A Catalyst for Discussion on Observables, Inference, and Behaviorism

William L. Palya
Jacksonville State University

1. A key peck occurred.

2. The key pecking behavior was performed.
3. The pigeon emitted a response.
4. Learning was demonstrated when the pigeon emitted the response.
5. Learning was exhibited by the pigeon when it emitted the response.
6. The pigeon learned the response.
7. The pigeon learned to make the response.
8. The pigeon learned that the response would be followed by food.
9. The pigeon learned the rule that food follows the response.
10. The pigeon learned to use rules in order to get the food.
11. The pigeon used rules, drawn from its set of evolutionary-stable strategies, to solve the problem preventing it from attaining the food it needed.
12. The pigeon needed food and, therefore, used its problem-solving strategies in order to determine the correct rules required to satisfy its need, and then emitted that operant.
13. In order to reduce his drive for food, the pigeon used covert operants to retrieve the correct rules and stimulus equivalents. After choosing the goal with the best cost-benefit ratio, he implemented his problem-solv-

Too simplistic.
Doesn't address the
complexity of psycho-
logical experience.

- ing strategies by emitting the optimal overt operant.
14. Because the criterion of uncertainty was exceeded, Charlie selected the relevant cues and gained the reinforcing information. Expected consequences were reinstated through covert operants. Using rules drawn from the meta-rule store, he then decided to allocate behavior to the alternatives of not responding and responding, so that they matched their relative reinforcement densities corrected by the biasing factor appropriate for that instant in time. Key pecking was used as an index of this behavioral potentiality whenever pecking was correlated with the quantitative model; otherwise, the key pecking behavior was considered to be under the influence of a chaotic attractor, and an empirically determined transformation was used.

It seems like the
bill for all this
indulgence
will come due
sooner or later.