

IN MEMORIAM: JERRY MERTENS
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Operants

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Is it possible to escape from a world with unequal balances of power, exploitation, and aversive control to a utopian community? Skinner offered his vision in *Walden Two*, published in 1948. The search for answers still continues today ...

ADDRESSING RACIAL AND GENDER ISSUES



I HAVE JUST COME BACK FROM THE WOOF! 2019 CONFERENCE IN NOTTINGHAM, UK. ALL THE SPEAKERS ILLUSTRATED WAYS TO SHAPE BEHAVIOR. THEIR PROCEDURES CONTINUALLY OFFERED ANIMALS THE OPTION TO STOP TRAINING OR TO TAKE A BREAK. USING ONLY POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT, THE SPEAKERS SHOWED WAYS TO SOLVE COMMON PROBLEMS. AFTER SHAPING, THEIR DOGS EAGERLY GOT INTO THEIR CARRYING CASES. THE ANIMALS ACCEPTED, WITHOUT PROTEST, PAINFUL MEDICAL TREATMENTS. WITH SHAPING, GOALS WERE ACHIEVED WITHOUT COERCION. SHAPING IS BASED ON THE SCIENCE THAT SKINNER BEGAN. THE PRINCIPLES APPLY TO ANY SPECIES. THAT GOT ME THINKING ABOUT EDUCATION. RECENTLY I HAVE SEEN SIGNS THAT SKINNER'S SHAPING TECHNIQUES ARE FINDING THEIR WAY INTO SCHOOLS. TEACHERS ARE CONCENTRATING LESS ON WHAT THEY ARE DOING AND MORE ON THEIR STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE. BY FOCUSING ON EACH STUDENT'S PROGRESS, ONE CAN MORE EASILY ADJUST INSTRUCTION TO HELP EACH SUCCEED. SUCCESS IN ACQUIRING NEW SKILLS, IN TURN, LEADS TO ENTHUSIASM FOR CONTINUED LEARNING.

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President, B. F. Skinner Foundation

Chinese Translated by Phoebe Lau

我剛從英國的諾丁漢 WOOF! 2019會議回來。所有講員說明了行為塑造的各種方法。他們持續給動物選擇停止訓練或暫休一會。講員展示了如何透過運用正向行為策略解決常見問題。例如，行為塑造可使狗隻渴望進入牠們的便攜式籠子裡；牠們順從，接受痛苦的藥物治療。經過行為塑造後，在沒有強迫的情形下，可以達到以上目的。行為塑造始於Skinner所提倡的科學理論。他的理論適合應用於不同的生物種類。這讓我對教育有所反思。近來我領悟到Skinner的行為塑造理論能夠應用在學校中。教師較集中在學生的表現

Dutch Translated by Frans van Haaren

Ik ben net terug van de WOOF!2019 conferentie in Nottingham, Engeland. Alle sprekers lieten voorbeelden zien hoe we gedrag aan kunnen leren. Hun procedures lieten de dieren voortdurend kiezen om de training te beëindigen of om een pauze in te laten. De sprekers boden allerlei manieren aan om vaak voorkomende problemen met alleen maar positieve bekrachtiging op te lossen. Na afloop van het leerproces gingen de honden zonder enige aarzeling hun kennel in. Zonder te protesteren accepteerden de dieren pijnlijke medische behandelingen. Gedurende het leerproces werden doelen behaald zonder enige dwang. Dat leerproces is gebaseerd op de wetenschap die begon met Skinner. De principes van die wetenschap blijken voor iedereen te gelden. Dat deed mij denken aan onderwijs. Het is mij recentelijk duidelijk geworden dat Skinner's benadering meer en meer ingang vindt op scholen. Onderwijzers en onderwijzeressen leggen steeds minder nadruk op hun gedrag en meer nadruk op het gedrag van hun studenten. Met meer nadruk op de vooruitgang van iedere student, wordt het gemakkelijker om het onderwijs aan te passen zodat iedere student succesvol is. Succes in het aanleren van nieuwe vaardigheden leidt dan, vanzelf, tot enthousiasme om meer te willen leren.

French Translated by MarieCéline Clemenceau

Je viens juste de rentrer de la conférence WOOF! 2019 qui avait lieu à Nottingham au Royaume-Uni. Tous les présentateurs ont illustré des manières de façonner le comportement. Leurs procédures offraient continuellement aux animaux la possibilité d'arrêter leur entraînement ou de faire une pause. En utilisant uniquement le renforcement positif, les présentateurs ont montré des moyens de résoudre des problèmes communs. Après avoir façonné, leurs chiens entraient vivement dans leurs caisses de transport. Les animaux acceptaient des traitements médicaux douloureux sans protester. Avec le façonnement, les objectifs étaient atteints sans contrainte. Le façonnement est basé sur la science que Skinner a commencée. Les principes s'appliquent à toutes les espèces. Cela m'a fait penser à l'éducation. Récemment, j'ai vu des signes indiquant que les techniques de façonnement de Skinner se répandent dans les écoles. Les enseignants se concentrent moins sur ce qu'ils font et davantage sur la performance de leurs élèves. En se concentrant sur les progrès de chaque élève, il est plus facile d'ajuster les instructions pour les aider à réussir. Le succès dans l'acquisition de nouvelles compétences conduit, en retour, à l'enthousiasme d'un apprentissage en continu.

Greek Translated by Katerina Dounavi

Μόλις επέστρεψα από το Συνέδριο WOOF! 2019 στο Νότιγγχαμ του Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου. Όλοι οι ομιλητές εξήγησαν τρόπους διαμόρφωσης της συμπεριφοράς. Οι διαδικασίες τους πρόσφεραν συνεχώς στα ζώα την επιλογή να σταματήσουν την εκπαίδευση ή να κάνουν διάλειμμα. Χρησιμοποιώντας μόνο θετική ενίσχυση, οι ομιλητές έδειξαν τρόπους επίλυσης κοινών προβλημάτων. Μετά τη διαμόρφωση δράσεων, οι σκύλοι τους με ενθουσιασμό μπήκαν στα κουτιά μεταφοράς τους. Τα ζώα δέχθηκαν, χωρίς διαμαρτυρία, επώδυνες ιατρικές θεραπείες. Με τη διαμόρφωση δράσεων, οι στόχοι επιτεύχθηκαν χωρίς εξαναγκασμό. Η διαμόρφωση βασίζεται στην επιστήμη που ξεκίνησε ο Skinner. Οι αρχές ισχύουν για οποιοδήποτε είδος. Αυτό με έκανε να σκεφτώ την εκπαίδευση. Πρόσφατα έχω δει σημάδια ότι οι τεχνικές διαμόρφωσης του Skinner βρίσκουν το δρόμο τους στα σχολεία. Οι εκπαιδευτικοί επικεντρώνονται λιγότερο σε αυτό που κάνουν και περισσότερο στην απόδοση των μαθητών τους. Εστιάζοντας στην πρόοδο κάθε μαθητή, είναι ευκολότερο να προσαρμόσει κανείς τη διδασκαλία για να τους βοηθήσει να πετύχουν. Με τη σειρά της, η επιτυχία στην απόκτηση νέων δεξιοτήτων οδηγεί σε ενθουσιασμό για συνεχή μάθηση.

Hebrew Translated by Shiri Ayvazo

כרגע חזרתי מכנס WOOF! 2019 בנוטינגהאם, בריטניה. כל המציגים הדגישו דרכים לעצב התנהגות. בהליכה הם הציעו לחיות באופן מתמשך את האפשרות להפסיק את האימון או לקחת הפסקה. המציגים הראו דרכים לפתור בעיות נפוצות תוך שימוש בחיזוק חיובי בלבד. לאחר העיצוב, כלבים נכנסו בשקיקה אל הכלובים שלהם. החיות קיבלו, ללא מחאה, טיפול רפואי מכאיב. באמצעות עיצוב, המטרות הושגו ללא כפייה. עיצוב מבוסס על המדע אותו החל סקינר. העקרונות ישימים לכל יצור חי. זה גרם לי לחשוב על חינוך. לאחרונה ראיתי סימנים שטכניקות העיצוב של סקינר מוצאות דרך אל תוך בתי הספר. מורים מתרכזים פחות על מה שהם עושים, ויותר על הביצועים של תלמידיהם. באמצעות ההתמקדות בהתקדמות של כל תלמיד, אדם יכול להתאים את הוראתו יותר בקלות כדי לסייע להם להצליח. הצלחה ברכישת מיומנויות חדשות מובילה להתלהבות ללמידה נמשכת.

Italian Translated by Anna Luzi

Sono appena tornata dal WOOF!, la conferenza del 2019 che si tiene a Nottingham, nel Regno Unito. Tutti i relatori hanno illustrato varie modalità per modificare il comportamento animale attraverso lo shaping. La procedura consiste nel fare alcune interruzioni durante l'addestramento, concedendo all'animale opportune pause. I relatori hanno evidenziato come si riesca a risolvere i più comuni problemi comportamentali utilizzando esclusivamente rinforzi positivi. Grazie all'applicazione di tecniche di shaping, i cani sono entrati di buon grado nella loro gabbia ed hanno accettato di sottoporsi, senza protestare, anche a trattamenti medici dolorosi. Con lo shaping gli obiettivi sono stati raggiunti senza coercizione. Lo shaping si basa sulla scienza di cui Skinner è stato l'iniziatore. I principi si possono applicare a qualsiasi specie animale. Questo mi ha fatto pensare all'educazione. Recentemente ho notato che le tecniche di shaping introdotte da Skinner stanno entrando nelle scuole. Gli insegnanti si stanno concentrando meno su loro stessi e più sulle prestazioni dei loro studenti. Concentrandosi sui progressi di ogni studente, è possibile adattare più facilmente il tipo di istruzioni da dare, per aiutarli ad avere successo. Avere successo nell'acquisizione di nuove competenze, porta a sua volta, ad un sempre maggiore entusiasmo nel continuare ad imparare.

Japanese Translated by Naoki Yamagishi

イギリスのノッティンガムで開催された会議WOOF! 2019(動物行動とトレーニングの会議)からたった今戻ってきました。すべての話題提供者が行動形成の方法について説明していました。彼らの手順はトレーニングの中止や休憩をとる選択肢を常に用意しています。正の強化(提示型強化)のみを使うことで、よくある問題を解決することができます。行動形成の後、イヌはキャリーケースに熱心に入っていきます。痛みを伴う治療を、抵抗することなく受け入れます。行動形成によって、強制なしに目標が達成されます。行動形成はスキナーが始めた科学に基づいています。この原理はあらゆる(動物)種に適用されます。そこで私は教育について考えました。最近、私はスキナーの行動形成技法が学校で使われる兆しを見てきました。教師は徐々に、自分たちが何をしているかではなく、生徒のパフォーマンスに注意を払い始めています。生徒の友達に注目することで、私たちはより容易に指導を調整し、生徒の成功を手助けすることができます。新しいスキルの獲得に成功すると、継続的な学習への熱意につながります。

Korean Translated by Theresa Yunhee Shin

저는 영국 노팅햄에서 열리는 WOOF! 2019년 학술대회를 참가하고 돌아왔습니다. 모든 강연자들이 행동 형성에 대한 방법들을 설명하였습니다. 동물들이 훈련을 멈추거나 휴식을 취하는 선택권을 지속적으로 제공하는 절차들이었습니다. 오직 긍정적 강화만의 사용으로, 강연자들은 일반적인 문제들을 해결하는 방법을 보여주었습니다. 행동형성 후에, 강아지들은 아주 일찍 운반용 케이스에 도달했습니다. 동물들은 저항이나 고통스런 의학적 처치없이도 받아들였습니다. 행동형성을 적용하면 강제성이 없이도 목적이 획득될 수 있습니다. 행동형성은 스키너가 시작한 과학의 기초입니다. 이 원칙은 어떤 종에게도 상관없이 적용됩니다. 저는 교육에 대해서도 생각해보았습니다. 최근 저는 스키너의 행동형성기법들이 학교안에서 그들의 길을 찾고 있는 중이라는 표시들을 보고 있습니다. 교사들이 학생이 하는 것에는 덜 집중하고, 그들의 수행에만 더 집중하고 있습니다. 각 학생들의 진전도에 집중하는 것이 학생들이 성공할 수 있도록 돕는 가장 쉽고 적절한 교수가 될 수 있습니다. 새로운 기술을 획득하는 데 있어 성공은, 결국, 지속적인 학습을 위한 열의가 이끄는 것이기 때문입니다.

Norwegian Translated by Karoline Giæver Helgesen

Jeg har nettopp kommet tilbake fra WOOF! 2019 konferansen i Nottingham, Storbritannia. Presentørene illustrerte alle ulike tilnærminger til shaping av atferd. Prosedyrene deres ga dyrene kontinuerlig mulighet til å avbryte treningen eller ta en pause. Ved bare å bruke positiv forsterkning viste presentørene ulike løsninger for vanlige problemer. Etter shaping tok hundene ivrig plass i bæreeveskene. Dyrene aksepterte også, uten protester, smertefulle medisinske behandlinger. Med shapingprosedyrer ble mål nådd uten bruk av tvang. Shaping som prosedyre er basert på vitenskapen Skinner startet. Prinsippene gjelder på tvers av arter. Dette fikk meg til å tenke på utdanning. Nylig har jeg sett tegn på at Skinners shapingteknikker er i ferd med å finne vei inn i skolene. Lærerne konsentrerer seg mindre om egen atferd og mer om elevenes ytelse. Ved å fokusere på den enkelte elevs fremgang kan man lettere tilpasse instruksjonene som skal til for å hjelpe dem med å lykkes. Mestring av nye ferdigheter leder til entusiasme for fortsatt læring.

Polish Translated by Monika Suchowierska-Stephany

W ostatnich dniach wróciłam z konferencji WOOF! 2019, która odbyła się w Nottingham w Wielkiej Brytanii. Wszyscy prelegenci prezentowali metody kształtowania zachowania zwierząt. Procedury te zapewniały zwierzętom możliwość zaprzestania treningu albo tymczasowej przerwy. Trenerzy ukazywali drogi rozwiązań często występujących problemów z wykorzystaniem jedynie wzmocnień pozytywnych. Po sesjach kształtowania zwierzęta chętnie wracały do swoich boksów. Bez protestu poddawały się sprawiającym ból procedurom medycznym. W wyniku kształtowania zachowań osiągnano cele treningowe bez stosowania przymusu. Kształtowanie bazuje na nauce zapoczątkowanej przez Skinnera. Te same prawidłowości odnoszą się do każdego gatunku. Zaczęłam zatem myśleć o edukacji. Ostatnio zauważyłam pewne oznaki tego, że skinnerowskie metody kształtowania zachowań zaczynają pojawiać się w szkołach. Nauczyciele koncentrują się mniej na tym co robią, a bardziej na osiągnięciach swoich uczniów. Zwracając większą uwagę na postępy każdego dziecka, można dostosować nauczanie tak, aby uczeń odnosił sukcesy. Powodzenie w zdobywaniu nowych umiejętności kształtuje pełen entuzjazmu stosunek do dalszej nauki.

Portuguese Translated by Monalisa Leão

Acabei de voltar do WOOF! Conferência de 2019 em Nottingham, Reino Unido. Todos os palestrantes ilustraram maneiras de modelar o comportamento. Seus procedimentos ofereciam continuamente aos animais a opção de interromper o treinamento ou fazer uma pausa. Usando apenas reforçamento positivo, os palestrantes mostraram maneiras de resolver problemas comuns. Depois de modelar, seus cães entraram avidamente em suas caixas de transporte. Os animais aceitaram, sem protestar, tratamentos médicos dolorosos. Com a modelagem, os objetivos foram alcançados sem coerção. Modelagem é baseada na ciência que Skinner começou. Os princípios se aplicam a qualquer espécie. Isso me fez pensar em educação. Recentemente, tenho visto sinais de que as técnicas de modelagem de Skinner estão chegando às escolas. Os professores estão se concentrando menos no que estão fazendo e mais no desempenho de seus alunos. Concentrando-se no progresso de cada aluno, pode-se ajustar mais facilmente as instruções para ajudá-los a ter sucesso. O sucesso na aquisição de novas habilidades, por sua vez, leva ao entusiasmo pelo aprendizado contínuo.

Russian Translated by Alexander Fedorov

Я только что вернулась с конференции WOOF! 2019, проходившей в Ноттингеме, Великобритания. Все выступавшие приводили примеры различных способов формирования поведения (шейпинга). И каждый раз их методы давали животным выбор прекратить тренировку или сделать перерыв. Используя только положительное подкрепление, выступающие демонстрировали пути решения общих проблем. После шейпинга их собаки с готовностью возвращались в клетки для переноски. Животные принимали – и без всяких протестов – болезненные медицинские процедуры. При помощи шейпинга целей удавалось достигать без всякого принуждения и применения силы. И все это заставило меня задуматься об образовании. В последнее время я стала замечать знаки того, что скиннеровские техники шейпинга проникают в школы. Учителя меньше сосредотачиваются на том, что они делают, и больше – на продуктивности своих учеников. Фокусируясь на прогрессе каждого ученика, можно с большей легкостью адаптировать обучение так, чтобы помочь ему достичь успеха. А успех в усвоении новых навыков, в свою очередь, ведет к энтузиазму в отношении дальнейшего обучения.

Spanish Translated by Kenneth Madrigal and Gonzalo Fernández

Acabo de regresar de Nottingham en Reino Unido, donde asistí a la “WOOF! 2019 Conference”. En dicho evento, todos los ponentes mostraron estrategias para establecer cierta respuesta; permitiendo continuamente a los animales interrumpir las sesiones de moldeamiento o tomarse un descanso. Empleando únicamente reforzamiento positivo, los ponentes mostraron formas distintas de resolver problemas comunes. Por ejemplo, una vez terminado el moldeamiento de la respuesta, los perros regresaban a sus jaulas o incluso podían aceptar sin ningún problema tratamientos médicos dolorosos. Por medio de un adecuado moldeamiento, es posible establecer cierta respuesta sin tener que incurrir en prácticas coercitivas. El moldeamiento de las respuestas es parte de la ciencia que inició Skinner, cuyos principios son aplicables a cualquier especie. Es así que me puse a pensar en la educación. Recientemente he observado que algunas de las técnicas de moldeamiento comienzan a ser empleadas en las escuelas. Los profesores se concentran menos en lo que ellos hacen y más en la ejecución de sus estudiantes. Si se toma en cuenta el progreso del estudiante, es posible ajustar la instrucción para ayudarle. Como resultado, el estudiante adquiere una nueva competencia, y esto le alienta para continuar aprendiendo.

Swedish Translated by Dag Strömberg

Jag har nyligen kommit tillbaka från konferensen WOOF! 2019 i Nottingham, UK. Alla talarna illustrerade sätt att forma beteende. Deras procedurer erbjöd ständigt djuren valmöjligheten att avsluta träningen eller att ta en paus. Genom att använda enbart positiv förstärkning visade tränarna sätt att lösa vanliga problem. Efter shaping kom deras hundar ivrigt till sina bärväsor. Djuren accepterade, utan protest, smärtsam medicinsk behandling. Med shaping uppnåddes målen utan tvång. Shaping bygger på den vetenskap som Skinner påbörjade. Principerna gäller alla arter. Det fick mig att tänka på undervisning. Jag har nyligen sett att Skinners shapingtekniker finner sin väg till skolor. Lärare koncentrerar sig mindre på vad de gör och mer på elevernas prestation. Genom att fokusera på varje elevs framsteg kan en lättare anpassa undervisningen för att hjälpa dem att lyckas. Framgång i att tillägna sig nya färdigheter leder, i sin tur, till entusiasm för fortsatt lärande.


Thai Translated by Sirima Na Nakorn

ผู้เขียนเพิ่งกลับจากการเข้าร่วมงานประชุม WOOF! 2019 ที่เมืองนอตติงแฮม ประเทศอังกฤษ ผู้บรรยายทุกท่านต่างเสนอผลงานด้านการปรับพฤติกรรมโดยการใช้เทคนิค Shaping ขั้นตอนการฝึกใช้การให้รางวัล คือให้สัตว์ทดลองสามารถเลือกที่จะหยุดทำงาน หรือพักการทำงานได้ การวิจัยของทุกท่าน แสดงผลเหมือนกัน คือ สัตว์ทดลองร่วมมือในการทำงาน เช่น เมื่อถึงเวลาที่เดินเข้ากรงเอง และบางตัวก็ยอมรับการรักษาทางการแพทย์ ที่มีความเจ็บปวดโดยไม่ต้องบังคับ ทำให้งานต่าง ๆ บรรลุเป้าหมายด้วยดี Shaping เป็นเทคนิคที่คิดค้นโดย ดร. สกินเนอร์ หลักการใช้ได้ผลกับสิ่งมีชีวิตทุกสายพันธุ์ ซึ่งทำให้ผู้เชี่ยวชาญถึงการด้านการศึกษา ที่พบว่าบรรดาคุณครูตามโรงเรียนต่าง ๆ มักนำเทคนิค Shaping ของ ดร. สกินเนอร์ มาใช้ในการสอนเด็กนักเรียน คุณครูเน้นผลงาน และผลการเรียนรู้ของนักเรียน มากกว่าที่จะเน้นว่านักเรียนต้องให้ความสำคัญกับการสอนของคุณครู การที่คุณครูเน้นมองไปยังผลงานและผลการเรียนรู้ของเด็กเป็นหลัก ทำให้ครูสามารถปรับวิธีการสอนให้เหมาะกับเด็กแต่ละคน ที่อาจเรียนรู้ในแบบต่าง ๆ กัน ความสำเร็จในการพัฒนาทักษะใหม่เหล่านี้ ทำให้ทั้งนักเรียนและคุณครู กระตือรือร้นที่จะ เรียนรู้ และแสวงหาความรู้ใหม่ ๆ ต่อไปไม่รู้จบ

Turkish Translated by Yeşim Güleç-Aslan

WOOF 2019'dan yeni döndüm! İngiltere, Nottingham'daki bir konferans. Tüm konuşmacılar davranış şekillendirmenin yollarını gösterdiler. Onların kullandıkları işlemler, hayvanlara sürekli olarak eğitimi durdurma ya da ara verme seçeneğini önerdi. Konuşmacılar, yalnızca olumlu pekiştirme kullanarak yaygın sorunları çözmenin yollarını gösterdi. Şekil verme işleminden sonra, onların köpekleri istekli bir şekilde taşıma çantalarına girdi. Hayvanlar itiraz etmeden acı veren tıbbi tedavileri kabul ettiler. Şekil verme ile zorlama olmadan hedeflere ulaşıldı. Şekil verme, Skinner'ın başladığı bilime dayanır. İlkeler herhangi bir tür için uygulanır. Bu beni eğitim hakkında düşündürdü. Son zamanlarda, Skinner'ın şekil verme tekniklerinin okullarda uygulanmaya doğru yol alıyor. Öğretmenler yaptıkları işe daha az ve öğrencilerinin performansına daha fazla odaklanıyorlar. Her bir öğrencinin gelişimine odaklanarak, başarılı olmalarına yardımcı olmak için öğretim daha kolay bir şekilde ayarlanabilir. Yeni beceriler kazanmadaki başarı, sırayla, sürekli öğrenme için çözümlere yol açar.

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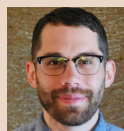
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We would like to thank all contributors to this issue. *Operants* preserves the intellectual tradition of Skinner's writings — of interest to the field, but also written without heavy use of citations and references. In most articles intellectual credit to others is given, not by citing and referencing specific studies or articles/books, but rather through discussing the “big idea” or “concept”, and naming the person/affiliation. In this way, then, the intellectual credit is provided while still writing for a wider audience. Especially today we would like to continue to advance the relationship between basic and applied science, and its theory, and make that available to the public.

Operants is produced by the B. F. Skinner Foundation. The opinions reflected in this *Operants* do not necessarily represent the views of the Foundation. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for factual and scientific accuracy, however, as a rule, we preserve the author's grammar and punctuation.

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In this issue of *Operants*, we bring you several pieces that all relate to behavior analysis, culture, power, and control. As readers of Skinner's works will no doubt be aware, he was an ardent supporter of the use of positive reinforcement to bring about desirable societal change. His fictional utopian novel, *Walden Two*, was based on his vision at that time regarding how to construct a society using behavioral principles and procedures. Of course, as with any fictional novel, the true test is how well the experiment based on the idea can be carried out. Many experimental societies have been formed over the years, with varying results.

Unfortunately, much of what we see in the world regarding power, control, and the maintenance of such resources, involves the use of aversive control techniques. For example, we see this whenever any "ism" is invoked: racism, ageism, classism, elitism, sexism, and so forth. Back in 2006, I attended a talk by Gloria Steinem at Mississippi State University. My bias at that time was that I might not be that interested in the talk, as I anticipated that she would be restricting her talk to feminist issues. However, I was pleasantly surprised, and enlightened, by her statement that all of the "isms" we face in society involve those who hold power limiting power, resources, and opportunities for those who do not yet have power. As I sat listening to Steinem speak, it occurred to me how well her viewpoint overlapped with what I have read of Skinner. It was a great revelation to consider the overlapping points, and to really think about how society operates from a behavior analytic framework. This is a vitally important area, especially as we become increasingly concerned about the rights of everyone in a world where rights can be, and are, threatened.

As is the case with many issues of *Operants*, sometimes the "stars align". More specifically, often our articles happen to fall into the pipeline in a manner that coincidentally makes for an issue around a theme. In this issue, then, we are fortunate to have several pieces related to these attempts. First, we include a reprint of Skinner's foreword to a book on Twin Oaks, which provides an update and reflection on *Walden Two*. Adder Oaks provides us with an analysis of how the behaviorist beginnings of Twin Oaks provided an important and enduring foundation for the community, and of course it has evolved as all entities do in our universe. Johansson reminds us that some people never really wanted to "live" the life in *Walden Two* despite its appeal, and others perhaps who did not realize that the fictional novel was more of a "blueprint". As with any theory, blueprint, or similar idea, the experiment must be conducted. When the experiment is conducted, it must necessarily include procedural integrity checks, as well as many other considerations for ensuring that the theoretical framework is being appropriately designed, implemented, and assessed. This has surely been difficult to do in most cases, and thus it is natural to expect that such cultures would necessarily evolve with different characteristics than those with which they started out. After all, "selection by consequences" operates whether it is by experimental design or by nature. It is surely an interesting suggestion to try out features of *Walden Two* within organizations to determine whether or not they would operate in a manner expected by behavior analytic cultural designers. That said, the same cautions and recommendations about fidelity would be important to take into account when designing such a system.

Darrel Bostow reports on his "Walden Two," reminds us that it can exist anywhere, and walks us through his own experiences in his own version. Readers are encouraged to follow his link at the end of the article to discover what awaits! Daniel Sundberg and Fredrik Jukka Johansson bring us up to date on recent developments and publications related to similar utopias, and both conclude that perhaps the best way to start initiating Walden Two-like communities is within organizations themselves. Such an approach is indeed a great experimental recommendation, as it would allow organizations to function in a way that is consistent with the values espoused by those who would create a Walden Two, but also allow for a more seamless integration into the larger cultural milieu. At the same time, creating smaller Walden Two organizational systems within larger societal systems could have the potential to change both the larger system and the smaller systems as a function of their ongoing interactions and transactions. Such an experiment is certainly worth entertaining.

We are also publishing a translated interview of Táhcita Medrado, who is an emerging expert on the intersection between behavior analysis, racism, and sexism. I first met Ms. Medrado when I was a visiting professor at the Federal University in São Carlos, SP, Brazil (UFSCar) back in 2017. As a student in a course I taught on Sidman's Stimulus Equivalence Relations, I was immediately struck by her adherence to sound research design, behavior analysis, and extending the work to matters of social importance. I had the good fortune to see her again last year at a conference in Brazil, and to learn more about what she is doing at part of her doctoral studies. As we discussed all kinds of issues, my interest in a behavioral interpretation of what is termed "Gaslighting" was piqued as a result of other writings I was completing on culture, diversity, and inclusion. Certainly my discussions with Táhcita Medrado helped me to form my ideas about this issue as well.

So it is, then, that we include an article on "gaslighting" for your consideration in the overall theme of how we might think about the various isms that lead to unequal balances of power, exploitation, and aversive control. In the spirit of Skinner's writings, let us consider how to build and sustain a better world not only for ourselves, but for those who come after we are no longer here.

I would be remiss if I did not conclude by saying that this will be my last issue as Editor in Chief. I am grateful to the B. F. Skinner Foundation for inviting me to serve in this capacity, and have definitely enjoyed the opportunity to work with so many fine people. My thanks go (in alphabetical order) to Sheila Cornelius, Konstantin Evdokimov, Ed Morris, David Palmer, David Roth, Ernie Vargas, and Julie Vargas. All of these wonderful people provided excellent background and systems by which to perform in this capacity, and I know that David Roth will make an excellent new Editor in Chief starting with the 2019 Quarter One issue. Onward to do great work that helps make everyone's lives better!

Darlene E. Crone-Todd, PhD, BCBA-D, LABA



Remembering Gerald “Jerry” Mertens

02/24/1936 - 01/11/2019

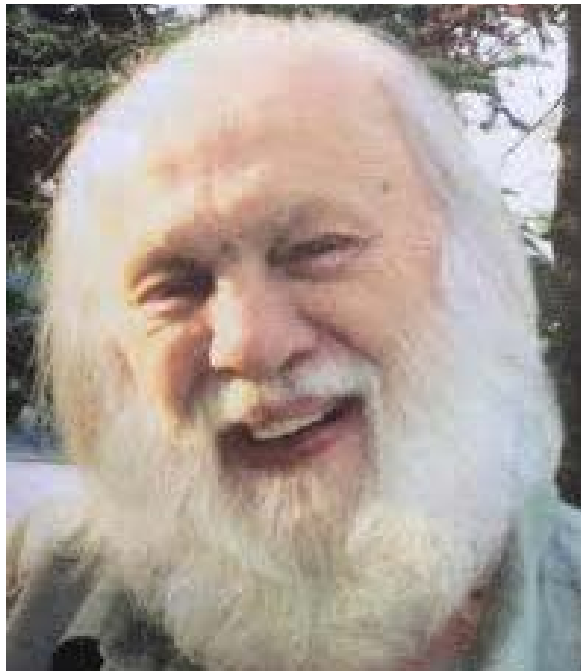
By Darlene Crone-Todd, PhD, BCBA-D, LABA

There is much written about the history of behavior analysis, and of Jerry Mertens’ role in helping to establish the original Association for Behavior Analysis. The purpose of writing this piece is to provide an overview of my interactions with Jerry throughout the years of our friendship. In so doing, I hope to provide readers with a narrative of who he was, what he espoused, and what kinds of products he left behind.

My first contact with Professor Mertens was through email, when I was a doctoral student at the University of Manitoba, around the year 2000. He was planning and marketing what would be his last “Psychology Tour” (out of St. Cloud State University in Minnesota), which would take students through the Midwestern and Eastern USA. I could not resist this opportunity, so made arrangements to take the course even though it did not necessarily count toward credit in my own program. His emails and attachments were very detailed about the trip, expectations, and general culture. He gave us clear rules, such as “If you miss the van, you will be left behind”, and “Homework is due each day”, “We will be reading and presenting articles in the vans as we drive between sites”, and “Don’t bring too many clothes because there will be laundry available and everyone is limited to how much space their luggage and sleeping bag/bedding can take up in the van”. As the time until the date in May approached, it became very clear to me that this was going to be an intense experience!

Once I arrived in St. Cloud to begin the tour

experience, I finally met both Jerry and his wife, Sylvia. We soon found that we all had a deep love and appreciation for science and behavior. As other students arrived, we found ourselves on an incredible tour that involved science, behavior, and debunking pseudoscience. In fact, Jerry “the Magician” appeared each day



on the tour, astounding us all with his feats of mentalism. His work was so good you could almost swear he was reading your mind. There was also a prize to be won: Each day, we had to write up a short description of what he had performed, and how he could have possibly done this without any “psychic” ability at all. As he explained it, he had no such psychic ability so it was important in the best spirit of Harry Houdini to try to understand how people can make it look like they have magical powers. This at least provides an alternative explanation. The student who provided the greatest number of reasonable and plausible explanations for Jerry’s

feats would win the “Ellery Queen” prize at the end of the tour. Alas, I was not able to score high enough on this assessment of my debunking skills; however, this very experience led me to seek out more information on “cold readings”, “hot readings”, and all forms of mentalism as practiced by magicians and the like. This would be great preparation for our move to Salem, Massachusetts, many years later.

Other aspects of this tour were the resources and experiences that led to a richer set of material for my later publications, teaching, and contacts in the field. Later, I would incorporate the “fake psychic” abilities into my research methods and statistics courses

as a way to have students determine ahead of time what counts as something that is unlikely due to chance, or how many times something has to be replicated before we conclude that it is a real finding. During this same tour, which included the Association for Behavior Analysis (ABA, now ABAI) meeting, I attended my second SQAB (Society for the Quantitative Analyses of Behavior) meeting, which would lead to my eventual designation as executive coordinator (later, executive director) for that organization. But the tour was so much more than what any of us experienced professionally: We all formed bonds and norms, and learned to look out for each other in case anyone was at risk of sleeping in (no student was left behind on our trip).

Every day, we handed in a kind of “index”, like one in a book, of our readings and visits to different locations. At the end of the three-week long course, our final “paper” was a complete index of the entire tour. I remember obsessing over that final index, wanting to ensure that it was complete. I finally sent it by email to Jerry a few weeks after the tour, and happily earned an “A” in the course.

After that tour, Jerry would keep in contact via email. Later, I would see him and his wife Sylvia at the annual SQAB and ABAI conferences. We never missed a chance to reconnect, talk about the field, and of course our shared interests in magic and debunking pseudoscience. When I started my position at Salem State University (then, Salem State College), we had even more connections through the magic community. A former retired professor in our department, Cesareo Pelaez, started the “Le Grand David Magic Show” in Beverly, MA, and I was to learn even more about magic through mutual contacts connected through Jerry, the magic show, and faculty in the department that I now called my professional home.

Jerry never missed a chance to say hello, to

catch up on the latest news, and to talk about the good things that people were doing in the field. He was bright, energetic, and keenly interested in the science of behavior and how it could be used to help others right up until the end. We had the good fortune to spend time with him and some of his family members just last summer when he visited Salem for a meeting of ma-

gicians. We had dinner with him and his family, and then went to a special magic show in which we were willing participants. We even learned a few new tricks.

So it was every time I saw Jerry. Through his commitment to science, behavior, and all things interesting in the world, we learned new things every time we came into contact with him or his writings. To quote Jerry’s own self-written obituary:

“My life has been a ‘good run.’ Thanks to all who helped make it this way! My request to you is that you work hard to help others have the best life possible.”

Note that this simple message tells us that he expressed satisfaction with his life and appreciation for those who helped make his life a “good run”. Further, we should all work hard so that others can have the best life possible. The following is the message that I now add to all of my university courses, and to new people in the field: *Work hard. Learn as much as you can, and do well so that others can have the best life possible.*

A final note on the “magic” of Jerry: Just a few weeks before he died, he emailed asking if we could be included in his annual calendar of friends and family. I was thrilled to receive the calendar back in January, with a note indicating where to find our photo among the many ones included therein. The next day, we learned of his death. So it was that even then, he managed to make a little magic happen in a coincidental way through contiguity.

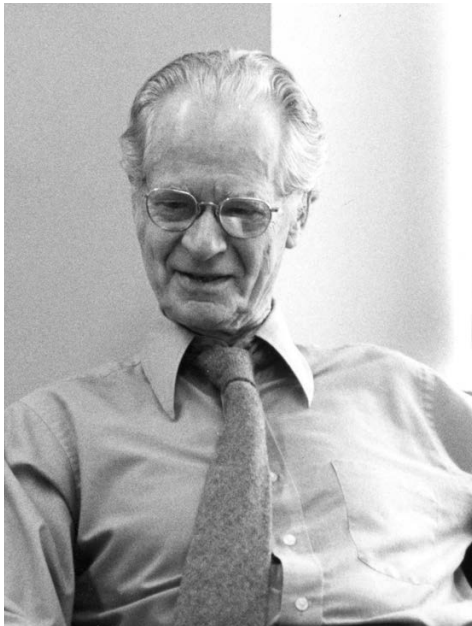
Peace out, Jerry. ■



Left to right: Barrie Todd, Jerry Mertens, and Darlene Crone-Todd. Salem, MA. Summer 2018.

Foreword to Kathleen Kincade's *A Walden Two Experiment: The First Five Years of Twin Oaks Community*

B. F. Skinner, PhD



Kathleen Kincade was one of the eight original members of Twin Oaks. She published her memoirs in 1974 and asked Skinner to write a foreword for the book.

The article is illustrated by the pictures of Skinner's visit to Twin Oaks in spring of 1978.

What should a person do when he does not like his way of life? The Utopian answer is clear: Build a better one. But of course it is easier said than done. Even the great Utopists showed a certain lack of confidence when they placed their better worlds in faraway places or distant times in order to make them seem plausible. Someday, somewhere, there will be a better life, but probably not here and now. And to most people the word "Utopian" still means impossible.

New ways of life have nevertheless been explicitly designed and built. The blueprints of workable religious communities are to be found, for example, in the Rule of Augustine and the Rule of Benedict. The *vita monastica* was not so much a better way of life here on earth as a step toward that greatest of all Utopias, the Christian heaven. But in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries glowing reports of life in the South Seas suggested the possibility of heaven on earth, and a century or two of idyllic Utopian speculation led to many practical tests. Etienne Cabet's *Voyage en Icarie*, in the idyllic vein, seemed so promising that Cabet and a group of followers left France in the 1850's to build Icaria — not in the Mediterranean or the South Seas but on the Red River in Texas. Cabet died on the way but his followers set up several Icarias in the Midwest. They attracted no particular attention because many similar communities were being founded in the United States at that time.

Conditions were unusually favorable for such ventures in the nineteenth century. The successful design of the United States as a nation had lent support to the perfectionistic enterprises of the Enlightenment, and in that vast fertile land which lay to the west groups of people could be left alone to do as they pleased. A new life did not need to be luxurious, because most Americans were accustomed to what we should today regard as a rather spartan standard of living. Moreover, members of most of those communities brought with them well-established ethical and religious practices, which solved some of the problems of government. Many of the communities of the nineteenth century were in fact religious, either as offshoots of various Protestant sects like the Rappites or Hutterites or as newly founded sects like the Shakers or Mormons. Secular communities, such as Robert Owen's New Harmony, tended to be, perhaps significantly, shorter-lived.

Contrary to popular belief, most nineteenth-century communities were economically successful. If Utopia continued to mean impossible, it was because there were other problems to be solved. The important ones concerned personal relations — relations among the members of a community or with its neighbors. The Oneida community in central New York State was an imaginative social experiment, but its sexual practices, designed to further a well-planned eugenics program, could not be tolerated by the surrounding countryside. As John Humphrey Noyes, the founder of Oneida, pointed out, the sense

of possession associated with sex is in conflict with the very idea of communal ownership, and it caused trouble for most of the nineteenth-century experiments.

It is not only in experimental communities that relations among people are troublesome. No matter where people live, a great deal depends on whether or not they live together peacefully, happily, and productively. A failure to do so is often obscured by apparent successes in other fields. The American way of life in the last third of the twentieth century does not seem so very bad. No one need starve or go without shelter or clothing, and education is, up to a point, free. Reasonable medical services are available, and an inexpensive device, a television set, provides almost continuous entertainment. Social security takes care of old age, and with a little extra effort all of these amenities can be greatly improved. Why, then, should anyone try to build a better way of life today?

The answer is that we have achieved all this at a terrible cost in personal relations. And we are beginning to see why. We have chosen the wrong behavioral processes in the design of cultural practices. Young people



today sum it up in their slogan, "Make love, not war!" but they are easily misunderstood. Love and war are extreme forms of personal intercourse, and the slogan tends to conceal the basic issue: our present culture is in trouble because of its *prodigious use of punitive control*. Our international stance sets the pattern: when a nation displeases us, we bomb it, and we refuse to relinquish the power to do so in order to move toward an effective world government. Order in the streets is now treated almost entirely as a matter of police power. Children are still severely beaten in some of our public schools. Economic incentives seem at first glance to use rewards rather than punishments, but a worker does not come to work on Monday morning because he receives a week's pay on Friday afternoon; he comes because he will be discharged and cut off from that pay if he does not.

Certain characteristics of the genetic endowment of the human species explain why we so readily turn to punitive control and why it has taken us so long to see the potential of positive reinforcement and to design more effective social structures with its help. But we are



beginning to learn. Walden Two was not by any means the first Utopia to minimize punitive control, but it was, I believe, the first to offer substantial scientific evidence of the feasibility of alternative methods. It was not only a plea for love against war, it offered concrete suggestions about how a way of life might be made to work without punishment.

In a chapter near the end of *Walden Two*—a chapter which has puzzled many readers—Frazier, the protagonist, plays God. He and the narrator, Burris, are sitting on a ledge of rock far above the community, and Frazier has taken out a small telescope and is surveying his handiwork. Burris goads him into comparing himself with God.

"There's another point of similarity," [Frazier] said at last when he saw that I was not going to speak. "I don't know whether you'll understand this, Burris. I expect you'll laugh. But try to forget your professional cynicism."

He dropped the telescope and hesitated for a moment. Then he flung his hand loosely in a sweeping gesture which embraced all of Walden Two.

"These are my children, Burris," he said, almost in a whisper. "I love them."

He got to his feet and started back along the ledge. I followed carefully. He turned into the underbrush and waited for me to catch up. He was embarrassed and rather confused.

"What is love," he said, with a shrug, "except another name for the use of positive reinforcement?"

"Or vice versa," I said.

When I wrote *Walden Two* (in 1945), only seven years—and war years at that—had passed since I had published the *Behavior of Organisms*, in which I reported research on the principles used in the design of the community. Nothing had actually been done to put those principles to a practical test, and I was obviously guessing. I had no way of knowing what a ten-year-old experimental community founded on those principles would be like. But I should not have to guess today. We have learned a great deal in the intervening years, and what has come to be called behavior modification is now wide-

ly practiced in many different kinds of “communities”—homes for retardates, schools for juvenile delinquents, hospitals for psychotics, classrooms in public schools,



and so on. The members of these communities are not representative of the population at large, but what has been done could be regarded as a kind of flank attack on the design of an intentional community suitable for everyone.

Whether or not the kind of life I described in *Walden Two* was feasible and worthwhile nevertheless remained to be shown, and this book is the story of a practical test. Kat Kinkade and her associates founded Twin Oaks, in Louisa, Virginia, in 1967 on the model of Walden Two. What happened to them is told here with delightful and disarming candor. Many mistakes were made, but it was possible to correct them in time. Disagreements were often vigorous if not violent. Money was always in short supply, and many of the amenities of life had to be neglected. People with children came and went, and the community remained childless.

There were many other problems to be faced, often disheartening but some of them in retrospect amusing. What do you do when, having gone back to the land to raise your own food, you discover that the farmers in the neighborhood are buying dressed chickens at the supermarket? You agree that all labor shall be voluntary, but what do you do when people join the community who voluntarily do nothing? You want the goodwill and



understanding of your neighbors, but does that mean that your menfolk should cut off their long hair and that you must give up nude bathing in the river? You have left the crowded city behind, but what do you do about the streams of visitors who begin to pour in? You believe that government is best when it governs least, but decisions must be made, and who is to make them, and why should they be accepted? What do you do when you decide to practice open criticism and nobody comes to the meetings? You know that people are more relaxed and friendly when they are not in competition, but what about sports and games?

These are some of the questions that arose, and were for the most part answered, during the first five years of the Twin Oaks experiment. Is the result a Walden Two? Not yet, says Kat, and she is right. Is it a Walden Two experiment? Certainly it is not much like the experiment described in the book. The life portrayed in *Walden Two* was the goal of Twin Oaks, but it was not approached through the application of scientific principles. Kat and her friends simply muddled through. But the important point is that they got through. And if Twin



Oaks is now on its way to something close to Walden Two — and I think it is — it is because certain principles have stood the test. There is much more in an experimental analysis of behavior that is useful, and I shall be surprised if it is not eventually used. One great source of wisdom is now about to be tapped: Twin Oaks is ready to raise children. If the lives of those children are properly managed, lessons will be learned of extraordinary value to the community and to us all.

It is easy to dismiss the problems faced by the founders of Twin Oaks as of local interest only, but we are all trying to solve problems like them all the time. We are all engaged in the design of cultural practices. Twin Oaks is simply the world in miniature. The problems it faces and the solutions it tries are those of a world community. While Kat and her friends seek solutions to their problems, the rest of the world must do something about *its* food supplies, *its* educational systems, *its* sanitation and health, *its* “interpersonal” relations, *its* cultural activities, and *its* Olympic games.

Non-competitive volleyball, anyone? ■

Walden Two Actualized: An Examination of the Behaviorist Roots of Twin Oaks Community Adder Oaks

The Definitions and Purpose [of the community] shall be implemented through:

A. Intentionality in our planning and daily functioning to discover and encourage the most desirable behaviors for individual members and the most desirable goals and methods of functioning for the Community as a whole; ...

F. An emphasis in the Community's social policy and practices on fostering responsibility and commitment, on cooperation rather than competition, and on affirming rather than punishing means for changing behavior; ...

Bylaws of Twin Oaks Community, Incorporated
Article I, Paragraph Three. Implementation.

In 1967, nine ambitious idealists bought a plot of rural farmland in central Virginia with the intention of building as close an approximation to a utopia as possible. Inspired by B.F. Skinner's *Walden Two*, the founding members of Twin Oaks Community sought to establish a community in which behaviorist principles would be implemented to establish harmony and peace among its members, and ultimately spread to the world at large. Seventy years after the publication of *Walden Two* and more than fifty years into the existence of Twin Oaks, a lot has changed. Few of the hundred or so residents of Twin Oaks today call themselves behaviorists, and many have not even read *Walden Two*. Yet, much of the structure and ideals borrowed from the imagined Walden Two community remain strong. Incentive will always influence behavior, and the founding principles inexorably shape the behavior of individuals and the community.

The most striking similarity between Walden Two and Twin Oaks is the structure of community government. Like Walden Two, Twin Oaks has managers assigned to many of the areas of life at Twin Oaks: businesses such as tofu production and hammock crafting, agriculture areas such as the vegetable garden and the dairy, domestic needs such as clothing and cooking, social needs such as holiday and recreation, and organizational needs such as labor allocation and conflict resolution. Additionally, there is a shifting group of community planners who deal with the big picture issues, or anything that grows too contentious to be handled by an individual area. The planners do not gain their position by winning an election campaign, but rather by being nominated by the current plannership, with input from the membership at large. However, Twin Oaks rests its political organization on a democratic foundation, a striking difference compared to Walden Two. In the novel, there is the supposition that the organization of the community and knowledge of human behavior guarantees that the planners and managers will ultimately be guiding the community toward the greater good of its members. At Twin



Adder Oaks has been a member of Twin Oaks Community since 2011, where he lives with family, manages the community's homeschool cooperative, and serves as a community planner. He is co-host of the podcast Commune Dads. Adder received his B.S. in Mathematics from Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania in 2010.

Photos from twinoakscommunity.org

Oaks, the population is able to veto or recall planners, appeal manager decisions, and ultimately override any decision made by the planners or managers using a democratic override. Though it rarely comes to such actions, Twin Oaks's safeguard for the good of its members is to give them a direct voice when they need it.

The way Twin Oaks makes institutional decisions may not even be the aspect of the community that most influences the way people live. Arguably, the labor system gets to wear the crown. Lifted directly from Walden Two, "labor credits" are awarded to members for the work they do, in any area deemed valuable to the community. A small sampling of labor creditable work includes the following: working in the tofu factory or hammock shop, cleaning shared space, taking care of children, organizing community social



Hammock weaving

events, doing outreach work, serving as a planner or manager, maintaining the labor database, scheduling work for the week, cooking dinner, and mowing the lawn. Members secure their place in the community by earning enough labor credits to meet a weekly quota. By choosing to award labor credits for whatever work the community needs, be that industrial, domestic, or social, Twin Oaks is putting behaviorism into action by providing positive reinforcement for actions that might not otherwise be compensated in mainstream society. In Walden Two, the incentives are fine-tuned by differentially awarding labor credits based on the community's need for the work to get done and hardship of the job. Twin Oaks experimented with a variable labor credit system, but ultimately discarded it, instead using a system that awards a single labor credit per hour of work, regardless of the work being done. In doing so, Twin Oaks consciously traded the behaviorist ideal of optimizing incentives against another value that sits at the heart of the community: egalitarianism. Inextricably tied to the labor system of Twin Oaks is the communal economic structure. As in Walden Two, the physical and financial resources of the community are

held in common. The money the community makes and the food it produces are shared. Members live in group houses, sixteen vehicles are shared for all domestic and business needs, healthcare is funded out of the communal purse, and all of the work that members do goes toward making that happen.



Twin Oaks manifests its relationship to work and industry very differently than mainstream society, but still diverges quite a bit from the utopian ideal of Walden Two. Members of both the real and imagined community have varied labor scenes, allowing them to take part in many different aspects of the community. Twin Oaks gains some efficiency of scale in many areas of its work, be it doing dishes using an industrial dishwasher, or cooking for one hundred people at a time, or having a forestry crew fell whole trees and split its wood to use for heat. But there is not the constant eye toward efficiency or the social engineering to make the absolute most out of the minimum required input, which Walden Two sets as its ideal. Much of this is



probably due to the realities of setting up organizational systems at the same time as they must be used to live, along with a shifting membership and a smaller scale of economy than the imagined thousand-person Walden Two. However, some of this difference may be due to conscious emphasis on different values. For example, Walden Two eschews "natural farming," which surely meant something very different in 1948 compared to today. Skinner may have been wary

of trading off efficiency for an arbitrary feeling of naturalness earned from working a field by hand. While those who tend the vegetable gardens at Twin Oaks are well aware of the psychological benefits of working outdoors and producing that which they will consume, the community has a commitment to natural agriculture practices that goes beyond a personal feeling of satisfaction. Twin Oaks commits to maintaining natural resources for present and future generations, and recognizes that more industrialized agricultural methods often gain what appears to be economic efficiency by externalizing its costs, either through the steady destruction of the environment or the depletion of resources for the future generations.

Perhaps the most interesting part of an experimental community such as the actual Twin Oaks or the imagined *Walden Two* are the cultural differences from mainstream society. *Walden Two* imagines some pretty radical departures from cultural norms, while embracing certain cultural norms wholeheartedly, in a way that seems fatuous in retrospect. It induces eye rolls to read some of the comments the characters make about women and beauty, while simultaneously providing a view of women's liberation more revolutionary than most people today would even take the time to consider. The women of *Walden Two* are free to choose the work they have and the lives they lead, freed by the economic security of the community and a fully communal childcare program. Twin Oaks experimented with such communal childcare in its earlier years, though now children live in the residences with their parents and have access to a range of



communal childcare resources, including a morning daycare, a homeschool cooperative, and individual time for work and play with various adults of the community. Childcare, including that of a parent for their own child, earns labor credits. Valuing this sort of work, traditionally the uncompensated domain of women, along with replacing two-person economic codependency with a whole community of income sharing, shakes the foundations of the nuclear family and provides a new communal level of social and economic support.

Walden Two imagines community-grown



entertainment: original music, plays, books, and more. The home-grown culture creation of Twin Oaks is one of its points of pride. The community has birthed a number of bands, who usually perform for the community, but have occasionally broken out to perform for the public and tour. The walls of the community are decorated almost exclusively by art produced within the community, and original plays tend to be put on once every few years. However, the mainstream still influences entertainment here. Though the founding members of Twin Oaks agreed to live without broadcast television, the advent of the internet has resulted in a much greater presence of mainstream movies, television, and music.

The founders of Twin Oaks held behaviorism in the forefront of their consciousness. They had read *Walden Two* and sought to use the science of human behavior into action. But Twin Oaks was also founded in the so-called Summer of Love, when people all over America were looking for radical alternatives to mainstream society. What was Twin Oaks to do when the hippies came knocking? In large part, Twin Oaks opened its doors – conditionally. To join the community, one did not have to subscribe to Skinnerian views or feel inspired by *Walden Two*. One *did* have to abide by the community agreements, live within communal values, and make quota by doing one's share of labor creditable work. Because of this, Twin Oaks culture has a touch of many alternative subcultures, due to influences from a diversity of members, be they hippies, back-to-landers, revolutionaries, futurists, and whoever else this alternative lifestyle has managed to attract. In the end, however, they are all Twin Oaksers, and live by the values set forth in 1967, inspired by *Walden Two*.

As the years go on and the original publication of *Walden Two* becomes a more distant memory, Twin Oaks will continue to grow and change, adapting to a changing membership and society at large. All along the way, the behaviorist systems and culture set in motion by the founding members will continue to be at its foundation, providing a powerful tool to meet the demands of these changing needs. It is impossible to guess at this point what Twin Oaks will be like in another fifty years, but one can be sure that the vision of *Walden Two* will live on inside it. ■

Walden Two - 70 Years After Publication

Living Walden Two

By: Fredrik Jukka Johansson

Mr Johansson is a clinical psychologist who occasionally dabbles in journalism. He has some experience in living in a Walden Two-inspired commune, and a long standing interest in both fictional and real utopian communities. He currently resides in Skuggholmarna, outside the coast of Sweden.

Walden Two was written during a few intense weeks in 1945, and the book was published three years later. The account of a behaviorist utopia was not an immediate success, and it was not until the alternative movements in the revolutionary 1960s that sales really took off. And soon after its publication, a number of attempts were under way to realize the society outlined by Skinner.

At most, thirty-one different Walden Two communities have existed to-date, although most were extremely short-lived. The German sociologist Hilke Kuhlmann interviewed a number of participants in these experimental societies. Two of these experiments have survived to this day: *Twin Oaks* in Virginia, and *Comunidad los Horcones* in northern Mexico.

Twin Oaks was founded by young people who were mostly interested in the "alternative" aspects of Skinner's vision, and less interested in the "science" parts of the book. They saw the book as a blueprint for a successful society, and attempted to implement the systems with Planners, joint childcare, and labor credits. However, these systems apparently proved unwieldy in practice.

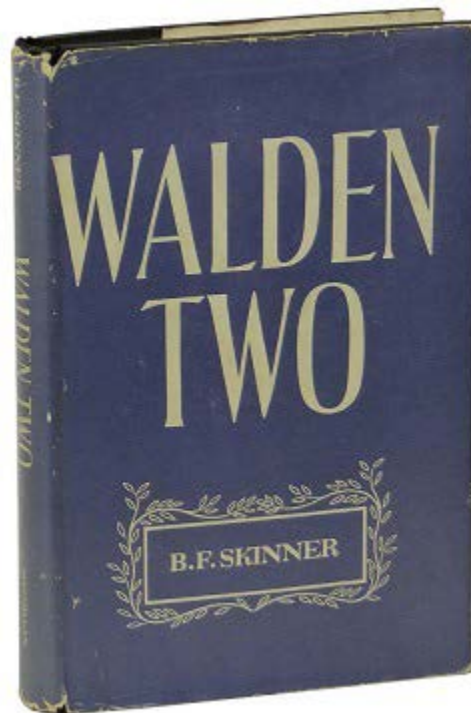
The participants interviewed by Kuhlmann believe that the reason that these systems did not work was that members found them aversive since they were not decided upon through a democratic process. Being a part of the decision-making process, rather than the quality of the decisions themselves,

was more important to the members. The Board of Planners is thus no longer a part of Twin Oaks, and has been replaced by a pseudo-democratic system. Twin Oaks also tried to implement a system of joint child care, in which children spent their days in a separate building, named Degania, with nurses called Metas (the names "Degania" and "Metas" were taken from the Israeli Kibbutz movement). However, parents were reluctant to separate from their children and hand them over to other adults. Also, the system of variable labor credits has been replaced by a system where members are all required to do an even share of certain aversive tasks (e.g. washing dishes and cleaning).

Today, about one hundred people live at Twin Oaks. The community's income relies on selling hammocks on the internet. Members are prohibited from owning things such as television, pornography, and air conditioners. Behaviorism is considered to be part of the early history of the collective and no longer a guiding principle.

Kuhlmann believes that the original experiment was overwhelmed by too many new members. Over time, focus shifted from social development to the 1970s emphasis on personal development. Skinner explicitly distanced himself from the alternative movement and did not want to see himself as part of it.

Twin Oaks is an example in which members of the alternative culture tried to use *Walden Two* as a blueprint for a new society, but there were others who



Walden Two. First Edition.

tried to apply the idea of scientific experimentation to create a better society. This group consisted mainly of university students and professors. They were academics with experience of implementing positive reinforcement systems with institutionalized patients. The project of realizing Walden Two was undertaken by arranging conferences and writing grant applications. Only a few attempts ever left the ground; according to Kuhlmann, this was mainly due to a lack of organizational skills. The exception is the Mexican experiment: Comunidad los Horcones. Currently, this commune receives a large part of its income from running a school for autistic children, using state-of-the-art applied behavior analysis. In the spirit of *Walden Two*, the members of the community have experimented with systems for sharing jobs, making joint decisions, and training children. The members publish scientific articles in international behavioral analytical journals. But Comunidad los Horcones is a small community with less than a dozen members, and it isn't growing.

The attempts to realize Walden Two can thus be divided into two groups: those who saw the book as a blueprint and those who never really tried. The former failed because the actual societal systems Skinner suggested were exactly that: suggestions. According to Klaw, Skinner had taken many of his social solutions from earlier classic American utopists, such as Edward Bellamy, and the Christian Oneida movement. The academics failed due to a lack of organizational skills, and a reluctance to fully commit to the experiment. It's one thing to be behavior analysts and design token economies for others, and it's something else to be the one analyzed. According to Kuhlmann, many of these academics wanted to be Frazier; and no one wanted to be a regular member.

In Defense of Lost Causes

Readers of *Walden Two* may object to Skinner's cultural blueprint out of concern that such a culture may eventually become homogeneous in its practices.

However, as Frazier points out, the culture is safeguarded by holding scientific experimentation as a fundamental cultural value. "An experimental attitude toward everything" would inevitably ensure variability and selection throughout the progressively changing environments of the community over time.

The psychoanalyst Slavoj Žižek claims that after the tumultuous twentieth century, the societal conclusion is that ideology is dangerous. Anyone who actually wants to try and change society is a dangerous fanatic. Žižek writes that many people agree that parliamentary democracy is a compromise, that capitalism is bringing the planet to an environmental disaster, and that economic injustices are more entrenched than ever - still no attempts at change can be accepted. From Robespierre to Lenin - idealism is evil. But Žižek believes that contemporary lukewarm liberalism will not work in the long run and that radical solutions will be needed. Walden Two, and the idea that a science of human behavior will create a better society, is exactly such an idea.

What is to Be Done?

Walden Two is a book about the effects of psychology becoming a true science, much like Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* imagined the future societal impacts of modern biology.

Skinner, when writing his book, seemed to suggest that such a behavioral science was imminent. However, this premise is simply not yet true. But, as the reader certainly knows, there are glimpses.

The research area most relevant to a future Walden Two is Organizational Behavior Management (OBM). William Abernathy believes that it would make sense to try to create a Walden Two within an existing company. This would avoid the problems of building a new organization from scratch. One possibility, similar to the Comunidad los Horcones solution, is to develop a Walden Two society in an organization that is already committed to, and with a concentration of skills in, applied behavioral analysis, such as a specialized school for children with autism. ■



Therapy session in Los Horcones.
Photo: www.loshorcones.org

Living in a Walden Two

Darrel E. Bostow, PhD
Pembroke, Maine



Darrel Bostow was born in Minot, North Dakota, in the tradition of farmers. He graduated from the University of Cincinnati in 1966, majoring in pre-medicine and psychology. He commenced graduate work in industrial psychology at Western Michigan University but quickly came under the influence of behavior analysts, such as Fred Keller, Richard Malott, Jack Michael, Roger Ulrich, Bill Hopkins, and, of course, the writings of B. F. Skinner. After completing his MA in psychology with thesis research in variations of Sidman avoidance in an animal lab, Darrel migrated to Southern Illinois University with Bill Hopkins. At SIU, Darrel came under the influence of Nathan Azrin, Don Hake, Harry Rubin, and Beth Sulzer-Azaroff. In 1970, Darrel became assistant professor in the Educational Psychology Department of the University of South Florida where he remained for 36 years, retiring as Emeritus Professor in 2006. Darrel's research began in elementary school classrooms and eventually involved programmed instruction delivered via the Internet. He now lives in Pembroke, Maine, where he and June, his wife, have developed a model farm that uses sustainable technologies to raise locally-grown organic vegetables (Smith Ridge Farm, Dennysville, Maine).

This article originally appeared in Q4, 2015 edition of *Operants*.

Let me introduce myself. I am Darrel, and I spend most of my time living in a Walden Two. Yes, a "Walden Two" DOES exist! I have been asked to describe what it is like to live here in mine.

First, a little history. I was born the year Professor Burrhus assembled his notes on Frazier's Walden Two in the form of the book. If you have read the book, you will recall that Burrhus visited the utopian community and decided to live there. He subsequently spent a great deal of his time writing in the public relations area. I first read *Walden Two* in the fall of 1966 when I began graduate school in the psychology department at Western Michigan University. At WMU, I accidentally fell into the context of the many "operant conditioners" in my program. Several faculty members knew Professor Burrhus, Frazier, and their field of the experimental analysis of behavior. Variables at Western Michigan quickly converged to pull together my professional and personal identity. I became a dyed-in-the-wool Skinnerian, and now live in an "intentional community." A powerful influence was, of course, B. F. Skinner's book, *Walden Two*.

I had come through many natural science courses during my undergraduate years, all of which established a firmly deterministic point of view. I eventually questioned the possibility of supernatural forces, including a miraculous creative mind. Somewhere during the first few pages of *Walden Two*, it dawned on me that human behavior is part of the physical universe and also governed by the laws of nature, not the product of a free will ordained by a supernatural force. If this scientific conception was true, we could build behavior just as we can build a bridge.

The idea of a planned world that produces behavior by design shook me but was logical. I eagerly read each new chapter of *Walden Two* and a purpose in my life evolved—make a better world and live in it—piecemeal if necessary. I began to wonder why we should continue to build a world that cannot possibly be sustained with Earth's resources.

Before I move on to other issues, let me tell you about Frazier. T. E. Frazier was the man who started Walden Two. He was, indeed, an activist and a visionary. Frazier was around 31 years old when he began forming the community. (Burrhus asked Frazier to recount exactly how the community got started, but Frazier's notes were somehow lost.) Burrhus and Frazier enjoyed long and productive lives, refining the details of a science of behavior and promoting behavior patterns typical of the original Walden Two. Sadly, they both died in 1990. Their roles in the community of Walden Two remained significant until their deaths, but both had refused to play any administrative roles because they did not want the community to depend upon their leadership. They remained relatively quiet,

largely out of view, yet attended occasional professional conferences and speaking engagements. When you listened to them speak, I am told they were much like Benjamin Franklin has been described—good listeners who spoke briefly and directly. I first met both Frazier and Burrhus at a Division 25 Hospitality Suite at the American Psychological Association Convention in 1967. Unfortunately, I could not spend significant time with either of them. I had to depend upon their writing, which I, of course, studied diligently. Eventually, I did visit with them more extensively.

During the latter part of their lives, Frazier and Burrhus became firmly convinced that burgeoning world population, excessive consumption of natural resources, pollution of the environment, and wars based upon contests for the remaining resources increasingly threatened the survival of many species, including humans. We now consume energy and natural resources at a prodigious level. We have acquired pleasures and creature comforts that consume our time and money at such a rate that we work long hours only to have brief periods in which to enjoy them. We cannot imagine a world without smartphones, motor vehicles, large living spaces, and a vast media system. But in all of this, humans have lost basic self-supportive skills. Few people grow what they eat, know how to prepare basic foods, and have no inclination to do either one. Few people can play musical instruments, do craftwork, or compose literature that they and others find interesting to hear, see, or read.

Now, let me tell you a little about how I have developed my Walden Two. The process has happened in slow stages. We all begin any enterprise as prisoners of our circumstances and genetic endowments. At the time I read *Walden Two*, I was preparing to possibly work in a private school that accelerated learning with the application of behavioral principles, and I had adopted Frazier's world vision. But a university teaching position came to my attention when I was finishing my dissertation, and I applied for it. This offered the security of working in an established educational system with its health and retirement benefits, and I postponed attempting to visit what I thought might be the original Walden Two community. Instead, I began to prepare to eventually live in my own Walden Two by adopting behavioral practices very much like those described by Professor Burrhus in the novel.

In my Walden Two, members live by a code and each member reviews parts of the code in some way at least weekly to keep on track in a manner similar to that described in *Walden Two*. This code is occasionally revised based upon intermittent discussions about problems and trends in the behavior of members. Originally, the community wanted to reproduce itself

physically by rapidly acquiring and reproducing members. But world population has burgeoned and population *control*, not expansion, has taken over as a community objective.

We here at my Walden Two have taken personal action to reinvent life. We are moving to a less consuming lifestyle. Like Frazier's Walden Two, each adult member has his or her personal room for sleeping and privacy. We spend a good deal of time in our personal rooms because they offer a retreat from community life and provide the solitude that brings renewal. Here, personal security does not depend upon social or legal commitments. All members maintain strong caring for each other. Members apply for personal rooms when they reach the age of 18. The community is small and arranged in a network of garden apartment/personal rooms accessible from central halls and outside patio entrances. A central kitchen with a buffet and a variety of eating areas allows for the semblance of private dining, and members often take their meals to their personal rooms. We maintain an extensive store of food, and our gardens and greenhouses supply year around fresh food. There is no fear of manual labor. Good exercise happens as a natural course of things. Every effort is made to reduce petroleum-consuming vehicle use to the minimum necessary.

Our members tend to have good health. The code insists that all members hold their personal weight to ideal recommendations. No members smoke. Recreational drugs are rarely used by anyone because all members engage in artistic pursuits, play some form of instrument, sing, and practice a variety of crafts. The natural emotional byproducts of successfully doing productive things render recreational drugs unappealing. Members select their own physicians and dentists outside the community because it is not large enough to support those professional practices.

Our Walden Code requires an enlightened view of the last years and days of one's life. Each individual signs an agreement that the community is not responsible for health care. However, the network of personal living spaces provides an automatic social support network. Individuals are in close proximity to each other without "living in each other's pockets." When anyone needs special help, members are glad to supply it. Electronic monitoring equipment allows members to live in their personal rooms as long as possible. Our shops are able to create all sorts of prosthetic devices not available in the culture at large. And for the final days, all members have clearly outlined advance-care directives, refusing heroic methods to keep them alive when death is eminent. Members are given end-of-life choices.

New members find moving to Walden Two to

be a significant adjustment from living in the world at large. Living harmoniously requires rigorous self-management. Unfortunately, the world at large establishes and maintains behavior that is often self-defeating. The struggle for dominance in social relationships is not nurtured and enhanced in our Walden Two culture. Competition is not honored nor are awards given to those who “win.” Instead, cooperation is encouraged. Thus, moving into our community requires a turnaround from the world at large, and prospective members have a long probationary period for adjustment.

I have much more to tell about living in my Walden Two, but I have been asked for a brief introduction. Stated in the vernacular, Walden Two is a state of mind, which can be defined as the strengthening effects of operant behavior when it is reinforced. *It is a way of living and the feelings that arise with it, not necessarily a place.* It is a life with the purpose

of making one’s world a better place—one in which humans can live sustainably. Anyone can live in a Walden Two because it is the *behavior* one engages in. But the place—the social and physical environment—is important because it sustains the behavior of Walden Two. To produce and maintain “Walden Two” behavior, that environment must be designed and redesigned through time as a more sustainable and happier life evolves. Fortunately, one’s Walden Two can begin where one finds oneself—immediately and in a piecemeal fashion. It can begin with one person just like Thoreau, and then two, and then three . . .

In summary, your environment controls you, and if you are to *direct* its control, you must in turn control it. That is how to maintain a designed life—a happier one. And by the way, here is a tutorial from the public relations area of my Walden Two about how to design a happier life: www.scienceofbehavior.com/enjoylife.php. ■■■

brevis

2019 B. F. Skinner Foundation’s Board of Directors Meeting



During the meeting, left to right: Julie S. Vargas, President; Darlene Crone-Todd, Director; Joyce Tu, Vice-President; Ernest A. Vargas; Konstantin Evdokimov; David Roth, Director; Per Holth, Director; David Palmer, Director.

New Visions of *Walden Two*

Daniel B. Sundberg, PhD
ABA Technologies
Melbourne, FL

Dr. B. F. Skinner published his first and only piece of fiction, *Walden Two*, in 1948. When the book first came out, Skinner stated that it sat in relative obscurity for a dozen or so years, however as the 1950s drew to a close, the popularity of the book grew. Today it has more than 4,000 reviews on popular book site www.goodreads.com, four times as many as Skinner's next most reviewed book, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*. In the years that followed, some took inspiration from Skinner's book to create societies held together not by religion or anti-authority ideals, but by science and a scientific approach to improving the human condition. Others took that inspiration and wrote of how the principles of *Walden Two* could be applied to different social environments.

Two books in particular built upon the idea of using a scientific approach to designing a society. *Walden Three: A Scientific Utopia*, written by Dr. Reuben Ardila, tells a fictional story of a country that attempts to build itself based on *Walden Two*. *The Liberated Workplace: Transitioning to Walden Three* by Dr. William Abernathy is a semi-fictional story of a company that is redesigned with *Walden Two* in mind in what amounts to a very practical guide.

In Skinner's novel the reader is taken on a tour of a unique community that has at its core "a constantly experimental attitude toward everything." In this society, every facet of life is treated as an experiment designed to produce happy, intelligent, and productive people who support a flourishing well-designed society. In this way, *Walden Two* was depicted as a society that could become a utopia through experimentation. While Ardila's and Abernathy's books are written in dissimilar styles, they both pay great homage to Skinner and are fundamentally based on the same idea of taking an experimental approach to improving the human condition and the effectiveness of a social community.

Walden Three: A Behavioral Utopia

In 1979, Dr. Reuben Ardila published *Walden Three: A Scientific Utopia*, in which we are told a fictional story of a society designed on the principles of Skinner's *Walden Two*. However, unlike Skinner's *Walden Two*, this is not a single community of individuals seeking to escape the grind of modern society. Instead, it is a whole country transformed into a scientific society by an eccentric dictator at the head of a military coup. Ardila's society encompasses every facet of life from education and health, to economy and religion, all of which are designed based on science and experimentation.

In Ardila's story, the scientific approach to creating a society and culture is applied to a much grander and ambitious scale than was done in Skinner's *Walden Two*. This book shows us an interesting perspective on the potential impact on human life if a *Walden Two* was created out of an entire country. Ardila also shows some of the



Dr. Daniel B. Sundberg is a behavior analyst dedicated to creating meaningful change for individuals and organizations, using the science of human behavior. Dan has worked in a variety of organizations, including non-profits. Additionally, Dan spent two years as a university lecturer, teaching undergraduate students how to improve the workplace with behavior analysis. Dan earned his BA in Psychology at the University of California at Berkeley, a MS in Organizational Behavior Management from Florida Institute of Technology, and a PhD in Industrial/Organizational Behavior Management from Western Michigan University. Dan is currently Regional Manager of Consulting Services at ABA Technologies, where he helps to develop and deliver OBM consulting services. Dan is also a guest reviewer for the Journal of Organizational Behavior Management, and in his spare time, he creates behavior-based products that allow people to manage their time and accomplish their goals. He also has a special interest in building effective work practices and cultures for start-up companies and increasing the positive effects of organizations, working toward an environmentally-sustainable future.

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immense challenges of engineering a society that large, including the effects of international politics, and large-scale cultural change, and of relying on a benevolent dictator to lead the system. The perspective on how such a society would be treated by the world community, especially as the book is set during the height of the Cold War, is particularly interesting. In the end, the book gave the impression that building a *Walden Two* by political action is far from the most effective approach and that the organic growth that is depicted in Skinner's and Abernathy's books have the best chances of success.

The Liberated Workplace: Transitioning to Walden Three

Skinner devotes a significant amount of the story of *Walden Two* to describing a reimagined approach to our working lives, in which the goal is to "get rid of the work, not the worker" to make the society as effective and efficient as possible. In *Walden Two*, traditional management is non-existent, and people work about four hours a day on tasks that are most interesting or desirable to them. Work is treated as a means to an end only, not an end in and of itself. This approach has the effect of creating a not just a happier community but a more effective one as well.

Focusing on eliminating work may seem at odds with the objectives of today's economy. However, Dr. William Abernathy's book shows us this is not the case. In 2014, Abernathy published *The Liberated Workplace: Transitioning to Walden Three*, which shows that a science-based community does not have to be constrained to a residential setting and can flourish in a workplace. As a behavior analyst who focuses on applying the science of behavior to improving organizations, my attention was immediately drawn to Abernathy's vision of bringing *Walden Two* to the world. Particularly attractive was Abernathy's stance that we do not need to flee society at large to begin creating a *Walden Two* community. Abernathy suggests instead that the workplace is the perfect vessel for creating the sort of "revolution" described by Skinner.

Abernathy tells the story of a fictional company, Superior Button, that seeks to create a *Walden Two* environment in their place of work. This story reads more like a case study or instruction manual than the piece of fiction that it is, and many of the examples and data used in the book feel like real examples from Abernathy's extensive experience.

While the book maintains much of the idealism of Skinner's and Ardila's works, it is at the same time much less grand in its scale in that it seeks to change one aspect of society rather than society as a whole. However, this has the effect of depicting a very feasible society, and one very similar to many progressive (and effective) companies that exist today. Abernathy describes in extensive detail the methods and systems for maximizing the reinforcement available for the participants in the system (the workers) as well as the owners of the system who seek to maximize impact and profitability.

Abernathy's system is also more likely to appeal to America's culture of individualism, which, in both Skinner's and Ardila's societies, is seen as an obstacle to be overcome, rather than leveraged. Abernathy's approach is also highly realistic and can perhaps be thought of as a shaping step towards creating a *Walden Two* for society at large. If the lessons of the many failed communities that have attempted to emulate *Walden Two* (in spirit if not in fact) are to be heeded, a scientific society is by no means a small undertaking. Piggybacking such a society on existing structures and building them in a way that supports existing systems of reinforcement is not at all an unreasonable proposition.

Many companies today strive to build a system like Abernathy's to move them towards a liberated and "utopian" workplace. Google, Zappos, and Lincoln Electric are just a few examples of organizations that work to engineer environments that maximize employee autonomy, choice, and effectiveness, and that minimize work for work's sake.

Abernathy's approach to creating a *Walden Two* is realistic enough to be adopted by organizations such as these. One could almost imagine the owner of a company with these ambitions coming across Abernathy's book and being so inspired by the ideas discussed therein that she goes into work the next day and begins taking steps to create a "liberated workplace." Perhaps, the only reason that we are not seeing more organizations doing so is because Abernathy's vision of a utopian workplace has not reached that audience yet.

Abernathy's book follows both Skinner's spirit of changing the world for the better and his pragmatism in making that change. If you don't have a chance to pick up the book, here are some great lessons from the book in how to create a *Walden Two* in the workplace:

- Focus on results, rather than activity wherever possible.
- Allow people to maximize positive reinforcement through choice and by maximizing their work output.
- Treat the transition to a *Walden Two* as a shaping process, and proceed slowly in steps.
- Eliminate bureaucracy wherever possible.
- Do the above by allowing people to grow within their existing roles, rather than through promotions.
- Reinforce behaviors and results that actually contribute to the output of the organization.

Conclusion

Overall, these two books make for interesting reads and show that Skinner's vision of a behavioral utopia is still inspiring people around the world. Those who have had the opportunity to read Skinner's *Walden Two* have no doubt imagined how intriguing it would be as a scientist to live in such a society. In these two books, we have the opportunity to imagine once more scientific societies based on an experimental attitude. ■

Táhcita Medrado Mizael

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This interview came about after the students examined Táhcita's master's dissertation, and felt that she could answer the many questions they would like to ask a black behavior analyst who is also a researcher of racial issues. The questions were based on the principle that, as in the Federal University of Mato Grosso/Cuiabá, many psychology courses in Brazil have very few behavior analysis disciplines and there is no time readily available within a course of study that easily allows access and discussions of the field's contributions to social issues.

When and how did your interest in behavior analysis start?

My interest in behavior analysis started when I was an undergraduate student, most likely influenced by my fondness for research. The institution where I completed my undergraduate degree (UFSCar), is very good at teaching and doing research, and I loved to know that even in the humanities it was possible to have control over variables, and identify causal relationships between events. At first, I was more interested in psychoanalysis, but I realized that it could not be falsified, since any event could be explained away by the various concepts in the field (but the knowledge that I had and I still have of this field is pretty basic). This difficulty made me look at other disciplines. Since behavior analysis is very strong at UFSCar, I began to learn and got increasingly interested in the experimental approach with control over variables and the possibility of proving, and especially the ability to falsify, findings.

What events occurred during your undergraduate education do you consider relevant for you to remain interested in this field? And what events occurred during your undergraduate education that were essential for your education?

I think that finding controlling relations helped me to understand why I behaved differently depending on the context I was in. Understanding and predicting the behavior of others was (and is) very reinforcing to me. Regarding my education, the research internship in UFSCar's reading program (that uses stimulus equivalence to teach prerequisites of language to children with learning difficulties) and the experiences with children with autism spectrum disorders were important, because I could see that behavior analysis could be used to improve people's lives. Stimulus equivalence was especially important. I thought I could use it to explain everything from language learning to even more complex behavior, such as to explain phobias, preferences and to understand learning that occurs indirectly (not directly taught), as in prejudices.

Your work is very much directed at racial and gender issues. In what ways, and how much, do you believe that the fact of being a black woman and your education helped you professionally develop these topics? Can you highlight other influences?

I think the fact of being a woman, or being black, is not enough in itself for someone to want to research these issues. I believe that only after I developed what is called "race consciousness" and "gender awareness" that I became sensitive to them. I realized that being a woman and being black were variables that affected the way



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This interview was translated, edited, and then finalized in collaboration between Darlene Crone-Todd, Táhcita Medrado Mizael, and Angelo A. S. Sampaio. Originally, the interview was conducted by psychology students of the Federal University of Mato Grosso (UFMT), teaching assistants (known as "monitors" in Brazil) in the Experimental Analysis of Behavior course: Aline Batista Sousa, Larissa Rodrigues de Campos Oliveira, Monica Maria Silva e Santos, and Peter Teylon Rodrigues de Souza, under the guidance of Professor and occasional collaborator in Boletim Contexto (Context Bulletin) Virginia Cordeiro Amorim. Our collaborative translation has extended or updated some of the original content, but otherwise represents the spirit in which the students at UFMT conducted the interview.

I saw myself, and especially how other people treated me. I usually give a simple example to explain what I mean: When I was a teenager and went out with my friends, the boys used to harass us, trying to kiss us, touching our bodies without consent, not accepting no for an answer, and even forcing kisses in some situations. Since this happened in all the places I went to, I was sure that men were these “insatiable” beings who needed sex, and I did not consider such acts as harassment. But one day, I went to a LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual) club and I experienced a different reality, where no one touched my body without my consent. The men who approached me accepted no for an answer without insisting or forcing kisses (but that does not mean that harassment never happens in these clubs). After that day I began to rethink what I saw as truth and understood that often, we accept that “things are like that” because we are exposed to a reality where these actions are reinforced and therefore, maintained. But that does not need to be so.

Returning back to the starting point: For a long time I experienced things as a woman and as a black person and I treated them as “normal”. Only when I started to attend spaces that discussed blackness and gender issues, read about these topics, and contacted people who were already sensitive and heard their experiences, did I realize the influence of these variables in the way people treated me. Behavior analysis was an ally in this sense because its approach assisted me in interpreting things that happened to me and to people around me.

Your master’s dissertation talks about prejudiced racial attitudes using the stimulus equivalence paradigm. For your doctorate, you continue studying the topic, also contemplating respondent pairings. What are the main theoretical and methodological challenges you have found? Could you comment a little about this new work?

The challenges are many. To think of a future application of this procedure is a major challenge. It would require a number of prior studies to assess whether the results are generalizable as well as the influence of this training on how children interact with others or how they behave in the classroom (e.g., whether the changing of attitudes correlates with the amount of interaction with black children before and after their interactions) to name just two things. I believe that the most immediate challenge is to make a broad dissemination of research and form a network of researchers interested in this and related topics, for that kickoff to have continuity. For the doctorate, we conducted three studies. One investigated the training parameters we used in the master’s thesis. In the second one we checked the maintenance of these classes six weeks after the end of the training phase (participants maintained their performances!). We also examined whether we would find similar results (that is, a high number of participants who formed classes with a positive symbol and faces of black people) with an

alternative procedure. In the alternative procedure, the stimuli used were paired to simulate a less artificial and more common day-to-day situation for children. There were no programmed consequences and the children only watched the stimuli on a computer screen. The results showed that this procedure is not as effective as the former matching-to-sample procedure. This raises more questions than answers. For example, what is the role of reinforcement on the training phase, and was the number of pairings too low, etc.

You have a solid background in the experimental analysis of behavior. Also, you have presented papers focused on applied topics and you are also an expert in gender and sexuality issues. To what extent do you consider that behavior analysis can help those interested in racial and gender issues? What about the process of relating behavior analysis to other theories that have discussed these issues for much longer?

I think one of the greatest contributions is that, after we identify the variables that can control the emission of behavior harmful to individuals, we can see why this happens. Behavior is usually explained by internal processes (“the person is racist”) or by naturalizing behaviors (“men are like this”). With identified variables, we can prevent harmful behavior from happening and/or minimize its negative impacts. To be more specific, I think that identifying the learning processes from an experimental point of view is a great contribution that, as far as I know, is scarce in research from other disciplines. That is what I have used to try to reverse negative racial biases in children. By identifying existing relations indirectly (e.g., by the formation of equivalence classes), you can learn how children have related social groups, in this case, pairing black people, with negative attributes. Another example is the identification of variables related to, for instance, gender violence. By functionally analyzing the behaviors of the people involved you can show that seemingly innocuous behaviors can have harmful effects over someone in the relationship (e.g., managing money as a way to have greater control over the activities of the partner). Making behavior analytic accounts of existing theories from other literatures has occurred, unfortunately, more informally than from published research. Ideally partnering would be best, especially with people from other disciplines who are interested in articulating and disseminating their knowledge in other fields. But this is an arduous task that involves being open to listening, (including to criticism), but also to questioning your own view on the subject.

How do you assess the possibility of contributions that behavior analysis would have by approaching, specifically, the studies on intersectionality and colorism?

I think it is quite possible and even desirable. I think behavior analytic studies on stimulus discrimination and generalization (those famous generalization gradients) could be a starting point for a linkage with colorism, showing that as darker a person’s skin col-

or is, s/he will probably be exposed to more adverse situations compared to other black people with varying degrees of lighter skin.

Regarding intersectionality, the articulation of social markers (e.g., race, gender, age) depends on at least the articulation between the social markers and the context where this person is. At this time, I am writing a chapter on feminism that will make a link between behavior analysis and these intersectionalities.

How do you envision the future of research related to ethnic and racial issues in behavior analysis?

With the entry of a greater number of black students, mainly due to the adoption of affirmative action in universities, I have seen a growing interest in this subject. Black and brown students especially, realize that a lot of knowledge in psychology was not devoted to black and poor people. For example, I heard a story of a person who attended a short course on mourning and asked how to deal with the situation if the grieving person does not have a support network or resources to pay for a psychologist; the answer given to this person was “that will be difficult”. In this sense, research on blackness and related issues could make specific demands more visible to other groups.

Do you believe that one day we can eradicate racism? Can behavior analysis contribute to this cause?

I find it hard, because racism, among other things, favors certain social groups. The overwhelming majority of people in these groups control a series of reinforcers, act as control agencies and do everything possible to maintain the status quo. However, I believe that behavior analysis can contribute to changing the negative functions that people (white or not) attribute to black people and by showing the various processes by which people, even without a direct learning history, learn to relate black people with negative attributes.

Compared with other sciences, it is seen that behavior analysis is not widespread. What points do you think are key to this small dissemination, and what actions could reverse this situation?

That’s a tough question. I think that some researchers are not interested, but I could be wrong. Sometimes I think that language is a barrier, but we see many people reading psychoanalysis without consulting the vocabulary of psychoanalysis, so it is really hard to know what determines lack of interest.

Still, I dare say that using a more accessible language would increase the likelihood that people from other fields would read our work. This does not mean that we have to fully change our practices. You can disseminate the field by writing in science blogs, such as “Boletim Behaviorista” (Behaviorist Bulletin) or publishing in general psychology journals. The Youtube channel, (e.g., “Boteco Behaviorista” - Behaviorist Bar), and podcasts such as “ACearáCAST” are ways to disseminate our field for several audiences. But in all these cases, it is necessary to explain the concepts of the field, or to use a vocabulary that can be considered less accurate, but with the function of making other audi-

ences interested in the field.

In addition to the non-use (or reduced use) of technical terms, it would be important to show the contributions of our field to applied issues such as reading programs that have been developed out of stimulus equivalence relations, or studies of anxiety to mathematics. Our view of depression and anxiety sees the environment as the generator of these internal states and does not locate the “problem” in the individual. In sum, we can show that what we study applies to daily life and can help people in many ways.

What is the importance of promoting scientific publications of women and black people? How do you evaluate the possibility of psychology students focusing their studies exclusively in these topics?

It’s very important. Women and black people have spent many decades prohibited from studying and thus from becoming scientists or publishing. In this sense, any initiative that encourages these groups to publish, such as affirmative action, is welcome. Social movements have been talking about the importance of representation for a long time, and research has proven its advantages. If in the environment I live in, I have never seen a black person in a teaching position, or as a scientist or other related profession, it is unlikely that I will have an interest in following these careers. And if I, by any chance want to do it, the chances of me being punished when I verbalize or seek such a career are great.

Regarding the second question, I think that extremes are dangerous. Only with the multitude of ideas, projects and research topics is it possible to advance the science, although I believe it is important that more people investigate gender and ethnic-racial issues.

The curriculum of Psychology at the Federal University of Mato Grosso / Cuiabá has only one subject from the field, the Experimental Analysis of Behavior. Students who are interested in the approach usually work as assistants in the course, participate in GEDAC (Behavior Analysis Study and Dissemination Group) and, where possible, go to scientific meetings. Behavior Analysis has won fans and space here. However, there is still a large prejudice against the field. This reality is equivalent to many courses throughout Brazil. Do you have any suggestions of how to reduce prejudice against behavior analysis within the undergraduate psychology courses?

I have used some strategies, although unfortunately there is no manual or set of rules that, if applied, will be effective in reducing anyone’s prejudice precisely because each has a unique history. Much research shows that empathy correlates with a lower degree of prejudice. Based on that, I try to dialogue in order to make the audience feel empathetic with what I’m saying. For example, a person I met told me that two men or two women could not be a couple, that it was “not right” or “normal”. I, knowing that this person was a white woman married to a black man, said that for many years (and even today in some places), people

also found that an interracial couple is something abnormal. That was enough for her to begin to question her own position.

In another situation, a girl questioned why most people who live in the slums (favelas) do not study. I replied asking what was needed for someone to go to school, to travel the distance between home and school, the time or resources available for the child to arrive at school, etc. These are important variables that we neglect when we have resources or time available. We spend so much time in contact with people from backgrounds or realities similar to ours (e.g., social status, resources) that we tend to take for granted things that are usual for us, like going to school, not needing to work when you're a student, etc. It is therefore very important to explain what is involved when we discuss questions like "why a woman suffering violence does not leave her husband" or "why some children do not attend school". When we make clear what is needed in order to do something, it becomes easier to understand things that we naturalize or "take as a given". In the academic context, when I have contact with people who say negative things about behavior analysis, I usually ask what the person considers bad and why. This is usually enough to realize that the person learned the concepts improperly, or refers to another type of behaviorism

(e.g., methodological). I try to explain that behaviorism is like psychoanalysis, in that it has several "schools", with different thoughts, despite having certain things in common, and I try to clarify the concepts. This is difficult because the person who criticizes must be open to realizing s/he may have learned incorrect concepts; but in some cases, I have seen that some people show a genuine interest in better understanding the approach, asking for readings or wanting to talk more about it.

What tips do you have and what references would you suggest to undergraduate students who are interested in behavior analysis and racial and/or gender issues? Would you have any specific tip for the female students, black students or LGBTs?

One tip that was crucial for me was to check what other fields have already produced on the subject. This has helped me a lot to think about bridges between these issues and behavior analysis. It is difficult to give specific tips for female students, black or LGBTs. Being part of these three groups, I find it important to have or seek a support network (student movements, research groups on the subjects, friends, etc.) to help develop "race consciousness" (and/or gender awareness), to share questions and experiences and also to seek forms of self-affirmation that could help them face the prejudice that exists within and outside the university. ■

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A entrevista foi realizada pelos estudantes de Psicologia da Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso, monitores de Análise Experimental do Comportamento, Aline Batista Sousa, Larissa Rodrigues de Campos Oliveira, Monica Maria Silva e Santos e Peter Teylon Rodrigues de Souza, sob orientação da professora e colaboradora eventual do Boletim Contexto Virgínia Cordeiro Amorim. A arte é da nossa colaboradora fixa Cindy Vaccari.

A proposta dessa entrevista surgiu após os monitores estudarem a dissertação da Táhcita e considerarem que ela poderia responder às muitas perguntas que eles gostariam de fazer a uma analista do comportamento negra e pesquisadora de questões raciais. As perguntas partiram do princípio de que, assim como na UFMT/Cuiabá, muitos cursos de Psicologia pelo Brasil possuem pouquíssimas disciplinas de Análise do Comportamento e não há carga horária curricular que permita acesso e discussões das contribuições da área para as questões sociais.

Quando e como surgiu o seu interesse pela Análise do Comportamento?

Meu interesse pela AC veio ainda na graduação, muito provavelmente influenciado por eu gostar de pesquisa. A instituição onde eu fiz a graduação (UFSCar) é muito forte nesse âmbito, e eu adorei saber que mesmo nas ciências humanas era possível ter controle de variáveis e identificar relações causais entre eventos. No início, eu me interessava muito por psicanálise, mas percebi que ela (pelo conhecimento que tinha e que tenho, que é bastante básico) não poderia ser falseada, pois qualquer acontecimento poderia ser explicado pelos diversos conceitos existentes. Essa dificuldade me fez olhar para outras áreas, e como a AC era bastante forte na UFSCar, eu

fui aprendendo e me interessando cada vez mais pela abordagem experimental, com controle de variáveis, possibilidade de verificação e, principalmente, de falseamento.

Que acontecimentos, ocorridos durante a sua graduação, você considera relevantes para que você se mantivesse interessada por essa área e que foram fundamentais para sua formação acadêmica?

Acho que descobrir relações de controle foi muito importante para mim, perceber porque eu me comportava de maneira diferente dependendo do contexto em que eu me encontrava, e principalmente, entender e prever o comportamento dos outros era (e é) muito reforçador para mim. Com relação à minha formação acadêmica, o estágio em pesquisa no programa de leitura da UFSCar e as experiências com crianças autistas foram importantes, pois eu conseguia ver que a AC poderia ser usada para melhorar a vida das pessoas, mas quando eu aprendi equivalência de estímulos foi especialmente importante; eu pensava que podia utilizá-la para tudo! Desde a aprendizagem de línguas até coisas mais complexas, como explicar fobias e preferências e entender outras aprendizagens de maneira indireta, como preconceitos.

Seus trabalhos são muito voltados às questões raciais e **de gênero**. **Como e o quanto você acredita que o fato de ser uma mulher negra e seus estudos em Análise do Comportamento contribuíram para que você desenvolvesse profissionalmente esses temas? Você destacaria outras influências?**

Acho que o fato de ser mulher e/ou ser negra não é suficiente em si para que alguém queira pesquisar essas temáticas. Acredito que só depois que eu criei o que é chamado de “consciência de raça” e, no caso, a “consciência do gênero” eu me tornei sensível e percebi que ser mulher e ser negra eram variáveis que afetavam o modo como eu me via e principalmente como as pessoas me tratavam. Eu costumo dar um exemplo simples para explicar isso que pode ajudar a entender o que eu quero dizer: quando eu era adolescente e saía com minhas amigas, os meninos costumavam nos assediar, insistindo para ficarmos com eles, passando a mão em nossos corpos sem autorização, não aceitando não como resposta e inclusive forçando beijos em algumas situações. Como isso sempre acontecia em todos os ambientes que eu frequentava, eu tinha certeza que os homens eram esses seres “insaciáveis”, que precisam de sexo, e não considerava esses atos como assédio. Então, um dia, eu fui em uma balada LGBT e eu vivenciei uma realidade diferente, onde ninguém passou a mão no meu corpo sem meu consentimento e os homens que me abordavam aceitavam não como resposta sem insistir ou forçar beijo (mas isso não significa que assédios nunca aconteçam nessas baladas).

Depois daquele dia eu comecei a repensar o que eu tratava como verdade e entendi que, muitas vezes, nós achamos que “as coisas são assim mesmo” porque estamos expostos a uma realidade onde isso é reforçado e mantido, mas que não precisa ser assim.

Voltando então ao ponto inicial, durante muito tempo eu vivenciei coisas como mulher e como pessoa negra que tratava como “normais”, naturalizando coisas que são aprendidas e só depois que comecei a frequentar espaços que discutiam negritude e questões de gênero, fazer leituras sobre esses temas, e ter contato com pessoas que já estavam sensíveis a isso e me contavam suas experiências, eu comecei a perceber a influência dessas variáveis no modo como me tratavam. A AC foi uma aliada nesse sentido por sua abordagem relacional e contextual, me auxiliando na interpretação de coisas que acontecem comigo e às pessoas a minha volta.

A sua dissertação de mestrado abarca atitude racial preconceituosa através da Equivalência de Estímulos. No doutorado, você continua estudando o tema, contemplando também os emparelhamentos respondentes. Quais os principais desafios teóricos e metodológicos que você tem encontrado? Você poderia comentar um pouco sobre esse novo trabalho?

Os desafios são muitos. Acho que pensar em uma futura aplicação desse procedimento é um grande desafio e demandaria uma série de estudos prévios para avaliar se os resultados são generalizáveis e qual a influência desse treino na interação das crianças ou em como as crianças se comportam em sala (e.g., a mudança de atitude das crianças se correlaciona com a quantidade de interação com as crianças negras pré e pós-formação das classes?), para citar apenas duas coisas. Acredito que o desafio mais imediato é conseguir fazer uma ampla divulgação das pesquisas e formar uma rede de pesquisadores interessados nessa e em temáticas relacionadas, para que esse pontapé inicial tenha continuidade.

Sobre o novo trabalho, conduzimos três estudos, um investigando separadamente os parâmetros de treino que usamos na dissertação de mestrado, o segundo verificando a manutenção dessas classes seis semanas após o fim da fase de treino (os participantes mantiveram o responder!J), e também examinando se conseguimos resultados semelhantes (um número alto de participantes que formou as classes envolvendo um símbolo positivo e faces de pessoas negras) com um procedimento alternativo. Nesse procedimento, os estímulos utilizados são apenas pareados, para simular uma situação menos artificial e mais comum no dia-a-dia das crianças. Então não há reforçamento e as crianças apenas assistem os estímulos pareados na tela do computador. Os resultados mostraram que esse tipo de procedimento não é tão eficaz quanto o uso de emparelhamento de acordo com o modelo, e isso levanta mais perguntas do que respostas (e.g., qual é o papel do reforçamento na fase de treino, o número de pareamentos foi baixo?, etc.).

Você tem uma sólida formação em Análise Experimental do Comportamento. Simultaneamente, tem apresentado trabalhos voltados para temas aplicados e também é especialista em Gênero e Sexualidade. Até que ponto você considera que a AC pode contribuir para os interessados em questões

raciais e de gênero? Como tem sido o processo de relacionar a AC a outras teorias que já vêm discutindo essas questões há muito mais tempo?

Acho que uma das maiores contribuições é que, a partir da identificação das variáveis que podem controlar a emissão de comportamentos prejudiciais aos indivíduos, pode-se, além de identificar o porquê isso acontece, que geralmente é explicado por instâncias internas (“a pessoa é racista”) ou naturalização de condutas (“os homens são assim”), é possível propor maneiras de evitar que isso aconteça e/ou minimizar os impactos negativos de tais comportamentos. Para ser mais específica, acho que identificar os processos de aprendizagem a partir de um ponto de vista experimental é uma grande contribuição que, até onde eu sei, é escassa em pesquisas de outras áreas. Isso é justamente o que eu tenho utilizado para tentar reverter vieses raciais negativos em crianças, ao identificar que, de maneira indireta (e.g., pela formação de classes de equivalência), é possível aprender a relacionar grupos sociais, no caso, pessoas negras, com atributos negativos. Outro exemplo é a identificação de variáveis relacionadas com, por exemplo, a violência de gênero, ao analisar funcionalmente os comportamentos das pessoas envolvidas, mostrando que comportamentos aparentemente inócuos podem ter funções prejudiciais para alguém da relação (e.g., administrar o dinheiro do casal de modo a ter um maior controle sobre as atividades da parceira).

Esse processo de fazer leituras analítico-comportamentais de teorias já existentes em outras literaturas tem ocorrido, infelizmente, mais de maneira informal do que a partir de trabalhos publicados. O ideal seria fazer parcerias, em especial com pessoas de outras áreas que tenham interesse em articular e difundir seus conhecimentos em outras áreas, mas essa é uma tarefa árdua e que envolve estar aberto a ouvir (inclusive críticas) e até questionar os próprios pontos de vista sobre o assunto.

Como você avalia as possibilidades de contribuição que a AC teria ao se aproximar, especificamente, dos estudos sobre interseccionalidade e colorismo?

Acho que é bastante possível e até desejável. Acho que os estudos de AC sobre discriminação e generalização de estímulos (aqueles famosos gradientes de generalização) poderiam ser um ponto de partida para uma articulação com o colorismo, mostrando que quanto mais escura a pele de uma pessoa é, estatisticamente ela será exposta a mais situações adversas, em comparação com outra pessoa negra, porém de pele mais clara.

Com relação à interseccionalidade, o caráter relacional e contextual da AC se assemelha muito com as explicações sobre interseccionalidades, ou seja, o fato de que a articulação de marcadores sociais pode oferecer maior ou menor agência/poder para um indivíduo dependendo, pelo menos, dessa articulação entre os marcadores sociais e o contexto onde essa pessoa se

encontra. Neste momento, inclusive, estou escrevendo um capítulo sobre feminismo que discorrerá sobre uma articulação entre a AC e as interseccionalidades.

Como você prevê o futuro das pesquisas relacionadas às questões étnico-raciais na Análise do Comportamento?

Com a entrada de um número maior de alunos negros, devido principalmente à adoção das cotas raciais nas universidades, tenho visto um interesse crescente nessa temática, especialmente por alunos negros (pretos e pardos), que percebem que muitos conhecimentos da psicologia não foram pensados para populações negras e pobres (por exemplo, ouvi um relato de uma pessoa que participou de um minicurso sobre luto e perguntou como lidar com a situação caso a pessoa de luto não tenha uma rede de apoio ou recursos para pagar um psicólogo; a resposta foi “aí vai ser difícil, viu”). Nesse contexto, pesquisar sobre negritude e questões afins pode tornar demandas específicas mais visíveis para outros grupos.

Você acredita que um dia conseguiremos erradicar o racismo? De que formas a AC pode contribuir para esta causa?

Eu acho difícil pois o racismo serve, entre outras coisas, para privilegiar certos grupos sociais, e a maioria esmagadora nesses grupos controla uma série de reforçadores, atuando como agências de controle e fazendo o possível para manter o *status quo*. Entretanto, acredito que a AC pode contribuir para essa causa ao transformar as funções negativas que as pessoas brancas (ou não) atribuem a quem é negro, e ao evidenciar os diversos processos pelos quais é possível aprender a relacionar pessoas negras com atributos negativos mesmo sem uma história direta de aprendizagem.

Comparando com outras ciências, verifica-se que a Análise do Comportamento não é muito difundida. Quais pontos você acredita que são determinantes para essa baixa disseminação e quais ações poderiam reverter essa situação?

Essa é uma pergunta difícil. Eu acho que alguns pesquisadores não têm interesse nisso, mas posso estar enganada. Às vezes eu penso que a linguagem é uma barreira, mas nós vemos muitas pessoas lendo psicanálise sem consultar o vocabulário de psicanálise rs, então é realmente difícil de saber, de fato, o que determina isso.

Mesmo assim, eu arrisco dizer que utilizar uma linguagem mais acessível aumentaria a probabilidade de que pessoas de outras áreas lessem nossos trabalhos. Isso não significa que tenhamos que mudar nossas práticas totalmente. É possível disseminar a área escrevendo em *blogs* de divulgação científica, como o “Boletim Behaviorista”, ou publicando em revistas de psicologia geral. Os canais do *Youtube*, como o “Boteco Behaviorista”, e os *podcasts*, como o “ACearáCAST” são outra forma de mostrar nossa área para várias audiências, mas, em todos esses casos, é necessário que se explique os conceitos da área, ou se utilize um vocabulário que pode ser considerado menos

acurado, mas com a função de tornar outras audiências interessadas na área.

Além do não uso (ou uso reduzido) dos termos técnicos, seria importante mostrar as contribuições da nossa área em questões aplicadas, como os programas de leitura, os estudos sobre ansiedade à matemática, nossa visão sobre a depressão e a ansiedade (que se volta para o ambiente que gera esses estados internos e não coloca o “problema” no indivíduo), enfim, mostrar que o que nós estudamos pode ser visto no dia-a-dia e pode ajudar as pessoas de diversas formas.

Qual a importância do fomento às publicações científicas de mulheres e de pessoas negras? Como você avalia a possibilidade de os alunos de Psicologia centrarem seus estudos exclusivamente nessas produções?

É muito importante. Mulheres e pessoas negras passaram muitas décadas proibidas de estudar e, portanto, de se tornarem cientistas e publicarem. Nesse sentido, qualquer iniciativa que incentive esses grupos a publicar, como a reserva de vagas, é bem-vinda. Os movimentos sociais têm falado sobre a importância da representatividade há muito tempo, e pesquisas têm comprovado isso. Se, no ambiente em que vivo eu nunca vi uma pessoa negra na posição de professor(a), cientista ou profissão afim, é pouco provável que eu tenha interesse em seguir tal profissão; e se eu, por ventura quisesse seguir, as chances de eu ser punida quando verbalizar ou buscar isso são grandes.

Com relação a segunda pergunta, eu acho que os extremos são perigosos. Só com a multiplicidade de ideias, projetos e temas de pesquisa é possível fazer a ciência avançar, embora acredito ser importante que um número maior de pessoas investigue questões de gênero e étnico-raciais.

O currículo do curso de Psicologia da UFMT/Cuiabá possui apenas uma disciplina da área, Análise Experimental do Comportamento. Os alunos que se interessam pela abordagem costumam trabalhar como monitores da disciplina, participar do GEDAC (Grupo de Extensão e Difusão da Análise do Comportamento) e, quando possível, ir a eventos científicos. A AC já conquistou adeptos e espaços por aqui. Entretanto, ainda há bastante preconceito em relação à área. Essa realidade equivale à de muitos cursos Brasil afora. Você tem sugestões para diminuir o preconceito em relação à AC dentro das graduações?

Eu tenho utilizado algumas estratégias, embora infelizmente não haja um manual ou um conjunto de regras que, se aplicadas, serão eficazes na diminuição do preconceito de qualquer pessoa justamente porque cada um tem uma história única. Muitas pesquisas sobre o tema mostram que a empatia se correlaciona com um menor grau de preconceito. Baseado nisso, eu tento dialogar de modo a fazer a pessoa se sentir empática com o que eu estou falando. Por exemplo, uma pessoa que conheci me disse que dois homens ou duas mulheres não podiam ser um casal, que “não era certo” nem “normal”. Eu, sabendo que essa pessoa

era uma mulher branca casada com um homem negro, disse-a que durante muitos anos (e inclusive atualmente em alguns lugares), as pessoas também acham que um casal inter-racial é algo anormal. Isso foi suficiente para ela começar a questionar seu posicionamento.

Em outra situação, uma menina questionou porque a maioria das pessoas que moram nas favelas não estudam. Eu respondi perguntando o que era necessário para alguém ir para a escola, para mostrar que a distância entre a residência e a escola, ter tempo e/ou recursos disponíveis para que a criança chegue na escola, etc. são variáveis importantes que negligenciamos quando temos recursos/tempo/disponíveis. A gente passa tanto tempo em contato com pessoas de *backgrounds* e/ou realidades semelhantes à nossa (e.g., status social, facilidades) que tendemos a banalizar relatos de coisas que são básicas para nós, como ir à escola, não precisar trabalhar, etc. Por isso é muito importante explicitar o que está envolvido quando discutimos “por que uma mulher que sofre violência não larga o marido?”, ou “por que algumas crianças não vão à escola?”, entre outras. Quando deixamos claro o que é necessário para que se faça algo, fica mais fácil entender coisas que naturalizamos ou que “damos como dado”.

No contexto acadêmico, quando tenho contato com pessoas que falam mal da AC, eu costumo perguntar o que a pessoa considera ruim e o porquê. Isso geralmente é suficiente para perceber que a pessoa aprendeu os conceitos de maneira inadequada, ou se refere a outro tipo de behaviorismo (e.g., metodológico). Tento explicar que o behaviorismo é como a psicanálise, que tem diversas “escolas”, com pensamentos distintos, apesar de possuir certas coisas em comum, e procuro esclarecer os conceitos. Esse momento é difícil porque a pessoa que critica tem que estar aberta para ouvir que aprendeu errado e/ou para esclarecer suas dúvidas, mas em alguns casos, tenho visto que algumas pessoas mostram um interesse genuíno em entender melhor a abordagem, pedindo indicações de leituras e/ou querendo conversar mais sobre o assunto.

Que dicas você daria e que referências bibliográficas você indicaria aos estudantes de graduação que se interessam por AC e questões raciais e/ou de gênero? Você teria alguma dica específica para as alunas, estudantes negros ou LGBTQs?

Uma dica que foi crucial para mim foi conhecer um pouco do que as outras áreas já produziram sobre o assunto. Isso tem me auxiliado bastante a pensar em pontes entre estes temas e AC. É difícil dar dicas específicas para alunas, negros ou LGBTQs. Fazendo parte desses três grupos, acho que é importante ter ou buscar uma rede de apoio (coletivos, grupos de pesquisa sobre os temas, amigos, etc.) que ajudem a criar uma “consciência de raça”, a compartilhar dúvidas e vivências e também a buscar formas de autoafirmação que os auxiliem a enfrentar o preconceito existente dentro e fora da universidade. ■

Spotlight on *Gaslighting*: A Behavior Analysis of Unethical Behavior



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One term we hear more in our present society is “gaslighting”. This is a popular culture term related to the issue of power and control.

The term was made popular by the 1944 movie, “Gaslight”. (Spoiler alert!) In this movie, Charles Boyer plays a scheming love interest to Ingrid Bergman. He originally killed her aunt for her jewels, but was unable to locate them after the murder. He gets away, but takes a long view to eventually obtain them. As part of his scheme, he systematically tracks Bergman’s character down, romances her into marriage, and then begins a campaign to make her believe she is insane. While engaging in this atrocious behavior, he continues to search for the jewels throughout the house.

In today’s culture, the term “gaslight” is used to refer to the actions of making someone else question reality. What this means for behaviorists is that there is a method where the person engaging in “gaslighting” behavior systematically denies the validity of reports of events and statements that actually did occur, and thus attempts to convince the victim instead that they are crazy. This term, and many examples of it, is covered extremely well in Stephanie Sarkis’s book, “Gaslight”. We might notice many signs that are indicated by Sarkis, including blatant lying or denying what was said (despite witnesses or proof), using positive reinforcement unpredictably to keep one off-guard; aligning with others to garner support for their position and against the victim; and making statements that the victim(s) are crazy or lying.

What is interesting is that all of these gaslighting behaviors would be termed as “defense mechanisms” in a neo-psychodiagnostic paradigm. As readers of Skinner’s works might recognize, however, these behaviors are viewed from a behavior analytic perspective as escape or avoidance behavior. That is, the “gaslighter” is trying to escape or avoid punishment (e.g. being in trouble, being “found out”, etc.). There is also a strong possibility that differential reinforcement occurs, as the gaslighting behavior may function to gain access to preferred reinforcers. Boy-

er’s character has a clear set of reinforcers to attain: the jewels. All while looking for the jewels, Boyer tries to escape or avoid being “found out”, and has his wife committed to an insane asylum guaranteeing that he would not only have sole access to the house, but also the time to continue his search for the jewels.

More broadly, when we think of “gaslighting” in the popular media today, we see that it is often used by those who are trying to avoid any threats to their resources or livelihood. Their behavior is a result of additional factors, such as motivating operations. The problem on a larger scale, however, is that this behavior can often pay off (both immediately and long-term). It is most likely to occur when people detect any real or imagined threat to their position, power, or control.

The behaviors associated with “gaslighting” are most often observed when there are power or resources at stake. However, these behaviors may persist across different situations or people when there is no apparent power or resources involved. No matter what, where one abuses his or her power, we must speak out. When people speak out against the abusive behavior, there must be allies willing to reinforce such behavior, and work to overcome such issues. However, we must also recognize that this is often difficult to do, especially if the gaslighter has aligned themselves with others. Often, their behavior is different with one group of people versus the person(s) being “gaslighted”. Unfortunately, it can be a long time after the damage is done that others find out that the perpetrator really was “as bad as he or she was made out to be”.

A larger issue, of course, is how to prevent such egregious behavior in the first place. As we consider the behavior of fighting for power and resources, and the potential for pitting people against each other as a method to “divide and conquer”, let us remember too that using the counter-control methods available to us as individuals within our societies is imperative when despotic characters engage in such behavior. ■



B.F. Skinner