ON PERSONALITY

By
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A few thoughts to ruminate about

- Developmental Theories → Personality Development
- Evolutionary Theory
- Measurement Fallibilities
On the Development of Personality

- **Freudian Theory**
  - “Fixations” of the libido in psychosexual stages
    - Oral period – talkativeness
    - Anal period – orderliness
    - Phallic period – sexual identity

- **Erik Eriksen’s Psycho-Social Theory**
  - Solving “psycho-social crises”
    - Trust vs. mistrust
    - Autonomy vs. shame & doubt
    - Initiative vs. guilt
    - Industry vs. inferiority
    - Identity vs. Role Confusion
More on the Development of Personality

- Maslow’s Need Hierarchy
  - Focusing on physical, safety, social, esteem or self-actualization

- Skinnerian Theory and Social Learning
  - We are who we are because of the history of our rewards & punishments

- Biological Theories and Evolutionary Theory
  - Hard wired by genes and evolution
Biological Theories as Pessimistic

• Biology is destiny
  • “…the more genes you have in common with someone, the more similar your personalities are likely to be.” (p. 353)

• Evolutionary Theory as Teleological (end results are by design)
  • “…early humans who managed to survive to pass on their genes were those able to maintain good relations with others…. ” (p. 369)
    • Alpha male
    • Submissive male
    • Reproductive fitness

• Cornerstones of racism, sexism and even classism (survival of the fittest, social darwinism and manifest destiny)
Which is why I like…..

- “Give me a dozen healthy infants, well formed, and my own specified world to bring them up in and I’ll guarantee to take any one at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select – doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief, and yes, even beggar-man and thief, regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations, and race of his ancestors. I am going beyond my facts and I admit it, but so have the advocates of the contrary and they have been doing it for many thousands of years.”

- John Watson
Focusing on People with Problems

- Freudian Theory based on working with patients vs.
- Humanistic-Existential Approaches – striving for optimal functioning (self–actualization)
On the fallibility of measurement

- The MMPI
- Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale
- Narcissism, introversion, extroversion, love….
- The Big Five

- All are hypothetical ideas or hypothetical “constructs”

- Measures are ALWAYS imperfect.