

The neuroses

- NEUROSES, such as FREE-FLOATING ANXIETY, PHOBIAS and OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDERS are characterized by the emotion of ANXIETY, and are distinguished from the PSYCHOSES by the presence of INSIGHT.
- The TWO-STAGE THEORY of phobias says that they are initiated by classical conditioning of fear to a stimulus and are maintained by operant conditioning, which produces avoidance of the stimulus, thereby preventing extinction.

social interaction is impaired, and despite the severe problem, insight

The characteristic emotion of neurosis is ANXIETY, manifested psychologically by needless worrying, particularly about minutiae, intolerance of strong stimuli (shown by wearing sun-glasses on dull days), psychological exhaustion (once called NEURASTHENIA), difficulty in falling asleep, nightmares, and unrealistic fear of physical disease

(www.pearson.com) physical symptoms are sweating, goose bumps, dry

by the founder of behaviourism, J B Watson (1878–1958), with a 9 month-old boy called 'Little Albert'. A white rat (the conditioned stimulus), which previously was not a phobic object, was presented to the boy just as fear (the unconditioned response) was induced by a loud noise (the unconditioned stimulus). Subsequently, the boy

showed a phobic response to the rat, which induced fear (the conditioned response). Although attractive, this simple theory of phobias has two problems. Firstly, extinction should be rapid when the child subsequently sees the rat without a concurrent noise. It does not occur because of secondary operant conditioning by which phobics avoid the stimulus associated with fear, thereby reducing their anxiety, reinforcing an AVOIDANCE RESPONSE and preventing extinction. In the TWO STAGE THEORY, the phobia is initiated by classical conditioning but maintained by operant conditioning. A second problem is that many

stimuli are associated with fearful events, but few produce phobias. Certain objects, such as rats or snakes, induce phobias far more often than do others, such as teddy bears or kittens. BIOLOGICAL PREPAREDNESS

independently of any specific behaviour by the pigeon. If food delivery coincides with a particular action (such as standing on one leg), then this action is effectively rewarded, and subsequently is performed more often. Eventually the animal spends much of its time carrying out SUPERSTITIOUS or RITUALIZED behaviour, mistakenly assuming that the behaviour actually *caused* the reinforcement.

Behavioural treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder also takes ~~various forms, but systematic desensitization can reduce the association~~

between an object or thought and subsequent anxiety, although it is not very successful in long established cases. A second approach

system should be tightened; however that, of course, would be anxiety provoking. The obsessive-compulsive therefore prefers not to tighten the entire system but instead concentrates on a small portion (see Fig. 30.3 in Chapter 30). The obsessional therefore, as it were, lives in one corner of the construct system, choosing a construct such as safety or health with which to interpret all events.

PERSONAL CONSTRUCT PSYCHOTHERAPY has a range of treatments which try to change the construct system, in the case of neurotic disorders by loosening overly tight systems, by an interactive process between therapist and patient. Kelly said that if an appropriate model of man was of a scientist trying to understand the world, then the appropriate model for therapist and client was that of research student and

their own condition whereas the other, the therapist, has general experience of the problems of patients. Completion and interpretation of a repertory grid can itself be therapeutic for a patient, forcing them to see the limitations of their thought processes and the room for expansion of the construct system. A useful way to promote change is **FIXED-ROLE THERAPY**: the patient first produces a **SELF-CHARACTERIZATION**, a description of themselves as written by a friend. Patient and therapist then negotiate a **FIXED-ROLE SKETCH** describing a person with many opposite attributes to the patient themselves and the therapist then

problems. Present conflicts arise out of failure of resolution of conflicts occurring earlier in psychosexual life, causing **FIXATION** at oral, anal or phallic stages, the type of neurosis depending upon the time of fixation: the late phallic stage causes concern with sexual fulfilment and a predisposition to hysteria; the early phallic stage causes

avoidance of sexual relations and a predisposition to agoraphobia (and hence avoidance of temptation); and the anal stage causes a concern with **MASTERY**, with a sadistic or masochistic component and

v. the large pillow on the continental bed was placed so that it did not touch the wooden bedstead.

vi. the small square pillow was placed in a diamond shape on the long, lower pillow.

bulge at the bottom, and were then ritualistically smoothed out.

Using psychoanalytic techniques, Freud explored the symbolic meaning of the various components of the ceremonial. Clocks and watches frequently symbolize the female genitals through their periodicity (and many women describe their menstruation as 'regular as clockwork').

However, the girl associated the ticking of the large clock with the throbbing sensation found in the clitoris during sexual excitement. Flower pots and vases are also female symbols, and the breaking of

phallic stage, resulting in the girl developing an erotic fascination with her own father.

At this point you may well feel that the case has been heavily over-
 interpreted, and is highly unlikely, perhaps even impossible, for a
 young girl in late nineteenth century Vienna. Perhaps so, and Freud
 himself was aware of such criticism. Nevertheless the story has a
 nity and a completeness which would be difficult to derive from,

After examining the account of the patient, Freud concluded his

own description of the case thus:

'Wild thoughts, you will say, to be running through an unmarried
 girl's head. I admit that this is so. But you must not forget that I

did not make these things but only interpreted them. A sleep-
 ceremonial like this is a strange thing too, and you will not fail to