

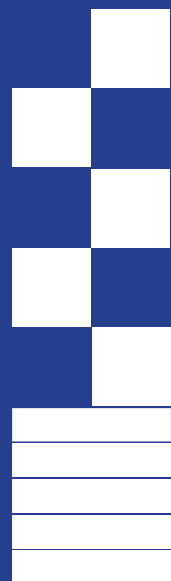
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# Creativity: Process and Personality

Larry Gross

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edition

with a new  
preface by  
Larry Gross



*Larry Gross*

# CREATIVITY

*Process and Personality*

A MEDIASTUDIES.PRESS PUBLIC DOMAIN EDITION

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## Chapter V: Abraham H. Maslow: The Mystery of Health

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THIS CASE-STUDY OCCUPIES, of necessity, an unusual position in the research I am reporting. The reason for this is that the subject of the study is also the sponsor and advisor for the research. Moreover, my general psychological viewpoint and conceptions of creativity and the creative personality have been strongly influenced and greatly stimulated by contact with Abraham Maslow as advisor, teacher and writer. While I think it is accurate to say that the outline which guided the interview was my work, as was the definition of creativity I am using as a *vade mecum*, his influence certainly extends to these as well. However, it is my belief that this did not create any real difficulties in preparing the case-study.

The interview used for this study took place in two parts. The first, on August 8, 1963, lasted two hours and dealt with sections I and II of the outline (cf. Chapter II); the second, on October 11, 1963, also 2 hours, dealt with sections III, IV and V. In the preparation of this study I am using, besides the recorded interviews, information from writings and other personal communications.

Abraham Maslow occupies an unusual position in contemporary psychology. He is one of the two subjects, the other being Skinner, who are commonly regarded as representing a school of thought, a commitment to a comprehensive theory of human nature. In this respect the others are all more eclectic, or committed to more limited, specific areas of psychological inquiry; even though, as Simon for example, they may present fairly comprehensive theories. Maslow and Skinner, however, come closest to formulating systematic views of human nature as a whole, albeit from radically different, even opposite, positions.

But Maslow is unusual in this too. He represents a position that is a result of a synthesis, in its basic assumptions, of psychoanalytic thought, gestalt-organismic theory and much experimental knowledge, and utilizes a great many of the culture and personality insights first formulated by anthropology. The resultant approach, which he has termed

holistic-dynamic (1954), in true holistic manner goes beyond the sum of its parts. He has carried this view, to a greater extent than ever before, into the largely uncharted and mysterious realms of psychological health and human fullness of being. This exploratory venture utilizes the beach-heads of previous thinkers and the intuitive maps of artists, poets and mystics. In recognizing, bringing together, and building on the common interests of many seemingly disparate schools, theories, and thinkers, he has outlined the aims and methods of a "Third Force" in modern psychology (1962a, p. vi). It is this synthetic, integrated position that he has come to represent, a commitment to a theory of "Humanistic Psychology." The paradigm we shall trace, then, is more of a bringing together, and expanding upon, than a replacement of other paradigmatic view points.

## SCHIZOPHRENOGENIC ENVIRONMENT

Abraham Maslow was born in 1908, and grew up in New York City. His recollections of his childhood differ from the other subjects in that their predominant tone is one of unhappy experiences, largely discontinuous with his adult life in tone and nature. He is the only one of the subjects who is an oldest sibling, which may be related to the unhappiness he reports. "Because of my troubles my younger siblings got along better." (In this context we might recall Simon's comment that his older brother had a "terrible time" with his father, who was "milder by the time I came along.")

One item of the outline around which many of Maslow's recollections centered was that of apartness, isolation, aloneness. This seems to be a dominant factor in his childhood. It is related to religion, to his family environment, and to physical factors. His general impression of his feeling at that time is one of almost total isolation and a sense of inferiority, extending even to his intellectual abilities, in a curious way.

"I think it is important being Jewish, especially in my generation. For me it definitely meant exile from the society. I was on the outside looking in, especially since I never lived in fully Jewish neighborhoods. In one I remember there was a little enclave of Jewish families, surrounded by Italians and Irish, so that going out of that area, going to the library for instance, meant going through the Irish neighborhood. And there was guerrilla warfare, you had to sneak and hide and run and so on. Going in the other direction was Italian territory. I got ganged often enough, and grew up thinking of Irish and Italians, Christians in general, Churches, religions, as a child, as cruel and nasty. So religion to me meant that you're nasty, or cruel, or a hater, or crazy."

"This feeling of being an outsider was double so, because I had a very unhappy home. I loathed my mother. She was a horrible woman and still is. My father fled the whole darn family; he was a nice guy but he just wasn't there. As far back as I can remember, even at the age of five or six, I lived in the library. I can remember going to school an hour

early and waiting for the teacher, and she would let me in, and I would sit there reading books—the primers. I lived in a world of books, not of people. School was beloved if I had a nice teacher, but hated when, as most often, they were not nice. I was persecuted in the style that Torrance describes, or Getzels and Jackson (1962). Occasionally, though, there was somebody very protective and nice.”

“I hated home so much that I didn’t even eat there. I lost my appetite when I came home. Later on, in high school, I was away all the time. I used to live in the 42nd St. Library Saturday and Sunday. I tried to leave home before breakfast, so I wouldn’t have to see my mother. And then just lived for years without food, 15¢ for lunch or something. That was a very miserable family. I had fights with my younger siblings.”

“My mother was a very superstitious, religious woman. To me as a child it was all the same. And I learnt from her, certainly, to despise everything about it. My father was culturally Jewish, but not religious. Because of this kind of background, it’s easier for me to be aware of phoniness and dishonesty than for most people. Like you’re not so committed to the phoniness, you don’t accept it, as the fish accepts the water, it’s like a strange thing. I can’t look at television, for instance, I just can’t stand the crap. It just enrages me.”

“I later became friends with my father. He finally divorced my mother, and then we lived together. He was a very nice fellow, we were friends until he died. I left home when I was in college and never returned. I haven’t seen my mother for 25 years.”

“Oh yes, I was all alone in the world. Apartness, yes; difference, yes. Even my superiorities, my intelligence, for instance, I thought something was wrong with me. I felt different and this made for feelings of inferiority. The fact that I liked to read books I kept a secret or hid, and always envied the all-American boys. Persecution, yes. Both as a Jew, and as a timid boy, who wouldn’t and didn’t fight. I was a very ugly child and youngster. In high school and college, I was 6 feet tall and weighed 112 lbs. I felt peculiar; this was really in my blood, a very profound feeling that somehow I was wrong. Never any feelings that I was superior that I can remember. Just one big aching inferiority complex.”

He only had one real friend as a child, his cousin Will Maslow. They spent a lot of time together, and eventually went to high school together. In high school, while a good student, the feelings of inferiority still remained, although the teachers treated him generally better than before. The reason for this may have been an intelligence test, in which he scored very high, which may have been known to his teachers, although he only found out years later. One example of this feeling that he cites occurred when an examination was announced for a complete scholarship at Cornell. His cousin Will took the test, scored highest in the state, and went to Cornell. But, he recalls, “it never would have occurred to me that I should take it. Me? But I was as good as Will! I could have spent four years at Cornell. But I never would have dared take the examination.”

He did participate to some extent in social activities, although of an intellectual sort. He was editor of a science magazine. In this context he recalls that in one issue of the magazine he wrote an article on the possibilities of generating atomic energy. He was hypothesizing on this possible source of energy and its applications. One of the uses that occurred to him was that of a submarine that would be able, with atomic energy, to stay submerged for long periods and travel at great speeds. This was in 1924!

After high school he went through college in a scattered sort of way. He went to the Cornell Agricultural College for a semester, which was free, to be near his cousin Will. He returned to New York, partly because Cornell didn't work out (hardly the right college to be in), and partly to be near his cousin Bertha, whom he later married. His wife, whom we shall mention further below, was to become the center of his emotional life for many years. "I think of happiness beginning with my wife." His mother, to be consistent, tried hard to block his marriage. Throughout the period of his courtship he spent a great deal of time at his future wife's home. Her mother, his aunt, was a much more sympathetic person than his mother.

He went to Law School for a very short while. This had been the wish of his father. It had always been understood that this is what he would do, and being timid, he never dared disagree. But after a short time in Law School he decided to quit. And he mustered up his courage. Going to his father, "I told him that I was not going to be a lawyer. I think that was the first courageous thing I ever did."

He went to Medical School also, for one year, but this too was not what he wanted. Feeling that hundreds of hours of memorizing were not the best kind of education, he left. Most of his other undergraduate education was at City College, and then at Wisconsin. He chose Wisconsin as a place to study psychology. The basis for this choice was the faculty, but he discovered when he arrived that, "it was a fake catalogue, they just weren't there." But he stayed at Wisconsin, graduated and went on to do graduate work, receiving his doctorate there.

It was at Wisconsin that he first began "to emerge from (his) cocoon." This was, along with his marriage, one of the major steps that cut him off from the unhappiness and isolation of his childhood.

"This is what you call now a schizophrenogenic environment. A mother who was totally rejecting and totally selfish; a shadowy father; no friends; total isolation. How the hell I didn't become schizophrenic I don't know."

## GROWTH AND MATURITY

"When I went to Wisconsin there was a change, in being treated by the professors as being one of them, like an equal, like an intellectual."



Young Maslow was something of an oddity at Wisconsin, but in a good sense. The young New Yorker was bright, eager to learn, full of intellectual curiosity, and he stood out among the “farm boys and country yokels” of Wisconsin. “I must have been the best student on the whole damn campus. The best student they ever had.” He was also somewhat puppyish and eagerly filial, and his professors took him up, “they fed me, even helped me buy my clothes.”

He became close to a number of his professors at Wisconsin, although “I never really respected any of them.” Yet, the emergence from the cocoon of timidity was a slow process. At one time the Wisconsin Academy of Science announced a competition for an essay, the winning essay to be read at a meeting of the academy. Maslow submitted an entry, and won the contest. But when the day of the meeting came, “I just couldn’t face them, I fled, and went for a long walk somewhere. Just never showed up at all.”

Maslow’s early work at Wisconsin was in the areas of comparative and experimental psychology, biology and neurophysiology. Here he began working with Harry Harlow on primate behavior and assisted Harlow in studies of delayed reactions of monkeys. This resulted in his first publication, with Harlow, in 1932. Although the work was dull, and repetitive, it succeeded in arousing his curiosity, more out of a desire for thoroughness in investigation than because of the inherent fascination of the topic. During the summer, back in New York, he found that the Bronx Zoo had a better group of monkeys than Wisconsin, and spent the summer running delayed reactions there. This resulted in another paper, on which Harlow asked to have his name also, although “he hadn’t written a word of it.”

It was while doing this tedious work that he had his first original, creative insight in psychology. He had noticed two striking things about the monkeys: the predominance of “domination behavior; and the screwing, which went on all the time—male and female, male and male, female and female, it didn’t seem to make any difference.” Being interested at the time in psychoanalytic theory, he had already become puzzled by the divergence between Freud and Adler. Freud placed all his emphasis on sex and social behavior; Adler saw everything in terms of dominance and subordination. So, “I started taking notes. I had two sets of note cards. And I wrote down everything I saw the monkeys doing. On one set, the Freudian set, I put down all the sexual behavior; on the other, the Adlerian set, all the dominance behavior. I had hundreds of these cards.” While running thousands of dull delayed reaction tests, he would take notes on the behavior of the monkeys. And one day, he suddenly had an insight of the sort known to creativity theory as combining previously discrete elements. “Suddenly the two pairs of notes came together.” He had realized that the two types of phenomena were not separate, for he saw that, “the dominant ones were always the ones who mounted the others.” The insight that the sexual behavior was a manifestation of the dominance relations was an integration of Freud and Adler, and he became tremendously interested

in investigating this idea. This was, at the time, a novel and original insight. There had been some work similar to it, with chickens (pecking orders, etc.) but this was generally unknown, and was also not related in the same way to psychoanalytic theory.

He started studying this phenomenon systematically. In the course of demonstrating his hypothesis that the sexual behavior was mainly a manifestation of dominance, he made one of the first of his creative methodological innovations. In order to determine easily, and conclusively which monkey of a group was the dominant, he invented a new method. "I invented it, among others, without realizing it. I was so absorbed. To see which monkey was dominant, I took a big pipe, and dropped one piece of food in, so that it made a noise coming down. Skinner would call it an anticipatory stimulus. And then the dominant animal would always get it. The dominant monkey would get 100% of the food, not just a majority. That method is now standard" (cf. 1936a, 1936b, 1936c).

This research he undertook as a doctoral thesis project. His choice was not an easy one, for unfortunate reasons. Earlier, he had proposed a Master's thesis topic on aesthetic reactions, and it was turned down as unpsychological. A second topic was also refused, and he was forced to take a topic, "The effect of varying external conditions on learning, retention and reproduction," that was more in keeping with current conceptions of what a psychological project was. He was ashamed of the thesis and hated doing it. Later, "I snuck into the library one night, took my thesis out of the shelves and threw it out the window. I even tore the card out of the catalogue." But his professors insisted he send the thesis to a journal. "I finally agreed, I was sure it would get turned down by the editor. But I was fooled, they accepted it and it was published." However, in this case, as in the monkey work, he did find something that was interesting in the research although not what he was supposed to be doing; and published another paper, "The effect of varying time intervals between acts of learning with a note on proactive inhibition." This paper was, in 1934, one of the first discussions of the effect of pro-active inhibition, which eventually became one of the important aspects of memory research, an aspect up till then ignored by most studies, with resultant important defects.

When he proposed his doctoral topic he met with not much better luck. While it dealt with animal behavior, a psychologically kosher field, it also dealt with sexuality, which was decidedly *terra non grata*. "I was nobody's disciple. I was my own man. Even my doctoral dissertation—no one would sign for it, nobody wanted to sponsor it, so I went ahead and did it without a sponsor. They were all afraid of it." To do a doctoral thesis without a sponsor was certainly a daring thing for a student to do. "It was one of the most courageous things I have ever done." His intellectual curiosity and independence were able to overcome his timidity.

Just as it was finished, Solly Zuckerman, at the London Zoo, published a book demonstrating the same theory. Maslow's thesis, which was more complete and thorough, was never published. One reason for this is that when he left Wisconsin he originally planned

to continue his studies on the dominance and sexuality of monkeys. Some further work was done (cf. 1936a, 1936b) but he couldn't continue as he had planned. His idea had been to investigate the behavior by castrating the monkeys, and then administering hormones, so as to have better control. He needed to work some place that had adequate animal facilities, and neurological facilities as well; and he applied to the few places that met these qualifications. The request was turned down. The reason later turned out to have been anti-semitism.

The monkey research having reached an impasse, Maslow went from Wisconsin to New York, where he taught at Brooklyn College for fourteen years. New York, it turned out, was a very fortunate place to be. "It was, beyond a doubt, the center of the psychologist universe of that time" (1954, p. ix). It was there that he found those who were to become his first real teachers and colleagues. "In New York I met great people, understood what it meant to be an innovator, a discoverer, an inventor." The next few years were, for him, the most important learning experience in his life, an experience of a sort that few are lucky enough to have. But luck was not the important factor.

## APPRENTICE IN ATHENS

"It was like coming out of the dark into the light. It was like a farm boy coming to Athens." Abraham Maslow, Ph.D., Wisconsin, came to New York full of curiosity eagerness, and ambition. Dazzled by the light of this modern Athens, he set himself to learn as much as was humanly possible from the great men gracing "the center of the psychological universe of that time. Many of the great European and American originators were available, even to a young student, and I have many of them to thank for their kindness and patience. No young man has ever been so fortunate in his teachers and friends than I" (Maslow, 1954, p. ix). (In my discussion of this period I shall rely heavily upon the preface to *Motivation and Personality* (1954), which is a "very carefully thought out" acknowledgement of the mentors and colleagues Maslow met and learned from in New York.)

"Gestalt psychology was taught me by Max Wertheimer and Kurt Koffka at the New School for Social Research. Later I found in Kurt Goldstein my bridge between the holistic and the dynamic" (Maslow, 1954, p. ix). The gestalt-organismic influence was one of the important ones in the development of Maslow's theories. But equally important was the personal impact, especially of Max Wertheimer. In this instance, as in others, not only did Maslow actively seek out the great man, but he apprenticed himself in a devoted, filial manner. The model for his relationship with Wertheimer, as with others, was a father-son, teacher-student one, in which he sat at the feet of his mentor, eagerly learning and absorbing. The learning was not confined to words. For a young, timid man, starved for a father to admire and emulate, the attraction of such people

as Wertheimer was profound. He was fascinated by this man's character as well as his teaching, and this fascination with Wertheimer and others led eventually to the study of the self-actualizing personality.

One important fact about this period is not brought out in the preface to his book. This may be termed Maslow's unusual perceptiveness, which was combined with his eagerness and desire to learn. The people whom he sought out, and at whose feet he gratefully sat, were not being generally sought after at that time, incredible as it may seem now. "There were only three of us who regularly turned up at Wertheimer's seminars. And all three are top psychologists. There were Hy Witkin, Sol Asch and myself, and frequently no one else—even though we kept trying to drum up trade for the seminars." Only three regular students for a psychologist whom Maslow, at least, considers, "as great as Freud, except for the writings" (for Wertheimer wrote very little, "so you wouldn't know unless you knew him"). (Only those who were good enough to see Wertheimer's merit became his devoted students. "Asch gave up all his own work to help Wertheimer write *Productive Thinking*.")

This pattern of seeking out and apprenticing himself to the great thinkers around him brought Maslow into close relationships with many teachers. Having heard Erich Fromm lecture, he went to visit him, introduced himself, and began another filial relationship, learning whatever he could. He was a regular at Alfred Adler's Friday evening meetings for a number of years, "the only non-Adlerian who came at all regularly."

Not all of these mentors were men. It is understandable that his filial needs would certainly extend to women, perhaps to an even greater extent. Two women in particular influenced him. Karen Horney became an important teacher, to whom he was much attached, and from whom he learned much about psychoanalytic theory.

Along with Max Wertheimer, probably the most important teacher Maslow found in New York was Ruth Benedict. "She was motherly to me, or I was filial with her. I just loved her, everybody did. I tagged after her." As with Wertheimer, the influence was twofold. From Benedict he learned about anthropology, in particular the theories she was working on in the field of personality and culture. This was a new departure for Maslow, as it was a novel venture for psychology which had not at that point utilized the achievements of anthropology to any real extent. A paper, "Personality and Patterns of Culture" (1937), which he wrote at that time, was one of the first attempts by a psychologist to deal with these factors. Ruth Benedict, as a warm and wonderful person, towards whom he felt very filial, was one of the major models for Maslow's study of self-actualized people.

He also studied anthropology from Ralph Linton while still in Wisconsin, Margaret Mead, Gregory Bateson, Alexander Lesser, and Lucien and Jane Banks. At Ruth Benedict's suggestion he spent a summer on a field trip among the Northern Blackfoot Indians.

Other important influences were Gardner and Lois Murphy, who “treated me like a son,” Ruth Monroe and E. L. Thorndike. Thorndike took him on as a research assistant, supported and encouraged him. “He taught me much about kindness and nobility that he never put down in writing” (Maslow, 1954, p. x).

These relationships were mostly on a parent-son model, in which Maslow listened while his teachers talked. His relations with peers, with friends and colleagues, when they were meaningful, tended to be ones in which he talked and they listened. His best friend at that time, Rod Menzies, who died prematurely, was both fatherly and protective, and listened to him.

Since then he has had very few real peers, in the sense of give and take. While at Berkeley for two years (not at the University) he met Elsa Frankel-Brunswick, from whom he learned a good deal. She arranged an informal seminar which met during those years, in which Krech, MacKinnon, Mandelbaum, Sanford and Tolman participated, but there too, “I was talking. I was explaining my new theories, they were listening.”

At Brandeis, where he has been since 1951, he feels that he has peers, in an intellectual sense, and he has learned from them (cf. 1962a. Acknowledgments). But the sort of peer he would like, he doesn’t have. “The closest approximation, in that real sense of argument, is Frank Manuel, but he thinks all my work is a lot of shit. Our talks are very good debates.”

Coming from an affection-deprived childhood, he was able to form strong filial-learning relations with his mentors. As an established psychologist he finds audiences and colleagues to whom he talks. But a peer relation of equality and common interest he has not been able to find.

“I have nobody in the whole world to talk with about my own work, I decided some time ago. I am a lonely worker. When I want to have a conversation, it is with myself, I have a whole drawerful of journals.” Much of Maslow’s thinking is done in the form of long journal notations, a practice he has utilized for many years. One such set of notes was dictated into a tape-recorder, and transcribed later and printed as *Summer Notes on Social Psychology of Industry and Management* (1962b). “What does all that sum up? Loneliness, intellectual loneliness. Usually I don’t mind, but sometimes I just feel lonely. I recognize, when I can have a good chat with somebody how exhilarated I get, how happy and excited. For me talking is such a part of thinking. I can talk something out and I know I am more intelligent then, more creative. The best stuff I have ever done has been like playing a basketball back and forth. I have been isolating myself more and more, trying to get detached, leaving the world. Partly because I am disappointed with Brandeis, with the administration; especially in the last six months, I’ve sort of given up.”

At Brooklyn College Maslow found enjoyment and satisfaction in teaching, he was one of the most popular teachers, his courses were mobbed. I do not know how much

of this satisfaction was the sort reported by Simon and Rokeach, of being able to clarify ideas in the communication of teaching. I suspect it was largely an enjoyment of having eager students, whose attitude was somewhat filial, as his was in turn to his teachers. The role of a good, kind father, educating and helping his students (he even organized an informal class in etiquette for his Brooklyn students), is one with much satisfaction to offer. At Brandeis, however, this has not been the case. Another generation of students, less eager to apprentice themselves than the depression days students of Brooklyn, have been more interested in spoon-feeding, uninvolved learning process, which has not been satisfying or stimulating for the most part. This need has been filled by speaking to all sorts of groups in other colleges, in history, in management training, and so on. In such situations, he feels, he is listened to with the sort of eager, alive interest that he enjoys. It is in such situations that he feels used well, "like a cow with a full teat." As the Jewish saying goes, "more than the calf enjoys sucking the cow's milk, the cow enjoys suckling the calf." At Brandeis this has not been the case, and Maslow feels that "if I had the money, I would stop teaching tomorrow. It isn't worth the time."

## OUT OF THE PRISON-HOUSE

"Shades of the prison-house begin to close upon the growing boy." Wordsworth's pessimistic depiction of the process of growth and maturation is the opposite of the gradual opening of the prison-house of fear, inferiority, and timidity in which Abraham Maslow had been enclosed during his unhappy childhood. In his discussion of the sections of the outline (Chapter II; II) dealing with motivation and personality, the predominant feature is the slow replacement of timidity and fear with confidence, of unhappiness with happiness, of inferiority with realistic self-awareness of health and creativity. The emergence from the cocoon was a slow, difficult journey from deficiency to a state of fuller being.

"Achievement motivation. I would have to rephrase that. I'd call it a sense of dedication for myself. First of all, I remember as a youngster, right through the first years of college, in New York, simply mopping up education. Schools, lectures, any lecture in the goddamned city and I was there. Plays, and concerts, every week and so on. It sounds crazy, but the [*sic*], I was never home. I remember very well, sitting in Cooper Union, and always being awed by the people on the platform, but they were so far distant that I don't think it ever occurred to me that I could be like them. I remember hearing Bertrand Russell there—those were my heroes. I didn't aspire, I felt too inferior to think of such a wild thing, to be one of those gods! I didn't even think of it, until someplace around the middle years in college, I remember then dedicating myself to that. There is one image in my head. I was all alone in a plant where I had a job. I had a key so I could go there and be alone. And I was reading Sumner's *Folkways*, which changed my whole life, just

inspired me. I remember it was one of the first times it dawned on me that I could be one of these godlike creatures, I could make contributions. And then I remember thinking, in an adolescent way, that I would die content if I could make a contribution to philosophy, to anthropology, to psychology. I don't know why I picked them. I don't know whether I felt then I am going to try and do it, or whether this was too far ahead of me. Maybe this was the beginning of aspiration, the dream, that wouldn't this be a wonderful thing. I also remember thinking that if I could do that, then I would be like those people I admired, and then I could be with them, get to know them. Later, only, when I went to Wisconsin, there was a change, in being treated by the professors as being one of them, like an equal, like an intellectual. It doesn't feel like *n-ach* in McClelland's sense, the ambitions I had, I think I could have done anonymously just as well. I don't think I would have done much different if it were all anonymous."

"It was like somebody deciding to be a nun, or a communist party member. I don't think it happened in a moment, it happened through years. It was a slow development out [*sic*] absolute inferiority and feelings of worthlessness, into a slow acceptance of the fact that I could do things. And my aspiration level just went higher and higher, ever since then, to this day, it still keeps going higher all the time."

"I wanted to be a good psychologist, and I did all the things that a conniving, shrewd, ambitious young man would do; joined everything and so on. But I think that was really secondary to making a contribution. Contribution is the real word here. If I hadn't felt that I could make a contribution, I would have left the field. Being a big shot made no difference. I trained myself in a way that I've never heard of anyone else doing. I took courses which I hated, learnt chemistry; did anthropological field work that I was afraid of, shy about doing; I took mathematics; I took every goddamned thing, whether I liked it or not. The only question was, would it make me a better psychologist? In that sense I was a professional, totally devoted; training myself, as it happens, very well."

"There is now emerging over the horizon a new conception of human sickness and of human health, a psychology that I find so thrilling and so full of wonderful possibilities that I yield to the temptation to present it publicly even before it is checked and confirmed, and therefore before it can be called reliable scientific knowledge" (1962a, p. 3). The person who wrote this can be said, I believe, to have a sense of destiny, perhaps even the zeal of a crusading prophet. But these words, written in 1962 (part of a lecture given, fittingly, at Cooper Union), would not have been possible for Abraham Maslow in the days of admiring from afar the gods of the intellectual world.

"The sense of destiny, yes. But that grew slowly. The full consciousness of it might not have come until I returned to New York after the Ph.D. Something happened there. I came to New York and got a job with Thorndike, that was an act of charity on his part. He picked somebody bright and just supported him. And then he tested me. They gave me tests until I was blue in the face, tested for weeks. And it turned out by the

Careful testing that I had an IQ of 195. Then he checked with a lot of other tests, and in all the tests that I took I made the second highest score ever recorded. Then they told me about it. It was shocking you might say, it dazed me—I walked around in a daze, trying to assimilate this. It went with my consciousness, cause consciously I knew I was smart. But unconsciously it was neurotic, I had this feeling of stupidity, along with a conscious smartness. This confrontation really made turmoil, and it had to be worked through (partly in analysis) and assimilated; and it took a long time, years even, because it contradicted my whole self image. When somebody disagreed with me my tendency always was, ‘well I must be wrong.’ But this supported me against people who disagreed with me. My impulse would be, ‘well he knows better, or he’s sure of himself,’ and then I would say, ‘but look at my IQ, maybe I am right, I am smarter than he is.’ It was a source of courage through those years and enabled me to be creative.”

“I know now that the work I spontaneously pick out for myself, nobody else could do, certainly not as well, and therefore I’d better do it, therefore I’d better not spend any time doing anything that somebody else might be able to do.”

The gradual emergence of self-confidence, and a sense of destiny, has not entirely banished the timidity. “Enjoyment of the iconoclastic role? It’s there along with the timidity. I don’t like that role of standing up there in front of them and spitting in their eye, it’s not for me.”

“I was independent all right, but I think that came as a slow development from timidity. I think I was independent before, but I kept my mouth shut about it. I am still more a mediating type, compromising, integrating, pulling together, rather than a fighter. Independent, but with that modification. I certainly was independent with that incident with my Ph.D. thesis. No one would sponsor it, and I told them all to go to hell, and went ahead and did it. I am independent intellectually, just easily, spontaneously; it’s the behavior, where I get into conflicts, when I have fears.”

None of the subjects reported feeling any pressure on them to publish. They all felt that writing was a natural outgrowth of their work.

“Publish or perish? No such pressure. I publish as naturally as a bird sings. It’s no effort, and furthermore, I think I would publish exactly the same if I had to put your name on it, kept it a secret. It would make no difference. I don’t say that; but the pleasures are epiphenomenal only, not essential. I like getting applause, but it’s not really necessary. I think it used to be when I was younger but I’ve gotten enough of it.”

The question of self-actualization is a difficult one in this case for obvious reasons.

“I’d say all my needs are satisfied, now; but that all were unsatisfied, up to the time of my marriage, and beyond. I was totally isolated, ungratified, unhappy. My whole childhood looks to me black, and I think of happiness beginning with my wife. When I kissed her the first time, my life began then, I think. Today certainly all my needs are satisfied, but there was a transition in between. And in my dreams that youngster is not lost altogether.”



"Would I call myself self-actualized? God knows. If you invent something, then you get so self-conscious about it, it would be impossible to say. How much of it is trying—after all, I took these people as models to some extent, I admired them so much. How much is acting, is hard to tell. How much is imitation that becomes so good that it is automatic and spontaneous, and what does that mean? It would be hard to say. I think there are hangovers from a very pathogenic childhood which are not lost altogether, and there are symptoms every once in a while, of tension. My sleep gets very bad, then I get tense. I think for a person who is as self-conscious as I have to be about all of these things, I think about them all the time, that the possibility of spontaneity is lost. Expressive, yes. Aggressive, certainly analysis made it possible for me to be as aggressive as I have to be, when necessary. It still takes self-conscious and deliberate will. Love? I am a good lover, able to love."

"I think I am creative, so much so that I am almost inclined to define things in terms of myself, which is dangerous and stupid. It has to be pluralistic. Why do I think I am creative? Because I have created a lot, and I can whenever I have to. It's not general though. For example, I am not creative artistically. I have tried to be, tried painting and dancing, tried musical instruments, I used to compose a lot; but really it's just intellectual work, and there it has always been creative, so far back as I can remember."

"I used to do both primary and secondary creativeness, but I have given up experimentation. I see my creativeness now as philosophical, speculative, theoretical. I would admire myself more if I also carried out the experiments, even though I figure I haven't got the time. I've got only, I figure, a good reasonable 10 years more of life, and I have so many things I want to do. Experiments take so goddamn long. So I have a very good reason, rationalization for it, for sticking to my theories, which no one else can do. But the truth is, I don't even feel like doing experiments."

"Creativeness is effortless for me, but that may be part of the way which I work, I never push it. My whole style of work is to be inspired, you might say, and then to work in a great gush, and when that's finished to turn away and go play, or do something else, till another inspiration hits me. You might say this is a priori effortless. When I have to do it, I do it, but don't enjoy it nearly so much."

"Peak experiences. I invented them. For me, well, they get less and less, year by year. I get more and more professional in working, narrowed down, less and less from other things. I think everybody reports that. I am more stale emotionally now, less reactive. Also, I have played many things out. Music, I used practically to die with it. Any piece in the standard repertoire, I can remember, like a sweetheart, the first time I heard it. I would cry. Now I don't get peak experiences from music, or from art, which I did also. I can still get them occasionally from dancing, watching beautiful dancing. From natural beauty. My kicks will come out of my work mostly. And everything else turns into a licker [*sic*] kick now. When I first kissed my wife, I almost died; now it's more even,

more domestic, although very profound. Ideas, work—I get big thrills out of my own discoveries, mostly, or out of people’s discoveries. Partly it’s a preparation for death. I have so much work to do which I’ll never be able to finish. Quite spontaneously, I prefer to be right here, with my books and my papers, rather than to travel, or go to a concert, or a play. The world narrows down. I am a psychologist more and more and more. Less and less interested in the world, people.”

Maslow also reported feelings of great joy, even peak experiences, resulting from good things happening in the world, such as an important Supreme Court decision. These I would call altruistic peaks. He also reports great excitement and joy from seeing people who try to do things well, whatever they are doing. Especially from people who are contributing to the world, writing books, developing ideas, working for justice. “In the 12th century people would not have hesitated to use the word saint, doing God’s work on earth. I despise anyone who can go through life without making any contribution to the world. Playing bridge or something.”

“Life goals, fulfilled, absolutely. I am a very fortunate man, nothing is missing. The only dream I have is if I could have a lot of money, I would like to devote myself full time to my work, and to have the secretaries, research assistants and so on. That would simply then double, triple and quadruple my work. But there’s no change in substance, I’d simply like to do more of it, not to be distracted. When I dream, it’s about secretaries and research assistants. And for a longer life span. I hope I can live long enough to do more of the project I want to do. I’ll never live long enough, because jobs will keep developing, but the longer I live the better I’ll take it. As long as I can work. I think it would be a great pity when I die, because it would be a great loss, if I am working at the time. But if I can’t work, then I don’t have any more claim on life than anyone else.”

“I feel myself to be very fortunate. I am very grateful. My job is what I am interested in, I am permitted to give a course in what I am interested in. I wasn’t just assigned something. I am aware of the affluent society, that is so rich that it can pay me to sit and think, so I feel lucky. Lucky in another sense. To be the carrier of talent. It is a problem, and it destroyed my childhood. On the other hand, it is a privilege, and though it’s made problems, I am very happy about them, I am very happy to be smart, it’s fun. What a dull thing it must be to be of average intelligence. I can have every fun they have and a lot more.”

## TOWARD A PSYCHOLOGY OF BEING

“I think of my whole life’s work in retrospect as being unified, though it couldn’t look like that.” I think we can view Maslow’s creative work first of all under the general, paradigmatic question of, “Why do people want what they want, and do what they do?” In other words, what motivates people? Why do healthy people behave one way,

and unhealthy people another way? Why do people grow? What are the biological, psychological, cultural determinants of motivation?

"The question of motivation I picked up very early, just being intrinsically interesting, just fascinated me. Probably has irrational, psychoanalytic roots. The rationalization, just thinking it out, it seemed to me to be just the most important, the most basic thing in all of psychology. Since I wanted to do important work, I remember asking myself, 'What's the most important way I can spend my time?' And then it turned out to be motivation. Maybe that came out of Freud, and Adler, that I was reading as a graduate student. Partly, I think also it came out of the failure of the behaviorist program. I went into psychology as a behaviorist. I read Watson, then I did work on conditioning, and various studies of learning, but it slowly struck me that the whole program was no good. The whole promise of behaviorism which I had seen, which drew me to Wisconsin, was worthless. Partly, I became less interested in learning, and more in the deepest motivations of human beings. I thought this was more important, just logically and psychologically prior, more radical, more fundamental than anything else."

The over-all question was posed, then, over against a background of the behaviorist methods and theory that he had previously been committed to. The formulation involved, therefore, the rejection of formerly accepted belief systems. That the question was paradigmatic we can only verify from its working out in terms of sub-problems and their solutions. I think that this will be seen clearly in the following.

The first major sub-question that Maslow posed was in itself a paradigmatic one. The question grew out of his interest in psychoanalytic theory. He became aware of the rival claims of the various psychoanalytic schools to have the key to human pathology and tried to find an answer which would put them together, because they all seemed to be right. "Which ever one I read, seemed to be right, while I was reading it. Then I would read another, and that seemed right." The question he asked was, "What makes people neurotic?" This is, of course, a fundamental question of psychoanalysis, therefore, not his original question, yet the posing of the problem as that of finding the solution that fits all the theories, is original. And creative in an integrative sense. How did he come to this?

"After I came to New York, many things happened simultaneously. One of them was that I got involved with the psychosomatic, psychoanalytic group. This was David Levy and Abram Kardiner, who were my friends. They were already moving away from orthodox psychoanalysis, and in this group, which met for several years, I gave this motivation paper (1943) first. This was essentially my effort to pull together for myself the seemingly contradictory planes of Freud, Jung, Adler, Fromm and Horney. (It was such a desire to reconcile Freud and Adler that earlier led to the insight on sexual and dominance behavior among monkeys.) It dawned on me that they were all correct, but that each was pushing too much at one exclusive thing. I had read Freud, I was actually

studying with Adler, and with Fromm and with Horney. They were all correct, only some things were more fundamental than others, and the whole enterprise was, anyway, psychoanalytic. That motivation business is really on the Freudian paradigm of instincts which are frustrated producing illness. My idea was to take the neurotic adult and to trace back where he went wrong, where the frustration was—reconstructive biology. That was psychoanalytic and the academic side coming together. What people want, and what they need, and what they are looking for out of life.”

He later summed up this part of the research as follows:

My original question was about psychopathogenesis. “What makes people neurotic?” My answer (a modification of and, I think, an improvement upon the analytic one) was, in brief, that neurosis seemed, at its core, and its beginning, to be a deficiency disease; that it was born out of being deprived of certain satisfactions which I called needs in the same sense that water and amino acids and calcium are needs, namely that their absence causes illness. Most neuroses involved, along with other complex determinants, ungratified wishes for safety, for belongingness, and identification, for close love relationships and for respect and prestige (1962a, p. 19).

This work was based not only upon the psychoanalytic data and theories that he was trying to integrate, it also utilized a great deal of biological and neurophysiological knowledge, which contributed to its effectiveness in bringing together the psychoanalytic and physiological concepts of deficiency and frustration. It incorporated the Freudian views on the needs for love and belonging, the Adlerian ideas on the need for power and prestige, and put them in a clear framework, the hierarchy of basic needs.

The impulse to integrate, the wish to view all of the disparate theories as aspects of a larger whole, reflects the influence of the gestalt-organismic-holistic school he had absorbed from Wertheimer and Goldstein. But there was more to this inquiry than the question of pathogenesis. There was also the further question, which in many ways was both more creative and more important, “What motivates the person whose safety, belonging, love and power needs are satisfied?” How did this question come into being?

“About the same time, I was involved with anthropology, and that had a relation to the self-actualizing business in a very personal way, because of Ruth Benedict. She was motherly to me, or I was filial with her. I just loved her, everybody did. I tagged after her. She kept pressing me, saying I was too Western, I was too busy, I was too ambitious, driving, and so on. She gave me things to read, poetry, various things, supposed to teach me to be more Eastern. I never got the point, although I think I understand now. But she herself was a model, so obviously serene and calm, that I had to understand her. So I worked on her, and at the same time on Max Wertheimer, another of my models. She happened to have been working with this culture and personality thing, that’s why I went out to the Blackfoot Indians, she picked them out for me. It was a secure society, with high synergy. So I was much involved with healthy and unhealthy people.”

“At the same time I was writing that abnormal psychology book (1941), and I had to write a chapter on the normal personality. Why? I don’t know, it just seemed sensible. And I realized how little was known about it, so I simply wrote an arbitrary chapter—I

thought so, so I wrote it, that was enough. I felt dissatisfied with it, and then thought of working at it more carefully. Part of this interest was at Brooklyn College. I started teaching a course, for the first time, on the normal personality. I just created it."

"Then I read Goldstein's stuff, where he talks about self-actualization. And I was in on Wertheimer's seminars. All of these were important. Then I was interested in psychotherapy, and just started doing it, without any training. Just did it. And that brought up the question of the goals of therapy. Where are you going? Just getting rid of symptoms is for me not satisfying enough. This was a source for this stuff on health, the good society, the good person."

"I think this is also very Jewish, this looking for the good world, and the ideal man. In the midst of the antisemitism—why were people nasty, and what were good people like? And then, especially for the Jewish boy, I would love the good person six times as much as anybody, and hate six times as much, a bad person. So it was very much a hot topic. It was a personal problem, and this was sort of self therapy and self exploration."

The study of Ruth Benedict, Max Wertheimer and other healthy and creative people led eventually to the theories on self-actualizing behavior which placed the need to self-actualize at the head of the hierarchy of human motives. This was first written down about 1943, entitled "Self-actualization: A Study of Psychological Health"; yet this was such a radical departure in psychology, for all that it was based on Goldstein, Fromm, Horney and others, that timidity won out again. "It was seven years before I summoned up enough courage to print it" (1954, p. xiii).

The book that resulted from this research, *Motivation and Personality* (1954), included an exposition on psychology as a science, and on the holistic-dynamic method used by Maslow; the theory of human motivation mentioned above; and detailed discussions of the nature of the self-actualized person. The book ended with a chapter which brought up many of the implications of this new view, of this recentering of psychology around a postulated positive drive for health, growth and realization. Much of the ideas in this chapter were conceived in a moment of great insight, a peak experience.

"I had a particular insight, a peak experience insight, while I was writing the '54 book. This was the great climax for me of all this stuff on motivation and self actualization. I was on a train. (Shades of Wertheimer, Poincaré!) Trains are always sort of special places, I feel cut off from everything, alone. I wrote out the whole business and I called it 'higher ceilings for psychology.' I wrote out all the implications for science, for psychology, for the theory of science, for the theory of society, for the theory of every goddamned thing. The implications of this picture of the more fully developed human being. And much of that I put into the book, in the last chapters on values and ideals. And ever since then I have had this picture of the revolution in psychology, and therefore in all the social sciences, therefore in everything. It's simply a different conception of knowledge. And that's what I have been playing with ever since."

It is this vision of a new concept of psychology that we have already seen above, of the new conception of sickness and of health, a psychology “coming over the horizon,” that Maslow finds thrilling and full of wonderful possibilities. In his later book (1962a), he calls this “larger jurisdiction for psychology.”

After the first book, Maslow pursued further the implications he had traced from his paradigmatic recentering of psychology. The question here was, what is the nature of the motivation that exists in people who are self-actualizing, whose basic needs are satisfied?

The major step in answering this question was the realization that there have to be two qualitatively different types of motivation. The first type includes those motives that derive from unfulfilled needs, unsatisfied wishes. These are deficiency-needs, motivated by deficiencies in the basic needs of the human being. The second type exists in the person whose needs are satisfied. These are not deficiency motivated but stem rather from an inherent drive to fulfill the potentialities of the human being, to achieve an ever more realized and actualized state. These, spontaneous, internally produced growth drives are not deficiency but “being” motives. It is not enough to satisfy the basic needs, one has the need to arrive at ever fuller states of being. This is one of the important leaps in the humanistic psychology developed by Maslow.

One aspect of the investigation of the being-motives and the being psychology, was of the happiest, most ecstatic moments in the lives of all human beings, not only the self-actualized. It turned out that almost anybody can report such experiences, which Maslow termed peak experiences, and these have certain common characteristics. What they are, in essence, he postulated, is transient moments of being in which people can glimpse the pastures of this heaven of psychological fullness. They are moments of love, of creative insight, of achievement, and so on. We have already seen some in the reports of our subjects.

The concept of actions and perceptions motivated not by need, by coping in the old sense; but rather expressive, even gratuitous, spontaneous, this was achieved in the face of a large body of contrary opinion and theory. As the previous steps, if not more so, this involved the rejection of old modes of thought.

Because it is so new, the exploration of the highest reaches of human nature and of its ultimate possibilities and aspirations is a difficult and tortuous task. It has involved for me the continuous destruction of cherished axioms, the perpetual coping with seeming paradoxes, contradictions, and vagueness and the occasional collapse around my ears of long established, firmly believed in and seemingly unassailable laws of psychology. Often these have turned out to be no laws at all but only rules for living in a state of mild and chronic psychopathology, of stunting and crippling immaturity which we don't notice because most others have this same disease that we have (1962a, p. 67f).

“My experiments were generally not planned, I was doing them out of curiosity. I was a curious person, looking around, and after I was through I would realize that it was an investigation. My motivation theory, I didn't realize it was done until it was done, I was just absorbed with a personal interest. It wasn't designed, planned. That peak

experience work, I didn't realize I had an investigation till it was all finished, sort of. It would be like a nosy or curious person, absorbed in something. I invented methods by the dozen, without realizing it, I was so absorbed."

"The gathering of information is sort of half conscious, it's only afterwards, a long time later I realize I've been gathering information. Usually nobody had asked my questions. I think that in all these things I was just pioneering. Although I never thought so then. Maybe that's why I never thought I was doing scientific work, professional work. It was a kind of personal curiosity. It was only later I started reading on it."

"I've rarely made a mistake. It sounds crazy, but for such a sloppy guy, I've never had to modify. Actually there have been some minor modifications, but none from psychology. All the things I have published have stood."

"Storage of information. I have many files. I have a bad memory, so everything has to be written down. Storing information is very important. I have journals, diaries. I have a list of all the books I've read since the age of 13. That's true of the oral character—greed to read every book, and do everything. I hate to let an idea go, so they're all written down. If I live 600 years I couldn't work out all those things."

"My custom has been to be doing 20, 30, 40 projects at once. I have them all listed in my journal. My file cabinets are full of projects. Then I have a bulletin board with things that I am doing, things to finish, and so on. The six or eight I am actively working on right now. I hate to be pressed, I hate calendar creativity."

"I don't analyze, I synthesize. Putting things together. Simplifying, boiling down in the holistic way. My thinking tends to be a restructuring of the whole, rather than adding three new facts or anything like that. Ideas come out of an inspiration, a clicking together of something. A realization of the implications; and it's apt to come in a great burst of insight. The dramatic moments are the easiest ones to remember, all the working through you don't remember. And I have a lousy memory."

"The motivation paper, for instance. I wasn't terribly impressed with it myself. It sort of seemed like routine work. I knocked it together for that psychoanalysis group. I don't remember any peak experience with that paper. It just grew, and represented my attempt at systematizing this field of motivation, with its rival plans, putting together what was right, excluding what wasn't. That book (1954) was an afterthought. I had some notion of what I wanted to do, all through the separate pieces. A synthetic job, putting together the holistic and the dynamic, the cultural and the biological, Freud and Adler, and so on. But each step was a sort of groping, they weren't planned."

The cumulative impression from all of these reports on his working methods and attitudes is one of an intuitive, curious person, pursuing questions that fascinate him, inventing new methods if necessary, without too much concern for methodology, and ending up with an integrative, novel and exciting insight which is something of a surprise. Yet, somehow, this intuitive solving of problems which seems so aimless, is not

as haphazard as it looks. There is after all a central question and a definite progression from one major integrative question, with its answer implying further questions, to the next; all of which, retrospectively at least, seems very orderly. And it all adds up to an increasingly broad, cumulative, conceptualization of human nature. Significant questions, violating previous beliefs and assumptions, there certainly are. Derivative, and no less significant questions, also radical departures, are followed up and integrated into the whole. For all the apparent lack of logical predetermined plan, Maslow's work seems to be following a path dictated by a certain necessity, a continuous and unified line. The end of the path is not yet in sight, it lies somewhere in the distance in as yet uncharted territory. But the ultimate goal is "the construction of a comprehensive, systematic and empirically based general psychology which includes both the depths and heights of human nature" (1962a, p. iv).



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