a importantes definiciones de los psicólogos de los años 30 y 40. Cabe notar, que la formulación de una teoría supone un compromiso, no siempre explícito, de quién la sustenta, por lo que es muy difícil encontrar científicos que se retracten de su propia formulación. Se puede decir, sin embargo, que este período fue fructífero en el sentido de que cualquier esfuerzo teórico debía explicitar la metodología empleada para realizar sus proposiciones conceptuales. Un hecho interesante que vale la pena destacar en la producción teórica de esos años, es la estrecha vinculación entre las teorías y las situaciones experimentales de donde eran derivadas dichas teorías. Aun cuando la producción empírica de ese tiempo, estaba relacionada con el problema del aprendizaje,

era común que cada teoría que surgía alrededor de este fenómeno estaba completamente tamizada por el tipo de experimentación que en particular era desarrollada. Harzem y Miles (1978), a este respecto señalan:

*“...hay muchos ejemplos en la historia de la ciencia donde el aparato usado ha influido la manera en la cual los investigadores han concebido el fenómeno en el que están interesados, y esto no es menos cierto en la psicología...”* p.5.

En el caso de Watson, hay que hacer notar que aunque sus afirmaciones constituyen una verdadera apología del método experimental, que en forma tan exitosa habían desarrollado las ciencias naturales, no fue él, sin embargo, quién en realidad predicara con el ejemplo. Sería de mayor justicia reconocer que fue Skinner, quién en 1938 en su libro *The behavior of organisms*, expuso un robusto programa experimental acompañado de evidencia empírica estableciendo una estricta congruencia entre lo que se decía y lo que se hacía. Históricamente, esta obra constituye el verdadero manifiesto conductista que permitió la exposición de motivos del programa experimental que ha tenido una gran influencia en la psicología. Con la incursión de Skinner, los teóricos del comportamiento se tornaron más cautos y se establecieron normas de confiabilidad en las declaraciones interpretativas y en la generación de constructos alrededor de los fenómenos psicológicos. La siguiente declaración de Skinner, en la conclusión del mencionado libro, ilustra la parsimonia que caracteriza a la mayoría de los teóricos de la conducta:

*“...si la extrapolación – a la conducta humana – puede estar o no justificada no puede ser decidido en este momento. Es posible que haya propiedades de la conducta humana que requerirán de un tipo de tratamiento diferente. Pero esto sólo puede ser evaluado aproximándose al problema de una forma ordenada y siguiendo los procedimientos acostumbrados por una ciencia experimental. No podemos afirmar ni negar una discontinuidad entre los campos humano y subhumano en tanto que sabemos muy poco acerca de ellos...”* p.442.

Una interpretación superficial de este principio parsimonioso, implicaría ubicar a Skinner como un científico reticente a la elaboración de teorías por considerarlas aventuradas y especulativas. Nada más

alejado de la realidad. En efecto, como veremos más adelante, Skinner nunca afirmó nada en tal sentido, simplemente desilusionó a aquellos ingenuos que pensaban que con unas cuantas estudios bajo condiciones controladas, podían encontrar una explicación a cada fenómeno de la vida diaria que implicara factores psicológicos.

El virtual casamiento histórico de Watson y Skinner, visto a distancia, puede suponerse como lógico y congruente, en la medida de sus consecuencias. El sistema formal planteado por Skinner, ha resultado de incalculable valor para el desarrollo de una teoría de la conducta; se logró conformar una comunidad de investigadores que desde diferentes campos y áreas establecieron un lenguaje apegado a los datos, generando una metodología con técnicas y procedimientos que demostraban tener efecto sobre la conducta de un sinnúmero de especies incluido el hombre mismo.

Evidentemente, estos hechos repercutieron no sólo dentro de la propia psicología, sino que permitió establecer contactos con datos y teorías de otras ramas científicas que pronto vieron un prometedor desarrollo de este novedoso enfoque psicológico. Fue posible, al mismo tiempo, señalar los límites y extensiones de la psicología con otras ciencias de la ciencia; la fisiología, tan cercana al origen del análisis experimental de la conducta, la biología que con la teoría de la evolución había impulsado entre otras al funcionalismo, encontró un trato distinto con relación a los aspectos filogenéticos del comportamiento. El conductismo, entendido como una filosofía de la ciencia de la conducta, planteó un desprendimiento radical de la filosofía dualista tradicional de principios de siglo. Estos son sólo algunos ejemplos del tipo de relaciones establecidas entre la ciencia de la conducta y otras disciplinas científicas.

Por otro lado, Harzem y Miles (1978) han trazado la importante diferencia entre lo que significa un análisis y una revisión de tipo conceptual. El primero se refiere, a las declaraciones conceptuales que conciernen a las fronteras existentes; mientras que la segunda, se refiere a las declaraciones conceptuales que implican la redefinición de esas fronteras. En este sentido, es claro que el conductismo y el análisis experimental de la conducta, se adjudican un lugar que los distingue nítidamente del resto de las otras ciencias a lo externo, y al mismo tiempo, de las otras aproximaciones actuales dentro de la psicología.

En resumen, se puede decir que tanto Watson

con su pronunciamiento, como Skinner con su programa, abrieron un sinnúmero de posibilidades sembrando la semilla que serviría como guía para la investigación de los elementos básicos que cimentaron la construcción de una teoría de la conducta.

### *Definición de Teoría*

Pero, ¿qué es una teoría?. Seguramente, la respuesta a esta pregunta, en última instancia nos remite directamente al problema del conocimiento científico en su conjunto y por ende, a tener que considerar los aspectos filosóficos que le subyacen. No es propósito de este trabajo hacer un examen a fondo sobre este tópico, por lo que únicamente ilustraremos de manera muy escueta, lo que algunos filósofos contemporáneos consideran respecto del significado de una teoría.

Si aceptamos provisionalmente que la ciencia nos remite a proposiciones (teorías) que predicen qué sucedería dadas ciertas condiciones, de inmediato surgiría el problema de cómo evaluar estas proposiciones (teorías). Así, podemos hablar de la probabilidad de que una proposición sea verdadera, dada cierta evidencia. Sin embargo, es fácil reconocer que la evidencia disponible no es toda la evidencia posible, por lo que nos encontramos con un vacío difícil de cubrir (Burton, 1980). En el caso de Popper (citado en Burton, 1980), proponía que únicamente sabiendo cómo una teoría pudiera ser empíricamente refutable, podríamos saber algo acerca de ella. Lakatos (1970, también citado en Burton, 1980), ofrece una aproximación bastante distinta. Este autor habla de "programas de investigación" en vez de teorías; de este modo, los programas de investigación son conjuntos de teorías, a través de los cuales el científico se mueve, utilizando reglas para hacer modificaciones. Entonces las teorías de un programa de investigación, comparten un núcleo común pero tienen diferencias individuales. En el caso de T. S. Kuhn (1962), más que hablar de teorías, se refiere al establecimiento de paradigmas y las transiciones en las que un paradigma caduco es substituido por uno nuevo; y la noción de paradigma en el sentido sociológico que le adjudica Kuhn, significa el esfuerzo científico universalmente reconocido.

Como es fácil advertir, también resulta un tanto complicado por su diversidad lo que los filósofos entienden por teoría, y los criterios de validez que son relevantes para su legitimación varían en un amplio rango. Por ello, será conveniente abandonar el tema

por el momento, para dar cabida de forma menos breve, a la revisión de lo que algunos teóricos de la conducta consideran respecto a la teoría, y la metodología – en ocasiones implícita – utilizada para arribar a ella.

De manera intencional, no seguiremos una secuencia cronológica para esta exposición; por lo que no hay ningún impedimento para empezar con K. W. Spence (1960), quién considera que las teorías en las ciencias físicas cuyo nivel de conocimiento esta más desarrollado, cumplen una función integradora; mientras que en el estado actual de la psicología y las ciencias sociales, las teorías juegan un papel bastante diferente, Dejemos que hable el propio Spence:

*“...en estos campos complejos – la psicología y las ciencias sociales – la situación más simple que puede ser arreglada, usualmente involucra un número tan grande de variables, que es extremadamente difícil, sino imposible, descubrir directamente las leyes empíricas que las relacionan. Las teorías en estas circunstancias funcionan como un dispositivo útil para la formulación de las leyes. Consisten primeramente en la introducción o postulación de constructos hipotéticos los cuales ayudan a llenar el vacío entre las variables experimentales.”* p.18.

Kantor (1983) por su parte, ha enfatizado el papel de la explicación en la investigación científica, estableciendo también su naturaleza psicológica. Para este autor la explicación es un modo avanzado de descripción, involucrando tipos de contacto especiales de personas con cosas y eventos. En un nivel más general establece las relaciones de la explicación en la ciencia de la siguiente manera:

*“La ciencia como una búsqueda de conocimiento y comprensión requiere de registros estables de avance. Para la mayoría, el tesoro científico se cristaliza como explicaciones, esto es, reportes analíticos acerca de las cosas y eventos estudiados. Estas explicaciones son expresadas en forma de proposiciones teóricas y leyes que representan a los experimentos, la investigación y los hallazgos de la investigación científica... si aceptamos que la investigación científica es un proceso para desarrollar orientaciones válidas con respecto a cosas y eventos, podemos considerar la explicación en ciencia como una forma más elaborada de orientación de la que se dispone generalmente con respecto a contactos no científicos con cosas y eventos.”* p.31.

Por otro lado, Harzem y Miles (1978) en una

actitud conciliadora, tratan de responder a la pregunta de ¿cual es el objeto de estudio de la psicología?, bajo cinco rubros que denominan teorías y cuya utilidad es organizar las diferentes concepciones existentes de lo que debe estudiar la psicología, a saber: a) teorías dualistas, b) teorías conductistas, c) teorías de agrupamiento (cluster), d) teorías cibernéticas, y finalmente, e) teorías operantes. Actualmente, estos autores se inclinan por el último tipo de teoría, aunque ellos toman la palabra teoría no en un sentido de propiedad y prefieren, en última instancia, hablar de formulación conceptual en vez de teoría, y a partir de ello mostrar que *“...si se reconoce que los problemas son conceptuales en carácter no hay ninguna necesidad de considerar a la psicología invadida por controversias insolubles...”* p.31.

Tomemos ahora lo que dice Skinner en su artículo *Tendencias actuales en psicología experimental* (1975), en el que abunda más que en ningún otro lado, acerca del sentido que tiene formular una teoría de la conducta:

*“una teoría, como usaré el término aquí, no tiene nada que ver con la presencia o ausencia de confirmación experimental. Los hechos y las teorías no se oponen los unos con las otras. La relación, en todo caso, es la siguiente: las teorías están basadas sobre hechos; son declaraciones acerca de las organizaciones de los hechos. La teoría atómica, la teoría de la evolución, y la teoría del gen, son ejemplos de teorías científicas útiles y con buena reputación. Son declaraciones acerca de hechos, y con un tratamiento operacional adecuado no necesitan ser más que eso. Pero tienen una generalidad que trasciende hechos particulares y les da una utilidad más amplia. Cada ciencia eventualmente alcanza una fase de teoría en este sentido.”* p.337.

Para Skinner hay tres pasos a seguir en la construcción de una teoría. El primero, es identificar el dato básico; el segundo, expresar relaciones ordenadas entre los datos, y por último; derivar conceptos de orden superior de las relaciones ordenadas.

En 1952 Clark L. Hull, otro importante expositor de la construcción teórica en psicología, señala en las consideraciones introductorias de su libro *A behavior system*, lo siguiente:

*“...la ciencia tiene dos aspectos esenciales, el empírico y el explicativo. El aspecto empírico está primeramente involucrado con los hechos de la ciencia revelados por la*



*observación y el experimento. El aspecto teórico o explicativo consiste en el intento serio por comprender los hechos de la ciencia para integrarlos dentro de un sistema coherente; por ejemplo, de tipo lógico. De estas observaciones e integraciones se han derivado directamente o indirectamente, las leyes básicas de la ciencia.” p.1.*

Más allá del alcance de este trabajo, se ubica la posibilidad de matizar las diferencias y semejanzas de cada una de las concepciones aquí apuntadas acerca del status de la teoría en la ciencia en general y de la psicología en particular. El hecho que hemos querido remarcar aquí es que, en efecto, existe una orientación generalizada entre los psicólogos conductuales hacia el establecimiento y desarrollo de una teoría de la conducta. En este contexto, la conclusión de Schoenfeld (1983) es compartida por nosotros, en el sentido de que la teoría de la conducta se encuentra en un largo momento de transición; podríamos añadir a esta conclusión, que la construcción de una teoría en ciencia se entiende como un proceso de elaboración y nunca como un producto terminado. La teoría de la evolución, por ejemplo, es cierto que resolvió muchos problemás en la biología, pero también es cierto, que planteó muchos más que están aún por ser resueltos. Paralelamente en la psicología, una teoría de la conducta ha generado un caudal de preguntas que han ido guiando el tipo de evidencia fáctica requerida.

Es importante señalar en este punto, que con estas afirmaciones no se pretende borrar las controversias conceptuales y filosóficas que coexisten al interior del conductismo y hacia fuera de él; en el sentido filosófico Moore (1981), ha escrito un interesante trabajo en el que desentraña las diferencias epistemológicas entre el mentalismo, el conductismo metodológico y el conductismo radical. Este autor concluye que el conductismo, de acuerdo al punto de vista de Skinner, o conductismo radical, no es simplemente el estudio científico de la conducta, sino que es una filosofía de la ciencia comprensiva e integrada, involucrada con el objeto de estudio, métodos y dimensiones de la psicología.

En esta dirección, también podemos estar de acuerdo con la división que establece Schoenfeld (1983), entre Conductismo con *C* y conductismo con *c*:

*“Cada psicólogo es un conductista con minúscula cuando trata con la conducta de los organismos que le*

*rodean. El Conductismo con mayúscula, es una filosofía y un programa; es la visión de lo que la ciencia de la conducta (con minúscula) deberá tomar como su interés; y cuales deberán ser sus métodos de investigación; es la aceptación de ciertos datos de la conducta, y el rechazo de ciertas metas como los fines apropiados para la ciencia de la conducta; es una actitud acerca de la ciencia en general y ciertos sistemas metafísicos y filosóficos en particular.” p.60.*

Esta diáfana exposición de lo que significa el conductismo, sorprendentemente, no ha sido tan claramente entendida por muchos psicólogos que llevan a cabo sus investigaciones sin la guía filosófica y científica que sería deseable. El propio Skinner se vio obligado a escribir un libro *About behaviorism* (1974), dedicado completamente a esclarecer y refutar una serie de críticas y confusiones tanto en lo interno como a lo externo de la psicología, y que revelan una falta de comprensión respecto al desarrollo de una teoría de la conducta. Muchos esfuerzos podrían ser mejor apreciados y aprovechados si pudieran ser difundidas con una mayor extensión estas importantes nociones. Es el caso de la aproximación interconductual que nace justo donde el conductismo radical de Skinner muestra sus límites con respecto a la explicación del comportamiento humano. J. R. Kantor (1973, versión castellana) propone una forma mucho más comprensiva de entender los fenómenos psicológicos al plantear un modelo de campo como basamento analítico. Ribes y López (1985) y Roca (1989) han contribuido de manera importante a extender esta visión en diferentes ámbitos del comportamiento humano e infrahumano. Esta aproximación interconductual aunque antigua en su planteamiento original — es relativamente joven en su desarrollo y difusión —, constituye un excelente ejemplo de la continuidad histórica que se requiere para conformar una teoría de la conducta que corresponda a las demandas de una disciplina científica.

En conclusión, la pregunta que da origen a este trabajo, puede ser respondida no sólo en un sentido utilitario de necesidad, sino de manera más precisa, en un sentido creativo; quedando todavía muchos aspectos que no han sido evaluados en su totalidad. Confirmándose con ello la pertinencia de una teoría de la conducta que no es que nos haga falta, sino que debemos desarrollar. El tema de otro trabajo, sería analizar el contexto social y político en el que surge una teoría; así como la metodología pertinente para

normar la actividad científica que da lugar a la formulación de una teoría. Para terminar me gustaría recordar las palabras de Skinner (1975) a este respecto:

*"Les guste o no a los psicólogos experimentales en particular, la psicología experimental esta adecuada e inevitablemente comprometida con la construcción de una teoría de la conducta. Una teoría es esencial para la comprensión científica de la conducta como objeto de estudio."* p.337.

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