

## BOOK REVIEW

E. Tobach, editor  
*Historical Perspectives and the  
International Status of Comparative Psychology*

This book represents "The Proceedings of the First (Toronto, 1982) and Second (Acapulco, 1984) Conferences of the International Society for Comparative Psychology (ISCP)." The book has two major sections—Part I: Historical Perspectives, all written by North Americans and Part II: International Status of Comparative Psychology, all but one from non-North American countries.

There is a sense in which we are all comparative psychologists since "Earlier in the century, the definition was much broader, emphasizing race, child and individual differences, as much as animal psychology" (Innis). Hence, this reviewer, while not a comparative psychologist was delighted to receive a fine scholarly refresher course plus an updating of new historical information and a realization that the tensions in comparative psychology as now understood continue to reflect the schisms in the entire discipline, i.e., some form of dualism in the Cartesian tradition versus the monism or naturalism aspired to by systematic behaviorism.

In comparative psychology the tensions are considered to result in a "current identity crisis" (Demarest) such that "comparative psychology in the Netherlands is threatened with extinction, just as in the U.S.A." (Nijssen and Van Rijswijk); this "crisis in comparative psychology is a theoretical one, one that will require some fundamental changes in our thinking in order to attain a solution" (Tolman). Hence the historical perspective expressed in several of the chapters is a quite appropriate focus for understanding the roots of the current tensions.

In fact, accepting Cartesian assumptions logically militates against comparative psychology as we have come to recognize it. Ardila, in his chapter on comparative psychology in Latin America, writes that in the last century "as taught to students in the schools of philosophy and medicine, the 'soul' was a unique characteristic of human beings, and animals did not have it. To study the psychology of animals would have been a logical impossibility. Animals also did not have 'souls', and because psychology was the study of the soul, animal psychology did not exist." I am reminded that DesCartes' famous paper on the operation of the pineal gland in human psychology was titled "*On the Passions of the Soul.*"

Demarest's chapter called "Two comparative Psychologies" gave me a *deja vu* experience. I used to tell my classes that the Cartesian formulation placed all other species save humans in the category of mere automata but that only we could learn and be rational since only we had souls or minds. Hence the revolutionary notions of psychological continuity proposed by Darwin, also discussed in this book, and the empirical observations of learning in other animals by Pavlov, Thorndike, and others posed a problem for theoretical positions. Either DesCartes was wrong and other species do have minds or souls (cognitive psychology) or he was wrong that humans do have minds or souls (Behaviorism). Demarest puts in this way:

This became the first great problem for comparative psychology. How does an evolutionary psychology explain the origins and evolution of mental life from life that is otherwise insensitive. By the early 1900's there were three alternative explanations; (a) grant consciousness to all animals, (b) grant consciousness only to those animals whose behavior reveals attributes regarded as evidence of mind, or (c) deny that *any* animal exhibits consciousness." (emphasis added)

Demarest goes on to discuss in depth the elaboration of these themes in the hands of Jennings and Loeb.

I was further enlightened by Furumoto and Scarborough's chapter, "Placing Women in the History of Comparative Psychology: Margaret Floy Washburn and Margaret Morse Nice." It is difficult to fathom why women are underrepresented in this field—after all, a good psychologist is, well, a good psychologist. In some future conference I hope someone will undertake to present the contributions of Florence Gelber and Elaine Kinder (as well as the editor of this volume, Ethel Tobach).

Not being a comparative psychologist I am in no position to define the field and therefore establish the criteria of what belongs in it, but I was struck by the absence of any reference Winthrop Kellogg and his wife L.A. Kellogg who raised a chimp (Gua) and their child (Donald) together in as identical conditions as was then possible. Their findings were reported in their book, *The Ape and The Child*, (1933). Such direct species comparisons seems to me to qualify for inclusion as a contribution to the history of comparative psychology. Could this research be receding in to non-history? The last text that I know of which made systematic use of the Kelloggs' data was Pronko & Bowles *Empirical Foundation of Psychology* (1951).

My final comments have to do with the laboratory control of behavior as regards comparative psychology. The reductionism of Loeb, Watson and other earlier behaviorists is quite reasonably criticized. However, they did point toward the potential of sophisticated control of individual behavior which is a hallmark of successful scientific achievement. Evolutionary influences have not been emphasized along with experimental rigor but

rather than criticize "the fact that comparative psychology has too often been associated with learning theory . . ." (Demarest) I would hope that comparative psychologists would incorporate that data into a broader perspective. Nature cannot be at odds with herself so a comprehensive theory must allow all legitimate data to be included. I am reminded here of Skinner's discovery of the power of operant shaping. This is not limited to the laboratory. C. Lloyd Morgan beautifully described it in 1909 by observing his fox-terrier adaptively learn to retrieve a heavy-knobbed stick over successive throws after an hour or two which he completely explained in terms of "sense experience" and the center of gravity combined with "trial and error." The generality of the process might still escape us if Skinner had not confined rats to an operant chamber.

Space does not allow me to refer to other important contributions contained in this volume: Zoological inputs, the history of the use of captive animals, and the contributions of R.M. Yerkes and E.C. Tolman plus the status of the field in other Non-U.S. countries not previously mentioned. These subjects are all treated successfully. This is an excellent selection of papers which should be suitable for use in upper-division courses or graduate seminars after a student has had a course in history and or systems of psychology.

**THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR COMPARATIVE PSYCHOLOGY  
ANNOUNCES ITS FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE,  
AUGUST, 1988, IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA**

*Part I*

With the Australian Society for the Study of Animal Behaviour August 26-28, 1988, at the Taronga Centre, Taronga Zoo, Sydney, Australia. Session I: paleogeology, paleobiology, ethnic history of Australia; Symposia and Paper Sessions (behavioural ecology; behavioural development and learning; comparative limitations of visual systems; behaviour of Australian fauna) All sessions plenary style. Half-day excursion to University of New South Wales Cowan Field Station in Muogamarra Nature Reserve. For further information write: Dr. D. B. Croft, University of N.S.W., P. O. Box 1, Kensington, N.S.W. 2033, Australia. PAPERS INVITED.

*Part II*

At the XXIV International Congress of Psychology (Sydney, Australia; August 28-September 2, 1988). For travel, registration, and other information, write: The Secretariat, XXIV International Congress G. P. O. Box 2609, Sydney, NSW 2001, Australia. PAPERS INVITED. If you submit papers directly to the Secretariat, please send copy to E. Tobach, American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79 Street, New York, New York 10024-5192.

Symposia organized by ISCP at the XXIV International Congress of Psychology Comparative Psychology: Towards the Year 2000

(Convener: E. Tobach)

Comparative Studies on Perception and Psychophysics

(S. Chase & B. Zoeke)

Comparative Studies on Perception, Learning and Cognition

(B. Zoeke & S. Chase)

The Evolution of Laterality: Parts I and II

(J. P. Ward)

Environmental Psychology in a Changing Biosphere

(J. Demick)

Has Animal Behavior Got Anything to Do with Human Behavior?

(N. K. Innis)

Conservancies in the Year 2000: The Future of Training and Research in Comparative Psychology in the Shrinking Planet

(B. Birney & G. Greenberg)

Primate Models of Conceptual Processes

(R.K.R. Thompson & K. Swartz)