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Psychology



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Burrhus Frederic Skinner According to Lefrancois p86), radical behaviorism is defined as a “ theory that looks at the actual behavior of organisms in the context of the definable and observable conditions that precede the behavior rather than on testing formal theories.” In other words, radical behaviorism is a theory that looks at the organism’s actual behavior and it depends on the observable and definable conditions of the organism rather than the testing of formal theories. Skinner states that there are two important features of radical behaviorism: (a) behavioral explanations exclusively depend on the phenomena observed directly, and (b) psychology is regarded as an objective science whose techniques entail behavior analysis without the appeal to speculative psychological events or subjective mental events. Its contribution to the body of knowledge on learning is enormous. Firstly, the theory respects behavior as a natural occurring phenomenon. Thus, it respects the continuity of events in time and space through which natural sciences accumulate as natural history. Secondly, it emphasizes on experimental control rather than on the dependent variables. The theory also emphasizes on the application of experimental control in culturally beneficial means. Thirdly, it recognizes private events such as emotions and thinking as hidden behaviors involved in similar behaviors that entails overt behaviors. Lastly, it acknowledges the fact that scientists are also affected by similar variables that influence other people’s behaviors (LeDoux, 2002). Thus, radical behaviorism is important in the thorough understanding of the behavior of an organism because it is dependent on the observable and definable conditions. In other words, the scientist can make conclusions about the behavior of an organism from what he or she sees.

References

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Lefrancois, G. R. (2011). *Theories of human learning: What the professor said*. Mason, OH: Cengage Learning.