



Beyond Behavior: Construction of an Overarching Psychological Theory of Lifestyles

Glenn D. Walters

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Rejecting behavior as the proper topic of study in psychology, Walters defines the subject matter for psychology as the human organism's interaction with the internal and external environments. In offering an overarching theoretical model based on 12 different theoretical traditions, Walters runs counter to the currently popular practice in psychology of constructing conceptual mini-models that restrict themselves to highly circumscribed areas of psychological inquiry. In Walters' view, the proliferation of mini-models has given the field a fragmented appearance.

A major tenant of the overarching theoretical conceptualization presented by Walters is that people try to manage threats to their existence by either adapting to ongoing environmental change or enacting patterned interactions known as lifestyles. These lifestyles, which are comprised of specific rules, roles, rituals, and relationships, can be organized into four general families; leader, follower, rebel, and disabled. In addition to lifestyle structure, Walters examines the three factors believed to be responsible for selection of a lifestyle over adaptation and preference for one lifestyle over another: incentive or type of fear experienced, opportunity or specific learning experiences, and choice or decision making apparatus. Walters provides a novel approach to the study of psychology, outlining the structure of lifestyles and discussing the role of motivation and learning in the selection of lifestyles and people's preference for one lifestyle over another. A provocative work of particular interest to scholars, students, and professionals dealing with theories of psychology, personality, and social interaction.

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