



INTRODUCTION

## Introduction to Special Section on the Psychology of Jacob Robert Kantor

Mitch J. Fryling<sup>1</sup>  · Dennis J. Delprato<sup>2</sup>

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In 1917, the founder of this journal, J. R. Kantor, culminated his work for the doctorate with the submission of his dissertation to the Department of Philosophy at the University of Chicago. The four articles in this special section were prepared in the centennial of Kantor's dissertation as a modest tribute to the thinker that Mountjoy and Cone (2006) referred to as iconoclastic, the hallmark of Kantor's intellectual contributions. Kantor's radical proposals were driven by his conviction that psychology had far to go to become a thoroughgoing natural science. Although his thinking could be seen as adhering to that of the behavioristic movement that was getting underway when he was a graduate student, he revealed ways in which behavioristic views fell short of the naturalistic ideal. As routes he promoted early on (e.g., the rejection of reductionistic and hereditarian postulates, field or system approaches, multivariable analyses, psychological behavior as always functional, interdependences in behavior-environment relations, and cognitive events as authentic behavioral happenings) have gradually worked their way into the discipline, however minimally at this point, Kantor has become increasingly vindicated. We hope the four presentations that follow in this special section will provide some insight into the depth and breadth of Kantor's contributions. For readers interested in exploring Kantor's career further, Mountjoy and Cone (2006) offer an excellent overview of Kantor from his earliest years onward in *Modern Perspectives on J. R. Kantor and Interbehaviorism*.

One obvious question concerning Kantor's intellectual voyage is just how he came to primarily affiliate with the discipline of psychology given that his Ph.D. was earned in philosophy. Mountjoy and Cone (2006) address a crucial part of the answer to this question by pointing out that at the time of Kantor's enrollment at the University of Chicago, psychology and philosophy were closely related and students were expected to take courses in both departments. Furthermore, the philosophy and psychology departments were in the early stages of a new way of thinking, what James (1904) found unique to Chicago, the Chicago "School of Thought." The thought was that inspired by John Dewey (i.e., functionalism). In the first presentation in this section, Delprato identifies how Kantor's dissertation, although bereft of any discussion of psychology, reveals several themes of the psychology Kantor was to later put forth. Readers interested in the details of the contents of the dissertation are directed to Mountjoy and Cone (1995). In the second paper, Ribes Iñesta describes how his own work, especially his theory of behavior, was derived from the foundation laid by Kantor's work. The third paper, written by Hayes and Fryling, elaborates on Kantor's contributions to psychology specifically, and especially emphasizes Kantor's construction of the Psychological Event, including implications for investigation. Finally, Peña Correal describes how he was initially influenced by Kantor's work, as well as how he and his students pursued a career of research derived from Kantorian foundations in Colombia.

Kantor's work may have been ahead of its time. For this reason, it is important that we celebrate Kantor's career and not forget the many implications of Kantor's work for the continued development of a natural science of behavior.

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✉ Mitch J. Fryling  
Mitchell.Fryling2@calstatela.edu

<sup>1</sup> Division of Special Education and Counseling, California State University, Los Angeles, 5151 State University Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90032, USA

<sup>2</sup> Saline, MI, USA

### Compliance with Ethical Standards

The manuscript does not describe research with either human or non-human subjects.

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