FREEDOM AND DIGNITY IN A. H. MASLOW'S PHILOSOPHY OF THE PERSON

by Ralph L. Underwood

The aim of this study is to disclose the central significance of Abraham H. Maslow's philosophy of the person for the current concern with the meaning of human dignity. In our time human self-regard is caught in a dilemma aggravated by the conflict between personal autonomy and social regulation. This problem reappears at various levels of consideration, such as ethical principles and political strategy. My perspective on it calls attention to its cultural and religious aspects. It is a cultural and religious matter because it confronts us with alternative values, including some that ultimately determine who we are, and because the issues surrounding self-determination and behavior control are not limited to passing relevancies but encompass as well the question of our heritage and what we deem worthy of preservation from generation to generation, that is, of what endures in the midst of change. For this angle of vision the philosophy of the person is an apposite region of inquiry, especially when it is focused in some master image of the authentic individual, a representation that distills the controlling assumptions and abbreviates the concrete concerns that guide self-understanding. In part the contemporary discussion about human excellence, individual choice, and behavior control is a debate in which various practical wisdoms about the meaning of being human vie for salient recognition and persuasive authority in the total vision of things that will organize our future.

Freedom and Dignity as Problematic

With the rise of behavioral technology many of its creators and clinical practitioners question the concept of personal "agency," moral or otherwise, if that implies some internal, moving, selecting process or reality within the human organism. With the prospect of more systematic means of altering behavior, many others in fact are asking

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ethical and anthropological questions with a heightened sense of their significance. B. F. Skinner's *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* may not help us to appreciate the latter phenomenon, but it serves to show how problematic personal autonomy is to the behaviorist.[1] A brief essay cannot hope to do justice to Skinner's excellent yet deceptively difficult statement of behaviorism writ large, but it can select elements therefrom which inform the challenge that the behavioral scheme of things presents to those who uphold, or at least feel ambivalent about, personal autonomy, among whom Maslow can be included. Maslow's significance will be interpreted in terms of his response to some aspects of the behavioral version of the argument that autonomy is misguided and inadequate for effective human activity.

The question before our culture, as Skinner sees it, is that of sheer survival. The survival problems par excellence—such as overpopulation and nuclear holocaust—are aggravated by the massive and extensive technology of modern life. The direction adequate to the situation, however, is not the reassertion of any nontechnological world but the completion of technology's frontiers by the institution of a technology of behavior. In proffering and interpreting his solution Skinner does not skirt the honored notion of personal autonomy but construes it as problematic, especially in the light of the necessity for an encompassing yet detailed design of culture. Autonomous man is the image that has undergirded two traditional values: first, the idea of freedom and hence of responsibility and accountability; second, the idea of dignity and hence of pride and excellence.

Skinner understands the significance of his argument: "Science has probably never demanded a more sweeping change in a traditional way of thinking about a subject, nor has there ever been a more important subject."[2] From the perspective of psychology as a "science of values" he disputes the widely accepted judgment that it is not possible to derive a normative statement from a descriptive statement. That judgment holds, he argues, only if indeed it is possible to select a norm or its opposite, and it is this commonplace that becomes increasingly implausible with the advance of behavioral control.[3] When autonomous man was assumed, it was the notion of a science of values that was problematic; once human feeedom and dignity become sufficiently dubious, a science of values seems sensible enough.

Thus the first question raised in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* has to do with autonomy, and the second concerns values. Self-determination, when it means determination from within the person, some immanent agency, is the basis of responsibility and the understanding which contrasts freedom with external control. Skinner goes "beyond" this view of freedom by declaring that freedom is liberation

from the aversive consequences of behavior. Not all forms of control are aversive. Accordingly, "the problem is to free men, not from control, but from certain kinds of control, and it can be solved only if our analysis takes all consequences into account."[4] Ironically, the literature of freedom has fostered aversive consequences insofar as it has called for punishments. Skinner throws the gauntlet: "But our task is not to encourage moral struggle or to build or demonstrate inner virtues. It is to make life less punishing and in doing so to release for more reinforcing activities the time and energy consumed in the avoidance of punishment."[5]

Autonomous man serves as rationale for moral punishments; also, he fills the role of explanation. Skinner elaborates on how this inner self stifles inquiry and preserves mystery. As he advocates going "beyond" dignity because it makes no more sense to give someone credit for his acts than it does to judge him blameworthy, so Skinner eschews human self-regard in favor of "achievement"—and this means the inexorable destruction of mystery and the increase of scientific knowledge, rather than credit to an immanent self for effort, wisdom, moral rectitude, or whatever.[6] What, then, is the measure of "achievement," or what the meaning of value? Behavior that is valuable is behavior that is reinforced, that is, its consequences make likely its recurrence. Thus good behavior is reinforced, perpetuated behavior; it is behavior which is "selected" by the environment. While "to be" is not a typically Skinnerian phrase, let us say that to be good is to be selected. This notion of good as survival is exposited first in terms of personal goods and their derivative, the goods of others. Still, there is an overriding good, the social environment or "culture"; it outlasts individuals and selects them for its own survival. If there were such a thing as "aim," it would be to keep going.

The survival motif and the orientation to consequences of action make it clear that Skinner's behavioral vision is an expression of American pragmatism. At its blossoming in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the pragmatic spirit sighted a future of growth and expanded quickly as a balanced pluralism. Since those halcyon days the accelerating rate of change has become a disorientating factor in modern consciousness, and with the convergence of a number of problems from various quarters—for example, energy supply, pollution, food resources, population—the future as growth has been shaken. A future of curtailment replaces the future of growth, and with this development the character of pragmatism has changed. The future diminished, pragmatism tends to become interiorized. We witness this in Philip Rieff's "psychological man," oriented to self-salvation, inner growth, and accommodation with exter-

nal reality.[7] For Skinner, no doubt, this solution is the kind of ineffective compromise that one can expect from the myth of a "weak ego"; it fails to eradicate human agency or to discern the function of the environment. A future of control, of systematic scheduling or good "husbandry," is the only viable course. This means that the future as growth not merely is modified but has collapsed, and pragmatism becomes exteriorized in toto. We should not be surprised if the young adults who demanded social justice in the 1960s and now are becoming interiorized—thanks to Eastern religion and Western psychology—as well as accommodated to American business soon abandon self-salvation for cultural deliverance paced by behavioral technology.

Maslow recognized that behaviorism is an expression of pragmatism, and he judged that our culture is overly pragmatic.[8] To many he represents a new alternative to the images of the person found in psychoanalysis and behaviorism. Skinner's model person acts on the environment in such a manner that the relation of behavior and consequences becomes increasingly clear. The efficiency of behavioral action replaces freedom and dignity. How does Maslow's authentic individual compare with this, and how does Maslow negotiate freedom and order in a philosophy of the person?

Freedom, Dignity, and Behavior Control in Maslow's Image of the Good Person

For those who are aware of the alternatives within psychology as well as of the continuities that form a psychological tradition, the names Freud, Skinner, and Maslow serve sometimes as eponyms for salient modes of orientation to human experience. They stand for alternative visions of culture, structures of value, and ways of looking at the world. Floyd Matson's comment reflects the appreciation of many for Maslow at this level of consideration: "Perhaps more than any other psychologist, Abraham Maslow deserves the title of founding father of that contemporary movement which seeks a humanistic alternative both to the emasculated scientism of the behaviorists and to the romantic pessimism of the classical Freudians."[9] As yet, neither Skinner nor Maslow has sparked the philosophical and theological imagination in the way that Freud has.[10]

The focus of an interpretation of Maslow's philosophy of the person has to be his description of "self-actualizing people."[11] He reasoned that, if we are presumptuous enough to label and study people as mentally ill and sociopathic, then we ought to be able to study the mentally healthy and socially functional people of this world. It may be that health is not simply the opposite of illness; if so,

the study of human health should produce understanding that cannot be inferred from the study of neurosis, etc. To state it simplistically, if a stranger to earth observed only crippled persons, he would believe that this is what normal earth people are like. In fact, Maslow believed, we have an implicit notion of health and maturity on the basis of our experience; his long-range goal was to systematize and make more nearly objective and universal this understanding of what it is possible and proper for persons to become. His report of self-actualizing persons was but an informal beginning; still, it reflects his thinking on personal values.

Thus it was that Maslow attempted to describe characteristics of historical figures and contemporaries who impressed him as realizing their personal potentialities. Briefly, these persons evidenced above-average judgment, efficient perception, and acceptance of reality. They were spontaneous and original, and they sustained a fresh appreciation of the basic goods of life. Also, they were concerned with the basic issues of life, with ends more than means, and had a philosophical sense of humor. A significant number of them reported or recorded in some manner their own mystical experiences. They resisted conformity but were not rebels against authority. A need for detachment and privacy was evident, and they developed deep friendships with only a few strong and healthy persons like themselves. Nevertheless, they manifested a strong fellow feeling for mankind and did not discriminate on the basis of social status, age, race, or sex. Despite these strengths, they had significant faults and were by no means absolutely perfect. Maslow emphasized that these descriptions represent attempts at objective observation and not idealization of persons; hence, they are values that are realizable in principle and cannot be excluded initially as idealistic. He also hoped that they would prove to be universalizable and not the products of parochial selection; that is, he strongly resisted the judgment of many of his critics that all one could derive from such a procedure was an idea of what is best in the eyes of a particular culture or historical era—not a scientific support of values.

Dignity. This concrete image of the authentic person is the starting point for our understanding of what human dignity is for Maslow. He believed that persons who become mature and worthy most often do so on the basis of a history of gratification of needs and not on the basis of the successful inhibition of troublesome instincts or conformity to cultural expectations. There is a human "essence" or biological "nature," he theorized, that will manifest itself under certain conditions. In other words, Maslow thinks of the self as a biological structure that unfolds over the course of time; the actualization of self is

the realization in personal development of idiosyncratic and species-specific features that were already real as structural propensities to act in certain ways that emerge in an identifiable series of behavioral and dynamic patterns. Even so, the physical and social environments have crucial roles, as we shall see, in providing both the proper conditions and substance for this development. The point for now is simply that, for Maslow, dignity and worth may refer inter alia to what persons in fact do achieve and to what persons are capable of becoming on the basis of an intrinsically given human nature.

One might elaborate and aver, for example, that Joe Doaks shares the credit of another's achievements and belongs in the same esteemed company because, if the circumstances of his life had been more auspicious, he likely would have manifested the same courage and strength. Or, conversely, though Joe Doaks could not help his misdeed on a certain occasion, in principle he remains a responsible person, since the correct conditions likely would have given him the ability to respond in genuinely alternative ways and since in fact he still may well be able to develop into the kind of person who can act differently in the future. In other words, the meaning of credit and blame becomes more complex by taking on "double meanings." Thus the meaning of human worth implies both praise for actual accomplishments and appreciation for potential that in some sense is "real." As an idea in Western consciousness, dignity has not referred primarily to individual merits;[12] nevertheless, Skinner's discussion of worth avoids the idea of universal dignity based on personhood as such. Maslow's image of the person discerns dignity in all individuals and simultaneously directs them to the kind of excellence that only a few have in fact demonstrated.

Accordingly, Maslow sees dignity disclosed clearly in those persons who express "the triumphant nature."[13] They are the undeprived and undaunted: "I think of the self-actualizing man not as an ordinary man with something added, but rather as the ordinary man with nothing taken away. The average man is a full human being with dampened and inhibited powers and capacities."[14] Such persons recognize mistakes without any injury to personal confidence about their ability; they can acknowledge wrongdoing, but in a matter-of-fact spirit—they do not bewail their sins. Dignity means that they do not accept others' opinions or the authority of tradition unless these resonate with their own experience of things. This image is designed in part to affirm the agentive self and thus the idea of human autonomy.

Freedom. As is the case with dignity, several aspects of Maslow's self-actualizing person suggest the motif of freedom and responsibility—for example, spontaneity and originality, resistance to

enculturation. My analysis will proceed to consider the idea of choice in his writings. The choices that people make provide the data for Maslow's "operationalization" of values. Even so, he does not accept all choices under any conditions as acts of personal freedom. In particular conditions, choices are likely to express genuinely a person's humanness or intrinsic nature (i.e., his belonging to the species, the nature he shares with all mankind) and his individuality (i.e., the novelty he contributes to life). So that we may have some idea of what Maslow means, let us examine sample "conditions" or criteria of free choice.

There is no real choice, says Maslow, whenever one is afraid or whenever a choice entails the giving up of personal security. True freedom is "not paid for by giving up safety and security but rather built up on the basis of adequate safety and security."[15] This set of criteria involves both psychological and external conditions. The introduction of any element of threat distorts the discovery of self via one's genuine order of preferences, a reliable hierarchy of values. On the other hand, the person who is highly insecure characterologically simply does not as a rule engage in free choices, or, at least, the realm of choice for such a person is extremely limited. Insofar as Maslow interprets neurosis as personal insecurity, freedom is an inner sense of secure trust in oneself and one's world—or the lack of neurosis. Safety, then, is required as a past foundation undergirding one's present being; and, secondarily, it is important as a set of contemporary circumstances.

When one's past has benefited from safety, care, and abundance, habituation is not likely to limit extensively the exercise of free choice. If one's past has meant limited exposure, however, habits may have become deeply ingrained simply because there were no alternatives; or the familiar may become preferable to anything novel if one has been traumatized or is generally insecure. In such cases, previously formed habits of preference may overshadow values such as present metabolic needs, which would be chosen more often, Maslow argues, if the effects of familiarization were minimized. Such minimization of familiarization, another condition of genuine choice, can be approximated by carefully structured simultaneous presentation of alternatives. In many instances this implies more than the simple offering of two possibilities, for it is necessary that one experience both choices in a structured situation before deciding on his preference. For example, one would have to savor carefully two foods or two types of wine before establishing a preference. This means that sometimes persons must be induced to try alternatives. Another procedure that can counter the effects of strong habituation is based on the principle of

contiguity: The strategy is to present alternatives which are highly similar. Instead of presenting the highest-priced wine alongside the cheapest to a person who is used to inexpensive wines, one presents a graded series, from the cheapest to the most expensive. Maslow predicts that most persons will eventually agree with the connoisseurs.[16]

Another requirement for genuine freedom of choice is knowledge. Ignorance limits choices; therefore, the more conscious one is of his alternatives, the more freedom he has, other factors being equal.[17] For this reason Maslow expects that education will always be a source of human freedom and advocates societal permission for free inquiry. In addition, he cites age as one criterion of freedom, for knowledge grows with increased years under desirable circumstances. Thus, while he argues that we ought to develop techniques for getting the child to tell us accurately what he wants, since this may well be what is best for him, Maslow also cautions that free choice is a less reliable guide to what is beneficial for the individual when the person is an infant or child than when he is mature.[18] Maturity enhances freedom.

These criteria illustrate that choices reflect true freedom only when certain conditions prevail. Ultimately, Maslow seems to want to argue that, if one establishes criteria for strength or autonomy and the conditions that make for genuine choices, then one can describe the preferences of such persons in the select conditions and thereby derive the "natural" values of human beings. Actually, he does not state his case this explicitly, and the description of self-actualization mixes criteria for autonomy per se with substantive values which presumably elaborate the pattern of choices characteristic of autonomous persons.

Individuality and Community. This abridged picture of human dignity and freedom which I have culled from Maslow's writings is sufficient to indicate that an implicit theory of culture is operative. He rejects the image of reason and culture as prison guards over impulses that require restraining;[19] this means that he eschews a theory of inherent conflict between individual desire and social requirements. At first it might appear that, for the natural, uninhibited individual to emerge, culture must only step aside, be permissive or laissez faire; but the situation is not that simple. Maslow's good culture is permissive, but it is far from chaotic. Indeed, biological nature as rooted in the individual is weak compared to the power of cultural traditions.[20] The best hope for human autonomy, then, is to direct the power of culture to the support and stabilization of the individual. Hence, culture has the positive role of nurturing personal growth.[21]

Maslow's "hierarchical" theory of motivation posits a series of needs (physiological, safety, belonging and love, self-esteem, self-

actualization, cognitive, and aesthetic needs) which ordinarily come to organize a person's behavior according to a temporal sequence in which one need syndrome dominates the dynamics of action until it fades, once its requirements have been fulfilled, and gives place to the next need syndrome in the series. The lower needs in the hierarchy require more dependence on the social environment than do the higher needs. The major function of culture, besides that of providing the material needs of survival, is to instill order in the life of the individual. For *Homo sapiens* culture is an indispensable "adaptive tool, one of whose main functions is to make the physiological emergencies come less and less often."[22] At this point physiological needs are interpreted as part of the picture of safety. Let me be emphatic in my interpretation: For Maslow culture is not the source of novelty. Ultimately, the individual is. Culture is the great conserver, provider of gratification, articulator of "Being" values, preserver and protector of biologically rooted or species-specific values, and the source of the stability on which individual strength and creativity are built. According to this image of the natural person and the nurturing society, culture is to provide the kind of control and regularity that encourages and permits growth rather than the kind that opposes biological nature.[23] This ordering process cannot "shape" the individual into anything the culture happens to want at a particular time in history, nor should it specify and determine every behavior or the details of events. Rather, it is to provide a context of dependable regularities over time. Security of this kind is more enduring and stable than that which can come from the oppressive attempt to conform individuals to unnatural expectations; in the latter case there is always an inevitably disruptive war being waged between the individual and his culture.

Whereas Skinner thinks in terms of the kind of control that does not have immediate or long-run aversive consequences, Maslow reasons in terms of the kind of regulation that permits flexibility and fosters growth. For him flexibility and growth enhance stability just as security permits creativity. That is to say, the regulatory means of securing stability at the expense of novelty in human affairs eventually undermine the strength of that stability. When compared to controls without creativity, stability with novelty increases the viability of a greater number of persons in a wider variety of circumstances. In other words, one cannot account for stability except by reference to the element of novelty that is responsibile for the quality of dynamic strength which characterizes enduring structures.

No culture can afford to neglect biological individuality and specieshood. Consequently, every culture needs to exalt its individu-

als, to treasure them as members of the species and for their potential to help develop adaptive novelty and flexibility. Every culture must grow, advance, expand—not necessarily in material goods or industrially but in its vision of present possibilities. Otherwise the foundations of stability and order themselves become threatened. Conversely, stability organizes and thereby frees individual energies. Since the individual is the primal source of novelty, and culture the principal means of security, to aver that they implicate each other is at the same time to assert the practical possibility of harmony or, as Maslow would say, "synergy" between individuality and community.[24] This also implies that the task for our time is not to survive, rather than advance, but to find the combination of order and change that both strengthens stability and enriches novelty.

Autonomy and Behavior Control. With this perspective on the meaning of individuality in relation to community, I am ready to pose the question of personal autonomy and behavior control. Maslow disagreed with the behaviorists and the psychoanalysts about their images of the person, but he wanted to appropriate their results to his own stance. Accordingly, he could say, "I am Freudian and I am behavioristic. . . ."[25] Some of his admirers have not taken this intention seriously, but I shall attempt to do so here with respect to behaviorism.

The problem begins when Maslow suggests that we should trust the free choices of persons more often than we tend to do and then observes that there is such a thing as a "good chooser" and a "bad chooser" and counsels that we should study in particular the behavior of the "best" choosers. He suggests that some persons naturally make wise, growth-fostering choices while others do not; still, the latter can be brought gradually to the point of making choices that accord with or approximate the spontaneous wisdom of their fellows.[26]

In part the problem is to understand how positive freedom is to be enlarged, once—for whatever reasons—it is languid or constricted. We have already seen how Maslow envisions a culture of highly supportive care, which protects security as well as instills a sense of belonging and love. In addition, he cites short-term techniques—for example, simultaneous comparison of alternatives, contiguity of choices, prompting to try new experiences, etc. For the most part, then, he advocates the persuasiveness of reason or the indirect structuring of experience wherever that seems to be needed. It should be noted, however, that Maslow also can include the element of coercion. In one passage, for example, he suggests that "pragmatically inferior supervisors" in a business situation be directed or made to perform leadership tasks in the manner freely chosen by the "pragmatically

superior supervisors."[27] Unfortunately, in single texts Maslow does not specify qualifications that might be introduced in the light of his vision as a whole. I believe, however, that it is in accord with his general sense of things for me to supply a missing comment. The result he hopes for, let me suggest, would be that, once the controlled persons had tried the different procedure, they would recognize its superior worth, despite their having been told what to do, and that, if they were then given a renewed choice between their original preference and its alternative, they would freely choose the interjected method. Suppose, however, that in many such instances persons do not so choose? In order to stand by the value of autonomy Maslow would have to permit their choices, admit that the conditions were not synergic, or simply not characterize the behavior as "free." Elsewhere he writes that we must permit people to make mistakes.[28]

In this example I am systematizing Maslow in order to elucidate an inherent logic: Since the genuineness of freedom depends on knowledge and on variety of experience, there are circumstances in which these should be augmented in order to maximize and enhance the reality of choices; there are means of structuring experience —persuasion and even coercion—which may expand the experiential repertoire on which becoming a "good" chooser often depends. Coercion would be used only as a last measure, a heuristic device, and hence can be justified only when subordinated clearly to the aim of freedom; thus it should not be continuous but short lived. Nevertheless, coercion is possible as a protective necessity[29] and, further, is designed so as to contribute positively to the likelihood of genuine self-determination. In the latter instance control differs from the aversive control which, according to Skinner, is preserved by the literature of freedom. If this be correct, then Maslow's vision sets forth the seeds of a version of behavior modification intended to enhance human freedom and dignity. The goal is not to shape the person but to shape the environment, where necessary and practicable, so that the person may grow according to his intrinsic nature. This analysis proffers only an incomplete outline; it neglects serious philosophical and programmatic questions. It does demonstrate, however, that at least some aspects of behavioral technology should be taken seriously in Maslow's vision of the social regulation of individual development.

An Organismic Design for Articulating Humanistic Vision and Experimental Procedure

Once one begins to recognize the practical power that can be marshaled to help realize his "natural" individual, the status of Maslow's normative claims looms large among the queries one might pursue. It

seems reasonable to expect that the character of Maslow's philosophy of the person and his paradoxical strategy for effecting human dignity and freedom can be clarified further by examining his method of research and the assumptions which converge therein. Such an analysis will help to identify the sense in which Maslow's image of self-actualization is an empirical yet normative construct. Furthermore, his method makes evident the central import of integration as a motif elaborated on the fundamental assumption of a pluralistic and organismic reality. This motif and assumption lie behind his idea of relating behavior control and autonomy. Again, this discussion can exposit a significant segment only, not the whole.

Maslow's theoretical orientation is best described as "organismic." He himself so characterizes it.[30] For me this means that the image of an organism in processes of maintenance and growth serves as a "root metaphor" that virtually constitutes—not merely illustrates—the categories of the theory. In Maslow's writings it founds the way of construing feelings, behavior, and even the situations in which feelings and behavior are staged. The overriding aim of organic thought historically has been synthesis or integration.[31] As Abrams points out, this intent can be so thoroughgoing that it is difficult for the organic mode of thought to deny its metaphysical opposite.[32] In part this is why Maslow appropriates Freud and Skinner: They are woven into the warp and woof of his framework as tests of its own adequacy. Maslow carries forward this fundamental vision of things in terms of a "holistic-analytic" methodology, wherein one intuitively grasps his subject matter as a whole and then modifies and refines that preunderstanding by means of analytical procedures.[33] On this basis Maslow attempts to combine clinical and experimental techniques, the latter revising and filling in the scenario of the former. The following is a representative statement that illustrates how organic integration views synthesis and analysis:

> I think the most important thing that I would like to communicate is my impression that the thinking and the research in the field of creativeness tends to be too atomistic and too *ad hoc*, and that it is not as holistic, organismic, or systemic as it could be and should be. Now of course I don't want to make any foolish dichotomies or polarizations here. That is, I don't want to imply any piety about holism or antagonism to dissection or atomism. The question for me is how to integrate them best, rather than choosing between them.[34]

Integration makes sense from the holistic viewpoint; in this instance integration effects a subordination of the atomistic viewpoint to the organismic.

The Syndrome Concept. A holistic-analytic method in psychology is appropriate to data when they are conceived as forming natural clusters, or syndromes, with the stability of qualitative identity. To illustrate the meaning of wholeness, Maslow likens a psychological syndrome to a stew, which is made up of diverse elements yet has a distinctive flavor of its own which permeates all the elements. Maslow's "basic needs" are such syndromes, that is, composite or complex wholes. In relation to one another and to the whole, the elements of a syndrome are internally related, implicate one another, or tie together organically. Thus one element of a syndrome does not simply exclude or include a relation to another; instead, it embodies more than one possibility or significance by virtue of its relations within a system, its place in a larger network or pattern.

Maslow's most systematic research was executed with respect to security and self-esteem or "dominance"; hence, these will illustrate best the syndrome concept and the method for its construction. He studied dominance in several species of infrahuman primates and in young adult women; he studied security in college-age young adults. With human subjects he collected clinical data and constructed paper-and-pencil tests of self-esteem and security.[35] His research on dominance in monkeys began with an intuitive, one might say "holistic," grasp of what dominance is. From casual observation of social hierarchies he felt he knew who the really dominant monkeys were. Such intuitive preunderstanding had to be sufficient to allow one to select two extreme groups with respect to the subject being studied; the strategy was to eliminate the statistical average. Specific behaviors that seemed to be relevant to dominance were identified, and systematic observation was then inaugurated so that one could have a record of how often the dominant animal actually performed any given behavior and how often a subordinate animal manifested that same behavior. Analysis disclosed that some behaviors actually did not correlate well with dominance or subordinance; they were eliminated or viewed as peripheral. This process was advanced through several stages of refinement; in other words, it was an inductive, iterative process which modified commonsense understanding. The same general procedure guided Maslow's study of high and low self-esteem in persons and of human security-insecurity.[36]

The construction of a syndrome yields a qualitative continuity which is delineated in numerous aspects or subsyndromes. Once these are established, for instance, a balanced test can be constructed that is designed to measure each aspect of the complex subject. Commonly, we think of self-esteem as implying security. Psychological literature

often assumes this or even equates these terms. Maslow's approach, however, led to a differentiation between security and high ego level, even though they are not entirely separable but are related dynamically. Some features of his highly insecure persons (such as brooding, worrying, moodiness, nervousness, jealousy) do not correlate with the feelings of his extremely low-dominance persons. Conversely, some aspects of high self-esteem—namely, unconventionality, low regard for rules, tendency to "use" people—seem independent of security feelings. Maslow's interpretation of the authoritarian personality is based on the distinction between security and dominance and the dynamic relation which characterizes them; this character type is low in security feeling, and hence a natural, strong tendency to be high in self-esteem becomes exaggerated and distorted.[37]

This analysis merely samples a habit of mind that is pervasive in Maslow. Psychological syndromes can be analyzed in terms of their elements. Also, they can be seen as subaspects of the person as a whole, and even persons can be viewed as "parts" or participants in larger wholes—the cause of justice, or society itself, for example. Maslow's description of the self-actualizing person, his "Being" values, etc., all are syndromes with approximately the same number of identified elements.

Values and Facts in Holistic Perspective. Just as two parts within an organized whole implicate each other, or as a part within a whole is determined in some measure by its relation to the whole, so facts and values are interrelated. Actually, Maslow argues, the valueless "facts" of rigorous descriptions are mere abstractions from concrete experience; they attend to selective features of reality such as form and systematically disregard other valid dimensions of reality as humanly experienced. The vectorial nature of reality or its dynamic directionality toward "completion," for example, is often overlooked.[38] Values, then, are not human additions to objective facts; rather, facts are the remainder once we have eliminated the values that are given in concrete experience. Empirical values are not "wishes," nor are they imposed on reality.[39] The task of a science of values is to recover all dimensions of reality, including the valuing process, and to increase the systematic knowledge thereof. Because of his multifaceted view of reason and reality, Maslow interpreted "science" generously as the pluralistic study of all aspects of human experience.[40] His perspective tends to fog the distinctions between disciplines and to emphasize instead the degree of certainty that can be had by various methods at their current stage of development. We should keep in mind the fact that he did not claim a high degree of reliability for his self-

actualization syndrome; yet he believed it possible in principle to construct an objectively valid understanding of authenticity via inductive research.

Let us examine this version of empirical reason from another angle. According to Maslow, the healthy and mature person is a more efficient perceiver of reality than is the coarctated or inhibited person. The neurotic person is "cognitively *wrong*," a poor thinker.[41] When a person's basic needs have not been gratified, hypothesizes Maslow, he will distort reality by selectively attending to only those things that he needs. With the satisfaction of such personal needs, one is relatively free to enjoy things as they are. Nevertheless, it is human to err; healthy persons often make mistakes about their experiences and about other persons. Empirical reason varies in degree of reliability and never guarantees absolute certainty; therefore, its conclusions always are tentative and should have room for at least some suspicion.[42] Still, Maslow felt that the critical spirit was responsible for the moral relativism and inaction of our time. What counts, then, is that empirical reason always has access to fresh observations; hence, it is the most trustworthy guide that life affords for the confidence that befits the triumphant spirit. Consequently, the mature individual is postambivalent and decisive in moral judgment and action; yet he continually seeks new evidence and is not dogmatic. Maslow's thought should be located, I suggest, as a psychological approach to an empirical philosophy. He is able to integrate behavior control with a vision of autonomy because of his assumption of a pluralistic and organismic reality wherein any element has more than one possibility of significance and can be understood in harmony with other values once it is viewed in a sufficiently comprehensive perspective.

Conclusion

In the context of the current dilemma concerning personal autonomy, I have reviewed A. H. Maslow's understanding of human dignity and freedom. I suggested that dignity has both universal and meritorious dimensions, and I proceeded to speculate that, once freedom is interpreted in the light of Maslow's implicit theory of culture, one can discern how the significance of behavioral technology can be relocated with respect to self-determination. Also, I resighted the status of Maslow's philosophy of the person from the viewpoint of his modus operandi as a normative psychologist. His image of the person is an expression of the integrative spirit which endeavors to articulate both biological and social dimensions of human existence and to show the potential within mankind's empirical situation for a harmony that fulfills the promise of individuality and community. My analysis has

been restricted to the reconsideration of autonomy and does not clarify that Maslow, like Skinner, moves "beyond freedom and dignity." Whereas Skinner simply takes an altogether different starting point and route, Maslow goes beyond autonomy based solely on dignity and freedom to a psychology of self-transcendence. I believe that an examination of this *Aufheben* of autonomy could demonstrate that it is not a shift in direction, inasmuch as it, too, is a consequence of Maslow's integrationist orientation.

Within the limitation of Maslow's philosophy of the person, as that vision is tendered in terms of autonomy and behavior control, it seems to me that his writings contribute a framework in which we may begin to acknowledge the realities of social control and understand on a practical level the positive role of order in the advance of freedom. Sometimes the myth of democracy and the ideal of equality, while genuine aspirations most of us shall continue to affirm, contribute to a way of looking at the world which often does not help liberal parents and statesmen to acknowledge candidly the actualities of social regulation in daily life, and this can have the consequence of alienating many whom we love and whose freedom we cherish. The task to which this interpretation of Maslow points, then, is that of enlarging our understanding of the positive and negative forms of control from the viewpoint of freedom and dignity.

One can acknowledge this promise without being bound to Maslow's image or method. His habit of overlapping criteria, while a faithful expression of organismic thinking and a beautiful way of articulating a fundamental harmony interrelating all things, does not help us to discern whether we are observing a process of growth that frees the individual and fulfills an inherent potential or a successful program of misconceived brainwashing. Only a differentiation —more refined than Maslow himself proffered—of criteria for genuine choice, on the one hand, and for positive freedom as authenticity, personal destiny, etc., on the other, can resolve this problem. That is, a productive vision of integration cannot maintain the integrity of its aim at unification unless it also preserves its most pluralistic moments.

This critical comment only illustrates what is a recurrent limitation of Maslow's approach. He claimed that the traditional dilemmas of philosophy, religion, and ethics can be restated in terms that are researchable, and he believed that empirical research eventually would demonstrate which understanding of any issue is correct. Because he feared that apriorities of philosophy lead to dogmatism or skepticism, he failed to recognize that advances of empirical research call for more reflection, not less. This should be evident first of all to

those who tend to agree with his concrete and holistic standpoint on values and facts. The iterative method may advance intuitive understanding of values and facts; it is not sufficient to confirm the validity of values, however. For me it is one source among several from which support for truth claims can be derived. It can serve as an empirical check on and an advance complementing phenomenological imagination; it should not be subordinated as a mere appanage to philosophizing. Contemporary application of this mode of thought promises to assist us in identifying the kind of stability and change that can enhance both survival contingencies and the personal and corporate life that survives.

NOTES

1. B. F. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971).
2. Ibid., p. 211.
3. Ibid., p. 114.
4. Ibid., p. 41.
5. Ibid., p. 81.
6. Ibid., p. 58.
7. Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith after Freud* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).
8. A. H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality,* 2d ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 138, 224.
9. Floyd Matson, ed., *Being, Becoming, and Behavior: The Psychological Sciences* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1967), p. 165.
10. See Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation,* trans. Denis Savage (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1970); and Peter Homans, *Theology after Freud: An Interpretative Inquiry* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1970). In Maslow's vision there is an overall integrity of direction, yet most of his writings are impressionistic; he goes back and forth on a question and does not employ vocabulary in a consistent manner. Reading him is thus frustrating and worthwhile only if one is able to discern how the irritating surface contradictions serve a common function. This study will not treat adequately his philosophy of the person as it emerges from a welter of texts that often are no more than thought experiments and from a style that is unsystematically yet consistently dialectical. Only those aspects of his model person that relate directly to the question of autonomy and coercion will be extracted for consideration.
11. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality,* pp. 149–80.
12. See, e.g., Steven Lukes, *Individualism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973).
13. A. H. Maslow, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (New York: Viking Press, 1971), p. 52.
14. As quoted in Richard J. Lowry, *A. H. Maslow: An Intellectual Portrait* (Monterey, Calif.: Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., 1973), p. 91.
15. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality,* p. 45; *Farther Reaches of Human Nature,* p. 143.
16. Maslow, *Farther Reaches of Human Nature,* pp. 142–44.
17. A. H. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being,* 2d ed. (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1968), p. 66.
18. Maslow, *Farther Reaches of Human Nature,* pp. 15, 143–45.
19. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality,* p. 271.
20. Ibid., p. 82.
21. Ibid., p. 58.
22. Ibid., p. 38; see also pp. 28, 37, 41.

23. Ibid., pp. 85, 94, 102, 279.
24. Maslow, *Farther Reaches of Human Nature,* pp. 197–208.
25. Ibid., p. 4.
26. Ibid., pp. 9–10; A. H. Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences* (1964; reprint ed., New York: Viking Press, 1970), p. 101; A. H. Maslow, "Psychological Data and Value Theory," in *New Knowledge in Human Values,* ed. A. H. Maslow (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1959), p. 121; A. H. Maslow, *Eupsychian Management: A Journal* (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1965), pp. 82–83.
27. Maslow, *Eupsychian Management,* p. 83.
28. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality,* p. 6; *Farther Reaches of Human Nature,* pp. 13–14; *Toward a Psychology of Being,* p. 54.
29. A. H. Maslow, "Power Relations and Patterns of Personal Development," in *Problems of Power in American Democracy,* ed. Arthur Kornhauser (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1957), p. 122; *Eupsychian Movement,* p. 72.
30. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality,* pp. ix, 299.
31. Stephen C. Pepper, *World Hypotheses: A Study in Evidence* (1942; reprint ed., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970); M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953).
32. Abrams, *Mirror and the Lamp,* p. 175.
33. The method was applied to psychology from the neurological work of Kurt Goldstein (see *The Organism* [New York: American Book Co., 1939] and *Human Nature in the Light of Psychopathology* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1940]).
34. Maslow, *Farther Reaches of Human Nature,* pp. 71–72.
35. A. H. Maslow, "A Test for Dominance-Feeling (Self-Esteem) in College Women," *Journal of Social Psychology* 12 (1940): 255–70; A. H. Maslow, "A Clinically Derived Test for Measuring Psychological Security-Insecurity," *Journal of General Psychology* 33 (1945): 21–41.
36. A study of Rhode Island red chicks by W. F. Dove, often cited by Maslow, is a good example of the iterative process. Dove continually regrouped his chicks according to their growth rates and observed their free choice of foods. Once he had identified the diet of the best-growing chicks, he tried it on random groups and found that they exceeded the previous average growth rate of chicks in a free-choice situation but did not attain the growth rate of the best-growing chicks in that situation (see W. F. Dove, "A Study of Individuality in the Nutritive Instincts and of the Causes and Effects of Variations in the Selection of Food," *American Naturalist* 69 [1935]: 469–544). Phrases in Maslow's writings such as "good choosers," "bad choosers," "biological assays," etc., derive from the Dove study, and the references made earlier to coercion are in *Eupsychian Management* (n. 26 above), in which Maslow is commenting on an implication of this research for the human situation. Though one should not be too literal or read all of Dove into Maslow, this animal research seems to be a kind of parable that limns Maslow's vision of human improvability.
37. A. H. Maslow, *Dominance, Self-Esteem, Self-Actualization: Germinal Papers of A. H. Maslow,* ed. Richard J. Lowry (Monterey, Calif.: Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., 1973), pp. 139–49.
38. Maslow, *Farther Reaches of Human Nature,* pp. 120–22, 169.
39. Ibid., pp. 149, 172, 291, 327.
40. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality,* pp. xxiii–xxiv, 16, 232, 235, 266; *Farther Reaches of Human Nature,* p. 108; *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences,* p. 12; and A. H. Maslow, *The Psychology of Science: A Reconnaissance* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).
41. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality,* pp. 17, 153.
42. Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences,* p. 46; *Farther Reaches of Human Nature,* p. 68.