

Remembering Ullin Place

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Ullin T. Place was a valued contributor to the field of behavior analysis, although many within the Association for Behavior Analysis (ABA) were probably unfamiliar with his work. Ullin was best known as a philosopher, his reputation beginning with his materialistic contributions to philosophy of mind in the mid-1950s. Ullin's credentials went far beyond philosophy, however, as he had extensive professional training and experience in both experimental and clinical psychology. He was well read, and he studied widely. He was sophisticated, interdisciplinary, and somewhat eccentric, and was the very model of the modern English intellectual.

I came to know Ullin through my association with Willard Day and his students at the University of Nevada, Reno, in the early 1980s. Ullin had published a number of papers in the journal *Behaviorism*, founded and edited by Day, and became a frequent presenter at the ABA meetings until only last year. His ABA presentations and published papers were primarily on two themes: philosophical issues relevant to behavior-analytic science, and issues relevant to the development and expansion of the functional analysis of verbal behavior.

He most often addressed issues that few if any behavior analysts were working on. These included methodological problems in the analysis of private events; issues involved with the presentation of behavior analysis to the larger psychological, philosophical, or linguistic community; new methodological strategies for the analysis of verbal behavior; and descriptions of

verbal phenomena from other fields of research that call for a functional analysis. Although I was occasionally puzzled by the rather unusual mix of ideas that he sometimes brought to this work, the fact that he invested in such important, complex, and neglected problems was one of the reasons I valued his presence in behavior analysis so highly.

Other reasons were more personal. We corresponded intermittently, sending material back and forth, and we frequently spoke at ABA. He once wrote me the greatest manuscript review I have ever received. This particular (signed) review leaned toward the negative, but it was nevertheless balanced in all ways, alternately praising, scolding, correcting, extending, and commenting. The greatness of the review was in its astonishing detail; it ran some 15 single-spaced pages (with very small font!), and included a reference section of some 20 entries. He had not only written a review, he had provided a valuable resource.

I will certainly miss his spoken presentations at ABA. They were always interesting and provocative, and were delivered with great style, wit, and sophistication. During one address he referred to a particularly confused product of cognitive psychology as "a dog's dinner"; an English idiom which has proper effect only if delivered with a proper English accent (imagine Winston Churchill saying it for effect).

I have often regarded Ullin's presence at ABA as something of a gift. There were many other causes and areas to which he might have devoted his considerable training and interests over the past two decades. He clearly saw something important in this rather small but unusually effective scientific field, however, and wanted to help us

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with our Big Questions. I spotted him frequently at ABA, either presenting or drifting through the meetings, a tall and somewhat ruffled figure, casual, friendly, most patient, an English gentleman, a true scholar. Personally, I am grateful for having known him, and for his generous, complex, and distinctive contributions to behavior analysis.