

Outline of Descriptive Psychology for Personality Theory and Clinical Applications

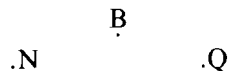
**Peter G. Ossorio
1970**

ABSTRACT

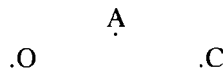
This outline serves as an abbreviated reference or an annotated course outline for the presentation of the Person Concept in a form which is heuristic with respect to the subject matter of personality and psychopathology. Of the four major components of the Person Concept, two are emphasized (Person, Behavior) and two are not (Language, Reality).

1. "Personality" refers to a range of facts, *not*, e.g., to a peculiar sort of *thing* or *process*. The facts in question are facts about persons, their behavior, their knowledge of one another, and their relations to one another.

2. The familiar, molar, descriptive facts of this sort are represented in the NBQ diagram. In the diagram, *each* of N, B, and Q are persons behaving with respect to one another. Each observes, describes (or understands), and responds accordingly.

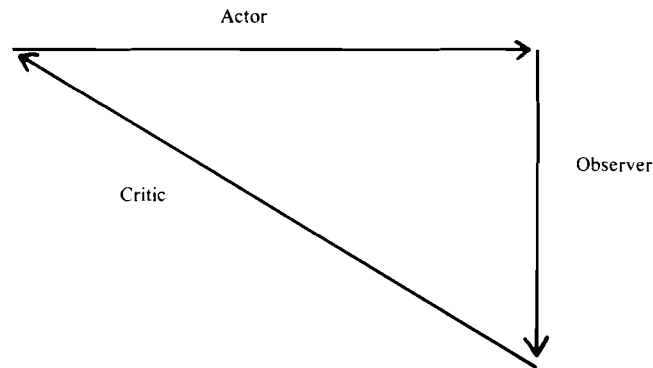


3. *Each* behaving person can be analyzed conceptually into three behavioral roles (three methodologically distinct kinds of personality facts). The three roles are represented in the AOC diagram: A (Actor) is the behavior in general, who is, in principle, subject to observation; O is the observer-describer of A; C is the critic, or the observer-appraiser, of O's description of A. In effect, the AOC diagram is a conceptual-methodological "close-up" of an individual in the NBQ diagram.



3a. *Functional AOC Schema for Clinical Use*. In most clinical uses of the AOC schema we use the case in which Actor, Observer-describer, and Critic are the same person, and we use the schema in functional form, as shown below, rather than in categorical form, as shown above.

Figure 1. Actor-Observer-Critic Schema.



What is brought out in the schema is that the triple is a functional unit, not merely a categorical taxonomy. It may or may not be clear from the diagram that it is the original, "natural," archetypal model of the negative feedback loop and all of the self-regulating, or "intelligent" machinery built on this principle. Any negative feedback mechanism will have a triple of elements corresponding to Actor, Observer, and Critic (Effector, Sensor, and Control are common corresponding terms). For example, a thermostatically controlled furnace will have (A) an apparatus for drawing in gas and burning it, (O) a thermometer which registers how hot the room is, and (C) a control device which, on the basis of the thermometer reading, and its own setting 'decides' whether the room is not hot enough, too hot, or acceptably hot, and depending on this, either turns the heat on, leaves it alone, or turns it off, which sets the conditions for a new cycle of operation.

It is because it codifies the essentials of self-regulation that the functional AOC schema lends itself to clinical use. Since the rationality of persons is archetypally exemplified in their capabilities of self-regulation, any psychopathology can, in one way or another, be represented as a deficiency in self-regulation. In general, failures and pathologies of self-regulation consist not of ceasing to be self-regulating, but rather of doing a bad job of it.

The significance of Actor, Observer, and Critic for human functioning can be more easily seen if we project these three forms of functioning from a cycle of behavior to the person as such. The person functions as Actor by living in accordance with his nature, hence Actor functioning is characterized as "impulsive", "spontaneous", "creative", "value-giving", and so forth. He functions as Observer by monitoring his own circumstances, behavior, achievements, states, and characteristics, hence Observer functioning is characterized as "reflective", "passive", "post hoc", and so forth. He functions as Critic by deciding whether things are going right or going wrong and (a) when things are going wrong, formulates a 'diagnosis' (*what* is wrong) and/or 'treatment' (what to do that might improve things) and sets the stage for implementation by means of Actor functioning; and (b) when things are going right (enough), by simply appreciating it and enjoying it and leaving well enough alone. The control aspect of the Critic is to screen out those potential behaviors (partial expressions of self) which would not fit the life setting and to allow those which would fit. This sets the stage for implementation by means of Actor functioning. The proper function of the Critic is interdictive, supportive, interpretive, and permissive, not coercive.

4. The role of A, the general case of a behaving person, can be analyzed conceptually into the two logically related concepts (a) behavior as intentional action (IA), and (b) personal characteristics, or individual difference (ID)

concepts. In effect, the concepts of IA and ID provide a conceptual-methodological "close-up" of the concept of a behaving person in general.

4a. The concept of intentional action is articulated by means of a parametric analysis:

$$IA = (I, W, K, KH, P, A, ID, S)$$

(See Appendix 1 for interpretation of symbols.)

4b. A structural *type* of personal characteristic is specified by (1) a type of behavior, or a principle (e.g., "achievement description"—see below) for specifying a type of behavior; (2) a pattern of occurrence in a life history. For each structural type there are a large number of particular personal characteristics of that type. For example, "generous", "hostile", "public-spirited", "suspicious", "ambitious" are particular Traits.

4c. The structural ID concepts can be classified as follows:

<i>Dispositions</i>	<i>Powers</i>	<i>Derivatives</i>
Trait	Ability	State
Attitude	Values	Status
Interest	Knowledge	Capacity
Style		Embodiment

4d. The concepts of IA and ID cover the range of all possible behaviors. Ordinary description of persons and their behavior is accomplished by restricting the values of the parameters of IA, including the ID parameter. Saying, e.g., "He's telephoning a friend" or "He's angry at me" is not in principle a *label* for a completely determinate something, but rather a way of distinguishing one range of facts (those compatible with the description) from another. However, the matter is more complicated: see Section 5.

5. The role of O is analyzed conceptually as a special case of the role of A. O is not merely a behaver in general, but specifically one whose behavior consists of observing and describing the behavior of A. (Note again that A, O, and C are distinct roles, not necessarily distinct persons.) In this behavior (IA), A *uses* the concept of behavior (IA). Now the role of A is articulated by specifying that his use of the concept of IA consists of using it not as a simple description (which was the most that could be suggested in 4c, above), but as a *calculational system* (compare a grammar or algebra).

5a. In general, a calculational system is specified as follows:

EOP table

Given: an initial finite set of explicit elements and operations

Then: an operation is always performed *on* an element, and the result is a product. Any such product is a new element on which the given operation(s) can be performed to generate new products. (For example, think of starting with a single element, the number "1", and a single operation, "add 1". The total range of elements will be the infinite set of positive integers.)

5b. The use of IA as a calculational system is summarized in Appendix 2. It shows a single element, namely IA, four operations, and twelve products. *Each product is a form of behavior description.* Each product becomes a new element on which further operations might be performed. Further, *each operation is a form of behavior*, given by an "achievement description."

5c. The major sorts of utility of the various forms of behavior description shown in Appendix 2 are as follows:

1. Cognizant action descriptions may be used to represent behavior (a) which consists of describing behavior (i.e., the role of O in the AOC diagram), or (b) of a person who knows what he is doing.
2. Deliberate action descriptions are used to represent behavior in which a person not merely distinguishes among behaviors but also chooses among them. That is, he acts on *grounds* (reasons) for doing one thing rather than another. (See reference to four standards or perspectives, below.) Deliberate action is the paradigm case of human behavior. Note that in Ossorio (1967b and 1969) both cognizant actions and deliberate actions (which are a special case of the former) are called "deliberate action."
3. Social practice descriptions are used to represent unitary sequences of behavior by a single individual or patterns of behavior involving multiple participants. (See references below to process descriptions; "social practice" and "intentional action" are special cases of the state of affairs system category of "process," Ossorio [1971, 1978].)
4. Deletion operations make it possible to refer to, to represent systematically, and to act in terms of any aspect or combination of aspects of behavior short of the full representation given by IA descriptions. Commonest motivations here are (a) the describer, A, is not in a position to give a full description of the behavior; (b) some regularities, e.g., in social patterns, do not involve all aspects of behavior (compare the pressure-temperature-volume laws in physics, which do not involve all physical aspects of objects); (c) as a special case of cognizant or deliberate action descriptions, a behavior describer, e.g., a therapist, may give motivationally non-committal descriptions because the motivational implications of a full IA description would generate unproductive resistance.
5. Reduction operations permit a formal simplification of the representation of behavior into a form which is representationally defective but often instrumentally valuable *to a person*. Cause-effect descriptions are the preferred form for most technology. They are useful because they are an egocentric form of description: To have a description of a causal sequence terminating in "G" is to have a description of what it is I (any "I") have to accomplish in order to accomplish "G" or prevent in order to prevent "G," and it is to have a description of what will happen *unless* I (or anything) intervene. Note that these uses do not *require* reduction operations nor do they require a deterministic theory of causality. (See Ossorio, 1967b, 1969, and 1978.)

5d. Since (1) the giving of a behavior description is a special form of IA, namely a "cognizant action," and (2) the *use* of IA as a calculational system requires only (a) IA as the single explicit "element" and (b) four special cases of IA (given by "achievement descriptions") for explicit operations, *nothing beyond the concept of IA is required* for the elaboration of the role of O and the range of structural forms of description available to O.

6. The role of C, the critic, is analyzed as a special case of the role of O, the observer-describer. C does not merely distinguish among behaviors, he *distinguishes among deliberate actions* in his own behavior of appraising O's description of A. His appraisal of O's description is given by an achievement description of O's deliberate action of *choosing* the description of A which was given by O. The achievement is expressed as the success or failure of O to meet the esthetic standard of correctness (or truth or objectivity, etc.) in choosing his description of A.

6a. The role of C reflects a more detailed analysis of deliberate action than was given above. Specifically, the grounds for choosing among behaviors in deliberate action can be categorized under four general standards or perspectives: Hedonic, Prudential, Ethical, Esthetic. The latter category, which corresponds to an undifferentiated concept of "fittingness," includes

three more familiar categories, i.e., (a) the usual notion of "esthetic" or "artistic," (b) the social concept of "appropriateness," and (c) the "intellectual" notions of truth, rigor, correctness, objectivity, etc. It is the latter perspective which is used by the critic, C, in making his appraisal of the extent to which O's behavior (his choice of description of A) can be correctly described as (a) responsive to that standard, or (b) exhibiting competence in the use of that perspective. [(a) is equivalent to (b)].

6b. The social practice of "negotiation" (Ossorio, 1969) is the paradigm for the resolution of disagreement among critics of a given description. There is a guaranteed resolution for each participant, though not necessarily agreement among them. Resolution of this kind *leaves no challenges to be raised or met* by the participants, though there may be other and further questions to be pursued (and disagreements thereon subject to negotiation). Thus, the AOC analysis does not create intractable justification problems with respect to behavior description.

6c. The role of C is articulated by reference to the maxims shown in Appendix 3. Formally, the maxims are logical constraints which O's description of A's behavior must conform to if it is correct. The constraints are logical because they are merely paraphrases of the logical aspects of intentional action and of the person as an individual who exhibits ID characteristics and whose history is a history of intentional action. In effect, the maxims are the concepts of IA and ID *from the active point of view of C as a critic*.

6d. Because behavior (IA) is logically complex, the fact of the occurrence of a given behavior will imply some number of distinct other facts, all of which are consistent with one another *in this way*, i.e., they correspond jointly to the occurrence of that behavior. Each observation-and-description corresponds to a given fact. Thus, the maxims serve as principles for relating one behavioral observation to another from the point of view (esthetic) of consistency. Since by virtue of this, one observation-and-description can be used as a check on another one, *the maxims serve as principles for giving empirically warranted behavior descriptions*.

6e. The maxims may be categorized as follows: Maxims 1-6 deal with behavior; 7-9 deal with ID characteristics. Maxims 1-5 deal with behavior occurring; maxims 6-8 deal with the acquisition of behavior potential; 9 deals with the manifestation of behavior potential. Of particular interest for the study of personality is the "Developmental Schema," an articulation of maxim 8 into a general format for causal-historical (but *not* deterministic) explanation follows.

6f. There are really two units combined in this schema. The first is used for the explanation of behavior:

Formula 1a. "In *these* circumstances, it would take *that* kind of person to engage in *this* kind of behavior." (the psychodiagnostic formula)

Formula 1b. "Given *this* kind of person in *those* circumstances, and, yes, *that's* what he *would* do." (the literary formula)

The second is used for the explanation of ID characteristics:

Formula 2. "An individual with capacity X will acquire ID characteristic Y if he has history Z₁, or Z₂, or...or Z_n."

NB: If he didn't acquire Y, then either (a) he didn't have capacity X, or (b) he didn't have one of the histories Z, or (c) we were just wrong about those histories being the way one acquires Y.

6g. See Ossorio (1967b) for discussion of maxims and forms of description.

7. The giving of a behavior description is a form of behavior, hence, it is the participation in a social practice. Moreover, it is the participation in a social practice in which there is a place for that description and its alternatives. In general, the *particular* way the practice is carried out on a given occasion hinges on *which* of the relevant descriptions is given. (Note the potential for conflict here between the esthetic (truth) and other standards in *choosing* the description. See below, the "contingency" in process descriptions.)

7a. The description of A by O, therefore, involves facts primarily about O. We may therefore think of A as a *boundary condition*, as the reality constraint on descriptions given by various O's. This contrasts with arbitrarily (methodologically) selecting some *description* of A as somehow having a guaranteed validity (Ossorio, 1969).

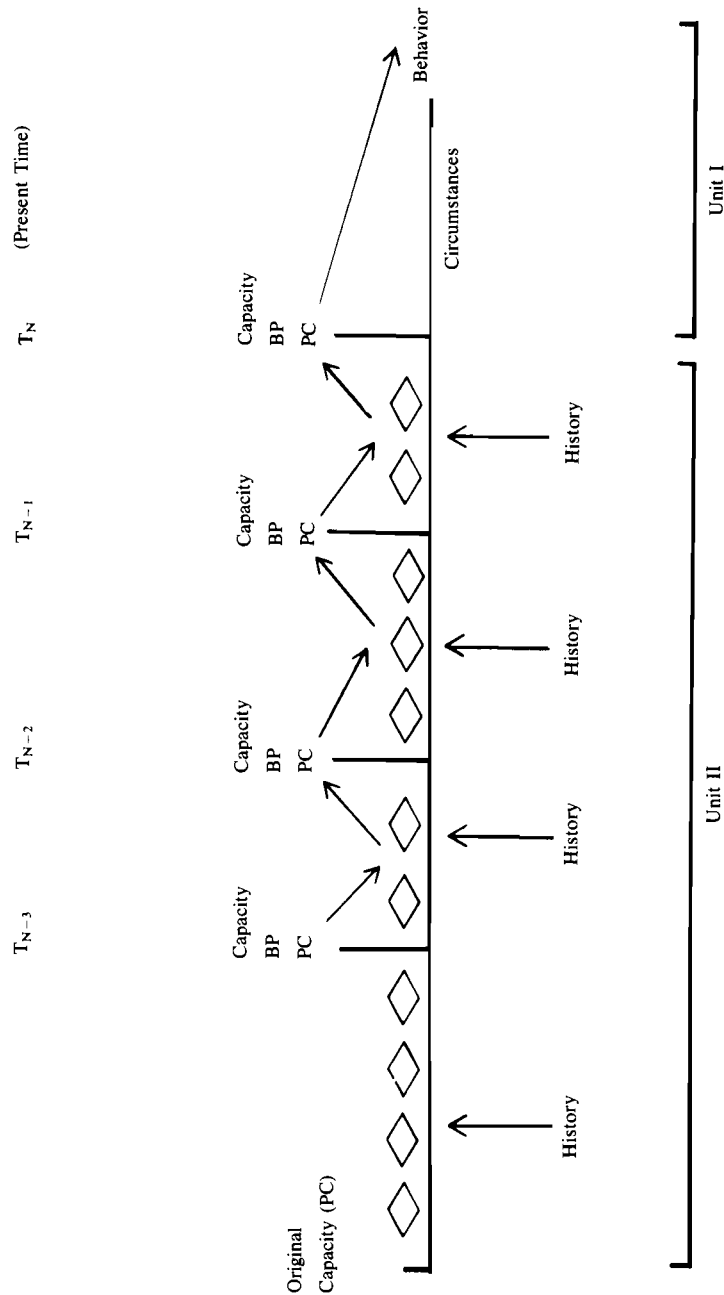
7b. Specifically, the observer contributes (a) the observation of what was done, (b) the knowledge of what wasn't done, but might have been, i.e., what the behavior chosen was chosen *from*; and (c) the description is given for the sake of the observer, since his own choice of behaviors hinges on which description he gives.

7c. In the NBQ diagram, the concept of N's description of B is crucial even when no verbal behavior on N's part occurs. In this case, Q's identification of N's *description* of B amounts to Q's specification of the *concepts* under which N distinguishes B and reacts to him. (See formula (5) and section on verbal behavior in Ossorio, 1969).

8. For our purpose, a theory is a personality theory (a general behavior theory) to the extent that it provides *general* (universal) and *systematic* (logically articulated) answers to these three questions:

- (a) Why do people do what they do?
- (b) What are the differences among people?
- (c) How come people are the way they are?

Figure 2. The Developmental Schema (PC = Personal Characteristics; BP = Behavior Potential).



8a. The relation of these three questions to one another and the scope of their joint coverage is given by the "developmental schema" above.

8b. The theorizing by a theorist (e.g., Freud, Jung, Allport, Binswanger, Skinner) may be represented as a particular instance of a person acting in the role of A, with the proviso that he is giving general and systematic descriptions. This being the case, we (members of the class) may now operate in the role of C, the critic of O's general descriptions of A.

8c. We are able to operate in the role of C because the descriptive system (the NBQ diagram and associated analyses) enables us to represent (a) what it is that O says about A, (b) how O uses what he says about A, and (c) A; and to do this in the same framework for all O's, so as to compare what they say. Our representation of A enables us to make judgments about whether what O says about A is an *adequate representation* of A.

8d. The descriptive system is "neutral" in a way not hitherto achieved. Since it is the logical articulation of a single concept, i.e., Person, it does not

consist of statements about behavior, not even general, systematic ones. (Note that concepts have no truth value and *cannot* be asserted.) The descriptive system is therefore not a more or less disguised preemptive bid for saying what behavior *really* is (recall paragraph 7a, above). A proper model for the function of the descriptive system is the familiar one of a coordinate system. The IA system may be thought of as a logically complex, verbal coordinate system in which any behavioral facts, including 'facts' couched in theoretical terms, may be mapped. Our descriptive paraphrases of theoretical statements are not (a) statements of what the phenomenon really is, or (b) depictions of what Freud (et al.) really said. Rather, they are statements which Freud's, Allport's, etc., are, in some relevant sense, *the same as*.

8e. Formally, existing personality theories are *not descriptions of A, but in some sense, A itself*. A picture of a house shows only a likeness of a house—it does not show the fact that it is itself a picture of a house. Likewise, Freud's (et al.) portrayal of behavior does not portray the fact that it is Freud's portrayal. We are already operating as critics in giving Freud's words the status of "what Freud said about behavior" rather than the status of "what behavior is." And as critics, we need commentary and not merely paraphrase. For example, it would be logical nonsense to say that the Freudian concept of "impetus" is the same as Maxim 3. But it will not be nonsense to say, "Using the concept of 'impetus' in the way that Freud does in describing behavior makes the same difference as our use of Maxim 3 in describing behavior."

9. Figure 3 is a heuristic representation of the major logical elements and primary logical links in the descriptive system. Figure 4 presents the status concepts.

Figure 3. Major Logical Links Among the Concepts.

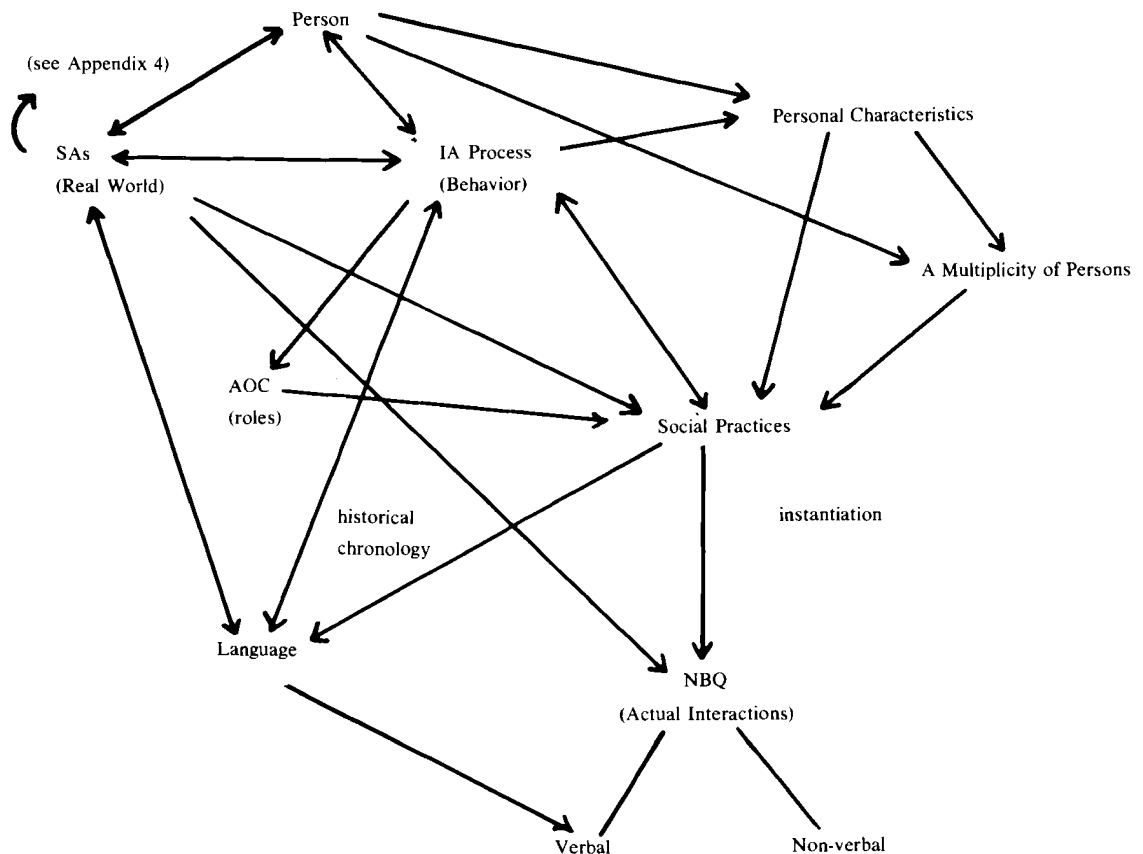
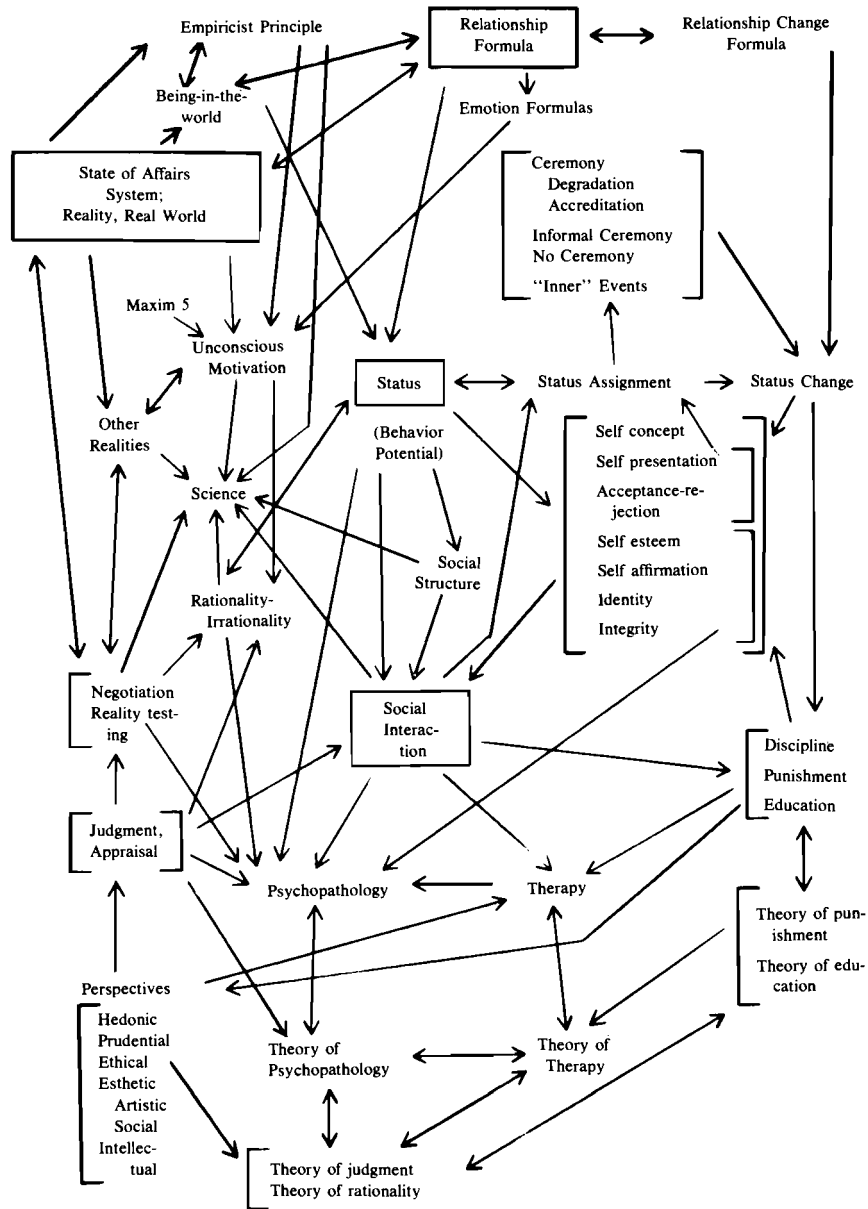


Figure 4. Map of Status Concepts.



10. In general, behavior descriptions are given for the sake of the observer-describer (O), since his choice among behaviors open to him hinges on which descriptions he gives.

10a. If O is a theorist, the distinctive use to which he puts his description is his participation in the social practice of (making a living as a practitioner of) psychotherapy, experimentation, or academic theorizing.

10b. If O is, e.g., a student who wants to understand himself and others better and interact with others more effectively, he is already responding to others in terms of his descriptions (NB 7c, above). His aims would in general be furthered by mastery of the descriptive system and practice in its use. More specifically, the expected value includes:

- (1) He would become more accurate in describing himself or others;
- (2) He would become better able to discover his own errors or to avoid being victimized by other persons' defective descriptions or misleading self-presentations (since he practices being a critic as well as an observer-

describer);

(3) He would become able to achieve more elaborate and detailed behavior descriptions, hence

(a) his understanding and appreciation of his own social practices would be increased,

(b) his descriptions would provide clearer, more differentiated guidelines for his behavior, hence

(c) overall, his interactions with others would become more *meaningful*.

(4) Since the result of practice is skill and sensitivity, none of the foregoing is at the price of spontaneity (NB, Maxims 1 and 9).

10c. Not merely behavior descriptions but person descriptions are given for the sake of the observer-describer. When O describes A as, e.g., "suspicious," "verbally facile," or "confused," the description carries with it implications or suggestions of the following sorts:

(1) What is to be expected of A;

(2) How A can be dealt with effectively;

(3) What is the appropriate way to treat A;

(4) What allowances to make for A.

Thus, personality descriptions are not in principle references to internal processes or internal causes of behavior, but rather are ways of "calibrating" a particular person against a social norm or against the observer-describer. In this way a person is able to understand and deal effectively with other persons who are different from him.

Because social norms (i.e., our knowledge of social practices) already codify what sort of actions are to be expected from persons generally, the additional value of personality characterizations lies in codifying the important ways in which a particular person's behavior can be expected to differ from the norm. The difference may be of either of the following two sorts:

(1) his behavior lies outside the normal range;

(2) his behavior exemplifies only a limited portion of the normal range.

Thus, the fact that personality characterizations refer, if only implicitly, to social norms does not imply that ID concepts such as "generous," "suspicious," "confused," etc., are arbitrary "pigeonholes" into which we categorize persons at the cost of doing violence to their uniqueness and individuality. (It sometimes helps to remember that "unique" and "individual" are no less observers' categories than "generous" or "confused" or "trait".)

10d. The "calibration" aspect of person descriptions leads to the following principle which holds for observer-describers: If a person has a given personal characteristic and his behavior is an expression of that personal characteristic, that fact calls for no explanation; in contrast, if his behavior is not an expression of that personal characteristic, that fact does call for an explanation. For example, if a generous person acts in a generous way, that calls for no explanation (recall 10c(1), above); however, if he acts in a mean or stingy way, that does call for an explanation.

10e. Clinical appraisals, whether couched in "psychodiagnostic," "existential," or "behavioral" terminology consist of some combination of ID and relational characterizations of the person. (See Section 11 for the relational formulation.)

11. As we have seen, the maxims are, collectively, a reformulation of the concepts of behavior (IA) and Person from the viewpoint of C, the critic. Because no new content is involved, the maxims are logical constraints to

which a behavior description must conform if it is to be a true description. Similarly, there is a reformulation from the viewpoint of O, the observer-describer. In this case, we speak of *behavior formulas* which automatically and implicitly incorporate Maxims 1-5 and, in some respects and to some extent, the remaining maxims as well. *Hence, the behavior formulas are pre-empirical.*

11a. There is a single, universal, content-free formula, namely, the *Relationship Formula*, of which other behavior formulas are special cases generated by introducing specific conceptual content, i.e., by specifying a particular relationship. Relationship Formula: If X has a given relationship, R, to Y, the behavior of X vis-à-vis Y will be an expression of that relationship *unless*

(a) X is acting on another relationship (with Y or with someone else) which takes precedence, *or*

(b) X doesn't recognize the relationship for what it is, *or*

(c) X is unable at that time to act in accordance with the relationship, *or*

(d) X mistakenly believes that what he did was an expression of that relationship.

11b. The concept of "relationship" in the general formula corresponds to the concept of behavioral potential and to the ID concepts of state and status. A person's status (without reference to his other ID characteristics) corresponds to his behavior potential, and that (again, without reference to his other ID characteristics) corresponds to the totality of his relationships with other individual elements of the real world, and most importantly, with other persons. Thus, to specify that X has a given relationship, R, with Y is to specify a portion of his behavior potential.

11c. The relationship formula may be derived from the maxims, using Maxim 2 as the entree. If X has a given relationship, R, to Y, that *gives* X a reason to treat Y accordingly, and he will do so, unless...Note that the "unless" clauses are systematically related to the parametric analysis of behavior. If "the behavior which is an expression of R" is thought of as an IA description with the parametric values given, then the "unless" clauses (a), (b), and (c) are ways of specifying that the required values of the W, K, and KH parameters, respectively, do not obtain, hence, it follows that the behavior which occurs is *not* "an expression of R"—a logical point, not an empirical one. The final "unless" clause does the same thing for the K parameter when it is cognizant action and not merely intentional action that is involved.

11d. Just as the Relationship Formula deals with the expression of relationships in behavior, the *Relationship Change Formula* deals with the acquisition of relationships. Just as the former corresponds primarily to the behavioral maxims (1-5), the latter corresponds primarily to the causal-historical personal change maxims, especially Maxim 8.

Change Formula:

Suppose that

R (X,Y) X has the relationship R to Y

R' ≠ R R' is a relationship other than R

B is an expression of R and not of R'

B' is an expression of R' and not of R

B' is the behavior of X vis-à-vis Y

Then R → R'

That is, if the behavior of X vis-à-vis Y is *not* an expression of the

relationship which holds between them (namely, R), then that relationship changes in the direction of one for which the behavior that *did* occur *would* have been an expression. This is one of the ways (the interactional way) in which new relationships may be acquired.

11e. Emotionally motivated behavior provides an important class of special cases of the two relationship formulas. One example is the *Hostility Formula*: Provocation by Y elicits a corresponding hostility by X *unless*

(a) X is acting on other reasons for showing or not showing hostility (note that it follows that *no* hostility will be shown if the reasons not to are decisive), *or*

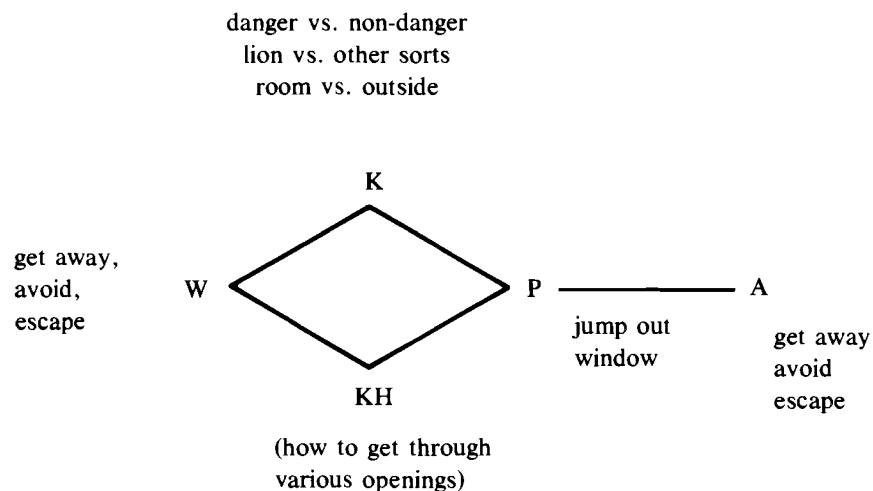
(b) X doesn't recognize the provocation for what it is, *or*

(c) X is not then able to show hostility, *or*

(d) X mistakenly believes that what he did was a show of corresponding hostility.

11f. Now consider a corresponding formula for fear ("Danger from Y elicits a corresponding attempt by X to escape the danger, unless...") and an actual description of fear-motivated behavior, i.e., "He jumped out the window when the lion walked into the room because he was afraid of the lion." A parametric formulation of this description would be:

Figure 5. Parametric Formulation of "He Jumped Out of the Window When the Lion Walked into the Room Because He Was Afraid of the Lion."

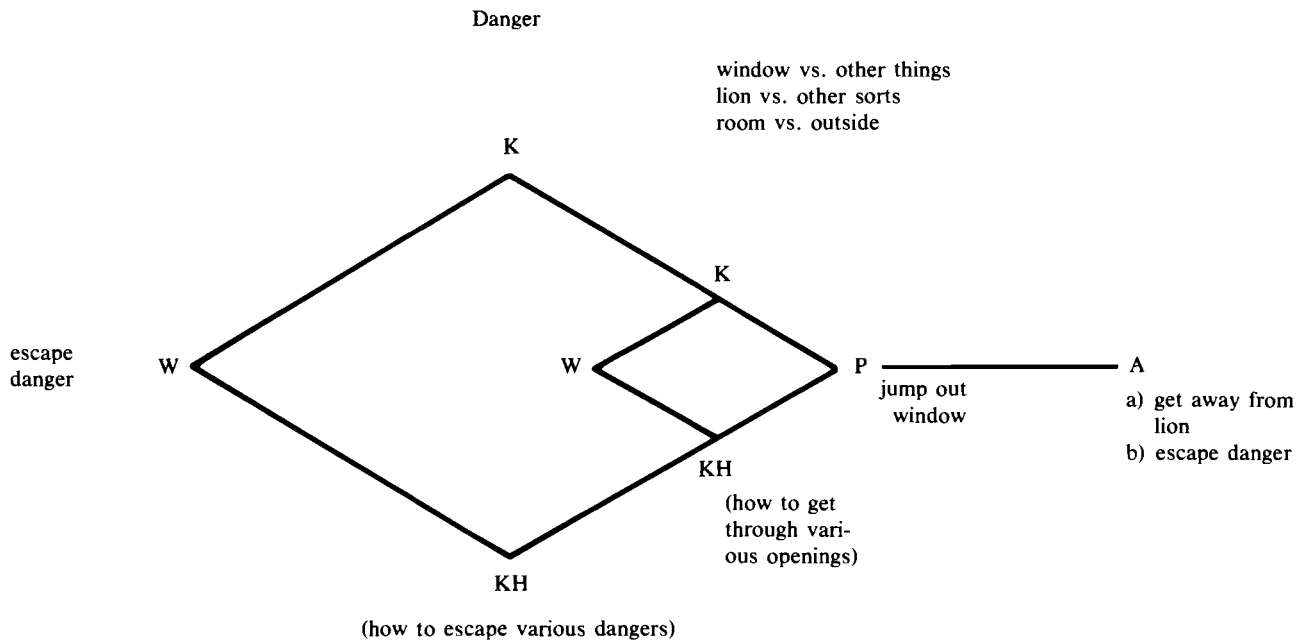


Note that it is this entire package plus the learned tendency to act on the discrimination (danger vs. non-danger) *without deliberation* which is the *fear behavior*. "Because he was afraid of the lion" is not (a) the motivation (the value of the W parameter), nor is it (b) a *hidden* motivation which *underlies* the observable behavior. "Fear" is an observer's *classification*, not a mysterious part of the *process*.

11g. The representation above fails to do justice to the structure of emotional behavior. This structure is given by a Symbolic Behavior Description in Figure 6.

The Symbolic Behavior Description allows us to separate neatly the general features of fear behavior from the specific features of *this* fear behavior. The specific features are given by the inner diamond and the general features, which are common to all fear behavior, are given by the outer diamond.

Figure 6. Symbolic Behavior Description.



11h. A general formula for emotionally motivated behavior may be stated as follows: Emotionally motivated behavior is deliberate action (in the sense of Appendix 2) in which

- (1) the actor makes a discrimination;
- (2) the discrimination logically carries a motivational significance;
- (3) the actor possesses a learning history (know how) relevant to acting on that discrimination; and
- (4) the actor has a learned tendency to act on that discrimination without deliberation.

11i. Thus, the critical difference between emotional behaviors involving differing emotions is the cognitive aspect, i.e., the "discrimination" mentioned in the general emotion formula above.

11j. The Symbolic Behavior formulation of emotional behavior provides an antidote to some unfortunate dichotomies which have grown up around emotional behavior. (a) The dichotomy of emotional vs. intellectual becomes either nonsensical or inconsequential as soon as we recognize that the most important differences among emotional behaviors stem from their cognitive (intellectual) aspect (the K parameter). (b) The dichotomy of emotional vs. rational loses all or most of its charm when we recognize that emotional Symbolic Behavior is, paradigmatically, also a case of Deliberate Action, hence it fits the paradigm of rational behavior (what could be more rational than to recognize a danger and to try to escape it?).

11k. This formulation of emotional behavior also helps to rescue us from the mammalian parochialism involved in approaches which define emotion in physiological terms or partly in physiological terms. Under such approaches, it would presumably be impossible for individuals with a non-mammalian embodiment to engage in fear behavior, anger behavior, etc., since the physiological components traditionally specified are peculiar to mammalian species. Although the physiology of emotion may have some practical interest, it is even less essential than the lion in the example. Fear behavior does require some particular discrimination, over and above "danger" (even if it is

only "the whole world"), of what it is that is dangerous. It does not at all require any distinctive physiological components, even though in fact there may well be some among human beings.

12. The behavior-descriptive system outlined above has a number of significant relationships to other, more familiar, ways of dealing with behavior. The following are *summary impressions*, which vary substantially in the degree of detailed backing which could be offered on request.

12a. In terms of the AOC diagram, we may identify the following gross coverage:

A: Scientific theories are systems of propositions about A.

O: Existing philosophies of science are anecdotal or a priori systems of propositions about a special case of O, i.e.. *scientific* observer-describers (Ossorio, 1967a).

C: There could hardly be said to be any discipline dealing with C. We have *customs*, rather than standards; we have appeals to authority (e.g., to the philosophers of science); and we have vague references to "the court of reason," etc. (In certain respects, Toulmin's *The Uses of Argument* (1958) might be a candidate here for a systematic approach to the role of critic.)

12b. Particularly if we note that the "social practice" description can be elaborated into descriptions of social institutions, societies, cultures, and systems of social processes. the range of forms of behavior description (Appendix 2) provides resources for distinguishing and relating the various social sciences and the various "fields" of psychology. From this standpoint, the different behavioral subject "fields" are distinguished by the kinds of facts they systematize, hence, by the type of behavioral formula which serves as a paradigm for their "explanations" and descriptions.

12c. Aside from honorific references to hypothetical psychological determinants, existing personality theories and other general behavior theories may be analyzed without remainder into more or less *incomplete* versions of some of the following descriptive elements:

- (1) The C-E formula;
- (2) The parametric analysis of behavior;
- (3) The parametric analysis of ID concepts;
- (4) The maxims;
- (5) The Developmental Schema; or
- (6) A variety of taxonomies within any of these conceptual structures.

For example:

The Skinnerian notion of "*operant*" is the notion of intentional action under a Performance Description (see Table 1, Appendix 2). Some of the parameters of IA which were deleted by the performance description (namely, the W, K, and KH parameters) reappear as types of *controlling variables*. "Controlling Variables" and "operant" occupy the positions of C and E, respectively in the C-E formula (see the second type of reduction in Appendix 2). "*Operant conditioning*" corresponds to Maxim 2 and Maxim 3 stated from the viewpoint of an observer-describer-*manipulator* of behavior; similarly, "behavior shaping" corresponds to Maxim 8 stated from that viewpoint, i.e., in C-E form. "Discrimination training" corresponds to sometimes Maxim 6, sometimes Maxim 7, etc.

12d. Since the conceptual structures of Descriptive Psychology are pre-empirical, so are our general theories of behavior. In that case, the traditional (a priori) notion that the point of experiments designed to 'confirm' these

theories is to support the claim that the theories are 'true' is subject to fundamental criticism (Ossorio, 1967a).

12e. On the face of it (see Maxim 1) the concept of deliberate action is, normatively, the concept of "behavior" or "doing" which, in its undifferentiated form, is a part of every-day life, of the humanistic disciplines, and of the "borderline" social sciences such as economics, political science, etc. For example,

(1) The formulation of verbal behavior as a special case of IA is the only (apparently; to date) existing psychological formulation which is compatible with (a) experimental data, (b) currently dominant linguistic theory (transformational grammars), (c) philosophical formulations of the notion of "speech acts," and (d) non-experimental but generally accepted facts about language pointed out by linguists in criticizing psychological theories of verbal behavior. (See Ossorio, 1969, and Appendix 4.)

(2) The parametric analysis of intentional action may be regarded as a successor to Aristotle's concept of practical reason, or the "practical syllogism."

(3) The concept of IA may be found in fairly explicit form in both Marx and Von Mises (and Rothbard), whose economic theories are diametrically opposed.

12f. The concept of "behavior formulas" as non-empirical schemata for giving particular behavior descriptions provides a link to moral philosophy and the philosophy of mind. Detailed analyses of mental and moral concepts which appear in this literature can almost always be construed as efforts to articulate behavioral formulas or the relationships among them. For example, all but one of the major elements of the "fear" example above may be found in a paper by Gosling (1962). The formulas for love or envy are more complex, and the questions of whether one can be both pleased and embarrassed at the same time is even more complex. Part of the point here is that the philosophical analyses are explicitly non-empirical, and this has brought them into apparent conflict and competition with psychological theories which purport to be empirical, or at least empirically justified. In the descriptive framework, data and formulas do not compete or conflict (see below).

12g. There are several logical links between descriptive psychology and the "natural sciences."

(1) Any science and all of them jointly are a set of social practices distinguished by particular ranges of verbal and non-verbal actions. What is fundamental here is the fact of persons and their behavior and not the theoretical 'entities' alluded to in these practices.

(2) The natural sciences deal with a limited range of SA system formulas, i.e., *non* human (e.g., biological, chemical, physical) objectives, processes, events, and states of affairs. These formulas and their specific instances are inventions of persons (see above), and may or may not have any further significance (see below). Since non-human objects and processes may (via the ID concept of 'status') be represented as *defective* cases of human objects and behavior, the latter are paradigmatically the universal subject matter.

(3) The structure of a social practice (and process descriptions generally) is specified in part by specifying contingencies, i.e., the restriction of otherwise-open possibilities as a function of prior or concurrent states of affairs (Ossorio, 1978). Since there is no restriction on the concepts which may be used to specify contingencies, any findings of any science which have a significance for behavior are directly usable as such within the science of

behavior.

(4) *Hence, there is no science more fundamental than behavioral science.*

13. What is empirical behaviorally is not our behavioral formulas but the results of their use. That is to say, the empirical questions regarding (e.g., the hostility formula) are primarily of this sort:

(a) When can it be used, by whom, in regard to whom, and to what effect?

(b) Likewise, what is the range of applicability of the "main clause" and each of the "unless" clauses?

(c) Likewise, how does it relate to other formulas, e.g., is there a priority hierarchy, and if so what is the nature of the hierarchy and for whom?

(d) How can the phenomena which fit the formula be affected by human efforts—what behaviors, what skills, etc. are required?

(e) What do various persons know about the formula and the phenomena, and what difference does it make to them?

In this way, systematic behavioral data gathering (psychological research) can be seen to have a point which has nothing to do with 'testing' our formulas, not, at least, in regard to their truth, and not in regard to their *immediate* practical utility. Neither is there any principle which certifies the laboratory experiment as the primary or 'really rigorous' form of data gathering.

14. A theory within Descriptive Psychology would be a general and systematic specification of *which* out of the empirical possibilities generated by the superordinate pre-empirical conceptual structures are in fact the case. Such a theory would be falsifiable rather than merely disconfirmable, for it would be stateable in non-theoretical language. A theory of this general sort has recently been devised (Littmann, 1980).

NOTE

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APPENDIX 1

Parameters of Behavior

$\langle B \rangle = \langle IA \rangle = \langle I, W, K, KH, P, A, ID, S \rangle$

Where

B = Behavior (Instances of behavior are identified directly by locutions in ordinary language)

IA = Intentional Action (The technical designation for behavior under the present parametric analysis)

I = The 'Identity' parameter (Refers to the identity of the individual whose behavior it is; values of this parameter are given by names or individuating description)

W = 'Want' = The motivational parameter (Values of this parameter are given by specifying states of affairs as being wanted)

K = 'Know' = The cognitive parameter (Values of this parameter are given by specifying states of affairs as being distinguished or conceptualized)

KH = 'Know How' = The competence parameter (Values are given by specifying prior states of affairs as a relevant learning history)

P = 'Performance' = The process, or procedural parameter (Values are given by specifying a process)

A = 'Achievement' = The result, or outcome, parameter (Values are given by specifying events and states of affairs)

ID = The 'Individual Difference' parameter (Values are given by specifying personal characteristics of which the behavior is an expression)

S = The 'Significance' parameter (Values are given by specifying behaviors or behavioral patterns engaged in by means of the behavior in question)

APPENDIX 2

Table 1. Behavior as Calculation

Element	Operation	Product
1. <I, W K, KH, P, A, ID, S>	Substitution	<I, W, , KH, P, A, ID, S> Cognizant Action Description
2.	Substitution	<I, , , KH, P, A, ID, S> Deliberate Action Description
3.	Substitution	<I, W, K, KH, P, , ID, S> Social Practice Description
4.	Substitution	<I, W, K, KH, , A, ID, S> Symbolic Behavior Description
5.	Deletion	<θ, θ, K, KH, P, A, θ, θ> Activity Description
6.	Deletion	<θ, θ, θ, θ, P, A, θ, θ> Performance Description
7.	Deletion	<θ, θ, θ, θ, θ, A, θ, θ> Achievement Description
8.	Deletion	<I, W, K, KH, P, θ, ID, S> Performance Description
9.	Deletion	<θ, θ, K, θ, P, A, θ, θ> Stimulus-Response Description
10.	Identity	<I, W, K, KH, P, A, ID, S> Intentional Action Description
11.	Reduction	<I, C, C.C, C, E, ID, S> Purposive Description
12.	Reduction	<I, C, C, C, E, E, ID.S> Cause-Effect Description

APPENDIX 3

Table 2. Maxims for Behavior Description

1. A person takes it that things are as they seem unless he has reason to think otherwise.
2. If a person recognizes an opportunity to get something he wants, he has a reason to try to get it.
3. If a person has a reason to do something, he will do it unless he has a stronger reason not to.
4. If a person has two reasons for doing X, he has a stronger reason for doing X than if he had only one of these reasons.
5. If a situation calls for a person to do something he can't do, he will do something he can do.
6. A person acquires facts by observation (and thought).
7. A person acquires concepts and skills by practice and experience in

- some of the social practices which involve the use of the concept or the exercise of the skill.
8. If a person has a given person characteristic, he acquired it in one of the ways it can be acquired, i.e., by having the prior capacity and an appropriate intervening history.
 9. Given the relevant competence, behavior goes right if it doesn't go wrong in one of the ways that it can go wrong.

APPENDIX 4

Verbal Behavior

The general concept of verbal behavior, V, is given by formula (5). (Formula numbers are taken from *Meaning and Symbolism* (1969)).

$$(5) \quad V = \langle C, L, B \rangle$$

The relation of verbal behavior to behavior is shown by the juxtaposition of formulas (1) and (5):

$$(1) \quad B = \langle I, W, K, KH, P, A, ID, S \rangle$$

$$(5) \quad V = \langle C, L, B \rangle$$

In formula (5), C is a concept, L is a locution which stands in a one to one relation to C (L is specified by giving a Performance description of the behavior of uttering the locution), and B is the class of behaviors which consist of acting on the concept C. Uttering L is thus a special case of B.

Note: A formula is not a statement or a description, though it can be used to make a statement or give a description. The formula above is not an assertion that in fact there is always a one to one connection between locution and concept. Rather, the formula provides a non-arbitrary way of understanding how it could be that in fact there isn't without supposing also that the connection is merely accidental or merely empirical.

To use the term "verbal behavior" is to refer to a distinctive kind of behavior and to give an incomplete specification of the behavior. The sense in which verbal behavior is a distinctive kind of behavior is given directly by the formula. The distinctive aspects include (a) a distinctive performance, i.e., a locution, (b) a distinctive connection between the locution and a conceptual distinction, and (c) a connection between this behavior and a class of other behaviors. The partial aspect consists of the fact that the distinctive aspects of verbal behavior involve only two of the parameters of the behavior in question. No behavior is merely verbal behavior. Rather, some behaviors qualify as verbal behaviors because of the values of their Performance and Know parameters. Thus, verbal behavior is necessarily symbolic behavior (see Appendix 2) not because it employs mysterious things called "symbols." but because it is always a case of doing A by doing B (doing A by saying "Y").

APPENDIX 5

The State of Affairs Conceptual System

The basic transition rules of the system are as follows:

1. A state of affairs is a totality of related objects and/or processes and/or events and/or states of affairs.
2. An event is a change from one state of affairs to another.
3. An object is a state of affairs having other, related, objects as constituents. (An object divides into related smaller objects.)
4. A process is a sequential change from one state of affairs to another.
5. A process is a state of affairs having other, related, processes as constituents. (A process divides into related smaller processes.)
6. The occurrence of an event is a state of affairs having at least two states of affairs (i.e., "before" and "after") as constituents.
7. The initiating or terminating of a process or an object is an event.
8. The occurrence of an object or a process is a state of affairs which is a constituent of some other state of affairs.
9. That a given state of affairs has a given relation to a second state of affairs is a state of affairs. (The relation may be, e.g., succession, similarity, incompatibility, inclusion, etc.)
10. That a given object, process, event, or state of affairs has a given characteristic is a state of affairs.