FALSE DICHOTOMIES AND TRUE METAPHORS: A COMMENT ON SEGALL'S "METAPHORS OF AGENCY"

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Dr. Segall's paper is a lucid reminder of how far away we deviate from common sense and observation when we try to uphold particular "scientific" constructs. Two centuries after Kant's demolition of the notion of a pure account of nature unfiltered by categories, it would seem unnecessary to remind psychologists of the fallacy of taking a concept for the phenomenon to which it refers, what Segall refers to as the mistake of assuming that metaphors have "thing-hood." It is paradoxical that in this so-called post-modernist era, an era when modes of knowing are questioned or even rejected, theoretical constructs such as dissociation, defense mechanisms, expectations, etc. are treated as things in themselves, instead of as theoretical constructs based on partial perspectives.

In addition to his *cri de coeur* against reification, there are many other areas of agreement between Dr. Segall's position and mine. Foremost is his discussion of dissociative phenomena as following both mechanistic and agentic processes. It would be especially peculiar if dissociative phenomena were the exception to the norm, namely that most behaviors and experiences can be evoked, appear unbidden, or be a mixture of the two. An easy example: I can purposefully evoke the presence of a person dear to me; at other times, external or internal cues will bring a remembrance of that person in what seems to be an unbidden way. Thus, even a garden variety memory can be a "doing," a "happening," or a mixture of the two. And even if a memory happens "by itself," I can use volitional processes to linger on it, distract myself from it, and so on. Conversely, when I decide to evoke a memory, some aspects of it will appear "on their own," sometimes surprising me.

In the clinical arena, patients have dissociative phenomena "happen" to them (e.g., a PTSD patient who, when hearing a cannon round, automatically ducked under a car) or they make them happen (e.g., in a memorable phrase, another PTSD patient talked of purposefully "fleeing" from himself when he is in a threatening situation). The same applies even with "hard-wired" neurological conditions. Individuals with uncontrollable seizures can also induce them by purposefully manipulating the sensory stimulation surrounding them.

The rigid dichotomy between agency and automaticity occurs more in the arena of concepts than in the arena of experience, where inter- and intra-individual gradations in the control and organization of consciousness are the norm (see Natsoulas, 1984).

I am also in agreement with Dr. Segall's view of performance and role-enactment as potentially truthful and important. The various analyses of social roles, from William James onwards, have already illustrated the various ways in which we are what we perform, and vice versa. This is not to deny the possibility of deception, understood as a deliberate act in which the agent attempts to persuade him/herself or others, of something the agent knows to be false. But it is not to deny either the possibility that what may start originally as illusion or even self-deception may become an experiential and physiological reality once the agent becomes immersed in the illusion, as seen in artistic performance, the evocation of emotions, hypnosis, and other phenomena. (Cardeña, 1996).

Having agreed with so much of what Dr. Segall has to say, I will part company with him on two issues. Toward the end of his paper, he states that the process of switching promotes, or "intends" to promote, socio-biological adaptation. I doubt that in every case switching, or any other dissociative or non-dissociative process, promotes adaptation. In fact, one of the virtues of Janet's model as compared with Freud's, is that it does not have a requirement that dissociative processes be intentional. They may be, but they do not have to be. The advantage of a functionalist explanation (i.e., to explain an event by the reputed function it may serve) is that one can always find a possible function for any process. Its disadvantage? That one can always find a possible function for any process. Jay Gould (1997) has explained why an exclusive functionalistic/adaptationist position does not even work in the biological realm and why current utility does not imply an adaptive etiology. I would not expect otherwise in the psychological realm.

My major disagreement with Dr. Segall, however, is in his repeated dichotomy between metaphorical and scientific language. He states at one point that "metaphors may not have an ultimate scientific truth value," and that "the actu-

ality of a phenomenon transcends and eludes metaphor," etc. There are two answers to this point. First, as the influential historian of science Kuhn (1970, p. 206) remarked, "philosophers have now abandoned the hope of achieving" the ideal of a language constructed of pure-sense data. In his view, and that of Wittgenstein, Feyerabend, and others, there is no scientific vocabulary that is unproblematic or independent of theory. So the ideal of the scientific language proposed by Dr. Segall is a chimera. Kuhn (1970) also remarks that scientific theories do not provide a description of reality as such, so that both metaphors and scientific language "elude" the phenomena that they seek to explain or describe.

The second answer is that not only is there no pure scientific language, but experience (and our theoretical models of "reality") cannot be construed without recourse to metaphorical language, as Johnson (1987) and others have suggested. In fact, Dr. Segall manifests the impossibility of his task when, in the first page of his paper, he gives a list of metaphors that describe "profound... fragmentation," but fails to realize that his apparently neutral term "fragmentation" is itself a metaphor. The mind is not literally a thing that has fragments, although this linguistic usage seems to make sense to most of us.

The solution to Dr. Segall's conundrum is not the substitution of a metaphorical language for a non-existent, purely scientific one, but the continued reminder that metaphors and constructs are but approximations and models. Their value depends on the functions they serve, their coherence, their ability to explain observations, and so on.

Despite these minor disagreements, I hope that Dr. Segall's fine paper will be read carefully and will help integrate the fragmented and dichotomous thought pervading so much of this area (metaphor intended). ■

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