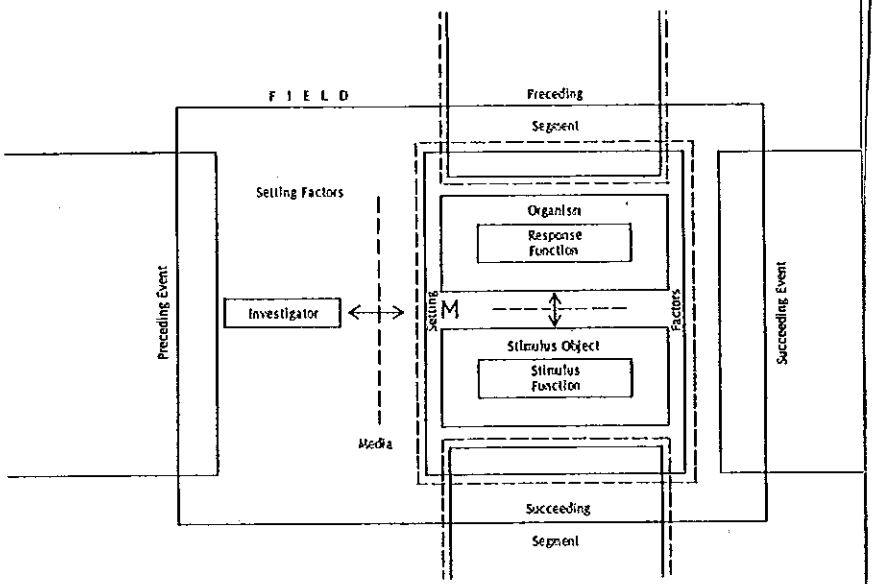
THE Interbehaviorist



A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF INTERBEHAVIORAL PSYCHOLOGY

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As the interbehavioral approach attempts to show, biological factors are always involved in organismic activities, but they (a) are not separate from behavior, (b) are not antecedent of behavior, (c) do not cause behavior, (d) do not manufacture psychological events, and (e) are not the underlying bases of behavior.

Dennis Delprato, 1979. The interbehavioral alternative to brain-dogma. Psychological Record, Volume 29, p. 416.

THE INTERBEHAVIORIST

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The Agora

In Volume 31, Number 1 (Winter 1981) of The Psychological Record, an article appeared by D. A. Boswell entitled "Metaphor and Observation in Science". It is highly critical of Kantorian interbehaviorism's claim that "mind" and "consciousness" are useless and dangerous metaphors. I urge readers who missed it to find the issue or request a reprint from D. A. Boswell, Department of Psychology, Western University, Middletown, CT. 06457. The editor is currently drafting a reply, hopefully for publication in the Record. I would be most interested in the reactions of other readers, and would be happy to include them in the next issue of The Interbehaviorist.

* * *

With this issue, we conclude the tenth volume of our quarterly newsletter of interbehavioral psychology. Enclosed is a subscription form for Volume 11, the first issue of which will appear at the end of the summer. I would be happy to publish your reactions not only to the Boswell article mentioned above, but also to MacRoberts' provocative comments (and my reply) in Volume 10, Number 3.

* * *

Dennis Delprato prefaces the following contribution with:

> Readers of The Interbehaviorist may find...of interest... (Roy) Shafer's attempt to radically revise Freudian Metapsychology. I think that his work is consistent with your (the editor's) comments in the most recent issue (Volume 10, Number 2) concerning your reflections on the APA convention.

* * *

Some Notes on Roy Schafer's Revolutionary Alternative to Freudian Metapsychology

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Picture a psychoanalysis without force, energy, cathexis, function, structure, self, motive, drive, an unconscious, an id, an ego, a superego, libidinal energy, mental places, emotion entities, causes; a psychoanalysis in which the individual does not "have" feelings or impulses or dispositions or habits or symptoms or sublimation; a psychoanalysis that does not speak of psychological depth, impulses that underlie actions, discharge or depletion of pent-up or displaced energy or cathexis. According to this psychoanalysis, we do not speak of "a" wish as an active or propulsive entity or force; nor do we say that anyone "has" a wish; we do not speak of "a" motive, "the" motive, "having" or "lacking" a motive, strong motivation, or motivational hierarchies. When speaking of the historical factors that are considered relevant to a psychological event, this psychoanalysis does not designate them the "causes" of the agent's action. This psychoanalysis tells us it is wrong to say that a person seems to be saying one thing and is "really" saying another. This psychoanalysis leads us to maintain "it is not necessary to assume that an action, in the sense of whatever is carried out behaviorally, spoken, or thought, must have been prepared by some immediately preceding mental activity that sets the stage for that action" (Schafer, 1976, p. 225). In the framework of this psychoanalysis, "we may say that people just do what they do and ...we need not qualify this statement with suggestions of prior reflective activity" (Schafer, 1976, p. 233).

And picture this: "We need not assume that each action must be triggered by something. We view actions historically; that is, as following one another in a sequence that is intelligible in a number of related ways; the sequence is more than a chaotic chronicle whose only organizing principle is the passage of time. In this respect psychoanalysis is an historical approach to lives...But historical background is not to be confused with the ideas of preparatory phases of thought and causal motives that somehow precede, underlie, trigger, and guide action." (Schafer, 1976, p. 232).

Since emotion is not an entity, it is wrong to speak of "the expression of emotion." One does not put feelings or emotions into words, for "to say that one is putting a feeling into words is to imply, what is no longer admissible, both that there is an independently existing emotion-entity and that this entity remains unchanged by being verbalized; that is to say, it is to imply that an emotion is what it is apart from the action by which we bring it into the world, such as naming, choosing words, gesturing, and observing one's actions." (Schafer, 1976, p. 301).

What of the concept experience? Experience is viewed as a construction of the individual.

"What the analysand reports introspectively as experience may be interpreted as one of his or her ways of saying something about what has been encountered in the world or in the body or what one has thought up. But, strictly speaking, that report in itself cannot be taken to show that anything is really the case in the sense that there is some final, unanalyzable, undescribable account of reality being reached through inspection of experiential reports...The inner world of experience is a kind of telling, not a kind of place." (Schafer, 1978, p. 197).

Furthermore, "one cannot make a good case for retaining the idea that there exists some kind of subjective experience (as of emotion) which as experience remains privileged...Once all...features have been specified, the notion of a purely private, experiential remainder becomes superfluous..."(Schafer, 1976, p. 308).

The above summarizes some of what psychoanalysis discards, in the view of Roy Schafer, the first Sigmund Freud Memorial Visiting Professor at University College London (1975-76). According to Schafer, the viability of clinical psychoanalysis, an interpretative discipline whose concern it is to construct life histories of human beings, requires radical revision of Freud's nineteenth-century natural science language--his metapsychology. He contends that psychoanalysts speak in the language rejected above because of their acceptance of the mechanistic, cause-effect, reductionistic world view available to Freud. Schafer's rejection of metapsychology and his alternative--action language--have been influenced by writing such as that of Ryle (1949) and Wittgenstein (1934-35, 1945-49). Those psychologists seeking to move psychology away from the dualistic perspective that is so deeply rooted in our culture should find Schafer's writing extremely useful. It is the present writer's view that Schafer's alternative is compatible with the philosophical positions of several other revolutionary (contemporary) alternatives to traditional psychology. Some of the labels that have been applied to those alternatives include: interbehaviorism (Kantor), radical behaviorism (Skinner), radical phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty), behavioral epigenesis (Kuo), and dialectical psychology (Riegel). I further contend that Schafer's psychoanalysis of action (his alternative to Freud's metapsychology) will make important contributions toward the eventual acceptance of a truly scientific psychology. Readers can use the above summary of what Schafer negates in psychoanalysis to partially evaluate this claim; his positive contributions should be of further assistance in this regard. I will mention some of these.

The central concept in Schafer's alternative is action:

"We shall regard all psychological processes, events, phenomena or behavior as some kind of activity, henceforth to be called action, and shall designate each action by an active verb stating its nature and by an adverb, when applicable, stating the mode of this action."

This rule entails that, so far as it is possible to do so sensibly, we shall not use nouns and adjectives to refer to psychological processes, events, etc. In this, we should avoid substantive designations of actions as well as adjectival or traitlike designations of modes of action."

"We must understand the word action to include all private psychological activity that can be made public through gesture and speech, such as dreams and the unspoken thoughts of everyday life, as well as all initially public activity, such as ordinary speech and motoric behaviors that has some goal-directed or symbolic properties." (Schafer, 1975,p.44).

Thus, thoughts, wishes, cognition, anxiety, perceptions are actions---thinking, wishing, perhaps expecting, acting anxiously, perceiving, respectively. Thoughts, e.g., are not processes of one kind that initiate action, rather thinking is an organismic activity that may or may not be systematically related to certain other activity, including thinking activity, at particular times. Like the other contemporary perspectives mentioned above, action psychoanalysis does not restrict our analysis to the individual's overt behavior as did naive behaviorism; therefore, it is not behavioristic in the original meaning of behaviorism. Part of the key to not restricting analysis to overt behavior is the reliance on observations from the individual and consideration of the situation (context); note how this is in agreement with the other revolutionary perspectives, especially interbehaviorism, radical behaviorism, and radical phenomenology.

It is not infrequent for an analyst working in the framework of interbehaviorism or radical behaviorism to describe historical and contemporary organism-environment interactions contributing to an event, then be informed that such an account is interesting but, unfortunately, that it is "mere description" not an explanation. Action psychoanalysis aims at thorough description. Schafer (1976) discusses how Freud's mechanistic perspective, which holds that legitimate scientific explanation requires causal forces, led him to consider his account of depression in terms of action as a mere description. Schafer suggests that depression is a matter of how individuals interact with aspects of their life circumstances.

Does conflict refer to internal conflicting impulses, drives, or cognitions? Schafer suggests that conflict is a matter of an individual acting in a conflicted manner or conflictually, e.g., going to the theatre may be about as attractive as studying.

For some years behavioral therapists have been confused by the frequent failures to find correlations between what are often considered to be different "measures of anxiety," e.g., heart rate and motor avoidance behavior. The notion that such measures would correlate assumes that heart rate and avoidance behavior are reflections or manifestations of a state of anxiety that is logically distinct from and antecedent to actions. Once anxiety is recognized as a

term descriptive of activity, not a motive or drive, such findings are not surprising.

The interactional or transactional nature of Schafer's alternative is very clear in the suggestion that "we cannot absolutely separate the definition of a situation and the definition of a reaction to it, for the two are correlative" (1976, p. 231).

Radical behaviorists, especially, will be glad to hear that thinking and speaking are rule-following performances.

Finally, self-control is to follow a course of action. "Self-control is a way of acting, however dramatized the subjective narrative of this way of acting may be" (1978, p. 102). Since self-control is not an internal process separate from acting, to lose self-control or to fail to exercise self-control is to act differently from when self-control is exercised.

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The feature article of the December 1980 issue of the American Psychologist was the Presidential Address by Florence L. Denmark, delivered at the 1980 APA Convention in Montreal. Entitled "Psyche: From Rocking the Cradle to Rocking the Boat," in contains some statements about the origins of the term "psyche" that are historically inaccurate and perpetuate the belief that psychology's origins are steeped in dualism. Here is Noel Smith's reply to Denmark's paper:

Corrections on Use of "Psyche"

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In Denmark's (1980) recent article on "Psyche" in the American Psychologist she begins with historical accounts of that term that are incorrect. She states:

> ...psyche is derived from the Greek, in which it originally signified the soul, the spirit, and the source of all vitality (p. 1057).

The earliest written source for the use of psyche is in Homer. He uses it to refer to the last gasp of breath (e.g., Odyssey, Chp. 5, l. 468) much as we use expire, meaning to breathe out and to die; in the course of succeeding centuries it came to have an affective meaning and was finally used in a systematic way by Aristotle (Smith,1974). In De Anima 412a, 28-29, Aristotle defines psyche (translated as "soul") as "the first grade of actuality of a natural body having life potentially in it." That is, it is the actualization of the organism's fundamental potentiality of actions. Aristotle provides the analogy that "psyche" is to "soma" as cutting is to the ax: it is what the organism does. It is the life-function of the organism and is similar to what we would call "behavior" but more encompassing, for it includes nutritive and locomotive acts. It also involves such covert behaviors as perceiving, thinking, dreaming, imagining, knowing, and others. These are all life-functions of the organism. This is decidedly not a mind-body dualism nor a putting together of mind and body, for there is no such distinction to start with. Aristotle's analysis of psychological events is one of a thoroughgoing organism-environment relationship and continuity. It is the potential of the organism to see, think, or recollect together with the potential of the object to be seen, thought about, or recollected. The joint actualization of these potentials constitutes the acts of seeing, thinking, or recollecting (Kantor, 1963 ; Randall, 1960; Shute, 1941/1964; Smith, 1971, 1974). The psychological event then is not inside the organism, or in a mind acting upon or directing the body, but in the interaction of the organism and its environment. This is in direct contradiction to Denmark's next sentence:

> Psychology, which began as the study of the mind detached from physical nature, has come to recognize the interrelationship between the intangible and the material aspects of human life (p. 1057).

This distinction between natural and supernatural, physical and nonphysical, material and immaterial, soul and body, and in modern form behavior and cognition or behavior and consciousness developed in the chaotic and insecure times of the Graeco-Roman period, not in the Homeric or Hellenic periods (Case, 1946; Kantor, 1963; Murray, 1955; Rostovtseff, 1957). Following the Graeco-Roman developments it became a part of the theology and the cultural heritage of the West and eventually entered into psychology as the psycho-physical dualism that Denmark attributes to the Greeks and to the original meaning of "psyche".

Perhaps we could take a clue from the Classical Greeks and rather than struggle with "an attempt to integrate" mind and body, as Denmark indicates we are doing, we could question the assumption about such a distinction. Perhaps also in the mode of the Greeks we could fruitfully examine concrete organism-object interactions rather than putative metaphysical relationships of mind and body. This would provide us with an alternative to traditional arguments stemming from Graeco-Roman mysticism about whether we are shaped by an external world or directed by an internal

one; whether there is a double world, an objective one outside and a subjective one inside; and whether mind can be integrated with body. These puzzles are artifacts of historical invention, not data...and not a mode of Greek thinking.

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