Module 5: The Neo-Freudians: Erikson & Fromm
TOWARDS A FOCUS ON OBJECT RELATIONS & CULTURE

Erikson's psychoanalytic ego psychology

"I consider it my task to approach the matter of the healthy personality from the genetic point of view: How does a healthy personality grow or, as it were, accrue from the successive stages of increasing capacity to master life's outer and inner tasks and dangers?" (Erikson 1956, p. 186)

Erikson postulates eight stages of personality development; each stage involves a psychosocial crisis. Successful resolutions of the crisis gives rise to an ego strength. Eg, hope emerges from the trust vs mistrust crisis.

"To fully understand Erikson's conception of ego strengths, it is necessary to examine the antipathic counterparts of each strength." (Markstrom, Sabino, Turner, and Berman, 1997, p. 708).

What are the antipathies?
Dystonic tendencies that are counterproductive to both positive resolutions of psychosocial crises and the establishment of ego strengths. A less desirable psychosocial stage resolution would be observed in a lower degree of an ego strength and greater presence of its antipathy.

What is the antipathic counterpart of each ego strength?
- Ego strength: hope
- Antipathy: withdrawal - associated with the absence of cognitive and emotional anticipation

- Ego strength: will (and autonomy)
- Antipathy: compulsivity and impulsivity - associated with the absence of sustained and controlled drive and determination

- Ego strength: purpose (and initiative)
- Antipathy: inhibition - characterised by a suppression of both the envisioning and the pursuit of valued goals

- Ego strength: competence (and industry)
- Antipathy: inertia - characterised by a resistance to the utilisation of one's abilities in task completion

- Ego strength: fidelity (being faithful to something, ability to maintain commitment to a social role requiring some sort of personal compromise)
- Antipathy: weak ego. role repudiation - observed in diffidence and defiance
   - *Diffidence* is characterised by hesitance or reluctance to select and commit to identity alternatives, as well as being observed in lack of self-confidence, insecurity, and timidity.
   - *Defiance* refers to a preference toward a negative identity (an identity undesirable relative to societal standards)

- Ego strength: love (and intimacy)
- Antipathy: exclusivity - evident in the absence of adult love objects. Inability to accept the vulnerability and self-sacrifice involved in intimate adult relations

- Ego strength: care (and generativity)

- Anapathy: rejectivity - defined as an unwillingness to care about others or to not take care of others.

- Ego strength: wisdom
- Antipathy: disdain - defined as a reaction to feeling and perceiving others as being in an increasing state of being finished, confused, and helpless

The epigenetic principle

Erikson's theory is founded on the epigenetic principle.

"Anything that grows has a ground plan, and that out of this ground plan the parts arise, each part having its time of special ascendancy, until all parts have arisen to form a functioning whole". (Erikson 1956, p. 187)

- Each ego strength is in existence, in some form, from the earliest psychosocial stage of trust to the last of integrity
- Although ever present, an ego strength reaches its time of ascendance in association with successful resolution of its corresponding psychosocial stage
- Each ego strength is grounded in all those that are prior to its ascendance and, when mature, gives new meaning to all previous ego strengths and all those yet to reach ascendance.
- Eg, fidelity - exists in various forms from the earliest psychosocial stages and is modified in relation to earlier ego

ERICKSON'S PSYCHOSOCIAL STAGES			
Stages	**Crisis**	**Favorable Outcome**	**Unfavorable Outcome**
Childhood			
1st year of life	Trust vs. Mistrust	Faith in the environment and future events	Suspicion, fear of future events
2nd year	Autonomy vs. Doubt	A sense of self-control and adequacy	Feelings of shame and self-doubt
3rd through 5th years	Initiative vs. Guilt	Ability to be a "self-starter," to initiate one's own activities.	A sense of guilt and inadequacy to be on one's own
6th year to puberty	Industry vs. Inferiority	Ability to learn how things work, to understand and organize.	A sense of inferiority at understanding and organizing.
Transition years			
Adolescence	Identity vs. confusion	Seeing oneself as a unique and integrated person.	Confusion over who and what one really is.
Adulthood			
Early adulthood	Intimacy vs. isolation	Ability to make commitments to others, to love.	Inability to form affectionate relationship.
Middle age	Generativity vs. self-adsorption	Concern for family and society in general.	Concern only for self—one's own well-being and prosperity.
Aging years	Integrity vs. despair	A sense of integrity and fulfillment; willingness to face death.	Dissatisfaction with life; despair over prospect of death.

strengths (ie, hope, will, purpose, competence), when they reach their times of ascendence. However during adolescence and with successful accomplishment of the crisis of identity vs identity confusion, that fidelity is realised in a much fuller capacity. The earlier ego strengths are reworked in appropriate correspondence to fidelity's ascendence (renewal of trust and hope to a higher degree and is shown in trust of one's self and others, and trustworthy in ideologic causes to which one has hope and faith).

It is not clear whether Erikson's account of the ego strengths is objective, or merely a reflection of values. *"I have come close to overstepping the limits… that separate psychology from ethical philosophy."* (Erikson).

Fromm's social psychoanalytic psychology

Fromm's holds that personality is a combination of inherited psychic qualities (temperament) and acquired psychic qualities (character). While temperament is not changeable, character is changeable to some extent by insights and new kinds of experience.

Character - the (relatively permanent) form in which human energy is canalised in the process of assimilation and socialisation. (Fromm)

1. The process of assimilation - a person must acquire and assimilate things in some fashion in order to satisfy his/her needs.

- <u>Four nonproductive character orientations</u>
  - **The receptive orientation**
    - a person feels "the source of all good" to be outside, and he believes that the only way to get what he wants is to receive it from that outside source.
    - The problem of love is that of 'being loved' and not that of loving.
    - As a consequence, such people tend to be indiscriminate in the choice of their love objects, and they fall for anybody that gives them love (or what looks like love). They are also exceedingly sensitive to any withdrawal or rebuff from the loved person
    - In the sphere of thinking and intellectual pursuits, the initial impulse is to find somebody else to provide needed information. They receive not give. Left to themselves, they feel paralysed, lost and alone
    - The general outlook is optimistic and friendly
  - **The exploitative orientation**
    - The exploitative type does not expect to receive things from others as gifts, but to take them away from others by force or cunning
    - Everyone is an object of exploitation and judged according to their usefulness
    - In the realm of love and affection, they feel attracted only to people whom they can take away from somebody else
    - In the realm of thinking and intellectual pursuits, the exploitative type will tend not to produce ideas but to steal them. *"Stolen fruits are sweetest."* (Fromm)
    - They tend to overrate what others have and underrate what is theirs
    - The general outlook is characterised by suspicion and cynicism, envy and jealousy.
  - **The hoarding orientation**
    - Experience the outside world as a threat. They surround themselves with a protective wall. They bring as much as they can in and let as little out as possible.
    - They hoarding type is miserly, they save, spending is thought to be a threat.
    - Love is essentially a possession. They do not give love, they try to get it by possessing. Intimacy is a threat
    - In the realm of thinking and intellectual pursuit, the hoarding type knows everything but is sterile and incapable of productive thinking
    - Pedantic orderliness (things, thoughts, feelings), compulsive cleanliness (things outside their own front tiers are dangerous and unclean), obsessive punctuality, obstinacy (constant 'no' as their automatic defence against intrusion)
    - The hoarding type's highest values are order and security. *"There is nothing new under the sun."* (Fromm)
  - **The marketing orientation**
    - Rooted in the experience of oneself as a commodity and of one's value as exchange value.
    - The marketing type is preoccupied with packaging his/her personality such that it is in demand. Success depends on how well a person sells himself on the market, how well he gets his personality across.
    - The only permanent quality of the marketing orientation is the very changeability of attitudes, i.e., in this orientation, those qualities are developed which can best be sold
    - The general quality of the marketing orientation is superficiality (and emptiness). "I am as you desire me." (Fromm)

- The productive orientation
  - ○ The person who can produce materially on his own, he is capable of producing what he needs
  - ○ Able to not be dependant on others
  - ○ Observes herself, not constantly watching what other people say, has a sense of her own authority, has convictions
  - ○ An active person not only in physical work but also in feeling, thinking, relationship to people
  - ○ All his expressions of his being are authentic

2. The process of socialisation - a person cannot live alone and unrelated to others
- He has to associate with others for work, sexual satisfaction, play, upbringing of the young, transmission of knowledge etc.
- A person can relate to others in various ways
- The particular form of interpersonal relatedness is expressive of a person's character
  - Symbiotic relatedness
    - ○ The person is related to others but loses or never attains his/her independence. Avoids the danger of aloneness by becoming part of another person. Happens in one of two ways:
      - A. By being 'swallowed' by the other person; masochistic, passive form of symbiotic relatedness
      - B. By 'swallowing' the other person; sadistic, active form of symbiotic relatedness
    - ○ All forms of the sadistic drive go back to the impulse of wanting to have complete mastery over another person, complete domination over a powerless person.
  - Withdrawal-destructiveness
    - ○ Withdrawal - an attempt to overcome the feeling of individual powerlessness by withdrawal from others who are experienced as threats. The emotional equivalent is the feeling of indifference toward others, often accompanied by a compensatory feeling of self-inflation
    - ○ Destructiveness - the impulse to destroy others follows from the fear of being destroyed by them. *"The energy of un-lived life transformed into energy for the destruction of life."* (Fromm)
  - Love - it implies responsibility, care, respect and knowledge, and the wish for the other person to grow and develop. Expression of intimacy between two human beings under the condition of the preservation of each others' integrity.

Fromm maintains that non-productive orientations blend with the productive orientations, so that any of the non-productive orientations has a positive and negative aspect according to the degree of productiveness in the total character.

Social character
The nucleus of the character structure which is shared by most members of the same culture. The concept of social character can be understood only in reference to the function of the social character.

The function of the social character - to mould and channel human energy within a given society for the purpose of the continued functioning of this society.
"Modern industrial society, for instance, could not have attained its ends had it not harnessed the energy of free men for work in an unprecedented degree. Man had to be moulded into a person who was eager to spend most of his energy for the purpose of work, who had the qualities of discipline, orderliness and punctuality, to a degree unknown in most other cultures. It would not have sufficed if each individual had to make up his mind consciously every day that he wanted to work, to be on time, etc., since any such conscious deliberation would lead to many more exceptions than the smooth functioning of society can afford... The social necessity for work, for punctuality, and orderliness had to be transformed into an inner