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BEHAVIOROLOGICAL CORRECTIONS: A NEW CONCEPT OF PRISON FROM A NATURAL SCIENCE DISCIPLINE

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ABSTRACT: A new correctional system, operated from a behaviorological perspective, is described; this system differs substantially from corrections informed by traditional behavior sciences. Relevant basic behaviorological principles are reviewed, followed by the behaviorological definition of corrections. Relations between economics and ethics are examined as facets of the behaviorological technology of criminal justice. A behavior technology of corrections is outlined, including an economic system around which the entire operation is conducted. The nature of the related governmental and educational subsystems is described. The sociology of inmate populations under behaviorological maintenance is examined and related to the culture at large. Special features of transition to life on the outside are discussed.

Introduction

The relative worth of human beings has always preoccupied social analysts. Strong conclusions have emerged in various cultural agencies and have been codified. The natural contingencies of social intercourse have also conditioned attitudes and shaped patterns of behavior with important practical implications for how people regard one another. Traditional behavioral scientists have tended to accept assumptions arising from ancient origins in non-scientific domains of the culture. As Skinner (1971) noted:

> Twenty-five hundred years ago it might have been said that man understood himself as well as any other part of his world. Today he is the thing he understands least. Physics and biology have come a long way, but there has been no comparable development of anything like a science of human behavior. Greek physics and biology are now of historical interest only (no modern physicist or biologist would turn to Aristotle for help), but the dialogues of Plato are still assigned to students and cited as if they threw light on human behavior. Aristotle could not have understood a page of modern physics or biology, but Socrates and his friends would have little trouble in following most current discussions of human affairs. (p. 3)

The inadequacy of the traditional foundation behavior sciences is far ranging and

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