

Interpreting the Behaviorist and Humanist Theories

Read each selection and decide whether its author is a behaviorist or a humanist. Then explain the main idea of the each selection. Additional paper may be necessary.

Abraham Maslow

1. Any theory of motivation that is worthy of attention must deal with the highest capacities of the healthy and strong person as well as with the defensive maneuvers of crippled spirits.¹
2. A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he is to be ultimately at peace with himself. What a man can be, he must be.²

Edward Thorndike

3. Any act which in a given situation produces satisfaction becomes associated with that situation so that when the situation recurs the act is more likely than before to recur also.³

Carl Rogers

4. Rarely do we listen with real understanding, true empathy. Yet listening, of this very special kind, is one of the most potent forces for change that I know. . . . As persons are accepted and prized, they tend to develop a more caring attitude toward themselves. . . . It becomes possible for them to listen more accurately to the flow of inner experiencings.⁴
5. It is the client who knows what hurts, what directions to go, what problems are crucial, what experiences have been deeply buried. It began to occur to me that unless I had a need to demonstrate my own cleverness and learning, I would do better to rely upon the patient for the direction of movement in the process.⁵

B. F. Skinner

6. The practice of looking inside the organism for an explanation of behavior has tended to obscure the variables which are immediately available for a scientific analysis. These variables lie outside the organism, in its immediate environment and in its environmental history. . . . The objection to inner states is not that they do not exist, but that they are not relevant.⁶
7. We do not always find good ice or snow when we go skating or skiing. . . . We do not always get a good meal in a particular restaurant because cooks are not always predictable. We do not always get an answer when we telephone a friend because the friend is not always at home. . . . The reinforcements characteristic of industry and education are almost always intermittent because it is not feasible to control behavior by reinforcing every response.⁷

¹Abraham Maslow, *Motivation and Personality 2nd ed.* (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1970).

²Ibid., 46.

³Edward L. Thorndike, *The Elements of Psychology* (1907).

⁴Carl Rogers, *A Way of Being* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980), 116.

⁵Rogers, *On Becoming a Person: A Therapeutic View of Psychotherapy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), 11-12.

⁶B. F. Skinner, *About Behaviorism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974).

⁷Skinner, *Science and Human Behavior* (New York: Free Press, 1953).

A Survey on the Behaviorist and Humanist Views

Part A.

Read each statement carefully. If you agree with the statement, mark *A* to the left of the statement. If you disagree with the statement, mark *B*.

- _____ 1. I learned my personality by watching how my parents reacted to events and the actions of others.
- _____ 2. My personality is very similar to my parents because I respond to things the same way they do.
- _____ 3. I feel that I am in control of how my life will develop.
- _____ 4. The environment that I live in has a lot to do with how my personality develops.
- _____ 5. People strive to be the best that they can be.
- _____ 6. If I am a good student, it is because my parents rewarded me for being a good student.
- _____ 7. My self-concept is very important to me.
- _____ 8. If I make choices in my life, I must face the consequences of those choices.
- _____ 9. There is no such thing as personality; either I act the way people want me to or I don't.
- _____ 10. People like me when I am good.
- _____ 11. People shouldn't reward good or bad behavior with feelings of like or dislike.
- _____ 12. My personality comes from being rewarded for certain traits.
- _____ 13. Sometimes I whine for attention because it gets me what I want.
- _____ 14. I try to like people for what they are inside, not for what they do.
- _____ 15. If I have a mental problem, I probably am the one best suited to solve it.