

Mahoney M J. *Cognition and behavior modification.*
Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1974. 351 p.
[Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA]

Behavioristic and cognitive approaches to human experience are reviewed. Orthodox behavioral perspectives are found theoretically and empirically inadequate. Concepts and research from the cognitive sciences are ostensibly more adequate, heuristic, and promising. Particularly fascinating are the implications of cognitive psychology for the study of science and scientists. [The Social Sciences Citation Index® (SSCI®) indicates that this book has been cited in over 500 publications since 1974.]

Michael J. Mahoney
Counseling Psychology
University of California
Santa Barbara, CA 93106

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Cognition and Behavior Modification was first conceptualized as a research paper for a graduate seminar at Stanford in 1969. It was rejected as a term-paper topic, but I remained fascinated with the interface of cognitive psychology and behaviorism as I continued my graduate studies and early research on self-control. In 1972 I joined the faculty at Penn State and began putting together lectures on "cognitive behavior modification." The summer of 1973 was spent lecturing on that topic in Brazil. The positive reactions of my Brazilian colleagues and a memorable evening with B.F. Skinner later that summer lent impetus to my beginning work on the book.

Skinner and I had corresponded on the phenomenon of self-control and the assumption of automaticity in reinforcement in 1970. I met him in 1971, and we had dinner together at the 1973 meeting of the American Psychological Association in Montreal. He said he liked my self-control research because it challenged the public image of behaviorism as totalitarian and manipulative. My interest in beliefs, imagery, "perceived" contingencies, and other "inner person processes," however, was deemed "mis-

guided" by Skinner, who insisted that there was no evidence whatsoever to support the "mentalist speculations" of cognitive psychology. His flat and adamant denial of any value in the cognitive sciences amplified my interest in critically reviewing theory and research in these two areas.

The book was written during the 1973-1974 academic year and quickly put into print by Ballinger. Reactions to the book, both immediately and over the next several years, were generally extreme and bimodal. I was gratified by the positive reviews it received from such people as Bandura, Beck, and Franks, but was startled when I later learned that it was literally banned at several academic enclaves of orthodox behaviorism. Likewise, at professional conventions I was either welcomed as a "progressive thinker" or publicly attacked (sometimes quite viciously) as a "malcontent" bent on undermining the foundations of behavior therapy. In retrospect, I am sure that my next book—on psychology of science and scientists—reflected my attempt to understand the professional intolerance that I encountered.¹ The intolerance notwithstanding, cognitive-behavioral approaches grew in popularity, developed their own journals, and rapidly became a major representative of modern psychological theory.^{2,4}

I was surprised and honored to learn that *Cognition and Behavior Modification* had become a Citation Classic. The reasons for its frequent citation are probably multiple and include the fact that it was an early invitation to the "cognitive revolution" that was already gaining momentum within psychology. Subjectively, my "best work" has usually felt like my most recent, and hindsight has always demanded humility about earlier projects. My current views of cognitive processes and personal development, for example, are considerably more complex than those ventured in 1974.⁵ Still, there is a common thread of an endorsement of the cognitive sciences as the most promising perspectives from which to understand and facilitate human development.

1. Mahoney M J. *Scientist as subject: the psychological imperative.* Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1976. 249 p.
2. Mahoney M J. Reflections on the cognitive-learning trend in psychotherapy. *Amer. Psychol.* 32:5-13, 1977. (Cited 140 times.)
3. Mahoney M J & Arnkoff D B. Cognitive and self-control therapies. (Garfield S L & Bergin A E, eds.) *Handbook of psychotherapy and behavior change.* New York: Wiley, 1978. Vol. 2, p. 689-722.
4. Mahoney M J & Freeman A, eds. *Cognition and psychotherapy.* New York: Plenum, 1985. 357 p.
5. Mahoney M J. *Personal change processes: notes on the facilitation of human development.* New York: Basic, in press.