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School of the Arts  
Virginia Commonwealth University

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Megan R. Brown entitled PSYCHOLOGY AND THE THEATRE: A QUALITATIVE EXPERIMENT IN ACTOR TRAINING has been approved by her committee as satisfactory completion of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Fine Arts

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PSYCHOLOGY AND THE THEATRE:  
A QUALITATIVE EXPERIMENT IN ACTOR TRAINING

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts (Theatre Pedagogy) at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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B.A., Peace College, 2003

Director: Janet B. Rodgers  
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May, 2004

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# Abstract

## PSYCHOLOGY AND THE THEATRE

By Megan R. Brown, M.F.A. candidate

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts (Theatre Pedagogy) at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2006

Major Director: Janet B. Rodgers  
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Psychology and theatre have a remarkable amount in common. In using the basic concepts and theories of psychology, actors can develop more concrete, logical approaches to characters. This thesis is a summation of the course I developed, "Psychology and the Theatre," which was an attempt to teach students introductory psychology and then experiment with translating those concepts to character analysis and stage performance. Students were taught eight units of psychology: Sensation, Perception, and Memory; Learning; Motivation and Emotion; Development; Freud and Psychodynamic Approaches to Personality; Adlerian Individual Psychology; Love and Social Cognition; and

Psychological Disorders. Students were given reading quizzes and written tests on the material from the psychology texts. In addition, students wrote journals and papers to help work through potential uses of the material. They also performed contemporary scenes, attempting to put the material into practice.

This course was an overall success; most students felt that this was a unique and helpful set of tools they could use to analyze and perform characters. Students found uses for each unit of the material, allowing more depth and logic to their character choices. With further development, this material has the potential to enhance the techniques of many actors.

## INTRODUCTION

The genesis of the class I created, Psychology and the Theatre, was a combination of my personal experiences with both actor training and training in psychology. I found that, in general, most directors and acting teachers with whom I had studied were unable to describe the concepts about emotion and behavior that they were teaching without primarily using vague, ethereal language. I found it enormously difficult to execute the work because I did not fully understand what was being taught. I did not find that any of my teachers were satisfactorily describing any means for me to elicit genuine emotion as a character. During the time I was in actor training, I was earning my B.A. in psychology. I found that the depth of understanding I received from learning about human behavior from more tangible sources with basis in scientific evidence enhanced the attempts at character development on which I was working in the theatre. I have come to believe that many students have difficulty grasping the language of many acting teachers and would benefit greatly from two enhancements of that training: First, I believe that acting students should study psychology as a way to gain a better general understanding of human thought, emotion, and behavior, and secondly, I believe that acting teachers should work to create a lexicon for teaching emotion that is based in concrete concepts rather than in vague language.

My objectives in creating this class were twofold. First, I wanted the class to explore the basic concepts of introductory psychology as a means for further understanding the human mind and behavior. Secondly, I wanted the class to analyze these concepts and apply them to performance in an attempt to build characters with more depth. My plan was to select basic materials that would generally be taught in an introductory psychology class as well as a few concepts from other areas, primarily social psychology and personality psychology, that could potentially lend themselves to the creation of a vivid, human character. I would then teach those concepts in combination with teaching a performance component and an analytical writing component to facilitate culminating the use of the theories with practical application to text.

### **Selection of Material**

The text for the class was one of the most difficult endeavors involved in its creation. I wanted to find a cost-effective way to provide different sections of a variety of texts. I considered having a course pack printed with various articles from various texts, but it would have been quite difficult to secure all of the copyrights from all of the sources I was considering. In a chance meeting with my textbook representative for another class, I was led to PRIMIS, a custom textbook creation tool provided by McGraw-Hill. McGraw-Hill maintains an electronic database of all of their published textbooks from which instructors can view and choose chapters from any of their books to create a customized text. It keeps a running tally of the cost of each chapter, and the instructor can view the cost that the selected bookstore will pay to order the texts. This provided me with the

opportunity to select precisely which chapters I wished to use from certain texts, allowing me to order all of my material from one place with no need to research copyright information. The textbooks ended up costing the students a little less than \$35.00, which satisfied the range I was willing to ask them to spend on a book that they could not resell.

The primary areas of psychology that I wished to address in the text were memory, learning, development, emotion, motivation, personality, and psychoanalytic theory from a few different perspectives. The majority of the chapters I chose to include came from an introductory psychology text, *Essentials of Understanding Psychology, Sixth Edition*. I also included a section from *Theories of Personality, Sixth Edition* and a section from *Exploring Social Psychology*. I began the semester with a basic discussion of the definitions of psychology and the functions of research, and then moved into the text, which I broke down into eight reading units.

### **Format of the Class**

The class met each Wednesday from 1-3:50. Eight students initially enrolled, and one withdrew halfway through the semester, leaving seven students to complete the course. The coursework was made up of several assignment types. After each reading assignment, the students were quizzed on the material. A lecture and discussion of the material would follow each quiz. Three times during the course of the semester, the students were given an examination. This included a written component, which concentrated on the material from the psychology text that was covered during that unit, and a scene presentation. To accompany the scene presentation and examination, students wrote analysis papers to

articulate how they were incorporating the material from the text and class discussions into their acting work. Students also kept journals of their reactions to the material, the class discussions, and the process of the work they were doing. Journals were submitted twice during the semester. Students were also graded on participation, which represented twenty percent of their grade.

Each class session was divided into two subsections for easier division of the material. On most days, the class began with a reading quiz followed by a discussion. To facilitate students' note taking and help them to study for each test, I provided an outline of each chapter with what I thought were the most pertinent key points. The class sat in a circle on lecture/discussion days. In a fairly relaxed atmosphere, I covered the material while encouraging open discussion and questions. The discussion consisted of first covering the material to a point that it was well understood and then, whenever possible, discussing how it might be used as a tool for acting. On a few select days, students spent time working on their scenes in class. Students were expected to warm up before working on their scenes. I would move from group to group to watch and listen and give feedback. On exam days, the first hour of class time was used for the students to take the written portion of their examination. Then, after a short break, we would have a group warm-up, after which each set of partners would present their scene followed by a short discussion of their presentation. Analysis papers for the first two exams were due on the Monday following the presentations; the final paper was due on the day of the final exam.

### **Outcome**

The students in this class reported a generally positive experience. They were an extraordinarily cooperative group, willing to experiment and very open-minded. They often expressed that they felt that the material covered in this class was “another tool in their actor’s toolbox.” They enjoyed the freedom of the discussions, as well as the use of theory in combination with practical application. There were distinctly observable differences in many of their acting styles by the end of the semester. Some of the students who were upperclassmen began the semester as rather strong actors and while they did not necessarily make large improvements, there was a noticeable increase in the variety of character choices that students were making. Some of the students who were sophomores and had had less training were starting out at an earlier level of acting development showed marked improvement in their character choices. One student in particular began the class making incredibly weak, impersonal, disconnected acting choices and, by the end of the semester, surprised everyone in the class with her growth and her fully developed character choices.

The greatest improvement was the students’ overall greater understanding of human behavior by the end of the semester. Once all of the material had been covered, they seemed to have a fairly firm grasp on basic psychology, particularly on emotion and psychoanalytic theory. This understanding was evident in their discussions, their exams and papers, and their journals. It is my hope that they are able to continue using what was learned in this class both in acting and in their lives. In the end, I asked them for evaluations of the course. Each student expressed excitement about the prospect of this

course being offered again, as they felt it could benefit more students. They also provided a list of excellent suggestions, many of which I have incorporated into the second semester of teaching the class.

This thesis includes descriptions of the eight units covered in the course including the concepts covered in each unit. For each unit, I discuss the material and its potential use in teaching acting. I also discuss the students' response to the material and its application as a part of this course. Finally, I suggest potential modifications and possibilities for future development of the course.

## **MATERIAL**

The material for the class was broken down into eight units: sensation, perception, and memory; learning; emotion and motivation; development; Freud and psychodynamic approaches to personality; Alfred Adler (individual psychology); love and social cognition; and psychological disorders.<sup>1</sup>

For each unit, the students began with a reading assignment from the textbook. Reading quizzes for each text unit were given primarily to ensure that students had completed the reading assignment before class and could actively participate in the class discussion. The formats of the quizzes varied; sometimes I included matching and multiple choice, and sometimes I used short answer or fill in the blank. I changed the format regularly because I have had little experience writing quizzes and I was experimenting with different methods to determine what would challenge the students but still be passable if the reading assignment had been completed. At the end of the semester, I asked the students to evaluate orally their impressions of the class. A few of them made a remark that

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<sup>1</sup> Most of the material covered in this course is considered general knowledge in the field of psychology. For this reason, only direct quotes and ideas that are not common knowledge in the field are cited herein. Although many concepts, theories, and theorists are not cited within the text of this thesis, further information on the theories discussed is available in any introductory psychology text. Most of my knowledge of the material comes from my having studied psychology during my undergraduate work at Peace College. Whenever necessary, I consulted either the text I was using for this course or other introductory psychology texts to ensure that the information I was teaching was, in fact, correct. References to the chapters used, as well as supplemental texts and web sites, can be found with each section in this chapter as well as in the Works Cited section.

surprised me, teaching me an important pedagogical lesson. They said that they liked that the format of the quizzes often changed, because they felt like it made them read the material more thoroughly. They said that when a professor uses the same format on all of the quizzes, they tend to read to pass that type of quiz rather than to learn the material. They said that if they did not know what the format would be, then they had to learn the material more thoroughly because they could not anticipate questions.

After each reading quiz, we would begin a discussion of the material. Because not knowing what questions were answered correctly tends to make students anxious, I would always start the discussion by going over the answers to the quiz. We would discuss any questions that several people missed and why a particular answer might not be correct. Then I would generally ask for their overall impressions of the material. During this part of the discussion, I would hand out the PowerPoint outline (see appendix for example), which noted key points from the reading that I felt were important to know for the exams. I also made sure to leave space for note taking on each outline so that students could organize all of their notes in one place, centering on what they were most likely to need to know for the test. The rest of the discussion would center on the PowerPoint handout.

Discussions were generally lively. This was a very open-minded, expressive, enthusiastic group. They were quick to question things with which they disagreed or that they did not understand. They were very open to sharing examples of how concepts could be seen in their own lives, and were respectful of each other when speaking and listening. I would first lead them to discuss a concept until I was confident that at least the majority

understood the idea well. I would then discuss with them how a concept might translate into performance.

### **Using the Material**

Over the course of the semester, the class and I discovered that the best application of psychological concepts to acting works through character analysis. One can parallel the uses of psychology as an acting tool to the five basic goals of psychology, which are to describe, explain, predict, control, and improve behavior (AllPsych). The first four are directly applicable to acting, where the fifth relates primarily to the students' lives both within and outside of performance.

The first goal, to describe behavior, is the very important first step to understanding human behavior. This is not dissimilar to what the students are learning in their other acting classes. The goal of description emphasizes the importance of observation. The skill of this description, in the context of this class, is twofold. Students must first have a basic understanding of the concepts they are trying to observe. This came from reading, discussing, and studying the material for examination. Secondly, the students must be able to turn to the text and observe whether the character they are approaching exhibits the trait, quality, or behavior they are analyzing. The ability to do this comes from courses they have taken previously, particularly their introduction to drama course in which they read, discuss, and analyze plays. This skill is applied in the Psychology and Theatre course through journaling and analysis papers.

The second goal, to explain behavior, is the natural second step to accompany description. With description, students analyze what a character does. With explanation, students analyze why a character does what he or she does. This, too, was manifested in journaling and analysis papers.

The third goal, to predict behavior, is the first step toward performing a character by using this material. Once the student has identified and explained why a character behaves in a particular way in the given circumstances of the script, they are more able to predict what types of emotions, cognitions, or behaviors a character might exhibit. This is tied directly to the fourth goal, to control behavior, where acting choices take place. Once the actor can predict the behavior of the character, he or she then has the power of the acting choice, with which he or she can control the behavior of the character.

The fifth goal, to improve behavior, is outside the scope of acting, but invaluable to the actor. Because we are working with scripts that have already been written, we cannot improve the state of the characters' lives. However, the actors have the responsibility to themselves and their fellow artists to be able to both control and improve their own behavior. This concept was discussed with the class on the first day, along with the goals of psychology.

### **Introductory Material**

On the first day of class, we covered the five basic goals of psychology, research methods, and the importance of not confusing theatre with therapy. We began with a discussion of what the study of psychology is, discussing the importance of understanding

cognitions, emotions, and behavior. This included a discussion of how we were going to use the first four goals of psychology (describing, explaining, predicting, and controlling behavior) as the platform for adapting the study of psychology to a usable tool for acting.

The discussion of research methods served two basic purposes. First, it was important to learn this basic building block in order to understand a good deal of the terminology that would be used later in the semester. Understanding how research is done helps students to understand how the theories and statistical evidence included in the text came to be. Second, understanding research, particularly its flaws and biases, helps students to develop a critical, skeptical eye. It is important that they know, for example, that much of Freud's theory has been repeatedly disproved, and that his ideas came from little more than his rather narrow-minded observations and philosophy. It is important that they understand that many theories will contradict one another, and that something that is accepted as valid evidence may, in ten or twenty years, be replaced by a theory with better evidence and more sound research. It is paramount that they understand the bias that the university system has on psychological research. A good percentage of the research that has been done on many of the currently accepted theories and concepts has come from universities. Universities generally expect that students who are studying psychology will participate in their research studies. This means that a good percentage of the individuals studied in current research are college-age, which accounts for a large bias in sampling in much current and past research.

Finally, at the insistence of the performance faculty, a discussion was included on why theatre is not therapy. Many actors who have personal issues with which they have

not yet dealt mistakenly project their need for a therapeutic atmosphere onto theatre. It is an easy mistake to make, as there is a distinct similarity in character portrayal and therapeutic role-play. It may genuinely benefit the actor, temporarily, to use the emotional work of rehearsal or performance to escape from or soothe an emotional need that they may be experiencing. This is not appropriate, however, as it does nothing but get in the way of the work. The therapeutic benefits, in addition, are artificial and will not last. Using theatre as therapy is damaging both to the actor and to his or her fellow artists. The actor's psychological needs are not met and, in fact, are likely to be exacerbated by neglecting to deal with the real issue at hand. In addition, the actor does a disservice to everyone else involved in the creative process if he or she wastes precious rehearsal time drawing focus away from the project and onto him or herself.

The class and I discussed the simple fact that we are all human beings, and that we all have unresolved problems. We discussed also that there are many ways to deal with those problems. Talk-therapy is probably, in my opinion, the best option for most people, although I do recognize that counseling is not for everyone, and if someone is resistant to it, it can be counter productive. Regardless, the actor must find some way to manage the outside emotional experience. Some may turn to faith or religion of some kind, some to exercise, meditation, or yoga, some may simply turn to reliable friends and family, or some may find that their relief comes from simple journaling. We discussed that regardless of the method used to handle personal crises and emotional distress, it is imperative that these not be issues that inject themselves into the work. Actors must accept that dealing with

their personal issues is as important a part of the actor's "homework" as memorizing lines or blocking.

### **Sensation, Perception, and Memory**

For the chapter on sensation and perception, I chose a chapter from Feldman's *Essentials of Understanding Psychology* entitled "Sensing the World Around Us." I initially chose to include a section on sensation and perception because I felt it was an important building block for learning later material, particularly terminology such as sensation, perception, stimulus, adaptation, etc., but it proved to be much more useful than I had imagined. Most of the students knew the basic terminology from having had biology courses, so this was not difficult for them to learn. However, a few concepts that I had considered to be minor proved to be some of the most useful concepts we covered during the semester.

The students readily latched on to the idea of the "absolute threshold." The absolute threshold, in scientific terms, is "the smallest intensity of a stimulus that must be present for the stimulus to be detected" (Feldman 94). For example, the number of milliliters of water that must be in the palm of your hand before you can feel wetness or weight would be your absolute threshold for the sensation of feeling water, or the number of decibels of sound that must be broadcast from the stereo before you can hear the music would be your absolute threshold for auditory stimuli. The concept is best understood when considering that the stimulus is causing a *change* in sensation that leads to a change in perception of the intensity of the stimulus.

The class liked this concept not only for its original scientific intention of perceiving a change detected by a sense organ, but for an adaptation to the idea that they thought would relate well to acting. The students thought that this idea could be reinterpreted in the emotional realm, where instead of the stimulus causing only a change in sensation, a stimulus would cause a change in emotion. This led us to the idea of the emotional absolute threshold, where one is determining the smallest intensity of a stimulus that must be present in order for a change in emotion or behavior to occur. For example, an actor might analyze her emotional absolute threshold as how loudly another character has to yell at her before she cries. This worked particularly well for the students performing a scene from *Anna in the Tropics*. The student playing Conchita determined an emotional absolute threshold for her character in how long she alluded to her husband's affair without his catching on before she could no longer bottle her anger and snapped at him. This made for a very interesting and logical choice when the emotion of her character shifted from passive-aggressive to angry. The character playing Palomo identified an emotional absolute threshold for his character later in the same scene, when he assessed how long he was able to converse about his affair before he became too uncomfortable and tried to end the conversation or change the subject. What was even more effective was that by this time, Conchita's absolute threshold had long since been reached, and Palomo was forced to struggle against her aggressiveness in order to try to escape (which he was ultimately unable to do).

For the reading on memory, I chose a chapter from Feldman's text called "Encoding, Storage, and Retrieval of Memory." The information on memory served a

different purpose than most of the material covered in the course. Rather than using the concepts of memory in order to analyze characters, I chose to include a unit on learning to aid the students in practical use of memory in their academic and theatrical endeavors. Understanding how memory works allows students to increase their memory capacity, particularly with the task of line memorization, although it is also helpful for general studying for their course work in this and other classes.

The most important concepts related to memory are those that aid in including more information in the working memory at one time and those that aid in transferring information from the working memory into the long-term memory. In 1956, George Miller's research determined that the average individual can hold  $7 \pm 2$  chunks of information in his or her working memory at any given time. In order to increase the amount of information in the working memory, one can "chunk" information, which means that the individual can work to relate items to each other causing what were once separate chunks of information to combine and become one new, larger chunk of information. For example, when an actor starts learning a monologue, it begins as many chunks of information organized as words, then phrases, then sentences. As the words are rehearsed more, the actor begins to organize larger portions of the text as chunks. For example, the first three sentences may be come so related through rehearsal that they then are remembered as one chunk of information. With further rehearsal a chunk may grow to several sentences, a paragraph, or even a page of text. This allows the actor to be able to hold larger amounts of text in his or working memory at once.

This is supplemented by the process of storing the information in the long-term memory so that it is easier to recall. When information is rehearsed, it is maintained in the working memory for as long as it is being rehearsed. For example, when someone looks up a phone number in a telephone book, she may repeat the number while walking to the phone, dial the number, and then promptly forget it. Simple repetition may increase the likelihood that the information will be stored in the long-term memory, particularly if there is time between rehearsals and then the individual returns to the information to rehearse. However, for many people, simple repetition is not enough to firmly store information in long-term memory for easy recall. In this case, it is best to use elaborative rehearsal. Many directors and acting teachers recommend that students learn their lines standing up and/or moving rather than sitting down, which is very good. However, much more can be added to this technique to aid in rehearsed information storing in long-term memory, such as visualization of images, recall of sounds, smells, and other sensations, and relating the recall of the information in some way to previously stored knowledge. All of these techniques are methods of *elaborative rehearsal*, which is much more effective than simple repetition. Any time an association is made between new information and previous knowledge, it is more likely to be remembered. Students should also be aware of the primacy effect (the likelihood of recalling information early in a set of text) and recency effect (the likelihood of recalling information at the end of a text) and begin different memorization rehearsals in different places in the text to counteract this phenomenon.

Because of some exercises I used in recalling information, such as reading lists of words or flashing pages with patterns of letters, the class was very engaged with this

section. Most of them expressed having had some difficulty in the task of learning lines, and they were eager to learn ways to help increase their capacity for memorization. Over the course of the semester, several of them mentioned at least a moderate improvement in their ability to memorize by using the techniques of chunking and elaborative rehearsal. I also theorize that this will be extremely helpful to them when studying for tests in other classes in the future.

### **Learning**

The readings for the learning unit came from two sources. I chose a chapter from an online text, *Psych 101* from AllPsych.com for the segment on classical conditioning, which I copied and gave to the class as a handout. Two chapters from the Feldman text were also included: “Operant Conditioning” and “Cognitive-Social Approaches to Learning.”

Classical conditioning, in my opinion, is one of the easiest concepts to adapt to performance. We followed the Pavlovian model of classical conditioning as follows:

**Unconditioned Stimulus (US)** – The stimulus in a stimulus-response chain that occurs naturally (rather than being learned)

**Unconditioned Response (UR)** – The response in a stimulus-response chain that occurs naturally (rather than being learned)

**Conditioned Stimulus (CS)** – The stimulus in a stimulus-response chain that is not naturally occurring, but rather has been learned through its pairing with a naturally occurring chain.

**Conditioned Response (CR)** – The response in a stimulus-response chain that is not naturally occurring, but rather has been learned through its pairing with a naturally occurring chain.

For example, the exercise I used in class to demonstrate classical conditioning was to first have a student hold a balloon, which I popped with a needle. Then, I handed the student

another balloon, and held up the needle as if I was going to pop the balloon, which caused the student to flinch. In this case, the unconditioned stimulus (US) was the initial popping of the balloon. The unconditioned response (UR) was the reaction to the initial pop, in which the student gasped and flinched. The conditioned stimulus (CS) was the student's seeing the needle while holding the second balloon, which caused the conditioned response (CR), which was to flinch in anticipation of the balloon again being popped.

After discussing several more simple examples, we discussed more complex situations, such as spousal abuse. In the case of a wife who is battered by her husband, one possible model of classical conditioning might be as follows:

- US** – Husband physically harms wife
- UR** – Wife experiences physical pain
- CS** – Husband comes home from work angry
- CR** – Wife is afraid in anticipation of repeated physical harm

In this case, the model is very simple to follow, but the conditioned response could have a variety of manifested behaviors. For example, the woman could develop a depressive or anxious mood disorder. She could become combative herself. She could have seizures or panic attacks. She could have a realization about her life, get smart, and leave her husband. All of these reactions, though, would be resultant of the fear she was conditioned to feel because of her husband's behavior.

As an acting tool, when a student is analyzing a script to determine if classical conditioning would be useful to understanding the character, the model can be broken down in such a way that the unconditioned stimulus, unconditioned response, and conditioned stimulus are the given circumstances of the text, which allows the conditioned

response to be the acting choice. For example, in the play *A Streetcar Named Desire*, a model for how the character Blanche has been classically conditioned could be something like the following:

**US** – Stanley angrily confronts Blanche about the papers to the house she lost because he feels a sense of entitlement to any monetary gain that may have occurred.

**UR** – Blanche, afraid of Stanley, is avoidant and changes the subject as quickly and often as possible.

**CS** – Blanche sees Stanley in a future encounter.

**CR** – Blanche, afraid, continues to be avoidant and change the subject.

While the textual reaction, avoidance and denial, is evident in Blanche's scripted lines, a powerful acting choice is possible. The conditioned response in this case is to fear Stanley. The choice to be made by the actor is how to manifest that fear emotionally, physically, and vocally. The actor could choose to make Blanche indignant, snide, angry, weak, demure, melancholy, or any of a number of other potential interpretations or combinations of emotions, each of which could represent how that actor chooses to manifest the emotion of fear based on their character approach.

Operant conditioning is a bit more difficult to understand than classical conditioning, but when understood correctly can be a powerful tool for an actor. Operant conditioning is learning in which the likelihood of a behavior being repeated can be increased or decreased based on its favorable or unfavorable consequences. In basic terms, operant conditioning is comprised of three primary concepts: positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, and punishment. Positive reinforcement occurs when a stimulus that is added to the environment increases the likelihood of a behavior's repetition. For example, if you praise or reward a child during toilet training when she correctly uses the

toilet, the child is more likely to do so in the future. Negative reinforcement occurs when the removal of an unpleasant stimulus from the environment increases the likelihood of a corresponding behavior. For example, if an unpleasant smell emanates from the trash in your home, and your removal of the trash alleviates the smell, you are more likely to take out the trash in the future. Punishment occurs when a stimulus that is either added or removed from the environment decreases the likelihood of a certain behavior. For example, if a child misbehaves and is spanked (adding a stimulus), he is less likely to misbehave in that way in the future. Similarly, if a child misbehaves and her television privileges are removed, she is less likely to misbehave in that way in the future.<sup>2</sup>

Understanding operant conditioning is primarily useful in the second goal of psychology, explaining behavior. Understanding how a character has been reinforced or punished can help the actor to understand why a character behaves certain ways. The concepts of operant conditioning would be very useful when creating a character history, as many acting teachers require students to do. When assessing how a character behaved before the action of the text begins, the actor must look to what in the character's past informs his or her current behavior. A character who is defiant, for example, may be assessed as having been punished too severely in the past. A character who is seemingly well adjusted may have had a great deal of positive reinforcement early in life.

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<sup>2</sup> Research has shown repeatedly that punishment, particularly corporal punishment, is a fairly ineffective method of modifying behavior in children and adults. In many cases, the result is not a reduction in the undesired behavior, but rather a defiant or rebellious increase of behavior, depending on various personality and temperament values. For the purposes of this paper, however, I will use punishment as an example by definition only, but the actor should keep in mind that his or her character may respond to punishment indignantly rather than with compliance.

One more advanced concept in operant conditioning, shaping, was found to be very useful by the students in this course. Shaping is the rewarding of closer and closer approximations of a desired behavior in order to produce it over time. For example, if a mother is trying to teach a son to be more responsible, she may first praise him for cleaning his room. She may then offer an allowance for certain household chores. She may award privileges for rules not broken, such as extending curfew on Saturdays if curfew is met during the week. She may offer to match the amount of money he puts in a savings account, and so on, so that each behavior closer to general responsibility is rewarded with slightly more valuable rewards. This concept was helpful to the student playing Adam in *The Shape of Things*, as it allowed him to understand that the character of Evelyn was shaping him by rewarding closer and closer approximations of his being well groomed until he had met the standard she was attempting to get him to reach.

Cognitive-social approaches to learning were of much interest but little use to the students. They were fascinated by the idea of latent learning, which is the notion that you learn many things without intending to learn them, such as how to get to a certain location or what some words mean. The idea of observational learning, which is learning by modeling the behavior observed in another individual, was somewhat useful. In general, this helps us to understand why violence begets violence, acceptance begets acceptance, etc. Observational learning, like operant conditioning, is helpful primarily for the purpose of explaining why a character behaves a certain way. It is present in everyone's life, and can be interpreted in many plays. In *Anna in the Tropics*, the women behave in a meek, subservient manner and the men are aggressive and sometimes violent because they have

observed generations of their families behave similarly. Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire* behaves in an overly effeminate, flirtatious way because she has seen other women in southern culture behave in that manner. In *The Shape of Things*, Jenny's character is somewhat conservative and reserved because she has observed the conservative behavior of her family her entire life. Observational learning, sometimes called modeling, is a prevalent force in explaining behavior.

### **Motivation and Emotion**

The chapters for emotion and motivation were also taken from *Essentials of Understanding Psychology*: “Explaining Motivation” and “Understanding Emotional Experiences,” respectively. This was the first unit of the material that could patently be tied to acting.

Motivation, put simply, is comprised of the factors that direct our behaviors. Much of our motivation comes from instincts, which are patterns of behavior that are biologically determined. Five approaches to motivation were covered in this course: drive-reduction, arousal, incentive, cognitive, and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Each theory suggests different ways in which we are motivated, but it is important to understand that although the theories disagree, they do not negate one another. Different behaviors are motivated in different ways, which is what has led theorists to create a number of theories to explain motivation. The different types of motivation are often working simultaneously to energize different behaviors. In addition, a single behavior can often be explained by more than one theory of motivation.

The drive-reduction approach to motivation suggests that our behavior is motivated by our biological need to satisfy a drive, which is a tension that stimulates a behavior specifically for relief of that tension. For example, thirst is a drive that causes tension through drying the mouth and throat to motivate us to drink water. Other examples of drives are hunger, tiredness, libido, and the need for bodily temperature regulation. The goal of drive reduction is to maintain homeostasis, which is the body's inclination to maintain internal balance. Drive-reduction explains very clearly how some behaviors – eating, drinking, sex, heating and cooling the body, etc. – are motivated, but it does not explain more complex behaviors, such as why someone acts on an impulse out of curiosity, which is not a biological drive.

The arousal approach to motivation, which is not one of the more widely accepted theories, suggests that we are motivated by maintaining certain levels of arousal. This explains why some people are thrill-seekers who will bungee jump, sky dive, or ride roller coasters. It also helps us to understand why our society has such a rabid interest in the lives of celebrities or why we read books that don't teach us a skill or why we watch movies. However, it does very little to explain simple behaviors, such as why we clean our homes or why we satisfy our biological drives. In addition, this theory is often of little use because the amount of required arousal varies greatly from person to person.

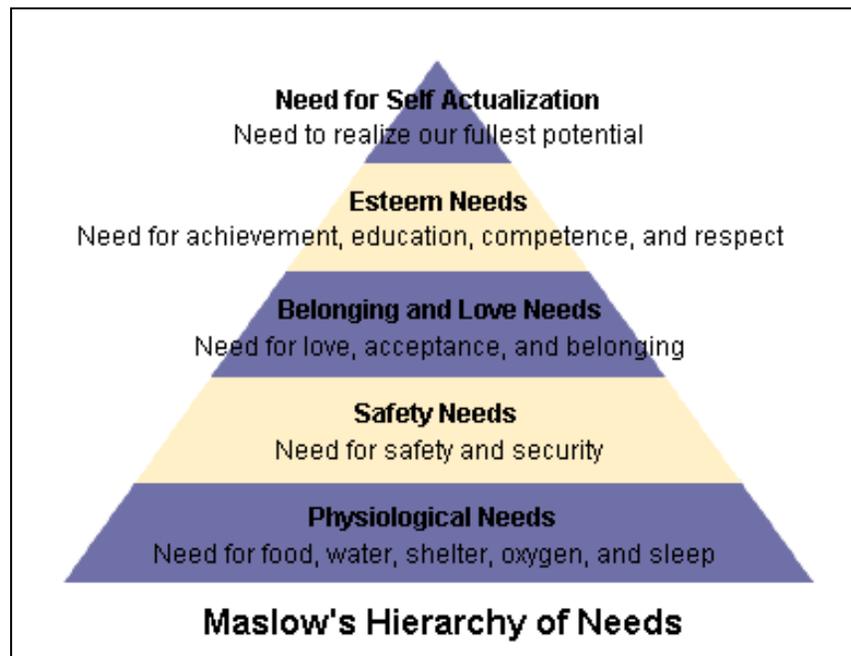
The incentive approach suggests that we are motivated by external goals, or incentives. For example, students are motivated to study for tests because they will receive good grades if they do. Good grades alone may be the incentive, or the incentive could be that the good grades will make graduating more likely to occur on time, which means that

a job can be sought. Many researchers believe that the incentive approach often works in tandem with drive-reduction. For example, we eat something that tastes good for two reasons. First, we are satisfying the hunger drive. Secondly, the good-tasting food offers an incentive. While this theory does explain the motivation of a large variety of behaviors, it does not explain why some people do things when no apparent incentive is present or when people behave in a way oppositional to receiving an incentive, such as when a student refuses to study for an exam knowing full well that he or she will not receive a good grade.

The cognitive approach to motivation suggests that we are motivated by our cognitions, that is, our thoughts and expectations. This works in two different ways. The first part of the cognitive approach to motivation is intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation explains that our behavior is motivated by our seeking personal enjoyment, rather than a tangible reward. Extrinsic motivation works similarly to the incentive approach in that it explains that we are motivated by receiving a reward. Research tells us that we are more likely to be intrinsically motivated than extrinsically motivated, as personal satisfaction is more valued by individuals than tangible rewards. The cognitive approach is one of the more comprehensive approaches, but it implies that we must be aware of our motivating factor, while some theorists do not believe that this is necessarily the case.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is the most comprehensive theory of motivation that was studied in this course. Maslow explains that motivation is hierarchical, and that we must first satisfy our most basic needs before we can satisfy our more complex needs. The

hierarchy is typically represented as a pyramid, an example of which, taken from Allpsych.com, is shown below:



In this theory, each set of needs builds on the one below it in the pyramid. According to Maslow, you must first have satisfied hunger, the need for sleep, and other physiological needs before safety needs can be considered. Once we have satisfied our physiological needs, we can move on to satisfying our safety needs, ergo, once we are fed and sheltered, we can consider our need for locked doors and the capacity for self-defense. Once those needs are met, we can seek love and belongingness, then, once those needs are met, we can seek to achieve, be competent, educate ourselves, etc. The highest need in the hierarchy, which Maslow believed very few people ever meet, is the need self-actualization, which is the ability to realize our fullest potential. This hierarchical structure addresses motivation

quite thoroughly, and it includes many of the concepts of drive-reduction, arousal, incentive, and cognitive approaches in a more digestible format. In this model, one can progress up through the hierarchy as well as regress to an earlier stage as more primary needs recur. For example, one's self-esteem needs can be put on hold temporarily as one regresses to satisfy hunger.

The students and I, after much discussion, decided that we disagree with the ordering of the third and fourth levels, or at least parts of them. Many of the students believe that you cannot fulfill the need for love before you can fulfill the need for self-esteem. This may not be the case in the needs of children, as one student was quick to point out, but as far as satisfying the needs of adults, the students expressed that they believed it was more primary to have self-esteem than love, citing their belief that "you cannot fully love someone or be loved by someone until you fully love yourself." They believe that you must achieve fulfillment for your esteem needs – education, respect, competence, etc. – before you can love or be loved. This sentiment is worth examining, but it does not differentiate between different types of love. It seems that romantic love should be placed as a higher need than esteem, while love from and for a parent, caregiver, sibling, or possibly a friend, may be achieved before esteem needs are addressed. This conversation also carried over to the discussion later in the semester of loving.

Regardless of the conflict that arose from the ordering of some needs, this proved to be very helpful in character analysis, particularly for the students performing in *Anna in the Tropics*. They felt it helpful to keep in mind that they are poor immigrants who are constantly trying to satisfy basic needs – food, shelter, safety, etc. – which always take

precedent over the emotional conflicts which they are battling. Their needs for love, excitement, esteem, belongingness, and realizing their potential were always secondary, as they were struggling to survive the majority of the time. The incentive approach and the cognitive approach were also easily applied to these characters, as they helped to explain why Conchita and Palomo are each having affairs. Conchita is meeting an esteem need as well as providing herself with intrinsic motivation, becoming self-satisfied by her affair. Palomo has affairs for the reward he receives, which the actor playing Palomo interpreted as sexual satisfaction.

Emotion goes hand in hand with motivation. Where motivation explains what energizes us to do what we do, emotion tells us how we feel about it. There are several important factors that must be understood when approaching emotion. First, it is vital to understand that emotion has both a strong cognitive component and a physical change related to the stimulus causing the emotion. Both parts are necessary to experience the emotion. Theorists have traditionally disagreed on the order of the experience of the two components; some believe that the physical component must occur first so that we can cognitively interpret the emotion, some believe that we cognitively recognize an emotion and then subsequently experience a physical change, and some believe that both components occur simultaneously. Each of the theories of emotion covered in this class has powerful research to prove its validity as well; each of the theories also faces strong opposition. When deciding which emotion theory to use as an acting tool, it is important that the actor consider which theory makes most intuitive sense to him or her.

Emotions serve a variety of functions for individuals. First, they prepare us for action. The prime example of this is the “fight or flight” phenomenon where, as a reaction to fear, our bodies prepare us either to flee or to fight for our survival. In this case, we are cognitively aware that we are afraid, and our bodies undergo a complex series of physical changes. The heart beats more rapidly to carry oxygen to the muscles; breathing becomes deeper and more rapid for the same reason. Many sweat or experience the urge to urinate, vomit, or sometimes have a bowel movement in the body’s effort to become more lightweight for faster running. Our digestion stops to conserve energy. Our adrenaline increases to give a temporary boost in physical strength and endurance. These physical experiences may not be recognized for their exact function, but are all recognized as a part of the overall emotion of “fear.”

The second function of emotion is to shape our future behavior. If we experience an unpleasant emotion as a result of a particular situation, we are less likely to put ourselves in that situation in the future. Similarly, if a situation causes us a pleasant emotion, we are more likely to seek it out in the future.

The third function of emotion is to help us interact more effectively with others. Our emotions cause us to exhibit a number of verbal and non-verbal cues that can let people know what we are feeling and how to interact with us. For example, if someone is angry, she may have a harsh tone of voice or wear a scowl, however overt or subtle it may be for that individual. This will signal to others who are communicating with her that it might be best to interact with her with as gentle a demeanor as possible while she is in this particular mood.

Emotion is one of the most difficult psychological phenomena to research, as each emotion is experienced quite differently by each individual. It is also difficult to accurately describe emotion as a universal set of phenomena due not only to the countless variety of emotions and their various intensities, but also because the lexicon used by individuals to describe emotion is seemingly infinite. According to one 1975 study, there are at least 500 words in the English language to describe emotion (Feldman 324). Theorists have debated how to catalogue which emotions are the most basic emotions, each attempt producing a different list depending on each researcher's definition of emotion. Some argue that there are no "basic" emotions, but that emotions are "best understood by breaking down their component parts" (Ibid 325). This breakdown of emotion into its components seems to be the most useful means of defining emotion for the purposes of character analysis and interpretation. If an actor is able to understand the components of emotions, he is more able to emulate those components, thus "simulating" the emotional experience. It is easier to describe the physical components of a particular emotion than the cognitive experience. When one is afraid, she may note that her heart was pounding, she had difficulty breathing, her muscles were tense, her mouth was dry, etc. Each of the theories of emotion that follow seeks to determine what causes these physical changes and how we are able to label each emotion.

One of the most widely recognized theories of emotion is the James-Lange theory. According to this theory, emotion starts with a bodily event that occurs in response to an external stimulus. Our body has what we would refer to as a "gut reaction," or a series of changes and reactions in our internal organs, called a "visceral experience" (Feldman 326).

Our reaction to that instinctive bodily change is how we experience the emotion. William James, one of the founders of this theory, was quoted in 1890 as having said, “we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble” (qtd. in Feldman 326). With this theory, we do not cognitively experience the emotion until our body has physically responded to the stimulus, after which we are able to interpret the experience based on the sensations we feel. The experience of the emotion, with this theory, is based solely on the interpretation of the visceral experience itself, and is not related to the stimulus causing the bodily changes.

There are some weaknesses with the James-Lange theory. First, we experience some emotions immediately in response to a stimulus, such as fear in response to a threatening stimulus. If the James-Lange theory were accurate, our bodily changes in response to external stimuli would have to occur extremely rapidly in order for them to have occurred before we interpret the emotion. In addition, a problem arises when examining the physical changes that occur in the body to be interpreted as an emotional experience. Some sets of physical changes that occur may be interpreted as an emotion in one situation whereas they may not be in a different situation. For example, if someone’s heart beats rapidly, breath quickens and deepens, sweat glands begin to expel liquid, etc., that person may be experiencing fear, or he may simply be engaging in aerobic exercise. The bodily experience is the same; the stimulus causing it is not. In addition, if this theory were accurate, then we would have to identify a different visceral experience for each emotion that we experience. This cannot be entirely possible, as the bodily changes that

occur for different emotions are often similar. For example, some people experience fear and anger with a similar pattern of physical changes.

In response to the James-Lange theory's problems, Walter Cannon and Philip Bard proposed in the late 1920's the idea that both the physical and cognitive elements of experiencing emotion occur simultaneously. This theory is explained specifically by the process undertaken by the brain:

After we perceive an emotion-producing stimulus, the thalamus is the initial site of the emotional response. Next, the thalamus sends a signal to the autonomic nervous system, thereby producing a visceral response. At the same time, the thalamus also communicates a message to the cerebral cortex regarding the nature of the emotion being experienced. Hence, it is not necessary for different emotions to have unique physiological patterns associated with them – as long as the message sent to the cerebral cortex differs according to the specific emotion. (Feldman 327)

The idea of the visceral experience is still key with the Cannon-Bard theory while some of the flaws in the James-Lange theory are addressed. It is less important to understand specifically how the brain processes the information (partly because further study of brain functioning tells us that this process is not entirely accurate) than to understand the idea that both processes – physical and cognitive – are occurring together, accounting for both the necessary rapidness of the cognitive recognition of the emotion and the wide variety of interpretations of similar physical experiences.

Although the Cannon-Bard theory helps to alleviate some of the discrepancies found with the James-Lange theory, it has a few problems as well. First, we now understand more about the neural experience of emotions; for instance, we now know that it is not the thalamus that sends emotional messages, but rather the hypothalamus and the limbic system in communication. Secondly, the Cannon-Bard theory's idea that the cognitive and physical components of emotion are experienced simultaneously has not been conclusively proven with empirical research.

The Schachter-Singer theory was developed in the 1960's to emphasize the role our observations of our environment play in our experiencing emotion. According to the Schachter-Singer theory, the emotional experience is a cognitive labeling of nonspecific physical arousal based on environmental cues. According to this theory, an individual could observe some kind of environmental cue, such as the sight of a strange man approaching from a distance at night, which would cause physical arousal. The interpretation of this arousal, based on the sight of the stranger and the darkness, would probably be fear. If, however, after a moment, the individual then recognized this man as a dear friend, the interpretation of that same arousal might become joy or relief.

There is quite a bit of empirical evidence to substantiate this theory, beginning with Schachter and Singer's classic experiment. In this study, participants were told that they would receive a vitamin injection before the experiment, but they were actually injected with Epinephrine, a drug that causes heightened physical arousal (increased heart rate and quickened breathing, along with facial reddening – all typical physical reactions to strong emotional experiences). Participants were then placed into two groups: one with an angry

confederate, and one with a gleeful confederate. Participants who were in the group with the angry confederate, when asked what emotions they were feeling, reported feeling angry.<sup>3</sup> Those who were in the group with the happy confederate reported feeling happy themselves. This suggested that it was not simply the physical arousal that caused the emotional experience, but the influence of the environment. Further studies showed that while this labeling of physical arousal may not always be the explanation for the experience of emotion, it often is. Furthermore, this study emphasized a point that has continued to be an important part of the study of emotion, which is the idea that one of the most important variables to consider is the influence of environmental factors, including the comparisons we are able to draw to others and to our own past experiences.

Research on emotion is continually evolving, and perhaps, over time, a definitive theory will emerge. However, at present there are almost as many theories about emotion as there are actual emotions. While this may be frustrating to psychologists, it actually may be helpful to actors. Every actor (like every human being) understands things in his or her own unique way. When using theories of emotion, as with theories of motivation, the actor has the choice of which theory makes most intuitive sense both to him or her and for the character.

Unfortunately, although the students in the class responded well to the ideas of emotion and seemed to have a good understanding of them, none of them really seemed to be able to use the material. At the time I taught this course, I had not figured out a way to

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<sup>3</sup> Confederates – A person who is a part of the experimenter's research team. Participants are led to believe that the confederate is another participant in the study, allowing the effects of the confederate's behavior to be observed without the participants knowing that that individual is serving as a variable of the experiment.

transition the theories of emotion into practice. While this was true of many of the concepts that we covered, this one seemed to be particularly baffling to both the class and myself. Generally, when I had not discovered a method of making the transition from concept to performance, the students and I would discuss it at length, generally making discoveries as a group while bouncing ideas off one another. In this case, there were a few pedagogical lessons of importance that I learned. First, it taught me a serious lesson about planning. I had somehow forgotten to include this section on the syllabus, so when I added it back in, it caused us to be pressed for time. This was a very important unit of this course, and I probably could have used it to replace something else less important rather than squeeze it in between two other units.

Secondly, the members of this class were exceptional students, but I learned that I should always have a “plan B” for when the original idea doesn’t work. While I had relied on them in the past to work out the answer to the question of “how can we use this on stage?”, this time I faced a silent crowd unable to answer the question. If I teach this course again, I now understand better that while my teaching style is to let the students work out the answers for themselves (because I believe they learn better if they do), I still need to be able to jump in and save a deteriorating discussion. In addition, I learned that even exceptional students cannot always find the answer. While I will continue to keep high expectations for my students, I have learned that I should know the answer before I expect them to come up with one. I went in to this course with the idea that there was no right way to use this material, and that the students and I would learn it together. I had this notion that if I came up with all the answers, it would hinder their freedom to choose their paths

as actors. I don't think that this is an entirely wrong way to approach this material, as it worked most of the time, but I do think that I need to have at least the seeds of the answer to help them along, and I do think that I need not to rely on the students as much as I did in this course. I am working now to either find existing exercises or establish new exercises that can be used in conjunction with the different concepts covered in this course so that this does not occur again.

The simulation of the emotional experience is the basic motivation behind the "Alba Emoting" technique. While this technique was not taught in this course, I did teach a brief overview of it recently to the students who are taking the course now while it is being offered a second time, and it worked quite successfully. I recommend that if this course is taught in the future that Alba Emoting be included with the Motivation and Emotion unit, as it was developed partially on the basis of the James-Lange theory and can easily help actors to understand the idea that it is possible to recreate an emotional experience without having to actually recall a particular emotion. However, I think an overview may not be enough coverage of Alba Emoting. I think that acting students should be taught the Alba Emoting method more fully in another course, and I think more time in this course (at least an entire week) should be devoted to it.

Furthermore, one idea that I have had since the completion of the course, that I will use if I teach this course again in the future, is to encourage actors to keep an emotion journal. In this journal, they would record the physical experiences they observe in themselves when they experience different emotions. I would encourage them to observe their breathing patterns, whether they feel hot or cold, particular tensions that they may feel

in their bodies, their heart rate (whether they simply observe a change or even take their pulse), whether they sweat, get headaches or nausea, etc. I would also encourage them to record the stimuli that caused the changes and the environmental factors contributing to the emotion. I also think it would be beneficial for them to record their cognitive experiences with the emotion – what their thought processes were, whether the emotion provoked expectations or memories, etc. If each actor becomes aware of what experiences he or she endures in conjunction with particular emotions, I believe it will allow a natural transition from the real experience to the recreation of the emotion on stage.

I believe that it is more psychologically sound to use a methodology such as this to evoke emotion on stage than to use some sense memory or emotional recall exercises. I vehemently oppose the idea that actors, particularly those in the early stages of training, should use personal life experiences in character portrayal. I do not believe that it is safe for the actor to relive painful experiences for the sake of the character. First, this can be psychologically harmful if the actor has not already resolved the issue through therapy of some kind. Asking someone to recall in great detail an experience that was painful can cause the problem to resurface in his or her life, making the trauma significantly more harmful. Secondly, asking the actor to summon up old feelings can be a distraction from the work at hand. If the actor is trying to re-experience a previous emotion, it can certainly cause her not to be “present” in the scene. In fact, it may even falsify the emotional experience as she portrays the emotional history of her own life more exactly than the emotional experienced of the character. I believe that it is imperative that actors are taught a system of portraying emotion that has a physical component based on training and

observation and a cognitive component that interprets the character's experience rather than the actor's experience.

### **Development**

One chapter for development, "Nature, Nurture, and Prenatal Development," was chosen for the class originally, then at the last minute I decided not to use it. I had chosen it after only briefly skimming it hoping that it would be helpful in emphasizing and explaining researchers' "nature vs. nurture" conflict. I then realized after thoroughly examining it that it primarily focused on prenatal development and very little on the ideas I was hoping it would discuss.

The chapter on development that we used in the end was "Infancy and Childhood" from the Feldman text, which I supplemented with a handout I had compiled from several web texts as well as my own knowledge of the topic. Several theories of attachment were covered in this section, two of which proved to be the most useful: the Ainsworth Attachment Theory and Erickson's "Eight Stages of Man." In addition, we covered Piaget's stages of cognitive development, which the students and I agreed was a decidedly useless theory for the purposes of this course. Piaget's theory, while generally acknowledged to be a worthwhile theory, focuses primarily on early childhood development. In addition, the theory deals a good deal with the stages of motor skill development and early cognitive development, and does not give extensive detail on development if an individual past the age where they are able to reason and make choices.

The Ainsworth theory, however, proved to spark a lively discussion as well as to be a useful means of character analysis. The theory developed from a study called the “Ainsworth Strange-Situation Paradigm.” The “Strange-Situation Paradigm” consisted of a series of episodes in which a mother and child are observed together in a strange-situation. First the mother and infant enter the experimental room together.<sup>4</sup> They are left alone and the mother sits while the baby is allowed to explore the room. An adult stranger enters, speaks with the mother, and then stays with the infant while the mother leaves the room. Next, the mother returns to comfort the infant, and the stranger leaves. Then, the mother leaves the infant alone briefly, after which the stranger enters again. The mother then returns and picks up the infant while the stranger leaves again. During this sequence of episodes, the infant’s behavior is observed, noting the amount of exploration done by the infant as well as the infant’s reactions to its mother’s departure and return. Based on these observations, the infants were categorized as one of three attachment styles: secure attachment, anxious-ambivalent insecure attachment, or anxious-avoidant insecure attachment. A fourth category for disorganized or disoriented children was created for those children whose behavior was not consistent enough to allow placement into a category.

Securely attached children showed a high level of free exploration while using the mother as a kind of “home base” to return to in times of need. They were comfortable in engaging with strangers. These infants showed distress when the mother was absent from the room and were happy to see her and sought comfort from her upon her return.

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<sup>4</sup> In this paper, the caregiver will be referred to as the “mother,” however this theory of attachment also

Ainsworth's theory asserts that securely attached children become so when a mother is attentive and meets the child's needs.<sup>5</sup>

The two anxious, insecure attachment styles were observed in children who neither explore freely in the new environment into which they have been introduced and who did not seem to be comforted by the presence of the mother. Children in the anxious-ambivalent category showed high levels of anxiety about exploring the environment and were resistant to interacting with the stranger. These children were exceptionally distressed when the mother left the room. While they would seek the mother for comfort upon her return, they would show ambivalence to her, seeming indignant at the same time clinging to her. The formation of this attachment style is often explained by noting that the child is reacting to a mothering style of convenience. In this situation, while the mother is attentive to the child, the child is not the highest priority of the mother. The mother may respond to the child after completing other tasks or, in some cases, may give attention to the child more due to her own needs than the needs of the child.

Infants in the anxious-avoidant category were generally disinterested in exploring the environment and with interacting with the stranger. The child generally did not show distress upon the mother's absence nor did she seek comfort upon the mother's return. Infants in this category were generally indifferent to all aspects of the situation. This theory asserts that anxious-avoidant children become so when the mother fails to meet the child's needs and creates distance in the relationship. Because these children's needs are not met,

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extends to other primary caregivers, including fathers and other guardians.

they often seem to show that they do not feel the need to communicate because they do not believe that communicating their needs will elicit a response from the mother.<sup>6</sup>

Children who were categorized as disorganized-disoriented were placed as such because of a lack of an observable coping skill. Securely attached children coped with environmental stressors by seeking comfort from the mother. While ambivalence and avoidance may not produce successful coping, they are still observable strategies for handling environmental stress.

The significance of this theory in understanding adult behavior is paramount. Regardless of the cause of the attachment, it has been shown that attachment styles in childhood are often seen as a life pattern, translating to a predictable pattern of behavior in adult romantic relationships. Securely attached adults are able to trust their partners, permitting them to easily spend time apart from one another without anxiety. As they did with their mothers as infants, securely attached individuals use their partner as a “home base” to return to for comfort after experiencing the stressors of their environments. Anxious-ambivalent adults are often “clingy” partners, who may worry that their partner does not value or love them. They show often-contradictory behavior in relationships, like their childhood counterparts, at times clinging while simultaneously behaving as though

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<sup>5</sup> Further theory has helped to determine that not only is secure attachment determined by other factors than the mother’s responsiveness, such as genetics, but that the mother’s behavior is also influenced by the behavior of the child, allowing the mother of a securely attached infant to, in effect, be a “better” mother.

<sup>6</sup> Research has shown that much like children who are securely attached, many factors other than the mothering style affect the child’s attachment style. This theory has been criticized for “blaming” mothers for their children’s insecure attachments when, in fact, they are not always at fault.

resentful of the other partners' needs.<sup>7</sup> Anxious-avoidant adults are reluctant to have close relationships and are unwilling to trust or depend on other individuals.<sup>8</sup>

The Ainsworth attachment theory is highly useful to actors as it aids them in decision-making about a character's general temperament. For example, the actress playing Jenny from *The Shape of Things* determined that her character exhibited an anxious-avoidant attachment style. This allowed her to determine some general characteristics that the character might exhibit, such as clinginess. From her observations of clingy people in her own life, she was able to make some character choices about posture, tone of voice, and general attitude that affected her performance in a very realistic way. This theory can be very powerful if thought of as determinant of a body of traits that a character might exhibit because of the attachment style exhibited, thus aiding the actor in creating a well-defined "personality" for the character.

Erik Erickson's "Eight Stages of Man," developed in 1956, are intended to explain what Erickson called the "psychosocial" development of individuals.<sup>9</sup> Based not on research, but rather on observation from psychotherapy administered to children and

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<sup>7</sup> This behavior pattern is similar to that of Borderline Personality Disorder, which will be discussed later in the chapter.

<sup>8</sup> While research does validate that these attachment-style patterns are often present in adults who exhibited them as children, it should be noted that it is possible to modify this behavior through therapy or simply by experiencing new, different relationships.

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that Erickson's eight stages are also often referred to as "Eight Stages of Development." In addition, sources cite different names for the stages, all of which have the same basic meaning but are phrased slightly differently. For the purposes of this text, I am using the names of the stages as I initially learned them when I studied developmental psychology as an undergraduate.

adolescents of a wide range of social classes, this theory is generally recognized to be a plausible explanation of developmental stages, despite its lack of substantiation from empirical evidence. Each stage deals with what Erickson termed a “psychosocial crisis.” The crisis from each stage must be resolved before the crisis in the next stage can be truly addressed. Failure to solve a crisis will cause difficulty in later stages and, in many cases, will cause later crises to be unapproachable or irresolvable.

The first stage, “Trust versus Mistrust,” occurs from infancy through about 18 months to 2 years of age. In this stage, the infant is attempting to solve the crisis of whether he can trust his caregivers and those in his daily environment. If a child is well parented and nurtured in this stage, he will feel basically secure and trustful and will enter into the next stage with an overall sense of optimism. If the child is neglected or mishandled in some way, he will lack security and trust and enter into the next stage with pessimism.

The second psychosocial crisis, “Autonomy versus Doubt,” occurs from about 18 months to two years through about three and a half to four years of age. In this stage, toddlers are seeking a “will” of their own and to be proud of themselves rather than shameful or self-doubting. A child who is developing healthily in this stage, much to the chagrin of parents, is prone to flared tempers and stubbornness, clearly learning the meaning of the word “No.” This is a time when a child begins to understand the idea of choice and asserts his or her will for the first time. If parents do not exert enough control over the child, she can become highly demanding and controlling. If parents exert too

much control, children cannot assert their own wills and will experience self-doubt or shame in decision-making.

The third stage, “Initiative versus Guilt,” occurs during what Erickson calls the “play age,” or the late preschool years (about three and a half years to the time the child enters school). It is during this age that children begin imaginative play, such as playing “house” or other activities in which fantasy is a component. An appropriately developing child in this stage also learns basic cooperation, such as sharing or playing in groups, and is able to take initiative and both lead and follow. If a child is developing a sense of guilt in this stage, he may be fearful or unreasonably shy, he may be unable to socialize with groups and, instead, remain on the “fringes,” and he may not be able to actively engage in imaginative play. His development is also often characterized by high dependence on adults.

“Industry versus Inferiority,” the fourth psychosocial crisis, generally takes place during what Erickson terms the “school age,” from the time of entrance to formal schooling to about seventh or eighth grade (age 13 to 14). At this time, children are learning reading and writing, mathematics, social studies and science, etc. In this stage, homework is vital, as it increasingly reinforces the child’s need for and understanding of self-discipline. Also during this stage, children for the first time are learning formalized, structured play, such as sports. If a child has passed through earlier phases by successfully solving the psychosocial crises therein, she should possess trust, autonomy, and initiative, which should allow her to be industrious in this stage. Children who had difficulty solving earlier crises, however, may not show this sense of industry. Children who did not learn to

trust may approach the future with doubt. Children who did not learn a sense of autonomy or to take initiative may not effectively solve this crisis, feeling defeated and inferior.

During adolescence, from about age 13 or 14 to about age 20, the individual experiences the psychosocial crisis of “Identity versus Identity Diffusion.” In this stage, the adolescent is faced with answering the question of “Who am I?” Even well adjusted adolescents, though, generally experience some identity diffusion as they experiment with behaviors that will help them answer the question of who they are. Many adolescents experiment with delinquency in some form, whether it be shoplifting, underage drinking or smoking, or other illegal or otherwise inappropriate acts. This stage also sees a rise in rebellion through behavior, or choice of fashion, friends, music, etc. In this stage, the healthily developing adolescent acquires maturity in time perspective as well as a sense of self-certainty (as opposed to self-consciousness). He begins to seek achievement and then actually to achieve. He seeks a role model to guide his actions and develops a set of ideals. Later in adolescence, a clear sexual identity is developed.

In the sixth stage, “Intimacy versus Isolation,” a young adult who has successfully solved the previous five crises can experience true intimacy for the first time. In this stage she can forge friendships and romantic partnerships that are genuine and enduring. Individuals in this stage often reflect in amusement on previous stages of a childish past when they come to experience an intimacy they believed they were able to achieve in earlier stages, recognizing the development they have experienced.

In adulthood, the seventh stage takes place, “Generativity versus Self-Absorption.” In this stage, the appropriately developing adult manifests productivity and creativity. It is

in this stage that marriage often flourishes, children are reared, individuals discover and excel in a career, and are, in whatever capacity, working.

In late life, if all seven crises previously experienced were adequately solved, mature adults face the final psychosocial crisis, “Integrity versus Despair.” Individuals who achieve integrity are highly independent and likely to try new things. Generally hard working, individuals with integrity have a satisfying self-concept and a well-understood and well-developed role in life. These individuals continue to experience intimacy and generativity, and tend not to experience regret or guilt about the past. They take pride in what they have created – children, work, art, hobbies, etc. If an individual comes to this stage of life with an unresolved crisis from a previous stage, he may experience regret and view himself and his life with despair.

Again, these stages are solidly reasonable explanations of development, but they exist only in theory and are not corroborated by research. However, the students taking this course responded exceptionally well to Erickson’s theory. Not only was it used in scene work for the class, the students expressed that this was one of the theories that they were most likely to turn to to help inform character decisions they would need to make in future performances. The class and I discussed at length exactly how one might go about using this information as a vehicle for acting. We determined that the most interesting and applicable use of Erickson’s stages was to address characters that were struggling as if they had not been able to solve one of the crises, or were still involved in the crisis because they were in that stage of life. An actor can allow herself a great deal of information about a character’s personality if she understands the aspects of development the character is

currently struggling with. For example, if a character is working through the “Identity versus Identity Diffusion” stage, the actor can approach the character as if he is constantly working to answer the question of “Who am I?” In that case, the actor will understand that the character’s stage in life would predict that he is likely to be rebelling or have a rebellious attitude. Or, if the actor chooses to approach the character as if he is developing poorly, he can address his personality in such a way that the character is unable to answer the question of who he is and is self-conscious or feels an overall sense of inferiority. The actor, by examining the stage in the character’s life, can gain insight into what the character’s cognitions may be, understanding his thoughts, fears, associations, and expectations.

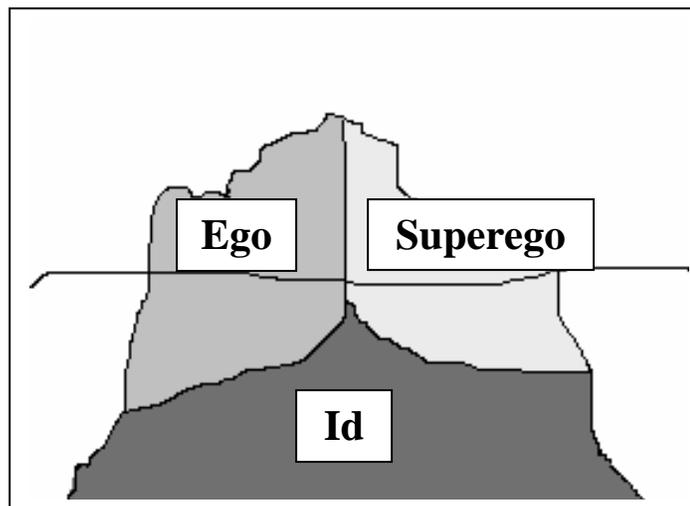
### **Freud and Psychodynamic Approaches to Personality**

The reading on Freud and psychodynamic theory came from the Feldman text as well. I also included a short chapter on other theories of personality, which turned out to be much less useful than psychoanalytic theory. Freudian theory, because of its use of developmental stages, was a natural follow-up to Erickson. The students’ reaction to Freud was varied. Most students already knew some Freudian terminology, even if they were not aware of its source, such as anal retentiveness, defense mechanisms, and oral fixation. After completing the reading assignment, they all understood that his theories were philosophical in nature, based on his own observations of a biased sampling pool and not on solid research. They also understood that his perceptions were colored by misogyny and drug use, as well as his being a part of a privileged social class. Some of the students loved

Freud's theory, believing that while it may not be wholly accurate, it is insightful and helpful to analysis. Others found the theory to be mostly useless and nonsensical, believing that development was more reasonably explained by Erickson's stages. Regardless of their overall feelings about Freudian theory, however, most of the students believed that there was some validity in the idea of defense mechanisms as described by Freud. The unit on Freud as covered in this course included primarily Freud's ideas of the unconscious, the psychosexual stages of development, and defense mechanisms.

Freud believed that the most important feature to understand about the personality is the unconscious, that is, the part of our personality, thoughts, and emotions of which we are not consciously aware. Freud believed that much more of our personality resides in the unconscious than the conscious mind. We cannot observe the unconscious, as it is not readily available to us, so we have to rely on clues such as dreams, fantasies, and slips of the tongue to verify its existence. Freud believed that the unconscious was comprised of two parts: the preconscious and a set of instinctual drives called the id, ego, and superego. The preconscious is the part of the unconscious that can easily be recalled when necessary, somewhat like long-term memory, and includes information that is not threatening for us to recall, such as our name, things we have learned in school, and our social security number. This is considered to be a part of the unconscious because the things stored here are not things that are in our working consciousness. Freud's idea of consciousness is basically a combination of the things in sensory memory and working memory (see the "Sensation, Perception, and Memory" section of this chapter).

The part of the unconscious with which Freud was most concerned is the set of instinctual drives he labeled the id, ego, and superego. According to Freud, our personality drives can be represented by a model of an iceberg, where only the tip (the conscious mind) is exposed and the rest of the iceberg (the unconscious part of personality) is hidden by the water. This representation can be seen in the following image:



The id, which is completely unconscious, works to satisfy our most primitive drives. These drives, fueled by what Freud termed “psychic energy,” create tension. The id demands constantly that this tension be relieved. The id causes us to have hunger, thirst, libido, and is where our tendencies toward aggression reside. The id operates under the “pleasure principle,” an idea that this part of our unconscious seeks immediate and complete gratification.

The ego is part conscious and part unconscious. It serves as a buffer between the id and reality, operating under what Freud calls the “reality principle.” Because reality prevents us from being able to satisfy our most primitive drives whenever and wherever

we want without consequences, the ego exists to temper the instinctual tension created by the id so that a person can remain safe and function in society.

The superego, also part unconscious and part conscious, represents our sense of morals and what we see as “right” or “wrong” as dictated to us by society, our parents, our superiors, and our peers. The superego is divided into two parts: the conscience and the ego-ideal. The conscience dictates that we have feelings of guilt when we do things that are “wrong.” The ego-ideal represents a fictive model of a “perfect” person we constantly strive to be, urging us to behave in the “right” way.

This model of the unconscious is used by Freud to help us understand how the different parts of our personality pull us in opposite directions. Because the id and the superego represent an unrealistic set of desires and behaviors, the ego is the part of the personality Freud worked to correct. His psychodynamic therapy was intended to strengthen the ego and allow better communication and regulation of the desires and drives set forth by the id and superego.

Freud is considered a noteworthy theorist primarily because of his theories of development. While other theorists had approached development as a set of stages prior to Freud’s theories, Freud’s was the first significant theory to explain specifically what would happen if a stage was not passed through correctly and a person became fixated or “stuck” in that stage. Each of Freud’s stages of development, called the “psychosexual stages,” focuses on a biological function that dictates the necessity of certain gratifying activities. Each stage centers on an erogenous zone from which pleasure is derived during that stage of development, thus making each stage, even those of infancy, “sexual.” If the child

develops appropriately, he will move on to the next stage. In some stages, the child may not develop appropriately and will become fixated, causing behavioral problems stemming from this fixation.

The first stage in Freud's theory of psychosexual development is the oral stage. In this stage, which lasts from birth to about 18 months, the erogenous zone from which infants draw pleasure is the mouth. Infants explore their environments with their mouths in this stage, enjoying such activities as nursing their mothers, and gumming, sucking, or biting their hands and other objects. The mother's breast in this stage not only represents nourishment, but also is a source of love. Children in this stage, because they do not yet have a sense of morality or of society, are controlled by the id, reacting only to primitive impulses. Because of this, they demand constant and immediate gratification, and fixation in this stage can only be avoided by responsive nurturing. Children who are fed inadequately or forcefully can become fixated in this stage. Some symptoms of oral fixation, according to this theory, are smoking, nail biting, pencil or pen chewing, habitual gum chewing, overeating, alcoholism, and "biting" sarcastic personalities.

The second psychosexual stage of development is the anal stage, which occurs from about 18 months to about 3 years of age. The erogenous zone in focus in this stage is the anus. During this stage, children are first learning to control their bowel movements. In Western culture, toilet training is an activity of great focus later in this stage. During toilet training, children learn when and where it is appropriate to excrete. Toddlers in this stage also start to understand the pleasure and displeasure associated with excretion, and begin to understand their control over their bowel movements. Because this is one of the first things

that children can fully control once they have mastered the ability, children in this age discover that this control means that they have some control over their parents. A child can choose to retain or expel his bowel movements, which is a choice of whether to grant or resist the wishes of his parents.

There are two types of fixations that may occur in the anal stage: anal-expulsive personality or anal-retentive personality. If parenting is too lenient, parents may not instill the child with an appropriate understanding of society's rules about bowel movement control. In this case, the child may develop an anal-expulsive personality. Some characteristics of anal-expulsion are sloppiness, lack of organization, recklessness, carelessness and deviance. If parenting is too strict during toilet training and pressure and punishment becomes extreme, children may begin to experience anxiety over bowel movements and tend to withhold this function. In this case, children may become anal-retentive. Some traits associated with anal-retention are meticulous cleanliness and organization, intolerance of those who are less organized, stinginess, general anxiety, conformity, and passive-aggressiveness.

The third stage of psychosexual development is the phallic stage, occurring from about four to five years of age. In the phallic stage, the erogenous zone becomes the genitalia. Pleasure in this stage is derived from masturbation and genital fondling. According to Freud, this is the most difficult stage to pass through because of the

experience of the “Oedipal Conflict” or “Oedipus Complex” in boys.<sup>10</sup> This theory asserts that young boys unconsciously become attracted to their mothers and, for this reason, wish to replace their fathers as the mother’s mate and kill the father. The boy becomes very jealous and angry toward his father, hating him enormously and creating a large distance between them. Because the boy is afraid of his father finding out his feelings, he becomes fearful and anxious. According to Freud, many childhood phobias can stem from the Oedipus complex, including “castration anxiety,” which occurs when a boy is afraid his father will cut off his penis if he finds out about his secret attraction to the mother. The Oedipus complex is named for the Greek myth, Oedipus Rex, in which Oedipus unwittingly marries his mother and kills his father.

During the phallic stage, girls experience “penis envy.” Freud believes that girls think that their lack of a penis means that they once had one and that it had been removed. In order to compensate for having been castrated, the girl wants to become impregnated by her father, as having a child would replace the lost penis. If a child is able to successfully resolve the Oedipal conflict, he will learn to control feelings of rage and hostility against the parent of the same sex, and be able to move on to the following stage of development. If a boy becomes fixated in this stage, he may for the rest of his life have feelings of guilt related to sex, fear castration, and be narcissistic. Freud implies that women never progress

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<sup>10</sup> Because Freud’s theory of the Oedipus complex only vaguely referenced “female Oedipal conflict,” he was criticized for being exclusionary. As somewhat of an afterthought, Carl Jung (a student and follower of Freud) later named the experience of young girls the “Electra Complex.” The Electra complex is also based on a character from Greek mythology, Electra, who asks her brother to avenge her father’s death by killing her mother. The theory based on this myth is also vague in explaining that girls have a comparable experience to the Oedipal complex.

past the phallic stage, thus maintaining a lifelong sense of inferiority, most never sexually maturing.<sup>11</sup> Freud did admit to a degree of uncertainty, however, about women's experience of penis envy.

The fourth stage is what Freud termed "latency." This is a period of time that occurs from about age five through the onset of puberty. There is no erogenous zone associated with this stage. During this time, the child's focus is on learning skills such as reading and mathematics, as well as developing same-sex friendships, adjusting to society outside of the home, engaging in sports, etc. This stage lasts until the reawakening of sexuality occurs as the individual begins to develop the capability of reproducing. There are no fixations associated with this stage.

The final stage of psychosocial development is the genital stage in which, again, the genitals become the erogenous zone in focus. This stage lasts from puberty through the rest of life. Gratifying activities in this stage include masturbation and heterosexual relationships.<sup>12</sup> During this stage, adolescents and then adults seek relationships due to their renewed sense of sexual desire. Freud believed that this stage does not cause fixations. Any difficulty in this stage comes from a fixation or unresolved issue from an earlier stage.

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<sup>11</sup> According to Freud, women who could only experience clitoral orgasms were not sexually mature, whereas only women who could experience "vaginal" orgasms were fully developed sexually. This theory has been discredited because our more recent understanding of anatomy helps us to understand that the existence of a vaginal orgasm is not likely (what was once considered a vaginal orgasm is now understood to be the "G-Spot" orgasm, the G-Spot being the reverse end of the clitoral shaft exposed inside the vagina near the cervix).

<sup>12</sup> Freud believed that homosexuality was a sign of neurosis, often caused by an unresolved Oedipal conflict.

Freud's theories of psychosexual development can be quite useful to an actor. For example, if a character is observed as having one characteristic of a particular fixation, the actor can "diagnose" the character with this fixation and work to exhibit other characteristics. In this class, the student playing Adam in *The Shape of Things*, discovered from the text that his character was very sarcastic and also a former nail-biter. He decided to approach the character from the point of view that he had an oral fixation. He played up the sarcasm, which worked very nicely. In addition, he made a point of doing things with his mouth that seemed habitual, such as touching his lips when listening or chewing his straw. While this came across as somewhat of a caricature of a person with an oral fixation, with further work, I think it would have been an effective character choice.

The final aspect of Freud's theory that was covered in this course was his theory of defense mechanisms. Defense mechanisms, according to Freud, are our unconscious' way of dealing with anxiety by concealing the source of the anxiety in some way. Freud is most noted for the defense mechanism he identified as "repression." Repression is the phenomenon that occurs when an individual pushes a particular traumatic memory into her unconscious so that it can no longer be recalled. For example, a woman may not remember that she was raped because she has repressed the memory.

Several defense mechanisms were discussed in this course, but the only ones of significant relevance are regression, displacement, denial, and projection. Regression is a defense mechanism in which individuals, as a response to anxiety, regress to an earlier stage of development. For example, an adult who becomes frustrated with their mate's lack of organization in the household might throw a temper tantrum, regressing to a childlike

state. Displacement occurs when frustration with a person of some authority is redirected toward a person who is not in a position of authority. For example, if a student has a disagreement with a teacher, instead of confronting the teacher and having an argument, he may inappropriately yell at his roommate over something minor. Denial is the refusal to accept something that is factual because of the anxiety that it produces. For instance, a widow may refuse to believe that her husband has died, believing that he is away on a trip and will come home at any moment. Projection is what occurs when an individual redirects unwanted feelings to someone else. For example, if a person is angry, they may act happy but ask a person they are conversing with why she is angry. Freud acknowledges that defense mechanisms are useful in coping with anxiety, but can become detrimental when so much psychic energy is used to channel anxiety into defense mechanisms.

Defense mechanisms can be helpful to character analysis in somewhat of an indirect manner. If an actor can discover in the text that a character is exhibiting a defense mechanism, he or she can use that to understand that the character has some issues with some kind of anxiety. Then, he or she can use a different theory (or Freud's psychosexual development theory) to help determine the cause of the anxiety to aid in the analysis of the character. For example, the student who played Dan in *Closer* approached the character as if he were using the defense mechanism of rationalization. His explanation of the character's defense in having an affair with Anna, a married woman, was that he rationalized it by telling himself that Anna, his girlfriend, would not find out. The student playing Alice in the same play interpreted her character as being motivated by the defense mechanism of denial. When Dan tells her he has been seeing another woman and is leaving

her, she leaves the room quietly and then comes back to ask him to make some tea, as if she simply did not believe that he had told her he was leaving. This student also took a more active approach, choosing to exhibit the signs of the defense mechanism of reaction formation. Unlike simple denial, reaction formation occurs when a person exhibits the opposite reaction than what they logically would feel in response to a given stimulus. In Alice's case, logic would dictate that she would appear hurt or upset by Dan's admission of infidelity and intention to abandon her; she might cry, get angry, yell, etc. Instead, the student chose to display a stoic, still, unscathed Alice, which made the subtly hurt look in her eyes much more intense and powerful. Both students used these defense mechanisms as a pathway to understanding some of the anxiety experienced by these characters, which was a fairly effective tactic that came as a result of examining the motivating factors behind their character's choices.

### **Alfred Adler (Individual Psychology)**

One of my favorite sections of this class was accompanied by the worst reading in the text, "Adler: Individual Psychology," from the Feist-Feist text *Theories of Personality*. It was chosen simply because there was little to choose from. Adler is generally regarded as a poor writer. Because of this, most of his theories are known because of his presentations at conferences, and from the work of his students and followers. Very little original writing from Adler exists, but his theories are an integral part of personality psychology. His theories on individual psychology and birth order are highly respected in

the field of personality, even though most study of Adler is undertaken by studying his students and followers.

Adler is noted for his opposition to Freud, his theories being much more optimistic. Where Freud believed that motivation comes from aggression and libido, Adler believed that motivation stems from the influence of society and the personal striving for success (or superiority). Where Freud believed that people cannot or do not want to change their personalities, Adler believed that people were responsible for their own personalities and could adjust them when necessary. Freud believed that an individual's present is a product of past experiences; Adler believed that an individual's present is resultant of their view of the future. The most important difference between the two psychiatrists was their view of the unconscious. Where Freud had emphasized the unconscious' influence on behavior quite heavily, Adler believed that psychologically healthy people are generally aware of what they do and why they do it.

Adler's theory is difficult to study, but I believe that its optimism gives it enough merit to use as an approach to personality. Adler's ideas are sometimes poorly or vaguely defined, and are sometimes a bit disorganized. His theory evolved over time, so many of his ideas underwent significant change from their first proposal to their final form. In addition, the chapter studied by the class was repetitive and filled with extraneous information and minutiae. For the sake of clarity, the following is only a skeletal overview of Adlerian theory.

Adler's theory is called "Individual Psychology," and focused on the individual's development as a singular event as well as in relation to each person's "social interest," a

term Adler used to refer to people's feeling of oneness with all mankind. His theory's final statements on individual psychology can be stated in outline form, a summation of his theory in 6 points, as follows:

- 1) The dynamic force behind people's behavior is the *striving for success or superiority*.
  - 2) People's *subjective perceptions* shape their behavior and personality.
  - 3) Personality is *unified and self-consistent*.
  - 4) The value of all human activity must be seen from the viewpoint of *social interest*.
  - 5) The self-consistent personality structure develops into a person's *style of life*.
  - 6) Style of life is molded by people's *creative power*.
- (Feist & Feist 123)

Adler believed that all motivation comes from a single drive, the striving for success or superiority. According to his theory, people are all born with physical deficiencies, which cause them to feel inferior. To compensate for these inborn deficiencies, people must strive for either success or superiority in their lives and achievements. Those who are not psychologically healthy strive for superiority over other people; psychologically healthy individuals strive for both personal success and success for humanity. A part of striving for success is what Adler termed "the final goal." Each person has a final goal in life, which is the single thing toward which they strive. The goal is not always known to the person, and it is fictional, having no objective existence. Every behavior in a person's life is leading toward that goal, from about the age of four or five through the end of life. People may have many preliminary goals throughout life to get to the final goal. The final goal, for the actor, is similar to a superobjective. Just as one has a singular goal in life toward which one is constantly working, a character has a singular

goal driving her action in the text. Smaller goals, or objectives, must be met in order to continue pursuing this superobjective. All the behaviors that an actor exhibits while playing this character can be interpreted as being a driving force toward this superobjective. The primary difference between Adler's idea of the final goal and the character's superobjective is that the final goal encompasses all of a person's life, while a superobjective is confined to carrying the character through the action of the play, not necessarily throughout life.

People have subjective perceptions of the world, which help to form their personalities. Included with these subjective perceptions are what Adler called "fictions," which affect how people expect the future to occur. Based on Vaaihinger's *The Philosophy of "As If,"* Adler's theory asserts that our perceptions, or fictions, have no real existence but, in order to cope with society, we function "as if" they do. Any stereotype that is regularly believed is a fiction. Fictions are either not true or cannot be proven. An example of a fiction is that men are better than women. While this is not true and cannot be proven, much of our society functions as if men are somehow biologically superior to women when, in fact, men's "superiority" is simply a long-standing set of social customs.

Because behavior is all leading toward the final goal, everyone's personalities are unified and all behavior is comprehensible; people do everything for a reason. Adler believed that inconsistent behavior is nonexistent, and that each person's thoughts, feelings, and actions are meant to serve a single purpose, even before that purpose is known to him.

Adler believed that people who are psychologically healthy are highly concerned with social interest. These people feel not isolated, but as if they are a member of a community with all people. Psychologically healthy people, according to Adler, are those who can experience and exhibit empathy for all mankind, generally manifested as an overall ability to cooperate. Adler believes that it is this social interest that binds humanity together, and that this empathic state is the natural state of humanity.

Adler's theory asserts that each person exhibits a unique and self-developed style of life, which is the general personality and behavioral characteristics of a person. A person's style of life includes their self-concept, relationships, level of social interest, and final goal. Healthy people maintain a style of life that is socially useful, and express their personality through action, often loving others, having solid relationships, and keeping occupied. Adler had a Darwinist view that natural selection would dictate that people with healthy styles of life were likely to populate the world, eliciting a future more full of healthy, productive individuals.

Adler believed that people have the freedom to create their own styles of life, asserting that people are in control of their own lives (this is a significant contrast to Freud) and making them responsible for their own final goal. This freedom is what Adler termed "creative power." Adler believed it is not what people are given that is of importance, but rather what they do with what they have. Creative solutions to problems and use of resources are a mark of a healthy individual.

Adler also had some theories of maladjustment, which is what Freud would have called neurosis. Rather than defense mechanisms, the rather aggressive term Freud coined

for the strategies we use to cope with anxiety, Adler believed we had “safeguarding tendencies,” which are strategies maladjusted people use to hide inflated self-images and safeguard their style of life. Adler believed that among our safeguarding tendencies are making excuses, aggression, and withdrawal. Excuses come in the form of “yes but” or “if only,” for example, “I’d write my novel if only I could find the free time.” Free time, in this case, is probably not the reason why the novel is being pushed aside, but an excuse was delivered to protect the failed writer from the real cause of the novel’s not being written, which really might be a lack of talent or an inability to manage time effectively.

There are three types of aggression discussed by Adler. Depreciation occurs when we undervalue others’ successes and inflate our own. Accusation occurs when we blame others for our own failures, even to the point of seeking revenge, avoiding a blow to our own self-esteem. Self-accusation is a manipulative act used to hurt people around us by hurting ourselves, such as self-torture, depression, guilt, or suicide. Each of the types of aggression, like excuses, shift blame from the real cause of the problem at hand and allow individuals to protect fragile self-esteem.

There are four types of withdrawal, each a strategy to safeguard oneself through creating distance between the individual and the problem. Moving backward, similar to Freud’s notion of regression, occurs when one reverts to a more secure period in life to safeguard his fictional goals. Unlike regression, moving backward may be a conscious effort to elicit sympathy from others. Standing still is a safeguard in which a person neither moves forward nor backward, avoiding progressing and attaining responsibility in an attempt to avoid the threat of failure. Hesitating is a safeguarding tendency that involves

procrastinating so that one can eventually use the excuse “it’s too late now.” The final type of withdrawal, constructing obstacles, occurs when someone creates obstacles that are reasonably easy to overcome to create prestige.

Safeguarding tendencies, much like Freud’s defense mechanisms, are primarily useful as a means to character analysis. Adlerian theory, in general, could be quite useful, but it would likely take more study than what can be covered in a course of this length. I think that an entire system could be based on Adler’s complex theories, but for the purposes of this course, it may not be the most effective technique. I do think, however, that it should be introduced in a course like this so that students can have enough exposure to it to be able to do further independent research on the theories. If students thoroughly study Adler, particularly the idea of the final goal and all that leads up to it, they could more easily dissect a role, looking at objectives, superobjectives, etc. In addition, I feel that Adler’s positive approach to the human psyche would be beneficial to the students’ growth as human beings as well as actors. It is easy to focus on the negative aspects of a character’s development, particularly because normal, well-adjusted characters simply are not interesting. Using Adler, students can see a more optimistic view of the source of human anxiety and our unlimited potential for change. Adlerian theory could be a powerful tool, I think, if used as a holistic approach, both to life and to character development. However, because this course is designed to be more of a survey of the concepts of psychology, I believe that it would be difficult to cover Adler in enough depth to make it truly useful to the students.

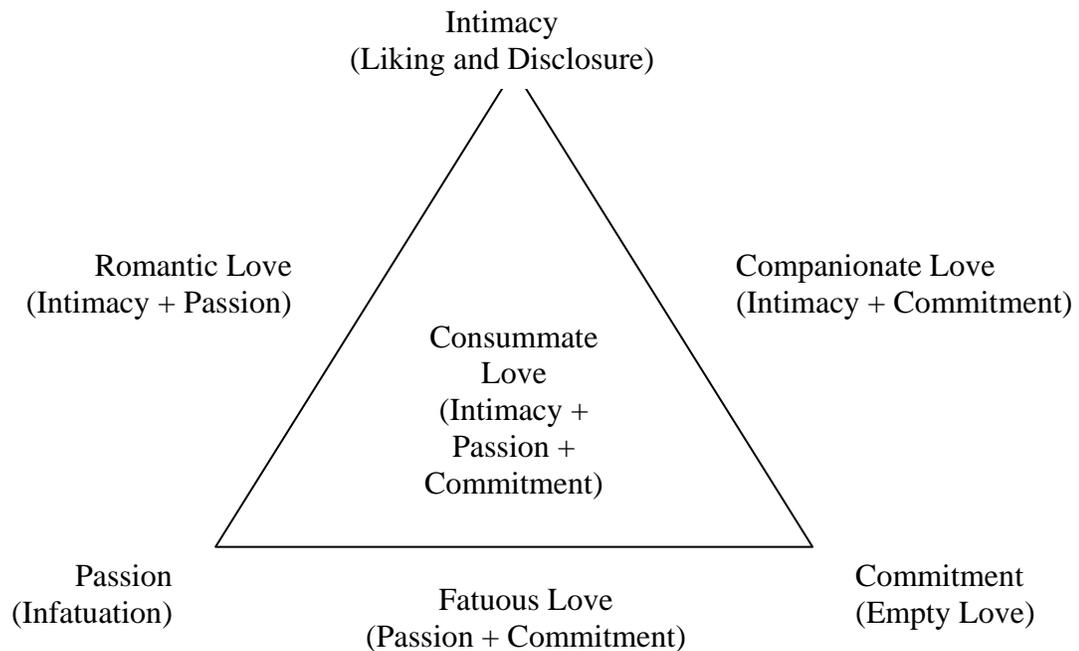
## Love and Social Cognition

The chapter on love and loving, “The Ups and Downs of Love,” was chosen from Myers’ *Exploring Social Psychology*.<sup>13</sup> This section, like many others covered, was primarily useful for the purposes of analysis, but did not lend itself to a specific approach to acting. Love theories were particularly helpful when assessing characters involved in romantic relationships. Because love is difficult to define, much like emotion, it is difficult to study. Much of the information on love and loving is theoretical and tentative, and the fully formed theories are supplemented with statistical tidbits that are more interesting than useful.

One of the most well liked theories of love is Sternberg’s triangle theory of love in which romantic love is divided into seven types, characterized by different combinations of passion, intimacy, and commitment. The following model demonstrated the different possible combinations:

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<sup>13</sup> A wonderful text concerning love and loving is Erich Fromm’s *The Art of Loving*. This text was recommended, but not required in this course. It should be noted that because of the time period in which *The Art of Loving* was written, some of its ideas regarding social conventions are a bit antiquated, but it is overall a very good text that not only thoroughly defines love but helps the reader understand how to love more effectively and honestly.



The Sternberg Theory allows an actor to determine and examine the nature of their characters' relationships, giving them the opportunity to have a more thorough understanding of the functionality of those relationships.

Theories of passionate love show that couples experiencing passionate love are the most likely to express love physically. Studies show that when passionate love is reciprocated, individuals feel joy and fulfillment. The Two-Factor Theory of Emotion asserts that passionate love (like any emotion), comes from a nonspecific arousal being interpreted as love due to environmental clues. This theory was borne out of the Schachter-Singer theory (see "Emotion and Motivation"). According to this theory, not only is the beginning of love due to an interpretation of arousal, but feelings of love are intensified by

arousal. This is where we get the idea of anger inducing passion – if a couple fights and resolves the issue, they are likely to engage in a physically passionate experience after they make up.

A primary component in the endurance of love is equity. In general, to maintain a healthy relationship, each partner should contribute about the same amount of effort to maintaining the relationship. When couples feel that their relationship is inequitable, difficulties often arise. Couples who report feeling that their relationships are equitable also are more likely to report that their relationships are satisfying. Along with general equity, couples that have equitable and open self-disclosure are more likely to be satisfied with the relationships.

Studying love, like any psychological phenomena, can help actors to have a better idea of general human behavior, but for the purposes of acting, it is not a particularly active way of approaching a character.

“Attitudes and Social Cognition” was the chapter for the second segment of this unit, chosen from Feldman’s text. Due to time constraints, this chapter was the least discussed section of material in this course. Only a few ideas from this section were pertinent to the course. Among those ideas was the notion of cognitive dissonance, or the idea that a person experiences anxiety or personal conflict when they hold two opposing cognitions. For example, a person may smoke even if they know that it is detrimental to their health, causing the individual to feel guilt or anxiety about smoking. A few biases in attitudes were also discussed. The halo effect occurs when a person initially observes a positive characteristic in another person and therefore attributes other positive

characteristics to that person that have not yet been observed. The assumed-similarity bias occurs when people assume that others are similar to themselves, even when they know little about the others. Another bias, the self-serving bias, reflects our tendency to attribute successes to personal characteristics and failures to external or situational causes. Finally, the fundamental attribution error is our tendency to attribute others' behaviors to their dispositions and our failure to consider situational causes of others' behavior. The study of attribution, if given more attention, might be beneficial to actors, but because it was discussed in only a few minutes' time in this course, it was not used in any of the actors' work in this course.

### **Psychological Disorders**

The final chapter, "The Major Psychological Disorders," was also from the Feldman text. In addition, students were given a printout from the internet which outlined the DSM-IV descriptions of the disorders discussed, as well as a list of all of the disorders currently recognized by the field of psychology.<sup>14</sup> Psychological disorders are useful for an actor to understand, but must be used carefully. Just as young students of psychology tend to read into themselves the symptoms of psychological disorders, a young actor may be quick to "diagnose" a character with a disorder, which could potentially cause an extreme, unrealistic approach to a character. While this may be an appropriate approach in a play that contains textual evidence to support diagnosing a character with a disorder, actors

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<sup>14</sup> DSM-IV is the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual used by psychologists and psychiatrists to evaluate what symptoms, as well as the frequency and duration of those symptoms, constitute diagnosis of specific

should be cautioned that, when the text does not support the decision to label a character with a disorder, it could make characters play as less realistic. It must be highly emphasized that individuals usually do not get diagnosed with a disorder unless their functioning is severely disrupted by the symptoms.<sup>15</sup> In this course, we discussed the major anxiety disorders, somatoform disorders, mood disorders, dissociative disorders, personality disorders and schizophrenia.

Anxiety disorders are caused by experiences of anxiety with no observable external cause, which affect an individual's daily functioning. The anxiety disorders covered in this course included phobic disorder, panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Phobic Disorders occur when an individual has an irrational fear of specific objects or situations. Some phobias do not affect an individual's daily functioning, particularly if the phobia is of something that is not found in daily life. For example, a person who has a phobia of flying (aerophobia) but does not regularly need or want to travel may function perfectly well as the stimulus is not regularly present. However, some phobias are particularly pernicious, such as a fear of strangers (xenophobia), in which a person is irrationally afraid of any person he has not met. People with phobic disorder experience extremely high levels of anxiety and panic, even to the point of a full-blown panic attack.

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disorders. This is generally used for statistical purposes as well as insurance purposes to make a patient eligible for medication.

<sup>15</sup> In this and any psychology course during which disorders are discussed, students must understand that it is common for students learning about disorders to believe that they exhibit the symptoms. They should be reminded that although they may identify with some of the symptoms of a particular disorder, most of the disorders are rare and unlikely to be present in the students in the class. In addition, most of the disorders are so recognizable that by the time students reach college they would already have been diagnosed if they did possess a psychological disorder.

Panic Disorder occurs when an individual experiences anxiety in the form of a panic attack with no observable cause. These panic attacks may last only a few seconds to several hours long, sometimes without warning. These attacks are characterized by such symptoms as heart palpitations, shortness of breath, dizziness, the urge to urinate, and other symptoms of the “fight or flight” phenomenon. The person may also have an irrational fear of imminent death.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder is characterized by long-term, persistent anxiety and worry, which also seems to have no discernable cause. A person may worry about rational things to an irrational degree, such as family, money, health, etc. The person may also have a recurring feeling that something bad will happen at any moment. Individuals with GAD become consumed with worry, and it often becomes the primary focus of their lives. The constant state of heightened arousal may cause physical symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, insomnia, slow digestion, and a myriad of other stress-induced physical symptoms.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a disorder in which individuals experience obsessions and/or compulsions with enough regularity to affect daily functioning. Most people experience both obsessions and compulsions, but not to a disordered extent. Obsessions are simply a recurring unwanted thought, such as a song “stuck” in your head or the recurring thought that you forgot to lock the front door. Compulsions are an irresistible urge to perform some act that seems unreasonable, such as repeated hand washing or needing to perform some action, such as touching a wall or spinning around, a specific number of times or in a specific way. If the individual is not

able to carry out the action, she experiences a high level of anxiety. While performing the “ritual” of compulsion temporarily relieves anxiety, the long-term anxiety is not satisfied and the compulsion inevitably returns.

Somatoform disorders are characterized by physical manifestations of psychological difficulties that have no medical cause. Two somatoform disorders were included in this course: Hypochondriasis and Conversion Disorder. Hypochondriasis occurs when individuals have unreasonable preoccupations with and recurring fears about their own health. They believe that minor illnesses and everyday aches and pains are symptoms of a more serious disease. The individual does not fake the symptoms, but rather misinterprets the sensations they are feeling. Conversion Disorder is a major psychological disorder that involves an actual physical disturbance with a psychological cause. Individuals with conversion disorder may lose the ability to use a sense organ or completely or partially lose the ability to move a limb. There is no physical or medical cause for the disturbance, and patients often seem unconcerned about the disorder. It may begin or end abruptly, and may occur during or following a period of trauma in the individual’s life.

Dissociative disorders are experienced so that the individual can avoid stress through escape. These disorders cause the separation of normally integrated character facets. Three of these disorders were discussed: Dissociative Identity Disorder (formerly known as Multiple Personality Disorder), Dissociative Amnesia, and Dissociative Fugue. These are the rarest of the psychological disorders, and should be used sparingly as an approach to character analysis, only using them when textual evidence is present. Because

of the rarity and extreme nature of this classification of disorders, I would advise that they be mentioned, but not studied, in this course. I feel that schizophrenia, also rare and extreme, can fit into this category. Students should be exposed to these disorders and perhaps referred to material where they can read further, but these should not be used in this setting as they are a bit too complex and are not often found in characters who are portrayed in dramatic literature.

Mood disorders occur when an individual experiences strong enough disturbances in emotion and mood to affect daily functioning. The two mood disorders included in this course were Major Depression and Bipolar Disorder (also known as Manic Depressive Disorder). Major Depression, found in about 1 in 5 people at some point in their life, is a severe and persistent occurrence of depression that affects concentration, decision-making, and social interaction. It is found about twice more often in women than men.<sup>16</sup> Individuals with depression may experience feelings of uselessness or worthlessness, may feel lonely, and may lose hope in the future. Major Depression may be experienced for a period of weeks, months, or years, and usually disrupts daily functioning for some period of time. It may cause fatigue, insomnia or hypersomnia, uncontrollable crying spells, and suicidal thoughts. Individuals with Bipolar Disorder experience the symptoms of Major Depression alternating with periods of mania, which is a state of intense, energetic euphoria that may involve the concocting of wild schemes, shopping or gambling sprees, or periods of other

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<sup>16</sup> The occurrence of depression, according to some theorists, may be just as likely to be found in men than women. Statistically, it is reported more in women, but men may be less likely to report feelings of depression, seek help for it, or see a therapist in general because of attached social stigma. The reporting of the higher occurrence in women may also work to reinforce this social stigma, perpetuating men's unlikelihood of reporting depression.

erratic behaviors. Manic episodes are characterized by ending with a “crash,” or a rapid digression from the euphoric state to an extremely low depressive state. Bipolar Disorder is generally recognized in individuals because of its periods of extreme highs and lows.

Personality disorders are the set of disorders I feel are most likely to be useful for actors. While only three are currently recognized in the DSM-IV as diagnosable disorders (Antisocial Personality Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, and Narcissistic Personality Disorder), previously published versions of the DSM and many abnormal psychology texts include several more personality disorders. We did not cover these additional disorders in the course, but I did encourage students to do more reading in this field and will continue to encourage other students to do so as well.

Individuals with Antisocial Personality Disorder (formerly known as “sociopaths”) show little or no regard for the moral and ethical rules of society or the welfare and rights of others. These individuals may appear to be likeable and clever, but after a closer examination are generally found to be highly deceptive and manipulative. Antisocial individuals are impulsive and deal poorly with frustration. They tend to show no guilt, anxiety, or remorse. Very little is known about the causes of this disorder and little can be determined for the treatment because these individuals are not likely to consent to being studied, are resistant to therapy, and are often unavailable as a high percentage of individuals with this disorder imprisoned for antisocial behavior. Studying the traits of this disorder might be very helpful to an actor who is cast in the role of a villainous character with which they have difficulty empathizing.

Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) is a disorder characterized by an inability or difficulty developing a secure sense of self. Individuals with BPD often depend on relationships with others to help them define their personal identity. They often manipulate others in order to keep relationships, exhibiting many of the characteristics of someone with an anxious-ambivalent attachment style (see “Development”). They greatly fear rejection, but because of their clingy, needy nature, they are difficult to have a relationship with. Because of this, their fears of rejection are often exacerbated, as they can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Those with BPD also often exhibit emotional instability, impulsivity, and angry outbursts. Learning the traits of this disorder can help actors to analyze a variety of characters, particularly women, as the disorder is found nearly twice as often in women than men.

Narcissistic Personality Disorder is generally recognized for an exaggerated sense of self-importance. These individuals perpetually expect special treatment, disregarding the feelings of others. Because of the inflated sense of self, narcissistic individuals have a difficult time experiencing empathy for others. A good example of a character that could be analyzed as having this disorder is Dan from *Closer*.

Overall, I think that it is important that actors understand psychological disorders and be given both an introduction to them and the tools to do further research on them if necessary, but I don't believe that most young actors should approach characters as if they have a psychological disorder. The only student who attempted to approach her character as if she had a psychological disorder was the student who played Alice in *Closer*. She initially tried to approach the character as if she had Dissociative Fugue, a disorder in

which individuals often take sudden, impulsive trips, forgetting their identity and setting up a new life with one that has developed in their unconscious as a result of the disorder. They usually remember their identities abruptly after weeks or months, remembering nothing of their wandering. Their last memories are generally those that occurred just before the fugue. After further exploration of the character, this approach seemed a little too unrealistic to the student, and she discarded it for more logical approaches.

## **REFLECTIONS**

While I consider this class to have been an overall success, it had its share of both triumphs and failures. One of the best qualities of the students who took this course, overall, was their willingness to play, experiment, and take risks. I faced little resistance to the requests I made of the students in class discussions as well as in their performances in scene work. In addition, the students were forthcoming in their suggestions about what they felt should be kept in this course and what they felt should change. I also observed a number of areas of clear strength and areas of clear weakness. In this section, I will address some of the issues that either the students or I addressed as strong or weak, as well as some observations that have come from now having begun to teach this course a second time.

### **Need for Prerequisites**

This course was designed to address actors whose actor training is well underway. For this reason, I think two important factors should be addressed before allowing students to take the course: first, I think that students in this course should be upperclassmen and secondly, I think that it should be restricted to students who are either performance majors or those who have a strong background in performance.

Upperclassmen will have a much easier time completing this course than first or second-year students; however, I think that the inclusion of sophomores is not unreasonable. In fact, many of the students in this course were sophomores and performed

on a higher level both academically and in scene work than some of the upperclassmen. However, in the second semester of the course, I currently have a few students who are in their first year. This makes communicating some ideas very difficult. They have had only one semester of university-level acting prior to taking this course and therefore lack some of the knowledge (terminology, vocal work, and movement work) that allows students the freedom to explore. In addition, they have not yet taken many courses outside the department, such as English, sciences, or history, that give them broader knowledge. I feel that if this course is taught in the future, it should be limited to juniors and seniors. If sophomores are included, they should be able to demonstrate in some way that they are capable of the level of demand this course requires.

Because this is a performance course, I think that students should be performance majors or, at the minimum, have taken a year of performance courses. One student who initially signed up for the course was a design major and had a high level of difficulty in the course. She was very guarded, participating very little in class discussions. Her scene work was lacking, and, in addition, she had very little vocal power or range, she was very restricted in her movement, and her understanding of character analysis was mediocre at best. She seemed to be extremely uncomfortable while performing scenes. She created a barrier between herself and the other students, often arriving late and leaving early, and she missed two entire class sessions. She turned in assignments late and poorly written, and did not seem to be learning the material. Her scene partner reported to me that she was difficult to get in touch with and that she missed a few of their out of class meetings. In the end, she decided to withdraw from the course.

Having someone in the group who showed little enthusiasm for the work, coupled with her lack of understanding of performance, created a toxic environment. Her scene partner was the real victim in this scenario, unable to fully explore the material and grow as an actor. The partner, though, remained strong and coped with the situation beautifully, channeling her frustration with her partner into excellent journal entries and analysis papers. At the end of the semester, when the students and I had a group discussion about what might improve the course, they unanimously expressed that they thought the course should be restricted to performance majors. When I advertised the course for its second offering, I made sure to note on the flier that the course had a heavy performance component, and recommended that only performance majors enroll in the course. I currently have one design major enrolled, but she has had a background in acting and wants to learn more about performance. Because of her background and her willingness to learn, she is doing quite well. I also have a theatre education major enrolled that is succeeding appropriately.

In addition to the need for students to be upperclassmen and to have a background in acting, I believe that students should have a strong training in writing. I think that a composition course, such as VCU's English 200 course, should be a prerequisite. Writing in this course, while not a larger percentage of the grade, is vital to the students' development. Their understanding of the material covered and its application cannot be measured simply by performances and tests on the psychology portion of the material. The analysis papers are the single assignment type that can allow the students to explain not only their understanding of the concepts being learned, but also how to use them. The tests

were used almost entirely to test their comprehension of the concepts of psychology; the scenes were used to test their development and growth in performance. It is impossible to tell from watching a scene whether students are applying these concepts to the scene work.

The difficulty here lies in their underdeveloped writing skills. If the papers are full of spelling, grammar, and syntactical errors, it becomes quite difficult to discern whether they are using the material in an analytical manner. Some of the students already had a firm grasp on writing; some did not. If this course were taught in the future, it would be a good idea to require a rough draft for the papers. I don't generally believe that it is important to require rough drafts for papers, because I think that students have a right to fail if they so choose. I generally allow them the opportunity to submit a draft, but do not require it. Almost no one submits a draft if it is not required. However, I think that the interdisciplinary nature of this type of analysis is more difficult than a paper written for a course that deals with only one field of study, and students would benefit from assistance in developing their ideas. However, it is not possible to teach composition in addition to all of the other material covered in the course; therefore students need to have learned how to organize and compose written work before enrolling in this course.

### **Approaches to Applying the Material**

The course was designed to be fairly experimental. Before I began, I was not certain whether my idea that learning the principles of psychology could enrich an actor's experience of interpreting a character would work. The basic structure was to first learn and master a set of concepts and then attempt to apply those concepts to scene work. For

the most part, this seemed to be a useful technique, but it is still in its infancy and necessitates further development.

Because I was working with a talented and open group of students, I was able to let them do the majority of the experimentation. They intuitively understood how to approach the work. However, I think the missing element is a set of exercises developed from the material that will facilitate translating the scientific ideas to live performance. As described in the previous chapter, I think that Alba Emoting is one exercise that already exists that can help students to understand the different theories of emotion and how to put them into practice. However, I think that before I ever choose to teach this course again, I would like to spend some time with willing students, preferably theatre students who have already taken a few courses in psychology, working to develop further exercises. I am not certain how this can be accomplished, but I do think that it can be. I think that using creative visualization, writing exercises, games, and other techniques may lead to the discovery of exercises that would be appropriate.

One student in the course suggested that the students in the course read a play that can be used for reference throughout the semester. The play would be included as an integral part of class discussions, allowing all of the students to be familiar with a set of characters that we could discuss as a group, referring to how specific psychological phenomena are present with characters in the play. I am attempting this with the students who are taking the course currently. The students in the second offering of the course all read Kushner's *Angels in America: Millennium Approaches*. While I think it is a worthwhile idea, it is fairly difficult to incorporate into the course. First, there is a lot of

material to be discussed in this course, and adding a play to the discussion creates a serious time management difficulty. When including *Millennium Approaches* to class discussion, time must be taken away from either discussion of the material from the psychology text or from scene work time. I think that the time that this is discussed could be shortened if students were required to write in their journals about how the characters exhibit specific sets of phenomena before it is brought up in class discussion. While I do think that this is a worthwhile idea, I do not think that it is necessary and, thus far, it has not proven to show improvement of the students' mastery of the material. Perhaps if this was a two-semester course and less material was covered, this might be a more relevant tactic.

Another item of importance is the choice of performance texts. The students in this course each performed two scenes; the first scene was performed twice, and the second scene once. The reasoning behind the repetition of the first scene was that there was very little meaningful material beyond the basic building blocks of psychology in the first set of units before the first examination. This allowed students to continue working on the same scene while continuing to learn the psychology, enhancing their characters' options. However, this meant that little time was spent with the second scene, thus allowing less growth. For this reason, I think the course can be better structured by having students first perform a monologue and then, after the first exam, moving into a substantial scene that they will work on for the remainder of the semester. During the current semester course, I have chosen to do this and it has worked quite well thus far. First, it allows me to get to know the students and their work a little longer, helping me to better choose appropriate

scenes. Secondly, it means that their more substantial scene will be worked on throughout the coverage of all of the more complex, useful material.

Along with this, I think it is important that contemporary, age-appropriate, American texts be used. Having to deal with style issues, age issues, and dialects complicates the work, and it draws away focus from the use of the psychology. I will note, though, that one of the better scenes in the first set was a Blanche and Stanley scene from *Streetcar Named Desire*. The actors chosen to perform this text already had a strong handle on the dialect and were fairly advanced as actors. In this case, it seemed an appropriate choice, and the students did an excellent job in performance.

Each of the other scenes chosen was contemporary. Scenes were chosen from *The Shape of Things*, *Stop, Kiss*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *Anna in the Tropics* for the first set of selections. *Anna in the Tropics* was performed by two African-American students, who approached the scene as if it were a “black play,” avoiding dealing with a Cuban dialect. For the second set, scenes were taken from *Closer*, and *Proof*. Each of these scenes benefited from the material covered in this course.

The students who played Jenny and Adam in *The Shape of Things* focused primarily on the concept of shaping (see “Learning”). The students who performed Callie and Sara in *Stop, Kiss* made no significant discoveries due to a poorly functioning partnership prohibiting productive scene work (one partner was the scene designer mentioned previously who eventually withdrew from the course). The primary approach to *Anna in the Tropics* dealt with Maslow’s hierarchy (see “Motivation and Emotion”).

The students who performed *A Streetcar Named Desire* had innumerable discoveries, approaching the text in different rehearsals and work-throughs from different perspectives, creating a fresh delivery of a scene that is often performed poorly. The student portraying Blanche discovered a use of the concept of the absolute threshold rather quickly, determining exactly how much Blanche must drink before she becomes forward and overly flirtatious. The student portraying Mitch approached his character as if he was suffering from a severe Oedipal conflict, concluding that his attachment for his mother and his inability to get truly close to Blanche was due to his unconscious attraction to his mother that had been reinforced throughout his life as he had been required to take care of her in his father's absence.

The students in *Closer* each found that his or her character was riddled with defense mechanisms and/or safeguarding tendencies. It was agreed that each of the characters in this play is ruled by his or her id, demanding instant gratification and relying little on morality. The students who were in *Proof*, on the other hand, generally felt that their characters, Hal, Claire, and Catherine, were ruled by the superego, specifically the ego-ideal, working constantly in one way or another toward being the "perfect person" that they imagine themselves capable of becoming. The student playing Claire also believed that her detachment from her father and her sister throughout her life could be due to a failure to satisfy her love and belongingness needs according to Maslow's hierarchy, thus not allowing her to fulfill her esteem needs. This actress also believes that Claire suffers from mild dementophobia, which is the fear of becoming insane, because her father has suffered from mental disorder and her sister has some unstable tendencies. The student

playing Catherine also believed that there was a tendency toward this phobia in her character. Neither of the students believed that their characters exhibited this phobia at a disordered level.

### **Feedback**

When the students were asked what could improve this course, the majority of them said vigorously that they wanted more feedback from me. They received written feedback from me on tests, papers, and journals, and oral feedback on scene presentation days, but they sincerely felt the need for more. There are two ways that this can and should be done in the future. First, rather than letting students work primarily individually, there should be more class time devoted to feedback on performance work. Secondly, either individual students or sets of partners (or both) could meet with me outside of class to discuss their work and progress. I think even doing this once or twice during the semester would help satisfy their need for more feedback.

In addition, I think extended written feedback should be offered to the students. Each student got a copy of my shorthand notes from their scene presentations, which I had gone over orally after the presentation. However, I think that it would be more useful if I were to write them out in translated longhand and elaborate when necessary, giving them a clearer picture of what I observed.

### **Time**

If I had to choose one thing that caused the majority of the drawbacks of this course, it would be the lack of time. We seemed to run out of time for class discussions, scene work, and scene presentations on a regular basis. One cause of this was most definitely the talkative nature of the students and myself, but I think that the openness of the discussions facilitated a more thorough understanding of the material. I do not think that a shortening of class discussions should be encouraged, but perhaps minimizing personal examples from students in relation to the material being discussed would help.

Perhaps some material could be cut out, possibly memory or love and social cognition. However, the material in this course is less than half of what would be covered in a regular introduction to psychology course. I think the right amount of material is included, but because of the time constraints, perhaps some of the material should be assigned as reading but not covered in class discussions. In addition, I think that if this class is offered in the future, it would be highly beneficial to offer it as a four-hour course rather than a three-hour course. The psychology portion could be offered for three credit hours, and the performance component could be made into a one-credit lab. Alternately, the course could be offered twice a week for two hours or three times a week for 75 minutes.

### **Conclusions**

This course was wholly satisfying in an artistic and an academic sense. I believe that while this course did not achieve all of the objectives I had outlined for it, it was a

good start and proved to me that this can, indeed, be a useful method of approaching performance. As for developing a formalized system and a concrete lexicon for teaching the material, I am far from finished, but I now see the potential of this course and courses of this type more clearly. I intend to continue to research, experiment, and develop this approach to acting.

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## APPENDIX A

### Psychology and the Theatre THEA 491-006

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Fall 2005 – Megan Brown THEA 491-006 Wednesdays 1-3:50 pm SSPLY 204	Office Hours by appointment only Office location Shafer Street Playhouse 203 <a href="mailto:brownmr3@vcu.edu">brownmr3@vcu.edu</a>
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#### REQUIRED MATERIALS

- ❖ Text – *Drama and Theatre* - custom textbook available at Carriage House
- ❖ Other readings to be handed out in class
- ❖ Pen and paper at all times. Please come prepared so that you do not have to borrow from other students.
- ❖ A stapler. *I do not* accept unstapled papers, especially if you expect to get them back. The Swingline Tot stapler is available at most office supply store, grocery stores, and drug stores for less than \$3.

#### CLASS OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To explore the basic concepts of introductory psychology as a means for further understanding of the human mind and behavior
- ❖ To analyze these concepts and apply them to performance in an attempt to build characters with more depth

#### ATTENDANCE

Attendance is a necessary and important component of this class, particularly because it meets only once a week. You may be **absent** one time with no penalty, but you cannot make up grades from work done in class. Two **lates** equal one absence. **If you arrive after 1:00 p.m. (from 1:01 on), you will be considered late.** Remember the attendance policy. “I didn’t realize that was the attendance policy” does not excuse you from any absences.

- ❖ After one absence or two lates you will lose 100 of the points you have earned (1 letter grade) from the total 1000 for each additional absence or late.
- ❖ You must sign in each day on the sign in sheet. If you do not sign in, then you are considered to be absent. Severe circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis WITH PROPER DOCUMENTATION.

#### DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities must inform the instructor immediately in order to make appropriate arrangements.

## CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Cheating or plagiarizing on any assignment will result in a 0 for the assignment, possible dismissal from the class, and students found cheating or plagiarizing will be subject to University rules on cheating and plagiarism as described in your student handbook. Remember that you signed the University Honor Code before attending classes. If you are caught cheating on a quiz or test in class or plagiarize an assignment, you will be immediately and permanently dismissed from the class.

## CONTACTING THE PROFESSOR

E-mail is my preferred method of communication. If you e-mail me, I am willing to e-mail you back or telephone you. You may also leave a written note in my campus mailbox or call the theatre office and leave a message. I will be glad to make an appointment to speak with you about class matters whenever necessary.

## EXPECTATIONS OF CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR AND PARTICIPATION

- ❖ Students are expected to behave as professional adults at all times. Use your best judgment to determine what this means beyond the stated guidelines.
- ❖ No cellular phones, pagers, PDA's that ring or beep, or any such electronic distraction are allowed to be ON or USED during class. If you have such an item, turn it OFF. **If your cell phone rings, pager pages, etc., you will lose 10 points off your participation grade every time.** This is non-negotiable. No excuses. If you have a pregnant wife about to deliver or you are a doctor on call, you may arrange with me to have your pager on silent vibrate.
- ❖ As a theatre class, it is most important that we foster an environment of safety and creativity. By taking this class, you agree not to disclose information of a personal nature that others discuss in class. You also agree not to be inappropriately critical of the work of others. While your opinions are valued, we are mainly experimenting in this class, and experiments can make you vulnerable to being a little silly. I encourage you to play without inhibition, and insist that you have respect for the work of others.
- ❖ Participation is 20% of your grade. Participation each day means that you are **attentive** and **participate** in class discussions. You are expected to speak and make a **meaningful contribution** to this class. Your grade will reflect both the quantity and the quality of your participation.

## GRADING

There are 1000 possible points to earn in this class. To earn all the points, a student must completely fulfill the requirements of participation and assignments. A breakdown of the grading and the description of the assignments' requirements are attached so that you may keep up with your grade throughout the semester.

- ❖ **No late assignments will be accepted.** If you must miss class on the date that an assignment is due, you must have it in by e-mail or in my mailbox **before** the beginning of class. *E-mailed assignments will not be accepted if you are in class.* Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- ❖ **Missed tests and quizzes cannot be made up.** Missed scene presentations cannot be made up unless the student gives proof of a **severe** circumstance, which must be approved by the instructor. Missed scene presentations will receive a reduced grade for the partner who caused the delay, but the other partner will not be penalized. If a missed scene presentation cannot be made up, the second partner will be given an alternate assignment. **You are expected to be in class on the day the presentations are due.** Severe circumstances are evaluated on a case by case basis. Unless you are gravely ill (if you are not sure if your illness constitutes grave illness, you are probably not ill enough to miss class), are hospitalized, or have a REAL emergency, you are expected to be in class on the day of presentations.
- ❖ The following is a breakdown of the assignments for the semester:
  - **Participation** in class – 200 points (20%) of final grade
  - **Tests** – There will be 3 written tests for a total of 150 points (15%) of final grade. The tests will not be cumulative.

- **Scene Presentations** – There will be 3 scene presentations on test days. The total of these is 300 points (30%) of the final grade.
- **Reading Quizzes** – There will be 8 reading quizzes, one for each reading assignment, worth 10 points each for a total of 80 points (8%) of the final grade.
- **Analyses** – There will be 3 analysis papers worth 50 points apiece, for a total of 150 points (15%) of the final grade. These papers will be primarily concerned with your ability to adapt the concepts of psychology to theatre, by taking what was covered in reading and lectures and analyzing how it applies to the scenes on which you will be working.
- **Journals** – You are expected to write at least a page a week in your journal. Please type and print your journals. They will be due two times over the course of the semester. These are worth a total of 100 points (12%) of your final grade. The 12 most meaningful entries will be graded.

*The dates, policies, and assignments in the class are subject to change at the instructor's discretion. However, any changes will be discussed with the class before being implemented.*

Grade Calculator sheet:

Reading quiz 1 \_\_\_/10  
 Reading quiz 2 \_\_\_/10  
 Reading quiz 3 \_\_\_/10  
 Reading quiz 4 \_\_\_/10  
 Reading quiz 5 \_\_\_/10  
 Reading quiz 6 \_\_\_/10  
 Reading quiz 7 \_\_\_/10  
 Reading quiz 8 \_\_\_/10  
 Total = 80 points

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Test 1:  
 Written portion \_\_\_/50  
 Scene \_\_\_/100

Test 2:  
 Written portion \_\_\_/50  
 Scene \_\_\_/100

Final Exam:  
 Written portion \_\_\_/50  
 Scene \_\_\_/100

Total = 450 points

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Analysis 1 \_\_\_/50  
 Analysis 2 \_\_\_/50  
 Analysis 3 \_\_\_/50  
 Total = 150 points

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Journal 1 \_\_\_/10  
 Journal 2 \_\_\_/10  
 Journal 3 \_\_\_/10  
 Journal 4 \_\_\_/10  
 Journal 5 \_\_\_/10  
 Journal 6 \_\_\_/10  
 Journal 7 \_\_\_/10  
 Journal 8 \_\_\_/10  
 Journal 9 \_\_\_/10  
 Journal 10 \_\_\_/10  
 Journal 11 \_\_\_/10  
 Journal 12 \_\_\_/10  
 Total = 120 points

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**Participation \_\_\_/200**

**10 Point Grading  
 Scale**

900-1000 points = A

800-899 points = B

700-799 points = C

600-699 points = D

Date	Part 1	Part 2
8/31	Introductions, discuss syllabus, games, hand out readings	Cold reads for later use
9/7	<b>Reading Quiz:</b> "Sensing the World Around Us" pp. 1-14 "Encoding, Storage, and Retrieval of Memory" pp. 37-50	Discussion, Receive Assignments for Analyses Receive scene assignments
9/14	<b>Reading Quiz:</b> "Operant Conditioning" pp. 15-29 Classical Conditioning – handout "Cognitive-Social Approaches to Learning" pp. 29-36	Discussion Work on scenes
9/21	Work on scenes	Work on scenes & discuss
9/28	<b>Test 1 – Written portion</b>	<b>Scene presentations</b> <i>Analysis 1 due</i>
10/5	Read pp. 51-68 (Motivation and Emotion) before class (no quiz on this reading)	Discussion
10/12	<b>Reading Quiz:</b> "Nature, Nurture and Prenatal Development" pp. 69-78 "Infancy and Childhood" pp. 79-96	Work on scenes & discuss <i>Journal Due- 60 points</i>
10/19	<b>Reading Quiz:</b> "Psychodynamic Approaches to Personality" pp. 97-104 "Other Major Approaches to Personality..." pp. 105-116	Discussion
10/26	Work on scenes	Work on scenes & discuss
11/2	<b>Test 2 – Written portion</b>	<b>Scene presentations</b> <i>Analysis 2 due</i>
11/9	<b>Reading Quiz:</b> "Adler: Individual Psychology" pp. 117-149	Discussion

11/16	<p><b>Reading Quiz:</b>          "The Ups and Downs of Love" pp. 150-165          "Attitudes and Social Cognition"          pp. 166-175</p>	<p>Discussion          Work on scenes</p>
11/23	<p>Work on scenes</p>	<p>Work on scenes &amp; discuss</p>
11/30	<p><b>Reading Quiz:</b>          "The Major Psychological Disorders"          pp. 176-195</p>	<p>Discussion          Work on scenes</p>
12/7	<p>Work on scenes</p>	<p>Work on scenes &amp; discuss  <i>Journal Due – 60 points</i></p>
12/14 ????	<p><b>Final Exam – Written portion</b></p>	<p><b>Scene presentations</b>  <i>Analysis 3 due</i></p>

## APPENDIX B

### Psychology and the Theatre THEA 491-013

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Spring 2006 – Megan Brown THEA 491-013 Wednesdays 1-3:50 pm SSPLY 204	Office Hours by appointment only Office location Shafer Street Playhouse 203 brownmr3@vcu.edu
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#### REQUIRED MATERIALS

- ❖ Text – *Drama and Theatre* - custom textbook available at Virginia Book Company
- ❖ *Angels in America Part 1: Millennium Approaches* by Tony Kushner – available at most book stores or new/used online
- ❖ Other readings to be handed out in class
- ❖ Pen and paper at all times. Please come prepared so that you do not have to borrow from other students.
- ❖ A stapler. I *do not* accept unstapled papers, especially if you expect to get them back. The Swingline Tot stapler is available at most office supply stores, grocery stores, and drug stores for less than \$3.

#### CLASS OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To explore the basic concepts of introductory psychology as a means for further understanding of the human mind and behavior
- ❖ To analyze these concepts and apply them to performance in an attempt to build characters with more depth

#### ATTENDANCE

Attendance is a necessary and important component of this class, particularly because it meets only once a week. You may be **absent** one time with no penalty, but you cannot make up grades from work done in class. Two **lates** equal one absence. **If you arrive after 1:00 p.m. (from 1:01 on), you will be considered late. If you arrive after 1:30, you will be counted absent.** Remember the attendance policy. “I didn’t realize that was the attendance policy” does not excuse you from any absences.

- ❖ After one absence or two lates you will lose 100 of the points you have earned (1 letter grade) from the total 1000 for each additional absence or late.

- ❖ You must sign in each day on the sign in sheet. If you do not sign in, then you are considered to be absent.

Severe circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis WITH PROPER DOCUMENTATION.

## DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities must inform the instructor immediately in order to make appropriate arrangements.

## CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Cheating or plagiarizing on any assignment will result in a 0 for the assignment, possible dismissal from the class, and students found cheating or plagiarizing will be subject to University rules on cheating and plagiarism as described in your student handbook. Remember that you signed the University Honor Code before attending classes. If you are caught cheating on a quiz or test in class or plagiarize an assignment, you will be immediately and permanently dismissed from the class.

## CONTACTING THE PROFESSOR

E-mail is my preferred method of communication. If you e-mail me, I am willing to e-mail you back or telephone you. You may also leave a written note in my campus mailbox or call the theatre office and leave a message. I will be glad to make an appointment to speak with you about class matters whenever necessary.

## EXPECTATIONS OF CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR AND PARTICIPATION

- ❖ Students are expected to behave as professional adults at all times. Use your best judgment to determine what this means beyond the stated guidelines.
- ❖ No cellular phones, pagers, PDA's that ring or beep, or any such electronic distraction are allowed to be ON or USED during class. If you have such an item, turn it OFF. **If your cell phone rings, pager pages, etc., you will lose 10 points off your participation grade every time.** This is non-negotiable. No excuses. If you have a pregnant wife about to deliver or you are a doctor on call, you may arrange with me to have your pager on silent vibrate.
- ❖ As a theatre class, it is most important that we foster an environment of safety and creativity. By taking this class, you agree not to disclose information of a personal nature that others discuss in class. You also agree not to be inappropriately critical of the work of others. While your opinions are valued, we are mainly experimenting in this class, and experiments can make you vulnerable to being a little silly. I encourage you to play without inhibition, and insist that you have respect for the work of others.
- ❖ Participation is 20% of your grade. Participation each day means that you are **attentive** and **participate** in class discussions. You are expected to speak and make a **meaningful contribution** to this class. Your grade will reflect both the quantity and the quality of your participation.

## GRADING

There are 1000 possible points to earn in this class. To earn all the points, a student must completely fulfill the requirements of participation and assignments. A breakdown of the grading and the description of the assignments' requirements are attached so that you may keep up with your grade throughout the semester.

- ❖ **No late assignments will be accepted.** If you must miss class on the date that an assignment is due, you must have it in by e-mail or in my mailbox **before** the beginning of class. *E-mailed assignments will not be accepted if you are in class.* Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- ❖ **Missed tests and quizzes cannot be made up.** Missed scene presentations cannot be made up unless the student gives proof of a **severe** circumstance, which must be approved by the instructor. Missed scene presentations will receive a reduced grade for the partner who caused the delay, but the other partner will not be penalized. If a missed scene presentation cannot be made up, the second partner will be given an alternate assignment. **You are expected to be in class on the day the presentations are due. Do not jeopardize your scene partner's progress.** Severe circumstances are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Unless you are gravely ill (if you are not sure if your illness constitutes grave illness, you are probably not ill enough to miss class), are hospitalized, or have a REAL emergency, you are expected to be in class on the day of presentations.
- ❖ The following is a breakdown of the assignments for the semester:
  - **Participation** in class – 200 points (20%) of final grade
  - **Tests** – There will be 3 written tests for 75 points each for a total of 225 points (22.5%) of final grade. The tests will not be cumulative.
  - **Scene Presentations** – There will be 1 monologue presentation and 2 scene presentations on test days. The total of these is 300 points (30%) of the final grade.
  - **Reading Quizzes** – There will be 9 reading quizzes, one for each reading assignment from the text (worth 10 points each), and one from the play *Angels in America Part 1: Millennium Approaches* by Tony Kushner (worth 20 points) for a total of 100 points (10%) of the final grade.
  - **Analyses** – There will be 2 analysis papers worth 50 points apiece, for a total of 100 points (10%) of the final grade. These papers will be primarily concerned with your ability to adapt the concepts of psychology to theatre, by taking what was covered in reading and lectures and analyzing how it applies to the scenes on which you will be working.
  - **Journals** – You are expected to write at least a page a week in your journal. Please type and print your journals. They will be due every other week for me to look through (that means *at least* 2 new pages every time you turn it in). At the end of the semester, your journal must be turned in in its entirety for me to grade for 75 points (7.5%) of the final grade.

***The dates, policies, and assignments in the class are subject to change at the instructor's discretion. However, any changes will be discussed with the class before being implemented.***

## Grade Calculator sheet:

Reading quiz 1 \_\_\_/10  
 Reading quiz 2 \_\_\_/10  
 Reading quiz 3 \_\_\_/10  
 Reading quiz 4 \_\_\_/10  
 Reading quiz 5 \_\_\_/10  
 Reading quiz 6 \_\_\_/10  
 Reading quiz 7 \_\_\_/10  
 Reading quiz 8 \_\_\_/10  
*Angels in America* quiz \_\_\_/20  
Total = 100 points

Test 1:  
 Written portion \_\_\_/75  
 Scene \_\_\_/100

Test 2:  
 Written portion \_\_\_/75  
 Scene \_\_\_/100

Final Exam:  
 Written portion \_\_\_/75  
 Scene \_\_\_/100

Total = 525 points

Analysis 1 \_\_\_/50  
 Analysis 2 \_\_\_/50  
Total = 100 points

Journal \_\_\_/75

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**Participation \_\_\_/200**

### 10 Point Grading Scale

900-1000 points = A

800-899 points = B

700-799 points = C

600-699 points = D

599 points or less = F

## Tentative Schedule

Date	Assignments	Activities
1/18		Introductions; discuss syllabus; "What is Psychology?"
		Cold reads from scripts for use later in semester; Discuss monologue assignment; Discuss quizzes, tests, papers
1/25	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading Quiz:</b> "Sensing the World Around Us" pp. 1-4 <i>(You do not need to read the section on vision)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Encoding, Storage, and Retrieval of Memory" pp. 15-28</p> <p>Journal Due</p>	Discuss Sensation and Perception
		<p style="text-align: center;">Discuss Memory;</p> <p>Exercises related to memory Read through/discuss monologues</p>
2/1	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading Quiz:</b> "Classical Conditioning" – pp. 29-36 "Operant Conditioning" pp. 37-50 "Cognitive-Social Approaches to Learning" pp. 51-57</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading Quiz:</b> <i>Angels in America Part 1: Millennium Approaches</i></p>	Discuss <i>Angels in America</i>
		<p>Discuss Classical Conditioning and Operant Conditioning; <i>Conditioning exercises</i> Work/discuss monologues</p>
2/8	<i>Journal Due</i>	<p>Discuss Cognitive-Social Learning</p> <p>Work/discuss monologues</p>
2/15	<b>Test 1</b>	<b>Written Exam</b>
		<b>Monologue Presentation</b>
2/22	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Reading Quiz:</b> "Explaining Motivation" – pp. 59-66 "Understanding Emotional Experiences" – pp. 67-76</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Journal Due</b></p>	<p>Discuss Motivation and Emotion</p> <p>Exercise: Alba Emoting</p>
		Assign/read through scenes, begin discussion with partners

3/1	<p><b>Reading Quiz:</b>          "Infancy and Childhood" pp. 77-94          "Adolescence: Becoming an Adult" – pp. 95-104</p> <p>Analysis Paper 1 Due</p>	<p><b>Discuss Development</b></p> <p><b>Work scenes</b></p>
3/8	<p><b>Reading Quiz:</b>          "Psychodynamic Approaches to Personality" pp. 105-112          "Other Major Approaches to Personality..." pp. 113-124  <b>Journal Due</b></p>	<p>Discuss Freud/Psychodynamic Approach</p> <p>Exercise: Free Association</p> <p>Work scenes</p>
3/15	<b>SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS</b>	
3/22		<p>Discuss other approaches to personality</p> <p>Work scenes</p>
3/29	<p><b>Test 2</b></p> <p>Journal Due</p>	<p><b>Written Exam</b></p> <p><b>Scene Presentation</b></p>
4/5	<p><b>Reading Quiz:</b>          "Adler: Individual Psychology" pp. 125-157</p>	<p>Discuss Adler</p> <p>Continue Discussion</p>
4/12	<p><b>Reading Quiz:</b>          "The Ups and Downs of Love" pp. 158-173          "Attitudes and Social Cognition" pp. 174-184  <b>Journal Due</b></p>	<p>Discuss Love</p> <p>Exercise: Disclosing</p> <p>Discuss social cognition          Work scenes</p>
4/19	<p><b>Reading Quiz:</b>          "The Major Psychological Disorders" pp. 185-215</p>	<p>Discuss Psychological Disorders</p> <p>Work scenes</p>
4/26	<p><b>Journal Due</b>  <b>Analysis Paper 2 Due</b></p>	<p><b>Video – TBA – Discuss Psychological Disorders</b></p>

		<b><i>Work Scenes</i></b>
5/10	<b>Final Exam</b> <b><i>Entire Journal Due</i></b>	<b>Written Exam</b>
		<b>Scene Presentation</b>

## VITA

Megan Brown was born in 1981 in Nashville, TN. She received her B.A. with honors in Psychology, with a minor in Theatre, from Peace College in 2003. During her time at Peace College, she presented original and collaborative research on relationships, religious practice, guilt, and sexuality at local and regional conferences, such as the Carolinas Psychology Conference and the Southeastern Psychology Conference. She is member of the Psi Chi National Honor Society in Psychology and the Alpha Chi National Academic Honor Society. She has taught Public Speaking at Virginia Commonwealth University and John Tyler Community College.