In Response

Can Radical Behaviorism Rescue Psychology?

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In a recent article, Skinner (1983) asked the question, "Can the Experimental Analysis of Behavior Rescue Psychology?" He then outlined the potential for an affirmative answer. The purpose of this paper is to propose that the experimental analysis of behavior (TEAB) may be characterized as a scientific endeavor in terms of two aspects: (1) a set of characteristic methodological practices or assumptions (e.g., emphasis upon the functional control of behavior, emphasis upon individual subjects, experimental control, etc.) especially geared toward the specified goals of prediction and control (e.g., Sidman, 1960) and (2) an associated philosophy of science, radical behaviorism. Furthermore, it is the purpose of this paper to propose that while both of these aspects of TEAB represent an extremely important contribution to psychology as a scientific enterprise, it is in fact radical behaviorism that is more likely to provide a basis for the rescue of psychology.

In an early chapter of *About Behaviorism*, Skinner (1974) made the important point that radical behaviorism is not the science of behavior but rather the philosophy of that science. The point is that while radical behaviorism is identified as the philosophical basis of TEAB, it is not TEAB or the characteristic methodological practices with which TEAB is associated. Indeed, the independence of radical behaviorism and TEAB methodology may be further illustrated by showing that it is possible for the behavior of a scientist to be controlled by one and not the other. For example, several authors have recently noted the increase in mentalistic

or methodological behavioristic theory in such journals as *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior* (Branch & Malagodi, 1980; Cullen, 1981). While falling within the methodological guidelines of TEAB (Nevin, 1980), such trends could hardly be viewed as the rescue of psychology envisioned by Skinner (1983) and other contemporary behaviorists. On the other hand, it is also a matter of record (though probably not as well known) that radical behaviorism and its implications have led some scientists into methodological areas that are not easily embraced by our usual conception of TEAB (e.g., Day, 1976a, 1976b, 1983; Spooner, 1981).

That TEAB has contributed a powerful and productive scientific methodology to psychology is without question. However it will clearly take more than this to rescue psychology from its current (seemingly chronic) state of disarray. A methodology has its part in the rule-governed behavior of scientists primarily in terms of the production of data, whereas the rule-governing effects of radical behaviorism would appear to be more complex, exerting an influence upon all aspects of scientific behavior, including the evolution of scientific methodology.

It is quite obvious that when Skinner (1983) referred to "the experimental analysis of behavior," he was speaking of TEAB under the influence of radical behaviorism. However the point may need emphasis because it is clearly possible to work within the methodological guidelines of TEAB without working as a radical behaviorist.

In radical behavioristic terms, this *In Response* column is attempting a more refined identification of variables that may control scientific behavior. If the ex-

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perimental analysis of behavior is to rescue psychology, it will only be through the guidance of radical behaviorism. While this is clearly what Skinner (1983) meant, it will do well for behavior analysts to remember it, lest TEAB fall into the kind of disarray which has characterized the rest of psychology.

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