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THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF MIND IN BEHAVIORISM

By REVEREND WARREN J. BARKER, S.J.

NEW ORLEANS, LA.

(Conclusion)

Despite all the technical scientific language with which Watson has veneered his mechanical explanation of man's actions the common-sense man fails to be impressed. Wonderful indeed, but we may ask where is the logic which he claims as the tool of the behaviorist. Our respect for Dr. Watson as a man of science is waning. He has mistaken the mere instrument, the mere operation for the cause itself—he has explained the mechanics, the function, but he has ignored the man behind the guns. At best this hypothesis only explains the apparatus the intellect uses in controlling the external bodily movements, and leaves as shrouded in mystery as ever the nature of the operator. The very control that it exercises on the bodily organs remains as yet the unknown X. An impulse coming from the will in man and by which the system of arcs and paths is set in motion is something altogether different from an impulse coming from without. It is a well known fact that muscle tired out by external stimulation and no longer responding to such a stimulus will in the same condition respond to an impulse from the will. The impulses from the will and the impulse from without are by no means identical though

both use the same system of arcs and paths.

Dr. Watson's mechanical and neural explanation of mind differs in few respects from that offered by Prof. Mandalay, and other materialistic and radical philosophers. But where he agrees, there he diverges. Where they postulate the occurrence of such reflexes in a conscious subject, our behaviorist denies to the subject even the knowledge and perception of its own actions. The Behaviorist finds no consciousness "in his laboratories, none in his subjects," and concludes that therefore it is non-existent. "All schools of psychology", says Dr. Watson, "except that of Behaviorism claim that 'Consciousness' is the subject matter of psychology. Behaviorism, on the contrary, claims that 'consciousness' is neither a definable nor usable concept." "This thing we call consciousness can be analyzed only by introspection—a looking in on what goes on inside of us. In 1912 the Behaviorists reached the conclusion that they could no longer be content to work with intangibles and unapproachables." Denial of the validity of introspection has thus rendered Behaviorism the unscientific muddle that it is, and in this denial we find the

key to the whole of behavioristic psychology.

Dr. Watson claims it unscientific to admit of introspection in his system; we hold it unpsychological to deny it. A real psychology is built not merely upon either the subjective or objective method of observation alone, but a harmony of both. Neither can we admit with Watson that introspection is either illogical or unscientific. Far more unscientific it is to build a psychology totally ignoring facts which are evident to all but those blinded by prejudice or ignorance. Dr. Watson's motive or intention in closing his eyes to facts obtruded upon his vision at every turn of his work is neither our business or desire to judge.

Consciousness is the most obtrusive fact in the world, and we may define it as "that reflex operation (not in the behavioristic sense) by which the mind attends to itself and recognizes its actions as its own." Take a concrete, objective example, as this is more in the behavioristic line, of a man asleep and a man awake. The one is neither aware of those walking about him, nor of his actions when someone tickles his toe or touches his upper lip, while the other will do a round of golf and return to the office to tell of *his* wonderful progress in the game. Where lies the difference? The answer is evident. Is this logic to deny, therefore, the existence of a thing that cannot be placed in a test tube, but whose existence is as patent to

every real observer of human behavior as the crawling and crying of the infant? It is common sense, as well as philosophical, to postulate a cause for that observable and objective phenomenon of man's awareness of his own action so continually expressed by the pronoun, *I*. Would Dr. Watson have us delete this part of speech from our vocabulary? Hardly, for he is constantly using it himself. In his usual illogical way he denies consciousness in one breath and admits it in another. He is quite aware that it was J. B. Watson who stood watching white rats in his laboratory in 1903 from which observance he formulated his psychology. He is certainly conscious that he is the author of *Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist*, for he again and again speaks of "*my*" book. Is consciousness definable or usable? Let Dr. Watson be struck by a flying brick and he'll quickly know the distinction between consciousness and unconsciousness.

Once again we must approach the behavioristic fold of errors and draw forth another and equally astounding fallacy sheared of its scientific wool. It is in this the Behaviorist differs from his psychological predecessors who tried to elevate the beast to the level of man by attributing intelligence to it. Dr. Watson lowers man to the level of the beast by denying intelligence to him. Between the pink-eyed progeny of the white rat and the pink-bodied

offspring of the human species Dr. Watson sees no distinction. Both breathe, both cry, both require nourishment, and so on. In his illogical and unphilosophical "reasoning" he has failed to see in this squirming and ugly little human form a potentiality that raises it completely above its kindred species—potentiality for intelligence.

Just what do we mean by "intelligence" is a likely question of the behaviorists who claim that psychologists of our type use this and similar words uncritically and unscientifically, ignorant of their meanings. Again we will be considered old-fashioned if we define our terms—for "definitions are not as popular today as they used to be" claims Dr. Watson. None the less if old-fashioned is a synonym for logical and orderly procedure we will risk the epithet. No better definition of "intelligence" can be found than in the words of our noted etymologist, Dr. Wassman:

"According to the etymological meaning of the term, and the concept hitherto attached to it by the scientific psychologists of all ages, intelligence—intellect, understanding—exclusively signifies the power of perceiving the relations of concepts to one another, and of drawing conclusions therefrom. It essentially includes the power of abstraction, the faculty of collecting from a number of single representations that which they all have in common, and thereby, of forming general concepts. It includes furthermore a deliberate power which recognizes the relation between means and end, between a subject and its actions, and, consequently, endows the intelligent being with self-consciousness

and rational, free activity."—(*Instinct and Intelligence.*)

It is clear from the definition that intelligence must be accorded man but cannot be the product of any organized or mechanical operation. It denotes then the presence of a supra-sensuous, supra-organic faculty, to which the scholastics have applied the name "Intellect". A simple process of reasoning from effect back to a similar cause, acceptable even to the most unphilosophic.

For a better understanding and proof of our major premise that man possesses and manifests intelligence we must appeal both to each one's own internal experience, and—what is more in accord with Watsonian logic—to the objective observation of man's behavior.

Man forms intellectual ideas, the objects of which are in nowise material beings. He may represent intellectually a mathematical point which has no dimensions whatever; but he cannot imagine a mathematical point. To imagine what we call a point on the blackboard is not to imagine a mathematical point, but to imagine a comparatively big lump of chalk which has three dimensions and a definite color, while the intellectual idea of a mathematical point precisely ignores all dimensions and colors.

Abstract numbers, for example the number 3, can be intellectually grasped, but cannot be imagined. Our imagination may represent the written symbol 3, or the

spoken word "three", or three material objects, as three dogs; but we cannot imagine the abstract number three as applicable as well to three dogs as to three houses, three men, three inches, three acts of kindness, etc. But our intellect is capable of such an idea, and there is nothing hazy about this idea; it is absolutely defined and remains unchanged whether it be applied to dogs, men, houses, or anything else whatever. Again we form ideas like those of morality, unity, relation, predicate, dependence, causality, and millions of other abstract objects of thought, not to forget "being as such", the top-notch of mental abstraction.

Explain all this, if you will, by mere neural and glandular reactions. Call thought mere speaking to oneself, it only renders it more unsolvable, more mysterious, more hypothetical, and ridiculously absurd. What would become of physics, chemistry, physiology, etc., were it not for the abstract universal idea upon which every science is founded? Universals are not gotten by mechanical reflexes of nerves. A universal is an abstraction of an immaterial faculty. When we employ the terms man, triangle, iron, or whale, we express that which has a particular connection, and is applied to a whole group of individuals — a universal nature common to all, distinguishing one species from another. When we say "man is an animal", "the sum of the angles of a triangle is equal

to two right angles", we mean not this man, nor this triangle, but the universal idea of man and triangle which can be predicated of all men and all triangles.

Organs can represent solely the concrete material phenomenon, and are aroused only by the impression of the object on the organ. The intellectual act, whether it manifests itself in the shape of the universal concept, of attention to abstract relations, or in the apprehension of necessity, does not represent an actual concrete fact, and is not evoked by the action of a material stimulus. An organic faculty can only represent individual concrete objects. But universal ideas, abstract intellectual relations, and the necessity of axiomatic truths do not possess actual concrete existences, and so cannot produce an impression on any organ. Yet it is evident that such are apprehended by us. Consequently it must be by some supra-organic or spiritual faculty. Thus it stands proved that man possesses a spiritual faculty, called the Intellect.

In asserting that the intellect is a spiritual faculty, we do not, of course, imply that it is in no way dependent on the organism, any more than in maintaining the freedom of the will we suppose this latter faculty to be uninfluenced by sensitive appetites. It is indisputable that exhaustion of brain power accompanies the work of thinking but the fact that the exercise of imagination or of external sense forms a necessary

condition of intellectual activity, accounts for such consumption of cerebral energy. Although intellect is a spiritual faculty of the mind, it presupposes, so long as the soul informs the body, the stimulation of the organic faculty of sense. This the scholastics have expressed by saying that intellectual activity depends extrinsically on the organic faculties. The universal concept, the intellectual judgment, the act of reflection, are not, like sensation, the results of the stimulation of a sense organ, but products of purely spiritual action.

Dr. Watson foresaw such a stumbling block to his behavioristic psychology, and endeavored to answer it in his own naive way.

"I hear you exclaim, 'Why yes, it is worth while to study human behavior in this way, but the study of behavior is not the whole of psychology. It leaves out too much. Don't I have sensations, perceptions, conceptions? Can I not be attentive or inattentive? Can I not will to do a thing or will not to do it, as the case may be? Do not certain things arouse pleasure in me, and others displeasure? Behaviorism is trying to rob us of everything we have believed in since childhood.' Having been brought up on introspective psychology," he adds, "as most of you have, these questions are perfectly natural, and you will find it hard to put away this terminology, and begin to formulate your psychological life in terms of behaviorism. Behaviorism is new wine and it will not go into old bottles. Let me hasten to add that if I were to ask you to tell me what you mean by the terms which you have been in the habit of using I could soon make you tongue-tied with contradictions. I believe I could even convince you that you do not know what you

mean. You have been using them uncritically as a part of your social and literary tradition."

It is scarcely believable that the common-sense man would allow dust to be thrown in his eyes so openly, but the trouble is that with man's bid for freedom of thought common sense has been relegated to the past. I rather think that it is Dr. Watson who would be tongue-tied if we should question him further on man's psychical life. His marvelous experiments upon babies and animals have taught us nothing new. There still remains that great chasm between man's physical and psychological actions. Watson has tried to bridge it by ignoring it, by turning his back upon it, but it still remains there the same. He has slashed the words "sensation", "image", "intelligence", "free will", and the like from his vocabulary and his text, and with them he has torn the very heart out of his psychology.

We have thus far touched upon but two of the great errors in Watsonian pseudo-psychology, and unfortunately space does not allow us more. Denial of consciousness and intellect, however, are two of the foundation stones upon which he has built his system; remove these, and his system topples. We have merely indicated our refutation, considering such sufficient to the common-sense man who may have been disturbed by the apparent logic in Dr. Watson's reasoning. From the proof of the spiritual intellect

and of consciousness adduced above, it is an easy step to a refutation of his other grave errors, denial of God, of the soul, of free will, and of moral standards. The astounded reader may ask if it is possible that the Behaviorists are sincere in their bid for scientific psychology, denying truths that even the most ignorant and most biased hesitate to call in question. Hardly; either we must attribute it to an exceptional mania for publicity or innovation or to a desire to reduce all men to their own low morality. Upon the principles of no God and no intellect Dr. Watson proposes to build us a new system of Ethics. May he never succeed for there are only too many looking for a system catering to their lower appetites. It does not take a philosopher to foresee and foretell the devastating influence such a system would have; murder, robbery, injustice, rape and all the others of the same category would follow swiftly in its wake. Where would be the respect for authority, for law. It would not be long before America would be in even a worse state than Russia. If he is consistent with his principles there could be no standards, no distinction between right and wrong, no motives to influence our actions, in fact no freedom of choice in the matter of crime. Such doctrines our Behaviorists are teaching to the young generation and its effects are already very much in evidence. May the champions of

truth and morality raise their voice and pens in protest.

THE BEHAVIORIST BABY

Only a baby small
 Dropped from the skies,
 Only a laughing face,
 Two sunny eyes,
 Waiting psychology's
 Touch to attune it;
 Only a wee
 Biological unit.

Sleep, little lilly-bud,
 Guarded from fear
 Mama is watching you,
 Mama is near.
 Smiling so dreamily,
 Tiny and slim you lie.
 What a temptation for
 Trying of stimuli.

What if you're suddenly
 Dropped out of bed?
 What if the pistol shoots
 Back of your head?
 That's for your benefit;
 What mama wants, is
 Just to condition her
 Baby's responses.

Rusbaby, Babykin,
 Why do you cry?
 Why this malevolent
 Gleam in your eye?
 Good gracious! Mercy me!
 See what he did?
 He bit the behaviorist!
 At-a-boy, kid!

—*Morris Bishop.*

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CONTRAST AND ACHIEVEMENT

When the Catholic Hospital Association was formed in 1915, there were in the United States 541 Catholic hospitals; today, there are 682; in Canada there were 90; today, there are 179. In 1915, the combined bed capacity of the Catholic hospitals of the United States including bassinets was 60,300; today, there are 104,150. In 1915, there were in our hospitals in Canada 10,550 beds; today, there are 32,946. In 1915, the average size of the hospital in the United States was 112; today, it is 154. In Canada in 1915, it was 117; today, it is 188. Another way of realizing these changes is to understand the meaning of the fact that between 1915 and 1940, the Catholic hospital field has developed as much as it developed previously between 1823 and 1915. In Canada, the development during these years was even greater.

But still more important than all of this is the fact that in 1915, the Catholic hospitals of the United States and Canada served approximately 925,000 patients each year in their in-patient service; last year, the Catholic hospitals in the two countries cared for approximately 2,400,000 patients. During the period we are discussing, the population of the United States has increased 29% and that of Canada 50%, while the increase in the number of Catholics in the United States during that same period can be reliably estimated to have been 36%, yet the in-patients in our Catholic hospitals increased by 170%, an increase that is approximately five times greater than the increase in the number of Catholics and almost six times greater than the increase in the population.—REV. A. M. SCHWITTALLA, S.J.