

little of its performance and limitations. It is time such papers were banned.

The editors will have to work hard if the journal is to achieve the range of material to which they aspire, particularly as it is in competition with several well-established journals including *Cognition* and *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. One should not judge by the first volume, however, since it usually takes a journal a few years to find its identity. There is certainly scope for a multidisciplinary journal containing articles written in such a style that they are

## COGNITION AND BRAIN THEORY

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all readily assimilable by members of the different disciplines. *Cognition and Brain Theory* should be in your library, but personal subscribers may want to wait a year or two before investing. □

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## In need of brief analysis?

Geoffrey Hall

*Behaviour Analysis Letters*. Editors J.E.R. Staddon and C.M. Bradshaw. 6/yr. (Elsevier Biomedical.) Dfl. 205, \$82.

THE titles of journals commonly use a sort of code. "Letters" in *Behaviour Analysis Letters* (BAL) is not hard to crack. It means short papers (the editors stipulate 2,500 words maximum), and a short publication lag (running at about 4 months on average for the papers which appear in the latest issue).

A quick survey of my colleagues reveals, however, that not all psychologists are able to decode the phrase "Behaviour Analysis". It means, in fact, that branch of experimental psychology created by B.F. Skinner — the approach that abstains from traditional psychological theory and statistical methodology and concentrates instead upon the detailed study of individual organisms (usually non-human) responding according to the constraints imposed by various schedules of reinforcement. The scope of BAL therefore exactly matches the area currently covered by the well-established *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behaviour* (JEAB).

So do we need this new journal? The editors assert that there has long been a want for a journal devoted to short papers on the experimental analysis of behaviour.



Although JEAB (in common with many psychology journals) now prefers work that comes as an "integrative package", some research, argue the editors of BAL, is better presented as a series of short papers. I remain to be convinced. Surely what counts in a paper is not that it is long or short but that it answers some important question (or, very occasionally provokes a

startling new one). Sometimes a short paper can do this, although I did not find an example in the issues of BAL made available for review. Rather, most of the contributions looked indeed like the first of a series and served to make the point that, in this branch of psychology, a single experiment is usually capable only of creating a problem, not of solving it. □

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## Primate range

Alan F. Dixson

*American Journal of Primatology*. Editor J. Erwin. 8/yr. (Alan R. Liss.) \$140 US, \$162 Europe.

THERE are now five journals which deal exclusively with primates: *Folia Primatologica*, *Primates*, *Journal of Medical Primatology*, *International Journal of Primatology* (reviewed in *Nature* 293, 350; 1981) and, most recently, the *American Journal of Primatology*.

The new journal has an attractive format and as well as reports of research work carries book reviews and editorials. Manuscripts are reviewed and published promptly. The journal aims to cater for all aspects of primate biology and, as the editor points out, "the breadth of the contributions is remarkable" — in a single issue they range from a paper on gallstones in an aged rhesus monkey to a review on self-awareness and the emergence of mind.

As this is the official journal of the American Society of Primatologists, it should command a good market in the United States. The editorial board is composed entirely of workers in American universities and research institutes, and the

great majority of articles published so far are by American scientists.

Although a broad and comparative approach to studies of primate biology is useful, several existing journals already adopt this policy and it is doubtful whether another publication is warranted. The claim that "knowledge of primates has doubled in less than five years" is also of dubious validity. A landslide of papers is not necessarily commensurate with a doubling in scientific knowledge.

Many of the best studies on primates are published in specialist journals rather than in the primatological literature. This will probably continue to be the case. However, the *American Journal of Primatology* has produced a useful supplement on reproduction and fertility in primates; perhaps the further use of specialized supplements will improve the quality of output achieved by the journal. □

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## Open issues

Frank Moriarty

*European Applied Research Reports: Environment and Natural Resources Section*. Irregular. (Harwood.) Dfl. 295, \$108.50 per volume of 500 pages. *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment*. Editors G.B. Wiersma and A.I. Sors. 4/yr. (Reidel.) Dfl.66 (personal), Dfl.180 (institutional).

THE reasons for publishing *European Applied Research Reports* are obscure. Volumes in the *Environment and Natural Resources Section* are to have an irregular number of parts, with 400–500 pages per volume, and will contain refereed original scientific work that has been conducted in collaboration with the Commission of the European Communities, reports and symposia proceedings, on all aspects of environmental and natural resources. No instructions are given for would-be authors, and there is no indication of who edits the reports, beyond the fact that they are published for the Directorate-General for Scientific and Technical Information. The standard of production is poor.

Even in the small number of issues yet published, the range of topics is considerable: from causes and remedies for coastal erosion in Togo and Benin to the consequences of phosphorus precipitation in water-purification plants. A great deal of material is included within individual papers that would usually be deleted by most scientific journals. Much of the work is worthy, but the range is so wide, and the essentials so diluted with detail, that the series is best seen as a monument to the