** Personality Psychology **

** Psychology 370 **

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**CHAPTER ELEVEN**

** DOLLARD AND MILLER: **

**Psychoanalytic Learning Theory**

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**CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

**Psychoanalytic Learning Theory: Dollard and Miller**

- Four fundamental concepts about learning
- The learning process
- Learning by imitation
- The four critical training periods of childhood
- Conflict
- Frustration and aggression
- Language
- Neurosis
- Psychotherapy
- Suppression

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**Psychoanalytic Learning Theory Reconsidered**

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**FOUR FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS ABOUT LEARNING**

- "IN ORDER TO LEARN, ONE MUST WANT SOMETHING, NOTICE SOMETHING, DO SOMETHING, AND GET SOMETHING."
- DRIVE ("WANT SOMETHING")
- CUE ("NOTICE SOMETHING")
- RESPONSE ("DO SOMETHING")
- REWARD ("GET SOMETHING")

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**PREVIEW OF DOLLARD AND MILLER’S THEORY**

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**DRIVE**

**Definition:** WHAT A PERSON WANTS, WHICH MOTIVATES LEARNING

**Examples:**
- HUNGER
- THIRST
- SEXUAL DRIVE
- APPROVAL-SEEKING
**CUE**

**Definition:** WHAT A PERSON NOTICES, WHICH PROVIDES A DISCRIMINATIVE STIMULUS FOR LEARNING

**Examples:**
- MOTHER CALLING
- SIGHT OF SOMEONE YOU LOVE

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**RESPONSE**

**Definition:** WHAT A PERSON DOES, WHICH IS LEARNED

**Examples:**
- CRYING
- ASKING FOR HELP
- CRITICIZING SOMEONE

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**RESPONSE**

- RESPONSE HIERARCHY
- DOMINANT RESPONSE
- RESULTANT HIERARCHY

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**Example of a response hierarchy: child**

- $R_1$: CRY
- $R_2$: GRAB TEDDY BEAR
- $R_3$: HIDE
- $R_4$: DEMAND DADDY
- $R_5$: GO QUIETLY TO BED

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**REWARD**

**Definition:** WHAT A PERSON GETS AS A RESULT OF A RESPONSE IN THE LEARNING SEQUENCE, WHICH STRENGTHENS RESPONSES BECAUSE OF ITS DRIVE-REDUCING EFFECT

**Examples:**
- FOOD
- APPROVAL

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**The learning process**

**LEARNING DILEMMA:** A SITUATION IN WHICH EXISTING RESPONSES ARE NOT REWARDED
When reinforcement is withheld, the rate of behavior decreases. In this example, if parents ignore a child who cries at bedtime, the child will cry less and less as time goes on.

When cues signal the appropriate response, we must also consider:
- Stimulus generalization
- Discrimination

Gradient of reward
- The more closely the response is followed by reward, the more it is strengthened.
- Language can influence this by making a response "close" by talking about it.

Anticipatory response

Learning by imitation
- Learning theory permits careful analysis of 3 kinds of "imitation" or "identification."
- Same behavior
- Copying
- Matched dependent behavior

The four critical training periods of childhood
1. Feeding
2. Cleanliness Training
3. Early Sex Training
4. Anger-Anxiety Conflicts

Conflict
- Gradient of approach
- Gradient of avoidance
Four types of conflict

- Approach-Avoidance
- Avoidance-Avoidance
- Approach-Approach
- Double Approach-Avoidance

Reducing Conflict

- Trying to reduce conflict
- Compare drugs (alcohol) with psychotherapy...
**Frustration and Aggression**

**The Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis**
- Interference with goal attainment
- Frustration leads to aggression

**Modification of the Frustration and Aggression Hypothesis**
- Learning Responses to Frustration
- Displacement and Catharsis
- Hostile Aggression and Instrumental Aggression
- Aggressive Cues
- The Role of Emotions

**Individual Differences in Aggressive Responses**
- Impact of early experience (child abuse) and failure of ego development
- Impact of learning
- Impact of brain development

**Language**
- Allows discrimination
- Facilitates learning and problem-solving
- Comparison with Freud’s “secondary process” (ego)

**Psychotherapy**
- Teaching behavioral coping
- Teaching discrimination of cues
- Teaching relaxation (drive reduction)
- Language as mediator of learning
Suppression

The White Bear Suppression Inventory is correlated with obsessional thinking, depression, and anxiety.

And, although people can learn to repress unwanted thoughts, they often “rebound” later, occurring with increased frequency.

- Can be adaptive
- Can sensitize to (mis)interpretation of other events (projection, for example)
- Can produce adverse health effects
- Suppression of thoughts is more helpful than suppression of emotions

Psychoanalytic Learning Theory Reconsidered

Chapter Review

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