



Let Us Now Praise General Psychology and General Psychologists: Following William Bevan

Symposium Introduction

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On behalf of Lew Lipsitt, Bob Perloff, and other members of Division 1, I would like to welcome you to this symposium. I specifically mention Lew and Bob because, truth to tell and credit due, they were mainly responsible for conceiving of this session's theme – as announced in its title, "Let Us Now Praise General Psychology and General Psychologists" – and its honorific purpose – as conveyed by its subtitle, "Following William Bevan". So I am happily here as Chair because of their kindness, and presumably because I had a hand some years ago in the publication of a *festschrift* for Bill Bevan (Kessel, 1995a). So my first task is a sad-happy one. Sadly Bill had a fall early in the summer and as a result was not able to travel to San Francisco (thus missing his first APA Convention in many years). Happily, however, Dottie Bevan has journeyed way west from

¹ *Afterthought, October, 2001. At this particular, and particularly troubled, moment in history only one quote is sufficient to convey the perennial challenge of Bill's vision and wisdom (Bevan, 1982): "Those who have heard me preach before know that my conviction about the importance of understanding history is practically motivated, for I believe that if we are to achieve a balanced national life, we must somehow reconcile our needs for a technology based on science with those for a humanely inspired culture. ... We can no longer confidently believe that the effects of science and technology upon the fate of society are always unidirectional and beneficent. We have known the atomic bomb; we are seeing large-scale, computer-inspired bank theft; we can anticipate abuses of the new biotechnology ... The critical unresolved question of the world in which we live is still whether its inhabitants can control their own destiny; prevent a nuclear war; preserve peace on a significant scale; achieve economic and social justice; conserve scarce natural resources, cope with global overpopulation; conquer famine and disease; in short, to preserve and improve the quality of our lives together. No one can answer such a question with confidence, but of one thing we can be certain. It is too important to be left to the politicians, to the business community, and to the generals" (pp. 1304, 1320-21).*

Durham, and we are all absolutely delighted to welcome her. Of course we know that Bill is with us in spirit.

My second task is to say a few words about the symposium theme and purpose. On the symposium theme, I will simply say that we are here to amplify the signal or message, in Lew Lipsitt's (2001) words, that "general psychology is like the old-time psychology, which is to say that we are interested in expanded and even expansive sorts of psychology". As the discipline grows ever more fractionated and as knowledge, or perhaps more accurately, information becomes increased and value of "ex-

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panded, expansive" views of psychology become all-the-greater, if not critical.

There is, of course, that old definition of the generalist that some of us dabbling dilettantes cleverly deliver every now and then ... the one about the generalist as "someone who's so rounded as to have no point"! Well, my hopefully-better-than-clever counter (concocted for this symposium) is that the generalist is "so grounded as to have great perspective". That may need a little rhetorical polishing, but I trust the central idea will become clear as these papers proceed. And if definitions or aphorisms cannot capture or convey the irreducible richness of a concept — in this case the great perspective that comes from deep grounding — I would urge everyone to read, and re-read, and re-re-read, Bill Bevan's "generalist" writings.

I particularly have in mind a series of evocatively-titled essays, many published in the *American Psychologist* from 1970 onwards, that contain "a vision of psychological scholarship and its place in soci-

This Symposium was presented at the San Francisco meeting of the American Psychological Association in August, 2001. It was sponsored by the Society for General Psychology.

ety and human affairs that is as searching as its voice becomes increasingly passionate and poetic" (Kessel, 1995b, p. 2)". In this combination of vision and voice, their reflection of broader intellectual and social movements, and their organic connection to Bill's actions as an organizational leader (not least of APA), these essays are close to unique in the psychological and social science literature (Bevan, 1970; 1971a; 1971b; 1976; 1980; 1982; 1986; 1991). Which means, quite simply, that today — as always and evermore and in great gratitude — we are all "following William Bevan."

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The Tragedy of the Commons

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A few years ago, Bill Bevan (1989) wrote an extraordinary piece dealing with "the tragedy of the commons". In it, Bill reminded his readers of the function of the New England commons, which was common ground, often surrounded by homes, in 16th and 17th century New England towns and villages. The legacy of the commons is, of course, the greensward that is a part of many New England communities, Boston included, even today. This common ground represented a commonwealth for everyone. Besides

being a place for animals to graze, it served as a locus for recreation and community, a venue for meetings, the gathering place for militia, and even, at times, a place where outdoor commerce was transacted.

My wife and I spend some time in Brunswick, Maine, each summer. Brunswick has long had a very substantial commons, located on the outskirts of town. It is forested, redolent of pine needles and, delightfully, in the fullness of summer, often full of wild blueberries. As always, we spent many happy hours walking the commons this summer, enjoying the by-now 250-year legacy of the Brunswick town founders to those who came after them.

Unfortunately, as Bill recalled in his article, at some point in some towns the fundamental point of the commons began to deteriorate. It usually did so when someone in the community chose to exploit land set aside for everyone's use for their own selfish purposes. When a commons was overgrazed, for example, insufficient grass remained for everyone else. Hence, "the tragedy of the commons", a metaphor for the tragic consequences of individual greed and avarice as they affect the community as a whole.

Bill's metaphor struck a strong chord with me when I first read "The tragedy of the commons". It still does. If anything, regretfully, the metaphor is even more apt today than when Bill first shared it with us.

As is true of so much else of what Bill Bevan has written and said, the relevance of the metaphor has deepened over time and with further reflection. In this case, the metaphor of the "tragedy of the commons" has become even more descriptive of American society as it has moved from the moderate left to the immoderate right. As a consequence, the tragedy of the commons has urgent relevance to our lives as psychologists, teachers, and researchers, even more to our roles as citizens of the United States of America. Let me share my perception of the following tragedies of our commonwealth on the national and international stage:

As citizens of the world, we are represented by an administration in Washington that appears willing to countenance, not to say encourage, our country's profligate — and increasingly dangerous — overconsumption of fossil fuels. This choice is in conscious preference to the acceleration of efforts to reduce the use of fossil fuels so as to begin to address the problems of global warming. In turning its back on the Kyoto Accords on global warming, the United States has reneged on international agreements to confront a worldwide global threat, global warming. As we consume ever greater quantities of fossil fuels, not only do we leave less for others, we assume an ever greater, ever more disproportionate share of the responsibility for the disastrous conse-

quences of the warming of our planet.

As citizens of the world, and as citizens of a member nation of the United Nations, we continue to witness our country, the richest and most favored in the history of humankind, systematically refuse to pay its fair share of United Nations dues. It has done so on a range of pretexts that even the most forgiving among us must confess have lost their logic. In choosing to deny support to the only international body capable of advocating for the rights of the weak and the responsibilities of the powerful, we have diminished our moral standing in the world as well as any pretext to viewing ourselves as a nation of compassion and justice.

Closer to home, as American citizens, we are participating, actively or passively, whether we like it or not, in the dismantling of efforts to ensure that every American citizen, rich or poor, black or white, has equal access to the opportunities for a good life higher education in this country provides. While the present administration certainly seems intent on accelerating this process, there are those of us of other political persuasions who also find the logic for these steps to be compelling. From my perspective, though, taking such a position means that we are opting to turn our backs on the common good – a well-educated citizenry – in favor of maintaining a system of higher education reserved for those of us who have, by accident of birth, good fortune, or economic advantage, attended good schools and grown up in intellectually active homes.

Again, as citizens, we are about to enjoy the benefits of a very substantial tax reduction, which will doubtless put a good deal more money in our pockets. We are the lucky ones. Many others in our country, however, less fortunate than we are, will not see much difference in the taxes they pay, but they will certainly see – and suffer from – the reduction in civic services that will necessarily accompany the tax cut, which is clearly designed largely to benefit those of us fortunate enough to have good jobs and good incomes. In this instance, then, the value of the commons is reduced for those who most depend on it, while those who can afford good medical care, adequate pensions, and decent housing will continue to manage quite nicely. Let me share an example: in the small midwestern state in which I live, a substantial tax reduction over the past few years has meant, perforce, a substantial reduction in state support for both higher education and K-12 this year. While doubtless a goal of those who put forth the tax reduction in the first place, the consequence is to withhold from some of the young people of Iowa the advantages high quality education could have provided them.

Still again, as citizens of the United States, many of us live in communities that have begun to turn their backs on the concept of universal public education

for all, in favor of a voucher system that, effectively, takes funds for public education and makes them available for private education. The rationale for vouchers will appeal to psychologists, who appreciate better than anyone the power of operant conditioning, in this case, the principle that the best educational opportunities will ultimately attract the most students and the highest level of financial support. Nonetheless, the premise is confounded by the inordinate difficulties, financial and otherwise, of educating children whose preparation for school has left them in greater need than others of special services. In this instance, then, the commons is a vision of quality education for all. Vouchers cannot help but reduce the quality of what is available for all in favor of quality only for some.

Finally, still as American citizens, we are being asked to endorse efforts of a variety of kinds to degrade our natural environment – our national parks, forests, rivers, and streams. Political rhetoric to the contrary, the aim of these efforts to overturn decades of conservation of natural resources is, simply, to enrich the officers and stockholders of oil, paper, forest products, and other companies wishing to exploit our natural resources for the benefit of the few and the mighty. The consequence? A diminished natural environment, fewer public parks and recreation areas, more slag piles, more deforested peaks and valleys, and more polluted streams and rivers, so that dividends can continue to flow to the owners of the industries responsible.

I can just hear some of you thinking to yourselves, "Sure, we wish all of this weren't happening, but what can we do? We only have one vote, and if the country has chosen to move in this direction, that's democracy."

I'm not sure that would have been Bill Bevan's response. As long as I've known him, Realist that he is, he's nonetheless been willing to take chances for what he believes, even if the odds aren't high that he will be heard. Just as the Stockbridge farmer or storekeeper or blacksmith of the early 1800s, on seeing a neighbor letting his cattle overgraze the commons, had to choose between risking his neighbor's ire and trying to avert another tragedy of the commons, we have the responsibility to do what we can, 200 years farther along, to try to save our planet for our grandchildren and their grandchildren. If our continued overconsumption of energy makes global warming inevitable, and that seems to be the way things are going, it simply isn't enough to tell ourselves we can't do anything about it or it won't affect us. Said another way, if we don't join our neighbors around the world in reversing the tidal wave, literally, that could destroy everything we have built for generations to come, we will have

borne silent, tragic witness to our role in a massive assault on the commons we call earth on a scale unknown to humankind in all our history

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General Psychology and its Implications for Management

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In a recent edition of the Chronicle of Education Dr. Zimbardo bemoaned the exodus of bright young Ph.D.'s to the foreign terrain of management and industry. I'd like today to address you as one who also gravitated to this terrain and lived to tell the tale of full and rich professional life.

I was educated as a psychologist with a strong emphasis on the physical and biological sciences. This included work at the University of Wisconsin in the Harry Harlow primate laboratory and at the University of South Dakota in the primate laboratory of Roger Davis. I went to Emory University to continue my work with Arthur Riopelle in the primate laboratory. It was at Emory University that I first encountered Bill Bevan and this opened up an entire new world for me. With his support and mentoring, I broadened my horizons into areas of perception, the importance of modeling, and other areas of general psychology. Further I learned and came to have an understanding of decision-making, which was later broadened by my work with Wilson P. (Spike) Tanner and his associates. Most of all, I learned the importance of planning, organizing, and evaluation of the outcomes of studies and experiments and to apply the results.

I was and still consider myself a general psychologist. My academic training led me to a career in the aerospace industry as well as academics. While working in the aerospace industry during its early days, I was able to use my training in general psychology to assess the astronauts' performance in target detection, general behavior in confined areas, etc. These led to the development and management of the initial Apollo simulation to assess the capability of astronauts for the lunar landing. I also led the development and management of the F-106 variable stability trainer. This aircraft was designed for the test pilot school at Edwards Airforce Base and used to assess pilot skills and new systems. In all of these activities I had to tolerate the accusations of being a rat runner etc., by my en-

gineering colleagues. The success of these endeavors silenced the skeptics.

Further, with the support of Bill Bevan, I was able to establish a model graduate management program at the University of Maryland University College, which has been emulated by any number of institutions.

I believe General Psychology provides an important background for the improvement of management processes. Particularly as it applies to consideration of the organization as a changing and dynamic system.

For good or ill the study of general psychology has impacted modern day management practices. The bible of MBA's, the Harvard Business Review, recently proselytized the virtues of behavioral sciences to those who study customer satisfaction. You'll find few if any graduates of an MBA program who do not know their Myers Briggs score. Marketing students consult numerous theories of attitude formation and change to understand consumer choice models. Business students who study organizational development and change have all heard of Mayo and his famous studies at GE. And before you relegate groupthink as some dusty relic of the 60's, let me remind you that we have the Challenger disaster as an example of groupthink. Most recently we have the seen the importance economists place on behavior and its impact on the economy. Further, with the increased importance of technology, the usability of software has become an important topic even to the most hardened technophobe.

I should also note that my education at Emory under the mentorship of Bill Bevan was prior to the time of the specializations of the areas considered within general psychology (e.g., human factors—now ergonomics, organizational and industrial psychology, etc.). To my mind this specialization does not necessarily produce a knowledge base which can be useful in the world of management. In fact, some of the research clearly does not lead to producing a functional management approach within an organization because the research is so specific and may not apply to all organizations.

Management Areas in Which General Psychology is extremely helpful

I have selected the following areas to briefly discuss. They are the collection and assessment of information, planning, organizing, decision making, evaluation and a systems approach.

Collection and Assessment of Information

One area of extreme importance in the management of organizations is the collection of information about the environment in which the

organization is to operate (environmental scanning). To my mind, one of the contributions of general psychology was to develop a process in which to ask the correct questions about the behavior under investigation and to clearly delineate the environment in which the behavior has occurred. The assessment of information is critical to the management process. It determines the organizational structure, the type of planning to engage in, etc.

It is important to consider different types of information whether in conducting an experiment or involved in a management process. This includes:

- Basic information which includes identification of possible alternatives
- Various states of nature and alternatives from which data are obtained
- Elaborating information, which includes the criteria for use of the information and future conditions.
- Performance information which includes payoffs and constraints.

Thus the above approach is of extreme importance, whether considering the design and assessment of the outcome of an experiment or utilizing information in an organization.

Planning/Strategy

Clearly any one who has conducted an experiment in any area of psychology knows the importance of planning (e.g., the establishment of an experimental design, consideration of the variables to be measured, etc.). The planning must be based upon data obtained/observed in other activities or the behaviors influenced by changes in the environment. Planning leads to certain strategies, which must be assessed (evaluated). Key to any successful planning is the need for a vision of expected outcomes (hypothesis) which would be beneficial to an organization, management, or to assess a theory in the conduct of an experiment. This is an area which was the foundation of operating in the general psychology environment and one that indeed applies to managing an organization.

Further, it is important to assess the individual's perception of the environment whether it be in the conduct of an experiment or operating in a business. Thus, understanding what is or is not a real clue to the environment becomes of extreme importance. Again, within general psychology, learning and understanding perceptual theory and its implications can have a profound influence on planning. It is hopefully, a way to reduce bias, in the establishment of a management process.

Organizing

One of the benefits of general psychology which

assisted me in management were the various approaches to organizing an experiment in any number of areas. Though the areas were clearly different and ranged from animal experiments involving various stimuli, diets, irradiation etc., to human studies in decision making, isolation and a variety of simulations. Thus I would argue that one of the benefits of general psychology was the process of organizing and understanding a particular approach or an environment in which to operate or implement the plan (experimental design).

This is extremely important in the management of an organization if it is to be successful in the implementation of its planning process irrespective of the business.

The contribution of general psychology to this factor is that it allows for the application and organization of an approach, irrespective of the area under study.

Decision Making

As previously mentioned one of the areas of importance is decision-making. This was an area of great interest in general psychology and certainly one in which my mentor, Bill Bevan, was quite active.

Managers are involved constantly in the decision making process and certainly the research over the years has provided numerous models which can be used to the benefit of the organization. These theories and models range from Lewin's Field Theory to Helson/Bevan's work on General Adaptation theory to Tanner and his colleagues' development of the Model of the Ideal Decision Maker. The more recent work of Sorkin and his colleagues on group decision making has taken these activities to new and important levels.

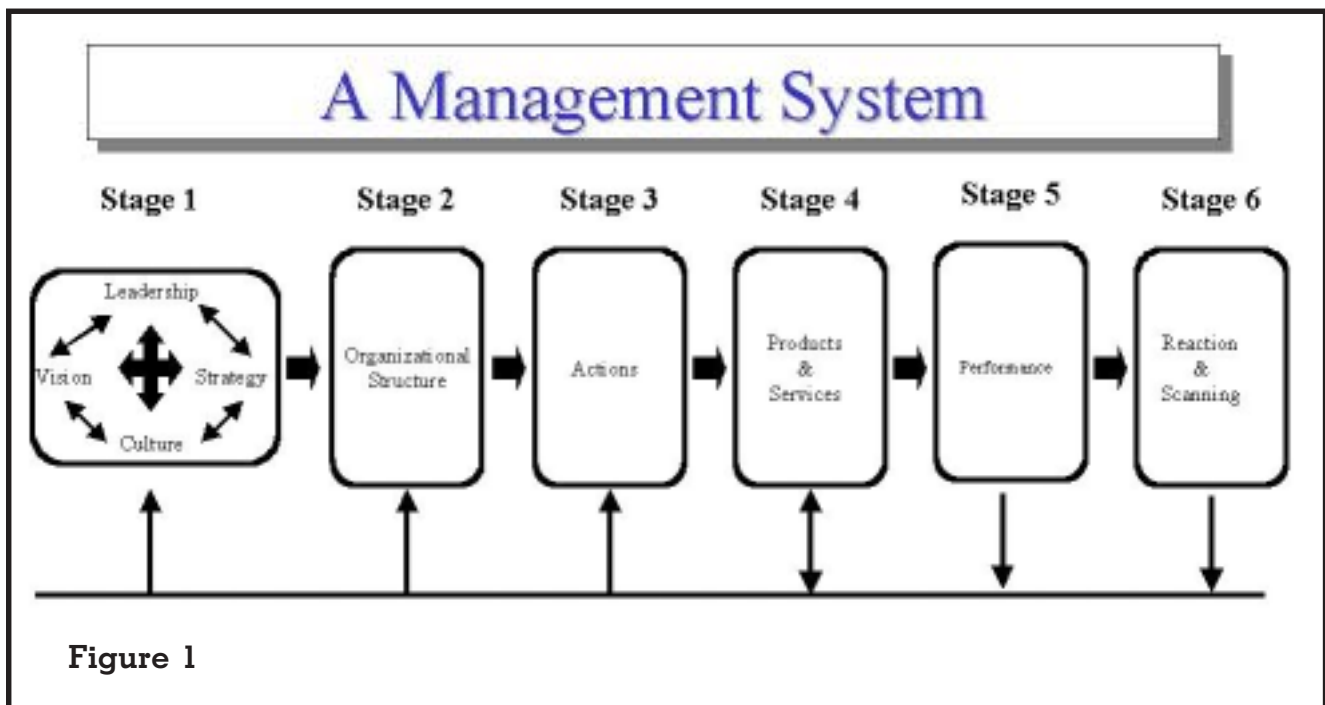
The decisions management make range from the product to develop and market to the approach to be used, the strategic planning process, the personnel to employ and manage (human resources), the distribution process, the type of organizational structure, etc.

In fact an understanding of decision making process is essential for management. The research in general psychology over the years has contributed to improving this process in the real world.

Thus, whether the research was done in the laboratory or in a real world environment, it provides a basis for manager's to develop and implement an effective organization.

Evaluation

One of the important factors in any organization is to evaluate if one is proceeding on correct road and indeed management must ask key questions in this regard. Through information has been collected and assessed on a timely basis, it may not answer



the question of the overall direction of the organization in the future. In a similar fashion, one, two or even more experiments do not necessarily evolve into a useful theory. Thus, it is important to conduct an evaluation of how the organization is behaving in the current environment or in projections of future environments.

This is not different than evaluating new data from recent experiments and assessing whether they are indeed compatible with the theory under consideration or the reasons why they are deviant. I believe a major contribution of general psychology was to constantly question extant theories and conduct new studies. This same approach has major implications for managing organizations.

Systems Approach

Finally, the organization as a system is a controlling metaphor in management. In much the same way, one considers the subject in an experimental environment as a system and thus the behaviors which have been observed must be consistent with the concept of the subject as a system.

The following then describes a suggested approach:

The definition of the organization as a system is a set of interacting operations (behaviors) designed to maximize payoff to the organization in its interface with various environments.

The interacting operations are units (composed of groups of individuals) working to maximize payoff where $\text{Payoff} = \text{Value}/\text{Cost}$

Assumptions considered in the above are:

All organizations have finite resources

All environments are probabilistic and have elements of uncertainty and ambiguity

If the interactions with environments are of high risk, resources may be lost and pay-offs reduced.

The tasks of managers given these prior assumptions are:

To use a rational decision approach. Make decisions when the likelihood that value will be greater than cost

To conserve finite resources

To reduce uncertainty and ambiguity in the environment thereby reducing risk

To have valid information upon which to base decisions.

Given the above, a model was developed and described in the festschrift in honor of Bill Bevan. I would like to briefly describe the model.

The model has five stages. Stage One deals with the interaction of leadership, the strategy (planning), the type of culture in which the organization operates as established by the leadership and the overall vision of the leadership, that is where the organization wishes to go. These interactions are important and all of them are areas which were studied in general psychology, albeit in a different arena as previously discussed.

Stage Two is the organizational structure. Clearly research has shown that there is not an ideal organizational structure. The structure is delivered by the output of Stage One.

Stage Three deals with the actions taken by management to implement the outcome of Stage One. They may include investment in new products, recruitment of new personnel, investment in research, expanding marketing activities, use of technology.

Stage Four is the development of the products and services which evolved under Stage One and were enhanced by the actions taken in Stage Three. Stage Five is the performance of products and services in the environment originally projected by the strategy and vision components in Stage One.

Lastly Stage Six is the assessment and reaction of the organization to the performance and a scanning of the environment to assess changes that may be necessary.

As can be seen Stage Four, Five and Six are the major feedback loops and can impact the other stages as appropriate.

The above model incorporates the essence of elements considered in the arena of general psychology. This includes understanding the importance of leadership, culture, planning, decision-making, and vision (perceptual understanding of the environment one wishes to enter).

It also emphasizes the importance of the execution of actions and the assessment of performance. Lastly, it includes a scanning of the environment in which the system operates which leads to feedback loops which could change the strategy and provide a broader understanding of what is or is not appropriate in various environments.

Conclusion

I have attempted to describe the impact of general psychology to my perspective on management. I emphasized that the approaches utilized and the diversity of general psychology was important in viewing management in terms of a broad variety of activities (decision making, planning, evaluation, etc.).

As previously indicated, it is my belief that before the specialization of psychology, general psychologists were prepared for a variety of activities in the world of work, including management. Unfortunately I am not sure that this is the case today. Nevertheless, I would like to thank my mentor, Bill Bevan, for his support and for broadening my horizons and providing me with the broad skills and knowledge base necessary in the world of management

Whatever happened to ... General Psychology?

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Whatever happened to General Psychology? The question of the title is a generic one inspired by Greg Kimble when he was associated with *Psychology Today*. His idea was to have a series of articles that would look back in time at topics that in their day were major areas of focus of psychologists in research or practice. Some of these have disappeared or changed considerably and others have not, but their stories could prove interesting and instructive. Division 1 has adopted the idea and at this convention the first fruits of the effort are to appear. And, looking at General Psychology (and whatever happened to it) seems to be a particularly appropriate topic for this symposium which honors in Bill Bevan a generalist of the first rank.

But what *was* General Psychology that we should look back upon it and wonder? From the point of view of APA, General Psychology is a specialty subfield that came into existence as a political subdivision and component of the APA Council of Representatives when the modern APA reorganized in 1945. The recorded history of these events, however, provides a confusing picture of just exactly what or who General Psychology was to represent. On the one hand, GP was defined by psychological subject matter, in this case its totality. The General in General Psychology was conceived as something like the General in General Store—anything that you are looking for is there. Many introductory textbooks of the time had “general psychology” in their title and were in fact somewhat selective summaries of the whole field. In 1945 as I remember, it was possible for people to be General Psychologists in that sense and to be aware of most of what psychologists were working on, if not to know all the details of all their work. When I first became a member of APA, I received by virtue of membership ALL the journals that APA published. New PhDs were expected to be renaissance persons in the discipline and expected as young academics to be capable of teaching any of the courses in the undergraduate curriculum. Fifty years ago, it was a reasonable ambition for an individual to know and to teach most of the known subject matter of psychology, thus to be a specialist in General Psychology. Today, in this sense, with the explosive growth of knowledge

in psychology and related areas we might be tempted to think of General Psychology as encyclopedic psychology. Everything is there, but not with significant depth.

Back to the 1945 APA reorganization. The original plan went further. It placed into Division One, the Division of General Psychology, all of those APA members who were not members of any other division. As a corollary of this position, you were by definition a General Psychologist if you were not a psychological specialist. If you did not specialize in a narrow range of subject matter, you must have had an interest in everything. This usage is akin to the General in General Practitioner, someone who has mastered the rudiments of medicine but did not undertake specialty training. This scheme that gave representation in APA governance to this large undeclared group through the Division of General Psychology proved to be an untenable idea. We can look back and see that with this scheme, the power in APA Council was going to reside with the apathetic. This was probably all right at the time: Wouldn't you know, the first three letters of apathy are APA. At any rate it didn't fly, but this idea of general psychology persisted.

By 1959, the governance of Division One had struggled sufficiently with the ambiguity presented by these two conceptualizations to be motivated to establish an operational definition in the form of a mission statement. In this statement, the Division was said to be

"an organization concerned with all aspects of psychology. Division One's Statement of Purpose reflects a responsibility for the general problems of psychology as a science and as a profession. The issues addressed include 1) theoretical, historical, systematic, and methodological aspects of psychology as a whole, 2) scientific and professional developments, especially as they cross boundaries, and 3) the relationship of psychology to other areas of human knowledge."

Henceforth, General Psychology could be identified with a mission and a subject matter. The subject matter emerged from a concern with the general problems of psychology as a science and as a profession and with the more philosophical aspects of psychology as a whole. Attention was also to be paid to intra- and interdisciplinary aspects of these general problems.

Believe it or not, this formulation makes a conceptual step forward even though it sounds as if things only got more complicated. The emphasis on General Problems gives us a way out and makes the mission a doable one.

Today we have mixed feelings about the expansion and the fractionation of psychology and its devel-

oping overlap with a number of other disciplines. It is folly to think that General Psychology could possibly be the totality of all the stuff that is going on in laboratories and other settings in which psychologists work. Psychological knowledge is expanding exponentially and is essentially unknowable in its entirety. Individuals cope with this problem by specializing and creating subspecialties upon subspecialties in order to get a firm grasp on a small chewable piece of the very big pie.

So maybe a focus on General Problems rather than the totality is a step toward an answer to the question of sheer magnitude. To perceive generality from a large set of particulars, however, requires an analytic stance and processing mechanisms capable of perceiving the outlines of significant and meaningful chunks of forest among the psychological trees. Achieving summarizing concepts when there is a very large and highly diversified set of particulars is daunting. But General Psychology, if it is to deal with general problems, should be concerned with weaving a big picture tapestry out of all of the smaller threads and identifying issues of concern among the patterns revealed by the process.

There is one use of the term "General" that may help us to grasp where we are or might be. That use comes from the military, which has, in the Army at least, a General officer called appropriately a General. The General who commands an army understands the role and function of all of the specialty components of the command and how they are to be integrated and activated in a unified, coordinated way. The general may not be able to repair a radar set, but understands what radar can do and how it relates to the job that is to be accomplished. Seeing the totality, the General knows who contributes what and what the interdependencies are among components. The General also understands the strategic and tactical aspects of the mission that has been assigned to the command and how these are related to the specialty components. This whole set of knowledge of particulars, relationships, roles, functions, interdependencies, strategies, and tactics we might put under the heading of Generalship and think of it as a body of knowledge, an aspect of military know-how concerned with the Gestalt conceptualization that covers or explains the existence of a military body and its function. Metaphorically, understanding the military Forest is at a different level from that of understanding individual Trees that comprise it. We're dealing with an ecological system of a sort in which everything is related to and somehow dependent upon everything else.

I am proposing here a parallel understanding for what we might mean by General Psychology. From this point of view General Psychology would consist

of theories or frameworks elucidating how the various aspects of psychology relate to one another. These frameworks would see all of psychological knowledge as relevant to an understanding of the person in a cultural/environmental context. Certainly, everything that psychologists know is related somehow to this general position. But understanding is not sufficient. The army exists to serve military and political functions. Can we say the same for psychology? Bill Bevan would have us think so. While touring inside an onion, Bill wrote, "The proposition that the learned professions must seek to direct their knowledge toward the public good is for me both a matter of quid pro quo and of ethical responsibility" (Bevan, 1991, p. 475).

From this point of view, psychological knowledge should be marshaled in the interest of solving various societal (and personal) problems. With an articulated view of General Psychology, the person with this knowledge, the psychology General or Generalist, should be in a position to look within Psychology's big bag of tricks for clues for diagnosing societal problems and for proposing feasible potential regimens for alleviating them.

What might such a General Psychology look like? Are we talking about some grand theoretical structure that somehow "unifies" or "integrates" the field into a logical whole? Long ago psychology nibbled at logical positivism and didn't like the taste! The enormous complexity and the problems involved in creating such axiom-based "hypothetico-deductive" approaches to psychological theory were highlighted in an devastating attack by Sigmund Koch years ago. No one has tried to do it since in just that way. Instead, we have seen a spate of mini-theories in various subfield areas that can be recognized as attempts at hypothetico-deductive theorizing although no one calls it that. But the trouble with this latter approach is that such theories are developed ad hoc in an intellectual vacuum with little attempt to relate the products of different specialty areas to one another let alone to theories within the same specialty area. Therein lies the problem of specialization. It pays off but at the expense of missing the party.

How about other systematic approaches to the totality of psychology, or approaches into which the some aspects of the totality of psychology might be stuffed? There are philosophical approaches, of course, that provide basic ground rules about what is to be considered in any science and how it is to be approached, and, perhaps, even some basic assumptions about cause and effect. Among these we might include empiricism, phenomenology, elementalism, reductionism, and on and on. Then there have been reasonably successful efforts to fit the substance of psychology into arbitrary packages organized around some core principle. Here I

would put dictionaries and encyclopedias and category schemes such as the keyword system used by PsychInfo. And the Science Citation Index and descriptive, non-analytic histories of psychology also have their own purpose and rationale. In a sense these are all General Psychologies since they encompass some aspect of everything psychological, be it definitions, category sets, authors and publications, or places in a time frame or historical lineage. Although organized around a compelling central scheme, these collections have no internal substantive coherence and they are of only limited or special usefulness for the purposes we have alluded to here..

Then there are frameworks that are substantive and make use of a unifying perspective to come to grips more or less successfully with a circumscribed range of psychological phenomena. Here I would include evolutionary psychology, cognitive neuroscience, connectionist modeling, but also behavior analysis and, yes, from our history, Wundt and Titchener's early view of psychology, Gestalt psychology, and even psychoanalysis. These are examples of what used to be called "schools of psychology." And of course there are many more of these. These had and continue to have current relevance if one looks for it. Many of them do provide a perspective from which pieces of psychological knowledge can be seen to be part of a larger vista. But they do not cover the full scope of things in which psychologists are interested and in which they work. They are competitive, complementary and selective, dealing only with limited aspects of psychological reality. And that is the problem. Our Generalist psychologist will want to have available the full range of psychological knowledge and techniques.. Everything fits into the big picture in some way. But how is the Psychologist General going to make a functioning army of this vast but seemingly disorganized and competitive set of pieces? An organizing framework of conceptualization is required, the kind that enables the Army General to see that an artillery battalion and a drum and bugle corps make sense together as part of an Army.

Until something better comes along, my favorite as a comprehensive stopgap, working framework is a formulation of an idea that has been around for a long time. Versions of utilitarianism and hedonism have echoed through the halls of the history of ideas. Utility theory has a formal version in classical economics. Versions of utility theory also underlie many of the assumptions that psychologists, and others, make about behavior. Simply stated, utility theory assumes that people try to make the most of life, behaving so as to maximize happiness and minimize pain. A number of psychology contributors including Herb Simon, Dan Kahneman, and Amos Tversky, Duncan Luce, and other decision theory types have knocked the idea about to make

it more consistent with what we know about the vicissitudes of behavior under conditions of uncertainty. This development has yielded results that give the lie to the assumptions of classical economics.

For our purposes, what has not been generally recognized is that this perspective, properly unfolded can serve as a framework for organizing much of our psychological knowledge. Very briefly, consider that the conscious human is privy to much information about a unique, personal world and his or her idiosyncratic relationship to that world. The individual acts upon the basis of that information while attempting to make the most of his or her life. The information comes from built in physiological and cultural mechanisms governing pleasure and pain and from the individual's interaction with his or her physical and social environment. As a result individuals come to know about that environment in its various manifestations, and come to appreciate what they can do in various situations as well as the likelihood and hedonic value of the various outcomes that may result from their actions. Then they perform those actions that make hedonic sense, a decision theory problem. This is all pretty cut and dried. Now what is interesting is that much or perhaps even all psychological knowledge of the past century falls right into this framework.

Much of the individual's information is dredged from memory, and the retrieval depends upon a number of factors including among other things conditions of learning and recall, as well as those interesting heuristics and biases identified by Tversky and Kahneman. Kahneman recently has been exploring the hedonic value of outcomes and how they are modified and how they are used in decisions, a development he calls hedonic psychology. But think of all we know about perceptual and motor learning as well as developmental factors that modulate it all and on and on, all of which can be considered in this framework.

How could the Psychologist General make use of this information in dealing with personal and public policy questions involving behaviors? There are diagnostic and prescriptive aspects to this question. If existing undesirable or unfortunate behaviors are involved, the question at hand involves the information structure that supports the behavior. What are the outcomes and likelihoods involved?. Influencing behavior change in this framework involves establishing conditions that will change the individual's information structure so that it supports alternative behaviors.. Some years ago at this convention I proposed a number of public policy steps to influence people to choose not to smoke. These included such things as putting pictures of diseased lungs on billboards to make salient the long term consequences. Just last week I heard that Canadian officials were considering putting pictures of cancerous lungs on cigarette packages themselves so

that exposure to the long term outcomes of smoking would be a part of every decision to have another. But back to the original question.

Whatever happened to General Psychology? We have seen, that in its original form, General Psychology, like the dinosaur, became too large to be viable, and in its political form it is nearing extinction as a body within APA. Division One membership numbers, once among the largest within APA are tending toward the minimal values that do not merit representation on Council, what irony!

But evolutionary pressures have changed the beast. In 1984 the Division modified its mission statement again, this time to be involved in an active role to further efforts to make psychology a coherent discipline. The William James Book Award, started the same year, was a step in that direction. It remains to be seen whether or not this kind of adaptation is sufficient to ward off a looming demise.

But I remain optimistic. Surely there is an insistent instinct to look at the bigger picture. Generalists will always exist. I look around and see a roomful right here.

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Generalpsychology: Variations on the themes of stem cells and "The tragedy of the commons"

**Robert Perloff: Discussant
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At the outset I should like to point out that only psychologists with the track record, vision, creativity, and gravitas of a William Bevan could have inspired and attracted such a splendid star-studded constellation of symposium presenters as these distinguished psychologists: Frank Kessel, the symposium's chairperson, and presenters Peter E. Nathan, Milton Grodsky, each of whom has, in one way or another, been influenced and mentored by Bill Bevan, and C. Alan Boneau, whose devotion and contributions to generalpsychology are at the very highest level, including his imaginative and tireless editorship of the Society of General Psychology's newsletter, *The General Psychologist*, each issue of

which is a treasure trove of essays and summaries of Division I's/the Society's selected program presentations, in addition to announcements and archival material concerning the Society.

About Bill Bevan

First, a few words about Bill Bevan, the psychologist and the person. Bill is no arrogant elitist, no scientific snob. He not only is incapable of looking down on any subspecialty within psychology and on applied psychology (including "professional" psychology, i.e., therapy, and clinical and counseling psychology), but also, much to his credit and much toward the enlightenment of those of us who walk in his shadow and stand on his shoulders, he enriches the various areas within psychology by examining them through the lens of generalpsychology.

William Bevan's infatuation with and embellishment of generalpsychology transcends psychology per se and ventures forth beyond psychology. For example, unlike many scientists, in psychology as well as in other sciences and learned disciplines, Bevan does not view spiritualism as a dreaded pariah. There is room, in the world according to William Bevan, for spiritualism in the panoply of psychology's specialties as well as in general psychology. He holds open the possibility of spiritualism's promise for elucidating the individual's motivations and behavior. Now this is independent of Bevan's own faith, whatever it is and I'm not interested in knowing what it is, only to point out that it is Bevan's catholicity (with a small c) that is important here, not his own particular faith or belief system

Any commentary on the life and contributions of William Bevan would be incomplete bereft of the influence of his devoted wife, Dottie, herself no tyro in matters of the mind, intellectuality, and the broader world around us. Bill's three children are engaged in significant careers of their own: William Bevan III, a distinguished lawyer in Pittsburgh; Mark, a respected physician in New Mexico; and Ross, a successful lawyer in Washington, D. C.

Grodsky's "Applications of generalpsychology to management"

Grodsky's paper is a veritable road map for how industrial/organizational psychologists should apply psychology to management's problems and challenges in the domain of human resources. A major thesis of his is authentically "Bevanish," and that is that specialization does not necessarily produce knowledge and a lodestar for folding human behavior into management's scenario. "In fact," he says, "some of the research produced [in industrial/organizational psychology] does not apply to producing a functional management approach within organizations because the research is so specific and may not apply to all organizations." This theme is played in many ways and contexts in Grodsky's paper, the merits and essence of which speak for themselves and, as a matter of fact, I would predict that his idea here not only applies to industrial/organizational psychology, but applies as well to other specialties within psychology,

developmental, social, educational, consumer, clinical, and others.

Alan Boneau's "Whatever happened to general psychology?": Stem cells

Boneau's chronology of how psychology evolved over the past half century is a valuable contribution to the history of psychology in general and in particular to the history of the American Psychological Association. To his discussion of the role of "general" in generalpsychology I would like to add the role of "G," the general factor in intelligence, which is still quite controversial. "G," I daresay might be to intelligence, that is, an omnipresent force, as "general" is to all of psychology. To use a current metaphor which is all the rage, general psychology might be psychology's stem cell. The basic verities which "general" psychology posit for strengthening and developing special facets of behavior, say developmental, social, clinical, psychology of adult development, and others, are in effect the consequences of how the stem cell of generalpsychology helps to form and shape and define the "cells" in specific domains within psychology. Hence, if a special field within psychology is languishing, then I say inject it with a dose of generalpsychology (aka stem cells) and sit back and observe wondrously how that special function is nourished and made live again.

I'm sure that Boneau would agree with Dawkins (1989) who asserts that "Rather than propose a new theory or unearth a new fact, often the most important contribution a scientist can make is to discover a new way of *seeing* [italics added] old theories or facts." Generalpsychology is a portal through which new ways of seeing old theories are revealed

Peter Nathan's "More on the tragedy of the commons"

Professor Nathan, no slouch at sticking his neck out dauntlessly, is characteristically forthright and intellectually fearless when he uses the metaphor of the "tragedy of the commons" --thus benefiting us all--to suggest how we might fashion an improved American society. His reference to the "tragedy of the commons" forged a wedge in my thinking about generalpsychology and how the whole of psychology would be better off were it to heed the message, the sermon, of generalpsychology. But before unveiling this twist or wedge, it is in order to define "the tragedy of the commons."

In modern times no one has more brilliantly, dramatically, and persuasively elucidated what is meant by "the tragedy of the commons" than Garrett Hardin (1968): the tragedy of the commons occurs when "...separate farmers, reasonably assuming that an additional grazing cow or two will serve their interests and [will not] harm a public pasture, [but] will, nevertheless, as an aggregate, ultimately achieve the destruction of those grounds by overgrazing" ...Freedom in a commons ... brings ruin to us all" (p. 1244).

This theme is embellished elsewhere by Hardin (1985a, 1985b, 1998), and applied and extended by Gifford (1982), Hardin & Baden (1977), Hiatt (1987), Herring (1990), Kramer & Brewer (1984), Rapoport & Bornstein (1987), Samuelson et al (1984), Wilford (1987), Yamagishi (1986), and Yamagishi & Sato (1986).

So how does this very insightful metaphor of "the tragedy of the commons" impact general psychology? Here is my thinking. When an individual psychologist (a herdsman whose grazing cows may be in the domains of developmental, social, cognitive, industrial/organizational, military, human factors, consumer, clinical or other specialties within psychology) plows his or her own special interest in psychology, foraging ravenously in the "commons" of the terrain or space made available by society for scientific plowing, this field or space or terrain will end up in ruins because of overgrazing. I am, I suppose, suggesting that the space (time, resources, "thinking," teaching, consulting, or whatever) allotted for psychology is a zero-sum game. When you plow (aka overgrazing) ceaselessly in specialties A, B, C, D, and E, there is less room for plowing in general psychology. The space is finite. A sliver of space, even a jot or tittle, appropriated by one plower is tantamount to plowing space aspired by another plower. Allowing a thousand plowers to bloom will be disastrous for the entire enterprise.

The more we allow special herds to plow, the less space is available for the plowing for basic verities (which is what general psychology seeks to cultivate) and in time, the pasture, the commons, will degenerate into a rubble of useless weeds.

Caveat emptor! Psychologists of the world, beware. Overplowing will bring peril to us all. Psychologists of the world, unite, form a coalition of psychologist-warriors to

do battle with creeping specialization Psychologists, remove the shackles of creeping specialization, and do not let a thousand plowers bloom. Caveat emptor!

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Bourne Again

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Bourne again? Let's get this straight, Bourne Again? Yup, you got it right the first time, Bourne again. So let me tell you how Lyle E. Bourne, Jr., was Bourne Again.

In the Summer, 2001, issue of *The General Psychologist*, our fearless leader, Lyle Bourne, president of the Society of General Psychology (aka Division 1 of APA) crafted a superb message delineating the mission, the very heart and soul I might add, of general psychology. He admonished us to be vigilant against "Larger groups like APA, striving not to offend or alienate their diverse members," and who, therefore, "cannot act against the often perceived inexorable division of our field" (Bourne, 2001, p. 44). Bourne then went on to vow that "The Society can and will" do the politically incorrect thing by stepping on toes, if necessary, in order to best serve the overall interest of the corpus of psychology.

So, this piece, reinforcing and extending Bourne's call to arms, is aptly called "Bourne again." Bourne then went on to lament that "... the trend toward dividing psychology into camps which have an increasingly difficult time talking to one another is not salutary, indeed not tolerable" (Bourne, p. 44).

Here are some examples of dissident camps fracturing APA: industrial/organizational psychologists who frown upon the "intrusion" by clinical psychologists into organizations, as if I/O owns and has exclusive rights over a variety of organizations, public, private. The military, hospitals, nonprofits; the disdain of research/academic snobs for "professional" psychologists (psychotherapists); the uneasiness of SPSSI (the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues) with military psychology; the probable disparagement a good many psychologists feel for their colleagues interested in the interface between psychology and religion; the philosophical and ideological distance between psychologists devoted to objective means for searching for truth and those psychologists (mostly psychotherapists and humanists) who are comfortable with subjective means for searching for truth; the disconnect between psychologists who identify themselves as liberal and Democrats and those psychologists who identify as conservatives and Republicans, concerning which Redding (2001) makes a case for sociopolitical diversity in psychology, the case for pluralism; and the breach between "touchy and feely" humanistic psychologists and tough-minded psychologists who view such "soft"

sentiments with undisguised contempt. Hey, mom, why can't we get along in this world, huh?

In Defense of General Psychology

1. General psychology offers a new way of seeing old theories and facts. Dawkins (1989, new edition) asserts that "Rather than propose a new theory or unearth a new fact, often the most important contribution a scientist can make is to discover a new way of seeing old theories or facts" (p. ix).

2. Stem cells. An embryonic stem cell is a cell from an embryo that has the potential to become a wide variety of specialized cell types. Stem cells are likened by *The Economist* (Aug. 18, 2001) to fountains of youth: "Most cells in the body are like most people in life. They grow up, they reproduce once or twice, they do the same job every day, they wind down and then they die. Stem cells, on the other hand, are special: given the right conditions, they can reproduce themselves time and time again, a neat trick known as 'self-renewal,' the molecular basis of which biologists have yet to work out" (p. 59).

In my view, general psychology might be psychology's stem cell. The basic verities which general psychology posit for strengthening and developing special facets of behavior, say developmental, social, clinical, psychology of adult development, and others, are in effect the consequences of how the stem cell of general psychology helps to form and shape and define the "cells" in specific domains within psychology. Hence, if a special field within psychology is languishing, then I say inject it with a dose of general psychology (aka stem cells) and sit back and observe wondrously how that special function is nourished and made live again.

And so it seems to me that Bourne's gospel for sustaining, enriching, and extending general psychology could be nourished—Bourne again—by signing on to Dawkins' new way of seeing old theories or facts and on to the stem cells metaphor.

Thus looking down upon psychology from my soi-disant Mt. Everest, I must confess that I've been Bourne again.

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