

Notes on Reductionism and related matters

Sorry! — This work is still not yet ready for general release.
I now predict that it will be ready by the end of June 2007 (not May as forecast previously).

However the main reason for the holdup may itself be of interest:

I have encountered the following two works, and I feel obliged to at least consider their impact first, despite the delay. (Indeed readers might find these works directly informative, without waiting for my thoughts on such matters):

(1) J.W.Slap and L.Slap-Shelton (1991), *The Schema in Clinical Psychoanalysis*. Analytic Press: Hillsdale NJ, London. [Reviewed in *J.Amer.Psychoanalytic Association*, **42**(1), 298-301; (1994).]

This support for the Piagetian approach came from an unexpected quarter. Psychiatrists appeared to ignore such thinking even though H.P.Hildebrand delivered a paper on the subject at a BPS conference in about 1974: ("*The importance of the work of Jean Piaget for the Psycho-analyst*").

It is thus refreshing to see such a "revival"; though because there is almost no overlap between the bibliographies of the two works, it rather looks like a re-invention of the wheel.

But to get back to the present paper: Attention-grabbing though Slap's book may be for the *Piagetian-project as a whole*, I am not sure it is truly relevant to our immediate topic of *reductionism*.

I guess I'll just have to decide about that!

(2) G.E.Atwood and R.D.Stolorow (1984), *Structures of Subjectivity: Explorations in Psychoanalytic Phenomenology*. Academic Press. — [My underlining.].

In trying to get a proper understanding of the reductionism-critics, I had the distinct feeling that their *stated* objections did not quite add up, and that their disapproval had deeper (perhaps unconscious) roots. Any such deeper roots might or might not be valid, but in either case it would obviously be scientifically useful to at least identify such assumptions. The late Sir John Eccles did *explicitly* bypass reductionism by invoking *the Divine* at the synapse (see my 1999 book). A less extreme metaphysical position was adopted by existentialists such as Sartre — and the Atwood/Stolorow book gives a useful summary of such views, (written conveniently for non-philosophers).

So: Are such thoughts relevant in considering the objections to reductionism? Surely "yes". But then where does that take us? — Well that is perhaps to be the essence of the not-yet-finished paper, so let's wait and see!

Meanwhile, discussion would be welcome: rrtraill4@dodo.com.au

BACKGROUND TO THIS PAPER:

It was originally intended as an appendix for the paper www.ondwelle.com/OSM05.pdf — which has the title: *The Gulf between Behavioural Psychology and Fundamental Psychology: a systematic attempt to bridge the gap*.

About 50 references in drafts hitherto, including:

The Main Critical Works Originally Considered:

Bannister, D (1968). "The myth of physiological psychology". *Bull. Brit. Psychol. Soc.*, **21**, 229-231.

Rose, S.P.R. (1987). *Molecules and Minds*. Open U.P.: Milton Keynes, UK

Rose, S.P.R. (1992) *The Making of Memory*. Bantam/Transworld: London

Rose, S.P.R. (2004) "Memory beyond the synapse". *Neuron Glia Biology*, **1**, 211-217.

Re-published online (2005) as www.open.ac.uk/science/biosci/research/rose/Memory%20Beyond%20Synapse.pdf

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