HUMANISTIC APPROACH

Humanistic approach developed in America in the early 1960s and was termed the third force with aim to replace psychoanalysis and behaviouristic approach. It is in opposition to introspection used by Wundt and influenced by Ericson's identity crisis and Jung's depersonalisation. It emerged from problems that troubled people, like inability to enjoy freedom of self expression, inner emptiness; they couldn't accept their own personality. Person is, in humanistic eyes naturally healthy; our nature is internally good and only corrupted by society. Here we can see the influence of Rousseau's romantic view. Also influential were Kierkegaard's and Heidegger's ideas of free will and striving towards growth. The person in humanistic view is unique and therefore should be studied individually and holistically and conclusions can not be made by studying animals. Resulting from these basic assumptions humanistic psychologists also use appropriate methods like individual holistic case study, open interviews, introspective self-report and Q-sort techniques with different statement about our selves. After World War II Rogers, Maslow and May established the initial character of humanistic perspective and remained its most respectful figures.

ROGERS

Rogers sees people as basically good and healthy maybe also because he studied for ministry. His theory is quite simple. Everything is built on one force of life called "actualising tendency" meaning that all creatures strive for to make the best out of their existence. It is in our nature to do the best we can. Unlike Maslow Rogers applied his theory to all living beings (just think of weed growing through the sidewalk). Rogers explains that evolution has provided us with the senses, the taste that we can find good food. This natural sense for what is good is called organismic valuing. From positive regard (love, affection, attention) we can develop positive self-regard (self esteem, self worth, positive self image) these three elements show us our real self. On the other hand, society gives us conditions of worth. We get positive regard on condition (you get something sweet when you finish you vegetables). So we develop conditional positive self regard what means that we like ourselves only if we reach standards that others have applied to us. This is called ideal self and is described as something that is out of reach, the standard we can not meet. The gap between real (I am) and ideal (I should) self is so called incongruity. The bigger the incongruity the more chances that a person will develop neurosis, because there are more threatening situations. For example tests

may be threatening if you are always expected to get the highest grade. So Rogers developed his own therapy called client-centred or just simply Rogerian therapy where the therapist has a similar role as parents or friends. Nobody must be forced into the therapy and the therapist should be very open and in high congruity of real and ideal self. There are 7 stages of this therapy. Firstly client just talks about externals, than describes feelings and in third stage takes himself as an object and talks about past experiences. Then he talks about present situation and also about the most painful feelings. He accepts these feelings as an important part of life and tries to learn something from them. He trusts his experience and relates to others openly and freely. At the end he solves his would/should dilemma.

MASLOW

One of many things that Maslow noticed when working with monkeys early in his career was that some needs precede over the others. For example if you are hungry and thirsty you will tend to take care of thirst first. Even though he said that we can't find the same things in animals and people (ideals, values, courage, humour) Maslow took this idea and created his famous hierarchy of needs. Physiological needs at the bottom include the need for food, water, air, minerals and vitamins. If there is lack of any of those the body will develop special hunger (let say for oranges if there is a lack of vitamin C). When the physiological needs are largely taken care of the second layer of need comes into play – the safety and security need including need for stability and protection. Then a third layer starts to show up. You begin to feel need for friends, children, love, sense of community. If love and belonging need are not fulfilled we can develop loneliness and social anxieties. Next we begin to look for a little self esteem, respect of other, fame, glory. First 4 levels Maslow called D-needs or deficit needs. If you don't get enough of something you feel the need. The last level is a bit different, called growth motivation, being needs or self actualisation. They involve continuous desire t fulfil the potentials, to become all you can be. We all strive to this level for personal growth. Maslow, to describe the characteristics of self actualised people first took some of those who he perceived to be self-actualised and described them. This doesn't seem a good scientific method to a lot of people. On the other hand Maslow's hierarchy has many applications in industry, government, families, education, religion…

What is not good at humanistic perspective is that there is no possibility of generalisations because every person is unique. Also we have no ecological validity because one case study studies only one person with his specific characteristics. Free will is very idealistic to have because in any situation a person is influenced by environment so his free will is limited, we are not totally free. Terms used in humanistic approach are sometimes hard to explain objectively and are also hard to measure; generally this is a soft approach. Further more when it focuses on here and now it misses past experiences which can be quite important.

On the other hand, holistic studies are very good because people really are whole persons. Humanists have the first explanation of self actualisation and also explain how to get to it. Maslow's hierarchy of needs for example has a lot of applications. Also this approach influenced the development of other social sciences like social anthropology, philosophy and others.