Book Review

For the Compleat Criminologist: Morris and Braukmann's *Behavioral Approaches to Crime and Delinquency*

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To paraphrase an old Texas saying, "It's been a long time a' comin' but the waitin's been worthwhile." The "it" referred to here is Morris and Braukmann's edited volume *Behavioral Approaches to Crime and Delinquency: A Handbook of Application, Research, and Concepts*. While there have been journal articles and book chapters describing applications of behavioral technology in correctional settings (e.g., McKee, 1964; Milan & Kolko, 1985; Milan & McKee, 1974) and a few books written by behavior analysts on this topic (e.g., Allyn, Milan, Roberts, & McKee, 1979), Morris and Braukmann have provided a behavior analytic theoretical and applied framework within which those of us interested in teaching about, training and intervening, and undertaking research in prison settings can function more effectively.

The authors' stated goal for this book is "to encourage a scientifically sound and accountable orientation toward effective and socially acceptable solutions to crime and delinquency" (p. xii). The projected audience for this volume is graduate and undergraduate students taking courses in crime and delinquency and researchers, as well as those in the criminal justice field who establish policy, control resources, and direct programs.

The book's multifaceted contents are diverse enough to be useful to its intended heterogeneous readership. Opening with an historical and conceptual intro-

duction to behaviorism, it moves from applications of behavioral principles outside prison (probation, parole, community settings) to specific intervention procedures with various incarcerated offenders (e.g., substance abusers). This book also introduces nonbehavioral theoretical approaches used to explain delinquent and criminal behavior and covers professional issues involved in applying behavioral approaches to delinquent and criminal populations.

The handbook is divided into six major parts: Chapters 1-3, labeled "The Introduction," establish the authors' commitment to the behavior analytic approach to crime and delinquency. In Chapter 1 Braukmann and Morris introduce behavioral assumptions and principles, discuss pros and cons of behavioral interventions, and comment on the other five parts of the book. Chapter 2 presents a well-drawn picture of the dimensions of behavior analysis: behavioral, technological, analytic, effective, general, and conceptual. Chapter 3 is an extensive overview of contemporary behaviorism. The authors' deftly turned phrases lead the reader from classical Greek philosophical beginnings through the philosophical "isms" (empiricism, associationism, structuralism, functionalism, pragmatism, operationism, and positivism) to natural selection and methodological behaviorism. They close this chapter with a conceptual system for the analysis of behavior, interrelating the roles of the person and environment, as in contemporary behaviorism, and historical and current context, as in interbehaviorism. This chapter presents as literate, well-integrated, and interesting an account of radical behaviorism as has been published to date.

Behavioral Approaches to Crime and Delinquency: A Handbook of Application, Research, and Concepts (1987), by Edward K. Morris and Curtis J. Braukmann, is available from Plenum Press, New York. Address correspondence to Janet Ellis, Center for Behavior Analysis, University of North Texas, Denton, TX 76203.

Chapters 4–7 comprise Part II and describe behavioral applications in adult and juvenile corrections. These researchers shared more common concerns: a recognition of difficulties facing applied researchers in correctional settings (Milan, Chapter 7, outlined highly relevant barriers); failure to maintain treatment gains in posttreatment settings; and the need for extensive staff training (including paraprofessionals) in learning and applying behavioral principles.

Part III (Chapters 8–11) details “Prevention and Intervention in Community Settings.” Chapter 8, “Law Enforcement and Crime Prevention,” offers a two-pronged approach to crime deterrence: (1) a description of how behavioral methods can be used by police to evaluate the efficiency of apprehension, investigation, and prosecution efforts; (2) a description of crime prevention programs coordinated between police departments and community groups. This chapter helps clarify the versatile and pragmatic technology available in behavioral approaches to crime. It should be of special interest to criminal justice students and police administrators. The conclusion reached after reviewing the research in Chapter 9, “Diversion and Neighborhood Delinquency Programs in Open Settings: A Social Network Interpretation,” will not come as a surprise to behavior analysts: “Aside from previous delinquent behavior, the strongest prediction of delinquency is association with delinquent peers” (p. 258).

Chapter 10, “Family-based Interventions for Crime and Delinquency,” presents an ecological, family-centered approach to dealing with such delinquent behaviors as fire setting, stealing, drug abuse, and running away. Then specific training models detail the ecological approach to crimes of abuse and neglect within the family (i.e., child and spouse abuse, child neglect, sexual abuse of children). Chapter 10 and Chapter 11, “School Programs for Delinquency Prevention and Intervention,” point up the importance of developing and evaluating environmental intervention models.

Part IV (Chapters 12–16) combines

very specific treatment approaches for sex offenders (Chapter 13) with general considerations in treating substance abusers (Chapter 12), while comparing (using meta-analysis) general efficacy of behavioral approaches to delinquency versus no treatment or treatment/usual controls (Chapter 13). Part IV ends with a chapter identifying process variables to be considered in evaluating correctional programs (Chapter 16).

Chapters 17–19 (Part V) acquaint the reader with alternative theoretical conceptualizations for the etiology of criminal and delinquent behavior: social learning theory (Chapter 17)—an admixture of theory of differential association and operant conditioning principles, cognitive-behavioral theory (Chapter 18) and neurohormonal explanations (Chapter 20). While these “explications . . . clearly fall under the rubric *behavioral*,” (p. 19) they pointed up the need for a feature that I noted was not missing but was misplaced—namely, editorial comments *following* each chapter instead of preceding them (in Chapter 1). More will be said about this later.

For several reasons, Part VI, “Professional Issues in Behavioral Application” (Chapters 20–22), provides a strong finale for this research volume. First, persons working in/considering careers in correctional settings will find Chapters 20 (“Psychologists in Adult Correctional Settings”) and 21 (“Legal and Ethical Issues in the Behavioral Treatment of Juvenile and Adult Offenders”) particularly relevant. Chapter 20 outlines functions (e.g., assessing; training; crisis intervention), goals (e.g., to stay current with research-based methods and well-grounded principles; to develop technology that enables generalization of gains to community settings), ethical and legal responsibilities (e.g., analyzing quality of existing prison programs—vocational and educational; improving offender classification models) of correctional psychologists. Chapter 21, written by a lawyer-behavioral psychologist, addresses such current ethical issues as informed consent and research procedures with an incarcerated population; among important

legal considerations discussed are motivational systems, aversive techniques, treatment planning and provision. These and other equally important topics are presented from a behavioral viewpoint not often encountered in correctional literature.

Second, these chapters also provide badly needed information for correctional administrators who establish policy, control resources, and supervise professional personnel. For instance (from direct observation) this management echelon often finds itself enmeshed in political and economic considerations that result in vague, ill-defined, overly inclusive job demands on health service providers (social workers, psychologists, and psychiatrists). These two chapters could furnish the basis for designating clearly specified management objectives for such professional employees. Additionally, these chapters may also function as something like establishing operations to enhance the value of behavioral psychologists to the criminal justice system as well as furnish ethical and legal discriminative stimuli for administration consideration.

Chapter 22 ("Social and Political Challenges to Behavioral Programs with Delinquents and Criminals") describes four sets of social and political contingencies that affect the behavior of therapists and their offender-clients: contingencies endemic to training-school, diversion, intensive-supervision, and funding. The author urges behavior analysts to take a more active role in developing and modifying these social/political contingencies in correctional systems. If we limit our efforts to therapeutic contingencies (which we appear to have been doing for some time), the author warns us, we may not have any behavior therapy programs to administer!

Returning to specific structural and content features of this book, recall that I noted above that Morris and Braukmann elected to make their general comments in Chapter 1. Having enjoyed their sophisticated account of contemporary behaviorism (Chapter 3), I missed additional input from them following each

chapter. For example, statements declaring that "principles of behavior modification are relatively simple to learn" (p. 129) and "the fact that behavioral principles can be effectively taught to and applied by paraprofessionals has long been noted" (p. 536) warrant some additional comment from the authors. All such simplistic statements may need to be further developed for correctional administrators and criminal justice graduate students. After all, if such statements are true there might have been no need for this book. Sidman (1989) put it succinctly: "Reinforcement does not work by magic. It is simple in principle but difficult to engineer" (p. 233).

I was similarly concerned by the unwarranted implications of another statement:

As an additional sign of maturity, behavioral efforts in prison and reformatory settings appear to have moved away from a heavy preoccupation with contingencies and consequences. The broad social learning model now . . . acknowledges environmental settings, antecedent conditions, and unique person-by-situation interactions. In turn, behavioral treatment in prison reflects an increased stress on self-control, mediators, and collaborative treatment planning (p. 535).

First, a comment: The aforementioned environmental conditions ascribed to social learning theory are not uniquely characteristic of this model. My questions are: (1) If we cannot as yet claim generalized success in implementing the simpler "contingencies-and-consequences" approach, what are the probabilities for success using an approach that involves control by remote contingencies (e.g., self-management skills, moral values)? Michael (1983) points out that control by remote contingencies is more likely among the educated than among the uneducated. If Michael is correct, then (2) with which offender population will the cognitive-behavioral approach be effectively implemented? Wilson and Herrnstein (1985) and Heilburn (1979) described the deficient behavioral repertoires of the typical offender population. Reportedly, these deficits are correlated with impulsive crimes and predict failure in the marketplace. Had

Morris and Braukmann addressed such topics in a commentary, it might have clarified some issues for the naive reader.

In another instance, an analytic commentary appended to the chapter on drug and alcohol abuse might have furnished important information to the reader as well as pointed out the potential comprehensiveness of a behavior analytic approach. The authors of Chapter 12 make the observation that by the time individuals enter treatment for drug and alcohol abuse, "the drug reinforcer has . . . become a predominant influence in their lives as evidenced by an overriding concern with acquisition . . . as well as repeated episodes of self-administration" (p. 332). Morris and Braukmann might have added to this summary statement an interesting functional aspect—namely Malott's (1973) analysis of how the rituals preceding the injection and the injection itself become powerful conditioned reinforcers *overriding* the unconditioned reinforcing effects of the drug itself. This type of analysis could provide the basis for more effectively arranged contingencies in some ongoing intervention program.

Also, readers might ask, as did I, why the predominant focus on juvenile corrections? Where are chapters covering behavioral interventions with developmentally disabled inmates (mentally retarded, psychiatric patients), female offenders, behaviorally oriented training homes for adult offenders? The authors explain that "where selective or differential emphasis exists [in their content areas] . . . it is often a function of the work that is available for review" (p. xi). In addition to these as-yet-unresearched areas, I noted the paucity of current behavioral research (out of 5 arbitrarily selected chapters, 56% of research dated 1970s; 36%, 1980s; 8%, 1960s); the commentary of chapter authors bemoaning the lack of successful generalization of treatment effects; the oft-mentioned problem of establishing additional outcome criteria to implement the criterion of recidivism rates. Also, Morris and Braukmann report that little behavioral work has been directed at such nonstreet

crimes as dumping hazardous wastes, commercial price fixing, extortion, and bribery. These circumstances lead me to agree with Morris (1980) that the field of corrections presents a very promising research base for applied behavior analysts.

This book, coupled with my working experiences in a prison system, lead me to suggest other avenues to be explored. First, in 1974 Reppucci and Saunders asked some questions that still need answering. These questions—"Where should one seek to enter a setting? Where will points of conflict arise? What will constitute a viable support system? What is a realistic time perspective for change?" (p. 660)—are particularly relevant for behavior change agents in correctional settings. As a beginning, we need an analysis of political and social contingencies in correctional agencies—at state and federal levels—including suggestions for overcoming the obvious obstacles (e.g., conflicts between security and treatment staff; difficulty in attracting and retaining treatment-oriented staff) as well as addressing more subtle constraints encountered in such closed institutions (e.g., quasi-official authority of wardens to impede, dictate, or prevent treatment interventions). Such an analysis is critically needed.

Second, while behavior analysts have entered the field of mental retardation in rather large numbers, the prisons have been mandated by federal courts to provide *effective* and *humane* services to modify violent and assaultive behaviors of their mentally retarded and psychiatric offenders. Our skills are needed in this area and, as yet, I have not seen behavioral research reported.

Third, in many large institutions housing persons with severe problem behavior, the focus is usually on suppressing the problem behavior rather than on the acquisition of appropriate behavior. Nowhere is this more evident than in prison intervention programs. It may be one reason (among many) why recidivism rates remain so high. Along these same lines, the offender entering prison generally has some adaptive, appropriate behavior. But rarely are programs designed

to maintain this portion of the inmate's repertoire. With our long history of training relevant behaviors (beginning with Allyon and Azrin, 1968) we have important strategies and tactics for developing and maintaining behavioral repertoires of both prisoners and prison personnel.

This brings me to a fourth avenue of exploration; this one concerns staff training programs within the prison setting. Behavior analysts have analyzed general contingencies involved in training non-professionals (Gardner, 1975) and contributed to staff training literature in the areas of business (Seaman, Green, & Watson-Perczel, 1986), state hospitals (Allyon & Azrin, 1968; Richman et al., 1988), and state schools (Kissel, Whitman, & Reid, 1983; Parsons, Cash, & Reid, 1989); but reports of effective behavioral training in prison settings are rare. McKee et al. (1974) conducted a successful intervention using correctional officers as behavior change agents; however, these researchers also commented on problems they encountered—stemming primarily from the fact that “the techniques taught in class called for institutional change” (p. 17). Having undertaken a less extensive program focused on client management and interpersonal skills for security and treatment staff, and having met with administrative resistance, I nonetheless believe that long-term, recurring behavioral *staff* training programs must be undertaken if we are ever to change the behavior of those convicted of crime.

My fifth unaddressed concern lies in the global area of establishing and maintaining positive work environments for all prison personnel. The nonbehavioral literature has presented us with (structural) descriptions of low morale and work stress in correctional institutions (Brodsky, 1982; Hawkins & Alpert, 1989; Jacobs, 1978; Shamir & Drory, 1982). The need for such a change within prison settings is not likely to be disputed (e.g., treatment staff turnover in “my” prison has exceeded 50% over the past two years). From my observations, behavior analysts would be the best qualified, most

appropriate professionals to set up such a work setting (given our awareness of the importance of verbal behavior, our proficiency with behavioral intervention techniques, and our general interest in establishing cooperative contingencies in institutional settings).

My last suggestion for potential applied research involves the establishment of pilot programs in prisons housing adult and juvenile offenders facing terms of three or more years using the concept of “model communities,” whose goal would be training the inmates themselves to staff the project. Currently, model inmate programs describe inmate-centered self-governing groups; in my prison work experience there was a decided difference between the goals of such a program and the actual conditions of implementation. Fraley (1988) suggested such a program wherein the inmates managed the economic, political, and social contingencies and lived with the consequences of their behavior; where sentences were indeterminate and the offender's behavior in the system actually determined the release date rather than resorting to parole board decisions or release on the basis of some arbitrary criteria.

Providing research-based behavioral interventions in correctional settings offers us new avenues for publication opportunities as well as opportunities to demonstrate our robust experimental methodology in an area of great concern to cultures worldwide. Morris and Braukmann's handbook, we hope, will impact their intended readership.

I would add to the audience of potential users targeted by Morris and Braukmann any behavior analyst interested in learning about a relatively unanalyzed subset of behavior that threatens to become an overriding cultural concern in the near future. This book serves as an excellent introduction to the field.

In summary, *Behavioral Approaches to Crime and Delinquency* has consolidated current research in crime and delinquency, explored strengths and weaknesses of treatment interventions and outcomes, and identified areas requiring policy changes. The authors suggest that soci-

ety's answer to prevailing problems in the criminal justice field is to build more prisons to house offenders for longer periods of time. However, as behavior analysts we can predict such a short-term solution will have long-term disastrous economic and social consequences, both for the culture and for the offenders. Among the main reasons why long-term incarceration is being considered are these: (1) failure of the correctional system to provide evidence of maintenance of treatment gains when the offender leaves prison; (2) failure of the culture to provide immediate sanctions when criminal behavior occurs; (3) increasing recidivism rates. These viable reasons can function as cues to us for further analysis and research efforts.

While "crimes are short-term, circumscribed events that result from (perhaps fortuitous) coming together of an individual having certain characteristics and an opportunity having certain (immediate and deferred) costs and benefits" (Wilson & Herrnstein, 1985, p. 23), changing *criminal behavior* is a long-term, arduous process—one requiring professionals with unique training in research methodology and intervention technology. Morris and Braukmann, two such professionals, have compiled a book describing how using a behavioral approach has already changed the criminal justice system, indicating how behavior analysis can continue to provide effective research designs on which to base interventions, and offering ideas for future opportunities to apply our science in divergent settings—ranging from correctional institutions to state and federal policy-making agencies. These challenges should keep us occupied for the foreseeable future.

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