

**PETER HARZEM (1930-2008):
BONDS AND REMEMBRANCES IN MEXICO**

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Peter Harzem passed away last May 26 after a long and recurrent illness, in the company of his wife, Anne, at their home in Auburn, Alabama.

Born in Istanbul (Turkey), into a well-educated middle-class family, Harzem was raised in a cultured environment that developed his sensibility to music, poetry, painting, and the pleasures and joys involved in refined eating and drinking. The growth of genuinely affective and social bonds was also the outcome of a family life in which daily events and interesting conversation were shared. Peter's childhood coincided with the great social transformations that took place after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the republican regime in Turkey. He moved to London in the 1940s where he obtained an honors degree in psychology from the University of London. Then he obtained a Ph.D. at the University of Wales at Bangor, where he was appointed as professor and head of the department of psychology. There he met Anne Laaja Rausberg, who became his beloved wife, and welcomed Emma-Elvira, their only child, in 1971.

Peter Harzem was a wonderful human being in many senses, and I was fortunate enough to share with him, during almost 20 years, many events and experiences, enjoying his intelligence, affection, and generosity. Harzem moved to Auburn University from Wales in 1978. I met him personally in 1980 at the ABA meeting in Dearborn, Michigan. We were introduced by Harry Hurwitz, a common friend. I first contacted Peter to invite him to teach a brief seminar to the faculty of psychology at the Iztacala campus of the National University of Mexico. I learned about him through his book with T. R. Miles, *Conceptual Issues on Operant Psychology*. Peter accepted the invitation, and when we met at the ABA meeting, prior to his visit, an enduring and fraternal friendship began.

It was not difficult for me to become close to Peter in many respects. We shared common roots in the Mediterranean culture and a deep admiration for the originality and deepness of British philosophers of language and the intellectual autonomy that supported their thinking. From our first encounter, Peter always showed himself to be witty and sharp in his commentaries about psychologists and politicians, among others, and was sensible to and appreciative of smells, colors, tastes, and manners that reminded him of his

infancy and adolescence. When I greeted him at Mexico City airport in 1980, while walking to the parking lot, his first words about the city were, "This reminds me of Istanbul!" His nostalgia for Turkey grew with time, and he even entertained the idea of spending long visits there in his later life.

Peter visited the National Autonomous University of México (UNAM) several times during the 1980s. He was invited to teach short seminars and to lecture on the Iztacala campus and, eventually, the central campus in 1980-1983. In 1982, the first of a series of symposia on the science of behavior was held. The rest were held under the auspices of the University of Guadalajara. In the first symposium, dedicated to language and behavior, Peter not only participated but also was instrumental in suggesting some of the speakers, and was coeditor of the book, published in Spanish by Trillas in 1990. Among other invited speakers, I recall A. Charles Catania, Sidney W. Bijou, William N. Schoenfeld, Marc Richelle, Alan Baron, Robert Arrington, and Jack Marr. During these years it was easy to appreciate that his scholarly and scientific interests were moving away from traditional operant animal research and toward problems related to the understanding of human behavior and social problems.

Peter also participated in several meetings in Mexico during the following years, until 1991. In July 1987 he was one of the invited speakers in the seminar on verbal relations that I jointly organized with Linda Parrott in a beautiful sixteenth-century building that had been the sugar cane hacienda of Hernán Cortés, the conqueror of Mexico. It had been adapted as a hotel, Hacienda de Vista Hermosa, 80 miles south of Mexico City. In October of the same year, Peter was one of the plenary speakers of the Mexican Congress on Behavior Analysis, held at Puebla. He was invited again as plenary speaker in the next Mexican Congress of Behavior Analysis, held at Hermosillo in February 1989. In 1990 we attended together the First International Meeting on Thought and Language in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, in southern Mexico.

In 1991, just one month before I moved from UNAM to the University of Guadalajara, Peter participated in two joint events held in the oldest building of the university, the Colegio de San Ildefonso, site of the original university founded in 1551 by the king of Spain, Phillip II. In this splendid building, with frescoes by Orozco and Rivera, Peter was one of the invited speakers of the Mexican Congress on the Analysis of Behavior, participating also in a satellite symposium that honored B. F. Skinner, who had recently passed away. Also participating in this symposium were Fred S. Keller, Jack Gewirtz, James Dinsmoor, Peter Dews, Phil Himeline, and Howard Rachlin. The symposium was published in 1995 by the University of Guadalajara.

The official visits of Peter Harzem were not the only occasions in which we used to meet. Sometimes he would come and stay at the house my family and I were living in, in Cuernavaca. Other times we would meet at conferences (APA, ABA) or at his homes in Opelika and Auburn. When I moved to the University of Guadalajara, our bonds became stronger. In 1991, Peter suggested me to organize a new congress series devoted to the scholarly analysis and discussion of behaviorism and the science of behavior. This congress would be open to behaviorists and nonbehaviorists, whether they were psychologists, biologists, anthropologists, or philosophers, as long as they were genuinely interested in conceptual, theoretical, and methodological scholarly discussion about the science of behavior.

The first congress was held in Guadalajara during the second week

of October 1992, as part of the bicentennial program of the University of Guadalajara. The honorary chairmen, Fred S. Keller and William N. Schoenfeld, who reunited on that occasion after many years, were given special recognition by the university. The other three plenary speakers were also outstanding scholars: William Estes, W. V. O. Quine, and Murray Sidman. The congress turned out to be an extraordinary event in all respects (for instance, the Jalisco Philharmonic Orchestra and the Folkloric Ballet of the University of Guadalajara offered performances). I cannot forget the satisfaction and happiness in Peter's expression and lively eyes after this success. The congress, from then on, was held approximately every two years, until 2006 (Palermo, Yokohama, Seville, Taipei, Xalapa, Auburn, Engelberg, and Santiago de Compostela). It is possible that a last one, honoring Peter Harzem, will be held in 2009.

The year 1992 was plethoric with events. In February, Peter participated in two meetings, also organized by the University of Guadalajara. The first was the Second Symposium on the Science of Behavior, with the attendance of Jack Gewirtz, Gerard Malcuit, Sidney Bijou, Andrée Pomerlau, Claire Poulson, Barbara Etzel, Josep Roca, Jesús Rosales-Ruiz, and Don Baer. Immediately afterward, the First Colloquium on Interbehavioral Psychology was held, with the attendance of Linda Hayes and Sidney Bijou. In September, Lucha and I got married, and Peter came specially from Auburn, with Anne and Emma, to be the best man in the civil wedding. The ceremony was followed by a very small celebration with our children, best men, and my mother at our home, with lively Greek music, Catalan champagne, and tequila!

In the following years, Peter and I visited each other at Guadalajara and Auburn. Some of his visits were due to invitations to teach in our graduate program at the University of Guadalajara or to his participation in scientific meetings. Peter was a frequent guest in the Biannual Symposium on the Science of Behavior. He participated in the symposia celebrated in 1996, 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2006, the last time he visited Guadalajara before his health problems intervened. In 1999 Peter was one of the plenary speakers in the Mexican Congress of Behavior Analysis, held in Guadalajara. A more significant participation for him was in a special symposium celebrating the 80th anniversary of Watson's *Behavioral Manifesto*, in Guadalajara in 1993. The proceedings were published as a special issue of the *Mexican Journal of Behavior Analysis* the same year, and contributors were William Schoenfeld, Abram Amsel, Robert Boakes, Victor M. Alcaraz, Edward Morris, A. C. Catania, T. R. Miles, Peter, and myself.

Peter's presentation in the symposium led him to an extensive and deep enquiry about the reasons underlying the discrediting of John B. Watson (following the title of his paper), and the unfairness still prevailing in the appreciation of his actual contributions to psychology as the science of behavior. Peter planned and began writing a book about Watson, which he could not finish because of his health problems. Last February, aware of the seriousness of his illness, I stayed some days with him and Anne in their home at Auburn. Peter still was determined to try to end the book and showed me the original fascicles in which *Behaviorism* first appeared on a weekly basis. To Peter, Watson was a paradigmatic figure, not only for his initiative and ingenuity but also because of the misunderstanding and distortion of him and his contributions by psychology (including the self-called "behaviorist" psychology). Peter believed that Watson's fall into oblivion was symptomatic of the critical condition of our science.

Peter's commitment to restore the actual figure of Watson and to tell the truth about his life, deeds, and ideas was something more than a momentary interest. It was an act of congruity with his ethical and moral feelings and a personal effort to show that scientific endeavor is not foreign to fraud, dishonesty, and hypocrisy. In Mexico, all of us, colleagues and students, always considered him a sincere, wise, and honest scholar. His death is a loss not only for all of us who loved him but also for psychology, especially in these times of vanity and simulation, in which intellectual honesty and moral commitment are so much needed. We won't forget him . . .