Editorial

As I finish my term as editor, there are two groups of people I would like to thank. First, the authors who have sent work to the journal deserve enormous credit for their creative and scholarly work. Even those whose writing has not found its way into the journal have accomplished the difficult task of communicating their intellectual work to an audience of critical peers. The organization of ideas and analysis into a disciplined and written format is no small achievement, and without that formal effort our field would not move forward. Second, the editorial board members and other reviewers have given a substantial amount of their time and creative energy to help guide and shape the work of others. This is a fundamentally selfless act, done for the good of the order, and the quality of those reactions has been excellent. Some of the best behavior-analytic writing I have read is found in those many thoughtful and insightful reviews, prompted by the careful writing of submitting authors. I am deeply grateful to all those who took the time to generate manuscripts and to participate in the review process.

It has been very interesting to be a participant observer in the journal's peer review process, and I am struck by two common themes that emerged. Reviewers generally want the journal to aspire to the highest level of conceptual analysis; readers frequently seem dissatisfied with analyses that are still evolving, looking instead for a definitive treatment of a topic. Because no analysis is ever completely finished, the tricky part has been identifying whether conceptual work has evolved enough to be of value to colleagues, even if additional work remains to be done. In general I have chosen to present work in its current form, not insisting on closure for the topic; I hope that the authors, reviewers, or other

readers will be inspired by what has been accomplished so far to carry the analysis to the next level. If reading an article provides an occasion to identify further analyses that the author could have or should have done on a given topic, please take the time to add your contribution to the collective written work of the field.

Reviewers also comment frequently that an author has not given a standard or consensus behavioral account of certain phenomena or conceptual constructs. Because it is often the author's goal to challenge aspects of our common perspective, such a comment would not rule out publication of a manuscript. Some reviewers feel that the journal should represent behavior analysis as a field, showing on behalf of behavior analysis the strongest examples of what our collective wisdom has to offer. I prefer to think of *The Behavior Analyst* as a forum through which authors can reach behavioral readers, either with integrated conventional views or with new or challenging analyses. Accordingly, I have encouraged some authors whose work has not received consensus support from behavior-analytic reviewers. Ultimately the articles in the journal are the work of the individual scholars who wrote them, and they do not represent a sanctioned behavior-analytic position. The quality of the scholarship will stand on its own merits—not merely on the fact that it was published. Only when behavior analysts read about a diversity of related perspectives will there be selection among them based on broad audience reaction. It is certainly true that I personally have not agreed with plenty of what we have printed; I do think that each article has been interesting, stimulating, and coherent, however, and that is the service we provide to behavioral readers.

I regret that the journal has appeared irregularly; I did not manage or identify a regular flow of high-quality work that was ready for publication at the times the journal was expected. I hope that the material that finally appeared has been interesting to read and useful

in prompting high-quality conversations about conceptual issues in behavior analysis. I have learned a great deal from having the opportunity to organize the publication of the journal.

Dan Bernstein
Editor