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THE ITEM

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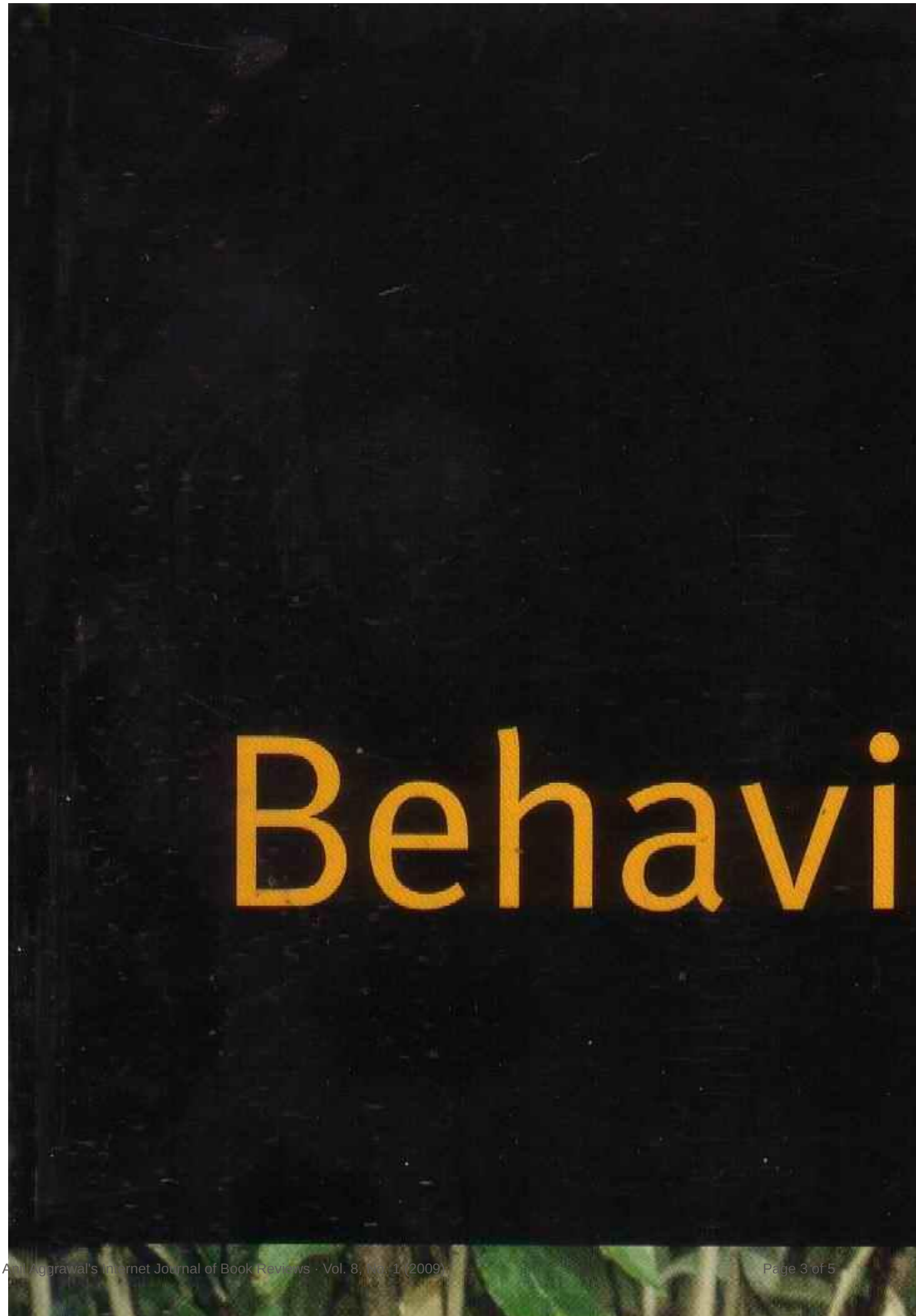
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Behavi

The book is a vivid description of hormonal effects on nervous system of organisms and thereafter the results shown in the form of behavior. The introduction itself impresses the reader as it provides a good amount of information about behavioural endocrinology and the techniques applied for recording the observations for convenience the book is divided into four parts.

The first part begins on a descriptive note. It comprises of three chapters. These describe the intercellular messengers; neurotransmitters, neurohormones and various other hormones of the body. This initial part of the book nicely elaborates the production and release of hormones and the resulting responses. Table 14 on page 28 illustrates a list of hormones secreted by various glands. This very part defines and explains how behavioural alterations could be induced in an organism by working at its molecular level. The techniques which allow the control of gene expression have been discussed in detail which impresses the reader as it generates interest in how techniques can measure and modify gene expression in behavioural endocrinology.

The most fundamental role of hormones in almost all species-sex differentiation has been allotted a separate detailed space so as to lay a firm ground for the readers to believe upon the organizational effects of gonadal hormones.

The readers are sure to find second part more interesting as it contains enormous information. One is amazed to find distinct general description of female sexual behaviour in the form of chapters. It hardly leaves any stone unturned regarding neuroendocrinology of female and male sexual behaviours. The inclusion of separate chapter on human sexual behaviour draws the attention of even laymen. The subject covers every aspect of human sexual behaviour with citings of different research workers at appropriate instances. This chapter is more educative in my perspective for students of any age group.

> *...The scientific testimonies make the work more valuable. This part of the book also traces evolutionary pathways of behaviour along with emphasizing on interdisciplinary approach to behavioural analysis. The evolutionary aspect to behaviour is also covered by authors: chapter 8 of the book introduces to the reader the variety in courtship behaviour in the vast animal world and chapter 9 unfolds the amazing effects of hormones on parental behaviour in mammalian, non-mammalian and bird species...*

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The third part of the book explores the regulatory functions of hormones. The readers would certainly find it worthwhile to go through the consequences that stress can cause as it can affect the immune system through activation of endocrine system. This subject would draw a broad spectrum of readers as this is the most common form of 'disease' from which masses suffer from. The chronic effects on immune system results in the emergence of immunological disease (page 300). The research work can effectively play a role in binding the readers to this amazing part of this book. The details of stress-response relation and puzzle surrounding the immune functions could force any 'stressed reader' to look upon ones lifestyle and to bring about the possible changes.

The findings of part four have important implications for our understanding of how gonadal hormones act in the brain to alter neuronal functions. It also reveals gender differences in abuse of the psychomotor stimulant drugs. Why study sex steroids? On page 621 gives some very genuine reasons how hormones can affect capabilities in males and females but the findings also tell us to take sex differences as dynamic entities rather than fixed static traits.

The last part of the book holds vast knowledge about the maintenance of internal chemistry of our body which further governs the secretion of hormones and regulation of behaviour. The chapter related to evolution of invertebrates, their remodeling during growth from young to adult is totally subject oriented and is good for students studying evolutionary biology.

The book explains each and every aspect regarding hormones and behaviour. The investigations and research work is depicted by suitable diagrams, tables, graphs and figures. One of the strong points of the book is that it gives all the basic information before discussing any topic in detail. The compilation of research work is done in such a way that it meets the demands of students of the subject as well as it provides important information in an interesting way even to a layman. The only weak point I could find was that the book, inspite of all its details-lacks coloured illustrations and photographs which could have made it all the more attractive.

-Geeta Saluja and Prateek Pandya



Dr. Geeta Saluja is a Wildlife Major, with a Ph.D. degree in wildlife from India. She has a strong liking for biology and chemistry, particularly biological and chemical terrorism. Her other areas of interest are environment awareness, astronomy and crime detection.



Prateek Pandya is a research scholar in the Department of Chemistry at Dayalbagh Educational Institute (D.E.I), Agra, UP, India. He can be contacted by clicking here.

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-Editor-in-Chief