

We have seen how, on the assumption that private property has been positively superseded, man produces man, himself and then other men; how the object which is the direct activity of his personality is at the same time his existence for other men and their existence for him. Similarly, the material of labour and man himself as a subject are the starting-point as well as the result of this movement (and because there must be this starting-point private property is a historical necessity). Therefore, the social character is the universal character of the whole movement; as society itself produces man as man, so it is produced by him. Activity and mind are social in their content as well as in their origin; they are social activity and social mind. The human significance of nature only exists for social man, because only in this case is nature a bond with other men, the basis of his existence for others and of their existence for him. Only then is nature the basis of his own human experience and a vital element of human reality. The natural existence of man has here become his human existence and nature itself has become human for him. Thus society is the accomplished union of man with nature, the veritable resurrection of nature, the realized naturalism of man and the realized humanism of nature.

(VI) Social activity and social mind by no means exist only in the form of activity or mind which is directly communal. Nevertheless, communal activity and mind, i.e. activity and mind which express and confirm themselves directly in a real association with other men, occur everywhere where this direct expression of sociability arises from the content of the activity or corresponds to the nature of mind.

Even when I carry out scientific work, etc., an activity which I can seldom conduct in direct association with other men, I perform a social, because human, act. It is not only the material of my activity—such as the language itself which the thinker uses—which is given to me as a social product. My own existence is a social activity. For this reason, what I myself produce I produce for society, and with the consciousness of acting as a social being.

My universal consciousness is only the theoretical form of that whose living form is the real community, the social entity, although at the present day this universal consciousness is an abstraction from real life and is opposed to it as an enemy. That is why the activity of my universal consciousness as such is my theoretical existence as a social being.

It is above all necessary to avoid postulating "society" once again as an abstraction confronting the individual. The individual is the social being. The manifestation of his life—even when it does not appear directly in the form of a communal manifestation, accomplished in association with other men—is, therefore, a manifestation and affirmation of social life. Individual human life and species-life are not different things, even though the mode of existence of individual life is necessarily either a more specific or a more general mode of species-life, or that of species-life a specific or more general mode of individual life.

In his species-consciousness man confirms his real social life, and reproduces his real existence in thought; while conversely, species-life confirms itself in species-consciousness and exists for itself in its universality as a thinking being. Though man is a unique individual—and it is just his particularity which makes him an individual, a really individual communal being—he is equally the whole, the ideal whole, the subjective existence of society as thought and experienced. He exists in reality as the representation and the real mind of social existence, and as the sum of human manifestations of life.

## 6. Determinism, Freedom, and Man

B.F. Skinner and Carl Rogers

### 1 (Skinner)

Science is steadily increasing our power to influence, change, mold—in a word, control—human behavior. It has extended our "understanding" so that we deal more successfully with people in nonscientific ways, but it has also identified conditions or variables which can be used to predict and control behavior in a new, and increasingly rigorous, technology.

### Government

Government has always been the special field of aversive control. The state is frequently defined in terms of the power to punish, and jurisprudence leans heavily upon the associated notion of personal responsibility. Yet it is becoming increasingly difficult to reconcile current practice and theory with these earlier views. In criminology, for example, there is a strong tendency to drop the notion of responsibility in favor of some such alternative as capacity or controllability. But no matter how strongly the facts, or even practical expedience, support such a change, it is difficult to make the change in a legal system designed on a different plan. When governments resort to other techniques (for example, positive reinforcement), the concept of responsibility is no longer relevant and the theory of government is no longer applicable.

The uneasiness with which we view government (in the broadest possible sense) when it does not use punishment is shown by the reception of my utopian novel, *Walden Two*. This was essentially a proposal to apply a behavioral technology to the construction of a workable, effective, and productive pattern of government. It was greeted with wrathful violence. Perhaps the reaction is best expressed in a quotation from *The Quest for Utopia* by Negley and Patrick:

Of all the dictatorships espoused by utopists, this is the most profound, and incipient dictators might well find in this utopia a guidebook of political practice.<sup>1</sup>

One would scarcely guess that the authors are talking about a world in which there is food, clothing, and shelter for all, where everyone chooses his own work and works on the average only 4 hours a day, where music and the arts flourish, where personal relationships develop under the most favorable circumstances, where education prepares every child for the social and intellectual life which lies before him, where—in short—people are truly happy, secure, productive, creative, and forward-looking. What is wrong with it? Only one thing: someone "planned it that way."

The dangers inherent in the control of human behavior are very real. The possibility of the misuse of scientific knowledge must always be faced. As I have pointed out elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> the new

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1. Glenn Negley and J.M. Patrick, *The Quest for Utopia* (New York: Schuman, 1952).

2. B.F. Skinner, *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 17 (1955), p. 547.

techniques emerging from a science of behavior must be subject to the explicit countercontrol which has already been applied to earlier and cruder forms. Brute force and deception, for example, are now fairly generally suppressed by ethical practices and by explicit governmental and religious agencies. A similar countercontrol of scientific knowledge in the interests of the group is a feasible and promising possibility. Although we cannot say how devious the course of its evolution may be, a cultural pattern of control and countercontrol will presumably emerge which will be most widely supported because it is most widely reinforcing.

What is needed is a new conception of human behavior which is compatible with the implications of a scientific analysis. All men control and are controlled. The question of government in the broadest possible sense is not how freedom is to be preserved but what kinds of control are to be used and to what ends.

## II (Rogers)

### Points of Agreement

I am sure we agree that men—as individuals and as societies—have always endeavored to understand, predict, influence, and control human behavior—their own behavior and that of others.

I believe we agree that the behavioral sciences are making and will continue to make increasingly rapid progress in the understanding of behavior, and that as a consequence the capacity to predict and to control behavior is developing with equal rapidity.

I believe we agree that to deny these advances, or to claim that man's behavior cannot be a field of science, is unrealistic. Even though this is not an issue for us, we should recognize that many intelligent men still hold strongly to the view that the actions of men are free in some sense such that scientific knowledge of man's behavior is impossible. Thus Reinhold Niebuhr, the noted theologian, heaps scorn on the concept of psychology as a science of man's behavior and even says, "In any event, no scientific investigation of past behavior can become the basis of predictions of future behavior."<sup>3</sup> So, while this is not an issue for psychologists, we should at least notice in passing that it is an issue for many people.

### Points at issue

With these several points of basic and important agreement, are there then any issues that remain on which there are differences? I believe there are. They can be stated very briefly. Who will be controlled? Who will exercise control? What type of control will be exercised? Most important of all, toward what end or what purpose, or in the pursuit of what value, will control be exercised?

### Some meanings

To avoid ambiguity and faulty communication, I would like to clarify the meanings of some of the terms we are using.

*Behavioral science* is a term that might be defined from several angles but in the context of this discussion it refers primarily to knowledge that the existence of certain describable conditions

in the human being and/or in his environment is followed by certain describable consequences in his actions.

*Prediction* means the prior identification of behaviors which then occur. Because it is important in some things I wish to say later, I would point out that one may predict a highly specific behavior, such as an eye blink, or one may predict a class of behaviors. One might correctly predict "avoidant behavior," for example, without being able to specify whether the individual will run away or simply close his eyes.

The word *control* is a very slippery one, which can be used with any one of several meanings. I would like to specify three that seem most important for our present purposes. *Control* may mean: (i) The setting of conditions by B for A, A having no voice in the matter, such that certain predictable behaviors then occur in A. I refer to this as external control. (ii) The setting of conditions by B for A, A giving some degree of consent to these conditions, such that certain predictable behaviors then occur in A. I refer to this as the influence of B on A. (iii) The setting of conditions by A such that certain predictable behaviors then occur in himself. I refer to this as internal control. It will be noted that Skinner lumps together the first two meanings, external control and influence, under the concept of control. I find this confusing.

### Usual concept of control of human behavior

These are the elements of the (Skinnerian) application of science to human behavior.

(1) There must first be some sort of decision about goals. Usually desirable goals are assumed, but sometimes, as in George Orwell's book *1984*, the goal that is selected is an aggrandizement of individual power with which most of us would disagree. In a recent paper Skinner suggests that one possible set of goals to be assigned to the behavioral technology is this: "Let men be happy, informed, skillful, well-behaved and productive."<sup>4</sup> In the first draft of his part of this article, which he was kind enough to show me, he did not mention such definite goals as these, but desired "improved" education practices, "wiser" use of knowledge in government, and the like. In the final version of his article he avoids even these value-laden terms, and his implicit goal is the very general one that scientific control of behavior is desirable, because it would perhaps bring "a far better world for everyone."

Thus the first step in thinking about the control of human behavior is the choice of goals, whether specific or general. It is necessary to come to terms in some way with the issue, "For what purpose?"

(2) A second element is that, whether the end selected is highly specific or is a very general one such as wanting "a better world," we proceed by the methods of science to discover the means to these ends. We continue through further experimentation and investigation to discover more effective means. The method of science is self-correcting in thus arriving at increasingly effective ways of achieving the purpose we have in mind.

(3) The third aspect of such control is that as the conditions or methods are discovered by which to reach the goals some person or some group establishes these conditions and uses these methods, having in one way or another obtained the power to do so.

3. Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Self and the Dramas of History* (New York: Scribner's, 1955), p. 47.

4. B.F. Skinner, *American Scholar*, Vol. 25 (1955-1956), p. 47.

(4) The fourth element is the exposure of individuals to the prescribed conditions, and this leads, with a high degree of probability, to behavior which is in line with the goals desired. Individuals are now happy, if that has been the goal, or well-behaved, or submissive, or whatever it has been decided to make them.

(5) The fifth element is that if the process I have described is put in motion then there is a continuing social organization which will continue to produce the types of behavior that have been valued.

#### Some flaws

The only element in this description with which I find myself in agreement is the second. It seems to me quite incontrovertibly true that the scientific method is an excellent way to discover the means by which to achieve our goals. Beyond that I feel many sharp differences, which I will try to spell out.

I believe that in Skinner's presentation here and in his previous writings, there is a serious underestimation of the problem of power. To hope that the power which is being made available by the behavioral sciences will be exercised by the scientists, or by a benevolent group, seems to me a hope little supported by either recent or distant history. It seems far more likely that behavioral scientists, holding their present attitudes, will be in the position of the German rocket scientists specializing in guided missiles. First they worked devotedly for Hitler to destroy the U.S.S.R. and the United States. Now, depending on who captured them, they work devotedly for the U.S.S.R. in the interest of destroying the United States, or devotedly for the United States in the interest of destroying the U.S.S.R. If behavioral scientists are concerned solely with advancing their science, it seems most probable that they will serve the purposes of whatever individual or group has the power.

But the major flaw I see in this review of what is involved in the scientific control of human behavior is the denial, misunderstanding, or gross underestimation of the place of ends, goals or values in their relationship to science. This error (as it seems to me) has so many implications that I would like to devote some space to it.

#### Ends and values in relation to science

In sharp contradiction to some views that have been advanced, I would like to propose a two-pronged thesis: (i) In any scientific endeavor—whether "pure" or applied science—there is a prior subjective choice of the purpose or value which that scientific work is perceived as serving. (ii) This subjective value choice which brings the scientific endeavor into being must always lie outside of that endeavor and can never become a part of the science involved in that endeavor.

Let me illustrate the first point from Skinner himself. It is clear that in his earlier writing it is recognized that a prior value choice is necessary, and it is specified as the goal that men are to become happy, well-behaved, productive, and so on. I am pleased that Skinner has retreated from the goals he then chose, because to me they seem to be stultifying values. I can only feel that he was choosing these goals for others, not for himself. I would hate to see Skinner become "well-behaved," as that term would be defined for him by behavioral scientists. His recent article in the *American Psychologist*<sup>5</sup> shows that he certainly does not want to be "productive" as that

value is defined by most psychologists. And the most awful fate I can imagine for him would be to have him constantly "happy." It is the fact that he is very unhappy about many things which makes me prize him.

In the first draft of his part of this article, he also included such prior value choices, saying for example, "We must decide how we are to use the knowledge which a science of human behavior is now making available." Now he has dropped all mention of such choices, and if I understand him correctly, he believes that science can proceed without them. He has suggested this view in another recent paper, stating that "We must continue to experiment in cultural design . . . testing the consequences as we go. Eventually the practices which make for the greatest biological and psychological strength of the group will presumably survive."<sup>6</sup>

I would point out, however, that to choose to experiment is a value choice. Even to move in the direction of perfectly random experimentation is a value choice. To test the consequences of an experiment is possible only if we have first made a subjective choice of a criterion value. And implicit in his statement is a valuing of biological and psychological strength. So even when trying to avoid such choice, it seems inescapable that a prior subjective value choice is necessary for any scientific endeavor, or for any application of scientific knowledge. . . .

#### Alternative set of values

Suppose we start with a set of ends, values, purposes, quite different from the type of goals we have been considering. Suppose we do this quite openly, setting them forth as a possible value choice to be accepted or rejected. Suppose we select a set of values that focuses on fluid elements of process rather than static attributes. We might then value: man as a process of becoming, as a process of achieving worth and dignity through the development of his potentialities; the individual human being as a self-actualizing process, moving on to more challenging and enriching experiences; the process by which the individual creatively adapts to an ever-new and changing world; the process by which knowledge transcends itself, as, for example, the theory of relativity transcended Newtonian physics, itself to be transcended in some future day by a new perception.

#### Possible concept of the control of human behavior

It is quite clear that the point of view I am expressing is in sharp contrast to the usual conception of the relationship of the behavioral sciences to the control of human behavior. In order to make this contrast even more blunt, I will state this possibility in paragraphs parallel to those used before.

(1) It is possible for us to choose to value man as a self-actualizing process of becoming; to value creativity, and the process by which knowledge becomes self-transcending.

(2) We can proceed, by the methods of science, to discover the conditions which necessarily precede these processes and, through continuing experimentation, to discover better means of achieving these purposes.

(3) It is possible for individuals or groups to set these conditions, with a minimum of power or control. According to present knowledge, the only authority necessary is the authority to establish certain qualities of interpersonal relationships.

5. B.F. Skinner, *American Psychologist*, Vol. 11 (1956), p. 221.

6. B.F. Skinner, *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 17 (1955), p. 549.

(4) Exposed to these conditions, present knowledge suggests that individuals become more self-responsible, make progress in self-actualization, become more flexible, and become more creatively adaptive.

(5) Thus such an initial choice would inaugurate the beginnings of a social system or subsystem in which values, knowledge, adaptive skills, and even the concept of science would be continually changing and self-transcending. The emphasis would be upon man as a process of becoming.

I believe it is clear that such a view as I have been describing does not lead to any definable utopia. It would be impossible to predict its final outcome. It involves a step-by-step development, based on a continuing subjective choice of purposes, which are implemented by the behavioral sciences. It is in the direction of the "open society," as that term has been defined by Popper,<sup>7</sup> where individuals carry responsibility for personal decisions. It is at the opposite pole from his concept of the closed society, of which *Walden Two* would be an example.

I trust it is also evident that the whole emphasis is on process, not on end-states of being. I am suggesting that it is by choosing to value certain qualitative elements of the process of becoming that we can find a pathway toward the open society.

### The Choice

It is my hope that we have helped to clarify the range of choice which will lie before us and our children in regard to the behavioral sciences. We can choose to use our growing knowledge to enslave people in ways never dreamed of before, depersonalizing them, controlling them by means so carefully selected that they will perhaps never be aware of their loss of personhood. We can choose to utilize our scientific knowledge to make men happy, well-behaved, and productive, as Skinner earlier suggested. Or we can insure that each person learns all the syllabus which we select and set before him, as Skinner now suggests. Or at the other end of the spectrum of choice we can choose to use the behavioral sciences in ways which will free, not control; which will bring about constructive variability, not conformity; which will develop creativity, not contentment; which will facilitate each person in his self-directed process of becoming; which will aid individuals, groups, and even the concept of science to become self-transcending in freshly adaptive ways of meeting life and its problems. The choice is up to us, and, the human race being what it is, we are likely to stumble about, making at times some nearly disastrous value choices and at other times highly constructive ones.

I am aware that to some, this setting forth of a choice is unrealistic, because a choice of values is regarded as not possible. Skinner has stated: "Man's vaunted creative powers . . . his capacity to choose and our right to hold him responsible for his choice--none of these is conspicuous in this new self-portrait (provided by science). Man, we once believed was free to express himself in art, music, and literature, to inquire into nature, to seek salvation in his own way. He could initiate action and make spontaneous and capricious changes of course. . . . But science insists that action is initiated by forces impinging upon the individual, and that caprice is only another name for behavior for which we have not yet found a cause."<sup>8</sup>

I can understand this point of view, but I believe that it avoids looking at the great paradox of behavioral science. Behavior, when it is examined scientifically, is surely best understood as determined by prior causation. This is one great fact of science. But responsible personal choice, which is the most essential element in being a person, which is the core experience in psychotherapy, which exists prior to any scientific endeavor, is an equally prominent fact in our lives. To deny the experience of responsible choice is, to me, as restricted a view as to deny the possibility of a behavioral science. That these two important elements of our experience appear to be in contradiction has perhaps the same significance as the contradiction between the wave theory and the corpuscular theory of light, both of which can be shown to be true, even though incompatible. We cannot profitably deny our subjective life, any more than we can deny the objective description of that life.

In conclusion then, it is my contention that science cannot come into being without a personal choice of the values we wish to achieve. And these values we choose to implement will forever lie outside of the science which implements them; the goals we select, the purposes we wish to follow, must always be outside of the science which achieves them. To me this has the encouraging meaning that the human person, with his capacity of subjective choice, can and will always exist, separate from and prior to any of his scientific undertakings. Unless as individuals and groups we choose to relinquish our capacity of subjective choice, we will always remain persons, not simply pawns of a self-created science.

### III (Skinner)

. . . The values I have occasionally recommended (and Rogers has not led me to recant) are transitional. Other things being equal, I am betting on the group whose practices make for healthy, happy, secure, productive, and creative people. And I insist that the values recommended by Rogers are transitional, too, for I can ask him the same kind of question. Man as a process of becoming—*what?* Self-actualization—for what? Inner control is no more a goal than external.

What evidence is there that a client ever becomes truly *self-directing*? What evidence is there that he ever makes a truly *inner* choice of ideal or goal? Even though the therapist does not do the choosing, even though he encourages "self-actualization"—he is not out of control as long as he holds himself ready to step in when occasion demands—when, for example, the client chooses the goal of becoming a more accomplished liar or murdering his boss. But supposing the therapist does withdraw completely or is no longer necessary—what about all the other forces acting upon the client? Is the self-chosen goal independent of his early ethical and religious training? Of the folk-wisdom of his group? Of the opinions and attitudes of others who are important to him? Surely not. The therapeutic situation is only a small part of the world of the client. From the therapist's point of view it may appear to be possible to relinquish control. But the control passes, not to a "self," but to forces in other parts of the client's world. The solution of the therapist's problem of power cannot be *our* solution, for we must consider *all* the forces acting upon the individual.

7. Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1945).

8. B. F. Skinner, *American Scholar*, Vol. 25 (1955-1956), p. 47.

*Sartre*

1. Explain the difference between "essence precedes existence" and "existence precedes essence."
2. Explain what Sartre means by "man will be what he will have planned to be. Not what he will want to be."
3. Define "responsibility," "anguish," "forlornness," and "despair" and explain how they are connected with one's basic choice of values.
4. Distinguish two meanings of humanism and identify Sartre's use of existential humanism.

*Marx*

1. How is the worker a commodity in 19th century capitalism?
2. Describe the alienation of the worker from the product of labor.
3. How is the worker alienated from labor as a human action?
4. Describe the differences between animal and human life.
5. How is man a species-being, and how does he possess a species-life?
6. How is man alienated from his species-life?
7. How can labor be a confirmation of man's species-life?
8. Explain how the individual human being can be the social whole of humanity in species-consciousness and species-life.

*Skinner and Rogers*

1. For Skinner, is the science of psychology becoming more successful in understanding, predicting, and controlling behavior?
2. What dangers does Skinner see inherent in the application of psychological techniques of control in the field of government?
3. How does Skinner respond to the objection that the application of his psychological principles in government leads to dictatorship?
4. What points of agreement and points at issue does Rogers see?
5. Distinguish three meanings of "control."
6. Contrast the five elements of the Skinnerian application of science to human behavior with the five elements of the Rogerian view.
7. What is the key argument of Rogers against Skinner's concept of science and value?
8. Does Rogers accept both subjective choice as the core experience in psychotherapy and the objective view of behavior as determined by prior causation?
9. How does Skinner reply to Rogers' concept of self-actualization as not a proof of the reality of freedom of choice?

*Nietzsche*

1. What does Nietzsche mean by the concept of beyond-man?
2. What does Nietzsche mean by the statement "remain faithful to earth"?
3. What is the will unto power?

## B. General Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Is Hobbes correct in deducing that the state of nature before government is formed must be a state of war? Explain.
2. Do you agree with Hobbes's assumption that the philosopher can state what the nature of man is prior to socialization? For example, is the novel, *Lord of the Flies*, a true description of human nature or a description of human nature deprived of its natural socialization? What can the phrase "human nature" mean?
3. Would you agree with Hobbes that there is no justice or injustice in the original human nature, or are some types of acts immoral whether or not a government prohibits them? Why do you agree or disagree?
4. Assuming Hobbes's description of the original state of human nature, do you agree that the best way of creating peace is that each person be contented with so much liberty against others as he would allow others against himself?
5. Do you agree with Socrates' assumption that there is a basic order to the parts of personality and to human needs which human reason can discover?
6. Do you agree with Socrates that an understanding of the types of people needed in a state can help you understand the structure of the human personality? Develop your comparison to substantiate your answer.
7. Contrast Socrates' and Hobbes's concepts of the natural law.
8. Do you agree or disagree with Sartre that you are responsible for yourself and all humans when you choose your role in life? Explain.
9. Do passions determine character, or do people choose their passions? Develop examples defending or rejecting Sartre's position.
10. Does Sartre contradict himself in replacing a universal essence in human nature with a universality of condition?
11. Is Sartre's concept of human existence more like Hobbes's concept of the state of nature of humanity or more like Socrates' concept of human nature?
12. What essential changes have developed in the relationships between capitalists, workers and the state in 20th century capitalism since the 19th century?
13. Do contemporary advertising and technology alienate people from their essential human needs and turn them into "commodity-people" satisfying less basic needs?
14. Do people determine their economic and social conditions, or do economic and social conditions determine people?
15. Compare Marxist and Existentialist humanism.
16. Could the notion of "self-fulfilling prophecy" be applicable to the question of whether human beings are determined or free? Does the person who believes that his behavior is determined by social conditions treat himself in such a way that his behavior is so determined? Does the person who believes in freedom become free?
17. The objection has been made that the scientific method is a limited way of interpreting reality, permitting the scientist to see and prove only those hypotheses compatible with the assumptions of the scientific method. Both Skinner and Rogers agree that human behavior should be studied under the assumption of science that it is determined by prior causation. Should literature, art, philosophy, or religion assume that human behavior is freely self-determined, assuming prior causation?