

ONWARDS FROM MASLOW

There is a danger of Abe Maslow being deified as the father and founder of humanistic psychology. Most of the books which mention him are either uncritical or irrelevant, and now that he is dead the temptation to turn him into some kind of saint is almost irresistible. But in fact his theory, while opening up all sorts of important new vistas, is both misleading and incomplete.

In brief and oversimplified form, his theory said that man had a hierarchy of weak instinctoid needs:

1. *Physiological* Hunger and thirst, sensory stimulation, temperature adjustment etc.
2. *Safety* Defences against danger, fight/flight responses, fear etc.
3. *Love and Belongingness* Wish for affection, for a place in the group, tenderness etc.
4. *Self-esteem* Mastery, competence, reputation, recognition, avoidance of failure etc.
5. *Self-actualisation* To become everything that one is capable of becoming, to be that self which one truly is etc.

And it went on to say that the satisfaction of each one of the five needs depended upon the prior satisfaction of those earlier in the list. Thus the physiological needs came first; when these were satisfied - not totally, but to an adequate extent - the safety needs emerged for

attention; when these were satisfied the love and belongingness needs emerged, and so on. As long as we were still struggling with our self-esteem needs, the self-actualization needs could not emerge.

Now this seems a reasonable enough picture, and it fits in with quite a lot of other work. What it is mainly saying is that it is need gratification which leads to growth, rather than need frustration or need discipline. But what it is also saying, and here comes one of the points I want to question, is that there is a kind of dividing line between the earlier needs and the later, in that the earlier needs are deficiency motivated while the self-actualisation need is abundance motivated.

These terms are not in common use, and it is worth while to explain them briefly here. By deficiency motivation is meant any action which is taken to remove some lack; it is what we most often call coping behaviour. (In the computer world and in biology it is often called homeostasis). We smell burning; and cannot rest until it is tracked down somehow or disappears. A great deal of our behaviour is deficiency motivated, in this sense.

Now abundance motivation is quite different. It takes off from something in us, rather than something in the outside world - though it may well be sparked off by something outside us. It is a desire for what is not necessary - for what goes beyond what is necessary. We may run across a field just because it is fun; we may read a novel just for pleasure; we may go surfing just for the challenge; we may write a poem for no particular rea-

son. Abundance motivation is sometimes called growth motivation or outgoing motivation or tension seeking (as opposed to the tension reduction of deficiency motivation).

What Maslow is saying, then, is that we will expect to find abundance motivation at the self-actualization level - and as I read him, he tends to identify the two things, or to run them together. Here and there he seems to suggest that we can find some abundance motivation at the self-esteem level and at the love and belongingness level, but he never says this, to the best of my knowledge, about the safety or the physiological level.

Now it seems certainly and obviously true that we do find abundance motivation at the level of self-actualization. But I want to say two things about this. One, that we can also find deficiency motivation at this level; and two, that we can also find abundance motivation at the two lowest levels. In other words, I want to make a dividing line right down the middle of the chart:

ABUNDANCE MOTIVATION

DEFICIENCY MOTIVATION

5. Self-actualisation
4. Self-esteem
3. Love and belongingness
2. Safety
1. Physiological

Very young babies show exploratory tendencies, playful activity, curiosity and so on; they do not have to wait to become self-actualising adults before they can get away from deficiency motivation. And we all know we can eat or drink from purely aesthetic motives, not only from hunger or thirst. So I think we

can say that at every level of activity we can find deficiency motivation and abundance motivation side by side. Maslow himself says quite clearly that there can be deficiency-motivated love, a kind of love-hunger; but there can also be abundance-motivated love, which is non-possessive and not need-oriented at all.

But how about self-actualization sometimes being deficiency-motivated? To people who have studied Maslow this may seem something like heresy.

Funnily enough, it was Maslow himself who discovered this, in the last years of his life. One of the key things about the self-actualization level had always been, for Maslow, the fact that it was at this level that the peak-experience appeared. The peak experience is an experience of great importance in anyone's life - it is one of the happiest moments, one of the most ecstatic moments, one of the moments of rapture. One seems, for a moment, to have entered into a different realm of being. Such moments often seemed to constitute a 'great leap forward' in self-actualization, giving a moment of insight into oneself and the world which could affect much of one's future thinking and feeling. The peak experience was often some kind of breakthrough in one's life, and Maslow did some important research to show that a whole new set of values was identified with such experiences - set of values which seemed to identify the best and healthiest kind of human being. So the peak experience was very important in Maslow's thinking.

But with the coming of LSD and the Esalen Institute, it appeared that perfectly authentic peak experiences were to be had simply and directly, almost for the asking. And Maslow turned back, appalled, from the new world he had helped to create:

If the *sole* good in life becomes the peak experience, and if all means to this end become

good, and if more peak experiences are better than fewer, then one can *force* the issue, push actively, strive and hunt and fight for them. So they have often moved over into magic, into the secret and esoteric, into the exotic, the occult, the dramatic and effortful, the dangerous, the cultish.

In other words, people could now start to say, 'I'm a bit off and miserable at the moment, so I think I need a peak experience this weekend.' And this is precisely the language of deficiency motivation.

Instead of being 'surprised by joy', 'turning on' is scheduled, promised, advertised, sold, hustled into being, and can get to be regarded as a commodity. More exotic, artificial, striving techniques may escalate further until they become *necessary* and until jadedness and impotence ensue.

So it does seem clear now that we can have deficiency OR abundance motivation at EVERY level. So what determines which it is? It seems to me that the whole culture in which we live can have a very powerful effect in generally encouraging deficiency motivation or in encouraging abundance motivation. Many people recently have been writing books to show that our educational system works mainly in the direction of encouraging deficiency motivation and discouraging abundance motivation. But it is not only in education, it is in the family, in industry, in hospitals, in most of our leisure activities and in the mass media of communication. In all these areas we are encouraged to want what we wanted before, and to take the lead from someone else, to fit in.

But of course this leads to a stagnant society, where any change arouses defences designed to overcome or neutralise it. This seems disastrous in an age of rapid change like the present - what we need are more creative people, ready to make the most of new events and ride the surf of change. And not only that, we need

people who will anticipate and create change which works in the direction of man's humanity, rather than in a way which turns him into a machine.

As soon as we look in this direction, we find that deficiency motivation and abundance motivation are not just interesting psychological categories, but lead to political thoughts. And this brings us into the second area where Maslow is defective.

Maslow never did justice to the political arena. His highest level of self-actualization was always an individual thing - once the individual had moved into the realm of being (which we may now translate as abundance motivation on the self-actualization level) he was on his own. In his later years he began to see the inadequacy of this:

I now consider that the book was too imbalanced toward the individualistic and too hard on groups, organisations and communities.

This was always true, and I think we have to go beyond the level of self-actualization, as a purely isolated individual thing. I want to suggest that we consider the possibility of more stages or levels, above the five levels which Maslow has described. One or two of these are suggested by Maslow himself, while others are not, but let us look at them and see whether they make sense or not.

6. Spreading the good stuff
7. Constructive conflict
8. Transcendent co-operative activity
9. Universal consciousness

At level 6, one just knows that one's sympathies are not restricted to one's own skin or the present time. As Maslow points out:

The Buddhists distinguish between the Pratyekabuddha, who wins enlightenment only

for himself, independently of others, from the Bodhisattva who, having attained enlightenment, yet feels that his own salvation is imperfect so long as others are unenlightened.

And this sympathy may well extend to animals, as well as to small groups and organisations. To live at this level is also hard, also fully human, also creative; it is both easier and more difficult than level 5. It is easier, because there is greater social approval for the unselfish than for the selfish; it is more difficult because the burden of interfering in other people's lives is tremendous. There is also the new burden of the past and the future - one cannot live for the moment as at level 5. There is a great belief in the future at this stage, and the idea of purpose and expectation is much stronger than at level 5.

Deficiency motivation can be very harmful at this stage, as with all these higher stages. It is possible for altruism to be motivated by guilt feelings which have to be assuaged. It is possible to invade other people's lives as a way of achieving domination and control. This is the kind of thing which Laing describes under the heading of violence masquerading as love.

Level 7 is called 'constructive conflict'. Again, Maslow does mention this:

Some data are available to indicate that self-actualising people (anyone beyond level 4 actuated by abundance motivation) and healthier college students give vent to their justified indignation and disapproval more wholeheartedly and with less uncertainty than do average people.

And in his very interesting book *Radical Man* Charles Hampden-Turner accumulates a vast body of evidence to show that the radical students of the New Left in America seem to be just at this stage of psychosocial development. The ability to say 'No' is crucial at this stage. Mary Follett had a lot of insight into this level.

Fear of difference is fear of life itself. It is possible to conceive conflict as not necessarily a wasteful outbreak of incompatibilities, but a *normal* process by which socially valuable differences register themselves for the enrichment of all concerned.

This is the level at which dialectical thinking becomes really important, as conflict is seen to take many forms - man against man, group against group, class against class. But the conflict has a purpose - a new and radically different system is aimed at.

This is essentially a revolutionary level, in contrast to the gradualism of level 6. Its dangers are equally clear. It is all too easy to get so wrapped up in the details of the conflict that one forgets - except in slogan form - what it was supposed to be for. And at this point it is easy for the means actually to become incompatible with the ends. This is also a difficult level to stay with, because the creativity and abundance motivation which properly characterise it tend to turn into defensiveness and deficiency motivation at the point where a destructive move is actually made; at such a point one may be joined by allies from earlier psycho-social levels, who are simply attracted by the prospect of a punch-up. And if the destruction goes on long enough, these people may take over - the classic process outlined by Eric Hoffer in *The True Believer*. But this is an important level, which Maslow says little about.

He says even less about level 8, which is called 'Transcendent co-operative activity'. By saying transcendent, I mean that those at this level have made what Marcuse calls the Great Refusal, and are able, or at least prepared, to look at their own society from the outside. So far, then, these people have at least had the insight of the previous level. But by saying co-operative activity, I mean that the person is committed to a group of others, not merely as comrades fighting

shoulder to shoulder (so that all one is really interested in is the reliability of the shoulder) but as real people - as real as the people who will exist 'after the revolution'. The person finds him or herself in and through others, together with whom he or she is creating a community which creatively criticises the existing society. Small groups like this can be widely diffused, with a high degree of autonomy, mobility and flexibility.

Such small groups tend not to be so deadly serious as those which arise at the previous levels. As Marcuse says:

Thus, in some sectors of the opposition, the radical protest tends to become antinomian, anarchistic and even non-political. Here is another reason why the rebellion takes on the weird and clownish forms which get on the nerves of the Establishment. In the face of the gruesomely serious totality of institutionalised politics, satire, irony and laughing provocation become a necessary dimension of the new politics. The rebels use the desperate laughter and the cynical defiance of the fool as means for demasking the deeds of the serious ones who govern the whole.

But again we have seen that it is possible for groups like this to go over to deficiency motivation - partly, perhaps, because the demands are so impossibly high at this level. One is virtually asking for a miniature new society, without any of the institutional foundations which normally underpin such arrangements. So all the time one is not only fighting against one's own previous socialization, but also against all the institutional currents in the wider society. It almost seems to be easier to make it work at the extremes - among those who are worst off and most heavily discriminated against - than among those who appear to have more ideas and more resources. The emphasis in all these groups is on experience and life-style, rather than on theory.

At level 9, neither Maslow nor Marcuse help us much. It is Norman Brown who has given me most insight into what uni-

versal consciousness might mean. There certainly are links with Maslow's peak-experiences, but what is missing in Maslow and found in Brown is a certain feeling for negation and disaster. It seems that the way to universal consciousness is a way which leads through catastrophe. It means the death of language, the death of sanity, the death of politics, the death of sex, the death of safety and the death of separation, among other things.

I can't help it if this sounds mysterious, because it is mysterious. Somehow it is our most reasonable and logical analysis which is standing in the way of our understanding. But if we get rid of our logical analysis, how can we talk about anything. Maybe only in poetry. This is a hard thing to visualise, even harder to make real. There is something about it in Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*.

Since time was, the serious concerns of man have always been fights against catastrophe, against sickness, war, poverty, enslavement, always the horsemen of the Apocalypse riding. But what to do in that scary void *beyond catastrophe* where all, supposedly, will be possible?

And the last chapter in Brown's *Love's Body* is also called Nothing. No wonder it's difficult to write about. Maybe we could meet and talk about it. I'm not going to write any more about it.

So anyway, here we have four more levels to add to the Maslow ones, two of which at least I think he might approve of, and two more which I think he ought to approve of. And all through these, as well, we have deficiency and abundance motivation moving. And all through them we have the same pressure from the culture, systematically pushing us away from the higher levels and pushing us away from abundance motivation into deficiency motivation.

The diagram sums up what I have said. I hope Maslow is nodding, and dancing on.

PREVAILING WINDS OF OUR SOCIAL SYSTEM

FAMILY		
EDUCATION		
WORK		
LEISURE	ABUNDANCE	DEFICIENCY
RELIGION	9	9
ART	8	8
MEDIA	7	7
	6	6
	5	5
	4	4
	3	3
	2	2
	1	1



The emotional significance of muscle tension is not adequately understood. The unresolved emotional conflicts of childhood are structured in the body by chronic muscular tensions that enslave the individual by limiting his motility and capacity for feeling. These tensions which grip the body - mould it, split it and distort it - must be eliminated before one can achieve inner freedom. Without this inner freedom it is illusory to believe that one can think, feel, act and love freely.

Alexander Lowen *The Betrayal of the Body* (Collier, 1967)