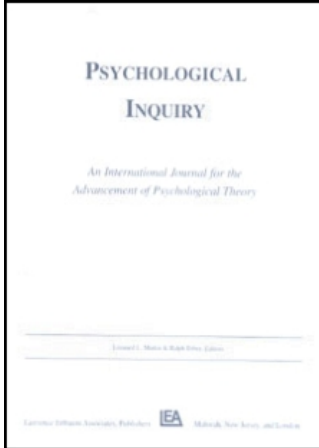


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BOOK REVIEW ESSAYS ON BANDURA'S *SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF THOUGHT AND ACTION*

An Evolutionary Milestone in the Psychology of Personality

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Publication of Albert Bandura's *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory* in 1986 was a significant event in the history of the scientific study of personality. It provides a detailed account of the acquisition of knowledge and skills relevant to personality and social interaction, provides a new perspective on motivational issues of longstanding interest, and offers an overarching framework for integrating personality and social psychology. In this essay, we seek to locate this book within the history of personality and social psychology, explore some of the ramifications of Bandura's doctrine of reciprocal determinism, and discuss the relationships between his concept of self-efficacy and other personality constructs.

The Development of Social Learning Theory

From a historical point of view, Bandura is a central figure in the movement away from static conceptualizations of personality in terms of types and traits, toward a more dynamic view that emphasizes the interaction between the person and his or her social environment. In this context, his book marks the furthest departure yet made by social learning theory from its sources in behaviorism and Hullian stimulus-response theory (see Bower & Hilgard, 1981; Cantor & Kihlstrom, 1987, 1989; Hall & Lindzey, 1978; Kihlstrom, 1988; Monte, 1987). Classical theories of personality had chiefly been formulated in the language of types and traits, temperaments and motives, and other hypothetical constructs. Beginning in the 1950s, however, in recognition of the empirical difficulties of the psychometric and psychodynamic approaches to personality, some researchers adopted a behaviorist stance that abandoned intrapsychic variables and focused instead on external ones such as behavior and the situation in which it occurs.

The situationist perspective on personality was stated most forcefully by B. F. Skinner (1953), who argued that most individual differences in behavior reflect the differential reinforcement histories of the people in question. In some respects (though not in his rejection of internal states as explanatory variables) Skinner's position was anticipated by the

"social learning" theory of personality introduced by Miller and Dollard (1941), who described personality as comprising habitual social behaviors acquired through learning (for the prehistory of social behaviorism and social learning theory, see Woodward, 1982). Accordingly, Miller and Dollard sought to understand the social circumstances under which these habits were acquired, with an emphasis on imitation of others as a habit acquired through secondary (social) reinforcement—hence, the name of the theory.

Despite the popularity of Hullian and Skinnerian approaches to learning, an explicitly cognitive orientation began to appear in social learning theory during the 1950s and 1960s. Thus, Rotter (1954), although adopting Miller and Dollard's term, attempted to fuse the drive-reduction, reinforcement theories of Thorndike and Hull with the cognitive learning theories of Tolman and Lewin. Although Rotter's version of social learning theory often used behaviorist vocabulary, and proposed a list of human needs serving drive functions, his emphasis on expectancies, values, choice, and locus of control gave it a clear cognitive twist. In the final analysis, however, Rotter's approach was less a theory of learning, and more a theory of choice. He had little to say about how expectancies, values, needs, and behavioral options were acquired, except to say that they were acquired through learning.

It remained for Bandura and Walters (1963) to add an explicit theory of the social learning process. Like Miller and Dollard, they stressed the role of imitation in social learning. However, in their formulation imitation no longer functioned as a secondary drive, and reinforcement was no longer given any role in learning per se. Rather, imitation—broadened to include observational learning of all forms—was construed as something that happened naturally, and reinforcement was held to control performance rather than learning. On first glance, the work of Bandura and Walters seemed to draw heavily on Skinnerian analyses of instrumental conditioning and the contingencies of reinforcement. However, the true nature of their effort is revealed in their use of the then-emerging literature on language acquisition and use for analogies to social learning by precept and example rather than by reinforcement.

By emphasizing cognitive processes rather than reinforcement, observation over direct experience, and self-regulation over environmental control, Bandura took a giant step away

from the behaviorist tradition and offered the first fully cognitive theory of social learning processes. Now the present monograph completes the break with behaviorist analyses begun more than two decades before by dropping the term "social learning" from the title. The social cognitive perspective is not merely a translation exercise, like the attempts to recast psychoanalysis in the terms of stimulus-response or information-processing theory (Dollard & Miller, 1950; Erdelyi, 1985). Rather, adoption of the conceptual apparatus of cognitive psychology entails adoption of its concepts, paradigms, and methods as well. Thus, the social cognitive theory offered here takes seriously the human capacity for symbolic representation, goal-directed planning, self-regulation, and self-reflection. Emphasis is placed on the processes by which attention is directed to some aspects of the internal and external milieu as opposed to others, to the manner in which experience is represented in memory, to the organization of social knowledge, to hypothesis-testing as an essential component of problem-solving, and to the constraints imposed by the individual's stage of cognitive development. In this respect, the social-cognitive paradigm, rooted in the tradition of social learning theory, offers new wine in old bottles rather than the reverse. It is a new way of thinking about personality, and one that offers one of the best hopes of linking the study of personality with the rest of the discipline of psychology (for alternative efforts, see Cantor & Kihlstrom, 1987, 1989; Mischel, 1973).

Beyond Interactionism

Within the social-cognitive framework, Bandura's unique contribution is in the notion of *reciprocal determinism* (or *triadic reciprocity*). Here he attempts nothing less than a sweeping integration of cognitive, personality, and social psychology—a grand synthesis that shows not just what we are as individuals and how we got that way, but how our individuality expresses itself in behavior that affects the world around us. The roots of Bandura's synthesis are to be found in Lewin's (1935) classic formulation: $B = f(P, E)$, where B = behavior, defined as overt action; P = personal determinants, variously defined as thoughts, feelings, motives, and traits; and E = environmental determinants, including both the physical and the sociocultural ecology (see Stivers & Wheelan, 1986). The portion of Lewin's formula represented by $B = f(P)$ asserts that some feature of the person, most often defined as a trait or a motive, determines behavior independent of, or even in spite of, the specific situation in which that behavior takes place. Similarly, that segment represented by $B = f(E)$ holds that some feature of the social or physical environment, typically defined in terms of the presence or activity of other people, determines behavior regardless of the specific individuals in that situation.

It has long been recognized that such exclusive formulations are largely misleading (Cronbach, 1957, 1975; Endler & Hunt, 1966). Rather, these formulae represent the respective emphases in the traditional subdisciplines of psychology: personality, focusing on internal factors, and social psychology, focusing on external ones. From an integrative point of view, however, the important question concerns how these determinants relate to each other—or, put another way: What did Lewin mean by his comma? Two possibilities are depicted in Figure 1. In the first version, $B = f(P + E)$, the additive function denotes that P and E each make an indepen-

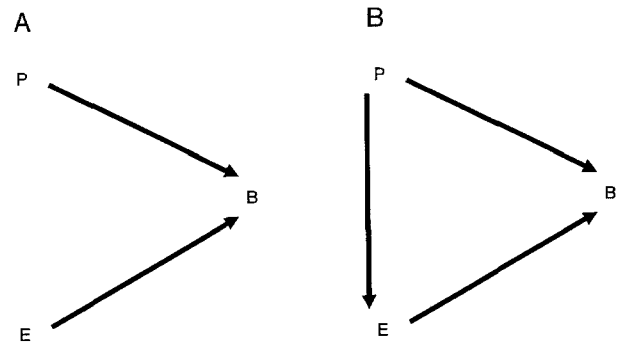


Figure 1. Two schematic portrayals of the relations between personal (P) and environmental (E) factors in the determination of behavior (B): panel A— P and E as independent factors; panel B— P and E as interacting factors, with P having an impact on E .

dent contribution to behavior. This situation is portrayed graphically in panel A of Figure 1: P and E are both shown as determinants of B , but there is no linkage between them. In the second version, $B = f(P \times E)$, the multiplicative function denotes that the contributions are not independent, but that one exerts an impact on the other. The multiplicative function lies at the heart of what might be called the doctrine of *interactionism* (Bowers, 1973). Interactionism denies the primacy of either internal or external factors in the determination of behavior, but argues instead that the balance between them is an empirical matter, depending entirely on the precise details of the people involved, and the situations in which the action takes place. As Bowers put it, "Situations are as much a function of the person as the person's behavior is a function of the situation" (1973, p. 327).

Since Bowers's article appeared, both personality and social psychologists have been increasingly interested in the dynamic ways that people create the situations to which they then respond—for example, by their mere presence in the situation, via direct behavioral manipulation of its characteristics, and through cognitive transformations of its meaning (e.g., Buss, 1987; Snyder & Ickes, 1985). Bandura's unique theoretical contribution stems from the apparent conceptual asymmetry in panel B of Figure 1. Personality and social psychologists can agree that both personal and environmental factors affect behavior, and both can accept the interactionist assertion that the person can have an impact on the situation, but what about the remaining possible relationships? Bandura has argued for a full-fledged interactionism that considers the ways in which the environment shapes the people in it, as well as the feedback that people receive from the behavior they emit, and the changes instigated in the environment by virtue of the behavior that it elicits. This leaves us, in Bandura's (1986) terms, with a specific state of reciprocal determinism known as *triadic reciprocity*. Such a situation is depicted in Figure 2.

It is important to note, with Bandura (1986), that reciprocity does not mean simultaneity. Most likely, reciprocal causal relations in the domain of personality and social interaction play themselves out over time. Nor are the bidirectional influences necessarily equal in strength. Still, when everything affects everything else, matters rapidly become very complex. Thus, it is rarely possible for one experiment to uncover reciprocal determinism in all its glory. For-

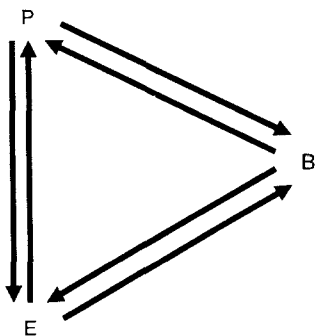


Figure 2. The full scope of (triadic) reciprocal determinism.

tunately, the absence of causal simultaneity works to the advantage of empirical investigators because it permits a strategy of analytic decomposition. That is to say, triadic reciprocal determinism can be analyzed into bidirectional segments. These segments, involving respectively *P* and *B*, *E* and *B*, and *P* and *E*, comprise three dialectics (Gould, 1981; Levins & Lewontin, 1986; Lewontin, Rose, & Kamin, 1984) that provide a framework for the integration of personality and social psychology (Kihlstrom et al., 1989). Taking Bandura's ideas seriously will open up new vistas for research on the interaction of personality, social, and cognitive processes.

The dialectic between the person and behavior begins with more than a half a century of experimental personality research, in which measurements of motives and traits are often used to predict some criterion behavior. A similar methodology is employed in the social-psychological study of attitudes and beliefs. Motives, traits, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, values, goals, and expectations are all features or properties of the person. They reside "beneath the skin" and are properly construed within the *P* element in Lewin's equation. All are of psychological interest because these internal states have consequences for overt behavior.

By any standard, considerably less attention has been paid to the reciprocal effects of behavior on the person, though there are some examples in the literature. Bandura himself has shown that successful performance on a task bolsters feelings of self-efficacy. Some other demonstrations, perhaps more counterintuitive, may be found in the literature on self-perception theory. Self-perception theory reverses the usual direction of causality by postulating, for example, that the observation of one's own behavior can lead to the formation of an attitude consistent with that behavior. The same reversal of common-sense causality is to be found in the James-Lange theory of emotions and its modern descendants, which assert that emotions are produced by the perception of musculoskeletal or visceral responses. Bandura's position of triadic reciprocity forces us to consider in more detail the ways in which the individual's behavior feeds back to alter the person who produced the behavior in the first place.

Similarly, the dialectic between the environment and behavior begins with a half-century of experimental social psychology, which traditionally has been concerned with social influences on behavior such as conformity, altruism, aggression, and decision-making. A similar thrust can be seen in work by environmental psychologists on the effects of temperature, humidity, architectural design, and the like. Both

literatures clearly demonstrate that features and properties of the environment, residing in the world outside the individual, have a clear impact on the behavior that people display in that environment. But as was the case in the dialectic between the person and behavior, the reciprocal effect of behavior on the situation has received somewhat less explicit attention from investigators. Perhaps this is because examples abound. After all, so much social behavior is operant in the sense that it brings about a change in the environment. But again, Bandura's ideas call us to consider more thoughtfully the ways in which situations are changed by the behavior that takes place in them.

The dialectic between the person and the environment also begins with the social-psychological literature concerned with persuasion and attitude change, proximity effects on interpersonal attraction, the effects of reward structure on intrinsic motivation, and exposure effects on preferences. In each case, some feature or property of the external environment is shown to affect some psychological feature or property of the person. But what about the reciprocal effects of the person on the environment? Obviously, people affect the environment through their overt behavior, but triadic reciprocity would seem to require evidence of more direct effects, unmediated by behavior. One possibility is that people may affect the environment merely by their presence and appearance, regardless of their actual behavior. For example, Money and Ehrhardt (1972) showed that the external genitalia of the newborn infant structure the environment in which he or she is raised (see also Sears, Maccoby, & Levin, 1957). Another possibility is that situations can be transformed *mentally*, that we are capable of changing our environments in important ways merely by thinking differently about them. In any event, Bandura's framework forces us to think more clearly about how people affect the environments in which they live and to translate these thoughts into more compelling empirical research. Other salient examples of triadic reciprocity may be found in the clinically oriented literature on marital discord and behavior disorders in children.

Much more is needed. Bandura's theoretical framework promises a genuine integration of personality and social psychology. But this integration can be achieved only when researchers take deliberate steps to incorporate all three elements, and especially the reciprocal relations among them, into their research designs. For example, systematic research on some personality construct would show how the construct under consideration relates to other features of personality. In addition, it would address the following points within the framework of triadic reciprocity:

1. Documenting (a) the influence of that construct on actual behavior as well as (b) the reciprocal influence of behavior on that dimension of personality,
2. Exploring (a) the influence of that personality variable, and (b) the behavior it produces, on the situation in which the behavior takes place,
3. Exploring (a) the influence of the situation, and (b) the behavior it elicits, on the personality variable in question.

Because traditional statistical techniques are not well suited to studies of reciprocal causal relations, this research strategy will require the development of more sophisticated statistical

techniques (Kenney & LaVoie, 1984; Thomas & Malone, 1979). In this way, Bandura's triadic reciprocity demands both new theories and new methods.

Self-Efficacy and Competence Motivation

A fairly clear sense of the shape that this new kind of integrated research program might take is given by what is perhaps Bandura's most important line of theory and research: self-efficacy (see also Bandura, 1989). Bandura has argued that people's beliefs about their ability to exercise control over events are a central and pervasive mechanism of human agency. These efficacy expectations are self-judgments of how well a person can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations. Thus efficacy expectations are future oriented, rather than retrospective, and they are specific to a particular situation and action. These cognitive beliefs are important determinants of motivation and performance. Bandura's model provides clear guidelines for how to operationalize self-efficacy in a situationally specific sense, permitting a careful analysis of mediating mechanisms and processes. The construct of self-efficacy is a simple one, but powerful in its theoretical range and application. Bandura's book reviews research on self-efficacy that has been conducted in an impressive variety of settings, from treatment of snake phobia, smoking cessation, and postcoronary rehabilitation, to performance in mathematics and sports; from pain tolerance and biofeedback, to career choice and managerial decision-making—all with considerable variability in subject populations.

Self-efficacy is a property of the person, but it is not a personality trait. That is, a person can be high on self-efficacy in one domain but low in another, so that the construct lacks the cross-situational consistency that is part and parcel of the trait construct (Kihlstrom, 1988). For this reason, Bandura has not introduced a global, context-free measure of self-efficacy, paralleling Rotter's (1966) concept of generalized expectancies for control of reinforcement. Further, the absence of such an instrument has effectively precluded the usual run of correlational studies between self-efficacy and conceptually related traitlike constructs such as locus of control, self-esteem, achievement motivation, depression, and the like. Nevertheless, he has not ignored the relations between self-efficacy and other statelike personal attributes, including both personality and physiological variables. Thus, fatigue, arousal (too high or too low), and dysphoric mood diminish perceived self-efficacy, whereas optimal arousal levels and positive moods enhance it—all without necessarily affecting actual performance. Self-efficacy also shows a lawful pattern of growth and decline over the life cycle (although more research on this question would probably be useful). And, equally important, the development of the capacity for self-appraisal that underlies perceived self-efficacy parallels the course seen for other metacognitive skills.

Bandura draws an important distinction between self-efficacy judgments and the response outcome expectations that are so crucial to Tolman's (1932) cognitive learning theory, Rotter's (1954) social learning theory, and Irwin's (1971) theory of intentional behavior. Outcome expectations relate to a person's judgment about the responsiveness of the environment, or the utility of behavior—that is, whether a particular action will have its desired (and intended) conse-

quence. Efficacy judgments, by contrast, reflect the individual's assessment of his or her own capability to execute the behavior in question, and they are conceptually independent of outcome expectations.

The distinction between outcome and efficacy expectations can be illustrated by the cognitive theories of depression in the "learned helplessness" tradition. Originally, Seligman (1975) proposed that depression reflected the individual's perception or belief that outcomes were uncontrollable (see also Mineka & Kihlstrom, 1978). However, Abramson and Sackeim (1977) pointed out that it is illogical for a person to take personal responsibility for outcomes that are in fact uncontrollable; nevertheless, depressive individuals display both helplessness and self-blame. These considerations led Abramson, Seligman, and Teasdale (1978) to propose that depression (or, more precisely, "hopelessness depression"; see Abramson, Metalsky, & Alloy, 1988) occurs when individuals perceive themselves as responsible for the uncontrollability of events. The transition between helplessness and hopelessness views of depression seems to parallel the distinction between outcome and efficacy expectations.

Bandura suggests that a person's behavior is best predicted by consideration of both outcome and efficacy judgments. Obviously, a person who has positive expectations for both outcome and efficacy would be more likely to engage in the target behavior than one who has neither. Even so, there must be other important variables. For example, Rotter (1954) attached great importance to the value of the outcome: Put bluntly, the person may have positive outcome and efficacy expectations, but simply not care about the outcome. Similarly, Harackiewicz (1989) showed that, in a particular domain, competence (an attribute conceptually similar to self-efficacy) must be personally valued to enhance subsequent intrinsic motivation. The attribution of competence—whether competence to perform a task is perceived as reflecting high ability, high effort, low task difficulty, or just plain luck—will also be important. Weiner (1985) showed that positive performance outcomes will have different motivational effects depending on whether the individual attributes them to ability or to effort; Deci (1975) proposed that judgments of competence will only influence intrinsic motivation when competence is perceived to be self-determined.

But what about the other two possibilities, where there is a discrepancy between outcome and efficacy expectations? Consider, for example, a person who believes that some action will produce a desired outcome (or avoid an undesired one) but who simultaneously believes himself to be incapable of performing that action. Bandura seems to suggest that the person will not even try; and a major prescription for cognitive behavioral therapy is to alter efficacy judgments so that the person can have some experience with positive outcomes. Perhaps more interestingly, consider a person who believes that she *could* perform some action that would ordinarily be efficacious, but also that in the current situation the environment would simply not respond appropriately. Under these circumstances, some people might not try; but others, by virtue of high achievement motivation, "Type A" tendencies, or sheer stubbornness, might well persist on the off chance that things would work out—or, perhaps, simply for the satisfaction of having made the attempt. Again, these scenarios suggest that other individual difference variables might be relevant to prediction.

Bandura provides us with a social cognitive analysis of a fundamental problem that has been studied from a variety of theoretical perspectives, which emphasize personality constructs that appear conceptually related to self-efficacy. In particular, the work on self-efficacy converges with models of competence motivation of the sort proposed by White (1959) and Harter (1981). Three decades ago, White proposed the construct of *effectance motivation*, the need of the organism to be active, to explore or manipulate its environment. Effectance motivation is inferred from the tendency of both human and nonhuman animals to engage in various kinds of operant behaviors, even in the absence of reinforcement. Translated into Bandura's terms, the effectance motive might be construed as the drive to have an impact, to have the ability to act instrumentally to change the environment in particular ways.

However, self-efficacy is not the same as effectance motivation. In his classic statement, White described a highly generalized sense of effectance, whereas for Bandura self-efficacy is highly domain specific. This conceptual gap, which epitomizes the differences between traditional personality and traditional social psychology, has been closed somewhat by Harter (1981), who has analyzed effectance motivation into several components (e.g., independence mastery, preference for challenge, and curiosity) and examined each within specific domains (e.g., school, social activities, and sports). Even so, there are other potentially important differences. True to his roots in Murray's motivational theory, White viewed effectance as a rewarding end state, suggesting that behavior would cease when a sense of efficacy had been achieved. By contrast, Bandura construes feelings of efficacy as an instigation to future behavior. More important, effectance motivation influences behavior in the organism's "spare time," when no other drive states are operative, whereas self-efficacy is held to operate in all acts of instrumental behavior. Finally, of course, the drive to be competent is not the same as the belief that *one is* competent. Thus, Bandura's concept of self-efficacy adds a new perspective on the problem of competence.

Self-efficacy bears a more complicated relationship to the problem of *intrinsic motivation*, the person's desire to engage in a certain activity for its own sake, without the promise or prospect of reward (Deci & Ryan, 1980; Harackiewicz, 1989). For example, Harackiewicz, Sansone, and Manderlink (1985) found that the relationship between self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation varied as a function of individual differences in achievement orientation. Sansone (1986) found that it also varied as a function of evaluative context. It is easy to believe that people are intrinsically motivated to engage in activities in which they are competent, (i.e., those in which they have a strong sense of self-efficacy). But even when people enjoy activities at which they are competent, it is not clear that perceptions of efficacy should always drive intrinsic interest. Rather, people's sense of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1987), achievement orientation and personal valuation of competence (Harackiewicz et al., 1985), the context in which performance is evaluated (Harackiewicz, Abrahams, & Wageman, 1987; Sansone, 1986), and the attributions they make concerning competence (Nicholls, 1984) all represent critical determinants of intrinsically motivated behavior.

It is also easy to imagine cases where people are intrinsically interested in tasks that they know they perform badly.

In fact, the concept of *optimal challenge* (Harter, 1981; White, 1959) suggests that people will sometimes fail as they strive to master a task. This raises the question of the standard against which performance, and thus competence or efficacy, is evaluated. An activity may be performed well enough to generate considerable self-satisfaction (and perceptions of progress and personal improvement), and continued interest, yet not well enough to elicit applause from others. Moreover, factors can affect intrinsic motivation without necessarily affecting self-efficacy. Thus, performance evaluation tends to diminish intrinsic interest when it is focused on normative comparisons (between self and others), but not when it is focused on task mastery, irrespective of the performance of others; however, both kinds of evaluation might lead to comparably high levels of self-efficacy (Harackiewicz et al., 1987).

True to his model of reciprocal determinism, Bandura has examined the factors that affect efficacy expectations (e.g., previous behavior and environmental influences), and the consequences of efficacy expectations (on both subsequent behavior and the selection and construction of environments). Consider, for example, the dialectical relation between *P* and *B*. A large part of Bandura's research program has been devoted to examining the effects of self-efficacy on experience, thought, and action. Judgments of self-efficacy determine the tasks people pursue, the amount of time and effort they will spend on them, and what they will think and feel during and after task performance. More important, he has developed detailed models of the cognitive and motivational mechanisms through which self-efficacy affects various aspects of behavior. The reciprocal effect of behavior on self-efficacy is seen in the fact that self-efficacy is responsive to performance enactments: Successes raise it; failures lower it.

With respect to the dialectic between *P* and *E*, it is not surprising that Bandura emphasizes the manner in which self-efficacy can be affected by a wide variety of factors in the social environment; after all, self-efficacy is exquisitely sensitive to situational factors. More crucially, this aspect of Bandura's model reflects his career-long emphasis on observational as opposed to enactive learning; it suggests that people can be made to feel more efficacious through various sorts of social interventions, including both precept and example. One particularly important source of self-efficacy information is vicarious experience: observing others, especially those who are like us, succeed or fail. Social learning occurs by precept as well as by example: other people can persuade us that we do, or do not, possess the skills necessary for competent task performance. The family, peer, school, and work environments are particularly powerful sources of information in this regard.

The environment is important because it sets the tasks about which self-efficacy appraisals are made, as well as providing information that shapes these judgments themselves. But according to reciprocal determinism, and indeed the general doctrine of interactionism, the person also exerts an effect on the environment: by evoking certain responses from the environment; by selecting environments (or the tasks they offer), or changing them through overt behavior; or by reconstruing them cognitively. In his work, Bandura seems to emphasize the behavioral manipulation of the environment: After all, individuals high in self-efficacy, by placing themselves in challenging situations or choosing to

attempt difficult tasks, thereby expose themselves to environments very different from those experienced by their low-self-efficacy counterparts. Moreover, of course, people can make tasks even more difficult than they would otherwise be, by performing them under conditions of fatigue or alcohol or drug intoxication, thus insuring that they will have the sorts of failure experiences that contribute to judgments of low self-efficacy.

What seems to be relatively absent, in Bandura's analysis to date, are the ways in which people change their environments merely by their presence in them, rather than through overt behavioral transactions. Consider, for example, the case of mental or physical illness. Stereotypes about illness, enshrined in the concept of the sick role (Siegler & Osmond, 1974), often imply that sick people cannot cope effectively with environmental demands and, even, that they should not try to do so. The environment adjusts itself accordingly, minimizing the extent to which patients must take responsibility for their own successes and failures; and, of course, it communicates this aspect of the sick role to those who are diagnosed as sick. Thus, the mere fact of patient status, irrespective of the person's actual competencies or behaviors, alters the environment in which the patient lives.

Also missing is detailed attention to the manner in which people can transform situations by purely cognitive acts (i.e., by changing the way they perceive or construe an environment or a task; Cantor & Kihlstrom, 1987, 1989). Environments are powerful, and people are limited in their capacity to alter them by selection or manipulation. Sometimes, we are thrust into a situation over which we have no control, or are faced with a task that we did not choose for ourselves. There may be limits to what we can do, but as George Kelly noted, there are far fewer limits to what we can think. Reconstructing a situation may alter our self-efficacy judgments concerning it. If, as Bandura (1989) noted, self-efficacy is an important basis for human agency, the kinds of cognitive processes described in his social cognitive theory are also the basis for human freedom.

The Next Stage

Bandura's (1986) final chapter, "Cognitive Regulators," points precisely in this direction. He makes the point that analyses of human action in terms of the functional relations between stimulus and response, input and output, are insufficient precisely because cognitive structures and processes mediate the effects of the environment. They determine where attention will be paid, the meaning that will be conferred on events, and the manner in which they will be remembered. The individual's repertoire of perceptions, expectations, memories, beliefs, and skills are fundamental aspects of personality, and join the traits, motives, attitudes, and values that are the focus of traditional work in this field. But Bandura has gone further than this. With his analyses of social learning, he has shown how important features of personality are acquired through precept and example. With his concept of triadic reciprocal determinism, he has given us a framework for the integration of personality and social psychology that promises to unite both traditional and contemporary viewpoints. And with his studies on self-efficacy, he has shown how this abstract framework can be implemented in a concrete program of empirical research. Beginning with his earliest writings, Bandura has fostered the

break of social learning theory from behaviorism and situationism, and sought to bring personality and social psychology closer together. These two trends are brought together in *Social Foundations of Thought and Action*, which now sets the stage for things to come.

Notes

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Weaving Development Into the Fabric of Personality and Social Psychology—On the Significance of Bandura’s *Social Foundations of Thought and Action*

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Conceptions of human behavior in terms of unidirectional personal determinism are just as unsatisfying as are those espousing unidirectional environmental determinism (Bandura, 1986, pp. 22–23) . . . Rather, human functioning is explained in terms of a model of triadic reciprocity in which behavior, cognitive and other personal factors, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants of each other (p. 18) . . . human nature is characterized by a vast potentiality . . . a major distinguishing mark of humans is their endowed plasticity (p. 21) . . . Changes occurring throughout the life span often take diverse forms, rather than follow a consistent, unidirectional course . . . Whether social behavior is invariant or changes over time depends, partly, on the degree of continuity of social conditions over the time span. A comprehensive theory must, therefore, . . . explain

both temporal continuities and change (p. 12) . . . Particular factors are . . . associated with effects probabilistically rather than inevitably. (p. 24)

If these statements were presented to an audience of developmental psychologists they would be received as parts of a by-now quite familiar set of ideas, ones associated with the life-span view of human development (Baltes, Reese, & Lipsitt, 1980) and with the developmental-contextual theoretical perspective in which it is embedded (Lerner, 1986; Lerner & Kauffman, 1985). Indeed, not only the same ideas but also the same vocabulary can be found, for example, in Baltes (1987), Brim and Kagan (1980), Elder (1980), Featherman (1983, 1985), and Lerner (1984, 1986), as well as throughout several edited volumes spanning almost two decades (e.g., Baltes, 1978; Baltes & Brim, 1979; Baltes, Featherman, &