Four Force of Psychology

The main theoretical forces that have shaped psychology and their impact on the psychological study of religion.

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Overview

What are the movements that have shaped (applied) psychology?

- Psychoanalytic
- Behavioral (Cognitive-Behavioral)
- Humanistic-Existential
- Multicultural

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Psychoanalytic

- Influential figures: Freud, Jung
- Main beliefs:
  1. Conflict best describes the human condition.
  2. Subconscious information: unknown but influential.
  3. Problems stem from subconscious conflicts.
  4. Resolution of problems

     Working through defenses and resolving conflict.

Perspectives on Religion

- Theory
  - Freud: *The Future of an Illusion*
    - Causes and effects of religion are rooted in the subconscious wishes and desires
    - Religion is the projection of the Oedipus complex
    - Stages of Humankind
      - Animistic: Belief in omnipotence of thought
      - Religious: Belief in the omnipotence of gods/divinity
      - Scientific: Mature acceptance of reality

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Perspectives on Religion

- Jung:
  - Collective Unconscious
  - Archetypes
  - Valued spirituality and religion as a vehicle for understanding, developing, and conveying a spiritual outlook on the world.

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Perspectives on Religion

- Impact
  - Paradoxical impact: Freud's contribution added to the split between psychology and religion, while Jung's work encourage collaboration.

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Behavioral (Cognitive-Behavioral)

- Influential figures: Skinner, Watson, Beck, Ellis
- Main beliefs:
  1. Learning and conditioning describes the human condition.
  2. All behavior is a result of conditioning (B) or a result of thought processes and environment (C-B).
  3. Problems result from reinforcement within one's environment (B) or beliefs, ideas, and interpretation of events in the environment (C-B).
  4. Problems can be solved by changing environment, behavior, or thoughts.

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CB Perspectives on Religion

- Theory
  - Watson & Skinner: Behavior alone can be studied
    - Inner religious experiences cannot be known.
  - Ellis: Religion is irrational and unhealthy
- Impact
  - Added to the split between psychology and religion (CB tends to be science oriented).
  - Antagonism against religious organizations.
  - Some current integration with spirituality and religion.

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Humanistic/Existential

- Influential Figures: Frankl, Maslow, Fromm, May
- Main beliefs:
  1. Fulfillment best describes the human condition.
  2. Human beings are basically good, and strive for "actualization" if given a safe, enriched environment.
  3. Problems are caused by lack of love, support, encouragement and abuses of society and culture.
  4. Humans have the ability to choose new ways of "being in the world" or new patterns of living.

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Humanistic/Existential

- Theory
  - Frankl: *Man's Search for Meaning*
  - Fromm: *Psychoanalysis and Religion*
    - Psychoanalyst with a humanistic perspective.
    - "While we have created wonderful things we have failed to make of ourselves beings for whom this tremendous effort would seem worthwhile." (p.1)
    - Humanistic versus Authoritarian Religion.
  - Maslow:
    - Hierarchy of Needs
    - Self-actualization (Peak Experiences)

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H/E Perspectives on Religion

- Impact
  - Made relevant to psychology issues important to religion (meaning, purpose, enlightenment, potential)
  - Provided a meeting ground for psychologists and religionists.

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Multiculturalism

- Influential Figures: D. Sue, J. Helms, M. Vasquez
- Main beliefs:
  1. Diversity best describes the human condition.
  2. Human beings are nurtured in different environments that create culturally-specific attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.
  3. Problems cannot be addressed out of context, and are often based in prejudice and inequality of resources.
  4. United States culture: not “melting pot,” “tossed salad.” Group differences must be understood and respected.

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MC Perspectives on Religion

- Theory
  - Sees religion as a dimension on which groups differ.
  - Understand and respond to the pressures, difficulties, and needs that people of minority religious status experience.
- Impact
  - Provides a means for understanding and respecting religious differences.
  - Supports openness to and “competency” in dealing with spiritual/religious issues.
  - Hard to be certain what the ultimate impact will be.

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