

**INTERBEHAVIORAL
PSYCHOLOGY**

NEWSLETTER

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Therefore everything in existence is, fundamentally, made out of two things. There are bodies and there is the void in which these bodies have their places and through which they move in different directions. For sensation which is common to everybody declares that body exists. And unless we hold fast to this original belief in sensation, we shall find that in matters beyond the reach of sensation we shall have no principle to which we can refer and by means of which we can arrive at rational conclusions. Next, if there were no such thing as space (which is what we mean by "the void") there would be nowhere in which the bodies could be situated and it would be quite impossible for them to move about in different directions.... There is nothing else--nothing which you could say was distinct both from body and from void and could be pronounced to be a third substance. For everything that is to exist must be something in itself; if it is capable of touching and being touched, however light and small the touch may be, it will, provided that it does exist, increase the quantity of body to some extent, whether great or small, and be an addition to the sum of things. If on the other hand it is tangible and unable to prevent any object in motion from passing through it at any point, then unquestionably it must be what we call the empty void. Then again, whatever is to exist in itself will either do something, or else must remain passive itself while other things act upon it, or else must be of the sort in which things can exist and actions can take place. But nothing can act or be acted upon without body and nothing can afford space except the void and the empty. Therefore, apart from the void and bodies it is impossible for there to exist in the sum of things any residual third substance. Such a substance could never at any time come within the reach of our senses, nor could any man lay hold of it by any process of reasoning.

Lucretius (First Century B.C.)
(Rex Warner, Translator).

How may the union of the corporeal with the incorporeal be conceived?.. ..How will that which is corporeal seize upon that which is incorporeal, so to hold it conjoined with itself, or how will the incorporeal grasp the corporeal, so as reciprocally to keep it bound to itself....? I ask you how you think that you, if you are incorporeal and unextended, are capable of experiencing the sensation of pain?...The general difficulty always remains, how the corporeal can have anything in common with the incorporeal, or what relationship may be established between the one and the other.

Pierre Gassendi (Letter to Descartes quoted in OBJECTIONS AND REPLIES IN THE PHILOSOPHICAL WORK OF DESCARTES, Vol. 2, E.S. Haldane & G.R.T. Ross, Tr.)

So far as I can gather from his own words, this is the opinion of that distinguished man (Descartes), and I could scarcely have believed it possible for one so great to have put it forward if it had been less subtle. I can hardly wonder enough that a philosopher who firmly resolved to make no deduction except from self-evident principles, and to affirm nothing but what he clearly and distinctly perceived, and who blamed all the schoolmen because they desired to explain obscure matters by occult qualities, should except a hypothesis more occult than any occult quality. What does he understand, I ask, by the union of the mind and body? What clear and distinct conception has he thought intimately connected with a certain small portion of matter? I wish that he had explained this union by its proximate cause. But he conceived the mind to be so distinct from the body that he was able to assign no single cause of this union, nor of the mind itself, but was obliged to have recourse to the cause of the whole universe, that is to say, to God.

Baruch Spinoza: ETHICS
(W.H. White, Tr.)

In the race of the various phenomena with which this book is concerned, the selection is determined in part by the ancient distinction between mind and matter. Mind is mysterious, being, as the French philosopher Rene Descartes said, "unextended substance." Yet how can mind be in the body and still occupy no space there? It seems reasonable to suppose that so impalpable an essence could act in strange ways. For instance, if the mind or the soul--the two used not to be distinguished--can be here and yet take up no room, may not the mind or its effects be both here, there, and everywhere, like light or, as now, the radio waves?

E.G. Boring in the Introduction
to C.E.M. Hansel: ESP: A SCIENTIFIC
EVALUATION.

Now, matter obeys the principles of conservation of mass plus energy, momenta and electrical charges. Any influence upon matter implies the variation of at least one of these quantities. If one material system acts upon another, the changes of mass, momenta, energy and electric charges of the second are compensated by equal and contrary changes in the first. If mind is supposed to act upon matter, it would have to possess mass, energy, momenta or electric charges. But according to the usual psychological definition, it does not possess them. Therefore an action of mind upon matter is possible. It would mean the breaking of the laws of physics.

E. Gaviola: "The impossibility of
interaction between mind and matter",
Philosophy of Science, April 1936.

What room has modern science for the dichotomy of man or of any other natural object? There is no mind, and indeed, no body considered as an adjunct of mind. As an organism the scientific worker is an observable object in interrelation with other things. His existence, his operations, are as public and as stable as anything else in nature.

J.R. Kantor: THE LOGIC OF MODERN
SCIENCE.

☐☐ THE AGORA ☐☐

With this issue we come to the end of 1970. The number of subscribers now totals 145. The Newsletter will definitely continue for another year, and hopefully indefinitely into the future. Subscription forms for 1971 are included with this issue.

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A brief comment on the quotations: Gassendi, Spinoza, Gaviola, and Boring offer incisive comments on the problems of dualism, but fall victim to it in their own writings. Gaviola's paper is an object lesson on how the clearest statement of the problem is not sufficient to obviate it when the troublesome concept is not completely replaced by an event based orientation.

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Cheiron International Society for the History of the Behavioral and Social Sciences will meet April 29-May 2, 1971 in New York City. Several interbehavioralists usually attend (see Numbers 2 and 3). For information write Dr. Barbara Ross, University of Massachusetts, 100 Arlington Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

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At the 1970 APA meeting Jerry Carter received from The Division of Community Service a Distinguished Service Award for a "lifetime of significant contributions to community mental health and community psychology" and from The Division of Psychologists in Public Service the Hildreth Memorial Award. In the May Number we reported an award to him by The Division of Clinical Psychology.

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The continuing tenacity of the brain dogma is illustrated by some current material. Behavior Today, July 20, 1970 reports that Charles Burkland, a neurosurgeon at the Omaha VA Hospital, found that nine of twelve patients having hemispherectomies were able immediately after the operation to perform movements with the side of the body supposedly controlled by the excised hemisphere. But rather than abandon the old dogma he proposes that such movements must originate in the lower brain rather than the cortex. At the editor's institution a circular describing a new graduate seminar in biology called The Neural Basis of Behavior reads: "Many biologists have become convinced that we are on the verge of a revolution in the understanding of neurophysiology as it relates to behavior. In this seminar students will examine the conceptual basis for the coming revolution by reading and critically discussing some of the classic papers in neurophysiology. Later in the semester each student will present a report on the status of a currently hot topic of research. Some of the topics to be studied: perception, learning and memory, electrical stimulation of the brain, attention, sleep, pharmacological effects on behavior." In the Psychological Review, November 1970, Bindra takes Sperry to task for the dualism in the latter's paper of 1969 "A modified concept of consciousness." Unfortunately, Bindra gets as entangled in mentalistic constructs and neurological surrogates as Sperry. Sperry rebuts by disclaiming epiphenomenalism, double aspect, inner aspect of cerebral process, parallelism, and other traditional mentalistic approaches; but the basic dualistic entities and processes and their neural bases remain unchanged in that his theory relies these disclaimers. At this rate the imminent revolution is still an infinity away.

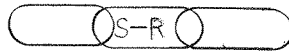
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The spooks are now heavily funded. August 31 Behavior Today reports that Howard Shevrin received a grant of \$157,900 from NIMH to study the unconscious. It is measured by fluctuations in electrical activity of the brain during visual discrimination tasks.

In the Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences, July 1969, 5, 326-339, Thornton published a critical review of the chapter on Socrates in Volume 1 of Kantor's THE SCIENTIFIC EVOLUTION OF PSYCHOLOGY. Mountjoy and Smith have written a reply that will appear in 1971, probably April or July, along with Thornton's rebuttal if he chooses to provide one. Russell and Winograd have replied in Science, September 1970 to Lowry's review of Volume 2 (see August Newsletter). A point in common with the reply of Mountjoy and Smith is a correction of the assumption that interbehaviorism is identical with Watsonian behaviorism.

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Feature articles in this number consist of a reaction to the excerpt from Handy's new book presented in the last number and a list of selected readings in interbehavioral psychology as requested earlier. These represent a few of several possible areas. Several features are already lined up for issues next year including a critique on intellectual "deficiency" by Marion White McPherson and a defense of the interbehavioral position by Jacqueline Farrington.



INTERACTION: TRANSACTION: WHICH?

In the excerpt from the new book of Professor Rollo Handy in the last number of the Newsletter, the author avers that while Dewey and Bentley* differentiate sharply between transactional and interactional interpretations of events there is a strong family resemblance between Kantor's Interaction and their Transaction. Thus Professor Handy joins other writers who have denied the claims of transactionists to have invented a different and superior principle of explicating events.

Are these claims only rhetorical autism? That appears to be the case. Still where there is so much clamor a look-in may be appropriate. Accordingly, we inquire briefly why there is such bombastic and strident emphasis upon the term "transaction" instead of "interaction". If there is a problem here it certainly must be examined upon two levels--a superficial semantic one and a deeper philosophic one. We suspect that this modern homo-homoi issue masks a great divergence between scientific interactions and meta-physical transactions.

Semantics first. As Professor Handy and other writers suggest, when concrete situations are described there is no compulsion to prefer one term to another. Words are seldom used descriptively, mainly they are metaphorical. Those who are attuned to the commercial aspects of our culture--merchants, brokers, fathers and sons of bankers--alert to loans, borrowers, and lenders favor the term "transaction". But those interested in analyzing and describing events and not merely applying names cannot accept favored terms as identical with confronted things and events. Transaction or Interaction? De gustibus.....

Turning next to the deeper philosophical considerations we discover that extremely different postulates underly the different usages. The transactionists draw their intellectual sustenance from the bottomless well of Hegelian objective idealism, in which actor and thing acted upon, the knower and the known, are interfused in one gigantic spiritual cosmochaos. For them nature is only knowledge of nature, and in all situations naming is identical with the named.

*Knowing and the Known, Boston, Beacon Press, 1949.

To cozen themselves and their readers the metaphysical transactionists loudly proclaim that the names or the events, hunter, hunted, and the hunting do not exist in isolation but in a system. What need to blast the man of straw who disagrees? Though Johnny may not know how to read, he does know that "borrower cannot borrow without a lender to lend, nor lender lend without borrower to borrow." He knows, too, that no transaction creates the interactors who by their actions engender the transaction. Moreover, he is quite aware that the borrower is not the lender but usually the victim of an exaction interaction. If ever the roles are reversed it is not because the actors were identical to begin with but rather because two separate and distinct people enter into an economic game in its various phases. No great acumen is required to see that there is no connection between any concrete transaction and any metaphysical transactionism, and no acumen is needed to conclude that the writings aimed at making such connections are gossamer spun to support the vast concrete universal.

Since it appears probable that of the Dewey-Bentley couple it is the latter who is mainly responsible for the great emphasis upon the power of words and their identity with knowledge and with things it is instructive to exemplify his mentalistic dialectic that is the basis of transactionism.

"We return to a status of the world in the mind, yet mind in the world. We solve it by symbiotaxis. The world is in the mind socially taken as action (symbiotaxis). The symbiotaxium constructs the world-knowledge--i.e., it 'is' that world. The world (knowledge) includes mind (mind as psychological technique)."*

In complete contrast to such transactionism the interactional viewpoint stands firmly upon a scientific philosophy. That is to say, all premises are exclusively derived from descriptive and analytic confrontations with actual events. Specifically in psychology the term "interaction" is employed as a synonym for the interbehavior of organisms with other organisms, or things and conditions with which they come into contact. The interbehavioral scientist is completely justified in investigating the components of interacting fields since they also interact with many other different things in other behavioral fields. Moreover, he may study how he himself fits into the different behavior fields and how he influences the various entire fields. The only "metaphysics" of the interbehavioral scientist consists of the demand that he rid himself of all assumptions derived from autistic constructions, instead of from interbehavioral observations. }

A. Mitsorg

*Inquiry into Inquiries, Boston, Beacon Press, 1954, p.25!

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