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SUPER-BEHAVIORISM

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Readers and students of psychology are familiar with the term Behaviorism. This term and the system to which it is applied have been made familiar by the two-principle representatives of the cult, Professor John B. Dewey and Professor John B. Watson.

This view of psychology is frankly materialist. It barely transcends the bald materialism of Hobbes, and certainly not that of Haeckel. Its view of mental phenomena, states, and processes is that they are the behavior of material atoms. The Behaviorist largely ignores consciousness and awareness, and especially any subject or percipient who is conscious or aware of something; and deals with stimuli and responses in a purely materialistic manner. Mental states and processes are just names given to these observable responses and consequents. The method of study is objective and not introspective. Behavior is a word applied to the manner in which an organism responds or reacts to its environment. But the environment and the organism responds or reacts to its environment. But the environment and the organism are both material. Psychology is thus not the science of mind, soul or consciousness; but the account of the behavior of an organism in response to its environment.

But a new kind of Behaviorism has made its appearance of late years which, for want of a better name, may be called Super-Behaviorism. This new brand avoids the crass materialism of the older kind, but is Behaviorism none the less. To name only two of its exploiters, we mention Professor G.T.W. Patrick of Iowa State University, and Professor Joseph H. Coffin, of Whittier College.

This kind of Behaviorism is based on Emergent Evolution and the theory of levels, which is a protest against the old theory of gradual ascent, and assumes that evolution took itself by its own bootstraps and lifted itself up by a single jerk to a higher level at certain points in the grand development.

Accordingly, evolution, finding itself on the level of vital neural forces, lifted itself up by a grand effort to the level of mind. This new something called mind is the direct fruition and achievement of bodily forces. It is not body-stuff itself, but the produce of resident bodily powers.

Neither is the mind (the world soul is taboo) an immaterial and spiritual entity after the older conception of soul. There is no soul-stuff, nor any stuff whatever for that matter. But then what is this mind? It is process, function, activity of a certain sort. There are thought, feeling, volition awareness, but no substantial reality of which these are acts or states. This new Behaviorism asks us to believe in thought without a thinker, in act without an actor, and awareness with nothing that is aware, and

process with nothing that proceeds. It is a railroad bridge across a river without piers, abutments, roadbed, or shore connections.

It is this sort of Behaviorism that is now being taught in many colleges professedly Christian. As to the rationality of the scheme, we leave the reader to judge.

Three observations: First, the new Behaviorism is a confession that the older materialistic Behaviorism of Dewey and Watson, is unsatisfactory. Second, Emergent Evolution is a confession that the older current theory does not fit the facts, and the theory of levels is a step in the direction of Creationism. Third, the shifting and drifting of those theories show that they are not founded on rock-bottom.

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