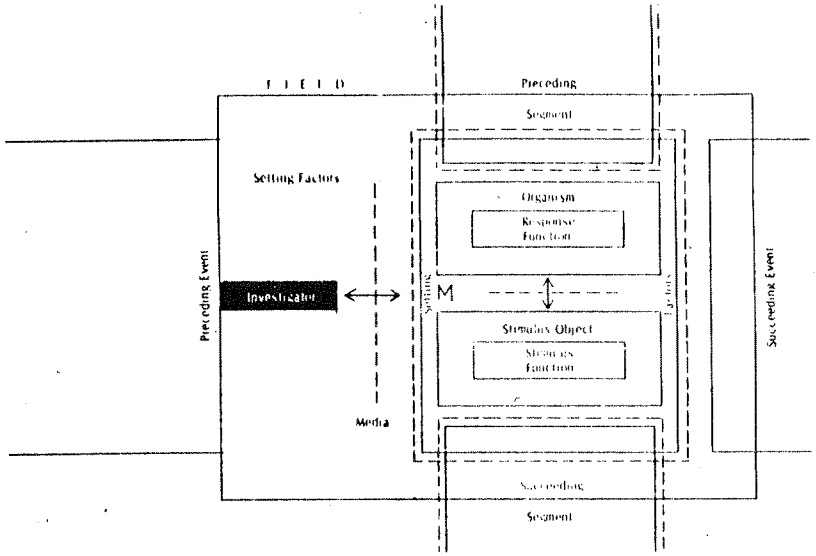
THE Interbehaviorist



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For there is no self-evidence to the proposition that the mental is the unobservable. In a perfectly valid sense, I can be said to observe another man's anger, sadness, his eagerness to please, his sense of his own dignity, uncertainty, love for a girl or whatever. I can find out these things about another sometimes by just observing him in the common sense of that term, sometimes by listening to what he says. But, in this latter case, I am not learning of some dubious and uncheckable "introspection" on his part. For what people say about themselves is never in principle and rarely in practice uncheckable.

C. Taylor, 1964. The Explanation of Behavior, Routledge and Kegan-Paul, p. 61-2.

THE INTERBEHAVIORIST

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The Agora

The June 8, 1979 issue of Science included a book review by R.C.Bolles of both volumes of Skinner's autobiography. The review contained a reference to Skinner's association with Kantor at Indiana University:

> Most scholars delight in a meeting of minds, but not Skinner. The historically inclined reader is going to be distressed that Skinner is so reluctant to acknowledge the existence of kindred souls. Indeed, he goes to some pains to prove the insularity of his work and his ideas....there is Skinner's colleague at Indiana, J.R.Kantor, who is treated cordially enough but very briefly. Are we really supposed to believe that Skinner learned nothing or gained nothing from this man who shared so many of his views about a purely behavioral behaviorism?

Regarding Skinner's apparent belief in the insularity of his work, the editor has a postscript. A Kenyon colleague and I are conducting a survey of "eminent psychologists" (defined by their appearance on the Endler et al "Most-Cited" list, American Psychologist, December 1978) in order to determine what books and articles have influenced their work. Whereas most of the respondents have submitted rather long lists, Skinner mentioned only two books--Watson's Behaviorism and Bertrand Russell's Philosophy--and he went on to say that even these books did not have much effect upon his life as a psychologist.

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Henry Pronko has informed me that Psychology from the Standpoint of an Interbehaviorist will appear in the fall of 1980, in time for adoption the following spring. Most graciously, he has promised a complimentary copy of the book to all subscribers to The Interbehaviorist. This is an incentive to renew your subscription: a form for Volume 10 will be included with the final issue of Volume 9, which will appear in March.

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At the top of the next page is an abstract of Noel Smith's 94-page annotated bibliography of citations to Kantor's works. Copies of the bibliography are available to those who want them.

Citations that excluded self-citations were collected to the works of J.R. Kantor for the 60 year period of 1918-1976 from books and journal articles. The 526 citations are presented alphabetically by author along with annotations to the characteristics of the citations. The works referred to in each citation are keyed to Kantor's bibliography. The citations are as complete as a nine-year search could make possible--probably about 95% for journals and perhaps 80% for books. The annotations provide information about reactions to interbehaviorism and to its supporters and detractors and supply a data base for analyses. A brief description of the interbehavioral field system and of the procedure precedes the list.

* * *

Noel Smith also responded to the editor's statement in the Spring 1979 issue that interbehaviorism is "appreciative of the organism's awesome complexity":

> The reference to "the organism's awesome complexity" is slightly misleading from an interbehavioral framework, for it is not the organism itself that is the focus but quite explicitly the total field of which the organism is but one part. The interaction of organism with stimulus objects having stimulus functions occurring in a setting and as part of a developing history of interactions together constitute the psychological event. The repudiation of mere responses to stimuli--organocentrism--is a cornerstone of interbehaviorism. The biological complexity of the organism is an inseparable part of the interaction but so is the complexity of past interactions including the development of stimulus functions of stimulus objects and corresponding response functions of the organism together with setting factors and, in the case of direct contact with stimulus objects, media of contact.

* * *

Dennis Delprato provided the following overviews of two papers that are supportive of an interbehavioral psychology:

I.

Kantor's position on the role biological factors play in behavior is nicely supported by a study of Dodrill, MacFarlane, and Boyd (Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 1974, 42, 251-255). As a result of their research, the authors rejected the common hypothesis that intrauterine infection of the rubella virus (German measles) is associated with deficits in intelligence behavior as a result of physical effects on the internal intellectual apparatus. Kantor, of course, holds that biological conditions are participating factors in behavior that, when "abnormal," are related to behavioral difficulties to the extent that they preclude the individual from "being the kind of a biological organism that can come into contact with stimulus objects and acquire reactions toward them" (Pronko, 1973, p. 204). Dodrill et al. conclude as follows:

> "...this study has shown that children with a history of intrauterine rubella infection who have the important sensory modality of vision remaining are not retarded, but rather have average intelligence. Physical symptoms seem important primarily as they close off important sources of information to the developing child. The suggestion, then, is that the clinical picture commonly seen as one of retardation is not produced by the physical damage of the rubella virus per se, but rather by the secondary effects of such damage that limit psychological development and expression. If this is true, then we may repudiate the notion that rubella results in inevitable mental retardation...."
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> (p. 254)

II.

Fischer, in a paper entitled "Contextual Approach to Assessment," (Community Mental Health Journal, 1973, 9, 38-46) discusses "an alternative to reductive psychodynamic assessment" that contains several interbehavioral features. For example, she points out that what has been referred to as "psychopathological" is not in the person, but between the person and his milieu; thus, assessment cannot consist of an attempt to identify some pathological state within the person. Fischer offers a model of assessment that "is based on the principle that behavior occurs within specific contexts [interbehavioral fields, setting events]." Techniques of assessment include firsthand observation of the individual's interactions with events, including consideration of the person's interactions with his or her society's institutions. Fischer considers that she comes from a phenomenological perspective; her paper is another example of why interbehaviorists are perhaps not well advised to summarily reject all of what flies under the phenomenological banner.

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Dennis Delprato also provided abstracts of three interbehaviorally-oriented papers he has written, all of which are scheduled to appear within the next year:

Delprato, D.J. The reactional biography concept: early contribution to a perspective for the psychology of aging. Human Development, in press.

This paper reviews J. R. Kantor's reactional biography concept in the context of published literature in the psychology of aging. The reactional biography concept is based on an organismic perspective which emphasizes the holistic nature of psychological behavior and the role of organism-environment interactions in psychological development, and it depicts a relationship between the biological and psychological life curves of the individual. Kantor's perspective is seen to be compatible with recent

views and empirical findings in the psychology of aging such as the results of investigations of the relationship between different components of intelligence and age, the diminishing emphasis on biologically based age models, increasing recognition of organism-environment interactions, and behavioral plasticity in old age.

Delprato, D.J. Hereditary determinants of fears and phobias: a critical review. Behavior Therapy, in press.

Although behavioral therapy was founded on the assumption that problematic behaviors are learned during the life history of the individual, there is currently a strong tendency to minimize or to rule out altogether the "learning-conditioning" analysis of fears and phobias in favor of an emphasis on hereditary factors. This paper examined several research findings that have been presented as consistent with the assumption that fears and phobias are more dependent upon inherited predispositions than upon organisms' individual learning histories. Research areas covered included allegations of failures to replicate Watson and Rayner's (1920) influential fear conditioning study, taste aversion learning phenomena, human conditioning experiments with phobic and nonphobic preaversive stimuli, research on the topography of avoidance responses, and the "hawk-goose" effect with birds. The main conclusion was that, although the learning-conditioning approach is inadequate, no body of research conclusively supports the evolutionary hypothesis. It was suggested that attempts to fit the ontogeny of fear into the traditional "innate versus learned" framework have hampered identification of developmental factors underlying fear behavior that go beyond concepts of heredity and learning.

Delprato, D.J. The interbehavioral alternative to brain dogma. Psychological Record, in press.

Physiological reductionism as exhibited in allegations that the brain causes behavior (brain-dogma) is viewed from the interbehavioral perspective. Explicit and subtle forms of brain-dogma are identified in contemporary versions of mentalism, cognitivism, and behaviorism. The interbehavioral approach provides an alternative to brain-dogma in the form of a holistic view of behavior which recognizes that neural processes cannot be separated from behavior (dualism) but instead are integral, participating factors in all psychological behavior. An emphasis on organism-environment interactions and the interbehavioral field conception rules out classical mechanical, cause-effect, deterministic versions of causation which underlie brain-dogma. A variety of other viewpoints that are compatible with the interbehavioral approach are briefly reviewed.

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> It is the adequacy of the response which in immediate experience determines the reality of the stimulation. Things are not real as seen or heard or smelled; they are real as actually or potentially experienced through contact....The response is functionally the reality of the stimulation, the end of the act the reality of its beginning. The stimulation implies the response.
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> G. H. Mead, approximately 1910. "The Process of Mind in Nature." In A. Strauss (Ed.), George Herbert Mead on Social Psychology. U. of Chicago Press, 1964, p. 92-3.

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