Implications for Adaptive Action

Reed College

Although reinforcement often leads to repetitive, even stereot ped responding, that is not a necessar outcome. When it depends on variations, reinforcement results in responding that is diverse, novel, indeed unpredictable, ith distributions sometimes approaching those of a random process. This article revie s evidence for the po erful and precise control b reinforcement over behavioral variabilit , evidence obtained from human and animal-model studies, and implications of such control. For e ample, reinforcement of variabilit facilitates learning of comple ne responses, aids problem solving, and ma contribute to creativit . Depression and autism are characteri ed b abnormall repetitive behaviors, but individuals af, icted ith such ps chopathologies can learn to var their behaviors hen reinforced for so doing. And reinforced variabilit ma help to solve a basic pu le concerning the nature of voluntar action

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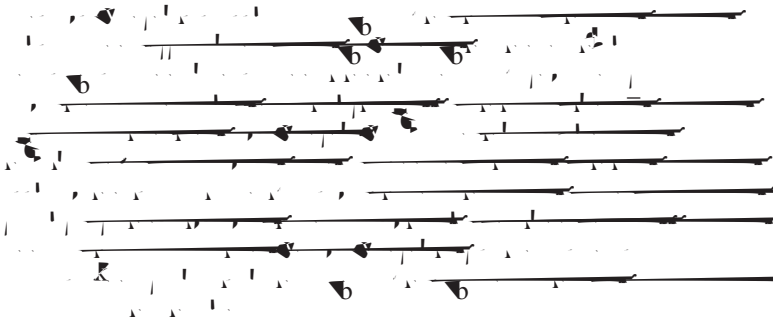

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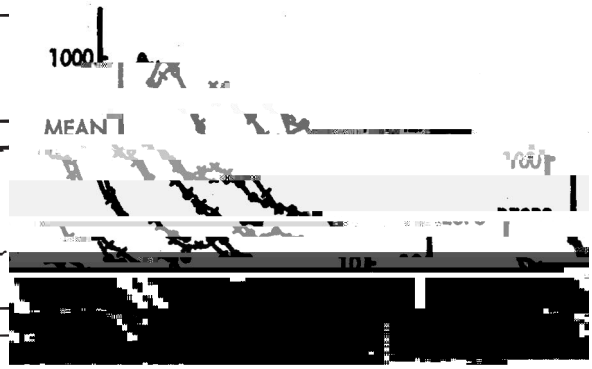

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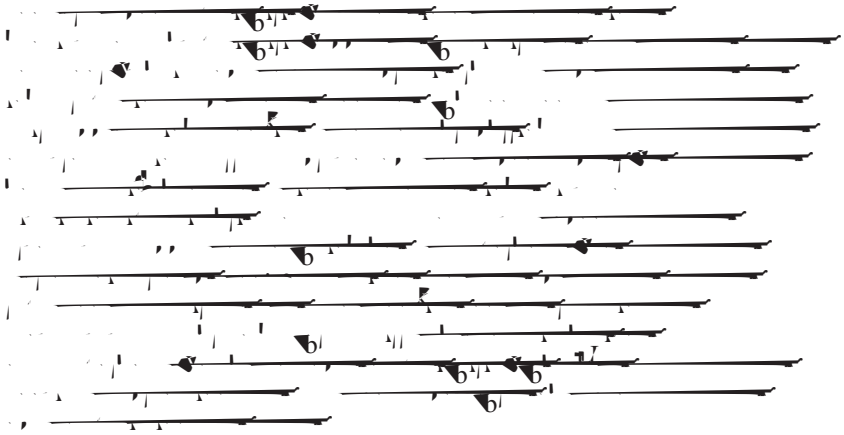

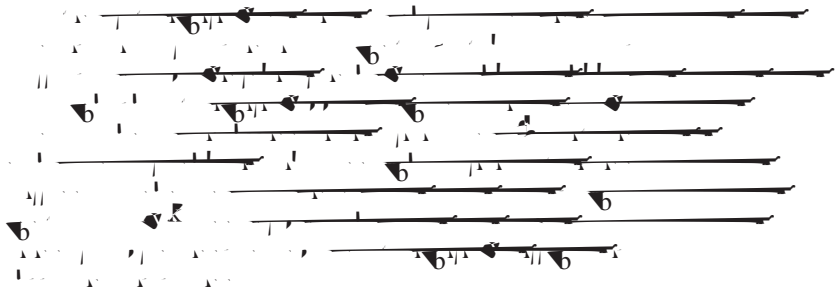

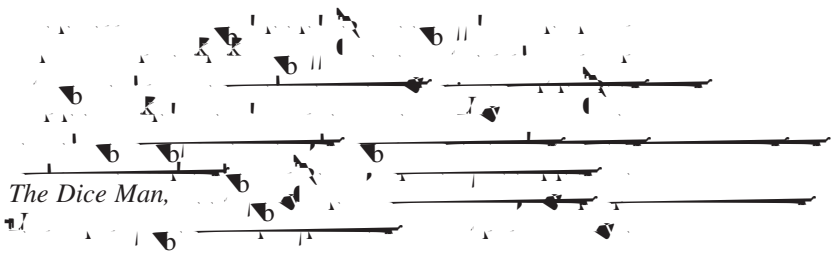

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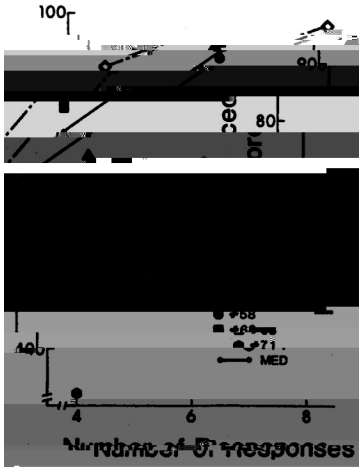

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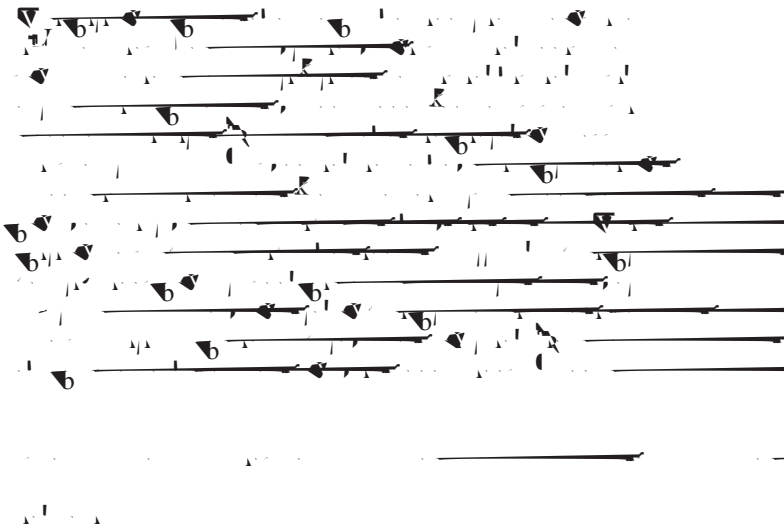

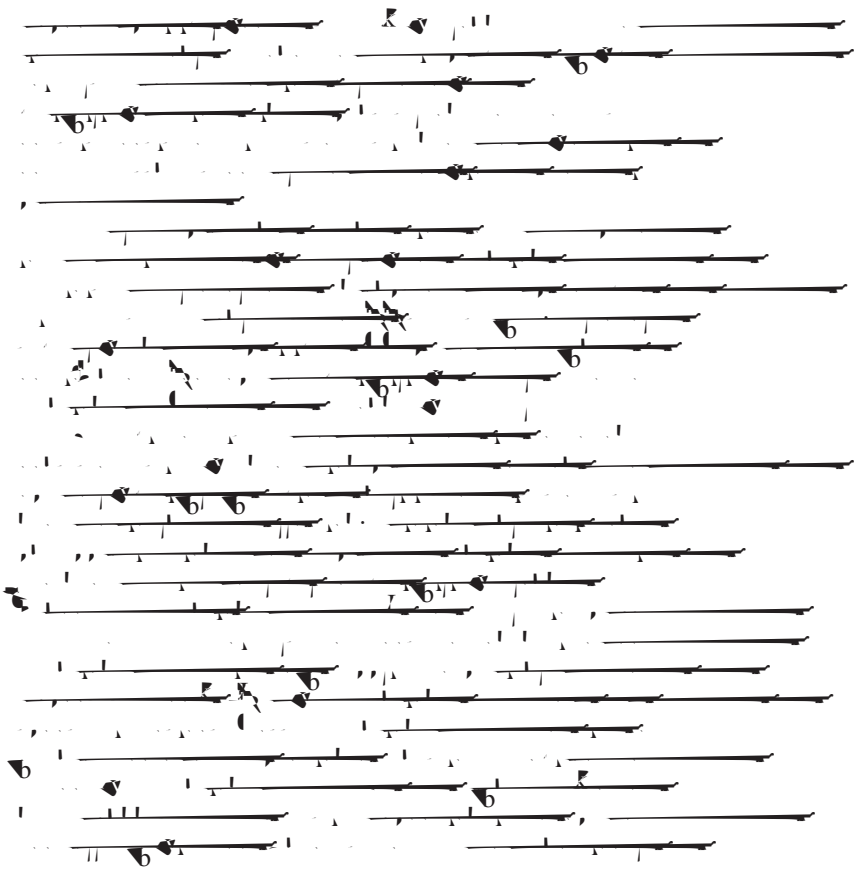

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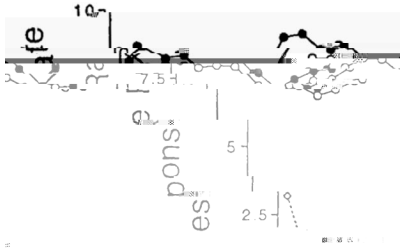

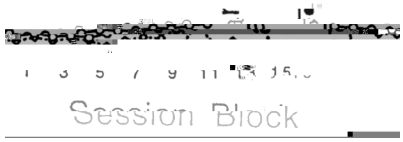

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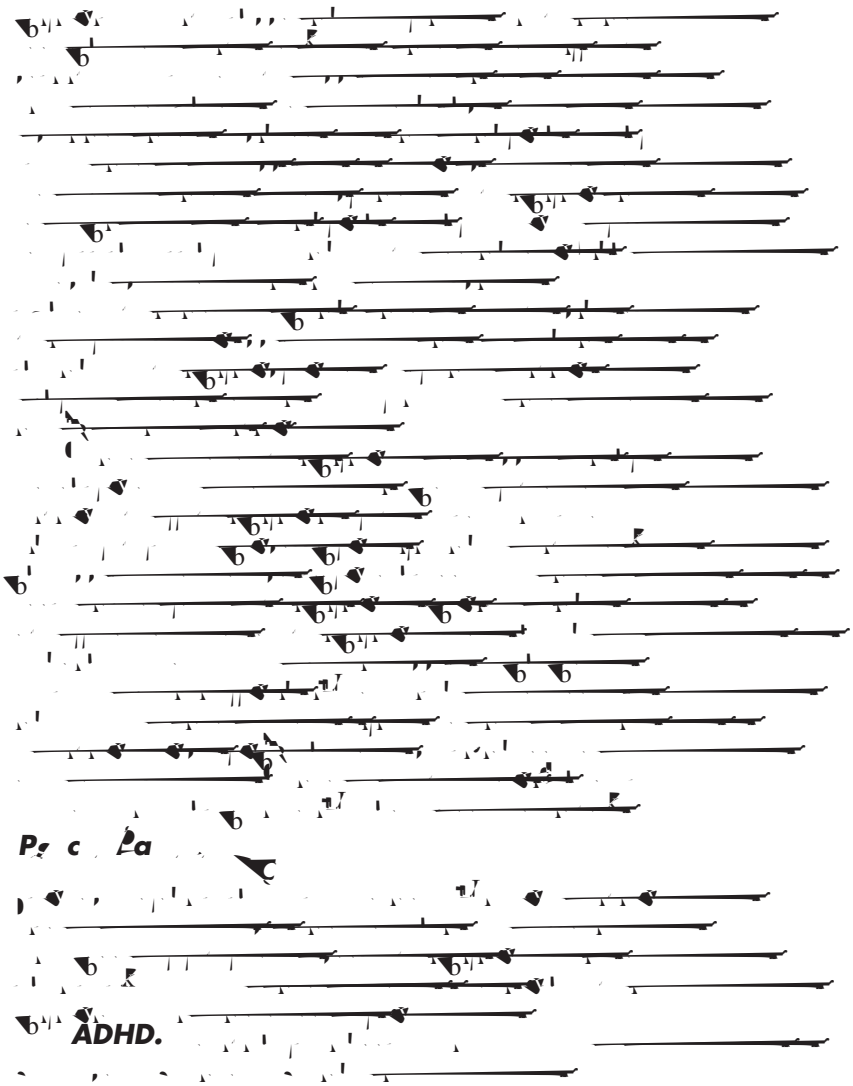

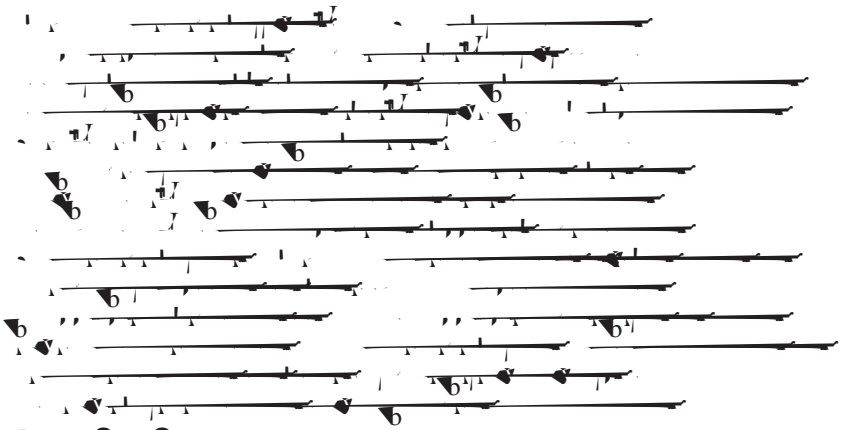

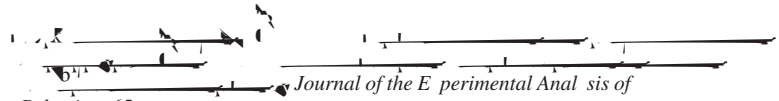

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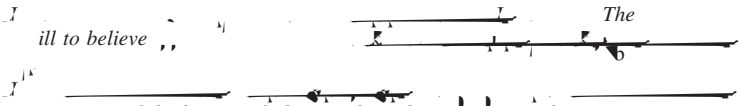

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