

THE STATUS OF PERSONS OR WHO WAS THAT MASKED METAPHOR?

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ABSTRACT

In the present paper, the development of mechanistic metaphors in behavioral science during the past three hundred years is described briefly. The ways in which metaphors can both illuminate and obscure our view of persons and their behavior is discussed. Ossorio's (1969) formulation of a person as an individual whose history is paradigmatically a history of deliberate action is introduced as a substantial departure from attempts to identify the nature of man. A number of the possible effects of having this formulation are proposed and discussed.

Ossorio (1966) has described a person as an individual whose history is paradigmatically a history of deliberate action. This formulation represents a fundamental departure from previous attempts to describe the nature of man. In fact, it does not attempt to say what the nature

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of man is or even to say that man has a nature. In the present paper, I shall discuss this description of persons and the significance it has.

Ossorio (1976) has said that status does not determine what the facts are, but it does determine how the facts count. Thus, the status of persons will determine how the facts about persons will count. This issue is not a trivial matter. The status or place persons are assigned in the world will determine how it is appropriate to treat persons.

THE DEGRADATION OF MAN

The images of man developed over the past 400 years may be viewed as a series of degradations of the status of persons. In his book, *Images of Man in Psychological Research*, Shotter (1975) describes what might be viewed as the degradation of human beings that has occurred during the past three to four hundred years of philosophical and scientific thought. Prior to Copernicus and Galileo, man stood at the center of the universe. The sun and other heavenly bodies rotated around the earth. Man, possessed of an immortal soul and created in the image of God, was the measure of all things. It was man's world in which to act and make things happen, and man stood at the center of the universe (Shotter, 1975).

Therefore, it was a rude shock to learn from Copernicus and Galileo that the world was only a minor planet which rotates around the sun which, in turn, is only one of many suns in solar systems which make up virtually countless galaxies. Hobbes, Descartes and Newton then introduced the notion that man, the world and the universe were like machines in that their motion was determined by forces which could be calculated. Whether out of genuine belief or fear of the inquisition, Descartes and Newton did maintain the concept of a spiritual domain and a spiritual aspect of man (Turbayne, 1970). Thus, in the 17th and 18th century, while man was no longer at the center of the universe, he was still created by and in the image of God and possessed an immortal soul. He was a unique creation.

In 1859, Darwin (Irvine & Irvine, 1956) seemed to dissolve completely the distinction between man and animals so that man came to be viewed by science as simply a complex animal or organism. At the beginning of the 20th century, Freud (1900, 1904) furthered the degradation with the concept that much if not all of the behavior of man is determined by unconscious instinctual forces of physiological origin. Man was, therefore, reduced to the status of an organism with movements determined by mechanisms over which man had little control. It was thought that organisms would also be reduced to an assemblage of

physical particles whose motion was to be determined by the laws of physics (Turbayne, 1970).

This mechanistic and deterministic view of the nature of man seems to be a result of the widespread and rather complete acceptance of the machine metaphor introduced by Descartes. I shall discuss the way in which this metaphor has become so dominant and pervasive, at least in the Western World, that Descartes and Newton, the other major developer of this metaphor, have been described as having established a church more powerful than that founded by Peter and Paul (Turbayne, 1970). First, however, we need to consider how metaphors develop and how they may be useful.

DEVELOPMENT AND USE OF METAPHOR

In the *Myth of Metaphor*, Turbayne has presented an illuminating and worthwhile description of the nature and development of metaphor and the applications of metaphor in the development of science. In fact, one of the ways in which we might characterize the history of science is to describe it as a record of attempts to apply metaphors to objects and processes. Metaphors have also been used by theologians, poets, and philosophers for a variety of purposes. The invention of a metaphor full of illustrative power is the achievement of genius. Many metaphors, including the machine metaphor, have contributed significantly to our understanding of and effectiveness in dealing with the world. As we shall see, however, there is a difference between using a metaphor and being deceived or trapped by a metaphor.

The invention of a metaphor involves representing a set of facts regarding one category of objects or processes as though they belonged to another category. For example, if we say metaphorically that man is a wolf, we are giving men and wolves the same name, but we are also fusing the characteristics of men and wolves and assigning the characteristics of wolves to men. We are aware that men are not literally wolves. There would be no point to speaking of a metaphor if we were not aware of this duality. However, we act as if men are like or at least as if men share some of the characteristics of wolves to illustrate and emphasize some characteristics of men such as being predatory or merciless.

Examples of metaphors used by theologians, poets, and scientists are familiar to most of us. Theologians have used the relationship of father and child as a metaphor for the relation of God and man. Poets speak of sleep taking flight or of stars as mansions. Attributing memory to computers has become such a common phrase that we may be in danger

of losing sight of the fact that characterizing computers in this way is a metaphor.

In general, we can make good use of metaphors without being trapped by them. For example, aeronautical engineers say the airplane crashed because of metal fatigue although they know the metal did not become weary. Poets speak of the cloak of darkness but do not try to unbutton the cloak or use it to keep warm. Again, it should be noted that often metaphor is the work of genius and may serve to illuminate and enrich our understanding of the world.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MACHINE METAPHOR

Turbayne's (1970) analysis of the use of metaphor focuses primarily on the development of the mechanistic metaphor which has come to be viewed not as a metaphor but as scientific truth about the nature of man and the world. This dogma of man and the world being a type of machine is now identified with science. This image or metaphor has also been enthusiastically embraced by most psychologists in their theoretical and empirical endeavors (Shotter, 1975). To question it is to engage in heresy (Turbayne, 1970).

I shall discuss the development and implications of this particular metaphor in some detail. If the mechanical model were simply a preoccupation of scientists or behavioral scientists, perhaps it could be dismissed as the idiosyncratic notions of a priesthood. However, the model has become a central tenet of the entire Western World, and the consequences of this pervasive image of man extend far beyond the domain of science.

Rene Descartes (Turbayne, 1970) is said to have had a dream on the night of November 10, 1619 which enabled him to see that he could describe the earth and generally the whole visible universe as if it were a machine in which there was nothing else to consider except the shape and motion of its parts. Subsequently, Descartes applied the machine metaphor to problems of physics, physiology, and psychology. Descartes viewed the human body as an earthly machine, and relationships like love as movements of animal spirits (Turbayne, 1970).

Newton used calculus and the concepts of attraction and repulsion to explain and calculate the movement of the planets, the motion of the moon, the effect of the moon on the tides, and the acceleration of bodies falling to the earth. The constituent elements of Newton's model were effects such as "bodies at rest" or "bodies in motion" and causes such as "power of going," "resistance," "attraction," "repulsion," and "impressed forces" (Turbayne, 1970). The ultimate goal of these early

model builders was to use the characteristics of machines to represent everything that was knowable in the world.

Newton (Turbayne, 1970) was careful to describe his causes as "manifest qualities" to distinguish them from "occult qualities." However, neither Newton nor any observer who has followed him has ever been able to find or directly observe any sort of force or energy at all. So called physical causes such as gravity, force, attraction, repulsion, energy, and resistance have never been observed by anyone at anytime. They were and are essentially occult forces introduced to account for certain observable events such as the movement of planets or the increased velocity of bodies as they fall toward the earth.

Here, it is worth noting that when primitive societies ascribe powers to clouds, rivers, mountains and rocks, we are amused and dismiss them as superstitious. However, when Descartes, Newton and their scientific heirs ascribe forces to bodies, it seems to make sense as a description of the world (Turbayne, 1970). Yet, both types of forces have the same metaphysical status. They are pure inventions of the person who introduced the metaphor. One set of forces is neither more nor less occult than the other.

One interesting aspect of Turbayne's analysis of metaphor is that we can see that the machine metaphor was itself a result of an even earlier cross-sorting of characteristics in which certain facts regarding persons were represented as facts about *machines* and *their* movements. The causal forces introduced to account for the movement of machines and later the motion of everything else were simple extensions of concepts used in describing persons and their behavior.

Turbayne says, "The machine metaphor is a mixed one using something man made," a machine such as a clock, "and something man did not make," the causal forces such as attraction, repulsion, and so forth which were said to cause the movement of machines (Turbayne, 1970, p. 56). Both aspects of the machine metaphor represent extensions of characteristics of persons to a new type of object, the machine.

More specifically, persons move objects by pushing or pulling them. Persons are the paradigm case of individuals who are attracted to or repulsed by each other. The behavior of persons which is designed to produce a particular result is the paradigm case of a cause-effect relationship. For example, I cause the chalk to go across the room and break by throwing it against the wall. In a monarchy, the king forces his subjects to submit and obey his rule. To say he has power over his subjects is not to say there is some causal factor called force or power. Instead, it is to say something about his position or relationship to his subjects. To say I am resisting going to the grocery store because I would rather watch a football game is not to suggest there is an entity

or force called resistance which prevents me from moving. It is to say something about my reasons for going or not going to the store.

A paraphrased and somewhat simplified version of one of Newton's laws of motion is that a body will move in the direction of an applied force unless another force is operating. This law is a direct extension of and represents a metaphorical use of a far older psychological principle which is that a person will do what the person has a reason to do unless the person has a better reason to do something else (Ossorio, 1976). This principle has been used throughout recorded history in our attempts to understand the behavior of persons. If a person does something we do not expect, we take it that the person must have had some stronger reason for doing the unexpected behavior. In a parallel fashion, the builders of the machine metaphor took it that if an object did not move as expected, there must have been some other force operating and set about devising ways to calculate the effects of those forces even though no one had ever directly observed a force.

The concepts of power, force, resistance, repulsion, attraction, and reasons for acting have been part of the concepts of persons and their behavior for much of recorded history. They predate modern science by several thousand years. They are concepts used by people in interacting with each other, in giving descriptions of themselves and others, and in evaluating their own behavior and the behavior of others. It is not surprising that an early metaphor builder extended familiar concepts to account for the movement of machines or other objects. If I force the rock to move by pushing it, it makes sense to describe the rock as forcing other rocks to move as it rolls down the hill. If we lose track of the original context, it is an easy move to begin to speak of rocks forcing other rocks to move or to speak of planets forcing other planets to move in their respective orbits or to speak of gravity "pulling" objects back to the ground. Thus, objects, as did machines at a later time, begin to take on some of the characteristics of persons.

Ortega y Gasset (1941) noted that technology has moved from the making and use of tools to the making and operation of machines. Tools are used by man to accomplish tasks more efficiently. Machines, on the other hand, do some of the things persons do. Therefore, the machine replaced the tool and, to a considerable degree, the man who used the tool. Many machines can carry out some or all of their operations without the constant or direct intervention of a person. For example, a person using various tools could calculate the time of day at a given location, but a relatively simple machine, the clock, will keep track of time with little intervention from a person and will free persons from the burden of having to calculate the time laboriously. Machines

were invented by persons to do some of the things persons do; that is, to stand in the place of a person.

In summary, the conceptualization and function of a machine is a direct extension of the concept of persons. The concept of a machine used by Descartes, Newton and their successors was itself developed metaphorically from behavioral concepts and principles which men had been using for thousands of years. These great "sort-crossers" were themselves victimized by a metaphor which had been handed down from previous generations. They were, of course, able to make good use of the concept of a machine to illuminate a wide range of previously obscure aspects of the world.

THE LIFE OF A METAPHOR

Turbayne (1970) says there are three stages in the life of a metaphor. At first, a word is simply misused. Such misuses are usually corrected when we hear them. Later, we begin to make believe or act as if instances of one type of phenomenon are in certain ways instances of another type. For example, in certain ways we act as if human beings are machines, as if forces reside in bodies or as if the Russian border is an iron curtain. Here, the metaphor is used with awareness to illustrate previously hidden or obscure aspects of some phenomenon. In the third stage, the original metaphor is hidden or masked, and we come to accept the "fact" that the two types of phenomena "really" are the same. Thus, we come to "see" that men really are machines, and there really are forces which reside in bodies. In this stage, we no longer make believe, and what before had been a model, is now taken for the thing modeled. Men come to be viewed as "really nothing more than complex machines."

We use the game of chess metaphorically to illustrate certain aspects of war. The metaphor serves as a filter or screen through which we can gain a particular perspective on the world or some aspect of it. The chess metaphor emphasizes the strategic aspects while suppressing the grimmer aspects of war (Turbayne, 1970). The metaphor may shift our attitude or perspective toward the world. Over time, the aspects that are stressed continue to be stressed, and the aspects unstressed continue to be unstressed. What was an occasional cross-sorting produced by the originator of the metaphor becomes the conventional sort, and the awareness that was part of the original use of the metaphor is lost. The new cross sort comes to be accepted as the way the world is. The old allocations are neglected, and the facts or how the facts are counted change. Once this shift has occurred, then war may come to be viewed simply as a game with all of the horror and carnage eliminated.

Once the awareness of the metaphor is lost, and we no longer are engaged in pretending, metaphors tend to become masks or disguises which hide rather than illuminate. Then, we are duped into believing that the model or metaphor is the way the world is rather than recognizing, as the originators of the metaphors may have done, that the metaphor is simply one way of allocating the facts or one way of describing the world.

MACHINE METAPHOR, PERSONS AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

Mitchell (1987) characterized the history of psychology as consisting of the introduction of a series of metaphors that were then applied to persons and their behavior. The metaphors have included machines, animals, electric circuits, hydraulic pumps, telegraph systems, and computers. From its earliest days, psychology embraced the mechanical models derived from the metaphor introduced by Descartes and Newton.

It is interesting to note that by the end of the 19th Century there was little awareness that theorists were using a metaphor. An interesting historical anecdote concerning Brucke, one of Freud's instructors illustrates this point (Jones, 1955). When a student came into his lab, Brucke and the student pledged an oath to put into practice the solemn truth that no forces other than the common physical-chemical ones are active within the organism. In those cases which could not at the time be explained by these forces, one had to agree either to find the specific way or form of their action by means of the physical-mathematical method or assume other forces equal in dignity to the physical-chemical forces and reducible to the forces of attraction and repulsion (Jones, 1955, p. 30).

Not only had unobservable and essentially occult forces of the 17th Century become facts, but in the 19th and 20th Century, scientists were being asked to swear an oath of faith and loyalty (see Ossorio, 1981 for a discussion of the nonfalsifiability of basic laws of science). It is little wonder that Turbayne (1970) speaks of a church more powerful than that founded by Peter and Paul or that Ossorio (1969) speaks of the theology of determinism. What began as a metaphor (and a heretical one at that) became an orthodoxy of its own with its own priesthood, believers, and theology. Part of that theology was that physiological forces underlie and cause effects such as the movement of organisms including the organism man.

Freud's theoretical system did not deviate from these principles. Freud simply dispensed with a specific anatomical basis for the

deterministic forces which he said were operating in human beings. The models or images of man which have followed the Freudian model in the past hundred years have primarily been the latest type of machine invented by men together with the familiar notion of an underlying, unobservable and unfalsifiable force. If we cannot explain a phenomena by means of current forces, we "distinguish," that is invent, new forces such as drives, instincts, homeostasis, psychic energy, reinforcement, sensations, needs, and libido (Jones, 1955).

Kurt Vonnegut has said, "We are what we pretend to be so we had better be careful about what we pretend to be" (Shotter, 1975, p. 28). In the present discussion, I would rephrase Vonnegut's warning by saying we may become what we pretend to be so we had better be careful. If we pretend man is an object or animal, it may, in itself, be a relatively harmless pretense that is useful to biologists or physicists who are interested in certain limited aspects of the embodiment of persons. However, if we come to use the metaphor without awareness that it is a metaphor and treat people as though they "really" or "basically" are objects, animals or organisms, we may lose the ability to distinguish persons from objects, animals or, (in the vernacular of most of psychology) "organisms."

In some ways, it is difficult to take the above metaphors seriously. If someone (or something?) approached us and said, "All men are animals, and their behavior is determined by drives, instincts and other forces," we might be inclined to dismiss them simply as being self-contradictory. In effect, they would be negating their own status as a responsible person (Ossorio, 1978). Ordinarily, we do not take seriously the words uttered by an object such as a machine or an animal such as a parrot. An individual who claims to be a responsible scientist giving a report of something the scientist has discovered but says the discovery is that there are no individuals who are responsible for anything and that all behavior including the scientist's research and report of the findings is determined by physiological or other forces is in a self-contradicting and self-annihilating position. We engage in research because we have decided that research is a way of answering certain types of questions and because we are able to decide when the research has provided a satisfactory result for our purposes. To say then that scientists through research have discovered that persons do not make choices or that their behavior including the behavior of the persons doing the research is the result of some deterministic force or mechanism is ludicrous at best.

If, however, we take those making the claim seriously, we might well shoot them or at least lock them up. In effect, they are also suggesting we should be regarded and treated as animals or objects. Up to the

present time, objects and animals have occupied particular places or statuses in our world. That is, objects and animals can be bought, sold, destroyed, inherited, discarded, and so forth.

POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE MACHINE METAPHOR

The social practice of slavery in the United States and elsewhere provides an informative though disturbing example of one group of people treating another group as either animals or objects. In this country, for more than two hundred years several million black people were regarded and treated as animals or objects that were the property of their owners to a significant degree. The status individuals have within a community determines what their eligibilities are and how it is appropriate to treat them. Thus, it was appropriate in the community in which slavery was an accepted social practice to buy, sell, destroy, inherit, and in other ways manage slaves as one would manage any other piece of property. To question such a practice would have been to violate the customs and principles of the community (Fredrickson, 1971; McKitnick, 1963).

It is not entirely clear that slave owners in the United States completely accepted (that is, lost awareness of) the metaphor in their treatment of blacks as animals. They were quite concerned about the possibility of slave rebellion, and the practice of having sexual intercourse with slaves was common and tolerated if not fully accepted (Jordan, 1968). Ordinarily, animals do not revolt, and sexual intercourse with animals was not a tolerated or acceptable practice in the antebellum South. As noted earlier, the awareness of the metaphor may be lost in the later stages of the development of a metaphor. The new set of characteristics tends to be viewed as the way the world is. A review of the literature on slavery written in the 1800's includes many scientific, religious, ethical, medical, and economic arguments that blacks really were animals or, at best, a sub-human species (McKitnick, 1963).

There are other examples of how the status of being a person can be acquired or lost in a community. Adolph Hitler and his followers made a determined attempt to assign Jews the status of an inferior or sub-human race with none of the characteristics or sensibilities of the "superior" Aryan race (Fest, 1973). The results of this attempt to assign a group of persons the status of non-persons or at best marginal persons are all too familiar.

A recent attempt to envision a world in which persons would be treated as organisms whose behavior is determined by external forces is provided by Skinner's (1971) now familiar book, *Beyond Freedom and*

Dignity. Skinner urges us to give up the illusion that we are individuals who engage in what we would term deliberate action and accept the "reality" that we are organisms whose behavior is determined by our history of reinforcement. Skinner's argument puts him in the self-contradictory position noted above. It is also not clear how or if there is a point to urging us to accept and adopt Skinner's explanation since our behavior, including our adopting a point of view, is supposed to be determined by our history of reinforcement. How could we choose to follow or not follow Skinner's scheme? If we are animals or machines, we do not have such choices or indeed any choice at all.

In psychology, the consequences of our preoccupation with various mechanical metaphors have been described, in considerable detail, by a number of critics (Mischel, 1969; Shotter, 1975; Ortega y Gasset, 1941; and Ossorio, 1978). In brief, the preoccupation has produced a behavioral science that is of parochial interest primarily to other behavioral scientists. For the most part, it has failed to increase our understanding of or effectiveness in dealing with significant social problems. Over the past hundred years, the facts and characteristics which distinguish persons from objects, machines, and organisms have tended to be lost or obscured by the various mechanical metaphors. As a result, we have been left with a behavioral science which lacks a systematic formulation of its principal subject matter, persons and their behavior (Ossorio, 1969).

One reason for our lack of progress in formulating the subject matter of behavioral science has been, as I have indicated above, our attempts to use various mechanical metaphors to try to identify or define the nature of man. When we lose sight of the fact that we have introduced a metaphor, we come to be victims of the metaphor and come to believe that men or persons really are machines, animals, or organisms. A further problem is that none of the mechanistic or organismic metaphors seem adequate to begin even to represent the range of facts and possible facts about persons and their behavior.

Finally, the whole attempt to define the nature of man may be what Ryle (1949) has termed a category mistake in that man may not have a nature. Here again, our preoccupation with mechanical or animal metaphors may be leading us to ask the wrong questions. It does make sense to ask what is the nature of an object, machine or organism. However, Ortega y Gasset (1941) has said that man is not a thing that has a nature; what he has is a history—a history of the behaviors he has chosen to engage in. Ossorio (1970) has said a person is paradigmatically an individual whose history is a history of deliberate action. Here, the focus is not on the nature of persons but on what they do, how they function. The focus is also not on finding some common denominator

which all cases of persons are said to have. In the past, a lowest common denominator approach has tended to reduce persons to physiological entities (Ossorio, 1969).

AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE MACHINE METAPHOR

Ossorio's (1971) approach in developing an alternative to the deterministic machine metaphors in behavioral science was to develop a conceptual framework within which all of the facts and possible facts about persons and their behavior could be represented. He did not begin by trying to describe the nature of man or to describe anything at all. Instead, he delineated a framework of concepts which could be used in giving descriptions of persons and their behavior and used by behavioral scientists in other ways to increase their understanding of and effectiveness in dealing with persons and their behavior. Through the use of conceptual-notational devices such as paradigm case formulation, parametric analysis and calculational systems, Ossorio has been able to develop a framework which can be used to represent whatever we know about persons (as well as what we do not know) without introducing polemic or theological propositions about the nature of man. In fact, as we shall see, there is nothing about the framework presented by Ossorio that even requires or limits a person to being a human being.

The conceptual framework developed by Ossorio has come to be characterized as Descriptive Psychology. Over the past 25 years, Ossorio and his colleagues have delineated a framework of concepts to represent persons, behavior, language, and reality. Formats for representing objects, processes, events, and states of affairs at any level of complexity or detail have been developed and applied to a variety of content areas (Shideler, 1988). Forms of behavior description which can be used to represent behavior at any level of complexity have been introduced and used to represent highly complex patterns of behavior. Parametric analyses have been developed which enable us to represent what we know about behavior and the similarities and differences among persons (Shideler, 1988).

The use of paradigm case formulations to represent subject matter in Descriptive Psychology is exemplified by the paradigm case formulation of a person. A paradigmatic or indubitable case of a person is an individual whose history is a history of deliberate action. If there ever was a case or instance of a person, an individual whose history is a history of deliberate action is one. This paradigm case is also the most complex case of a person. As we shall see, other cases of persons can

be identified and represented by deleting characteristics from the "full-blown" or paradigm case.

The use of parametric analysis in Descriptive Psychology is illustrated by the parametric analysis of behavior. The parameters of behavior include want, knowledge, know how or skills, performance, achievement, personal characteristics such as the traits or abilities the behavior is an expression of, and the significance of the behavior. To say that a person is engaged in deliberate action, is to assign certain values to the parameters listed above. It is to say the person not only has a reason for acting but also knows what she/he wants, is choosing that action over other actions, has the concepts, skills and other personal characteristics required for the action, and is participating in at least one social practice. It is also to say the person knows what she/he is doing, does it on purpose and is responsible for the behavior in question.

Assigning values to the parameters of behavior is one of the ways in which the framework of Descriptive Psychology can be used by persons who are engaged in describing behavior for research or other purposes. The parameters of behavior and the forms of behavior (Ossorio, 1978) which can be generated by using the parametric analysis as a calculational system can then be used to represent behavior at whatever level of complexity or detail is needed for a particular area of interest.

At this point, we can see more clearly why, earlier in the present paper, it made sense to say that Skinner and other advocates of deterministic metaphors were in a self-annihilating position. For example, when Skinner says behavior is determined by an individual's history of reinforcement rather than an expression of what a person wants, knows, and knows how to do in light of the person's circumstances and personal characteristics, he is engaging in deliberate action. Skinner is choosing one description over another, knows what he is doing, is doing it on purpose, is participating in the social practice of science as it has been done for generations, and is expressing his status as a psychologist. If he is not making a choice, does not know what he is doing, is doing it accidentally, and so forth, either we would not listen to him or we might take precautions to protect him from himself. Skinner and other behavior theorists are engaging in deliberate action in presenting a theory of behavior, and their theories of behavior must be capable of representing their own behavior as behavior theorists if their theories are to qualify as comprehensive theories of human behavior. In a similar fashion, Descartes and Newton were engaged in deliberate action when they presented their mechanical metaphor. Thus, they were engaged in a form of behavior which negated and could not be represented within their model of the nature of man.

One function of the concept of a person as an individual whose history is a history of deliberate action is that it serves as a reminder of the logical and necessary requirements for any of us to engage in, describe, evaluate, or be responsible for behavior. One result of the dominance of the machine metaphor over these many years is that the facts which distinguish persons and their behavior from machines or animals have been obscured. The formulation of persons as individuals whose history is paradigmatically a history of deliberate action is a reminder of how persons can be distinguished from animals and objects. As we shall see, the formulation can also be used to illustrate some of the ways in which animals and objects may be viewed as similar to persons, although the similarities may not be the ones we have come to expect.

In the remainder of this paper, I shall discuss some of the ways in which this formulation of the concept of a person might be used by persons in choosing what it is they are to do. The ultimate fate of any conceptual system will be decided by history and the choices which persons make, but I shall try to identify some of the possible differences this formulation might make.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE FORMULATION

Representing Human Knowledge

One result of Ossorio's articulation of the Person Concept is that the fragmentation of human knowledge which has developed in the past hundred years need not continue. Ortega y Gasset (1941) and Ossorio (1971) have commented on the fragmentation of universities and of knowledge generally into separate disciplines each with their own practices, customs, and languages. Up to the present time, there has been no obvious relationship between many academic or intellectual disciplines and no way of comparing them in any systematic way.

Science, philosophy, history, mathematics, literature, business and technology are all forms of behavior. More specifically, they are social practices or products of social practices developed by and for persons because they have a place in the lives of persons. One relationship all of these practices have is they are part of the ways of living of persons. The significance of these practices is the value they have to persons. Therefore, we can begin to compare and evaluate sciences, technologies, philosophies and other social practices in terms of what they contribute to the ways of living of persons.

The concept of a person provides a framework within which all of the facts and possible facts about persons and their behavior and, therefore,

everything else can be represented. More specifically, the parameters of a person and the parameters of behavior introduced by Ossorio provide a way of representing systematically all of the ways in which persons and behaviors can be similar or different (Ossorio, 1978). The social practice of biology is a form of behavior engaged in by a community of persons who have a more or less distinct set of basic objects, members, concepts, practices, choice principles and language (Shideler, 1988). As a social practice engaged in by a community of persons, biology can be described systematically and compared to other forms of behavior in terms of their basic objects, members, concepts, practices, choice principles and language. Therefore, the concept of a person provides a single conceptual framework within which all of human knowledge can be represented, compared, and evaluated by persons. Attempts to represent, compare and evaluate different fields of human endeavor or knowledge are also forms of behavior which are subject to being described, compared, and so forth.

Maintaining or Increasing the Status of Persons

Perhaps for the first time in history, we have a clear and coherent articulation of what it is to be a person. Paradigmatically, a person is an individual whose history is a history of deliberate action. That is to say, paradigmatically persons are individuals who (a) are choosing behaviors in light of what they want, know, and know how to do; (b) have finite knowledge and skills; (c) are acting in light of their appraisal of their circumstances; (d) are expressing personal characteristics; (e) have a history of choices; (f) may or may not know their behavior could be described and evaluated in more than one way by others; (g) are responsible for their own actions; (h) are participating in one or more social practices by engaging in the behavior; and (i) are trying to accomplish results which are intelligible in light of their circumstances and personal characteristics. It should be noted that the use of references to paradigmatic persons is meant to reflect the fact that persons are not always engaged in deliberate action. They may be asleep or unconscious or not aware of what they are doing at various times. Moreover, there are, as we shall see, cases on nonparadigmatic persons who lack or have limited capacities to engage in deliberate action.

There are a number of consequences which are likely to result from having a substantive and coherent formulation of what is involved in being a person:

1. We are less likely to be victimized by scientists, political leaders and others who attempt to degrade persons in general or particular groups of persons. We are reminded of the polemics of Nazi Germany

in which Jews were degraded systematically by descriptions of them as a sub-human species. They were often assigned the status of being less than persons and in many ways were treated as non-persons (Bauer, 1982). As in the case of slavery, it became "appropriate" in Nazi Germany for ordinary people to assign Jews the status of marginal persons and treat them accordingly.

2. We are likely to approach tasks such as child rearing differently if we come to view children as having the status of incipient persons who need to be able to develop competence in making judgments from different perspectives and dealing with conflicts among those perspectives. If we are preparing children to acquire the status of adult persons and participate in the social practices of our communities, what sort of opportunities do we provide for children to participate in those social practices? We play board games with young children but do we allow them to keep score? We "allow" young children to do menial tasks such as washing dishes but do we involve them in planning or cooking meals? We punish children for misdeeds but do we involve them in deciding what they did wrong and what sanctions are appropriate for someone who committed the particular misdeed under the circumstances that prevailed at the time? Having a clear understanding of what is involved in being a paradigmatic person may put us in a better position to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of ways to prepare children for becoming adult paradigmatic persons.

3. Up to the present time, we have recognized as persons only those individuals who have the embodiment of homo sapiens, namely human beings. There is however, nothing about the concept of a person that requires persons to be human beings (Ossorio, 1978; Schwartz, 1982). Without too much difficulty, we can begin to think of examples of individuals who already are or could become capable of deliberate action although they do not have the embodiment of homo sapiens. Examples of such individuals would include certain mammals such as dolphins or great apes as well as computers and extra-terrestrial beings. To the degree that such individuals choose one behavior over another because it is that behavior, know what it is they are doing and therefore, are responsible for their behavior, those individuals would qualify as persons, albeit persons with a different type of embodiment than the persons we now recognize.

Given the articulation of the concept of a person introduced above, we may be able to begin to develop learning or other developmental histories which will enable us to develop computers, dolphins or great apes into paradigm case persons. Attempts to provide histories which will enable primates to develop language and concepts similar to those of persons have been in progress for a number of years (Schwartz,

1982). There are profound and complex questions regarding the ethical responsibilities that go with any such course of action. For example, would not a computer or a dolphin who is a person have civil rights?

4. The issue of what might be involved in dealing with and understanding extra-terrestrial "beings" or "persons" is open to all sorts of speculation as illustrated in our science fiction literature primarily because there are no reality limits on what we can say in the absence of instances of visitors from other worlds with whom we have been able to establish a relationship. The concept of a person and the concept of behavior articulated in Descriptive Psychology provide us with resources for recognizing and understanding persons who have very different personal characteristics including different embodiment (e.g. the embodiment of a six foot amoeba or no embodiment at all), abilities, knowledge, traits, attitudes, and so forth as well as the possibility of representing the different behavioral practices, customs, and choice principles which might be encountered in attempts to establish relationships with different types of persons. Being able to recognize individuals from other worlds as persons who are engaging in deliberate action and having a way of representing what we understand about their behavior would seem to be an essential step in developing a viable relationship with persons from other worlds. The resources for representing language, and reality concepts such as objects, processes, events, and states of affairs that are available in Descriptive Psychology would also be important resources for understanding different worlds and persons who have developed those worlds in various ways.

Thus, as we look and, perhaps travel beyond our own planet and solar system, we are in a better position to recognize, understand, negotiate with, and perhaps establish relationships with other persons with dissimilar or perhaps no embodiment. Their behavioral practices, personal characteristics, concepts, language principles and basic objects could be systematically mapped; ours could be shared as well.

5. It is also worth noting that animals and other living things besides the higher mammals noted above also may be viewed as persons but as persons with limited (as far as we know at this time) capacities. We might consider, therefore, what differences it would make in the lives of individual persons or to the survival of persons collectively to recognize animals and other living things as persons with reduced capacities. As noted earlier, we have tended to view persons as either complex animals or objects. Any attempt to assign persons the status of complex animals or objects requires us to discard characteristics of persons, particularly their ability to engage in deliberate action. Neither animals nor objects are capable of choosing to engage in behavior "X" because it is a case of "X." One mark of that inability is we do not hold

them accountable for their actions. We may kill mad dogs to prevent them from hurting others, but we do not hold them responsible, and we do not sue mountains for damages when parts of them fall on our houses.

On the other hand, we can view living things or objects as persons with reduced capacities without discarding any of their capacities. As noted above, the paradigm case of a person is an individual whose history is a history of deliberate action. As noted earlier, this formulation does not include any requirement that a person be a human being. Up to the present time, all of the individuals we recognize as persons have the embodiment of *homo sapiens* and are, therefore, human beings. However, we can generate cases of non-human persons by carrying out certain transformations on the paradigm case of a person. For example, delete the characteristic of choosing one behavior over another and we have the case of an animal. If we delete the capacity for independent action, we have the case of an object such as a lake or mountain.

The parameters of a person include traits, attitudes, interests, styles, abilities, values, knowledge, state, status and embodiment. Given this set of parameters and the related concept of deliberate action, we can identify systematically the differences and similarities between human beings and animals or objects. Therefore, we are in a position to provide detailed and informative answers to questions regarding those similarities and differences without resorting to polemic arguments which seem to reflect little but the philosophical predispositions of those involved in such disputes. Given the number and scope of the parameters listed above, it seems likely that having a mammalian embodiment does not, in itself, represent a high degree of similarity between types of individuals.

To some degree, we already treat many of our pets as cases of limited persons. We say the dog learned to retrieve the stick, and we praise him for it. We also speak of the cat as being inquisitive, aggressive, or independent. These descriptions are either derived from or represent extensions of the concepts we use in describing the behavior and personal characteristics of persons. In general, we do not have a second language or way of describing the behavior or the significance of the behavior of animals. Therefore, we use many of the same person concepts in our attempts to understand and deal effectively with animals. Here, we might recall the use of person concepts by the early "inventors" of the concept of a machine. The main difference in applying these descriptions to animals and objects or young children, who are not yet full fledged paradigm persons, is that, since these types

of individuals lack language, we do not have clear reality checks on the descriptions we give.

It is also doubtful that most people describing dogs as loyal or cars as faithful have the same expectations or make the same commitments in giving the description. For example, I do not ask or expect the dog to pick up the newspaper next week when I am out of town.

However, individuals do assign pets the status of at least limited persons, and often pets become "members of the family." The significance of such relationships can be profound. For persons with few other significant relationships, the relationships with this other "limited person" may make the difference between having a reason to live and not having a reason to live.

There are also interesting questions regarding our possible relationships to non-domestic animals. If we assign them the status of limited persons, how would our relationship to animals change? Perhaps of even more interest, how would the relationship of animals to human beings change? What could we learn from these persons about how to live in the world without destroying it? Could we care for them without "taking care of them" and changing their personal characteristics? How would our world be different if we had accorded animals the status of limited persons three hundred years ago rather than trying to treat persons as though they were complex animals or objects? These questions are complex, but the answers might well be of profound significance to us as "human being type" persons.

6. For some, it may require even more of a leap into unfamiliar territory to think of assigning the status of limited persons to other living things and objects. On the other hand, we do treat cars, favorite chairs, old coats, houses and mountains as though they are in some sense persons. The relationship of primitive societies to mountains and streams was referred to earlier. I have named two of the cars I "owned." The word "owned" has special emphasis here because, for a long time, I found I could not sell them or part with them even though they had become fairly expensive to operate.

I have talked with numerous people who have lived in Boulder, Colorado, where the mountains are immediately present as a backdrop for the city. They came to have a significant relationship with the mountains. When they left Boulder, the loss of the relationship to the mountains resulted in a significant depression. The mountains provided security and a perspective on the rest of the world.

The relationships to cars and mountains involved persons treating them, to some degree and in some ways, as persons. It also involved assigning them some of the characteristics of persons. In some ways, the cars and mountains became trusted and faithful companions. To some

degree, I and others developed an "I-thou" relationship rather than a "I-it" relationship with the car or the mountain and thereby increased the significance of our relationships to the "objects."

However, the issue here is not me and my car but the question of what place persons assign themselves and other individuals in the world. Only persons have the status of "status-assigners," and it is only persons who can determine what place other persons, including human and non-human persons, will have in their lives. Ossorio has not put man back at the center of the universe, but he has reminded us that persons are and always have been the measure of all things, since all things have the place that as persons we are able to give them. Thus, Ossorio has reminded us that it is our world to act and be in, as well as be responsible for.

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