

Origins, Status, and Mission of Behaviorology

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...either psychology must change its viewpoint so as to take in the facts of behavior...or else behavior must stand alone as a wholly separate and independent science. (John B. Watson, 1913)

...I think I am beginning to see the scope of a behavioral—or behavioristic—analysis. It does talk about the important things; it does point to conditions which can be changed; it does show what is wrong with other ways of talking about things. (B.F. Skinner, 1983a, p. 347, from a note written about 1972)

...[I've] been slow in throwing off the notion that a science of behavior is the future of psychology.... Now I think this is a world of our own. (B.F. Skinner, 1989a, declaring the disciplinary independence of the science he founded; from a transcript of his major address to close the convention of the Association for Behavior Analysis)

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Chapter 1:

Introduction

*T*his record is especially intended to facilitate analyses and interpretations by those who study the origins and emergence of the discipline of behaviorology. The manifestation of any new discipline evokes questions: What is the nature of the new discipline

Ledoux began this paper in early 1987 to analyze the variables leading to the independent development of behaviorological science. As the necessity of the behaviorology movement, and the significance of behaviorology's contributions to the culture, became more apparent, Ledoux invited Fraley to collaborate. Over five years of countless exchanges produced this paper, with each exchange extending and improving the work, and with Fraley's contribution becoming the greater—hence his listing as primary author.

in terms of both subject matter and organization? What has been the course of its evolution both as a concept and as a formally organized verbal community? And why, along that course, did organizational independence become necessary? How does both the subject matter addressed by the new discipline and the organization of its people relate to those of other disciplines, especially to those with which it might share a common history? How should one prepare oneself to work within this discipline? And, importantly, what is the cultural mission of this organized discipline—what is it supposed to accomplish, and how does its mission relate to those of peripheral disciplines or fields?

In addressing these questions, this work describes the historical facts of the emergence. Additionally, beyond a description of the “facts” that answer such questions, a principal objective has been to describe contingencies under which the founders of this discipline operated when producing those facts. To that end, from this behaviorological perspective, this paper reports particular circumstances in which those leaders found themselves. This work includes some behavioral events not because the positions they reflect are likely to be of lasting import, but rather to sketch the behavioral milieu in which the founders operated at the time. Quotations appear from letters and other informal communication sources to reveal the nature of the verbal community in which the early leaders were enmeshed. *This paper thus takes the form of a behaviorologically analyzed record.* The authors hope that this report will have adequately described the functions of these many critical variables so that the subsequent course of this movement can be related to the behaviors of those working for or against it during the period described in this account.

The authors did not edit this work for conformance to current political strategies. Reviewers occasionally objected to what they saw as publicity for persons whose views on certain matters they disrespected or deemed unworthy. Editing on that basis has been resisted. The roles of such persons in the behaviorology movement, acting both for and against its interests, have been included in this account on the basis of the effects of their actions on the history of behaviorology. Nor have the authors tried to cast this work as a recruiting instrument for the gentle persuasion of uncommitted potential converts to a movement. Articles of that type frequently appear as authors, in support of their respective causes, strive to appeal convincingly to various elements in the at-large professional community. But in contrast, this article, presenting an analyzed description of the movement recorded near the time of the reported events, simply answers the kinds of questions that naturally arise through the study of any newly emerging discipline. (Except to add a few, more accessible sources officially presented or published a year or three later, writing this work occurred from early 1987 to 1993.)

This work is divided into five parts plus short introductory and concluding chapters. Among them some normal chronology is evident. Within parts, where appropriate, a chronological order has also been followed. However, in places, a strict historical chronology would have failed to capture the more episodic and thematic nature of the contingencies that affected the leaders and participants of movements. People become involved in important episodes, and each episode preoccupies them for a time while the currents of other events continue to swirl around them. Their behaviors are better understood in light of historical treatments that, while not losing contact with the calendar, nevertheless preserve and deal with that episodic and thematic integrity, even though doing so departs in places from a strictly chronological record.

The five main parts of this paper are Chapters Two through Six. Chapter Two (**The Evolution of the Concept of Behaviorology**) examines the nature and origins of the behaviorology concept worldwide—and its increasing ill fit within organized psychology where the incipient stages of its organizational coalescence occurred. Chapter Three (**Issues Driving the Independence Movement**) explores the increasing strength, in five different classes of contingencies, to incur the high costs of organizing a separate and independent discipline. Chapter Four (**The Transition Period: Organizing the Discipline and Developing its Infrastructure**) presents a comprehensive review of the subsequent activities to organize the behaviorology discipline and considers the cultural engineering by which the newly named discipline was formalized, rendered operational, and installed in the scientific community. Chapter Five (**The Continuing Debate: Reactions from the Behavioral Community at Large**) reviews the prevailing cultural milieu and analyzes the support for, and the opposition to, the behaviorology movement, as well as some self-management problems facing those who were taking the lead in formalizing the behaviorology discipline. Chapter Six (**Interdisciplinary Context: A Cultural Role for the New Discipline**) emphasizes the prevailing views of the early behaviorologists on where their discipline fit both among the community of natural science disciplines extant in the culture and in the cultural marketplace. It also comparatively explores the different levels of analysis characteristic of the existing behavior-related natural science disciplines, and examines the cultural basis of resistance to behaviorology. (Partially to facilitate possible serial publication of the paper's parts, each chapter starts with a review of previous material and finishes with a preview of the next chapter. In serial publication, with each installment perhaps including its own references, the introductory Chapter One would appear with Chapter Two while Chapter Six would appear with the conclusion Chapter Seven and the endnotes and complete references.) ❧