

In Memoriam

Kenneth MacCorquodale
1919-1986

Kenneth MacCorquodale was born in Olivia, Minnesota, on June 26, 1919. He was educated at the University of Minnesota, where he received his B.A. in 1941 and his Ph.D. in 1946. He served on the faculty of that university until his retirement to Emeritus in 1981, having chaired the Department of Psychology from 1960 to 1963. To members of the Association of Behavior Analysis, he is probably best known for his 1969 and 1970 papers, "B. F. Skinner's *Verbal Behavior*: A Retrospective Appreciation," and "On Chomsky's Review of Skinner's *Verbal Behavior*," both published in the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior (JEAB)*. Were a citation analysis of his publications done, however, it would undoubtedly show that his best-known work is "On a Distinction between Hypothetical Constructs and Intervening Variables," co-authored with Paul Meehl and published in 1948. This paper laid the cornerstone for whatever the following generation of psychologists knew about philosophy of science, and its influence is still widely felt.

Although B. F. Skinner was a member of the Minnesota faculty throughout MacCorquodale's student years, it was William Heron who served as his doctoral advisor, and Richard Elliott to whom he looked as mentor. The University of Minnesota has a tradition of career appointments to the psychology faculty, those persons in turn giving form and substance to the unique character of that Department. One becomes all too aware of the brief history of our discipline in realizing that Richard Elliott *established* Minnesota's Department of Psychology in 1919, the year of MacCorquodale's birth, serving as its chairman until 1951 and retiring from the faculty in 1956. Thus, in the careers of these two men, psychology at Min-

nesota is compassed, from its establishment as an independent department to the present decade.

It was Elliott who first offered MacCorquodale a faculty appointment at Minnesota, and who later invited him to serve as Assistant Editor for the Appleton-Century-Crofts Century Psychology Series. MacCorquodale began editorial responsibilities with the Century Series in 1955, assuming the head editorship on Elliott's retirement and continuing in this position until 1973 when the series ended. The Century Series, initiated in 1929 with Boring's *History of Experimental Psychology*, is unarguably the most important series in the history of our field. Including the classic works of Skinner, Hull, and Tolman in its early days, it continued under MacCorquodale's guidance with the publication of influential works by Bijou and Baer, Honig, E. Reese, and Skinner, just to mention some of its behavioral authors. MacCorquodale became well-known for his editorial talents. Always with tact and discretion, he was consummately skilled at helping authors to say better what had already been said well.

Although MacCorquodale's personal professional interests eventually came to settle on radical behaviorism, the first decade of his professional life was spent exploring the purposive behaviorism of E. C. Tolman. A series of papers focusing on latent learning, most of which were co-authored with his fellow Minnesotan, Paul Meehl, was published in the *Journal of Comparative and Physiological Psychology* during the late 1940s and early 1950s. MacCorquodale and Meehl participated in the 1951 Dartmouth Conference on Learning Theory that culminated in the 1954 volume, *Modern Learning Theory*—published, not unexpectedly, in the Century Psychology Series. MacCorquodale and Meehl's con-

tribution evaluated Tolman's position, and it remains the definitive critical analysis of expectancy theory.

MacCorquodale was a peerless classroom teacher. His preferred style was the traditional lecture: spare, elegant, and precise. His course in verbal behavior, which he offered for the first time in 1952, presented a "psychological analysis of the act of talking." The closest we have to a public record of the MacCorquodale course—both its style and content—is found in Stephen Winokur's (1976) *A Primer of Verbal Behavior*. Winokur, a MacCorquodale student, sat through the Verbal Behavior course twice, and taught it himself on a third occasion when MacCorquodale was absent on sabbatical leave. While the *Primer* is Winokur's own book, anyone familiar with MacCorquodale's course recognizes a powerful influence there. In his introduction to the book, MacCorquodale said, "It does not elaborate greatly; it does not repeat itself nor underscore especially important points because, in fact, it makes almost no *unimportant* ones." Precisely that could be said of MacCorquodale's own pedagogy.

At the encouragement of A. C. Catania, MacCorquodale prepared the two papers concerned with Skinner's book, *Verbal Behavior*, for publication in *JEAB*. Curiously enough, MacCorquodale did not use Skinner's book in his own course on verbal behavior—he said that Skinner had "over-written" it to the point where it proved awkward as an expository classroom text—but his deep admiration of the work was clear. Still, in rereading his "Retrospective Appreciation," one notes the frequent points at which MacCorquodale suggested that something is incompletely worked out, not the least example of which is response probability. The reply to Chomsky when it appeared had been long needed by the radical behaviorist community. It successfully confirmed the deep suspicion that the emperor of linguistics indeed wore no

clothes, at least on that infamous outing of 1959. The response, however, would continue to be valuable whether Chomsky had written his misinformed review or not. MacCorquodale's reply to Chomsky's "Criticism 3: Speech is complex behavior whose understanding and explanation require a complex, mediational, neurological-genetic theory" articulates the behavioristic answer to *all* applications of this argument, directed at speech or any other "higher mental process."

Following his retirement from Minnesota, MacCorquodale assumed an Adjunct Professorship at the University of California, San Diego. In the fall of 1984 a conference in honor of his 65th birthday, organized by his former student and colleague Travis Thompson, was held in St. Paul, Minnesota. The papers of this conference, edited by Thompson and Michael Zeiler under the title, *Analysis and Integration of Behavioral Units*, have recently been published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates (1986), and will be reviewed in the next issue of this Journal.

Through the influence of his scholarship, his teaching, and his editorial work, Kenneth MacCorquodale contributed to the advancement of scientific psychology in general, and behavior analysis in particular. Anyone privileged to know the man could not help but be impressed with his erudition, his style, his dry wit, his brilliant facility with language. Yet he was a man who neither promoted nor aggrandized himself; he was a modest and private person. Most important to him, he was at last able in retirement to join his wife, Sally Sperling (professor of psychology, University of California, Riverside), from whom conflicting careers had kept him separated. It was at their home in Coronado, California that, following an illness, he died on February 28, 1986.

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