

Examining Contrasting Views from Behaviorism and Psycho-Biological Perspectives

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First and foremost, humanistic psychology originated during the 1960's which sought out to examine the components of self-identity, self-growth, and self-worth after the post-war American society [1]. Humanistic psychology espoused the belief that mental illness psychologists examined the patient in a holistic manner along with the philosophy of the "growth-driven self" [1]. The history of psychology has shown students that another version of helping mental illness in comparison to previous theories of psychoanalysis (Freud) and behaviorism (Tolman) did exist. In looking at the evolution of the field of psychology, as people and the environment have evolved, so has the psychology field in keeping up with human development. According to Goodwin (2008) humanistic psychology began as a revolt against former methods of psychological theories. The goal of humanistic psychology focused upon characteristics proposing a "free will" eliciting purpose, in search for meaning in life, and achievement of self-actualization [2]. An important focus of humanistic psychology has been "self-actualization"; however, from a clinician's point of view another part in self-development and self-achievement is "free will". The power of choice to make good decisions or poor ones concerning personal development determines who we are and who we will become in the future.

Let us examine two prominent fore-fathers of humanistic psychology who were Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers who originally trained in the field of experimental psychology [2]. Both psychologists decided to change their direction from a purely scientific point of view towards a humanistic level of focus to understanding personal accomplishment. The most important and significant contribution to humanistic psychology was Maslow's pyramid of self-actualization. Every undergraduate and graduate student understands the imperatives of self-actualization and how behavioral consequences occur as a result of unmet psychological needs. On the other hand, Peoples (1981) viewed the value of humanistic ideas very differently.

Peoples (1981) shared a very different opinion about self-actualization which leads to "narcissistic self-absorption". Therefore, in the personal quest for social equality, social integration, and social concerns are then reduced to self-ideals instead of that of social interests [3].

Valdesuso (2000) shared theories held by Dr. Erika Fromm whom integrated psychopathology and Gestalt theory into a humanistic psycho-biological concept-model. Dr. Fromm, believed that from a psycho-biological perspective, humanistic concepts determine how well individuals function in relations to their environment [4]. Although, Dr. Fromm utilized hypnosis in the advancement of humanistic studies, Dr. Fromm's psycho-biological model created a pathway for clinical psychology to emerge. Through the interpretation of both Gestalt and psychopathology during the 1960's, Fromm helped to develop and pioneer a new transition from humanistic theories into clinical applications addressing ego activity, passivity, and receptivity challenges within the person [4]. Therefore, Dr. Fromm believed that behavioral changes can be made through hypnosis by altering the processing of our thoughts. However, in pursuit of self-achievement, actualization, and free will, Dr. Fromm believed that we would be altering the idea of "free-will" in this writer's opinion. So that the power of choice to choose one's personal fate and direction can be altered through the power of hypnosis because their perceptions are then changed. Consequently, Dr. Fromm's position of hypnosis has, therefore, changed humanistic psychological values to utilizing suggestive through processing techniques to increasing primary processing, absorption, and Gestalt reality orientation [4].

In the past, psychological humanistic beliefs were held in opposition to the ideals of how behaviors were a result of repressed biological urges or operant conditioning such as in Pavlov's theory [2]. Whereas, Freud (psychoanalysis), and, Tolman (behaviorism), held separate and differing views of psychology. A humanistic approach to psychology included finding the reasons why individuals choose not to seek meaning of life was a concern. Finding personal purpose in life is then seen by whether or not clients have achieved self-actualization as a goal. Therefore, in reaching each level of Maslow's distinctive chart, it is important to note that personal needs are met at each level through psychological, social, and environmental constructs.

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