

Utopian Vision through Behaviorisms in B.F. Skinner's *Walden Two*

This thesis aims to analyze B.F. Skinner's utopian vision in his novel Walden Two in order to show how the dream of utopian society continues to haunt the people of 1945 and how they continue to preach the notion of fair and equal world. It further examines the importance of communal living where everyone can find peace, harmony, equality, and respect. It was post war era and Skinner's focus is on valorization of the values presented by Henry David Thoreau in Walden such as peace and harmony are still thrives. On the one hand, he shows the promise of utopian society for achieving good life at the same time he projects the need to control one's life from birth to eliminate negative emotions such as jealousy, frustration, revenge and so on. But unlike Thoreau who glorifies individualism for individual freedom, Skinner advocates for socialism as a response to individualism. In doing so, this researcher takes the theoretical concept of Utopia by Sir Thomas More, Krishna Kumar and other theorists on utopia. It also deals with Skinner's concept of Behaviorism especially his notion of "Operant Conditioning" which is learning process through which the strength of behavior is modified by reward or punishment. The thesis concludes with the finding that Skinner adopts the values of Thoreau's Walden but in the process he shows point of departure from it. Skinner's claim is that to change society effectively, one has to change human behavior at first.

Key Words: Behaviorism, Utopia, Operant Conditioning, Individualism, Socialism, Collectivism.

This thesis is an inquiry into B.F. Skinner's *Walden Two*, a novel written in the context of the world war II. In the early summer of 1945, Skinner envisioned a society finally free from frustration, war, suffering, and personal unhappiness. In particular, *Walden Two* emphasizes on the goodness of a utopian society where

everything runs through system where students are free to study their interested subject, system of labor credit, proper rest and entertainment. The Society of 1945 was fragmented, traumatized, alienated and full of frustration. Skinner becomes dissatisfied with modern civilized life and widespread anxiety of people. In *Walden Two*, he wants to show the relevance of values valorized by Thoreau in *Walden* in post war context.

In the time he wrote *Walden Two*, the good notion of society is marred by the presence of violence both at the central and domestic level. So to provide solution to that catastrophic situation, Skinner gives continuity of Thoreau's themes and also makes point of departure from it by presenting ideas about individualism versus social existence.

Thoreau's *Walden* is journal of how he spent his two years in Walden Pond, near Concord, Massachusetts, living a simple life alone. Supporting the value of individual self-realization, simplicity, solitude, he figures out how society will be reformed through the reformation of an individual, not through the refinement of institutions. Living in a culture attracted by the idea of success represented by technology and economy, he is stubbornly skeptical of the idea that any outward improvement of life can bring the inner peace. Skinner is different from Thoreau in a case that he glorifies how the outward environmental factors bring improvement in life. He too is conscious about the individual happiness but he thinks that external environment plays great role to design their lives. Thoreau points out we restrict ourselves and our views of the world by accepting externally imposed limits, whereas Skinner celebrates externally imposed limits in order to develop a better society. Thoreau highlights the importance of change from within but Skinner points out only engineered people from birth are able to eliminate the bad behaviors. He celebrates

the external factor of environmental stimuli in the formation of better life.

Walden Two is the story of visitors who are the product of materialistic world. The novel begins with the soldiers and other character's journey to the *Walden Two*, a happy, balanced and systematic society. In the novel, World War II has just ended and Rogers, Steve and thousands of other servicemen are returning to their communities with radically changed views about the world. They are fed up with bad activities of the world. The bad activities can be understood as an exploitation of capitalist society, destruction of war, vulgarity and social injustice. The protagonist professor Burriss works in academia that has had no interest in a utopian society. But the arrival of Rogers and Steve at his office encourage him to get involved in their attempt to change things for better. Burriss contacts Frazier, who invites them to stay for several days to experience life in supposedly utopian community named *Walden Two*.

Issue of utopian projection is merely a presence of all equal society. Why does Skinner show peoples attraction towards utopian society? How does *Walden Two* become alternative society for their happiness? How does *Walden Two* achieve this utopia? And is it possible to create a heavenly community in this world? This research will seek to answer these questions in this research work.

People of 1945 were frustrated with warfare, violence, and loss of lives in war. *Walden Two*, through the representation of a utopian society promises to provide happiness, security, peace and order for them. Therefore, this kind of society becomes an alternative society against horrific world of dystopian society. Skinner presents *Walden Two* as the solution to the problems created by the war. The focus on the character's journey to *Walden Two* valorizes the utopian society which is based on the principle of behaviorism.

Skinner claims that observable behavior is the only appropriate subject of

study in psychology. As such, psychology should describe behavior and the conditions, under which it is modified, either negative or positive reinforcement of behaviors. Hilgard in *Theories of Learning* describes:

Skinner however is an experimental psychologist of outstanding reputation, generally recognized as one of the leading authorities on contemporary behavioral theory. Naturally, his major emphasis is on the problem of fitting individual behavior to the needs of the community. Indeed, this book may be considered his first attempt to popularize the finding of modern behavioral research and to make it available to the general public. (36)

Hilgard praises B.F. Skinner for his good deeds in the field of behaviorism. He presents something more innovative than his contemporaries. Hilgard point out Skinner is conscious about the problem of fitting ones behavior as the needs of society. In doing so, he applies his theory of behaviorism in his own work of fiction.

Although *Walden Two* advances a markedly progressive vision for its time, R.S. Wolpert points out that behavior analysis as, “field interested in social justice” must be all inclusive and incorporate non white, feminine, and economically disadvantaged class perspective in its analysis of cultural practices. In critiquing *Walden Two* from a social constructionist perspective, Wolpert demonstrates against the extent to which the novels of ideas remain firmly rooted in the culture of behavior-analytic community. Wolpert criticizes *Walden Two* in a sense that his ideas are deeply rooted in the practice of behavior analytic community. He seems confused either his behaviorist views are useful or not to design better society. Similarly, Richard F. Rakos in review of living *Walden Two* states:

To this day, the novel plays an important role in sustaining the core behavior-analytic tenet that control of behavior is an inescapable fact; the only issue is

whether the control will be planned or unplanned by human. *Walden Two*, of course, described in detailed a community in which societal control is achieved through the comprehensive scientific application of behavioral principles. It advocated social change through “non political empiricism”, reflecting Skinner’s faith in science over politics. (np)

Self control is our ability to control our feelings and appear calm. Rakos says that it is impossible to reject the control of behavioral but only the issue is whether it is as systematic as in *Walden Two* or not. The success of *Walden Two* gives credit to the behavioral principles depending on science neglecting politics.

Positivism is a belief that states that the only authentic knowledge is scientific knowledge, and that such knowledge can only come from positive affirmation of theories through strict scientific method. In this sense Roy A. Moxley opines:

Both of B.F. Skinner’s first two books show a positivistic orientation. Skinner explicitly stated in *The Behaviorism of Organism* that his “method” was “positivistic” and Skinner *Walden Two*, written in 1945, was also positivistic.

Positivism was a view of knowledge that was mainly influential in France, England, and Germany, and reached into Russia and South America. (19)

Roy A.Moxley finds Skinner work as positive work. The idea of positivistic is developing around the world. Skinner is conscious to remove the negative aspect of society. He believes that he had found the key to world peace and happiness and applied his theory in his own book *Walden Two*.

The success of *Walden Two* community depends on the system. It contains the elements that direct the behaviors of individual towards the achievable goals of communism. Terry J. Knapp explains, “*Walden Two* contains an index to direct one’s attention to important operant concepts such as reinforcement, punishment, and self –

control, or to socially and politically relevant topic such as freedom, democracy, and social control” (222). Knap says Skinner effort is to show the importance of behaviorism.

Classical utopian writers of past like Thomas More, Plato have often provided excellent suggestions for economic arrangements and for political structures, but they have neglected the crucial problems of relations with the outside world and of ensuring the cooperation of the members the community. Dinsmoor in *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavioral* states that, “what distinguished *Walden Two* from its predecessor was its emphasis on pragmatic, experimental solutions, not only to the problems of domestic engineering but even to the problems of domestic engineering but even to the problems of social relationships within the community” (117). James Dinsmoor points out the act which made *Walden Two* different from other. It is not only a theoretical community, it is developing not only in the arm chair but in the laboratory, the laboratory for its experiments in living was the community itself. Dinsmoor celebrates the practical solution to the problems of society projected by Skinner.

In this way, many critics talk about *Walden Two* from different perspective. But my research focuses on how B.F. Skinner develops a community which focuses on behaviorism and as a result produces better society for the victims of World War Second. This thesis does not go thoroughly the ideas of Henry David Thoreau’s *Walden* but go thoroughly how Skinner covers up his theme and presents it as the new work of art. Skinner’s work is continuity of and departure from Thoreau’s work.

Utopian literature is the description of ideal society. Utopian philosophy represents a guiding principle for humanity and helps to achieve the best life possible in a complex world. The basis for such a society is the prosperity and security for the

people of the world that the author has created. This type of literature is used as a tool to test and perceive different social reforms. It is useful because the author does not have to describe the way in which such reforms were implemented. They only give priority to the system created by their own ideals and their own needs. They also do not have to take into account the political realities of the time nor the opinions of other.

The roots of the word utopia are from the Greek *ou* (not) and *topos* (place), thus meaning “no place” or “nowhere”, although there are also overtones of “good place” from the homonymous Greek prefix *eu* meaning (good). Sir Thomas More invented the word ‘Utopia’ as well as he too developed the literary genre with the publication his famous book *Utopia* in 1516. But this is not to say that without him literature cannot be characterized as utopia; almost two millennia before him, Plato’s *The Republic* attempted to articulate a perfect society through a series of drastic and achievable goals. Rather, More invention of the word finally gave a name to the genre and began a heavy examination and analysis of a Utopia, allowing it to branch out of literature and into politics, religion, and every field research. The publication of *Utopia* established a genre for the republic to be placed in; but the *Utopia* is often described as the first real utopian work, a designation that is impossible without Thomas More.

Plato has also written about the notion of utopia. He points out that life of true philosophy is the life of enlightened person. It is necessary to escape the jail of the cave and turn upward to the world of intelligible knowledge, to find the “form” that are within us and to grow accustomed to contemplating them, so that we may at last achieve real knowledge:

In the world of knowledge, the essential form of good knowledge is the limit

of our inquiries, and can barely be perceived, but when perceived we cannot help concluding that it is in every case the source of all that is bright and beautiful –in the visible world giving birth to light and its master, and in the intellectual world dispensing, immediately and with full authority, truth and reason; and that whosoever would act wisely, either in private or in public, must set this form of good before his eyes.(228)

Plato writes in his *Republic* that people cannot gain knowledge of things through senses because the objects of sense perception are fleeting and constantly changing. Plato states that we can have genuine knowledge only of changeless things, such as truth, beauty, and goodness, which are known by the mind. He called such things ideas or forms. According to him, the most important idea is the idea of good. Plato opines that the best life is one of the contemplation of eternal truths.

The theory of utopia has changed drastically in recent times, as philosophers and social scientists moved away from the dreamy and unattainable goals of early utopias. *Walden Two* operates a flexible design, by continually testing the most successful evidence-based strategies in order to organize community. *Walden Two* thus avoids the fact that most societies grow dysfunctional by depending in politics and social structures. B.F. Skinner who produces utopian vision in *Walden Two* proposes behaviorism to redesign society.

The word “behaviorism” refers to a systematic approach to understanding the behavior of humans and animals. Therefore, behaviorism is a psychological approach which emphasizes scientific and objective methods of investigation. John Watson’s article *psychology as the behaviorist views it* is often referred to as the “behaviorist manifesto” in which Watson outlines the principles of all behaviorists:

Psychology as the behaviorist views it” is a purely objective experimental

branch of natural science. It's theoretical goal is the prediction and control of behavior. Introspection forms no essential part of its method, nor is the scientific value of its data dependent upon the readiness with which they lend themselves to interpretation in terms of consciousness. (158)

Behaviorism is primarily concerned with observable behavior, as opposed to internal events like thinking and emotions. By the 1920s John B. Watson left academic psychology, and other behaviorists were becoming more influential, proposing new forms of learning. The most important of these was Burrhus Frederic Skinner. He was regarded as the father of operant conditioning. It means roughly changing of behavior by the use of reinforcement which is given after the desired response. Reinforcement and punishment, the core tools of operant conditioning are either positive or negative. Skinner created the Skinner box or operant conditioning chamber to test the effects of operant conditioning principles on rats. In that research, he discovered that positive reinforcement could be used to control the behavior of rat. He also found that he could shape the rat's behavior through the use of rewards, which could be applied to human learning as well.

B.F. Skinner's position is extremely important because he emphasizes the realities of human environment and human behavior. Yet his behaviorist position is limited because it deals only with observable and the measurable. It cannot adequately deals with totality of a person life. People are treated as objects not as subject.

The term utopia and Behaviorism are not innate rather they are existed through social and cultural construction. The ideology of these terms is to highlight the better existence than before. The success of *Walden Two* community is based on the concept of utopia and behaviorism. *Walden Two* is the mixture of both.

The plot of the novel takes place during a catastrophic World War Second

which becomes the dominant issue behind the context of *Walden Two*. It highlights the shift from individuality to communality. The novel was written in 1945 describes a possible future in which everyone dreams of perfect existence turning into reality.

Overall, this thesis aim's to clarify how Skinner applied the proven principles of behavior to improve the human condition in a community. Skinner wants to do something better and he strives towards the idea of achieving a better world doing efforts necessary to carry it out. Throughout history, everyone may dream and wish for better life. On the eve of Second World War, B.F. Skinner imagines such a place in his novel *Walden Two*. Search of utopian vision is important theme in the novel because it is apparent everywhere.

This research tries to analyze *Walden Two* which is socially engineered community where human behavior can be predicted, encouraged and controlled within a system. B.F Skinner's *Walden Two* is a modern utopia which imagines a society where human problems are solved by a scientific technology of human conduct. The focus of Skinner is to build an alternative society for those who are fed off with the bad activities of world. He assumes that the society like *Walden Two* provides happiness, peace and security to the people of contemporary time. For Skinner, *Walden Two* is the depiction of perfect society which is driven by some set of ideals.

Plato has also a concept of an ideal state quite different from Skinner's *Walden Two*. Individual freedom is maintained in Plato's *Republic*, whereas individual freedom is controlled from birth in *Walden Two* community. But individual take it as normal, as it the part of their life. Plato state should be ruled by the philosopher to make the state beautiful and to make sure individual's freedom and justice. Plato views on ideal state:

The best city is one where philosophers rule as the Guardians of the city, and where the rest of the population is divided into auxiliary guardians (soldiers) and workers. The classes are built up and maintained by a mixture of controlled breeding, education, and selection. The justice of the city consists in the fact that each class does its own proper business without interfering with the other classes...that justice is simply a matter of rulers live in communal life, a life where personal interests and those of the state are merged. (xix)

Plato says that we can establish utopian state only if philosopher rules the state. The ruler should be responsible to guarantee the justice and to maintain individual freedom. The rulers run their simple life like a common people where their personal interest and those of state are merged. Like in Plato's *Republic* Skinner's community has also no real governing body except planners. The planners and managers have knowledge to guarantee that the needs of all are met.

Skinner gives a description of a utopian community in which planned systematic reinforcement contingencies can provide opportunities for social survival. He bases such plan on the fact that humans are flexible; therefore behavioral engineering is the only useful solution to foster behavior that is both personally and socially advantageous. Members of *Walden Two* are conditioned to be productive and happy members of a society.

Skinner was not happy with his own life since, he had not found the elements to celebrate in his life. He had seen his family members struggling to move from house hold works. Skinner thought to do something new and project science of behavior systematically. In *Walden Two*, his idea of fresh start is reflected through every character except Professor Castle. Rogers talking with Professor Burriss and Steve ask some questions which are dominant in every chapters of book. Rogers

shows his frustration of previous life and wants to move on differently. He says:

Why we have to take off where we left off. Why isn't this a good time to get a fresh start? From the very beginning. Why not get some people together and set up a social system somewhere that will really work? There are a lot of things about the way we're all living now that are completely insane . . . why can't do something about it? Why can't we go on doing something about it?

(3)

Rogers becomes the representatives of thousands of soldiers who are fed up with civilian humility and cannot make up their minds. His questions develop the context of the novel. He is searching for a better life. He wants change from the roots. His eyes to view the world are changed drastically. His new interest in social problems and good will rise from the feeling of frustration and depression. War made the life of people miserable. They cannot be happy because they have heavy load of burden on their heads.

In the history of world, first and second world wars are the example of misuse of power ignoring the suffering, pain and unhappiness of people. War glorifies the negative characteristic of the society which is related to the idea of dystopian society.

Tomoko Masuzawa has an opinion on dystopian world. She says:

The imperialist objective of European hegemony is more or less equivalent to the idea of the universal reign of reason, and the brutal oppressive hierarchical structure of domination can be justified as an inevitable manifestation of the natural supremacy of the enlightened race who have science, technology, and industry on their side, over the not yet enlightened and the incorrigibly unenlightened. (551)

European countries have very strong power, through this power they want to rule the

world. Skinner points out the pathetic miserable condition of people. So, in 1945 Skinner borrows the ideas from Henry David Thoreau *Walden*. Skinner presented the ideas and values of Thoreau in different way. Along with Thoreau ideas, he applied his own theory of behaviorism in *Walden Two*.

Skinner's idea of behavioral engineering is highly implemented in *Walden Two*? He insists, "In *behavior of organisms*, published seven years earlier, I had refused to apply my results outside the laboratory" (v). Skinner says that he discards to apply his laboratory experiments in outside world. He further explains, "But of course, I had speculated about the technology that a science of behavior implied and about the difference it could make" (vi). He applies his theory of behaviorism to *Walden Two*. He decides to write an account of thousands of people where they might have solved the problems of their daily lives with the help of behavioral engineering.

In *Walden Two*, Frazier, the founding member of *Walden Two*, designs a system of education and culture through the scientific management of the social and material environment on the principles of operant conditioning. Operant conditioning is a learning process through which the strength of behavior is modified by reward or punishment. He took a strong deterministic stand by focusing his society on functional relation between environmental condition and behavior. He insists that, "they are within reach of a special behavioral science which can take the place of wisdom and common sense and with happier results" (43). Frazier's point is that the behavioral science enables the people of *Walden Two* to distinguish the wise from the unwise. He again portrays, "and what has happened in the past twenty five years has increased the plausibility of his achievement-a community in which the most important problems of daily life, as well as certain aspects of economics and government, are solved" (43). He again explains the success of *Walden Two* where

fulfillment of individual basic needs is more prioritize. Frazier engineered people are satisfied with their life in *Walden Two* represents it as the perfect society.

Skinner invents thought control to create a society in which perfection is the ultimate objective. Skinner projects an atmosphere of striving for perfection. Perfection according to Frazier cannot happen without the work of community. He further says, “We simply make mass production available to everyone as a consequence of co-operative living” (43) but these labor saving practices require cultural engineering. Frazier argues communism is impossible without cultural conditioning. *Walden Two* emphasizes mans flaws and strives to correct them through science of any kind.

But perfection is just their belief. Outsiders are those who visit *Walden Two* try their best to prove it as burden. No one is able to perform action as per their will. From birth, they were structured as machine and acts as per the will of planners of society. Frazier’s critics protest against his ideas and challenge him to apply those principles on New York City or the state department and see what happens. The world is vast and complex space. What is applicable for a small group may not be applicable to the nation or the world as a whole. Frazier argues against his critics as mentioned below:

Walden Two is a pilot experiment. Industries do not invest in large plants until they have tried a new process on a small scale. If we want to find out how people can live together without quarreling, can produce the goods they need without working too hard, or can raise and educate their children more efficiently, let us start with units of manageable size before moving on to larger problems.(ix)

Frazier community is a sample of success where people live together without ego. He

explains that the world is suffering from the ills of bigness and what is needed, is some clinical examples in the large cities. He justifies his point by explaining that industries also do not invest in large plants before applying to small scale. *Walden two* is the community of governable size before moving on to bigger one.

The literary utopia has been the predominant form of utopia since More. It can also claim to perform better and to show in concrete detail what it would be like to live in such a society, and make us want to achieve it as in skinner's *Walden Two*. David Wotten in *A New Account of Utopia* says:

Utopia is often heralded as the founding text of modern communism: the concept of communism was already well-known from the *Republic* and the New Testament, but one has to wait for the diggers to find its practice recommended again. *Utopia* portrays a remarkably egalitarian society with an elaborate structure of representative government. (29)

Utopia portrayed as a response to social climates and social concerns. Plato already deals with the concept like utopia but he is unable to develop it as a genre. Thomas More does it and invents society where classes and the state no longer exist. More constructed in utopia was designed to convince the reader that he was offering a blueprint for reform.

Walden Two is the utopian novel of ideas structured as the tour of an experimental community by a group of several people. During the tour, there is a debate between the founding members and Castle, each taking an extreme position on any topics, each develop the strongest arguments available in defense of positions which are logically different with each other. They were making strong recommendations about what sorts of ultimate reinforcements ought to count. Castle is highly influenced by the outside world, so that he is unable to imagine his life in

such place where he has to act. He thinks *Walden Two* is not a happy community, but everyone pretends to be happy in certain conditions.

Walden Two is basically a communal farm with several hundred residents. It is organized around meeting the basic human needs of its residents in exchange for at least work possible. All traditional human bonds are broken to one degree or another. Dining is communal. Children are raised by the community with the idea of family firmly rejected. Married people are encouraged to live apart. Money is abolished. Parents are not supposed to be overly concerned with their biological children. Perfection is their motive. The only exception to the communal system is that every person has their own private living space.

Utopia as an organized concept encourages everybody to investigate the norms of organization and to discover ideal system through which human lives could be made better. For Thomas More, according to David Harvey, "Utopia is an artificially created island, which functions as an isolated, coherently organized, and largely closed space economy" (160). He continues that utopia "becomes with mores initiative, a fertile means to explore and express vast range of completing ideas about social relationships; moral orderings, political-economic systems, and the like (161)". Harvey thinks utopia is a fresh approach to advocate social change. David Sisk also believes that utopian literature as, "it explores [the] perfectibility of human society through hypothetical advancements in technology, philosophy, and social structures, resulting in perfect or near perfect communities located in distant lands or in the Future"(2). For David Sisk utopia is the perfect or nearly perfect place that will exist in the future or distant lands.

The concept of utopia that More puts forward has many notions in it such as the utopian belief in religious tolerance, the sharing of power and the evil of private

property that contrasts enormously with the contemporaries of sixteenth century England. More's *Utopia* is a response to a specific historical time which reflects on the many social, political, and religious injustices in England. His utopia is the destruction of private property. The utopia that More shows his views how the world could be free from the evils of private property:

Though, to speak plainly my real sentiments, I must freely own that as long as there is any property, and while money is the standard of all other things, I cannot think that a nation can be governed either justly or happily: not justly, because the best thing will fall to share of the worst men; nor happily, because all things will be divided among a few (and even these are not in all respects happy), the rest being left to be absolutely miserable. (55-56)

In a utopian world there should not be private property. He says that keeping private property invites quarrels and clashes creating economic hierarchy. Having private property makes the classes like higher and lower. From the same place injustice might appear dominating to lower class people by so-called higher class people.

Walden Two also ignores the idea of private property. Cooperative housing is the lifestyle of *Walden Two*. Unlike Thoreau's *Walden*, it rejects the notion of individuality and focused on the problems of society. Thoreau in *Walden* says, "I learned this, at least, by my experiment; that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours" (323). Thoreau is confident about his experimental life. Though he belongs to the westerners, he challenges the existing belief of westerners. He rejects materialism to embrace simplicity. Most utopias are collective but Thoreau's *Walden* is an individual utopia. In the same way, Ian Ousby has also expressed his opinion about Utopia. Ousby's opinion about utopia regarding

the private property is:

There is no private ownership on utopia, with goods being stored in warehouses and people requesting what they need. There are also no locks on the doors of the houses, which are rotated between the citizens every ten years. Agriculture is the most important job on the island. Every person is taught it and must live in the countryside, farming, for two years at a time, with women doing the same work as men. Parallel to this every citizen must learn at least one of the other essential trades; weaving, carpentry, metal smiting and masonry. (987)

Ousby does not have any intention to keep private property. He adds that utopian society cannot be imagined by keeping private property and storing the goods in a store house. So abolishment of private property is a key term to make a utopic world. There is no discrimination between male and female. Both of them work sharing with each other. They do not lock the doors of their houses. They are always open for everyone.

Walden Two celebrates the labor credit. No one is paid, and all services and goods are free. However, each person is required to do a certain amount of work, for which they receives labor credit. Frazier views about labor credit in *Walden Two* explore:

Labor credits are a sort of money. But they are not coins or bills-just entries in a ledger. All goods and services are free, as you saw in the dining room this evening. Each of us pays for what he uses with twelve hundred labor credits each year-say, four credits for each workday. We change the value according to the needs of the community. (45)

Frazier says that four labor credits are required per day. Everything is free among

people. The value of labor credit change as the needs demand. This kind utopian vision is borrowed from Thomas More *Utopia*. Thomas More says, "Out of the twenty four equal hours into which they divide day and night they allow just six to works: three hours before noon when they go to lunch, after which they allow two hours of the afternoon to a siesta, then three further hours of work are concluded with supper" (64). In Thomas More's *Utopia*, all able-bodied citizens must work; thus unemployment is eradicated, and the length of the working day can be minimized: the people have only worked six hours a day.

In *Walden Two*, the child starts to work in the community at an early age. Children are kept in heated glass cubicles for their first year of life. The cubicles keep the babies warm without the bother of clothing and protect them from irritation. Among the visitors castle always tries to find out some practical and principled reason why the community should not work. In this case too, he was skeptical. He said, "What's about mother love". Castle limited his thought on mother love. He thinks individually but *Walden Two* is such a community where communal love is more important. Frazier explains like below in response of Castle doubt:

And we supply it in liberal doses. But we don't limit it to the mothers. We go in for father love, too –for everybody's love –community love, if you wish. Our children are treated with affection by everyone-and thoughtful affection too, which is not marred by fits of temper due to overwork or careless handling due to ignorance. (90)

Walden Two is quite different from Thomas More's *Utopia*. B.F Skinner takes his path to describe utopian community in a different way. This *Walden Two* is not a classical utopia, perfect society driven by some set of ideals. Instead, it is an experimental or scientific utopia, one in which each and every practices can be

changed if the evidence argues against it. It also exists in modern world and represents itself as modern utopia inspired from Thomas More *Utopias*. Frazier questions, “What distinguishes *Walden Two* from all the imaginary Utopias ever dreamed of . . . why, the fact that it exists right here and now!”(179). He answers himself that, “it doesn’t depend on a change in government or on the machinations of world politics. It doesn’t wait upon an improvement in human nature. At this very moment we have the necessary techniques, both material and psychological, to create a full and satisfying life for everyone” (180). Frazier applies technique to create the utopian community in this modern world. He does not wait for change in government and world politics too.

The proper management of one’s soul would reward immediate happiness and well-being, and specific educational methods would cultivate the spiritual and civic harmony. David Wotten in *A New Account of Utopia* further says:

The author of *Utopia* is prepared to abandon tradition and reshape society from scratch; he is also prepared to recognize and seek to explain change within his own society, providing a devastating account of the advance of pasture at the expense of arable, and the consequent increase of unemployment and of crime as sheep devour men. Even the death penalty –the core institution of every previous system of criminal law-seems to him pointless, for exterminating criminals has no effect if one does nothing to eliminate the cause of crime. (30)

Thomas More wrote *Utopia* when western society faced with several conflicts. The miserable condition of people in society might be the result of the injustice and domination of the people especially in Europe. He lived in an intensely hierarchical society, and no one spoke up for equality. He is ready to forget the tradition and eager

to project social change. He thinks to eliminate crimes, and write the book *Utopia* about an island where people were happy and society did not know any diseases or poverty. Skinner followed More in twentieth century. World war invites the destructive nature of society and creates the world impossible to exist. Skinner's novel also describes new account of utopian society.

Skinner guided by More, developed a society guided by the principles derived from behavioral analysis and his strategy for social change. Professor Castle, skeptical visitor to *Walden Two*, again questions Frazier, the radical founder of this behaviorally engineered utopian community about child bearing practices in the community. The community deliberately teaches 'self control' to its children in order to make them more independent, and says Frazier, "don't be misled; the control always rests in the last analysis in the hands of society" (96). The original twentieth century Champion of Behaviorism, Watson was quite frank in stating his belief that applied behaviorism could lead to a utopia. He asserts:

I am trying to dangle a stimulus in front of you, a verbal stimulus which, if acted upon, will gradually change this universe. For this universe will change if you bring your children, not in the freedom of the libertine, but in behaviorist freedom . . . will not these children, in turn bring up their children in a still more scientific way, until the world finally becomes a place fit for human habitation?(303-4)

From the moment a child is born, society tries to shape its desires so that it will act in the best interest of the community. If children are habitual in behaviorist freedom, they are able to bring up their children in a more systematic way.

In *Walden Two* this kind of shaping has been put to experimental test. Frazier explains that he and Simmons faced the challenge of translating various practices of

self control. They study classical ethics and modern psychology in order to design an environment in which children would grow up to be self controlled, happy contributors to society. In this regard, the founding editor of *Utopian Studies* Lyman Tower Sargent says:

The two most common ways of bringing about utopia have been law and education, and although both are used at all times, the former was dominant in early utopias and then partially supplanted by the latter. Religion has been the basis for many utopias, in most cases simply saying that if people would simply practice what they purport to believe, a good society would emerge.

(187)

Sargent gives emphasis on the importance of law, education and religion too. Most of us, when we give something respond with “thanks” or “thank you” or we knock before opening a door. These are conditioned behaviors we have been taught which create a more pleasant and as like utopian community as said by Sargent. People follow the rules and regulations guided by their religion but not as systematically as in *Walden Two*. Conditioning take people towards right path as they become usual to that conditioning. Krishna Kumar in *The Ends of Utopia* insists:

Like the literary utopians, Rousseau, Owen, Fourier, Marx and the others are passionately convinced that humans are perfectible, and that with the right kind of social organization something approaching perfectibility can be realized. But they are equally convinced that the time of fictitious accounts of the good society are past...now is the time for serious, “scientific” schemes of social reformation. (557)

Krishna Kumar asserts the need of good social science. Skinner playfully describes a modern utopia where systematic use of behavioral science designs a better place than

before. Community conditioning only becomes dangerous when it is used by the powerful to manipulate the people in their favor. At the age of three or four, children are taught to tolerate delayed using lollipops in a special way, “We give each child a lollipop which has been dipped in powdered sugar so that a single touch of the tongue can be detected. We tell him he may eat the lollipop later in the day, provided it hasn’t already been licked” (98). Frazier explains that the ethical training is completed by the age of six. But at such early age the problem of not licking the lollipop is not easy. Children of *Walden Two* are well trained. The experiment of lollipop proved the fact that the children at *Walden Two* become able to control self which is the result of behaviorism from their birth.

Castle reacts to Frazier’s description by calling such practices, “a display of sadistic tyranny”. Castle was against of behavior which gives pleasure in the pain of others. But at the same time, Rogers says, “I wish somebody had taught me that” (99). Rogers wished to be engineered when he was child. Frazier says notably, “some of us learn control, more or less by accident. The rest of us go all our lives not even understanding how it is possible , and blaming our failure on being born the wrong way”(99).Frazier insists we do not try our best to control our behavior, and questions upon our upbringing. The community provides early ethical training as Frazier remarks:

A group of children arrive home after a long walk tired and hungry. They are expecting supper; they find, instead, that it’s time for lesson in self control: they must stand for five minutes in front of streaming bowls of soup. The assignment is accepted like a problem in arithmetic. Any groaning or complaining is a wrong answer. Instead, the children begin at once to work upon themselves to avoid any unhappiness during delay. One of them may

make a joke of it . . . the children count of –heads and tails. Then a coin is tossed and if it comes up heads, the head sit down and eat. The tails remain standing for another five minutes. (99- 100)

Castle finds this training as a form of torture. From the beginning of the novel, castle was against the terms and conditions of *Walden Two*. He was highly influenced by the outside world and rejects every terms and conditions of scientific experimental community.

As the novel moves forward, he becomes increasingly dissatisfied with Frazier’s account and demands to know what the children gain through such punishment. Frazier further mentions:

What they get is escape from the petty emotions which eat the heart out of the unprepared. They get the satisfaction of pleasant and profitable social relations on a scale almost undreamed of in the world at large. They get immeasurably increased efficiency, because they can stick to a job without suffering the aches and pains which soon beset most of us. They get new horizons, for they are spared the emotions characteristic of frustration and failure. They –“his eyes searched the branches of the trees. “Is that enough?” (102)

Frazier discloses the profit of shaping a child from the moment it is born. From the practice of self control, children learn to eliminate jealousy, frustration, and other negative emotions, and to create tolerance, in the children of *Walden Two*. Frazier argues that the real world provides only haphazard training in self control, but *Walden Two* strives to make, “everyman a brave man”(105). In the outside world these kinds of emotion are thrown without warning at a child who is often not ready to deal with them. But in *Walden Two* each and every step is carefully monitored and designed to help the child to develop. According to Frazier, these children grow up to be

completely happy because emotions which are deemed as negative for them are systematically removed during their training. Krishna Kumar in *Battle for Peace* explains, “The relationship between education and war offers a similar set of well-matched arguments. It is widely believed that the spread of education enhances the probability of peace” (125). Good education takes the student towards the peaceful society. Frazier in *Walden Two* provides systematic education which helps to enhance the society towards the achievable goal of dreamy world.

Walden Two is a perfect utopian place not only from one aspect but also from different aspects. It is beauty place, beauty means not only physical beauty having full of greenery, fresh atmosphere and peaceful environment but also inner beauty having all people, who are living in *Walden Two* and whoever goes will be equally behaved and equally treated. Skinner designs a world liked by the people living in that world. Outsiders may do complaints about the world because it’s our human nature to find fault in others.

Walden Two also neglects the importance of history. Frazier feels that history tells us nothing. So it is meaningless to waste time exploring it. He continues:

I don’t care how well historical facts can be known from afar. Is it important to know them at all? I submit that history never even comes close to repeating itself. Even if we had reliable information about the past, we couldn’t find a case similar enough to justify inferences about the present or immediate future. We can no real use of history as a current guide . . . what we give our young people in *Walden Two* is a grasp of current forces which a culture must deal with . . . the present is the thing. (224-25)

Frazier community does not take history as their guide for better life. History is nothing and never repeats again. Whatever is done at *Walden Two* deals with present

issue. Individuals are conditioned to forget the past and gives priority to present. If one is curious, then he may read history. But no one is forced to learned history. Planners of *Walden Two* reject the historical fact during the course of conditioning.

Unknowingly, Frazier admits to having control over individual member's choice. Even though there is a focus on the present, the members of *Walden Two* do not participate in the present socio- political affairs. Frazier contests that members of *Walden Two* should not have to waste their time thinking about politics and candidates, because politics really wouldn't give us the chance we want. Krishna Kumar in *The Ends of Utopia* talks about Fredric Jameson points. He argues, " utopia tends to be at its most vigorous during "transitional periods," when major social changes are accompanied by a kind of political will or means are lacking to give shape and direction to the changes"(551). He explains the failure of political action to fulfill the needs of individual. *Walden Two* members yield complete trust to their community leaders to make choices for them while the community only protects them from any other influences

Frazier ignores the democracy because it is unable to satisfy all the individuals. Rather than governmental organization, humans are better off solving their problems with the help of behavioral techniques. Democracy does not discover the peoples will in an election because the minority has no true recourse. In *Walden Two* Frazier expands, "We have no election campaigns to falsify issues or obscure them with emotional appeals, but a careful study of the satisfaction of the membership is made. Every member has a direct channel through which he may protest to the manager or even the planners"(267). They have no power to exercise violent force on the members of community. Individuals are free to explain their problems with planners. Planners implement rules and law to solve the problems. He further

explains:

You can't make progress toward the Good Life by political action! Not under any current form of government! You must operate upon another level entirely. What you need is a sort nonpolitical Action Committee: keep out of politics and away from government except –for practical and temporary purposes. It's not the place for men of good will or vision. (180)

An important theme in *Walden Two* is that political action is to be avoided. The great cultural revolutions have not started with politics. What is needed is a nonpolitical community deals with knowledge about human behavior and new ways of applying that knowledge to design of cultural practices. Politics is for bad people. Those who involves in politics are guided by the ideology of being superior. They dominate the individual for their own benefit.

The planners and managers of *Walden Two* must promote their own society among its members in the face of the outside society. Frazier claims to use fair and unbiased information when comparing *Walden Two* with other society because their members have already been engineered. Children are not going to be jealous or envious of the people of outside world because they have been programmed differently. Their conditioning will only raise a sense of distaste for outside world and a sense of appreciation for their own. In a sense, taking them outside of *Walden Two* is testing the success of the experiment. If the children remain loyal members of *Walden Two*, the conditioning worked. There is no mention of failure.

When we look at the progression from the family to the state, we learn that loyalty is easily transferable under proper conditions. "Individuality is displaced by common identity", and then, the only notable occurrence is the success of the group (Volkan 226). Volkan's point is that *Walden Two* replaces the family as a social unit.

Due to their initial programming, individuals in these societies exchange their personal loyalties for those of the state. *Walden Two* is self selected community. The people who have chosen to live at *Walden Two* may be well suited to it. And if, after arriving, they prove not to be well suited to it, they are free to leave. No one should be forced to enter a *Walden Two* community. Nor should anyone be compelled to stay by force or threat of force. A well design society should provide reinforces necessary to maintain its membership.

The use of force is not excuse in *Walden Two* but the fact is that it is utilized by the ruling behavioral scientists for the welfare of society and for an individual. In the novel, professor Burriss at first finds himself somewhere in the middle. He doubt that such a utopia could work but latter he finds Frazier argument compelling, and he cannot discount the evidence of success in front of him. He is torn in between *Walden Two* and outside world. Finally he comes to a decision about *Walden Two*. The shock of returning to outside world, with its crowds and empty hope for better life, are enough to convince him that *Walden Two*, even if flawed, still provides a better life. When society is purposefully stratified, the social structure would not have to change; people will come to depend on that organization.

Walden Two is a revolutionary text. It challenges the contemporary society questioning those conventions which allowed a minority to dominate while the majorities were subjugated. In an age of depression, inequality, it made an attack on those elements which made life unfair for the common people. The inhabitants of *Walden Two* would give up those things that did not work toward the good of the community and instead reinforce those behaviors that were beneficial. In the *Walden Two* “revisited”, Skinner opines:

The choice is clear: either we do nothing and allow a miserable and probably

catastrophic future to overtake us, or we use our knowledge about human behavior to create a social environment in which we shall live productive and creative lives and do so without jeopardizing the chances that those who follow us will be able to do the same. Something like a *Walden Two* would not be a bad start. (xvi)

Skinner's *Walden Two* is an experimental community where we find problem's solution when we try them out in a well controlled environment. It is better to do something than to talk about the problems of society as well as the world. Skinner tries to figure out something different than that of his contemporaries. In the period of depression, skinner's *Walden Two* provides hope for better life those who are frustrated with their life. In this sense something like *Walden Two* would not be a bad start.

To sum up, this research after thorough analysis concludes that behaviorism plays a dominant role to show utopian vision in B.F. Skinner's *Walden Two*. He highlights some aspects of utopian society in which new forms of knowledge contribute to reaching the ideal of perfect society. In the process of creating such society many negative aspects of human life would be overcome. People will delete wrongful act from their lives. Individual's main purpose should be to focus on the virtues and values such as love, respect, peace harmony and equality.

Walden Two formulate the idea that people should live in a positive way and the struggle to achieve goal would lead to the foundation of utopian society. Humanity dream of balanced and better life takes everyone towards a same destination utopia or heaven on earth. In broadest sense, utopia refers to people's trial and effort of creating a perfect society by coming with the ideas that could radically change our world. As such, the perfect society should make extensive use of positive

reinforcement in all areas of life which leads skinner to envision a society designed by behavioral engineers, who would condition people to live and enjoy good life.

Utopian thinking and better imagined states of collective and individual being has been to some extent responsible for many successful and unsuccessful social experiments. *Walden Two* imposes the solution through the imposition of particular system of social organization and control. Skinner playfully revives the theme of Thoreau *Walden* in the process of developing better society. Thoreau encourages his readers to be satisfied with less materiality, to embrace independence, self- reliance and simplicity of life. Thoreau major emphasis is on individualism. Quite different from Thoreau, Skinner gives emphasis on the social life where the individuality is totally neglected. People take each and every step for the welfare of society.

Destruction of war invited the age of depression destroying all the things. Therefore, to overcome from that catastrophic situation B.F. Skinner started imagining the alternative ways. His new way of thinking succeed to find better solution and in this way he is able to create heavenly paradise on this materialistic world. The world that promises equality and fairness is possible in real world. Thoreau and Skinner think that better society will be in practice through the reformation of individual. Thoreau highlights the within change. But Skinner insists the need to control one's behavior by birth. Thus, Skinner's *Walden Two* is about the utopian community developed by focusing on the influence of environmental factors in the development of human behavior.

Works Cited

- Dinsmoor, James A. "Academic Roots: Columbia University, 1943-1951." *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*, 1990: pp.129-49.
- Fredric, Jameson. *Archaeologies of the Future*. Yale University Press, 1979.
- Harvey, David. *Spaces of Hope*. vol. 7. 2000, Edicoes Loyola.
- Hilgard, E. R. *Theories of Learning*. Appleton-Century, 1948.
- Knap, J. Terry. An Index to B.F. Skinner's "Walden Two." *Behaviour and Philosophy*, vol.3, no.2, Fall1975, pp.222-28, *JSTOR*.[www.jstor.org/stable.27758848](http://www.jstor.org/stable/27758848)
- Kumar, Krishna. *Battle for Peace*. Penguin Books.2007.
- - - . "The Ends of Utopia." *New Literary History*. vol.41, no.3(Summer 2003), pp. 549-69. *JSTOR*.[www.jstor.org/stable.40983884](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40983884)
- Masuzawa, Tomoko. "From Empire to Utopia: The Effacement of Colonial Markings In *Lost Horizon*." *Positions*,vol.7. no.2(1991): pp. 541-72.
- More, Sir Thomas. *Utopia*. Ed. Dominic Baker- Smith. Penguin Books, 2012.
- Moxley, A. Roy. "B. F. Skinner's Other Positivistic Book: Walden Two." *Behavior and Philosophy*, vol.34, 2006, pp.19-37. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable.27759518](http://www.jstor.org/stable/27759518).
- Ousby, Ian, editor. "Utopia." *The Wordsworth Companion to Literature in English*. London: Wordsworth Reference, 1997. [http// www/amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)
- Plato. *The Republic*. Wordsworth, 1997.
- Rakos, Richard. "The reality of impossible dreams: A review of McCord's Voyage to utopia: from monastery to commune-the search for the perfect society in modern times." *The Behavior Analyst*. 1992b;15: pp.71-76.
- Sargent, Lyman Tower. "Five Hundred years of Thomas More's *Utopia* and *Utopianism*." *Utopian Studies*. vol.27, no.2. pp.184-192 *JSTOR*.[www.jstor.](http://www.jstor.org)

org.stable.10.5325

Sisk, David. "Transformation of language in Modern Dystopias." *Connectical*. Green Wood Press, 1997.

Skinner, B.F. *Walden Two*. 1948. Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. 2005.

Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden*. J. Lyndon Shanley ed. Price tone University Press, 1971.

Volkan, Vamik D. "The Need to Have Enemies and Allies: A Developmental Approach." *Political Psychology*, vol. 6, no. 2, June. 1985, pp. 219-47. *JSTOR*. [www.jstor.org/stable.3790902](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3790902).

Watson J. B. *Behaviorism*. Norton, 1970.

Wolpert, R. S. "A Multicultural Feminist analyses of Walden Two." *The Behavior Analyst Today*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2005: pp.186-90. <http://dx.doi.org>.

Wootton, David. "Friendship Portrayed: A New Account of Utopia." *History Workshop Journal*, no.4, Spring 1998, pp.28-47. *JSTOR*. www.jstor.org/stable.4289549