

BEHAVIORISM

Behaviorism

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Behaviorism is a form of psychology in which we use introspection and associative learning in order to have a reaction according to the environment that we are in, but how exactly are we able to do such a thing and why does it work? We as humans learn and use these patterns of association every day, however we are not the only ones who are able to do such a thing, animals, such as dogs, also learn by associating. The ability to learn in such a manner is amazing on its own but we as humans have taken that knowledge even further and have developed a system in which we can translate these small gestures that we do into our very own thoughts.

To understand how such achievements of the mind are accomplished we must first understand what behaviorism itself and where these ideas came from. Behaviorism is a theory that states we learn using introspection, monitoring one's own actions. In the beginning there were originally three different types of behaviorism, analytic, psychological, and methodological.

The theory of Analytic Behaviorism has roots that trace back to the philosophical movements of Logical Positivism. More specifically, behaviorism stems from a doctrine named verificationism, Verificationism was the base for analytical behaviorism, mostly, the claim that one's behavior can be translated into their mental motivations (G. Graham, 2010). Analytic Behaviorism aided avoid Dualism, the belief that body and mind are two separate entities, because behaviorism linked ones actions to their thoughts. This changed the view that people had on psychology as many people in the scientific community did not accept psychological findings as they were all theory because no finding could be applied to all and proven to be fact. However after realization of Behaviorism, psychologist's practices began to be

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applied to modern science and psychology became more widely used to treat mental disorders as well as physical ones.

Psychological Behaviorism is another type of behaviorism that roots back to the Enlightenment era where many famed philosophers concluded that intelligent behavior was a result of associative learning; associative learning is when someone or something associates one thing with another. Past philosophers were able to conclude this because they began to observe that some actions were learned by associating two things with each other such as food and refrigerator, mother and care, and school and learning. Most of these associative learning abilities also stem from introspection, the action of monitoring your own actions, for example take the “mother and love” association, one must have had some experience to have associated two people or things with one another. These findings then lead to the idea that animals and humans acquire knowledge from their environment and use that knowledge to influence their actions.

Methodological Behaviorism is yet another form of behaviorism that shares roots with analytical behaviorism as they both stem from positivism. Positivism was the time when psychologists tried to unite themselves with scientists and unify psychology and natural science. Some psychologists such as the famed John Watson said “psychology as a behaviorist views it is a purely objective experimental branch of natural science. Its theoretical goal is ... prediction and control.” Watson wanted to establish that both natural science and (behavioral) psychology both follow the same methods of hypothesis and experimentation so in essence the two are a distinction without a difference.

These three different types of behaviorism although similar are different however it wasn't until a man by the name of B.F. Skinner combined the three different

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theories to create one single theory called radical behaviorism. Radical Behaviorism was a method of psychology that attempts to translate one physical action into what the person's true intentions are based off of what they are thinking. This is a method use by all types of psychologists even today.

Now, psychologists use the theories and methods of behaviorism for a range of different objectives; behaviorism can be used for a range of different objectives such as a man who fiddles with his thumbs because he is lying to an infant crying because they are hungry. Behaviorist methods can be applied in a variety of ways which is why it is a validated psychological approach.

One famous behavioral psychologist was the Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov. Pavlov, very interested in the physiology of organisms, began his research in the digestive system of organisms (V. Berger, 2005) but he soon noticed how his experiments where yielding other results other than what was originally intended; Pavlov's dog demonstrated conditioning, a form of behavioral psychology. During the experiment, Pavlov would ring a bell and give the dog some food, once seeing the food, the dog began salivating. Soon after, the dog associated the bell with the food and would begin salivating just after hearing the bell. With this in mind the theory of classic conditioning was created, that an unconditioned reflex, such as the dog salivated upon seeing the food, was not learned but rather instinctive, however the same unconditioned reflex would be achieved if properly associated (R, Hall 1998), such as the ringing of the bells. These advancements in conditioning behavior were then applied throughout the psychological communities.

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Yet another experiment conducted by a famous behaviorist was that of B.F. Skinner. B.F. Skinner stated that no matter what background, race, or abilities one person has, he can successfully train that child to become anything he wanted them to become from a doctor or lawyer to a beggar or thief, this lead to Skinner conducting the experiment called "Little Albert." Skinner believed that he may be able to train the child to become afraid of a white rat. At first the child showed no fear at all to the rat but upon sight of the mouse Skinner would make a loud noise to frighten the baby, after which the baby would begin crying. Eventually the baby would begin crying on sight without hearing the loud noise. This type of conditioning is known as operant conditioning or reinforcement. Although this experiment was extremely controversial the experiment did yield results that confirmed the Skinner's theory. After which, Skinner began experimenting with rats to see if the same results would be achieved using the Skinner box. In these experiments, Skinner would place a rat in a box with two buttns, one would shock the rat and the other would release food for the rat to eat, after time the rat would only approach the food button.

In conclusion, there are several methods to behavioral psychology that have impacted psychology and people in general in ways that we do not realize. Classic conditioning, learning associations (creating natural responses to unnatural stimuli) can be used to "train children and animals, and reinforcement, rewarding "good" behavior and punishing "bad" are both tactics used in the behaviorist arsenal that are used to help change people lives for the better.

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