

THE INTERBEHAVIORIST

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QUOTATION

It is essential to recognize...that Kantor's initiative and leadership in this field [of observation] is unquestioned. In comparison with him, Lewin offers us a belated "mentalist" shadow, while the peculiar significance of Pavlov's procedure could not readily have been appraised free from its ordinary mechanistic discolorations until after Kantor had established the background of observation.

- A. F. Bentley (1940)

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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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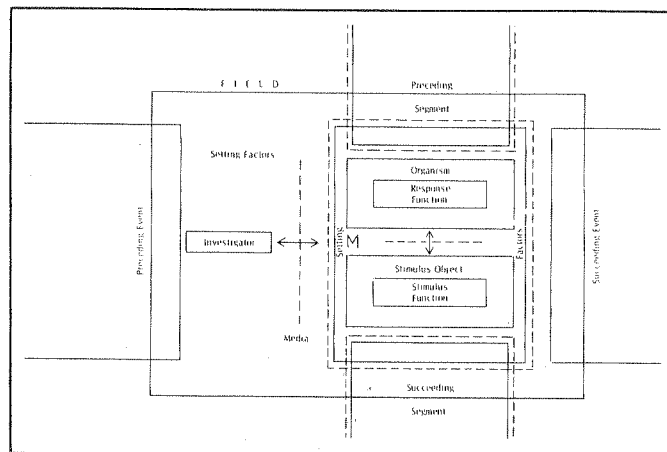
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NOTES FROM THE FIELD

PAUL T. MOUNTJOY and J. D. HANSOR published a comment in the American Psychologist (1985, 40, 967-968), entitled "The Measurement of Technological Progress and Its Relationship to War" in answer to a suggestion made earlier by Sarason that wars promote scientific and technological progress. Mountjoy and Hansor provided data from an analysis of patent-file data that does not support Sarason's contention.

Three papers of an interbehavioral character have recently been published in Europe by SANDY HOBBS. In "A Permanent Revolution in Knowledge?" (Scottish Journal of Adult Education, 1985, 7, 6-9), he interviews David Cornwell on the teaching of psychology as a life skill. Then, with David Cornwell, Hobbs published two papers in the psychology section of M. Romer's (Ed.) (1985) Le Temps Libre et Le Loisir (Paris: Association pour la Diffusion de las Recherche sur l'Action Culturelle) which contains the proceedings of the World Research Congress on Free Time and Leisure, held at Marly-le-Roi, France, in 1984. The two papers were titled "The Psychology, Leisure, and Work of Children" and "Spontaneity and Play in the Child," the latter of which is a reinterpretation of some of Piaget's work in terms of the reactional biography concept. A longer version of the text is available on request from David Cornwell, Jordanhall College of Education, Glasgow G13 1PP, Scotland.

HOBBS also published a brief description of interbehavioral psychology and of The Interbehaviorist in the new newsletter of the Scottish Branch of the British Psychological Association. We thank Sandy for the good notices.



THE AGORA

This issue is the fourth and final one for 1985. The first issue for 1986 should be ready and mailed by the end of January. We want to thank all of those who resubscribed for 1985 and those who were new subscribers during the year for your support. Time now, however, for us to ask for your resubscriptions. A subscription form has been enclosed.

We appreciate the support of readers who sent us notes from the field, book and journal notes, comments, and articles this year. Please continue. If you have suggestions for how the newsletter might be improved, please pass them our way.

As for newsletter subscriptions, we now have a mailing list of 115, of whom about 100 are regular subscribers. This number is lower than last year's final count, the reason being that we culled the list for those who were on the subscription list when we took over from the past editor, but who had not resubscribed. We have, however, gained 27 new subscribers this year, and hope to see the subscription list grow anew.

Financially, we are on fair footing, and managing. By culling the subscription list, we have saved money on postage; we still, though, print 200 copies of each issue -- optimists that we are. Never fear, we will definitely be with you in this coming year, and the years to follow.

The feature article in the present issue is a transcription of Professor Kantor's conversation hour at the 1977 meeting of the Association for Behavior Analysis. Shery Chamberlain, the assistant business manager for SABA, has kindly sent us the tape and a typed version of Professor Kantor's comments, and Paul Mountjoy's introduction. We thank Shery and SABA for their thoughtfulness. The tape has been deposited by Paul in the Archives of the History of Psychology in Akron, Ohio. Before turning to that material, however, we have several items to report.

The Behavioral and Brain Sciences

Arthur Kahn (Westinghouse Electric, Baltimore) wrote to suggest that the special issue of The Behavioral and Brain Sciences [1984, 7(4)] featuring six of B. F. Skinner's canonical papers and peer commentary could be the basis for an interesting seminar on interbehavioral

psychology and the concept of mind. The commentaries by contemporary philosophers and philosophers of science are particularly illuminating as to the current hold that the "mind" has over their behavior. This issue of the journal is available through Cambridge University Press, 32 East 57th Street, New York, NY 10022.

1986 Mexican Congress on Behavior Analysis

Hector Martinez, Coordinator of the Organizing Committee, has written to request that we announce the call for papers for the VIIIth Mexican Congress on Behavior Analysis, to be held in Veracruz City, March 10-14, 1986. The meeting will cover basic and applied research and conceptual analyses of behavior, both human and nonhuman. The deadline for submitting papers is February 15, 1986. Papers to be read in English must be submitted beforehand so that brief translations may be prepared ahead of time. Papers should not exceed 23 minutes. Submissions should be sent to Hector Martinez, Coordinacion de Posgrado en Psicologia, ENEP Iztacala, Apartado Postal 314, Tlalnepantla Edo. de Mexico, C.P. 54000. For information regarding housing, please write Wilfredo Salas and Maribel Gonzalez, Facultad de Psicologia, Juarez 81, Xalapa, Mexico.

Subscriptions

Efforts that current subscribers make to promote new subscriptions, especially from university, college, and institutional libraries, are appreciated. Subscription information is listed inside the front cover of the newsletter.

The new subscribers since the last issue are listed below. For those interested, a mailing list is available on request.

New Subscribers

Fernando C. Capovilla (Temple Univ.)
Tom Wharff (University of Kansas)
Chai-Chen Chao (Univ. of Arizona)

The quotation on the front cover of this issue was submitted by Susan M. Schneider. It appeared on p. 239 in A. F. Bentley (1940), Observable behaviors. Psychological Review, 47, 230-253.

Conversation Hour with J. R. Kantor

Third Annual Convention of the Midwest Association for Behavior Analysis

Blackstone Hotel, Chicago, Illinois

Sunday, May 15, 1977

Introduced and Moderated by Paul T. Mountjoy

MOUNTJOY: We are here for a conversation hour with Dr. Kantor. I would just like to remind those of you who do not know him that, in the very early 1920s, he began to develop a system of objective psychology which stood as a potent antagonist to the mechanistic systems of behaviorism at that time. Since then, both he and his competitors for psychological eminence have evolved in many different ways. And, of course, time has produced changes. Dr. Kantor is now in his eighty-ninth year, if my arithmetic is correct, and I think it is. He is still very active. His latest book on psycholinguistics is in the hands of the printer and should be available very soon. However, unfortunately, his hearing has deteriorated over the years and he will be unable to understand questions from the audience unless they are produced in written form. I have a volunteer assistant who will pass out sheets of paper among you.

[Organizational matters are clarified. The first question is handed up. Professor Kantor good-humoredly suggests to Mountjoy, "Maybe you could read this [to the audience] so that everybody knows what the question is."]

MOUNTJOY: Do you think that a cause-effect, goal-oriented philosophy like behaviorism is more conducive to research than a philosophy like interbehaviorism, and is this justification for dualism in science?

KANTOR: My engagement was to be present at a discussion hour, and you can imagine how little actual discussion can go on in a crystal room like this, and with a man who is so hard of hearing. I could not tell anything that my friend Professor Mountjoy was saying.

Now the first thing I have to say about this question is that it is not very clear to me. In the first place, there is a

comparison between behaviorism and interbehaviorism [but] interbehaviorism is too. Now the point is, and this is a very crucial point, behaviorism and interbehaviorism both are views or theories in psychology that stand for the elimination of all kinds of spookology, so you do not contrast one with the other. The holder of each view is prepared to do research in much the same way, that is to say, by elimination of supernaturals.

Now, I will say a word or two, which really isn't part of an answer to this question, as to the difference between behaviorism and interbehaviorism. Remember both views are antimentalism -- both stand for the elimination of mentals. There's a difference between the origin of the two views. One stems, as you probably know, from Pavlovian conditioning. But the other view, interbehaviorism, stems from an older type of psychology, an older type of science, which merely objected from the very beginning to limiting psychology to any particular type of research or theory.

[Professor Kantor uses a blackboard to make his points, but before commencing, he jokes with the audience, "Can you hear me? I can hardly hear myself, but then if you can hear me, then I am all right."]

If we make a distinction between behaviorism and interbehaviorism, it would be something like this: Remember both are antimentalism; that is common. Now, behaviorism tends to two kinds of view. One is that the organism initiates the behavior, and the stimulus object is, in a way, a cue or some condition not too prominent in the situation. Now, there's a second aspect of this behaviorism, and it works like this: Great emphasis is put upon the stimulus, and the organism is conditioned, and it is modified according to some kind of stimulus. Now, this sort of thing fits quite well in our psychological traditions in the sense that you speak of an independent and a dependent variable. The control is this

way, or the control is that way, when you emit behavior. Now, this is the difference between the two.

According to interbehaviorism, psychological events are fields, so you have to consider that you do not have any independence and dependence. You have reciprocity, which is a different type of thing. The event consists of these two actions: They are reciprocal. And then you have other things that are happening. You always have a setting factor which is as much a part of the field. [Pointing, Kantor says] This is called a field, and this is the boundary of the field. That is, we have to think always in terms of a unit of events. So you have a reciprocal interaction -- interbehavior -- that is performed under setting conditions. Now, there's something else, and that is what we call a medium of contact. A good example of [this] is that an individual organism cannot interact with a stimulus object, say in visual interbehavior, unless you have light as the medium of contact. In the case of hearing, the airwaves serve as the medium of contact. So you see the difference between behaviorism and interbehaviorism is the technical difference of how much and how skillfully you analyze the events which we call either a behavior or an interbehavior.

MOUNTJOY: Would you please clarify the scope of the concept "setting factor" and how does this differ from "discriminative stimulus"?

KANTOR: Well, I want to give an illustration of a setting factor in psychological interbehavior. This is a simple and maybe a trivial illustration. If you are interested in language behavior, you know that in this setting, in this room, and upon this occasion, my speech is different from other occasions and from other settings. In other words, a setting factor is always present in a psychological action. Another simple example would be that if an organism is satiated, it will not interact with the food in the same way as when it is hungry. And that is why in experimental situations you force the animal or the organism not to be satiated, that is, to be hungry. So the question is: How does this differ from discriminative stimuli. Well, a stimulus is a different thing. The setting is the surroundings of an

interaction. A stimulus -- a discriminative stimulus or any kind of stimulus -- is the thing the organism always interacts with.

MOUNTJOY: Would you give us a brief preview of the ideas presented in your new book [on linguistics, Kantor (1977)]?

KANTOR: I am afraid that I could not very well do that. That's too big an order. I hope that in the next few months there will be a prospectus available so you can see what the content of the book is. The book will be printed in the next month or so.

MOUNTJOY: Would you review for us what you feel to be the important reasons for continuing to study the history of psychology as a science?

KANTOR: This question has a fairly obvious answer. I'll put the matter in a special way. As a psychologist, it is obvious that whenever you want to do anything of any serious consequence, you want to have as much information about the situation, that is, about the behavior you are entering into. And so, the history of scientific psychology is very important. I have said a number of times that the history of science, if it is a valid history, is really an instrument for psychological investigation.

I am going to give you an example of what I mean in the way that indicates I'm trying to be informal with you and on a friendly, very friendly basis. I suppose that all of you are acquainted with the fact that Boring's history of experimental psychology is called, very often, a classical book. And I suppose you all know that the content of that book is based on purely mentalistic ideas. So that kind of history would not be of very much worth to you in any kind of psychological work. On the other hand, if you have a history of psychological work from a scientific standpoint, it will be very helpful. I will elaborate this a little bit further.

In Boring's book, you would read about visual experiments, and I hope most of you know that the model that is used for vision is to have some kind of energy impinge upon the eye. And then that would be followed by some kind of physiological process in the optic pathway, and not

until the process reaches the occipital lobe of the brain would you have any color. Color, for example, is manufactured somehow in the brain and is ejected or emitted out towards some object. The object doesn't exist either until this process happens. Well now, you don't have there a scientific description of a psychological activity. So that kind of history won't do any good. Here, of course, you could say that I am prejudiced. If you have an interbehavioral type of description in which the organism interacts with a colored object, and the color is in the object, based on various kinds of chemical substances, that is going to help you.

MOUNTJOY: What would you like to see happen in psychology? That is, what type of future directionality?

KANTOR: May I guess that you know the answer, really -- all of you. My answer, if I have to give it, would be of course the more psychology became interbehavioral and scientific the better the future of the science would be. And there's another angle to this. Actually, you all know that if there is a genuine experiment in psychology, it is always an interbehavioral one and a behavioral one. You always have a stimulus and a response to deal with. And what you are trying to find out in an experiment -- what the science of psychology is about -- is to discover the kinds of interbehavior you will have depending upon the kind of organism you are working with, the kind of stimulus object you present, the setting factors, and so on. Now, one thing that has recently, fairly recently, become a generally recognized feature of experimentation in psychology, is that, if you are working with infrahuman organisms or human organisms, you want to know about the development of the organism. You want to be acquainted with it. But always, psychologists and biologists have wanted to know the strains of the organism; they wanted to know its background. Well that's one thing. And, of course, you want to know about your stimulus objects.

I want to give an illustration about that. A colleague of mine once wanted to know what kind of disturbance a subject would show if you presented the subject with a very striking kind of stimulus, and especially if the individual was presented

with a stimulus without previous knowledge of what he was going to be interacting with. And I'm going to make this a very short story. So one of the things that this researcher did was to have a test of stability and then he put a 5-foot snake on the lap of the subject. It did disturb some of the subjects, but not all of them. And, as it happens that most of them were people who came out of rural environments, a 5-foot black snake didn't make much difference to them. They didn't show much disturbance. That indicates that you have to know your stimulus object. Would it be a stimulus for this particular organism under these setting conditions?

MOUNTJOY: Can you comment on Paul Fuller's [1973] article in The Psychological Record comparing your system and Skinner's.

Kantor [in reference to a different article]: There isn't very much difference. You remember, that was an experiment [Fuller, 1949] with pretty much what you would call vegetating organisms. The main point was could you modify the behavior of such an organism. And Paul proved that you could, up to a certain extent. And there would be no difference here because in each case you would be working with stimuli and responses. And it wouldn't make much difference which theory you held to because it is such a simple kind of situation.

Where the big differences might come out would be in complex human behavior. For example, in the study of language, there you would find a big difference. For example, Professor Skinner [1957] wrote a book called Verbal Behavior. And what he attempted to do was to show that verbal behavior could be modified and could be treated on a conditional basis. Now, the good point about that was that it broke down the distinction between language and other behavior because language has always been thought to be, and still is by non-behaviorists, as something spooky. There is something in the mind that got translated into a word. So, that [Skinner's analysis] was all good. However, the question arises whether complicated action like conversation can be treated simply as conditioning. There are a lot of other factors that come in. And so, while both [behaviorism and interbehaviorism], again, are united in

the point of excluding mentals, one view is more capable of dealing with complex behavior in the human being.

MOUNTJOY: I have often wondered to what extent Skinner's philosophical base was influenced if not dictated by Kantor?

KANTOR: I don't know the answer to this question and so I am going to tell a couple of little stories.

I was at a meeting in New York City one time some years ago [that] I only could see or hear the beginning of. I was quite hard of hearing at that time and I had an extension cord from the seats to the lectern, and somebody unknowingly stepped on the contacts and so I wasn't able to hear anything. I went out of the meeting in New York City and looked for an electrical shop so I could replace that part. But I had a hard time finding an electrical shop. But I finally did find one, and I wandered back to the hotel, [but] it seemed to me too late to go to the meeting, so I stood and looked at some of the attractive window displays. A young man came up to me and he said, "So you are responsible for the whole thing," meaning behaviorism and interbehaviorism. Well that's a story.

And another similar story was that a student wrote to me from Wales. He had been to this country, and he had had some acquaintances in interbehavioral psychology. But he wasn't, I think, very politic. And he wrote to Skinner and he asked him how much he was influenced by me. Professor Skinner answered him, and he said, "I have never understood interbehavioral psychology." So the implication was that he was not influenced by it. And that is possible because, as I said in the beginning, behaviorism is derived from Pavlovian work. And someone might have become a behaviorist, as Pavlov would, not from just thinking in terms of the actual modification of behavior in the animals. So that is possible.

Actually, of course, it doesn't matter about influences. What matters is that since there are two branches, let us say, of behaviorism, then you become acquainted as well as you can be with the points made by each view and then draw your own conclusion. You might come out in one of three ways: You might say that A influenced B; you could say that B influenced A; or you might say that there

is no influence either way.

MOUNTJOY: Interbehaviorism seems to be directed toward how we talk about our research. What are its implications for how we conduct research? That is, what are its methodological implications in contrast with those of behaviorism and mentalism?

KANTOR: Well, to begin with, nobody can do any research with a mentalistic outlook. Mentalism is "spookism" -- something supernatural. It has nothing to do with any science. That's out of the question.

Now, the next question is: How elaborate do you want your researchers to be? How much leeway do you want in the selection of problems. Well, my answer to that would be that the interbehavioral view has a larger scope. A while ago, I mentioned, for example, that a book on verbal behavior [Skinner, 1957], which is supposed to be on language, isn't on language because language isn't verbal behavior. Language is a bigger thing than verbal behavior. But if you hold to that view [language is verbal behavior], then you are limited in your operations, you're limited in your research.

As I tried to indicate, I would offer as a final statement the advice that you should, if you're interested, study the two views carefully and come to your own conclusions. It's no good in any science to be told what is better and what is worse. That doesn't mean anything. I speak now as any scientist would. You must become as well acquainted with the kind of material you are interested in and then you will develop your theory about what has been going on -- what kind of events you have been dealing with -- and that's the end of the story. It's not going to be anything absolute. You know, or should know, that science is a job of work. If you are interested in human behavior or in animal behavior, you must hold to your job with as few prejudices as you can. Study hard your subject, your behavior, or your interbehavior, and then you are on the right track of science. But you don't have any absolutes. No absolutes in any science.

MOUNTJOY: Could you summarize your views on instinctive behavior in humans?

KANTOR: Well, in my view, instinctive behavior isn't based -- that kind of construction isn't based -- on observation. It is based on some kind of theory -- mentalistic theory. It's no good at all in any science.

Now, there's one thing we have to do that is helpful and that is [to see that] perhaps someone who uses the word "instinctive" doesn't mean that at all; he doesn't mean any spooky thing. He really means behavior. Maybe it's a habitual behavior or it's reflex behavior, and so you clarify yourself about that. My main point here is that terms in psychology, many of them, have been built up under very different conditions than is true for scientific psychology. They were based on all kinds of spurious philosophy and that is something we have to watch out for and we have to avoid as much as we can.

MOUNTJOY: Now that you have completed the book on language [Kantor, 1977], are you working on anything new? Perhaps an autobiography?

KANTOR: What autobiography? I think you know I'm a very old man. But I still am working and I am going to work on something else after this book is printed. But it is not an autobiography. And, it's too early to announce the content or the name of the book, and so on. But, if you are interested, maybe if I keep going you

will be able to see the book, if I can finish it. [Professor Kantor was to publish three more books and two collections of articles (Kantor, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984a, 1984b).]

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