

insists, is always a response to an external trigger in the environment which surrounds the person. Since he has no interest in what goes on inside the person, he ignores everything which intervenes between the trigger and the response, both of which are external to the person, and pours scorn on any belief that there is anything between these two. Any such belief he assumes to be concerned with fiction or myth and refers to it as "mentalism" or "autonomous man." Equally mythical are associated ideas, such as "freedom" or "dignity."

In his discussion of these "myths," Skinner begins by saying that our lives and our society are in terrible shape. This, he insists, is because we know so little about human behavior. What we need is "a technology of behaviour." Although this is the title of the first chapter in this book, discussion of this panacea never gets beyond this admonition, and there is no further mention of the need or nature of this technology. Instead, in his usual fashion, Skinner reverts to his past-time of knocking down all the strawmen of his own versions of the past efforts of psychology. We lack a technology of behavior, says Skinner, because we have not tried to make one but have, instead, wasted our time for 2,500 years trying to understand human psychology by introspection and by discussing the problem in terms of mind, perception, consciousness, feelings, purposes, human nature, causes, and such "unscientific" ideas!

To Skinner none of these things exist, and we must discard them and ignore all internal and subjective processes. Instead, we should concern ourselves only with "objective" phenomena, especially with how to obtain "desirable" behavior by manipulation of the individual's external experience, above all by limitation and deprivation of experience, to the point where a desirable response can be elicited by a specific external trigger. This process by which men will be reduced to robots responding to signals is called by Skinner "operant conditioning." He would resent our calling this "brainwashing," not only because this is an objectionable word, but also because the brain is one of the things which Skinner refuses to recognize, since it is internal and not part of behavior. Skinner does not tell us what he means by "desirable" behavior, but it is quite clear that he means submissive and unresisting response to the established triggers.

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According to Skinner, any way of dealing with human or social problems other than by operant conditioning is "pre-scientific," while his way is "scientific," and is, indeed, the advancing edge of scientific advance, a kind of wave of the future in human development and the only possible protection against approaching social disaster. Any criticism of Skinner's ideas is dismissed by him with contempt as based on ignorance, old-fashioned, pre-scientific