

My second point is a question - why reprint Sutherland's review? Without going into great detail, Sutherland showed, in a spectacular way, his ignorance of Skinner's work. Indeed, the piece is less of a book review, more of a diatribe - a vehicle for Sutherland to get off his chest years of bottled-up frustrations (how's that for an intervening variable?) against a man who has added infinitely more to the study of behaviour than Sutherland, while neglecting the very approach to which Sutherland has devoted himself.

There are other reviews available which make pertinent criticism while being generally unfavourable (if that is what was needed for the Bulletin) while there are even favourable reviews by very well-informed scientists (e.g. Blackman's review).

The last issue of the Bulletin was disappointing, since I would have thought that in the B.A.B.P. we have a nucleus of scientists who are, at least, favourable to behavioural psychology, and who are willing to discuss issues sensibly. It left me feeling not sure.

Yours faithfully,
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References

- Skinner, B.F. The operational analysis of psychological terms. *Psychological Review*, 1943, 52, 1270-277, 291-294.
Skinner, B.F. Are theories of learning necessary? *Psychological Review*, 1950, 57, 193-216.
Skinner, B.F. Behaviourism at fifty. *Science*, 1963, 140, 951-958.
Skinner, B.F. Contingencies of reinforcement: a theoretical analysis. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969.
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Dear Sir,

We are dismayed to find N.S. Sutherland's "review" of Skinner's "About Behaviourism" reprinted, without comment, in the last issue of the Bulletin. Sutherland's remarks could hardly be called constructive and he is often inaccurate; for example, he claims that the Skinnerian approach has led to "trivial" discoveries in the applied field. Even the briefest acquaintance with the literature must show such comment to be, at best, poorly informed.

Adequate rebuttal would require the dissection of the whole article sentence by sentence. Suffice it to say that Sutherland's understanding of Skinner's use of the terms "behaviourism" and "reinforcement" appear to be inconsistent with Skinner's actual usage.

More adequate and constructively critical reviews are available; see, for example, Blackman, D. *Times Higher Educational Supplement*; 28th March, 1975. Rachlin, H. in *Behaviour Therapy*; May, 1975, vol. 6, pp.437-440. Schnaitter, R. *Between Organism and Environment*. A review of B.F.

Skinner's "About Behaviourism", *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behaviour*; 1975, 23, 297-307. Some redress of the balance would be welcome.

Yours sincerely,
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BOOK REVIEWS

BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION WITH THE RETARDED CHILD

J. Comley (Ed.)

Heinemann: London (1975) xix + 208 pp. Price £4.25 clothbound.

As far as I know, this is the first British text intended to give basic information on behavioural techniques for use by parents, teachers, and nurses of the mentally handicapped. As such, it could have been an exciting and useful book, in so far as it could have illustrated the value of these techniques within the context of the British services for the subnormal. Regretfully, the book is muddled and in the end disappointing.

The editor attempts to cover basic behavioural principles and to use his text to link illustrative cases written by ten other contributors. The main fault is that the text is at times too general and vague, at times too specifically technical, and at times it is used as a vehicle to fight obscure battles. The net result is that the principles are never clearly described and it is doubtful if uninitiated readers would be able to relate the content to their needs in bringing up a retarded child.

The studies are sometimes of interest. Too many are concerned with children who are not mentally retarded, so that the reader is asked to generalize to a different population. At times, the presentation is suspect, as when qualitative data are presented in quantitative graph form without any explanations as to how the data are obtained. One or two studies are worth publishing particularly when they discuss problems encountered in treatment.

In summary, this is a good idea, badly executed which is unlikely to meet the needs of the audience for whom it was written. This is a great pity since a simple text would be welcome by parents of handicapped children.

William Yule

BEHAVIOUR THERAPY WITH DELINQUENTS

Edited by J.S. Stumphauzer, Charles C. Thomas, Springfield Illinois, 1973. p.xiii + 358. \$11.95.

This collection of 22 papers is intended as a reference text illustrating both the growth and the potential of the application of behavioural