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Articles

- 3 Is there any Relationship between Sexual Attraction and Gender Typology?
Juan Fernández, María Ángeles Quiroga, and Isabel Del Olmo
- 10 Affective Priming with Pictures of Emotional Scenes: The Role of Perceptual Similarity and Category Relatedness
Pedro Avero and Manuel G. Calvo
- 19 Facial-Expression Affective Attributes and their Configural Correlates: Components and Categories
David L. Bimler and Galina V. Paramei
- 32 Comparing Speed Estimations from a Moving Vehicle in Different Traffic Scenarios: Absence versus Presence of Traffic Flow
Ángela Conchillo, Miguel Ángel Recarte, Luis Nunes, and Trinidad Ruiz
- 38 Personality Dimensions and Subjective Well-Being
Eliseo Chico Librán
- 45 Emotional Intelligence as Predictor of Mental, Social, and Physical Health in University Students
Natalio Extremera and Pablo Fernández-Berrocal
- 52 Memories of the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001: A Study of the Consistency and Phenomenal Characteristics of Flashbulb Memories
Pilar Ferré Romeu
- 61 Post-Traumatic Stress Reactions Following the March 11, 2004 Terrorist Attacks in a Madrid Community Sample: A Cautionary Note about the Measurement of Psychological Trauma
Carmelo Vázquez, Pau Pérez-Sales, and Georg Matt
- 75 Diabetes Mellitus as a Model of Psychosomatic and Somatopsychic Interrelationships
Ludvig I. Wasserman and Elena A. Trifonova
- 86 Psychometric Properties of a European Spanish Version of the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)
Eduardo Remor
- 94 The Development of a Spanish Language Version of the Worn Out Scale of the General Well-Being Questionnaire (GWBQ)
Tom Cox, Amparo Oliver, Eusebio Rial-González, José Manuel Tomás, Amanda Griffiths, and Louise Thompson
- 103 Nursing Motives for Helping Scale (N-MHS): Reliability and Validity
José Luis González Gutiérrez, Cecilia Peñacoba Puente, Ricardo Moreno Rodríguez, Almudena López López, and Lilian Velasco Furlong

Special Article

- 115 Russia, 1961
B. F. Skinner

B.F. Skinner: A Journey to the Center of the U.S.S.R.

In May of 1961, an interdisciplinarian team of North American behavioral scientists traveled through the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. The trip was sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences, approved by the State Department, and financed by the Ford Foundation. The team of North American scientists was made up of Donald G. Marquis, Robert K. Merton, James G. Miller, George P. Murdock, Francis H. Palmer, Anatol Rapoport, Henry W. Riecken, B. F. Skinner, Ralph W. Tyler, and Raymond W. Waggoner. Professors Marquis, Miller, Murdock, Palmer, Skinner, and Tyler were accompanied by their wives.

B.F. Skinner visited several republics and cities of the U.S.S.R.: Russia (Moscow, Leningrad, Sochi), Uzbekistan (Tashkent, Samarkand), Georgia (Tbilisi), and Ukraine (Kiev). After leaving the U.S.S.R., the group visited Prague and Warsaw (Skinner returned to the United States from Prague, omitting the visit to Poland). During his visits to various institutions, Skinner had the opportunity to meet several Soviet investigators and to become acquainted with their work: Luria, Leontiev, Sokolov, Vinogradova, Smirnov, Elkonin, Anokhin, Zaporozhetz, Kostiuik, Lomov, Chernigovski, Koltzova, Lebedev, Yarmolenko, and Ivanov, among others. While in Prague, he visited Professor Horvath.

Using a portable dictaphone, B.F. Skinner recorded his impressions of the trip¹, which were subsequently transcribed upon his return to the United States. In Skinner's own words, "A few changes have been made to put material in order, and in some cases forgetful repetitions have been deleted. Otherwise the record stands as made. It was prepared for purely personal reasons and contains trivialities, irrelevancies, first impressions subject to change, some pretty standard responses of new visitors to Russia, plus (it is hoped) a few fresh glimpses and reactions." The notes were duplicated and distributed among the group members and among Skinner's friends. It was not designed to be reproduced or published.

For the first time, and with the authorization of the B.F. Skinner Foundation, *The Spanish Journal of Psychology* now publishes this exceptional document of B.F. Skinner. The full text of the account of the trip is offered with no changes. Only some minor typographical errors and the spelling of some names, understandable in the case of a document transcribed from a tape and not intended for publication, have been corrected. A few brief biographical notes about some of the people mentioned in the text have been added.

Javier Bandrés

¹ For another account of the trip see Miller, J.L. & Miller, J.G. (1962) Behavioral Scientists Visit the Soviet Union. *Behavioral Science*, 7, 3, 344-378.