THEORETICAL APPROACHES to PSYCHOLOGY

Underlying model/image of what people are like

- psychological normality
- nature of development
- preferred methods of study
- major causes of abnormality
- preferred goals/ methods of treatment

Behaviourist approach

Watson [1913]

mainstream psychology

Basic principles/ assumptions

- Focus on learning, especially classical (Pavlovian) and operant (instrumental) conditioning (= associative learning)
- Classical conditioning = S-R psychology
- Law of parsimony
- Use of operational definitions
- Aim of science = prediction/ control

methodological behaviourism

mental states = inaccessible

radical behaviourism

mental states = explanatory fictions (i.e. irrelevant)

Practical contributions

- behaviour therapy/ modification
- behavioural neuroscience
- behavioural pharmacology
- biofeedback
- computer assisted learning (CAI)

Theoretical contributions

- memory and forgetting
- language, moral and gender development
- relationship formation
- abnormal behaviour
- free will/determinism

Social Learning Theory (SLT) · [Bandura, 1971]

Cognitive behaviourism [Tolman, 1948]

Evolutionary approach

Sociobiology [Wilson, 1975]

Evolutionary psychology [Buss, 1995]

Basic principles/ assumptions

- Evolutionary principles link original function of behaviour to current psychological mechanisms

'human nature'

- Humans = animals, products of evolution
- Rejects SSSM
- Mind comprises collection of specialized/ independent modules designed by natural selection to solve problems faced by our hunter-gatherer ancestors

phylogeny and ontogeny

Theoretical contributions

- Male violence
- Fear
- Stress
- Mate selection
- Language
- Mind = a cognitive machine
- Focuses on universal features of mind. Gender = crucial exception (sexual dimorphism)
- Nature-nurture = false dichotomy

Social constructionist approach

[Gergen, 1973]

Basic principles/ assumptions

- critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge
- historical/cultural specificity [cultural vs. cross-cultural psychology: Shweder, 1990]
- knowledge sustained by social processes
- knowledge and action go together

Theoretical contributions

Social representation theory (SRT) [Moscovici, 1961]

SRs:

- are generated in communication
- provide a code for communication
- provide a way of distinguishing social groups

Psychodynamic approach

Freud's psychoanalytic theory = the original psychodynamic theory

Basic principles/ assumptions

- Importance of the unconscious mind
- Repression = key ego defence and cornerstone of whole theory
- Infantile sexuality/psychosexual stages
- Importance of early experience

Theoretical contributions

Ego psychology [Anna Freud, Erikson]

Jung's analytical psychology

Adler's individual psychology

Object relations school [Klein, Fairbairn, Bowlby, Mahler, Winnicott]

- Motivation
- Dreams/relationship between sleep & dreams
- Forgetting
- Gender development
- Aggression
- Abnormality
- Adult consciousness
- Prejudice

Practical contributions

- Psychoanalysis
- Psychotherapy as a whole

Humanistic approach

Third force [Maslow, 1968]

Rogers [1951]

Theoretical contributions

- Self-concept
- Hierarchy of needs
- Phenomenal field [Cohen, 1958]

Basic principles/ assumptions

- Free will
- Phenomenological approach (stressing subjective experience)
- Self-actualization/actualizing tendency
- Understanding the whole person

Practical contributions

- Client (or person-) centred therapy [Rogers, 1959]
- Research into psychotherapy
- Importance of therapist qualities → lay therapy

Cognitive approach

Basic principles/ assumptions

- computer analogy
- mental abilities = information processing systems

Theoretical contributions

- Similarities between humans and computers
- Attention
- Pattern Recognition
- Memory
- Social cognition
- Cognitive development
- Nature of intelligence

Practical contributions

- Treatment of mental disorders [Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy - Ellis, 1962]