

Cognition,
Creativity,
and
Behavior

Selected Essays

Robert Epstein

Cognition, Creativity, and Behavior: Selected Essays

By Robert Epstein

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This diverse set of essays traces Epstein's experimental and theoretical work over a 15 year period. Four of the essays were coauthored by the eminent psychologist B.F. Skinner. The book demonstrates how the scientific study of behavior can increase our understanding and effectiveness in many domains: creativity and innovation, parenting, artificial intelligence, self-improvement, and even world peace. Reviewers have praised the volume as an impressive effort by one of America's most notable psychologists.

Epstein's goals in writing this book were (a) to present some relatively interesting papers that can stand alone and (b) to organize and edit them so that sections have some integrity and so that the overall volume paints a fairly consistent picture of his evolving views on cognition, creativity, and behavior. Parts I and II focus on generativity research and theory and on some Columban (pigeon) simulations of human behavior, and Part III includes some related laboratory studies. Part IV is concerned with efforts to create a comprehensive science of behavior, and Part V includes essays about Skinner, one of the principle architects of behaviorism. Part VI includes forays into artificial intelligence, child rearing, categorization research, and other topics, and Part VII takes the volume to some uncertain reflections on growing older, and to a modest proposal for a day of world peace.

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Editorial Review

Review

"[I]t is an interesting collection for those who are interested in the experimental study of behavior and the role Skinner has played in its development." - **Metapsychology: Mental Health Net**

Review

"Cognition, Creativity, and Behavior is a wonderfully informative and entertaining volume with particularly impressive breadth and coverage. Granted such coverage is only useful if the author can back up his ideas and suggestions, but Professor Epstein can and does. He describes unambiguously valid methods and research findings, but is equally careful to describe bridges between the laboratory and the natural environment. He relies on sound methods (both experimental and logical), but at the same time stretches the boundaries of application by tackling such topics as self-control, spontaneous behavior, creativity, and world peace. This truly is a book for everyone, and I expect it will convince many readers to consider viewing the world and ourselves from the behavioral perspective." (Mark A. Runco, editor, *Creativity Research Journal*, Professor, California State University, Fullerton)

"Robert Epstein's immense influence on the field of psychology started early and has never abated. He established an international reputation while still a graduate student working under the guidance of B.F. Skinner at Harvard University. His scholarly contributions and achievements since that time, many of which are summarized in this book, have been nothing short of extraordinary. Professor Epstein thinks profound thoughts nonstop, generates novel and creative ideas at the drop of a hat, and is famous for his propensity to translate these ideas into bold deeds. As I see it, the book's title is a reflection of the areas in which he excels. This collection of some of Epstein's most celebrated essays will surely fascinate anyone who has ever contemplated the mysteries of cognition, creativity, and behavior." (John T. Wixted, Associate Professor of Psychology, University of California San Diego)

Epstein shows how far one can go without positing internal representations and processes. He provides an unusual perspective on such central topics in cognitive science as creativity, and shows the value of regarding complex cognitive phenomena from multiple perspectives. Even those who disagree with his basic assumptions will find it worthwhile to consider Epstein's approach. (^B^X Stephen M. Kosslyn, Professor of Psychology^LHarvard University)

From the Back Cover

This diverse set of essays traces Epstein's experimental and theoretical work over a 15-year period. Four of the essays were coauthored by the eminent psychologist B. F. Skinner. The book demonstrates how the scientific study of the behavior can increase our understanding and effectiveness in many domains: creativity and innovation, parenting, artificial intelligence, self-improvement, and even world peace. Reviewers have praised the volume as an impressive effort by one of America's most notable psychologists. The volume paints a fairly consistent picture of Epstein's evolving view on cognition, creativity, and behavior. The first sections focus on generativity research and theory and on some "Columban" (pigeon) simulations of human behavior, including some related laboratory studies. The next sections cover efforts to create a comprehensive science of behavior; essays about Skinner, one of the principal architects of behaviorism; and forays into artificial intelligence, child rearing, categorization research, and other topics. The volume concludes with some uncertain reflections on growing older and a modest proposal for a day of world peace.

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