



The Evolution of Psychology

Psychoanalysis: The First Force in Psychology

Psychotherapy, focussing particularly on childhood, but also present life experiences, is repair-oriented, rather than growth-oriented. Psychoanalytic therapy seeks to provide a deeper, emotional understanding of the client's current problem, not simply an intellectual one. However, psychoanalysis does not supply us with a psychology of one's spirituality, of what human beings may grow toward, of what they can become.

Behaviorism: The Second Force in Psychology

Behaviorism emphasizes controlled laboratory experimentation using observable behavior to determine and predict behavior. However, these mainly concern physiological or neurological kinds of studies such as Pavlov's famous classical conditioning of dogs' learned or *conditioned responses* (salivation) to *conditioned stimuli* (*bell ringing prior to/associated with food given*). In Behaviorism, the individual is equated with his or her behavior where the individual 'is' what he or she 'does.'

Phenomenological Psychology

Phenomenologists believe that the proper frame of reference from which to understand behavior is the internal mental and emotional experience of the person. Similarly, **Existentialism** focuses on subjectivity, free will and individuality. Despite this inclusion of the individual's subjective and existential sense of self, neither phenomenology nor existentialism include the transcendent sense of self. What is important, though, is that an increasingly holistic approach of studying individuals was occurring.

Humanistic Psychology: The Third Force in Psychology

Humanistic psychology was the first major field to focus on 'human potentialities' and thus prefer to study people's subjective experience, especially that which is perceived as most central to well-being and growth in life. At the same time, **Cognitive Psychology** brought a plethora of interest and research in such topics as self, ego, and identity. Cognitive theories call attention to the ways in which the mind generates meaning and experience.

Transpersonal Psychology

Humanistic psychology, while emphasising the desirability of our being 'whole persons,' failed to come to terms with any of the possibilities that are seemingly beyond the whole person. Among others, Maslow realized that modern psychology needed to address the spiritual component of humankind. His discovery that people have 'peak experiences' of expanded identity and consciousness gave birth to transpersonal psychology. These meaningful and beneficial experiences are also referred to as mystical, transcendent, spiritual, religious, transpersonal, and intuitive experiences. Transpersonal psychology focuses on the study of these phenomena as a natural part of human existence with application to physical, psychological and spiritual wellbeing and development.

Espousing no particular religion, this approach draws on Eastern and Western spiritual disciplines and on modern research in altered states of consciousness, at the same time retaining the insights of psychodynamic and behavioral psychology (Chinen, 1990 p. 202).*

- Chinen, A.B. (1990). *Transpersonal psychotherapy*. In: J.K Zeig & W.M Munion (Eds.), *What is psychotherapy? Contemporary perspectives*. San Fransico: Jossey Bass Inc.

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