
FOLK PSYCHOLOGY

An interesting development in philosophy is the recognition that there is such a thing as 'folk psychology' as distinct from 'scientific psychology'. I don't much care for this terminology myself, as the distinction seems to me much more between the new paradigm research and some of the more rigid and programmatic old paradigm research. New paradigm research is based on a philosophy of realism: it says that we must talk about action, not behaviour, when the person is intentionally doing something. The worst of the old paradigm research is based on a philosophy of anti-realism; it wants to talk about variables and behaviours and flow charts rather than about people. It steers clear of the notion of action.

Folk psychology (and hence new paradigm research) is happy to use commonsense notions such as intentions, beliefs, desires and so forth, because these form part of the notion of action. Old paradigm research, involving an anti-realist philosophy, tries to avoid such notions and wants to adopt a consistently scientific language free from any reliance on common sense.

In a recent article, George Graham and Terence Horgan have issued a challenge which seems to me irrefutable, claiming that any attempt to construct a psychology free from such commonsense notions is doomed to failure. Here is what they say:

We have excellent reason to believe that the concept of action, as opposed to mere bodily motion, is a thoroughly folk psychological concept. For, in the extensive philosophical literature on action theory, there is overwhelming agreement that whatever else an action is, it is a piece of behaviour that is explainable by certain folk psychological states of the agent which rationalise it under some description (e.g. Davidson 1963) Goldman 1970; Brand 1984). But if the concept of action is folk psychological in this way, then the anti-realist position entails that we never do anything - persons never act. And if we never do anything, then anti-realists cannot assert anti-realism, for asserting is a form of acting. Indeed, for a vocal noise to count as a speech act requires an **especially rich** set of intentions beliefs, desires, etc., as causes of the noise - as Grice (1957 1969), Bennett (1976) and other philosophers have argued. Therefore, if nobody ever has propositional attitudes, as anti-realists assert, then nobody ever speaks either. In particular, nobody else asserts anything, because asserting is a form of speaking. So, there is a virulent programmatic contradiction inherent in anti-realism: When someone asserts this view, the very content of his assertion entails that he is not actually asserting anything, and indeed is not even speaking. (Graham & Horgan 1988 p 72)

This seems to me a good knock-down argument, and I can't see any way round it. This whole journal, which is quite new, has several articles which are worthy of consideration by anyone who wants to

know what the underpinnings are (or are not) for what they are doing empirically. (Graham G & Horgan T (1988) 'How to be Realistic about Folk Psychology' **Philosophical Psychology** 1/1 69-81)

John Rowan

The Trick of Love

The trick of love is this -
Not to be blinded by the genitals.

They have their place,
Nestling inviting, dark and snug:
Delirious high of the body's low.
But that's not all,
Not even the most of love.

It is a sometime peak,
Explosive, shattering, transcendental.

But so is the clasp of loving hands,
A gentle kiss,
An open and absorbing look.

There are a thousand ways of love,
Each right, sufficient; each on its own inevitable level.

Some wild: some tender: some lip to lip;
Some sated with a silent loving look.

Love is all powerful - feel it in all.
Do not be blinded by the intrusive,
By the obtrusive -
Genital.

Manning Dark

4.4.72
