

Highlight the key features/tenets of Freud's and Murray's theories of personality. Identify key similarities and differences between the two theories, and briefly assess if they are compatible or mutually exclusive.

In the following, I am going to first explain the key features of Freud's and Murray's theories of personality. Secondly, I will go through the similarities and differences between Freud's and Murray's theories. Lastly, I will discuss whether these two theories are compatible or mutually exclusive.

Before I start, let's go through the meaning of 'personality'. Personality consists of the unique and stable patterns of behaviour, thoughts, and emotions shown by individuals (Nelson & Miller, 1995) or, as Friedman and Schustack (1999) have recently put it, the psychological forces that make people uniquely themselves.

Actually, there are several theories that attempt to explain personality: Sigmund Freud, Henry A Murray and his collaborators, B F Skinner and George Kelly. Here, I am going to focus on the theories of Freud and Murray.

To explain personality, psychoanalysts, with Sigmund Freud as the pioneer, tried to bring repressed unconscious material to the conscious domain. With respect to personality, however, four topics are most central: levels of consciousness, the structure of personality, anxiety and defense mechanisms, and psychosexual stages of development. Let's go through these one by one.

Freud believed that the human mind has three distinct levels: the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious. The conscious level includes our current thoughts; whatever we are thinking about or experiencing at a given moment (e.g. thoughts, perception). Beneath this conscious level is the much larger preconscious. This contains memories that are not part of current thought but can readily be brought to mind if the need arises (e.g. memories, stored knowledge). Finally, beneath the preconscious, and forming the bulk of the human mind, is the unconscious: thoughts, desires, and impulses of which we remain largely unaware. Although some of this material has always been unconscious, Freud believed that much of it was once conscious but has been actively repressed because it was too anxiety provoking. For example, shameful experiences or unacceptable sexual or aggressive urges are often driven deep within the unconscious. This is why one major goal of psychoanalysis—the method of treating psychological disorders devised by Freud – is to bring repressed material back into consciousness (which patients can gain insight into the early life experience that caused them to repress it in the first place) in order to remove mental illness.

Freud also believed that personality involves three basic structures: id, ego, and superego, which correspond very roughly to desire, reason, and conscience. The id consists of all our primitive, innate urges. These include various bodily needs,

sexual desire, and aggressive impulses. According to Freud, the id is totally unconscious and is dominated by the 'pleasure principle': it demands immediate, total gratification and is not capable of considering the potential consequence of seeking this goal.

The ego's task is to hold the id in check until conditions allow for satisfaction of its impulses. The ego operates in accordance with the 'reality principle': it takes into account external conditions and the consequences of various actions and directs behaviour so as to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. So remembering, reasoning, evaluating and planning are the thought processes on which the ego depends.

According to Freud, the superego is the portion of human personality representing the conscience. It is acquired from our parents and through experience and represents our internalization of the moral teachings and norms of our society. Unfortunately, such teachings are often quite inflexible and leave little room for gratification of our basic desires. Because of this fact, the ego faces another difficult task. Freud believed that when the ego feels it may be unable to control impulses from the id, it experiences anxiety (intense feelings of nervousness, tension, or worry). To reduce such anxiety, the ego uses various defense mechanisms.

Defense mechanisms are techniques used by the ego to keep threatening and unacceptable material out of consciousness, and so to reduce anxiety. Here are some of the defense mechanisms: Repression – pushing painful or dangerous thoughts out of consciousness, keeping them unconscious, e.g. a woman forgets a doctor's appointment for a test for cancer. Rationalization – attempting to prove that one's behaviour is 'rational and justifiable and thus worthy of the approval of self and others, e.g. a woman explains that she ate an entire cake so that it wouldn't spoil in the summer heat. Projection – transferring unacceptable motives or impulses to others, e.g. a man who feels strong hostility toward a neighbor perceives the neighbor as being hostile to him. Others like denial of reality, displacement, fantasy, identification, isolation, reaction formation, regression and sublimation are also the techniques used in order to tackle anxiety.

Now, I am going to talk about Freud's five stages of psychosexual development.

According to Freud, psychosexual development is an innate sequence of stages through which all human beings pass. At each stage, pleasure is focused on a different region of the body. The five stages are oral stage (birth to 1), anal stage (1-3), phallic stage (3-5 or 6), latency stage (5 or 6- puberty), and genital stage (puberty onwards).

The oral stage is the stage which pleasure is centered in the region of the mouth.

The mouth, the lips and the tongue are very sensitive, and the rubbing arising out of sucking gives very great pleasure to the child. It sucks for pleasure. Freud calls the sensitive areas 'erogenous zones'. If too little gratification results in a personality that is overly dependent on others; too much, results in a personality that is excessively hostile.

During the anal stage, the process of elimination becomes the primary focus of pleasure. Activity such as expelling and holding back faeces are pleasurable. Fixation at this stage, may affect the orderliness, stinginess and stubbornness in the future.

During phallic stage, pleasure is centered in the genital region. The resulting stimulation of the erogenous zones of the sex organs leads to deep pleasure. Freud speculated that at this time we fantasize about sex with out opposite-sex parent; Oedipal (for boys) or Electra (for girls) complex. Also, castration anxiety may develop among boys and at the same time penis envy among girls.

By 6 or 7 the child enters the latency stage. Children's sexual desires are relatively weak. During this the child can concentrate on social and cognitive skills. The

source of pleasure shifts from self to other persons. Finally, during puberty adolescents enter the genital stage. During this stage pleasure is again focused on the genitals. Now, lust is blended with affection, and people become capable of adult love.

The above are the main features of Freud's theory of personality. His ideas were dependent on clinical experience. Amongst Freud's patients there were many women, who suffered from hysteria. In his early days Freud questioned such patients under hypnosis. He tried to establish a close, trusting relationship with the patient so that the unpleasant experiences could be recalled. He concluded that unpleasant emotions caused unpleasant experiences to be banished from consciousness, and to be repressed into the unconscious. So he used psychoanalysis approach to bring repressed material back into consciousness to remove mental illness for the patient.

To conclude, Freud believed that much of mental life is unconscious, even adults may not be aware of the underlying motivations of their behaviours. It seems that childhood experiences have important effect on our development of personality and social behaviour. Also, the relationship we had with other people in the past, such as parents, may affect our relationships with other people in the future. Some

psychologists claimed that Freud's concepts are unobservable and untestable. Also, it relied heavily on a small number of case studies and it neglects the environment and social influence. Because of these, Murray and his collaborators developed a more comprehensive theory to explain personality.

Murray's theory cover two types of needs felt by people: biological and psychological. They also considered something called the environmental press, or the outside influences that affect people. Now, I am going to explain these factors one by one.

Murray also claimed that behaviour is regulated by a biological mechanism. They agreed that human beings carry out complex activities because innate forces control them, not because they understand them. For example, a newborn child sucks nipple and gets food. Actually, the child doesn't know it is necessary to suck and get food. He does it because the body is in need of food, the mouth itches and when he sucks, the itch diminishes and he feels deep pleasure. It shows how biological, innate mechanisms may work in humans.

Murray and his collaborators thought they could identify 'needs' which arise more directly from our physical nature. They identified 13 such needs, they are: air, water, food, sex, lactation, urination, defecation, harm avoidance, nox avoidance, heat

avoidance, cold avoidance, sentience and passivity. These needs are as same as Freud's concept of 'id', they refer to a mental representation of biological processes, and they provide the 'psychic energy', which makes action possible. These needs are connected with deep pleasures: eating, drinking, urinating, defecation, and sexual activity. In short, we can say that these needs have to do with the satisfaction of physical needs, but in addition there are other needs which are more relevant to mental satisfaction.

There is another set of needs which Murray said had to do with mental or emotional satisfaction. In *Explorations of Personality*, 20 of these needs were identified.

Here are some examples: acquisition (e.g. to work for money), achievement (e.g. to get a distinction in examination), nurturance (work as a volunteer in youth center) and play (like to tell jokes). For example, a successful businessman has the needs of 'acquisition' and 'achievement'. He wants to exercise power and to gain possessions. That's why he is wealthy and successful. In some ways they were functions of the brain, of our psychological nature. They also affect our mental or emotional satisfaction.

At the same time, Murray and his collaborators were equally aware of influences arising from outside. They considered something they called the 'environmental

press'. The 'press' of an object is what it can do to the subject, or for the subject, or the power it has to affect the well-being of the subject. There are positive press and negative press. Here are some examples of positive press: affiliation (a friendly, sociable companion), nurturance (a protective, sympathetic ally), lack (the condition of poverty), dominance (restraint, and imprisoning or prohibiting object). For example, if one person suddenly lost his job and he has financial problem ('lack' of money), his personality may change (bad temper, pessimistic) because he is facing what Murray called environment press. This is how the environment press affects one's personality.

Murray and his colleagues also included Freud's concepts of the ego, the superego and the id. They also speak of the conscious and the unconscious. In addition, they didn't agree with Freud about the possibility of reducing psychic life to a few fundamental forces which could supposedly explain all the many kinds of behaviour they found in their subjects. They also claimed that needs are not presenting at all times. They find the needs arising in isolation; mostly they saw needs occurring in groups. That's why they considered the outside influences as well.

Talking about the method they used, while Freud used his clinical interviews only, Murray and his colleagues also used some other methods such as laboratory

techniques, questionnaires, handwriting test and Thematic Apperception Test.

Laboratory techniques including 'reaction time', can measure how quickly people respond to the sight or sound of stimuli. If they respond slowly to some words meaning that they find these words were more disturbing than other words to which they respond more quickly. They also invited subjects to reply to a series of statements and rating their answers. For example, on a scale from: Disagree strongly to Disagree, to Neutral, to Agree, and Agree strongly.

They also invented a new kind of test which became very well-known, called TAT (Thematic Apperception Test). They show some ambiguous pictures to the people and asked them to write a story about the picture based around: 'who are the people in the picture, what are they doing, and what will the outcome be'. They also maintained that people interpret that people interpret these kinds of pictures according to their own perception. Murray believed that it would reflect their own personal dreams, wishes of worries and they can uncover the basic 'themes' that recur in the unconscious. He also asked subjects to complete impossible puzzles aiming to test their ability to cope with frustration, asking people to write simple autobiographies or to describe their childhood experiences. These methods were used by Murray and his colleagues to analyze subjects' personality.

To conclude, we found that Murray's theory also included Freud's concepts but their language is wider than that of Freud. For example, either than biological influence, they also considered psychological and social needs. Also, Murray used variety of methods to analysis personality and the methods they used were more testable.

They would then attempt to fit all the observations and interpretations together in an understandable and convincing 'portrait' of the person. It seems that their theory is more practical.

Now, let's look at the similarities and differences between these two theories.

About similarities, both of them emphasized biological factors. Freud introduced the concept of 'id, ego and superego', which refers to a mental representation of biological processes. On the other hand, Murray also considered the biological needs in understand personality. They also agreed that human beings carry out complex activities because they are prompted by innate forces, not because they 'understand' them.

Secondly, both of them endorse the notions of the level of consciousness. Freud talked about the three level of consciousness: consciousness, preconscious and unconscious. He attempted to bring the repressed feelings from unconscious to conscious in order to help his patients who suffered from mental illnesses. Murray

also speaks of the conscious and the unconscious. He and his colleagues used the TAT to uncover the basic 'themes' that recur in the unconscious in order to find out their own personal dreams or wishes.

Furthermore, they see the role of the environment as an important factor. Freud's theory showed that the role of parents have an important impact on child's development of personality. It really depends on how the parents treat and train their little child. On the other hand, Murray suggested environmental press. He pointed out that the outside influences also affect people's personality.

Lastly, both of them used in-depth interview to collect data. For Freud, he interviewed his patients and asked them to lie on the sofa; he tried to establish a close relationship with the patients so that they could recall their repressed feeling easily. For Murray, he also used in-depth interview to collect data. He tried to interview the subjects and studied their personality by asking questions and testing their respond to stimuli.

There are differences between these two theories also. Firstly, while Freud endorses the notion of stage of development; Murray didn't mention any of this staged theory. Freud believed that the five stages of psychosexual development were based in

children's biology, and that therefore all of us as children go through them in the same sequence (oral->anal->phallic->latency->genital). In contrast, Murray's theory contains no stages, because he thought that personality is influenced from time to time by the different needs.

Secondly, the analysis of the biological factors is much more detailed in Murray than in Freud. Murray identified 13 biological needs and gave explanation to what these needs refer to. It gave a closer analysis of the relationship between nature and nurture or what is inborn and what is environmentally determined. It is more clear than Freud's explanation about the concept of 'id'.

Moreover, Murray contains a large number of basic units that he calls psychological needs. In *Explorations of Personality*, 20 of these needs were identified. The language used to describe them lies much closer to the language of everyday life, while Freud's attempts to reduce all phenomena to a function of a diffuse life force that he calls the libido (the psychic energy that powers all mental activity). Also, Murray was equally aware of influences arising from outside which Freud had totally neglected it. It seems that Murray's approach has a wider base than Freud's.

Lastly, we can observe that Murray's ideas were developed equally in the laboratory

and the clinic, while Freud's ideas were dependent on clinical experience only.

Murray and his colleagues used laboratory techniques, such as 'reaction time' to measure the respond of the people, which is somehow more testable and measurable.

After going through the main features of the two theories, we can say that the two theories are compatible. Although there are some differences between these two theories, they still shared the concept of psychoanalytical approach. They both attempt to bring repressed unconscious material into consciousness, in order to help reducing conflicts. On the other hand, Murray and his colleagues shared Freud's fundamental belief that in some way all behaviour is determined. They spoke of the brain as 'an extremely complex, differentiated resonator, composed of variously integrated traces (much modified by the residues of racial and personal experience)'. These traces would then lead to thought and action. It seems that they shared the same perspective. Murray's concepts of psychological needs and environmental press can give a wider scope in studying personality. Also, the wide range of methods used by Murray maintains the reliability and testability of the study. On the other hand, Freud's psychodynamic and psychosexual theories provide a more thorough explanation about how human innate forces affecting personality. So, these two theories can be used together to provide a more comprehensive picture of human functioning.

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