

EDITORIAL

Animal Learning & Behavior is one of the new journals of the Psychonomic Society, and we hope to make it worthy of the scientific standards for which the Society stands. Like the other new journals, this one has metamorphosed from its semiautonomous existence as one of four parts of *Psychonomic Science*. We, therefore, have the advantage of building on the experiences of almost two years, and on the work of a dedicated editorial board and many diligent special consultants. With the kind of cooperation we have been getting from our colleagues, editorial work can at times be a joy.

The Editor and Associate Editors will all serve as action editors. We hope by this arrangement that we can give each paper submitted most careful attention and consideration. There will not be a designated group of consulting editors, but each of us will look for reviewing help from special consultants most qualified to provide it on a particular manuscript. Our experience with ad hoc reviewing is that it is generally excellent, and it is also a way to get many members of the Society, and others who work in the areas covered by AL&B, involved in the reviewing process and in setting and maintaining quality standards for the journal.

We will continue to try to attract and recognize experimental articles of ever higher quality, and these will make up the bulk of what is published. But, like the other new journals of the Society, the new AL&B will also occasionally find some pages for important theoretical contributions, and for critical reviews that offer an interesting organization or reorganization of some portion of the literature and have an appreciable theoretical content; we will not favor review articles whose major impact is bibliographic.

Comments on articles which have appeared in AL&B will be published if, in the opinion of the Editor and/or one of his Associates, they would be of interest to, and instructive to, a significant portion of the readership of the journal. It is particularly important that such comments be written and rewritten so that their meaning is clear and so that they have no ad hominem content. We will not allow extended exchanges,

of diminishing interest to readers, between authors and their critics.

For the present at least, we will not be limited by a rigid page allocation, and will not impose arbitrary page limits on manuscripts. While very often the shorter version of an article is the better one, we do not urge brevity at the expense of clarity of exposition and omission of necessary procedural details. And while priority will be given to substantial articles reporting relatively conclusive research, we will sometimes accept articles reporting the more tentative kinds of findings, particularly if in our judgment they might serve to stimulate new and interesting kinds of work. Ordinarily, however, a more appropriate periodical for articles of this kind, particularly if they are brief, is the new *Bulletin of the Psychonomic Society*.

The data we publish must of course be reliable and the product of sound design considerations; but immaculate technique, design, and analysis are not sufficient grounds for publication. Authors should tell us in simple, succinct English why their studies were carried out, what news is provided by the results, and how they relate to a larger body of knowledge. Whether or not to interpret, or how to interpret, findings is up to the author, except when an interpretation clearly does not fit the data reported in the article in question or elsewhere.

This is not a highly specialized journal; and the fact that it is not makes it reasonable to expect, and provides an opportunity for, increased communication among, say, investigators whose work is with Pavlovian conditioning, operant conditioning, and other paradigms for the study of learning and motivation, as well as investigators of animal development and animal behavior from a number of different orientations. All share an interest in the learning and behavior of nonhuman, as well as human, animals, and each has something to contribute to at least some of the others. We sense that some breaking down of intellectual and terminological barriers in these and other areas already has been accomplished, and feel that an acceleration of this process is desirable. To publish in AL&B should, therefore, be regarded

as an opportunity to communicate with a more diverse audience than usual, and articles should be prepared with this in mind. While the technology employed in a particular study and even the language of the report will differ from article to article, depending on the area of investigation and on the orientation of the contributor, we ask authors to keep jargon to a minimum and to help readers with different backgrounds to understand the ideas and procedures with which they are working. If this

is done, every reader of AL&B may find something of interest in more than just two or three articles in an issue.

The present editor has been fortunate to find a group of editorial associates who share to some degree an ecumenical spirit about the study of animal learning and behavior. He urges it on contributors to AL&B and hopes that this spirit may become the hallmark of at least the first editorial administration of this journal.

Abram Amsel