

# Personality 1

Sunday, 15 March 2015

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- Hippocrates theorised that personality was formed by temperaments which he categorised into 4 bodily fluids in his trait theory.
  - Scientifically speaking, personality is a psychological construct:
    - The dynamic and organised set of characteristics possessed by a person that uniquely influences them (Ryckman)
  - Study of personality attempts to determine:
    - What - particular personality trait
    - Why - why this trait is present (nature/nurture)
    - How to solve personality issues with evidence based treatments
  - Generating testable hypothesis/falsifiable theories and use statistical methods to eliminate bias
  - Nomothetic VS Idiographic:
    - Nomothetic - investigating large groups and applying general theories
    - Idiographic - investigating individuals in depth (this is subjective and qualitative)
  - Personality theories are:
    - Not implicit
    - Synthesis of all areas of psychology
    - Wide ranging applications
    - Diversity of research methods
  - Personality structures are the most stable aspects of personality
  - Personality expressions - aggression, anxiety etc
  - Dynamic motivational concepts
  - Determinants:
    - Environmental (e.g. Family, education)
    - Biological (e.g. Brain functions, hormones, age)
    - Genetic (e.g. Genes, evolution, heritability)
- Genes account for 50% of our personality make up  
Shared environmental - 10%  
Non-shared environmental - 40%
- Common controversies:
    - Nature-nurture
    - Person-situation (free will, stable self)
    - Categories-dimensions

# Personality 2

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## Assumptions in psychoanalysis I

- Psychic determinism - everything that happens in a person's mind has a specific cause
  - Cause lies in structure + processes (dynamics) of personality - psychodynamics - interactions in the mind
  - Purpose of psychoanalysis is to find these causes - Freud believed the unconscious could slip through the conscious during psychoanalysis

- The mind - psychological result of mainly the brain and partly the rest of the body's physiological functions - Freud was a materialist
- Levels of awareness:
  - Conscious - content of one's awareness at any given point in time
  - Pre-conscious - material just beneath awareness that is easily retrievable
  - Unconscious - greatly influential material such as memories and desires that a person is not consciously aware of
  - Collective conscious (Jung) - latent memory traces (archetypes) inherited from ancestral past, e.g. Narratives, symbols and concepts
- Christians have a negative reaction to Freud's theories on psychoanalysis

#### Assumptions in psychoanalysis II

- Internal structure - mind consists of specific, functionally independent and at times conflicting parts - communication not collaboration
  - Id - irrational and emotional part of the mind
    - Pleasure principle - need to immediately gratify the Id's urges (raw biological desires which are present from birth)
  - Ego - rational and decision making part of the mind - the mediator
    - Reality principle - force delaying gratification of Id's needs until appropriate to do so
  - Superego - moral part of the mind responsible for conscience. This part reflects the internalisation of learned morals and criticised Id's urges.

#### Assumptions of Personality III

- Psychic conflict - friction between the different parts of the mind
  - Ego's responsibility to find a psychic compromise between competing demands of motivation, morality and practicality.
  - Sexual/aggressive impulses are central to psychic conflict because they are very hard to satiate due to social sanctions.

#### Assumptions in Psychoanalysis IV

- Prolonged unresolved conflict can lead to considerable levels of anxiety and/or guilt.
- The ego becomes guilty or anxious about an out of control Id or an out of control Superego.
- Defence mechanisms are largely unconscious reactions applied by the ego to protect oneself from anxiety and/or guilt
- Common defence mechanisms:
  - Repression - burying thoughts into unconscious
  - Projection - attributing thoughts/feelings to another
  - Displacement - diverting emotions from original source to another
  - Reaction formation - behaving opposite of how one feels
  - Regression - a reversion of immature patterns of behaviour
  - Rationalisation - creating false but plausible excuses to justify unacceptable behaviour
  - Identification - bolstering self-esteem through imaginary or real alliances with others
- Differential utilisation - not everyone uses the same defence
- Differential centrality - same defence mechanisms are not equally important for everyone
- Specialisation - not all defence mechanisms work in all situations

#### Assumptions in Psychoanalysis V

- Mental energy - required for functionality
  - Libido - life drive or sex drive fuels the Id
  - Thanatos - death drive towards destruction - unconscious will to end pain

## Personality development

- Psychosexual stages are developmental periods with characteristic sexual focuses that shape one's personality and reflect a child's evolving quest for pleasure and their growing realisation of social limitations to fulfil these.

Stage	Ages	Erotic Focus	Key Tasks/experiences
Oral	0-1	Mouth	Weaning
Anal	2-3	Anus	Toilet training
Phallic	4-5	Genitals	Identifying with adult role models, coping with oedipal crises
Latency	6-12	None	Expanding social contacts
Genital	Puberty	Genitals	Establishing intimate relationships, contributing to society

- Fixations - failure to progress from one stage to the next due to excessive gratification/frustration of particular needs

### Contributions of Freud

- First proper personality theories
- Proposed existence of unconscious forces
- Explain effects of early development
- Treatment of mood disorders

### Criticisms

- Weren't based on longitudinal research
- Poor testability
- Inadequate empirical evidence
- Sexism?
- Function like philosophies

# Personality 3

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## Cognitive and Behavioural Approach to Personality

### Criticisms to Psychoanalysis

- Clinical approach:
  - Observing people with mental health problems inhibits generalisation to a healthy population.
  - Cohort bias - Viennese, middle-class females in early 20th C were sexually repressed - how can Freud's theories be relevant in a sexually liberate society?
  - Sample selection bias - patients selected Freud as their therapist
- Theoretical approach (armchair speculation)
  - Observation/interpretation of evidence without scientific controls, e.g. Blinded studies
  - Limited to certain cases
  - Conclusions may be subjective (issues with deductive premises) and influenced by Freud's particular personality and world view.
  - Lack of standardisation or scientific base - Freud used Socrates' philosophical ideas of the libido and thanatos

