INTRAPERSONAL EVOLUTION:
The Structured Unconscious,
The Structural More,
And the Semantic Jump

MAURINE ECKLOFF*

IN 1859, CHARLES DARWIN presented the concept of organic evolution of living species in *Origin of the Species*. More recently, theorists have responded to the conceptual, value, and experiential revolutions which occur within human individuals by explaining them as similar evolutionary processes of an internal (intraperpersonal) nature occurring in the internal states of humans which, in turn, precipitate evolution in human affairs (Bois, 1983; Hall, 1959). This evolutionary process, according to J. S. Bois, is accomplished through the process of "semantic jumping" (Bois, 1983, pp. 149-154). As Schroder, Driver, and Streufert explain it:

This change, from lower to higher levels of thought, is a matter of degree, paralleling the evolutionary scale across species and developing with age within species. (P. 5)

* Maurine Eckloff, Ph.D., is a Professor in the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts at the University of Nebraska at Kearney.
When this process occurs generally within the human species it might be said that "social evolution" has occurred. This paper presents a discussion of the concept of individual intrapersonal evolution as a process involving the individual's structured unconscious, the addition of the structural more, and a resulting semantic jump.

The Structured Unconscious

Animals operate instinctually; their plan of operation is programmed into their organism. Birds build nests; beavers build dams; and bees build honeycombs. Humans, too, have a predisposition to act, a first nature that determines some of their behavior, just as it does for the birds, the beavers, or the bees. Humans, however, have the ability to use symbolic language and this separates them from the animals:

Human thought is less stimulus bound; action can be delayed; a given stimulus gives rise to a greater number of outcomes...the moth has no alternative when faced with a "light" and immediately flies toward it, whereas a human engaging in complex thought processes can perceive stimuli in many ways and can consider many ways of interrelating these perceptions for his adaptive purposes. (Schroder, Driver and Streufert, 1967, p. 5)

Language is the dividing line between human beings and other animals, and it may be language that enables one to feel, think, and act in a way which is considered human. Humans, as contrasted with other living creatures, acquire a second nature which is structural in nature (Schroder, Driver, Streufert, 1967) and one which general semanticists define as the structured unconscious, a personal, individualized structural system for processing information, which acts as a filter for abstracting, ordering, labeling, and valuing:

Humans as semantic transactors — as thinking, feeling, self-moving, and electrochemical processes — have a first nature
that determines some of their behavior.... But humans also acquire a second nature, which determines the manner in which they transact with people, things, situations, language and symbols.... This personal second nature reaches an even finer degree of differentiation: the structured unconscious becomes a distinctive personal unconscious, a dynamic pattern of attitudes, habits, internalized values, and modes of thinking by which each person relates to the world of things and people, observes and judges the world, and expresses himself to himself and to his surroundings. (Bois, 1983, pp. 141-142)

Humans assimilate into their unconscious level patterns of activity that were not inherited through the chromosomes which they received from their parents. These patterns are cultural and vary from one culture to another. Broadly speaking, they differentiate a Chinese person from a Japanese, a German from a French person. Cultural differences are found in vocabularies, in social mannerisms, and in the way people eat, cook, and furnish their homes, play games, dance, greet one another — do whatever is done, as we say, "spontaneously" or "naturally" (Whorf, 1956).

This cultural second nature reaches an even finer degree of differentiation when the cultural unconscious becomes a distinctive personal unconscious, a dynamic pattern of attitudes, habits, internalized values, and modes of thinking by which each person relates to the world of things and people, observes and judges that world and expresses one's self to one's self and one's surroundings.

Because unconscious is usually taken as a psychological term, one may fall back into the rut of distinguishing between mental and physical and may overlook the fact that this acquired second nature, the structured unconscious, goes deep into one's muscular tissues and glandular and nervous systems, and affects the entire being.

According to one psychiatrist:
Though obvious, it is also perhaps well to emphasize the fact that distinctions between organic and psychogenic are sometimes far from absolute. Organic changes in the organism must occur not only in the psychopath, the schizophrenic, and the hysterical patient, but in all people in response to every item of experience. He who learns French, gets married, dissects a cadaver, is frightened by a dog or looks for a new word in the dictionary can scarcely be conceived of as emerging with the synaptic patterns of his nervous system entirely unchanged. It would not be profitable to confine our concept of what is organic to the cellular level with so much already known which indicates that molecular and submolecular changes (colloidal, electrochemical, etc.) are regularly resulting from our acts of learning or, if one prefers, from all our conditioning. He who ever saw a miser, an honest man, a bigot, a golf enthusiast, or a person who genuinely loves another will not have to be told that such changes can be enduring. (Cleckley, 1950, p. 442)

Features of the individual's personal structured unconscious are built-in and become part of the individual like the skin that stands between the flesh and the outside. The unconscious is woven through the semantic organism. Even at the thinking level we can note hidden assumptions, theories, and methods of thinking. They form the basis of one's logical consistency. Edward T. Hall writes of this hidden dimension:

We have been taught to think linearly rather than comprehensively, and we do this not through conscious design or because we are not intelligent or capable, but because of the way in which deep cultural undercurrents structure life in subtle but highly consistent ways that are not consciously formulated...these hidden currents shape our lives; yet their influence is only beginning to be identified. (Hall, 1976, p. 9)
The Structural More

The patterning of the structured unconscious determines much of one's behavior. With the addition of significant information into the intrapersonal communication system there are changes in the structure of the unconscious processing with this newly introduced information. Following Bois, we can label these changes the "structural more." "Linear" and "additive" thinkers believe one and one are always two, and two and two are always four. The additive thinker believes that "one more" means exactly "one more" and nothing else. Yet, one more may mean a spectacular increase in structural complexity, a new order of existence which the additive mode of thinking does not reveal. One more is not simply an additive "more." In some cases it causes significant restructuring of the activity of the individual's information processing system.

When one thinks with natural numbers one can add and subtract. Trouble begins when one attempts to use additive thinking in human affairs. For instance, when a third person is added to two who are part of an intimate relationship, the third person is more than the addition of one. The third person causes a transformation of the relationship, a restructuring. Any highly salient information introduced into the structure causes a transformation, a restructuring. This restructuring is not evident in simply stating that three is one more than two.

Korzybski said:

With our present low development and the lack of structural researches, we still keep an additive Aristotelian language, which is perhaps, able to deal with additive, simple, immediate and comparatively unimportant issues, but is entirely unfit to deal with principles which underlie the most fundamental problems of life. (1958, p. 265)
Additive thinking, which considers "more" and "plus" linearly and does not indicate a transformation of the elements of the whole, is present in most everyday thinking.

The structure of the whole determines what elements will be accepted into the structure and in what quantity and with what procedure. The whole, in the case of humans, is not simply the psychophysical activities that we have in common with all other members of the human family; it is the individual as a highly differentiated semantic transactor with a unique past environment and anticipated future, and with unique thoughts, feelings, values, and bodily habits (Bois, 1983, p. 147).

The introduction of highly salient information into the structure as a whole is illustrated by Helen Keller, the deaf and blind author who wrote of the experience of what might be labeled a "semantic jump" when she suddenly realized that the word "water" represented the cool liquid flowing over her hand:

Suddenly I felt a mist consciousness as of something forgotten — a thrill of returning thought; and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me, I knew then that "w-a-t-e-r" meant the wonderful cool something that was flowing over my hand. That living word awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free. There were barriers still, it is true, but barriers that could in time be swept away. I left the well-house eager to learn. Everything had a name, and each name gave birth to a new thought. As we returned to the house every object which I touched seemed to quiver with life. That was because I saw everything with the strange new sight that had come to me. On entering the door I remembered the doll I had broken. I felt my way to the hearth and picked up the pieces. I tried vainly to put them together. Then my eyes filled with tears; for I realized what I had done, and for the first time I felt repentance and sorrow. (Keller, p. 114)
For Helen Keller the addition of this information can be labeled a *structural more*, resulting in changes in the *structured unconscious* of the magnitude necessary to cause a significant change in her cognitive structuring, a new way of viewing reality, in other words, a *semantic jump*.

**Semantic Jump**

Bois explained the semantic jump as an internal revolution, a restructuring of reality. The semantic jump indicates a radical, irreversible change in an individual's structural system which affects the entire organism, the entire structure of the human information processing system. A personal revolution may be compared to a political or scientific revolution occurring in society.

Bois (1983) explains the semantic jump by stating that with the structural more there is a corresponding change in the semantic transaction pattern. This change, even if slight, involves a modification of one's outlook on life. In some cases it may be spectacular, it may mean a genuine revolution in our inner world of ideas and values, indicating a significant change in an individual's structure which affects the entire organism. This may be compared to the experience of the astronaut who finds himself weightless for the first time after being torn out of the gravitational forces.

According to Bois, semantic transactions have seven aspects, and significant change in any of these seven can precipitate a semantic jump (Bois, 1983). A human may be described as a thinking, feeling, self-moving, electrochemical process within an environment and in process with the past and future. The following are examples of semantic transactions:

1. Electrochemical aspect — sex glands become active at puberty.
2. Environmental aspect — move from the country to the city.
3. Feeling aspect — loss of a loved one; defeat in a political campaign.
4. Thinking aspect — political or religious conversion.
5. Self-moving aspect — learning to dance, to paint, to type.
6. Aspect of the past — understanding past events which are influencing current action.

Any significant change, such as those above, results in the addition of a structural more which, if significant in nature, results in a major structural change in the structured unconscious causing changes in cognitive structuring of incoming information. Each semantic jump may be thought of as an evolutionary intrapersonal change. The structural more causes major changes in the structured unconscious, resulting in a semantic jump, with significant changes in the perceptions and valuing of the individual. With the semantic jump there are several factors present: (1) the introduction of highly salient information and (2) a dramatic change in belief and/or behavior.

General semantics, as an educational discipline, strongly emphasizes relationships between language and human behavior. It is based on a broad survey of fields of knowledge: mathematics, logic, physics, biology, neurology, psychology and psychiatry. Through the process of abstracting we construct our reality. With the semantic jump there is a reconstruction of this reality, a rearrangement, a movement from one "reality" to another.

In order to change another person, in any way, one must first cause alterations in the other's language/symbol system. Any change in this system is a transaction with the whole organism. One cannot separate out or isolate any part — the "mental" from the physical, the emotional from the rational:
This division...into appeals to the "intellect" and appeals to the "emotions" is no more valid and accurate than the division of the living organism into a "body," "mind," and "soul." Scientific psychologists have long ceased to do this. Why shouldn't we be as sensitive to the validity of our assumptions as the psychologists? (Murray, 1944, p. 37)

The language/symbol system of an individual structures his or her reality, and to implement change there must be a change in the language structure.

The intrapersonal revolution, the semantic jump, is accomplished, as Bois held, by the addition of a structural more into the structured unconscious. This theory takes us away from the additive thinking of the classical method of explaining reality.

The classical view of the world fits nicely with the language we speak. Things are what they were, what they are, and what they will be. Whatever happens to individuals is thought to happen as a movement in space or in time. It does not happen through them, and it does not transform their intimate structure as it happens, but pushes them unchanged along the road of history from year to year. Contrasted with this simple view of things, the concept of semantic jumping allows one to move to a learned awareness that the world and oneself are swirls of restless processes. Our bodies live because they are complexes of actions, circulation, chemical exchanges, respiration, and electric charges in constant variation. This moving flux of changing processes is the basis of human existence. As Alan Watts explains it: "The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it and join the dance." (Watts, 1951, p. 43)

A system which rationalizes a subject-predicate language and therefore conceives of the world as made of actors engaged in actions is inadequate to meet the requirements of up-to-date thinking. Modern theorists, with an understanding of intrapersonal cognitive functioning, including the con-
cept of the structured unconscious and the structural more resulting in a semantic jump, can begin the process of disen-gaging themselves from the shackles of classical thinking through a series of historical semantic jumps.

REFERENCES