

2002-1 Translation

1- Almost all our major problems involve human behavior, and they cannot be solved by physical and biological technology alone.

What is needed is a technology of behavior, but we have been slow to develop the science from which such a technology might be drawn.

41) One difficulty is that almost all of what is called behavioral science continues to trace behavior to states of mind, feelings, traits of character, human nature, and so on.

Physics and biology once followed similar practices and advanced only when they discarded them.

42) The behavioral sciences have been slow to change partly because the explanatory items often seem to be directly observed and partly because other kinds of explanations have been hard to find.

The environment is obviously important, but its role has remained obscure.

It does not push or pull, it selects, and this function is difficult to discover and analyze.

43) The role of natural selection in evolution was formulated only a little more than a hundred years ago, and the selective role of the environment in shaping and maintaining the behavior of the individual is only beginning to be recognized and studied.

As the interaction between organism and environment has come to be understood, however, effects once assigned to states of mind, feelings, and traits are beginning to be traced to accessible conditions, and a technology of behavior may therefore become available.

It will not solve our problems, however, until it replaces traditional prescientific views, and these are strongly entrenched.

Freedom and dignity illustrate the difficulty.

44) They are the possessions of the autonomous (self-governing) man of traditional theory, and they are essential to practices in which a person is held responsible for his conduct and given credit for his achievements.

A scientific analysis shifts both the responsibility and the achievement to the environment.

It also raises questions concerning “values.”

Who will use a technology and to what ends?

45) Until these issues are resolved, a technology of behavior will continue to be rejected, and with it possibly the only way to solve our problems.