

J. R. KANTOR'S INTERBEHAVIORAL PSYCHOLOGY AND HUMANISM

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This paper addresses connections between J. R. Kantor's interbehavioral psychology and humanism. It discusses numerous ways in which interbehavioral thinking is humanistic. Kantor's naturalism and human-oriented historiography have foundations in the original humanism of Hellenic times. His secular orientation, cyclical theory of history, respect for Greek thought, independent critical thinking, and historical inclinations are found as key marks of Renaissance and Enlightenment humanism. Interbehavioral psychology agrees with many features of contemporary humanism by emphasizing (a) the human roots of all constructs, (b) the inseparability of mind-body, (c) holism over reductionism, (d) human as opposed to nonhuman research, (e) the acceptability of nonexperimental research, (f) an evolutionary perspective, (g) humans as inevitably linked to a world, (h) human freedom as conditional, and (i) the unity of the sciences and humanities. The major conclusion is that interbehavioral psychology might be especially attractive to those who aspire to a scientific psychology that never ignores essential human characteristics.

Jacob Robert Kantor (1888-1984) appears to have made no public pronouncements advocating humanism. Given the tremendous diversity in humanistic thinking (e.g., Kurtz, 1973), it is not surprising that a rigorous thinker such as Kantor would hesitate to affiliate with a rather amorphous intellectual sphere. Nonetheless, one can make a case that Kantor's philosophy and psychology had a definite humanistic core. This paper will examine Kantor's interbehavioral system in relation to humanism. Although writers in psychology often present humanism as the foundation of an alternative to other general approaches or systems (e.g., Cain, 2002; Goble, 1970; Schneider, Bugental, & Pierson, 2001), the humanistic intellectual and cultural movement is not necessarily consistently represented in some of what passes under the name of humanism (e.g., Smith, 2001). The purpose

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of the present article is to explore relations between interbehaviorism and historical humanism. It is not concerned with how various psychologists have represented humanism in any of the diverse versions of what they presented as humanistic psychology. The main conclusions are that Kantor's interbehaviorism is soundly based in historical humanism and that it has promise as one source of a scientific and humanistic psychology.

Kantor's Interbehavioral System

Born the son of an orthodox Jewish rabbi in Harrisburg, PA, Kantor, at an early age, somehow became sensitive to the disparity between religious presuppositions and what he observed in his lived world (J. R. Kantor, personal communication, April 22, 1983). He opted for the latter. This would take him to science, naturalism, and humanism.

We can best understand Kantor's humanism from the standpoint of his overall intellectual approach. Kantor sought to develop a coherent philosophy and psychology that centered on human psychological behavior as the foundation of all disciplines, whether conventionally part of the sciences or the humanities. After trying terms such as *interactional* and *organismic*, Kantor settled on *interbehavioral* to describe his thinking. *Behavior* recognizes the dynamic or active nature of all psychological events; *inter* emphasizes that the actor's actions are coordinated with specific objects such that action and object are always reciprocally related.

Kantor went far towards developing a comprehensive framework for psychology from the ground up. His two foundations were historicocritical analysis and scientific systematics. Kantor argued that critical analysis of the history of a science is one way of advancing knowledge, in particular by removing cultural obstacles.

Another tool of the scientific knowledge worker is scientific systematics by which we examine the logic (or systematics) of science and of particular sciences to clear away impediments to sound knowledge. To do this, Kantor argued that we need to identify the often unacknowledged fundamental assumptions that underlie our work. Interbehavioral systematics (Kantor, 1959) consists of identifying and organizing postulates so that they are open to critical examination and, when satisfactory, are available to serve as guides for future workers who can further test and modify them as necessary.

Interbehaviorism and Humanism Through the Centuries

Given that humanism is many-headed, it is useful to examine Kantor's thought at three critical junctures: original humanism of the 5th century B.C.E. in Greece, the rebirth of humanism with the Renaissance beginning in the 14th century, and its continuation by the efforts of 20th century humanists such as John Dewey, John Herman Randall, Corless Lamont, and Paul Kurtz.

Original Humanism

Humans as the measure of all. If we take the humanistic movement of the 5th century B.C.E. in Greece as a major marker in the history of humanism (e.g., Schiller, 1970), then Kantor's system is consistent with this first significant step toward humanism. Kantor's (1963, 1969) macrohistoricocritical analysis makes an intricate case for Hellenic culture as firmly ensconced in nature and fundamentally naturalistic. Protagoras's dictum of humans as the measure of all things, of humans as the makers of truth, follows from the Hellenics always thinking in terms of this world and never in terms of another timeless and spaceless realm where supernatural gods and perhaps nonspatiotemporal souls existed and superseded worldly humans.

Kantor warns against reaching conclusions about the Hellenics by way of translators and interpreters who lived under very different conditions from those in place in Ancient Greece. Interpreters' representations of the Greeks are products of human behavior that are invariably influenced by the behaver's culture. Tendencies toward invoking supernaturalistic realms beyond the lived world of ordinary space-time evolved after the fall of Hellenic civilization. Kantor marshals evidence that the Greeks had no space-transcending inclinations in their thinking. As such, there were no supernatural powers to compete with humans and their world. As to the question of the gods of Hellenic theology, Kantor (1963) asks, "Have the Greeks ever allowed themselves to forget that everything in the religious domain was wrought by humans and that no god could be accepted as the source and creator of all?" (p. 84). Greek gods were human or were derivations from human prototypes with various degrees of exaggeration; they might have been superhuman, but they were never supernatural.

Humanistic historiography. A striking example of Kantor's fundamental humanistic leanings and ties to the original humanists is his historiographic work, *The Scientific Evolution of Psychology* (1963, 1969). Part of the thinking that blossomed in the 5th century B.C.E. was Herodotus's invention of humanistic history (Collingwood, 1993). For the first time, historiography was "humanistic as distinct from either mythical or theocratic" (Collingwood, 1993, p. 19). Additionally, because history was inseparable from human actions, humanistic historiography was, and is, distinguished from annals. Annals refer to chronological records of events (Teggart, 1941). Herodotus's history is not confined to bare events. It is one of unity, coherence, and internal development (Teggart, 1941), supplied by a humanistic consideration of humans who had reasons for acting as they did (Collingwood, 1993). According to these criteria, Kantor's (1963, 1969) history of psychology is exemplary, and it shines as a humanistic historiography of the discipline.

Renaissance and Enlightenment Humanism

There is no doubting that proper claims to humanistic thinking today trace back to the original (Hellenic) humanists by way of the Renaissance humanists (c. 1300-1600 C.E.) and a later intensification of the humanist attitude with the 18th century French enlightenment. The Italian and northern

European humanists so much established the core of still vibrant post-medieval western thinking that, from one perspective, humanism marks the essence of contemporary life. Yet, thinkers vary in the degree to which they exemplify various traits of Renaissance and Enlightenment humanism. Kantor's views are strikingly compatible with some main tendencies of those who set the stage for modern times.

Scorn for Middle Ages, rejection of tradition. The Renaissance marks the beginning of modern times because its leaders so vigorously rejected medievalism. An overriding target was the medieval preoccupation with spirit and concern with a future world that distinguished religious from secular outlooks. Humanists of the modern era found classical Greek and Roman thinking as a desirable option for their times and thereby looked favorably upon secular points of view and concerns.¹ Enlightenment humanists such as Voltaire and Gibbon showed invigorated rejection of traditional religious thinking (Collingwood, 1993).

To Kantor, the major impediment to effective knowledge is cultural tradition. Kantor's scholarly grappling with lasting and pervasive impacts of nonnaturalistic components of our cultural heritage especially reveals his humanism, and, so vigorous and thoroughgoing is Kantor's reaction to nonnaturalism, that his alternative is well-described as a radical naturalism. At the heart of his radical naturalism is the original humanistic proposition of humans [of this world] as the measure of all.

Kantor's acute sensitivity to the centrality of human behavior in all knowledge claims, combined with historicocritical analysis, led him to buttress a crucial insight into the underpinning of antihumanistic sentiment. He was not the first to declare that supernaturalism, claims of space- and time-transcending realms and beings, is perfectly naturalistic human behavior. Gibbon (1776/1932) and Freud (1927/1957), among others, exposed the humanistic origins of supernaturalistic proclamations. Kantor (1963, 1969) documents events, such as the living conditions of a decaying and crumbling society, well known to historians, that gave rise to thinkers' gradual escapist verbal creation of a nonspatiotemporal realm. The venerable spiritual-material dualism evolved, and the lived world was verbally placed in opposition to a better, superior world. People were encouraged to change their priorities from the natural world (that includes humans) to transpatial realms.

Cyclical theory of history. Cyclical theories of history vary in their makeup and have undergone much critical scrutiny. Yet, early humanists adopted a cyclical view to replace the religious one of history as the inexorable unfolding of divine plan (Mazzeo, 1965). And Collingwood (1993) argued that, although unpopular, recurrence is superior to all other views of the macrocosm. The fundamental theme in Kantor's (1963, 1969) history of

¹One must be careful to view the Renaissance humanists in the context of their cultural conditions. Many remained loyal to the church. Their critical attacks on Christianity as practiced, although often in the interest of a purified Christianity, to a great extent promoted secularization by rejecting the only palpable alternative to a secular track, not by a direct attack on prevailing religious beliefs (Kristeller, 1988). Secular tendencies of the Renaissance will be intensified with the Age of Enlightenment (Lucas, 1960).

psychology is one of two cycles. Kantor argues, with much evidential support, that psychology's recovery of humanistic naturalism after a nadir during the Middle Ages parallels the humanists' picture of their times as engaged in a reconquest of the heights of the creative achievement of classical times after a trough in the Middle Ages.

Kantor's two-cycles description applies to widespread western cultural tendencies as well as to views of human nature because the latter are always situated in a broader culture. The first cycle is one beginning with the naturalism and humanism of the Hellenic culture and ending with the supernaturalism and theism of the Middle Ages. The second cycle, well known as the secularization of culture (Kristeller, 1988), begins at the end of the first cycle and shows a gradual recovery of naturalism and humanism from a period before the Renaissance continuing to the present.

Respect for Greek thought. Renaissance humanists worked hard to revive Greek literature which had almost completely died out in the West (Ferguson & Bruun, 1958). Kantor's two cycles analysis of the scientific evolution of psychology reveals the basis for the high esteem in which he regarded the Hellenics, especially Aristotle. Kantor (1963) praised Aristotle's biopsychology for its comprehensiveness, naturalistic foundations, and scientific postulates.

Independent critical thinking and historical bent. No list of characteristics of Renaissance humanists is complete unless it includes their critical and free thinking as well as their historical inclinations (Ferguson & Bruun, 1958). Kantor's (1963, 1969) history of psychology exemplifies historiography in the style of eminent Renaissance humanists Lorenzo Valla and Leonardo Bruni (Artz, 1966). Like these writers' histories, Kantor's is a historicocritical analysis of his subject. Historicocritical works go beyond mere accounts of happenings and developments to an examination of the worldly reasons for humans to have behaved the way they did. When they applied this approach to linguistic acts, Gibbon (1776/1932), Freud (1927/1957), and Kantor (1963, 1969) argued that supernaturalism itself is but the product of humans acting in the world of things and events. Such is the outcome of humanistically inspired knowing strategies calling for independent and critical thinking from a historical perspective.

Today's Humanism

The overriding aim of Kantor's life work was to develop a general epistemological system based on a naturalistic psychology that allowed knowers to arrive at the nature of things and events. Kantor addressed various areas of science and philosophy and labored to produce a truly natural science of human psychological behavior. His tools were observation, observational inference, and reason.

Events and constructs. Kantor's scientific systematics, the logical analysis of science, addresses the humanistic position that all humans have "philosophical positions" and that philosophy is inherently important for psychology (Maddi & Costa, 1972). An important component of Kantor's logical analysis is the distinction between objects and events, on the one

hand, and constructions and interpretations, on the other. Constructions, descriptions of our confrontations with events, are very different from events and things observed. Constructs are products of humans acting in their world and are not to be confused with things to which they may refer. However, the abstractive nature of constructed knowing products does not absolve the user from deriving them from events. Even the most abstract propositions of mathematics can be traced back to humans' complex interactions with objects and events. One example of the humanistic character of mathematics is the "evolution of abstract n -dimensional geometry from rope stretching, through the gradual accumulation of theorems ending in the systemization of Euclid's Elements and the final construction of non-Euclidean systems" (Kantor, 1959, p. 190).

Humanistic monism. Kantor's (1963, 1969) assessment of the humanistic development of spiritual-material dualism, based as it was on a firm commitment to human behavior as always naturalistic, underlies his humanistic monism. Mind and body are inseparable, there is no personal immortality. Rejected are both religious dualism as of soul-body and secular dualisms found in mind/consciousness-body/behavior splits. Kantor's naturalism is so radical that his view on mind departs from certain positions even humanists have taken. Critical comments of Kantorian scholar, Noel W. Smith (1995), derive from Smith's examination of certain other humanists' attempts to naturalize mind especially by biologizing it. Simply put, to the interbehaviorist, placing mind/consciousness inside the brain is to dehumanize, for brains may be part of humans but in themselves are merely biological configurations. If mind/consciousness is nothing but brain activity, the only way of retaining the human is to fall back on some form of secular psychophysical dualism. And all versions of psychophysical dualism, Kantor argued, derive from the antihumanistic spiritual-material world view that was handed down from the patristics.

Holism (antireductionism). Kantor earns further credentials as a radical humanist with his stance against all forms of reductionism, the most flagrant of which make mind and behavior lineal causal products (effects) of genetic and neural processes (causes). To ask, for example, how self-awareness, moral choices, or intelligent acts are made by the brain is to make human experience and action subservient to biological, nonhuman powers and forces. Kantor's field- or system-oriented science and psychology does not hold to the sort of lineal, causal determinism required by reductionistic interpretations. The independence (e.g., brain) and dependence (e.g., awareness, choice, behavior) of lineal mechanism are replaced by the systemic idea of interdependence or mutuality of participating factors. This holistic thinking does not place independent causal powers in any one part, such as the brain, of the psychological event. Instead, psychological events, including cognition—to identify a few of the major classes of participating components—are simultaneously biological, ecological, and social. Putative reductionistically arrived-at causes of psychological events, such as neural processes, are necessary but not sufficient conditions. Kantor's position is that we will only achieve understanding of the human experience by

studying humans in their entirety. This includes our biosocial-ecological evolutionary heritage and contemporary niche.

Human research. Kantor's humanism is further manifested in his position regarding how much can be learned by directing our attention to nonhuman research. He respected the contributions of nonhuman researchers in the area of some elementary psychological processes; however, he strongly suggested that the proper study of humans is humans. Humans may not be distinct because of nonnaturalistic powers harbored within us, but we have evolved as a unique species to the point where nonhuman research will be limiting. As far back as the 1920s, Kantor urged that more attention be paid to linguistic and cultural factors. Such radically humanistic notions were not well-taken in psychology at the time. The discipline was increasingly struggling to become scientific by way of adopting models for theory and research from more established sciences such as physics and biology. It is safe to say that Kantor's views eventually won the day, however, as contemporary psychology reveals ever more human research, with linguistic and sociocultural investigations increasingly prominent.

On experimental methods. North American psychologists have long taken experimental methodology to be the ideal for scientific work and have placed rigorous experimentation as the epitome of psychological study. Humanists have occasionally expressed concern over just how much we can learn about ourselves by way of experimentation. Do the manipulative procedures required by experimental methods permit the full expression of humanness? Kantor (e.g., 1953) acknowledged experimental observations as "among the most efficient and fruitful methods of science" (p. 99) and as "the most effective means of interbehaving precisely with objects and events . . . , assuming, of course, that the situation lends itself to experimental treatment" (p. 114). For years, psychology exhibited a rift between specialists working with humans in the area of personality and clinical psychology and those concentrating on basic science issues. The former eschewed experimentation in favor of naturalistic observation and correlational methodologies; the latter did experiments, consistent with the tendency to associate "hard (preferred) science" with experimentation. By the 1960s, we heard of great advances due to widespread application of experimental methods in personality and social psychology. However, by the 1980s, nonexperimental methodologies prominently returned in human research, or were even adopted on a large scale for the first time in areas (e.g., perception, memory, problem solving, animal behavior) previously dominated by experimentation. It appears that a substantial number of researchers came to the conclusion that many situations do not lend themselves well to experimentation; thus, they followed Kantor's (1939) warning against making experimentation a dogma, sacred ritual, or fetish.

Evolutional (event) continuum. Humanism views humans as of nature, thus as an evolutionary outcome of natural processes. For years, thinkers have attempted to articulate the implications of an evolutional perspective for naturalistic and humanistic world views. Kantor (1959) presented one of the most comprehensive frameworks for evolutional continuity with his event

continuum. According to this conception, all aspects of individual human experience are the outcome of a long series of evolutions, beginning with the first major evolutionary interval—planetary or inorganic. The first evolution involved development of chemical elements, compounds, planets, stars, and the earth. The second great evolution is the first biological one—phylogenetic evolution, during which plants, animals, species, genera, and phyla evolved, apparently by gradual modifications in some cases and by relatively sudden jumps in others. Phylogenetic evolution makes possible the third evolutionary stage, the second biological one, in the development of human psychological events—ontogenetic evolution. This stage begins with the union of the gametes, at which time an inordinately complex set of interactions between the new inchoate individual and its environment begins. When ontogenetic evolution reaches a certain point, biological conditions are such that the fourth major evolutionary interval begins, psychological development. Psychological development continues throughout the life of the individual.

The thoroughgoing evolutionary nature of the event continuum is of cosmic proportions. The great question of how the individual human fits into the cosmos is answered by reference to various stages of naturalistic evolutions. Even the most minute bit of psychological behavior on the part of a single seemingly prosaic person is the outcome of evolutionary processes beginning with the formation of the first chemical elements. All is natural. There is but a continuum of events. There is no point at which nonspatiotemporal factors either produce subsequent events or are themselves mysteriously created.

Field theory and the distinctly human. In their attempts to keep humans as always part of the world, humanists have had occasion to adopt the materialistic side of the venerable Idealism-Materialism dichotomy. Kantor (1969) recognized that materialisms have served as powerful agents in upsetting long-lasting traditions of supersensuousness and other-worldliness that blocked a naturalistic view of things. However, he argued that the ultimate outcome of materialism is the perpetuation of supernaturalistic presuppositions in that matter has always been a reciprocal factor in a metaphysical dualism of which spirit has been the opposite member. Materialism as we have known it in the modern era goes back to the Enlightenment, not to the naturalistic thinking of Democritus, Aristotle, Hippocrates, or Lucretius (Kantor, 1959, 1969).

Kantor's sensitivity to psychological theorizing especially contributed to his rejection of materialism. Time and time again, we find materialists such as Condillac, La Mettrie, and Cabanis not shedding culturally transmitted nonspatiotemporal soul-mind but rather making mind dependent on matter. The result has been a secular dualism that is evident today in materialistic solutions to mind-body questions. To Kantor, behind this thinking lie unexamined postulates that hark back to the patristics verbal sundering of humans from their lived world. His position is that of advanced phenomenologists who likewise object to dualisms "both of the world, i.e., a physical real world and its duplications in terms of representations in a mind,

and of man, i.e., a real man that is visible to everyone and then an 'inner man' consisting of conscious states of which he alone is aware" (Giorgi, 1975, p. 201).

If neither idealism nor materialism is suitable for describing the human experience, what orientation is? Kantor's answer derives from his field-theoretical perspective. His field theory is not simply an attempt to apply physical field constructs to humans. This would be distinctly nonhumanistic and ineffectual. What Kantor does adopt from developments in physical science is the overall world view of modern physics, as opposed to the mechanistic-materialistic orientation of classical physics. According to classical physics, all events were attributed to the action of various substances in the form of chemical elements and imponderable fluids, and matter existed objectively as hard and impenetrable stuff. Classical physics conceptualized matter as do nonphysicists today: something contrasted with energy whereby energy is rather like nonspatiotemporal soul, spirit, or mind (Frank, 1955).

Modern physics has given up on our everyday conception of matter (and energy). Now, "matter" is a system and is known experimentally by operations that are very different from those physicists used to test the presence of some hard or impenetrable stuff like the "matter" of our everyday language (Frank, 1955). Kantor would endorse from a psychological perspective the recommendation Philipp Frank (1955) offers from the standpoint of modern physical science: "Words like 'matter' and 'mind' are left to the language of everyday life where they have their legitimate place and are understood by the famous 'man in the street' unambiguously" (p. 502). When the radical naturalist abandons matter and mind, so goes materialism. The former "mind" is now embodied, which is not to say caused by, or reduced to, neuronal activity. "Mind" does not reside in a body with some sort of distinctive character. Kantor's solution is well-expressed by the phenomenologist M. Merleau-Ponty (1942/1963) who finds that humans do "not live in a world of states of consciousness or representations from which [they] would believe [themselves] able to act on and know external things by a sort of miracle. [They live] in a universe of experience, in a milieu which is neutral with regard to the substantial distinctions between the organism, thought and extension; [they live] in a direct commerce with beings, things and [their] own body" (p. 189).

Human freedom and knowing. The question of human freedom at times has posed problems for humanists who have attempted to sail the line between the Charybdis of classical science's mechanism-materialism and the Scylla of anti-science's supernaturalism. According to 19th-century science and most of today's nonscientists, scientific methods require the postulate of mechanistic-materialistic determinism whereby lineally operating causes preclude freedom of choice in natural events. Such determinism severely conflicts with humanism's commitment to human freedom. In the absence of a naturalistic alternative to lineal mechanism, the humanist may well resort to secular adaptations of religious versions of "free will," manifested in assumptions of human autonomy or of an independent controlling self.

Kantor's field-theoretical psychology finds no place for either the determinism of psychodynamic and behavioristic approaches or the self-actional conceptions of those seeking to avoid treating humans as automatons pushed and pulled about by lineally operating causes. The single-headed arrow of cause→effect, environment→behavior, stimulus→thought→response, and so on is replaced by mutuality of participating field/system factors. Instead of independent variable→dependent variable as ontologically descriptive of the world, interdependency in the form of ↔ reigns. The transactional double-headed arrow (e.g., organism↔object) represents simultaneity of participating factors. There is no absolute directionality to causality as is assumed by both conventional deterministic theories and self-actional alternatives. Kantor expanded on John Dewey's (1896) substitution of circularity for linearity in even the description of reflexes. In *Knowing and the Known*, Dewey and Bentley (1949\1973) endorsed Kantor's contribution to transactional thinking. To the transactionist, humans are never absolutely free of their body or of any other part of their world. They are in-the-world, not independent of it. Choices are made but never autonomously. Numerous spatiotemporal factors allow and prevent (condition) choice: organic, social, interpersonal, financial, legal, domestic, vocational, ecological, and personal.

The classical scientific outlook provided a picture of the individual as a submissive and passive recipient of worldly forces. In the case of knowing, the world battered its way into the knower who read and interpreted internal representations of outside things and events. Interbehavioral field theory captures the humanistic integrated subject-object way of thinking in which the mechanistic knower-known dichotomy no longer applies (e.g., Maslow, 1966). Knower↔Known are inseparable participating field components. Humanness is as much a part of rigorous scientific knowledge as it is of knowing oneself.

The humanities and sciences. The humanist's adoption of a scientific outlook could appear to be at odds with the centuries-old division between the sciences (naturalism) and the humanities and arts (humanism). Kantor's decision to direct his philosophy to psychology permitted him to directly confront this hoary inheritance from supernaturalistic cultural tradition. Once historicocritical analysis (Freud, 1927/1957; Gibbon, 1776/1932; Kantor, 1963, 1969) reveals the naturalistic underpinnings of placing nonspatiotemporal spirit inside humans, we understand the fundamental bias that arbitrarily segregates humans from other natural things and questions the goal of scientific understanding of our humanity. In numerous books and articles, Kantor pointed the way to address humanistic problems and disciplines from a naturalistic perspective: philosophy, logic, education, economics, art and aesthetics, religion, morals and ethics, language, law, literary tragedy, politics, economics, anthropology, culturalization, and, as mentioned several times above, history (Kantor, 1938, 1945, 1950, 1971, 1977, 1981, 1982, 1983). He handled all of these areas without compromising their uniquely human nature.

Conclusion

Kantor's interbehavioral thinking is allied with those humanistic views that have forthrightly linked up with naturalism and rationalism (e.g., Dewey, 1944; Kurtz, 1973; Lamont, 1990; Sellers, 1973). Interbehavioral psychology might be especially attractive to those who aspire to a scientific psychology that never ignores essential human characteristics. From his earliest writing, Kantor (e.g., 1924, 1926) argued that we could include human acts such as knowing and thinking in psychology, not dualistically, but as distinctive naturalistic events. The breadth of interbehavioral psychology's coverage and its integrative character (e.g., Delprato, 1987, 1995, in press) should contribute to the long-term relevance to scientific humanistic psychology of Kantor's corpus and work inspired by it.

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