

The background of the entire image consists of several overlapping, tilted rectangular pieces of light-colored paper. These papers are decorated with various ink splatters and stains in dark blue, black, red, pink, yellow, and green. The splatters are of different shapes and sizes, some resembling ink blots and others more like fine sprays. The papers are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and layering.

**BASIC MOTIVATION AND
HUMAN BEHAVIOUR**

Control, Affiliation and Self-expression

VELIBOR BOBO KOVAČ



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Introduction

Introduction

The principle aim of this book is to provide an answer to the fairly simple question Why do people do what they do? However, asking a simple question does not automatically imply that the answer will be just as simple. Indeed, it is safe to say that there are several possible theoretical alternatives when trying to supply the answer. Bearing this in mind, it is important to begin immediately by precisely defining the intentions, expectations and aims of the project being presented here. We can begin by stating that the main theme in this book is the identification and description of fundamental aspects of human motivation, their underlying mechanism(s) and the effects they have on consequent behaviour. The aim is to describe a few basic underlying motivational tendencies that are common to all people when exploring the diversity of human actions. This aim is difficult and frustrating to satisfy because as we all know, human behaviour is complex, variable and above all unpredictable. Furthermore, the workings of underlying motives are per definition merely postulated, as these assumed processes are generally hidden, non-observable and, as such, difficult to study empirically. Indeed, although

acknowledging the primacy of some motives, strong voices will suggest that there is no such thing as a basic foundation of motivation when it comes to ranking them according to importance (Pelham, 1997). For this reason, the main aim of this book is quite ambitious and therefore requires a systematic approach, convincing and credible arguments and above all clarity of the presented text.

It is safe to say that human motivation is a difficult and complex theoretical field. In defining motivation, psychological dictionaries predominantly underline two points: (1) that the field of motivation is extremely important in understanding human behaviour and (2) that the concept of motive (or motivation) is most controversial, least satisfactory (Chaplin, 1985), definitionally elusive (Reber, 1995) and has ill-defined boundaries (Evans, 1989). In contemporary theory, the notion of motivation is considered to be a hypothetical construct that causes behaviour to arise, and provides further “fuel” for its execution, direction, selection of goal(s), pause(s) and ultimately its end. The classical definitions of motivation place emphasis on behaviour as *“the activation of internal desires, needs, and concerns, [it] energizes behavior and sends the organism in a particular direction aimed at satisfaction of the motivational issues that give rise to the increased energy”* (Pittman, 1998, p. 549). Similarly, Bandura (1991, p. 69) perceives motivation as *“attempts to explain the motivational sources of behavior [which] therefore primarily aim at clarifying the determinants and intervening mechanisms that govern the selection, activation, and sustained direction of behavior toward certain goals”*. Although our understanding of the basic underlying motivational processes or our ability to predict and account for specific behaviours is still unsatisfactory, it is nevertheless difficult to argue that the field of motivation represents a neglected field in both the history of human thinking and contemporary literature. Over the past five to six decades a number of specific theories, books, periodicals and research articles have been produced that delineate the most relevant motivational topics. Over the years, many subtopics have emerged, while others have vanished for good and some have reappeared, perhaps in a different form or with a new focus and using refurbished terminology. Perceived from this historical point of view, it can be noted that the main focus of analysis has gradually but steadily shifted from investigations of basic processes that organise

behavioural responses (e.g. traits, drives, instincts and needs), through behavioural theories (stimulus–response, reinforcements and contingencies) and finally towards explicit emphasis on self-regulatory processes and attempts to precisely calculate and predict the probability of goal attainment.

Thus, the existing theoretical models predominantly attempt to combine the processes of basic motivation with the processes that are involved in self-regulation of behaviour, putting a little more emphasis on the latter (i.e. goal-directed behaviour in which cognition, emotion and automaticity are combined). Put another way, one could say that over the years, the original interest in basic motivational processes has gradually faded and the theories that analyse the manner in which people energise and regulate their own behaviour towards intended goals have become more prominent. These analyses have also become more and more comprehensive, wherein they attempt to integrate the basic components of human functioning into one broad theoretical model. An illustration of this can be seen in the noticeable differences between the chapters labelled “Motivation” in the widely influential and acknowledged two-volume editions of the *Handbook of Social Psychology*. I am here referring to editions four (Gilbert, Fiske, & Lindzey, 1998) and five (Fiske, Gilbert, & Lindzey, 2010).

In the fourth edition, Thane S. Pittman, the author of the chapter on motivation, looks back on the history of the field and declares that motivation has returned as a major theme in psychological analyses. It is easy to see that Pittman organised this chapter by focussing on broad, basic and fundamental motives, and far less on particular areas of motivational theory. However, in the 2010 edition, the chapter on motivation begins, not with a presentation of basic motivation processes, as was the case in the 1998 edition, but rather with the goal concept and achievement of desired outcomes (see Bargh, Gollwitzer, & Oettingen, 2010). The chapter’s later pages continue to emphasise self-regulation, goal setting and goal pursuit, and further elaborate on these themes. All in all, it is evident that the main focus of this chapter is centred on the differences and similarities between conscious and unconscious routes towards goal pursuit and achievement, and their respective effectiveness. Thus, these two chapters on motivation, that is, the 1998 and 2010 editions, noticeably differ

in terms of the main focus and theoretical emphasis (basic motivational processes as opposed to self-regulation and goal attainment). This tendency is also acknowledged by Thrash and Elliot (2001), who note that current theory is dominated by a variety of goal approaches with the aim of attaining consciously articulated ends or purposes at the expense of analyses of underlying processes. Pittman and Zeigler (2007) also explicitly state that the topic of basic human needs is surprisingly neglected and call for more analyses on this issue. In fact, these authors basically predict that exploration of basic human needs in terms of structures and different levels of analyses will be a recurring subject in the future. Despite these promising words, it still seems that the quest to find basic motivators which energise and organise behavioural acts has become somewhat less important compared to analyses of the goal construct and the provision of more precise accounts of the specific behavioural directions towards desired end states (e.g. Fishbach & Ferguson, 2007). In other words, exploration of the former is becoming an alarmingly neglected field in contemporary literature compared to the quantity of studies focussing on analyses of the processes immediately prior to the execution of behaviour.

For several reasons, I am not going to discuss here the background regarding for the increase in a preference for self-regulatory processes, as this is not important for this study. After all, shifts in emphasis in research are quite common and expected as accumulation of knowledge works as a wave that dynamically influences the emergence of new subjects of inquiry. Moreover, analyses of possible causes of any given action are always subjected to the fact that motives operate on different levels of abstraction, ranging from concrete tasks and situations, over to more general domains and dispositions, and finally to fundamental levels on which all human behavioural activity might rest (Vallacher & Wegner, 1987).

Explicit Focus on Basic Motivation

Regardless of the above-mentioned contributions of contemporary research to a detailed analysis of human action, it is unfortunate when research attention leans too far in one direction. This may directly result

in the shortage of theoretical frameworks that aim to identify and analyse the workings of the most fundamental human motivational tendencies. Although pairing motivation and self-regulation in one theoretical model is both desirable and necessary, the accentuated emphasis on the latter might blur the distinction between triggering factors (i.e. causal events prior to behaviour) and fundamental psychological tendencies that are hard-wired in human nature. This is an important distinction to make as it delineates a fundamental question: how far back in the causal chain do we have to go to provide a full account of specific human actions and, more importantly, to fully understand human nature in general?

Using a domino analogy, we can ask how far back in the causal chain we have to explore if we are to understand, for instance, why the 376th domino tile “suddenly” collapses. A complete understanding of the collapse is indeed difficult if we do not have sufficient knowledge about the structural organisation of the very first domino tiles. Even though it is difficult to develop empirical procedures that would imply the existence and the nature of these hypothetical entities, this should not stop us from developing a sound and argument-based theoretical proposition that would indicate their existence and their possible effects on human behaviour. The searches for satisfactory explanations are, however, predominantly focussed on all the neighbouring dominos, which indeed represent good candidates (the 375th domino, for example, looks particularly suspicious). Nevertheless, in many ways most of these proximate dominos, although certainly having a hand in the collapse, could be perceived as “mere” triggers. One known effect of triggers is the provision of comfort or closure in the sense that people need and want some form of explanation, no matter how dubious or superficial it might be. As a minor, yet necessary digression, it is important to note the difference between the superficial, which is definitely not good, and the simple, which might be a good and even preferred explanation. Even when explanations are made in the best manner of modern science, they still might be insufficient as they usually include variables that mainly originate from the recent steps in the causal chain.

It should be clear that it is not my intention that the opening pages of this book should offend a great number of accomplished and skilled members of the scientific community with an apparent if unintended

arrogance. The majority of the recently published work in the realm of motivation is complex in terms of detail and impressive when it comes to the use of various methodological approaches. As such, motivational theory has made clear advances, especially when it comes to understanding the workings of specific variables, such as self-efficacy, attitudes, intentions, norms and similarities, which tend to “behave” differently under various conditions. These evident contributions notwithstanding, the apparent disadvantage is that the majority of these approaches are too specific and can hardly provide a deep and multi-chained explanation of the given action ranging from visible behaviour to fundamental motivational tendencies. Excessive focus on identification of all possible proximate triggers sometimes only results in finding convenient scapegoats, with assignment of responsibility and “guilt” when it comes to how these specific variables work.

Another potential limitation of “trigger” analyses is that many complex behaviours often have a different surface expression from the original motivational background they come from, just as two brown-eyed people can give birth to a blue-eyed child. As an illustration of the difference between non-observable or hypothetical underlying motivational tendencies and motivational processes that occur prior to behavioural expression, the conceptual difference between genotype and phenotype might be used. “Genotype” is the term that refers to hereditary information about an individual, even if the genes are not expressed or directly observed. Thus, the origin of potential change is “hidden” yet has a powerful effect on human behaviour. On the other hand, the term “phenotype” refers to visible or directly observable characteristics, such as hair or eye colour. This type of information also has evident effects on human behaviour, but the information is incomplete without knowing the person’s genetic code in the cells. It follows that phenotype descriptions are powerful as the evidence lies in “seeing is believing”. Similarly, postulating the effects of genotypes might be difficult as their workings might not always be evident to external observation or be manifested externally. Another similar illustration, which also vividly shows the difference between non-observable and directly observable processes, is the widely used conceptual difference between homology and analogy (e.g. see Elster, 1999, on the phenomenon of addiction). Homology refers

to similarity between entities based on deeper underlying mechanisms, such as sharing a common ancestor. Analogy is the type of similarity that is based on somewhat superficial resemblance and does not necessarily indicate there is a recent common link between two organisms, or the motivational processes as is the case with the purposes of this illustration. Analogy thus refers to the several changes and adaptations between two relatively unrelated entities for the sole purpose of obtaining similarity in appearances. The widely used example of this difference is the comparison between sharks and dolphins, which indeed look strikingly similar in terms of visible characteristics. But the scientific fact is that one of them is a fish and the other is a mammal. I could go on and identify several other instances of common underlying characteristics and superficial similarity, such as the apparent etymology of certain words that only superficially look alike, the difference between surface and source traits (Cattell, 1946) or even the notion of structuralism as an example of the theoretical tradition in which the relation-specific elements and overarching structures are underlined. But the general point would be the same: the things we observe directly or the things that take place either close in time or in space might just represent scapegoats that distract us from identifying the actual causal forces. Thus, the analyses of the most recent causal effects might be misleading and not always match the basic origins of the phenomenon in question.

It is again important to clarify that the analyses of causal factors that occurred prior to the event and a better understanding of goal-oriented behaviour in general are extremely important, as they provide a viable explanation of the specific actions and are informative in terms of the prediction of behavioural outcomes. However, the possible consequence of a noticeably increased focus of contemporary theory on proximate causal mechanisms is the neglect of theoretical models that address the question of which underlying processes influence the selection of goals initially, and equally important, why. After all, motivation is more about the why of behaviour and less about the how and what. In other words, the predictive knowledge and calculations of probability about the how, and which goals should be attained, may represent qualitatively different aspects of the motivational theory than analyses of the processes that delineate why people do what they do in terms of innate fundamental tendencies com-

mon to all people. It follows that if we are to really understand a person's behaviour, we have to work our way back in the causal chain all the way to the underlying motivational agents that created the background for the given act. We have to go back or perhaps down, depending on the viewing perspective, to identify the very first dominos representing the basic building blocks of human nature. The knowledge about these a priori innate basic processes that stand for organisation of the complex human behaviour that emerges many years later is extremely important in understanding human nature and people's consequent actions.

As an alternative to the search for "triggers" and proximate causal mechanisms, the main idea in the present book is based on the premise that there are only a few underlying fundamental human motives which shape human existence and ultimately guide behaviour. The central point argued in this book is therefore the postulation that the complexity of human behaviour can be meaningfully explained by identifying a small number of fundamental motivational tendencies common to all people that are hard-wired in human nature. The identification and description of these few tendencies, or three to be precise, comprise the main aim of this book. The ultimate aim is the development of a multilevel theoretical tool that can help us to understand the motivational background of any given act. To fully understand the commonalities between people, regardless of race, gender or cultural/situational context, we have to go back and identify the very first dominos and understand their structural organisation. According to Weiner (1992, p. 4), *"the task of the motivational psychologist is to account for or explain as broad a swath of behavior as possible with as few constructs as possible"*. The most useful explanations are the ones that can be applied in many different situations and across various contexts, accounting for seemingly different actions by means of one or a few underlying mechanisms. It follows that scientifically based explanations of human actions typically postulate the existence of general principles that transcend the characteristics of specific instances. Similarly, Staats concludes that *"our science is presently characterized by separatism, a feature that has a pervasive effect and that constitutes an obstacle to scientific progress. The concept of separatism describes our science as split into unorganized bits and pieces, along many dimensions.... Our field is constructed of small islands of knowledge organized in ways that make no*

connection with the many other existing islands of knowledge" (Staats, 1981, p. 239). These words precisely describe my intentions with the present book. Individual theories having a specific focus on a particular process, drive or mechanism are undoubtedly both necessary and useful for advancements in the specific field but, as Weiner and Staats jointly imply, without reference to the field as a whole, these no matter how insightful propositions run the risk of representing an isolated thinking system.

Following and exploring this idea further, the present book attempts to integrate the existing knowledge in the field of motivation into a greater theoretical framework. This aim will be achieved by developing the proposition that all human behaviour evolves from the three fundamental underlying tendencies connected to the concepts of control, affiliation and self-expression. The tendencies towards control, affiliation and self-expression can be conceptualised as systems of interrelated psychological needs that guide and govern the variety of human actions. Thus, the motivational tendencies towards control, affiliation and self-expression are considered to be a priori given coordinators of human motivation. These systems represent separate, independent and autonomous but still interactive psychological tendencies in charge of organising a variety of needs in the larger pattern. The apparent contradiction between simultaneous independency of the systems and subsequent interdependency between various human needs will be addressed in Chap. 7, where the critical theoretical concerns are analysed. Each of the three systems is assumed to be capable of satisfying multiple goals of the actor. Put in this way, the proposition is relatively simple. The obvious challenge is how to make this proposition credible. Therefore, in the process of making my arguments strong and credible, I attempt to present a great number of concepts, theoretical views and empirical results that support and further reinforce the idea of central underlying motivations. Considering that the submitted literature covers a wide range of various behavioural manifestations, I am also obliged to make credible connections between these processes, as well as to establish the connection between these processes and the three proposed fundamental tendencies. This clearly indicates that the conceptualisation of the motivational systems is compatible and includes, but also goes beyond, the existing theoretical knowledge in the field of motivation and goal-oriented behaviour. The motivational systems

proposed here consist of various need processes that are widely discussed in the psychological literature, although frequently as separate issues. My task here is to convince the reader that (1) various need processes are indeed interrelated and that (2) this cluster of interrelated need processes indicates the existence of some major and overarching, yet underlying and hidden, human motivations. Thus, if the attentive reader feels that he/she is being exposed to some “razzle-dazzle” or blinded by the quantity of the presented research and the rather dry academic writing style, it will be good to keep in mind that the main aim of this work is fairly simple: to present separate pieces of evidence to support the argument that human existence in general, as well as any specifically given behaviour, inevitably contains traces of the three fundamental above-mentioned motives. I also urge the reader not to be preoccupied with the names of the motivational systems that are used here. Assigning proper and precise labels is always a tricky business in scientific theory, as unfortunately the chosen labels might miscommunicate the main message and bring imprecise connotations to mind. Thus, theoretical terms are always related to fortunate or unfortunate choice and related to historical changes in the field, as it is always difficult to predict the connotative weight one word has. In that sense, the label “control” could easily be replaced by the terms “mastery” or “achievement”, “affiliation” by “belonging” or “relatedness”, and “self-expression” by “growth” or “self-actualisation”, and all of them with the notions of balance or management. Nevertheless, regardless of the name or label, the main point remains: all aspects of any human action may ultimately be traced back to only three basic motivational tendencies that are related to controlling, belonging and expressing.

Why Write This Kind of Book?

This is indeed a fair question at this point, bearing in mind the quantity of existing literature on the topic of motivation, as well as acknowledging the obvious fact that this clearly represents an ambitious task. As is commonly known, many theorists in the past have attempted to describe the processes that define human nature. Aside from personal reasons and motivations that are not relevant here, I also perceive that the task of

initiating this type of analysis at this point in time is both needed and timely. This is based on the observation that the contemporary literature, in nearly all scientific fields, is frustratingly fragmented. Nowadays there are literally thousands of channels through which scientific work can be published. Although the majority of these channels are relatively credible, applying rigorous peer-review procedures, this overwhelming information flow presents at least two problems. The first of these relates to the vast quantity of this literature[em-dash]although easily retrievable by means of electronic search, the magnitude of the task basically forces the reader to undertake a superficial examination of the “evidence”, which is usually restricted to a very specific scientific area. Second, and more importantly, the requirements for scientific publications are narrow, forcing researchers to direct their focus on technical elements of writing, strict methodological approaches and stringent delivery of scientific messages. Although these requirements are part of my formal training and I certainly perceive these as essential in the sense that they elevate the quality of any scientific work, people in the field might lose interest in attempts to make connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena on the grounds that such work would be hard to publish. Hence, the argument here is that advances in any scientific field require, from time to time, a pause in the form of theoretical-philosophical works that attempt to organise and make sense out of the rapid accumulation of existing knowledge. Indeed, at the present time there are very few books in contemporary psychology that aim to integrate existing knowledge in one larger framework and simply, but efficiently, provide an account of diverse behavioural occurrences. The present work addresses this limitation and attempts to provide a theoretical framework that analyses the basic origins of human behaviour common to all people, regardless of historical, cultural, social or any other diversity.

Structure of the Book

The book has seven chapters, including this introduction. In the second chapter, I present a brief historical background on the issue of fundamental motivation by mainly focussing on two main themes given in chrono-

logical order. The first adopts a historical approach and identifies several theoretical traditions and influential theorists who in one or another way have worked with the idea of fundamental motivation. This brief overview includes the ideas preceding the rise of evolutionary theory and the consequent emergence of such contemporary theoretical traditions as psychoanalysis, behaviourism and humanistic psychology. Furthermore, several other individuals of theoretical importance, such as Lewin, Cattell and Murray, will be mentioned. The second theme centres on the identification of the most recent contemporary contributions that are quite similar to the main ideas of this book. This is a necessary first step as it represents generally accepted scientific methodology, wherein one considers the obvious possibility that present propositions have already been elaborated on earlier and elsewhere, truly enough in different forms and structural organisations. In other words, I have no delusions that the present work is extremely original and totally unrelated to existing propositions.

The next three chapters (Chaps. 3, 4 and 5) will then describe in detail the content of the three proposed fundamental motivations. The main aim of these chapters is to clarify the meaning of the central concepts in terms of definitional boundaries, to describe and analyse the main need processes through which these motivations are articulated and finally to suggest that all these need processes are interrelated, thus attesting for the existence of one fundamental underlying motivation. More specifically, in Chap. 2, the concept of control will be presented using historical and contemporary literature. Based on this introduction, the need for control will be further analysed in the three all-embracing life domains: mastering environmental cues where the need for achievement is prominent, balancing interpersonal relations leading to the emergence of the need for power and managing the intrapersonal processes resulting in employment of the various self-strategies. The chapter closes with the argument that all presented evidence in different life domains strongly suggests the existence of one unifying motivation for control (i.e. control motivational system).

Similarly, in Chap. 4, the concept of affiliation will be presented as a general human disposition and fundamental motivation. The chapter will analyse the concept of affiliation in the light of interpersonal and group dynamics. Some of the most prominent and established human

needs on the interpersonal level, such as attachment, intimacy and love, will be presented. It will be also argued that these needs are interrelated and imply the existence of the larger underlying belonging motivation. The second part moves up to the collective level and analyses the way people interact with each other in terms of in-group and inter-group relations. Similarly, as was the case with control motivation, the chapter ends by suggesting that all belonging needs, on both the interpersonal and the group levels, are part of the single basic motivational force that drives and bonds people together in various social constellations. In addition to this, the closing pages of this chapter will discuss the somewhat controversial suggestion that the conceptualisation of the human need for belonging should also include the need for distance, and in this way articulate affiliation as a two-way balancing process between the opposing needs.

Chapter 5 attempts to provide a viable definition of self-expression motivation. Considering that the amount of literature on self-expression, matched to the concepts of control and affiliation, is practically non-existent, the definition of self-expression will be clarified by comparing it to some other similar concepts, such as self-realisation and autonomy. Furthermore, the concept of art, as a domain in which the underlying tendency for self-expression is clearly manifested, will be considered. The chapter will also develop and strengthen the argument that self-expression should indeed be accepted as a fundamental human motivation. This aim will be achieved by submitting the literature review that shows whether or not this process fulfils the criteria of fundamental motivation put forward by Baumeister and Leary (1995). As in the previous two chapters, Chap. 5 will come to an end with the assessment of the presented evidence and summarise the arguments that suggest self-expression is indeed worthy of consideration as a basic motivational concept. Considering that the complexity of the presented literature might be overwhelming, the conclusion sections at the end of Chaps. 3, 4 and 5 will serve the purpose of reminding the reader that the main point here is not centred on details and particularity, but rather on building the argument that all individual needs mentioned here can be classified according to a proposed tripartite motivational division.

Chapter 6 will move the focus of enquiry from the descriptions of motivational domains towards the analysis of possible underlying mechanism(s). In other words, although Chaps. 3, 4 and 5 delineate and clarify in detail the definitional boundaries of each of the proposed systems, the question relating to which mechanism(s) is/are at work in shaping behavioural expressions in these domains is still left unanswered. In general, the theoretical difference between the description of the main motivational processes and the delineation of their underlying mechanisms represents a somewhat neglected subject of enquiry in contemporary literature. Considering the importance of this issue, the point of departure in Chap. 6 is the identification of the one possible candidate that might complete the understanding of the previously presented motivational systems of control, affiliation and self-expression. The chapter starts with a brief historical overview and recognises the existence of the one single mechanism which throughout the past has repeatedly tended to rise to the surface, admittedly in different forms, having slightly different theoretical labels and depending on specific scientific traditions. This mechanism is presently termed “balanced dual tension”. The chapter also includes the somewhat speculative discussion on the possibility that there are distinct kinds of balanced dual tension that are characteristic for each of the above-mentioned motivational systems.

After the aims and scientific positions have been introduced (Chap. 1), after a historical and contemporary review of the theories that are similar to the reasoning in this book have been presented (Chap. 2), after domains of motivational systems have been delineated (Chaps. 3, 4 and 5) and after the underlying mechanism(s) have been identified (Chap. 6), I am certain that the attentive reader will have noted a number of critical theoretical questions that have been left open without being properly clarified, nuanced and addressed. Hence, in Chap. 7 several questions that might challenge the arguments presented in the book will be identified, raised and addressed. The implicit point in this chapter is to clearly communicate to the reader my awareness of the existence of multiple limitations in the present analyses. Many of these points have been intentionally omitted during the presentation of the systems and underlying mechanism(s) on the grounds that some of them represent theoretical digressions that might distract the reader from grasping the main points of the present book.

And finally, the book ends with a closing Chap. 8 in which the main conclusions are summarised, implications of the present work are outlined and possible avenues for future research are presented.

All in all, the present approach adopts both analytical or molecular (examining the parts) and holistic or molar (grasping the whole) perspectives. The main aim represents an ambitious attempt to provide a meaningful theoretical tool for understanding the underlying structures (i.e. processes, forces, mechanisms) that govern human behaviour specifically and human nature in general. However, each book on motivation is unavoidably doomed to be criticised for omitting or ignoring specific traditions, processes, aspects, positions, perspectives and/or relevant persons. For example, although the term “human needs” will be frequently mentioned, a discussion on the meaning of this concept will not be provided. Similarly, the recognition of basic human instincts or the importance of the human physiological make-up and a subsequent discussion on how these interact with motivational systems of control, affiliation and self-expression will also be omitted. Before criticising this approach, I urge the reader to bear in mind that the main aim of the present analysis is the identification of the very first dominos responsible for the organisation and interaction of all subsequent developments that form human nature and behaviour. The omitted discussions on the number-specific aspects of human motivation, concepts, persons of importance, and other relevant motivational processes, are considered to be persuasively elaborated on elsewhere in numerous books and articles on general motivational processes that have been written over the course of history. All of the processes and concepts omitted here are considered to be important, but also secondary to control, affiliation and self-expression, as they tend to emerge later in the causal chain. Thus, the main theme, common to all chapters, goes beyond the proximate and even distant levels of motivational analyses and centres on the very first processes and mechanisms that shape all human existence.

I am also relatively certain that the reader might find the text here a little daunting in terms of complexity and the amount of presented research. However, I am also hopeful that the reader will find this thought provoking and inspiring. Considering the evident indefinability of the

topic in focus in this book, I strongly encourage the reader to employ his or her critical abilities in reading and judging the material. And finally, concerning the personal motivation to write this book, I take the liberty at the end of this introduction to borrow the words of Tolman (1959, p. 159) who accurately describes my academic drive. Enjoy.

I have liked to think about psychology in ways that have proved congenial to me. Since all the sciences, and especially psychology, are still immersed in such tremendous realms of the uncertain and the unknown, the best that any individual scientist, especially any psychologist, can do seems to be to follow his own gleam and his own bent, however inadequate they may be. In fact, I suppose that actually this is what we all do. In the end, the only sure criterion is to have fun. And I have had fun.

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2

Historical and Contemporary Background

The Impact of Evolutionary Theory

As noted in the introduction, the main intention of this book is to outline the most fundamental human processes that affect human behaviour. Considering the importance of the subject in question, it is reasonable to assume that this kind of project, in various forms, has been attempted before. Thus, it is clear that over the course of history many thinkers have in one way or another explored questions relating to the basic components of human nature. In fact, it is possible to say that philosophy's "million dollar question" in the history of human thinking has often been centred on attempts to meaningfully reduce the enormous diversity of human behaviour to basic processes that are common to all people. However, answering the question Does diversity of human action have some common ground? depends mainly on which point of view is adopted when it comes to understanding and defining human nature. Indeed, the answer to this question might only be provided by postulating some rudimentary motivational forces that shape human existence and guide subsequent behaviour. It also logically follows that these processes should be equally common and applicable to all people, regardless of social class,

background or origin. Moreover, and in a wider sense, such universal and comprehensive models of human motivation should also be applicable in part to the animal kingdom. As much as these requirements might sound reasonable and even trivial from the perspective of our time, the beliefs in mystical, supernatural, discriminatory and prejudicial understandings of human life and behavioural manifestations were quite influential and dominant in the distant past. As is commonly known, the development of a comprehensive theory of human existence that is applicable to all people was impeded to some degree by the dominant views on human nature that suggested different classes of human beings are not equally worthy. Thus, there is a rich human history of exclusion, segregation, ostracism, devaluation and marginalisation, and it is still strongly present where there are many examples of some categories of people being considered better or more valuable than others. Under such circumstances and under the domination of such a basic view on human nature, it is clear that it was difficult to develop models capable of explaining the apparent diversity of human behavioural manifestations, ranging from kings and nobles to the poor and developmentally challenged. In fact, it was not uncommon to postulate that men and women were also driven by qualitatively different processes in terms of motivation, as well as in terms of cognitive abilities. All this suggests that some important premises essential for developing one comprehensive theory of human motivation and subsequent behaviour were lacking. Perhaps even more importantly, the powerful existence of some other premises impeded advancements in human thought in this particular area. One of the most fundamental premises in the past that directly represented a major obstacle to the advancement of scientifically based models of human functioning was the notion of divine creation. In historical terms, one could say that the postulation of divine creation represented one of the most powerful, and in many ways most unfortunate, ideas on which all discussions concerning human nature started and ended. One of the main problems was that ancient philosophical discussions did not sufficiently distinguish between the “why” and “how” of behaviour. One could say that the “why” did not represent a problem because the majority of the postulations prior to 1850 have, without hesitation or doubt, been based on the notion of God as an initiator of all actions. In many ways, in the history of ideas

dating before the publication of evolutionary theory, the idea of divine creation could be considered an ultimate ad hoc solution or the missing link attached to the motivational explanation of human behaviour. God was also a convenient first and last variable in the line of causal explanation of both behaviour and the miracle of creation.

Although Darwin's theory of evolution (Darwin, 1859) has made many specific contributions to science, there are at least three distinct points that should be emphasised for the purposes here. First, his theory changed the basic theoretical principles for understanding human nature by moving the focus in analyses from the divine to human and physical processes. Perhaps unwillingly, and certainly not specifically aiming to attack the idea of divine creation, Darwin's work more than any other work in the realm of the natural sciences introduced the possibility that the notion of God was not necessary in understanding the origin of life in general and human beings in particular. This is why this relatively simple theory had a tremendous influence on the development of later scientific thinking, and its influence cannot be underestimated as it directly changed the basic premises (i.e. some of the first dominos) on which all the previous thinking had been built. Second, as with any good theoretical postulation, the basic ideas in the theory are fairly simple as they have a wide explanatory utility. The theory is certainly advanced in terms of specific details, but in its simplest form it suggests that behaviour is created gradually over a long period of time by promoting the "survival of the fittest". Furthermore, the theory suggests that the complexity of life on earth is only apparent or superficial in the sense that all life forms are related and originate from a common ancestor(s). The fact that the theory of evolution is so fundamental and the empirical evidence so overwhelming means that subsequent and future theories of motivation must have a reasonable degree of compatibility with the basic evolutionary principles. This kind of somewhat reductionist reasoning, which could be clearly detected in evolutionary theory, is very similar to the basic premises and arguments that will be presented in this book: the complexity of human behaviour originates from only a few (i.e. three) motivational tendencies that in turn comprise the many interrelated need processes. The third important contribution of evolutionary theory is the introduction of the whole range of new theoretical possibilities, as well as the establishment