PERSONALITY

1. The concept of personality: in search of the "soul"
•Why study personality?
-The desire to know thyself
-The desire to know thy neighbour
-The desire to be able to predict behaviour
-The desire to understand & overcome problems

•What is the study of personality?
-The psychological (scientific) study of the soul
-The scientific study of the whats, whys and hows of human motivation, thought, attitude, & behaviour (question-understand-control)
-The scientific study of personality has its focus on individual differences and attempts to understand the person "as deeply, completely, and precisely as possible" (Shoba & Mischel, 1996)
-"Personality psychology [is] the broadest of all psychological disciplines, one that attempts to understand both human nature and the ways in which individuals differ" (Buss, 2011)

•Defining personality
▪The person as a character = the most pervasive attribute
e.g. the coward, the flatterer, the fool, etc.

▪Personality as temperament (characteristic reaction patterns)
-Melancholic, choleric, sanguine, & phlegmatic

▪Stock characters & the commedia dell' arte = Collection of character and temperament
e.g. the handsome hero, the pretty young maiden, the jealous husband, etc.

▪Personality as degree of social attractiveness
-Persona: The mask
-Per (il) suono: To sound (through) – sounds that actors make to give the character a soul
-Popularity, attractiveness, ability to impress & get along with other people

•Scientific definition of personality
-An elusive term
-A psychological construct
-"Personality represents those characteristics of the person that account for consistent patterns of behavior" (Pervin, 2013)
-"The dynamic & organised set of characteristics possessed by a person that uniquely influences his or her cognitions, motivations, & behaviours in various situations" (Ryckman, 2012)

•Personality inquiry
-Nomothetic approach: Universal fundamentals of self; applicable to every human being
-Idiographic approach: Exclusively and primarily present in well-defined groups or in each human being

•Personality theory
▪Personality IS a science
-Not implicit personality theories
-Not (just) common sense
-Astrology

▪Personality structures
-The most stable and enduring aspects of personality

▪Personality processes
-Dynamic motivational concepts (conscious or unconscious) e.g. efforts to reduce tension or efforts to achieve

growth and self-fulfilment

▪Personality expressions (the way you view the world)
-Aggression-hostility, criminality
-Optimism/pessimism, anxiety
-Physical appearance
-Mental health/disorder

▪Personality determinants
-Environmental determinants: family, education, culture, etc.
-Biological determinants: brain functions, nervous system, hormones, age, etc.
-Genetic determinants: heritability, genes, evolution, etc.

→*The way you view the world says more about you than the world. What you see is a reflection of yourself.*

2. Psychoanalytic and psychodynamic approaches to personality
•Assumptions in psychoanalysis
1) Psychic determinism
-Everything that happens in a person's mind has a specific cause
-The cause lies hidden in the dynamics (structure and processes) of personality
-The purpose of psychoanalysis is to find those causes, by digging deep into the hidden part of the mind (The psychological result of mainly the brain & partly the rest of the body's physiological functions)
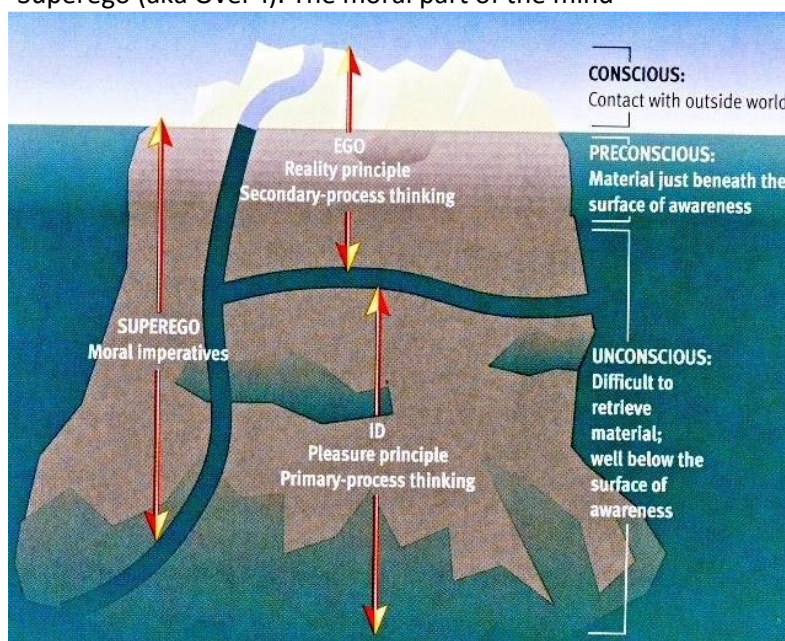
▪Levels of awareness
-Conscious: the content of one's awareness at any given point in time
-Preconscious: material just beneath awareness that is easily retrievable if needed
-Unconscious: greatly influential material, such as 'memories' and simple desires (food, sex)
-Collective unconscious: latent memory traces (archetypes) inherited from people's ancestral past

2) Internal structure
The mind consists of specific functionally independent and at times conflicting parts (communication NOT collaboration)
-Id (aka it or that): The irrational and emotional part of the mind
    -Pleasure principle: The need of an immediate gratification of Id's urges (raw biological desires)
-Ego (aka I): The rational and decision-making part of the mind
    -Reality principle: The force that delays the gratification of the Id's needs until the appropriate conditions are present
-Superego (aka Over-I): The moral part of the mind

CONSCIOUS:
Contact with outside world

PRECONSCIOUS:
Material just beneath the surface of awareness

UNCONSCIOUS:
Difficult to retrieve material; well below the surface of awareness

EGO
Reality principle
Secondary-process thinking

SUPEREGO
Moral imperatives

ID
Pleasure principle
Primary-process thinking

3) Psychic conflict = The friction between the different parts of the mind due to the absence of collaboration
-The ego's main job is to find a middle course (a psychic compromise) between the competing demands of motivation, morality, and practicality, between id and superego
-The most important of these conflicts centre on sexual or aggressive impulses
-Without reasonable internal compromises the individual is faced with an internal conflict between their needs and impulses that can have disastrous results (mental illness, criminal behaviour)

4) (Ego) Defence mechanism:
-Prolonged and unresolved conflict between the parts of the mind (can) lead to considerable levels of anxiety and/or guilt
-The ego is anxious about:
     -the Id getting out of control and doing something terrible
     -the Superego getting out of control and making you feel guilty (about things you did or thought or desired)
-If the anxiety and guilt reach a dysfunctional level, mental illness and criminal behaviour manifest

-Defence mechanism is adopted as largely unconscious reactions that protect a person from (primarily) feelings of anxiety and guilt

Defence mechanism	Definition	Example
Asceticism	Renunciation of needs	An anorexic girl denying all desires
Denial	Blocking external events from awareness	Drug addicts or alcoholics claiming that they don't have a problem
Displacement	Diverting emotional feelings (usually anger) from their original source to a substitute target	After parental scolding, a young girl takes her anger out on her little brother
Identification/ Introjection	Bolstering self-esteem by forming an imaginary or real alliance with some person or group	An insecure young man joins a fraternity to boost his self-esteem
Isolation/ Intellectualization	Stripping the emotion from a difficult memory or threatening impulse	A person acknowledge being abused in a cavalier manner
Projection	Attributing one's own thoughts, feelings, or motives to another	A woman who dislikes her boss thinks she likes her boss but feels that the boss doesn't like her
Rationalisation	Creating false but plausible excuses to justify unacceptable behaviour	A student watches TV instead of studying, saying that "additional study wouldn't do any good anyway"
Reaction formation	Behaving in a way that is exactly the opposite of one's true feelings	A parent who unconsciously resents a child spoils the child with outlandish gifts
Regression	A reversion to immature patterns of behaviour	An adult has a temper tantrum when he doesn't get his way
Repression	Keeping distressing thoughts and feelings buried in the unconscious	A traumatized soldier has no recollection of the details of a close brush with death
Sublimation	Acting out unacceptable impulses by converting these behaviors into a more acceptable form	A person experiencing extreme anger might take up kick-boxing as a means of venting frustration
Superego Isolation	Creating a gap between an unpleasant or threatening cognition, that can affect self-esteem, and other thoughts and feelings	A person beginning a train of thought and then pausing for a moment before continuing to a different subject
Undoing	Doing "magical" gestures/ rituals that cancel out unpleasant thoughts or feelings after they've already occurred	A boy reciting the alphabet backwards whenever he has sexual thoughts

▪Transference is a form of displacement whereby our feelings towards significant others may be displaced or shifted onto other people who we encounter later in life. For example, if we grow up in a house, terrified by our

father then that may influence how we feel towards other males later in life who was in authoritative position.

▪Individual differences in defence mechanism:
-Differential utilization: utilizing difference defence mechanisms
-Differential centrality: having same defence mechanisms but certain defence mechanism means more
-Specialisation: not all defence mechanisms are appropriate for a certain situation; mechanisms specialized for each situation/ conflict

5) Mental energy = The energy that the mind requires to function (personality processes)
-Mental energy consists of two fundamental drives (motives):
a) Libido or life drive or sexual drive: a motive towards creation, protection, enjoyment of life, productivity and growth
b) Thanatos (death): a motive towards destruction, disorder, and ultimately death

•Personality development
▪Psychosexual stages: Developmental periods with a characteristic sexual focus (urge for physical pleasure) that shape one's personality

Stage	Approximate Ages	Erotic Focus	Key Tasks and Experiences
Oral	0–1	Mouth (sucking, biting)	Weaning (from breast or bottle)
Anal	2–3	Anus (expelling or retaining feces)	Toilet training
Phallic	4–5	Genitals (masturbating)	Identifying with adult role models; coping with Oedipal crisis
Latency	6–12	None (sexually repressed)	Expanding social contacts
Genital	Puberty onward	Genitals (being sexually intimate)	Establishing intimate relationships; contributing to society through working

▪Fixation: a failure to move forward from one stage to another, due to excessive gratification or frustration of needs at a particular stage

▪Oedipal crisis
Each stage has certain difficult tasks associated with it where problems are likely to arise. For the phallic stage, it is the Oedipal crisis: a boy needs to compete with his father for his mother's love. The boy, recognizing the father's superiority, engages some of his ego defence: he displaces his sexual impulses from his mother to women; he identifies with the aggressor, the father, and attempts to become more and more like him, a man.

•Theory of psychoanalysis
▪Contribution:
-The first (proper) personality theories!
-The first theories to propose the existence and the influence of unconscious processes and forces
-The first theories to focus and explain the effects of early development on adult personality
-Major contributions to the treatment of (primarily) anxiety and mood disorders e.g. Dream therapy, clinical hypnosis and free association

▪Criticism:
-Poor testability
-Inadequate empirical evidence
-Sexism
-Function like philosophies or faith systems

3. Cognitive and behavioural approaches to personality

•CB objections to the approach to personality (psychoanalytic approach)
▪The Clinical Approach

=Observing people with mental health problems

-Doesn't allow for generalisation – they have distorted, often negative, views of the world

-How can we really know what is going on in one's mind, if we cannot directly observe and measure it?

-Cohort bias: each age group born at different year is influenced by different environments

-Selection bias: statistical bias; error in choosing the individuals to take part in a scientific study

▪The Theoretical Approach (aka armchair speculation)

=Observations and interpretations of evidence without proper scientific controls

-Limited to certain cases

-Conclusions may be biased/subjective (issues with deductive premises)

-Lack of standardisation or scientific bases

•Assumptions in cognitive and behavioural approach – Bandura

1) Behaviourism

-Behaviourism claims that the only valid way to know a person is through directly observing their behaviour (B-data)

-"We can only know what we can sense, and we sense everything we need to know"

-The goal of behaviourist is a functional analysis that maps out how exactly behaviour is a function of one's environmental situation

-The causes of behaviour can be found in the individual's environment and they can be directly observed

-Personality is the sum of behaviours

2) Learning

-<u>Learning</u> = change in behaviour as a function of experience

-Personality development is a result of learning

"Give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my own specified world to bring them up in and I'll guarantee to take any one at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select – doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant, chief, and yes, even beggarman and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, vocations, and race of his ancestors" (Watson, 1930, p. 65)

    -3 conditions for personality manipulation: infant, physically and psychology healthy and controlled environment

▪According to Radical Behaviourism:

-Personality doesn't really a priori exist

-Environmental contingencies can shape the person into anything and anyone

-Our personality makeup is the end-product of our habit systems

    -There are no stages (e.g. psychosexual stages) – every experience is not the same, not met at the same time and in the same order. Each individual's behaviour can be examined but not generalized in stages.

-Personality is more or less fixed by the age of 30

    -At the age of 30, when you settle down, the habit system is complete and the number of environment is very limited; there is less frequency of novel experiences that can shape your behaviour

3) Habituation

-Main type of learning

-Habituation = process through which the intensity of behavioural responses to repeated stimuli declines through time (becoming used to a stimulus)

-The stimulus needs to be:

    -Repetitive (variable frequency)

    -Within a given range of time-intervals

    -Within a given set of parameters

4) Conditioning

-Main type of learning

a) Classical =learning by association

-Learned helplessness – response to unpredictable and uncontrollable world that leads to chronic feelings

-Anxiety = Unpredictability
-Fear = Psychological response when expecting a negative outcome

-Unconditional/ Conditional – Stimulus/ Response

	US	UR	CS	CR
A.	Lemon juice in mouth	Salivation	Tone	Salivation
B.	Shock to foot	Pain	Light	Fear
C.	Ice cream in mouth	Pleasant taste	Sight of ice cream	Happiness
D.	Romantically enticing partner	Sexual arousal	Mood music	Sexual arousal

b) Operant = learning through reinforcement or punishment
-Behavioural hedonism: Every human is (primarily) motivated to learn in order to seek pleasure (reward) and avoid pain (punishment)
-Modelling

c) Social = learning through observing and imitating others
=Observational/ Vicarious learning = observing the consequences of other's action – predict modelling
-Authority/role-modelling and life relevance to be affected
-Same behaviour (same/similar response to the same stimuli) – observes and imitates others
-Matched-dependent (simple) behaviour (blindly following a model) - NO cognitive process
-Copying (complex behaviour)
-Social learning is mediated by one's self-efficacy (one's perception and cognition of their capabilities)

•Cognitive and behavioural approach
▪Contribution:
-The first objective personality theories
-The first truly scientific theories of personality
-The first theories to point out the major effects the environment (situation) has on personality
-Major contributions to the treatment of (primarily) phobias, substance abuse, personality, and mood disorders
        -Cognitive-Behavioural therapy (CBT)
        -Rational-Emotive Therapy (RET)
        -Systematic Desensitization
        -Aversion Therapy

▪Criticism
-Deterministic (plus originally dehumanising)
        -Deny the existence (or effects) of choice
        -Contrast with Reciprocal Determinism = environment moulds us but we can also control parts of environment
-Overdependence on animal research
-Do not (really) propose a personality structure
-(Originally) Simplistic
        -All we are is learned
        -Our personality is a direct response to environmental stimuli
        -Situationism = situation is the catalyst for all actions – although humans want to make order out of chaos and pursue consistency of the self, it is an illusion; humans behave differently to every single situation
        -Only or mainly observed behaviour is personality
        -Largely tend to neglect unobservable thoughts, aspirations, emotions, unconscious processes, attitudes, biology

4. Humanistic and existential approaches to personality

▪Psychoanalysis (1st force in psychology)
-Negative (pessimistic) view of personality

-Downplays the role of consciousness
-Focus on the unconscious
-Deterministic

▪Behaviourism (2nd force in psychology)
-Simplistic (reductionistic)
-Mechanistic (we automatically/ biologically respond to forces)
-Ignores subjective experiences
-Ignores the existence/role of consciousness
-Deterministic

-3rd force was influenced by: Civil rights movement, Feminism, The holocaust, Eastern philosophies, Postmodernism, Hippy movement and Experiences with mind-altering drugs

-"An assumption unusual in psychology today is that the subjective human being has an important value which is basic; that no matter how he may be labelled and evaluated, he is a human person first of all and most deeply."
-"It is as if Freud supplied to us the sick half of psychology and we must now fill it out with the healthy half."
-"If you do not express your own original ideas, if you do not listen to your own being, you will have betrayed yourself."
-"[We are] subjects to illness, death, limitations of intelligence and experience and other deterministic forces, but at the same time realising we have the subjective freedom to choose how we relate to these objective and deterministic forces. We alone can assign meaning to them and are responsible for own destinies."
-"Humanistic psychology is a value orientation that holds a hopeful, constructive view of human beings and of their substantial capacity to be self-determining. […] This conviction leads to an effort to enhance such distinctly human qualities as choice, creativity, the interaction of the body, mind and spirit, and the capacity to become more aware, free, responsible, life-affirming and trustworthy." (Association for Humanistic Psychology, 2013)

•Assumptions in humanistic and existential approach
1) Value orientation
-Although humans possess objective and physical properties, humans are works of art
-Focus on the creative potentials inherent in humans – humans capitalise creativity (create and destroy)
-The aim of H-E is to help individuals identify, understand and find the means to reach their highest and most important goals (growth & psychological health)
-Emphasis on the dignity and worth of humans and the conscious capacity to develop competence and self-respect → ignore unconscious processes
-Focus on:
      -The good side of human nature (Humanism)
      -Existence (dasein = being-in-the-world) – what does it mean to exist?
      -The now and here (1st force = past; 2nd force = future; 3rd force = present existence is most important)
      -Love, affiliation, creativity, spontaneity, joy, courage, humour, independence, morality, growth

2) Human being
-Each human being is a unique individual (idiographic approach)
-Humans are born good and (should) always strive to be happy (humanistic optimistic view)
-Humans are both good & evil (existential view)
-Freedom to choose one's own behaviour and control (responsibility) over one's life (consciousness is needed):
      -How you act (freedom of doing)
      -What you become (freedom of being)
      -Whether you are to be self-actualized or accept conditions of worth
-You have the freedom to make a choice even if you don't perceive the choices
-Attribution of fault – Who you are is nobody's fault – attribute it to yourself

3) Personality
-Personality = a unified whole and inseparable from the physical, psychological, and social environment
-The whole is greater than the sum of its parts = A non-deterministic approach = the systems that make up us interact with each other in a dynamic way = the whole involves, one part, another part and how they interact →

results in non-linear outcomes outcomes
-Existence of innate (exist in personality) growth mechanisms
-The growth process is the drive towards <u>the best you</u>:
     -Self-actualisation
     -Self-realisation
     -Selfhood development
-Total personality development is achieved when we realise and utilise in full our abilities and potentialities

4) Role of society
-Anything outside of self puts conditions upon your existence, reduces the desire to become the best of you
-Society (the bad guy) restricts personal growth through its rules and laws
-Obedience to (social) rules leads to dull, conventional, mediocre, and submissive individuals
    -vs. Choose rules that help you become you
-Realisation of the individual's potentialities if environmental conditions are right

5) Rejects the medical model of mental illness
One becomes ill due to:
▪Incongruence (= incongruity)
-Disharmony within cognitive elements of experience
-Discrepancy between one's experiences and their self-concept (who you think you are and what your experiences/ other people tell you who you are)
-If the discrepancy is prolonged:
     -Leads to anxiety
     -Can cause low self-esteem
     -(Rational) distortion of experience to fit your self-view → Distort reality

▪Inability to fulfill your D-Needs (deficiency needs)
-Fundamental needs of life - Physiological, safety, love, esteem
-Failure to satisfy them can lead to (mental) health problems

▪Terror management
-How do we manage our awareness of and response to death?
-Nothingness vs. being (believe in nothing but futility of life vs. choosing to live your life to the fullest)
-Existential guilt and angst (regret for action and inaction)

•Contribution
-The first holistic personality theories
-The first theories of personality to capitalise on subjective (free) will, personal responsibility, and conscious choice
-The first non-deterministic theories of personality
-They gave rise to positive psychology, transpersonal psychology (the 4th force), and holistic approaches to medicine
-Major contributions to social care systems, humanitarian interventions, and the treatment of (primarily) substance abuse and relational problems
E.g. Person-Centred Therapy, Gestalt Therapy, Logotherapy, Conjoint Family Therapy

•Criticism
-If individuals are good, why is the collection of individuals, the society, bad?
-What is conventional? What is mediocre?
-Too much reliance on the individual's self-reported conscious experience (subjectivity and introspection)
-Methodology is often too vague, unscientific, and untestable
-Theories lack falsifiability