

QUOTATION

E. B. HOLT ON TELEOLOGICAL BEHAVIORISM

On seeing the man purchase a ticket at the railway station, we felt that there was more behind this action, 'thoughts' that were the invisible secret of his movements. Suppose, instead, we inquire whether the more is not ahead. More is to come; let us watch the man further. He enters the train, which carries him to a city. There he proceeds to an office, on the door of which we read 'Real Estate.' Several other men are in this office; a document is produced; our man takes a sum of money from his pocket and gives this to one of the other men, and this man with some of the others signs the document. This they give to our man, and with it a bunch of keys. All shake hands, and the man whom we are watching departs. He goes to the railway station and takes another train, which carries him to the town where we first saw him. He walks through several streets, stops before an empty house, takes out his bunch of keys, and makes his way into the house. Not long afterwards several vans drive up in front, and the men outside proceed to take household furniture off the vans and into the house. Our man inside indicates where each piece is to be placed. He later gives the men from the vans money.

All this we get by observing what the man does, and without in any way appealing to the 'secret' thoughts of the man. If we wish to know more of what he is doing we have only to observe him more. Suppose, however, that we had appealed to his inner thoughts to discover the 'secret' of his movements, when we first saw him buying a ticket at the railway station. We approach him and say, "Sir, I am a philosopher and extremely anxious to know what you are doing, and of course I cannot learn that unless you will tell me what you are thinking." "Thinking?" he may reply, if he condones our guileless impertinence. "Why, I am thinking that it's a plaguey hot day, and I wish I had made my morning bath five degrees colder, and drunk less of that hot-wash that my wife calls instant coffee." "Was that all?" "Yes, that was all until I counted my change; and then I heard the train whistle.—Here it is. Good-by! And good luck to your philosophy!"

REFERENCE

Holt, E. B. (1915). *The Freudian wish and its place in ethics* (pp. 86–87). New York: Henry Holt.

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