

## Unit 8 Notes: Personality

### Definition

- *personality* is an individual's unique thoughts, feelings and behavior that persist over time and different situations

### Six Psychological Perspectives

- There are six main schools of thought regarding personality:
  - *psychodynamic*: focuses on unconscious motives and structures to explain personality
  - *humanistic*: focuses on the fundamental goodness of people and their attempts to strive for higher levels of functioning
  - *constitution (or type)*: proposes a relationship between body type and personality characteristics
  - *trait*: examines stable characteristics of the person that help explain behavior
  - *social-cognitive*: focuses on environmental contingencies and accompanying mental processes to explain personality
  - *behavioral*: focuses on the fundamentals of learning to explain behavior

### Psychodynamic: Sigmund Freud

- the most well-known psychodynamic theorist is Sigmund Freud.
- Freud focused on the power of inner forces as motivators to shape personality
- *Psychoanalysis* includes three main techniques:
  - *free association*: allowing the patient to say whatever comes to mind
  - *dream analysis*: attempts to examine the latent (hidden) content of a dream through examining its manifest (remembered) dream elements
  - *hypnosis*: a state of suggestibility induced by the therapist
- Freud's psychodynamic theory is based on a few key concepts:
  1. underlying symptoms can be relieved through the expression of the *strangled affect*, or bring these unconscious motives to the surface--the process of purging these emotions is called *catharsis*
  2. the symptoms someone displays have an *emotional logic* and the key to psychoanalysis is to unlock the mysteries of these symptoms
  3. a lot of abnormal behaviors are a result of *emotionally abrasive experiences* in our childhood; they unconsciously grow into abnormal behaviors as the person gets older
- Freud's theories are based on *psychic determinism*-- the assumption that our early life determines our behavior and unconscious reactions.
- Freud believed we all had certain drives and instincts which guide our behavior:
  - *eros*: the life instinct which seeks to preserve the species;
  - *libido*: our sexual energy
  - *thanatos*: our desire to return to the womb; shown in aggressive and destructive behavior
- Freud believed that everyone progressed through five stages of *psychosexual development*
- these stages are:
  - *oral stage* (0-1 years): achieves libidinal satisfaction from oral activities such as eating and sucking
  - *anal stage* (1-3 years): autonomy is developed through bladder and bowel control
  - *phallic stage* (3-6 years): the child comes to develop a sexual attachment to the opposite sexed parent and to see the same sexed parent as a rival for those affections
    - *Oedipus Complex*: boys want to possess the mother and see their father as a sexual rival
    - *Electra Complex*: girls want to possess the father and see their mother as a sexual rival

- *latency period* (6-puberty): a period of sexual rest for both sexes where sex-role identities develop
- *genital stage* (puberty on): a reawakening of sexual urges and a desire for heterosexual relationships
- Freud believed that the mind or our personality was made up of three constructs:
  - *the id*: the child within us that seeks expression of wishes and emotions (called the *pleasure principle*)
  - *the ego*: uses the *reality principle* to satisfy the id and superego safely and effectively in the real world
  - *the superego*: society's values and morals; the parent within us which is guided by the *idealistic principle*
- Individuals constantly strive to present their best self and reduce anxiety
- Freud called this preserving *ego integrity*
- To do this, individuals employ a variety of *defense mechanisms*:
  - *repression*: involuntary memory loss about something anxiety-producing
  - *suppression*: voluntarily not thinking about something anxiety-producing
  - *denial*: not facing up to the reality of a situation
  - *rationalization*: making up excuses for our actions
  - *displacement*: rechanneling aggression in a negative way; taking our frustrations out on a substitute person or object
  - *sublimation* (also called *compensation*): rechanneling aggression in a neutral or positive way
  - *projection*: putting onto others our own tendencies, motives or traits
  - *reaction formation*: behaving outwardly that opposite of how we inwardly feel
  - *fantasy*: escaping reality through daydreaming or using the imagination
  - *procrastination*: putting off something anxiety-producing until a later time
  - *fixation*: becoming stuck at a specific stage of psychosexual development because it is safer for ego integrity
  - *regression*: returning to an earlier stage of psychosexual development
- *neo-Freudians* refined and developed Freud's theories
- they did not agree that our libido guided the majority of our actions but found other sources for our motives

### **Psychodynamic: Carl Jung**

- Carl Jung was Freud's handpicked successor
- Jung believed that our personality or mind was made up of three constructs.
  - *conscious ego*: our consciousness awareness of ourselves and how we present our self to the outside world
  - *personal unconscious*: motives and behaviors that are unique to the individual hidden away in the unconscious
  - *collective unconscious*: racial memory; our understanding of mankind's past; our intuitive tendencies toward universal, reoccurring symbols called *archetypes*
- some of the more notable archetypal characters found in literature are:
  - *hero*: saves the day; defeats evil; protects the weak
  - *mother*: surrounds, encompasses and protects the individual; can be both a person or an institution
  - *shadow*: the dark side of our nature; our hidden, bad tendencies we do not like to acknowledge
  - *trickster/magician*: plays sly pranks and malicious tricks; usually represented as half man, half animal
  - *child-god*: an individual who has powers or knowledge beyond their years
  - *anima*: the projection of femininity from a man's collective unconscious; seeing in others our own opposite sexed characteristics

- *animus*: the projection of masculinity from a woman's collective unconscious; seeing in others our own opposite sexed characteristics
  - *persona*: the Greek word for "mask;" the different faces we put on in different environments
  - *self*: the desire for unity where the personal and collective unconscious intersect
- Jung believed in *mandala symbolism*, our striving for completeness or wholeness
  - Jung also believed that what most people felt were coincidence were actually acts of *synchronicity*-an individual's unconscious awareness of a greater understanding in the world
  - Jung also examined personality types and temperaments
  - he believed that personality traits lay along a continuum and individuals tended to fall somewhere along this continuum
  - the opposite ends of this continuum he called *polar opposites*

#### **Psychodynamic: Alfred Adler**

- Alfred Adler believed that individuals possess innate positive motives that are the primary determinant of our personality
- our major goal was the achievement of perfection
- we would strive to overcome personal and social obstacles through compensation
- Adler later modified his theories and believed that individuals attempted to overcome feelings of inferiority, what he termed the *inferiority complex*
- later, he revised his theories again and focused on how the individual strives for personal and social perfection
- to help us achieve this, we develop *fictional finalisms* which are goals we set to guide our behaviors

#### **Psychodynamic: Karen Horney**

- Karen Horney thought that basic anxiety was a greater motivating force than our libido
- this may develop in children whose parents are overly oppressive, indifferent or inconsistent in their child-rearing
- in coping with these, individuals develop one of three *neurotic trends*, irrational approaches to dealing with this anxiety
- Horney believed that, in interacting with others, we tend to develop into the following types:
  - *compliant type*: moving toward others in attempts to be submissive
  - *aggressive type*: moving against others in attempts to gain power
  - *detached type*: moving away from others to avoid being hurt

#### **Psychodynamic: Erik Erikson**

- Erik Erikson believed that individuals went through eight crises throughout their lives in which a positive or negative resolution to the crisis occurred.
- these are called the "Eight Ages of Man," and make up Erikson's eight stages of psychosocial development
- the stages are:
  - *trust versus mistrust* (0 - 1): the infant develops a sense of trust in the world if his or her needs are met
  - *autonomy versus doubt* (1 - 3): the toddler develops a sense of independence through bladder and bowel control
  - *initiative versus guilt* (3 - 5 1/2): the child learns to initiate actions, especially during play
  - *industry versus inferiority* (5 1/2 - 12): the child competes against his or her peers in producing acceptable work in school
  - *identity versus role-confusion* (adolescence): the teenager develops a sense of identity, strives for more self-understanding and establishes goals for the future

- *intimacy versus isolation* (young adulthood): a feeling of belonging either with a close group of friends or through marriage
- *generativity versus stagnation* (middle adulthood): *generativity* is Erikson's term for a concern for future generations; adults assist their growing children or the community to make the world a better place for them in the future
- *integrity versus despair* (later adulthood): the individual looks back over their life and assesses whether it was a positive or negative existence

### **Humanistic Perspective**

- the focus of *humanistic theory* is:
  - on the here and now
  - attempting to help the individual through the process of *unconditional positive regard* (unconditional support) in achieving *self-actualization*
  - a realization of the individual's full potential and comforting sense of place in the world
- the emphasis is on the whole person, not an examination into only one dysfunctional part of personality

### **Humanistic: William James**

- William James developed the concept of self--anything that a person can lay claim to be part of his or her person that distinguishes them from others
- James defined four parts to the self:
  - *material self*: refers to material possessions
  - *social self*: how we are perceived by others (akin to Jung's persona)
  - *spiritual self*: our reasoning, emotions and psychological faculties
  - *pure ego*: the person's internal stream of consciousness

### **Humanistic: Carl Rogers**

- Adler's concept of striving toward perfection and James' concept of self where building blocks for Roger's theories
- he believed that all organisms had a biological push toward fulfillment called an *actualizing tendency*
- individuals attempted to fulfill their own self-concepts or images they have formed of themselves through a *self-actualizing tendency*
- when an individual's *real self* matches their potential or *ideal self*, Rogers believes the individual has become a fully functioning person--individuals strive for this *congruence*

### **Humanistic: Abraham Maslow**

- Abraham Maslow also believed in our self-actualizing tendency by satisfying certain needs he arranged these in a hierarchical structure
  - the lower level needs represent our survival needs
  - the upper level needs our growth or meta-needs
- Maslow represented this *hierarchy of needs* in a pyramid, using the concept that the lower needs had to be met to form the foundation on which to build the higher level needs
- most of our time is spent toward the lower level needs
- the number of people who are self-actualized is relatively small.
- higher level needs are more difficult to measure because of the subtlety of their nature
- individuals who exhibit primarily lower (deficiency-oriented) needs are typically:
  - self-centered
  - reject their own impulses
  - seek goals common to others
  - look for short-term gratification
  - view others in terms of how they can be used to satisfy their own needs
  - behave on the basis of external cues

- individuals who exhibit primarily higher (growth-oriented) needs:
  - are typically more concerned with the world at large and other people
  - accept their impulses
  - attain unique and individual goals
  - look for long-term gratification
  - accept others for who they are
  - behave based on internal cues

### **Constitution or Type Perspective**

- *constitution theory* focuses on the connection between a person's body type and their personality

#### **Constitution: Hippocrates**

- Hippocrates believed that our personalities were associated with the four basic fluids in our body
- these humors of the body are:
  - black bile: melancholy or sad
  - blood: sanguine or cheerful
  - phlegm: phlegmatic or apathetic
  - yellow bile: choleric or excitable

#### **Constitution: William Sheldon**

- William Sheldon divides the human physique into three body types, or *somatotypes*
- the somatotypes are:
  - *endomorphs*: round bodies with large abdomens
  - *mesomorphs*: upright bodies with strong bones and muscles
  - *ectomorphs*: thin, fragile bodies
- Sheldon also divided our personality or temperaments into three types:
  - *viscerotonia*: fond of food, people and comfort; very sociable
  - *somatotonia*: love of activity and physical adventure
  - *cerebrotonia*: very private, restrained and self-conscious

### **Trait Perspective**

- *trait theory* concerns itself more with describing rather than explaining personality
- traits cannot be observed in a person but can be inferred from their behaviors
- traits can be classified in three ways:
  - *cardinal traits*: a general trait that influences everything an individual does; this is very rare
  - *central traits*: traits that in individual typically exemplifies in their normal behavior
  - *secondary traits*: traits which appear only in specific situations

#### **Trait: Gordon Allport & H.S. Odbert**

- Gordon Allport believed that each individual had their own unique constellation of traits
- along with H.S. Odbert, Allport identified 17,953 words from the dictionary that described personality
- only about 4500 of these words made up stable or enduring traits.
- when synonyms were removed, the list was reduced to about 200 basic traits.

#### **Trait: Raymond Cattell**

- Raymond Cattell found that when these 200 traits were attributed to people, certain traits tended to cluster around each other
- based on his research, called factor analysis, he found that there were between 16 and 25 basic personality traits

### **Trait: Tupes & Christal**

- Tupes and Christal has subsequently demonstrated that there are five basic dimensions of personality traits:
  - *extroversion--introversion* (or surgency): talkative, assertive, spontaneous, energetic, outspoken
  - *agreeableness--antagonism* (or pleasantness): warm, kind, flexible, forgiving, good-hearted
  - *conscientiousness--undirectedness* (or dependability): organized, responsible, hard-working, practical, reliable
  - *emotional stability--neuroticism*: relaxed, objective, even-tempered, secure, peaceful
  - *culture* (or intelligent or sophisticated or *openness--non-openness*): perceptive, analytical, artistic, creative, knowledgeable

### **Social-Cultural Perspective**

- the socio-cognitive theory focuses on the influence on the environment on the individual and how his or her behavior is changed correspondingly
- the process by which the individual, the situation and the environment all influence one another is called *reciprocal determinism*

### **Social-Cultural: Walter Mischel**

- Walter Mischel proposed that there is only an apparent consistency of behavior when we observe others because we are seeing them in only a limited number of social situations
- he believes that we tend to look for behaviors to validate our assumptions about the consistency of someone's behavior and ignore evidence to the contrary
- he later revised his theory indicating there are actually some aspect that are relatively consistent, for example intelligence and academic achievement

### **Social-Cultural: Albert Bandura**

- Albert Bandura is probably the most well-known of the social learning theorists
- he believed that we developed behaviors based on *observational learning*
- Bandura believed that an individual then evaluates their behavior in a situation according to *internal expectancies*
- the environmental feedback that ensues from this behavior can alter the internal expectancies for future behavior

### **Social-Cultural: Julian Rotter**

- Julian Rotter proposed that these expectancies can be influenced by one's *locus of control*, or an expectancy that reinforcement is under either internal or external control
- people who believe they are masters of their own fate have an *internal locus of control*
- those who believe their behavior is due to destiny have an *external locus of control*

### **Behavioral Perspective: B.F. Skinner & John Watson**

- B.F. Skinner believed that a person's behaviors were a result of past conditioning rather than some innate personality characteristic
- the parameters of their behaviors are based on what has worked for them in the past which, in essence, are conditioned responses to environmental stimuli
- new behaviors can change due to changes in *reinforcement contingencies*

### **Methods of Personality Testing**

- personal interview:
  - conversation with the purpose of obtaining information from the person being interviewed
  - used in clinical settings
  - can be unstructured or structured
  - structured interviews can draw out information on sensitive topics

- direct observation:
  - observing a person's actions firsthand in everyday situations over a long period of time
  - used by behaviorists and social learning theorists
  - works best with young children because they are less self-conscious
  - can be subject to observer misinterpretation
  - can be expensive and time-consuming
- objective tests:
  - personality tests that are administered and scored in a standard way
  - used by trait theorists
  - 16PF and MMPI are examples
  - self-report bias is possible as is familiarity with the test format
- projective tests:
  - personality tests consisting of ambiguous or unstructured material
  - used by psychodynamic theorists
  - the TAT and Rorschach test are examples
  - a more relaxed type of testing
  - unconscious thoughts can be uncovered
  - the true purpose of the test can be disguised
  - analysis relies on the skill of the examiner