

Personality, Language and Distractions in Society

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ABSTRACT

While there is a never-ending tussle between 'nature' and 'nurture' over the share of influence each has on human behaviour, one could find an interesting way of looking at things from a psychological angle that takes into account not rational actions, rather it focusses on something that is often overlooked – 'distractions'. The reason for such distractions could be many, all pointing towards one dominant fact that human society is a complex system with innumerable degrees of freedom. The limiting factor of human agency could be found in the form of language, an idea that was well articulated by Ludwig Wittgenstein. A careful analysis of the development of human personality shows that what goes down as individual is scarcely so. Social institutions act as rationalizing agents that supply an identity to a new-born baby even before it is born. In a civilized society, most human interactions take place in three distinct settings for a growing individual – the family, the school and the economy or the world of professional employment. In the Parsonian scheme of society, especially social structure, there is a movement from particularistic to universalistic in terms of the nature of human interactions. The power of language acquisition which is natural to every human being does not equip one with the required vocabulary in order to facilitate interactions. It is learnt through interactions over a period of time. It is through language that one develops a particular world view. But the process should not be seen as a smooth, streamlined process. There are 'chaotic', noise-like disturbances called 'distractions'. This paper looks to analyze some of the positive and negative aspects of the phenomenon that go into shaping human personality.

Keywords: *Distraction, Language, Nature, Nurture, Culture, Serendipity, Chaos, Emotions.*

“Man is born free, but everywhere he is in chains” remarked Rousseau in his seminal work, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*. In Rousseau's view, human civilization with its myriad ways of restricting the 'free will' had turned detrimental to a wholesome realization of the human personality (Rousseau, 1754). Similar thoughts have been conveyed by existentialists such as Jean Paul Sartre (Sartre, 1943). The discourse still finds its place in the post-modernist thought which suggests an end to 'grand theories' and 'meta-narratives' assigning preponderance to

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individual agency over collective suppression by the society and its structure at large. A careful analysis of the development of human personality shows that what goes down as individual is scarcely so. Social institutions act as rationalizing agents that supply an identity to a new-born baby even before it is born. In a civilized society, most human interactions take place in three distinct settings for a growing individual – the family, the school and the economy or the world of professional employment.

In the Parsonian scheme of society, especially social system, there is a movement from particularistic to universalistic in terms of the nature of human interactions (Parsons, 1959). Put in another terminology, it's a movement from simple to complex or a transition from 'status' to 'contract' if one applies Sir Henry Maine's argument (Maine, 1861). Maine's argument or the logic of the movement from simple to complex should not be confused as an evolutionist approach. It's simply meant to draw parallels between the kind of human interactions that take place within a family environment and the kind of interactions that take place in an educational institution or a more formal factory setting. According to Freud, the development of a human personality is the result of its formal beginnings under the aegis of the mother-infant relationship. A child identifies its mother as the first 'other', an event that sets in motion the process of the crystallization of one's self. In contrast with the outer world, an inner world begins to take shape. It's a world of affection and comfort provided mostly by one's mother, but the presence of a protective father cannot be discounted, at least in the Indian context, perhaps it's applicable to the entire Oriental world (Kakar, 1982). The child learns its first language with the help of its mother. Although there seems to be a disagreement between the Indian and the Occidental way of looking at the innate qualities of the child, there seems to be a consensus upon the role of mother in the development of a human personality. The western world adheres to the Lockean argument that suggests that child's mind at birth is a *tabula rasa* whereas in Hindu philosophy, the human soul is immortal and transcends its present form to take another birth. Thus, a child can't be a *tabula rasa* at birth. It must be born with a combination of the three gunas – 'sattva', 'rajas' and 'tamas', in a naturally endowed proportion. An imprint from its previous birth decides the mental inclination and attitude it is about to manifest on growing up as a human being.

Academic Perspectives on the Nature-Nurture debate:

Assuming a child to be a *tabula rasa* nullifies the entire 'nature versus nurture' debate. But the Indian way of looking at the child born with innate capabilities opens up the debate in its right perspective. If one is predestined to exhibit a certain kind of character and perform in a certain way based upon the blend of the gunas one is born with, how and to what extent does the role of the society determine human personality? A full demonstration of which takes place through the 'role-set' one is assigned based on social norms. When Durkheim conceptualized a society based on 'realism', he relegated individual psychology to the background and came up with a model of the society that holds an over-arching sway over the individual based on 'collective conscience' and 'social solidarity'. He argued that a DNA-like blueprint of the society resides in every

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individual and gets manifested in various ways of acting and behaving that the people adopt. It's through the individuals that the society lives and propagates itself. His holism becomes explicit in his argument that the society itself represents a 'collective psychology', 'a sum total of the beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of the society.' (Durkheim, 1895). If it sounds too functional, one may take up the Marxian view for analysis. Even in Marx's 'dialectical materialism', one finds the primacy of material conditions in the process that shapes individual personality. Human beings alter the nature according to their needs and proclivities which, in turn, shapes their own ways of thinking and living (Marx, 1846). No matter how dexterous a Greek soldier was when it came to wielding the sword, he could not even imagine how lethal an assault rifle could be. Hence, a difference in technology has a telling effect on the entire life world of the people living under different material conditions. Thus, one may settle for the argument that be it idealism or materialism, an individual is a miniature of the society in which he lives.

In the Meadian scheme of things, it's the 'generalized other' who is responsible for the kind of behaviour one exhibits (Mead, 1934). The formation of the 'generalized other' is a complex process controlled by the collective more than the individual himself. An interesting phenomenon can be observed in the motive behind the progress of science and technology. Why was the wheel invented? Was it for individual consumption or for the use of the entire society? If that's a bit difficult to answer, one can easily make out that the invention of the 'bow and arrow' was something that proved to be useful for the entire society instead of the individual who for the first time designed it. The question to be asked is: what motivated a single individual to invent a particular object. It's the manifestation of the individual desires and passions in the form that's appreciated by the society at large. Thus, is there a sphere of life wherein the individual is actually an individual in the real sense? No matter how intertwined the two seem, it's true that it's only through individual agency that every collectively held idea is implemented.

The Freudian meta-narrative attempts to come up with a deterministic idea of the individual personality that tries to explain every individual act through inherent inclinations, but how is the specific pattern of actions decided. It's true that the 'id' tries to bring to the fore all that remains buried in the unconscious, but how is the unconscious formed in the first place? Freud goes on to explain it on the basis of memory. Something that keeps lurking in one's memory without the person realizing that there is something of the sort alive in one's memory (Freud, 1915). In that case, what forms memory? Can there be a memory that's devoid of the effect of the external world, the never-ending series of objects, shapes, symbols and ideas. Thus whatever forms the unconscious can barely be individual in nature. They are somehow a part of the external world. The assortment of various influences from the wider society give birth to desires one calls 'ambition' and 'passion'.

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Schopenhauer distinguishes between 'will' and 'intellect'. According to him 'will' is the inner, the uncontrolled portion of man's desire whereas 'intellect' is the next step that is based on a conscious thought (Schopenhauer, 1818). Similar is the case with 'passion' and 'ambition'. Passion is the unconscious or the id and ambition is the conscious representing both ego and the superego in the Freudian sense. One may have a passion to kill, but it's psychotic to have an ambition to become a murderer. The difference is between the uncontrolled portion of the individual personality and the controlled, socially sanctioned behaviour one ought to exhibit. While passion is value-neutral, ambition is decided based on the predominant values of the society. But the problem here is an epistemological one. How do we study the unconscious or the actual uncontrolled inner personality? The behaviouralists argue that it's a domain not worthy of study owing to an epistemological barrier that exists based upon the limits of human cognition that does not aid us in our effort to understand the true nature of human emotions, thus rendering it impossible to precisely judge what are the motives behind each and every human action. Wittgenstein held the view that it is in fact erroneous to hold the outward expression of a particular behaviour as a completely external phenomenon. It is a manifestation of the inner processes that take place within the brain cells called neurons (Wittgenstein, 1921). Thus, neither 'physicalism' Cartesian 'dualism' does not help in the quest of trying to understand human personality.

The Significance of Language:

No matter where one draws the line between the conscious and the unconscious, one thing is for sure that the two remain involved in a continuous duel in a world that contains an ever-increasing menu of ideas and objects that play a decisive role in deciding the thinking pattern of human beings. The nominalistic tendency of the human mind considers it indispensable to name and categorize every phenomenon that happens to occur within the limits of one's cognition. But naming involves the use of language. According to Wittgenstein, anything that cannot be expressed through language cannot be considered as reliable knowledge (Wittgenstein, 1921). Similar views are echoed in the works of George Herbert Mead who considers language the essence of the development of human personality. The creation of the 'generalized other' cannot be accomplished without language (Mead, 1934). It's through language that meanings are assigned to the myriad patterns we observe around us. What is the meaning of 'meaning'? It is 'the question', one of the most difficult to answer in semantics according to Levi-Strauss (Levi-Strauss, 1978). The cause can be sought in the unavailability of a medium other than language itself in which the meaning of a word can be expressed. Thus the dictionary does nothing except manipulating the meaning of a word explicated through other words of the same language. Is it not a tautological exercise? In Berkeley's words, "To have a meaning, a word must stand for an 'idea'". (as quoted in Popper, 1963). But in the light of de Saussurian linguistics, ideas are not formed in isolation. The meaning of a particular word depends on the combination in which it is used (de Saussure, 1915). For example, there seems to be a huge difference between '*warm milk*' and '*warm welcome*'. The former denotes temperature while the latter an emotional gesture.

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Interestingly, both represent a feeling of comfort. Thus, can it be argued that no matter what the combination of words is, every word represents a unique idea? If it is so, what is the role of synonyms? Can a single idea be represented by more than one word? The problem multiplies itself when one tries to map similar ideas from different languages. An idea is unique to a particular 'life-world' (*lebenswelt*). Being able to represent it exactly in another language is a formidable task. For example, the word, 'zuchten' in the German language means 'to breed' or 'cultivate' whereas the word, 'zuchthaus' means a 'prison'. That's the German interpretation of the world. Do other languages (cultures) agree? Hard to say. Nevertheless, what's obvious is the impossibility of transposing a set of ideas from one culture to another exactly as they are. Hence, the entire import of ideas and discourse from one life-world to another depends on just one question: 'Do synonyms exist?' The problem is not of translation only. It's about different words creating an altogether different perception of the world (*weltanschauung*).

Undoubtedly, it's language and a combination of the id, the ego and the superego that goes into deciding an individual personality but what an individual does and actually thinks and delivers in his everyday life is an entirely different story. Aristotle believed in some form of determinism when he remarked that 'life is not a series of incoherent tragedies'. But it's not that simple either. The axis of thinking constantly shifts depending on a variety of factors. 'Recency Effect' plays a vital role in shaping the thought process and hence, the kind of behaviour one is likely to exhibit. Things that are of most recent occurrence occupy a particular area in our brain associated with short-term memory. Talk about governmental policy and we at once think of the current head of state and not somebody else. History too plays an important role in deciding our thought processes. A riot victim takes things differently than somebody who has spent all his life in a Beverly Hills mansion. Even a slight alarm sounds to him like the signal of may be yet another notoriously painful experience. People born and brought up in peaceful environments are more likely to be democratic in nature and consequently carry a particular social as well as cultural capital with them that helps them lead a successful life in the modern bourgeoisie fashion (Bourdieu, 1986).

The Disordered Aspect and Serendipity:

Besides, there is also a schema which is not ordered. It may be disordered to the extent of chaos, yet it's there and in the hindsight presents itself as an unbroken series of events that caused a person to become what he or she is. It's all because of multiple distractions at various points of time indicating logical breakpoints in the whole story. What is serendipity? It's the chance discovery of an hitherto unnoticed phenomenon. The question is: why would one observe something that was unnoticed so far. In metaphysics, it's 'change', but in the context of an individual it's nothing but distraction. The empiricist term it 'observation' or external observation as if the human mind is so inquisitive to be in search of newer phenomena all the time. Obviously that's not the case. It is distraction that causes most discoveries. Even in the paradigm of 'impression management' as expounded by Erving Goffman, an actor having evolved a

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'working consensus' does get distracted on the entry of a new person among the audience, and more so if the other person conveys to the actor that she believes in the contrary with respect to the theme of the performance one is engaged in (Goffman, 1959). How many times one observes in a typical board room meeting which has as its agenda the Syrian Crisis suddenly discussing the venue for its next annual party! All because there's a lady who distracted the leader /manager sufficiently to be 'carried away' by emotions ('libido' in Freudian sense) and the meeting took a different turn. Sudhir Kakar mentions how he gets conscious of the sound of the trumpets in the city of Mumbai at about 4 a.m. early in the morning while trying to write (Kakar, 1982). It's the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi, the grandest of all festivals in this part of India. Being conscious that there's a sound that is not normal definitely distracts the author. Does it affect the content of the paragraph he wrote under such circumstances? It's only the author who is qualified enough to answer the question. But even then would he be aware of the difference that caused him to write something else than what would have been penned down otherwise, all flowing through the unconscious? Such are the ramifications of the interplay between the unconscious and distractions. How many times have we noticed the phenomenon during a cricket match? A wrong appeal on the previous delivery actually causes the batsman to play a risky shot eventually costing him his wicket, one of the best examples of distractions. That's why they say it's a game of rhythm. Rhythm is nothing but the other end of distraction. It was this rhythmic life that had hidden from the human mind the thought that it is gravitational pull that caused the apple to fall on the ground. It took Newton's distracted mind to observe it and come up with the laws of gravitation. Why did Rontgen (one who discovered X-rays) live in the laboratory for seven weeks? It was only because some phenomenon that he observed appeared so abnormal that he got distracted to the extent of being an insomniac (Kuhn, 1962).

Other Modes of Positive Distractions:

So much for the distraction that leads to serendipity. But there are other forms of distractions that necessarily do not lead to discovery. They are simply a break in concentration with both short-term as well as long-term effects. The story of 'Mara' in Buddha's life is a brilliant example of what distraction is all about in the path of one's enlightenment. Although it's the part of folklore in the form of a myth with more than one version, it's actually symbolic of the counter-force that played its part in stopping Buddha from attaining enlightenment and it veritably represents the tussle between life and death, termed 'eros' and 'thanatos' in Freudian terms. In the words of Jnana Sipe, "As in most Buddhist teachings, the point of Mara is not to "believe in" Mara but to understand what Mara represents in your own practice and experience of life. Mara's army is just as real to us today as it was to the Buddha," Mara stands for those patterns of behavior that long for the security of clinging to something real and permanent rather than facing the question posed by being a transient and contingent creature. 'It makes no difference what you grasp', said Buddha, 'when someone grasps, Mara stands beside him.' The tempestuous longings and fears that assail us, as well as the views and opinions that confine us are sufficient evidence of this. Whether we talk of succumbing to irresistible urges and addictions or being paralyzed by

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neurotic obsessions, both are psychological ways of articulating our current cohabitation with the devil." Aristotle remarked, 'everything has a cause'. Thus life itself must have a cause. That cause according to almost all philosophies is salvation, also called 'Nirvana', especially in Buddhism. It's the same theme of 'Moksha' embedded in the Hindu philosophy. The belief in an after-life in Islam and working in the name of God's glory in the Protestant ethic are also variations of the same principle of the 'telos', the purpose of human life. Is it not a constant battle between 'unhindered pursuit' and 'distraction'? What does the myth of the sage, Vishwamitra and Menaka depict? It's again close to the myth of 'Mara' who is said to have used his daughter as a seductress in order to prevent Buddha from reaching the state of enlightenment. It explains the role of distraction that deviates one from the straight path one chooses in order to reach the destination of one's choice. Similar themes of distractions do appear in the biographies of other men like Swami Vivekananda and Gandhi who had to take special care of the situation in order to overcome it and to be able to work towards their goal single-mindedly.

These distractions are relevant on a macro and totalizing plane. Looking at the phenomenon of everyday sociology and particularly the Sociology of Emotions, mostly found in the realm of the interactive world, if an allegory is to be drawn from the market, an area where buyers and sellers interact with a common purpose in mind. One could take the case of a restaurant or a lounge. It mostly has a dim light with a light music running in the background which it claims is to relax the nerves of the customers, but in practice it's actually an attempt to distract people from whatever they have been pondering over so far. How many times do we actually find a bitter animosity being resolved over a dinner party? The ambience actually distracts one from one's prolonged state of mind. One cannot deny the fact that a lot of people travel by air owing to the hospitality of the air hostesses on board. Although it appears as a kind of enjoyment or at least visual pleasure especially from the viewpoint of 'gaze theory' propounded by Laura Mulvey (1975), it's actually a distraction that makes the monotonous journey on an airplane joyful. It can be compared with a journey by train or a bus where there are enough distractions to break the monotony. Sociology of emotion plays a vital role in decoding the peculiar kind of behaviour exhibited by the air hostess and other such professionals. There is an element of impersonality embedded in the manner one behaves. That's about the ego. The id of an air hostess has a part to play in the efficiency with which she 'performs' her role (Goffman, 1959). Disinterested courtesy is bound to lose out in the long run. A successful air hostess has to be personally involved and she must enjoy the particular job that she is entrusted with. In fact, they are trained to react in the context of the 'gaze theory'. They have a particular hairstyle, particular manner of looking around, walking and speaking also termed 'emotional labour' by Arlie Hochschild in her 1983 work, *The Managed Heart*. All this makes the life of the travelers more comfortable than it would have been otherwise.

The Negative Aspect of Distractions:

Distractions do not always help to break the state of monotony. Sometimes they are also seen as sources of disturbance that should be done away with. One is not surprised by the popular name given to the television set in almost every household across cultures. It's rightly called the 'idiot box' for its efficacy at distracting the studious children of the household quite easily. It's quite essential at this juncture to keep a difference between the two concepts – 'distraction' and 'temptation'. While distraction is mostly unwanted and is not the result of individual effort, temptation depends on an individual's effort to fulfil a particular wish or longing. In the strict Biblical sense, God tempted Abraham to test his loyalty. Genesis (22:1) reads thus: “God did tempt Abraham”. But based upon the idea of morality encapsulated in the Bible and the dominant theological discourse in Christianity, Jesus asked his disciples to pray thus: “Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Matthew, 6:13). Jesus considered temptation as something that entices one to commit sin. Thus one should keep away from temptations. Temptations represent a cathetic struggle between the id, the ego and the superego. On the other hand, distractions confront the unconscious, the inner world without the agency of the person affected.

Techniques of meditation are nothing but an attempt to keep both distractions and temptations away. Men such as Ramkrishna Paramhans and Swami Yogananda advocate the usefulness of such techniques in enhancing the levels of one's concentration. Yogananda explains it in the following manner: “A master bestows the divine experience of cosmic consciousness when his disciple, by meditation, has strengthened his mind to a degree where the vast vistas would not overwhelm him. The experience can never be given through one's mere intellectual willingness or open-mindedness. Only adequate enlargement by yoga practice and devotional BHAKTI can prepare the mind to absorb the liberating shock of omnipresence.” (Yogananda, 2003, p.89). The problem lay in the ease with which one practices these techniques. Even the very possibility of being able to spare some time from one's busy daily schedule poses itself as a big task given the myriad duties and obligations one is expected to negotiate owing to the ever-growing complexities of human life. Here again a mention must be made of the difference in approach between the Indian and the western concept of the valuability of time. While Indians seem to live with a feeling of timelessness (Kakar, 1982), the 'western' way of living is completely clock-based, one of the prime reasons why capitalism, especially modern organizations could flourish in the west (a corollary of the Weberian thesis on Protestant ethics and the spirit of modern capitalism). William H. Whyte argues that man in the modern world is identified by the name of the organization he works with (Whyte, 1956). Similar thoughts have been put forward by Young and Wilmott (1975) in their thesis on 'symmetrical family' where they argue that in modern times human life revolves around one's role in the realm of employment and thus determine family patterns in the society and the dynamics within the family. Work becomes the focal concern. Stanley Parker has a rather interesting thing to say in this regard. He argues that men have become leisure-seeking creatures owing to the unrelenting demands of work. Thus

they get on with their normal work-based lives with enjoyment while at workplace, leisure being the only motivating factor (Parker, 1976). Given such conditions, one hardly finds time, energy and motivation for meditation. As a result, there's no respite from distractions in one's daily life.

The Battle against Distractions:

The cultural moorings of distractions can be traced back to the dominant tradition of art embedded in folk songs and dances including poetry. Adorno looks at it from a critical theory perspective. According to him, in the modern society dominated by media and entertainment, it's the celebration of erotic, rather voyeuristic love that becomes the most common theme when it comes to popular cinema and music (Adorno, 1991). A parallel can be drawn between ancient art such as the murals and sculptures of Khajuraho. Erotic as well as voyeuristic tendencies could be easily discerned if one analyzes the major themes in such paintings. But Adorno's critique is not about the themes of art adhering to themes of love and voyeurism. He comments on the extent to which these themes dominate the ways of thinking of the people living in such a society. Popular cinema and music makes us believe something that is far from reality. It plays with human emotions and provokes a number of unwarranted reactions that one can call nothing but 'distractions'. How many times we find adolescents indulging in absurd behaviour owing to rejection in a failed effort to win love. It's difficult to explain phenomenon such as slitting one's veins under conditions of depression or settling scores with acid attacks. The dire consequences do put an end to one's entire career or, may be life itself in case of a suicide. What causes it? It's all distraction. No rational human being would ever plan to commit such acts, but one does because the pursuit that one has in one's life gets distorted by one's believing in a theme that's entirely false. It's not a shock to observe such 'social facts' because distraction due to love and sensual feelings is 'synchronic' in nature and also ubiquitous. The famous cave no. 10 in the Ajanta caves has a wall painting that depicts a rather interesting theme with the Buddha enjoying the company of women and alcohol. The interpreters would simply call it distraction. But what caused this distraction is not an intriguing question. Kautilya in his Arthashastra mentions four vices – hunting, gambling, drinking and women. One would agree with his theory that has stood the test of time. Men like Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. too had controversial relationships in their lives that arguably did affect the manner in which they thought. Historical evidence shows how Cleopatra dominated the Roman empire because Antony lost all say due to his emotional indulgence.

Quite interestingly, Freud argued that human mind is in constant search of displacement. What he calls displacement can also be called distractions. Once aware of the positive effects of distractions, men do seek it in order to get rid of something unwelcome hovering over their psyche. Indulgence in alcohol and drugs is one of the best examples how men seek distraction in order to go beyond the trajectory of their normal thought process. It came out quite clearly in the famous experiment with 'mescaline' undertaken by Aldous Huxley which suggests that intoxication creates certain kinds of hypnosis and hallucinations (Huxley, 1954). It is owing to

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the search of these uncommon states of mind that people indulge in drugs and alcohol. In the process, all they do is just seek distractions in order to get rid of some mental condition that seems detrimental to their overall psychological well-being. Jim Morrison died of drug overdose and Kurt Cobain composed a song called 'marijuana'. It is a matter of common experience that most men with creative proclivities in life take help of narcotic substances of one or the other kind in order to enhance their capabilities to think in a manner that is not possible under normal brain states.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, one can argue that although there can be umpteen sources of distractions, it can be divided in terms of its origin and consequences as positive and negative. When there are unwanted distractions in life, they are termed negative. On the contrary, when men themselves seek distraction from an otherwise unwanted state of mind, sometimes also called 'thought suppression' (Wegner, 1989), it seems to play a positive role. Whatever be its classificatory nature, distractions go a long way in deciding the ultimate behaviour one manifests both immediately and in the long-run. Herbert Simon explained the concept of 'bounded rationality' that wages a criticism against theories based on holism. He argued that a decision remains far from being entirely rational due to the inability of the human mind to consider all possible choices at hand (Simon, 1945). The requisite knowledge to have a holistic vision is also found wanting. But that seems to be a static representation of an individual trying to arrive at a conclusion based on certain facts available to him. Under real-time occurrences, life is never static. It's a dynamic process; in motion all the time. Thus no decision can actually be made from a position of rest (mental rest). Right there in the act of making a decision or forming an opinion, one is bound to be guided by a distraction that happens to decide the later course of one's thought process and the final outcome of the entire exercise. Thus the manner in which an individual personality is manifested through human behaviour is never a straight line or a pattern that can be explained through the help of simple shapes in Euclidean geometry. It's rather close to 'fractals' as explained by Mandelbrot. In fact it's wriggle-shaped. Edward Lorenz explains how a minute difference in one of the many parameters in a system can result in a large deviation in the manner the system normally functions. He described it through the famous statement, "A butterfly flapping its wings in Tokyo might cause rainfall in New York". The famous expression is popularly known as the 'butterfly effect'. Thus, in an unpredictable social milieu, infinite mental states and influences result in an unpredictable hordes of individual human behaviour and hence, human personality. What exactly makes it a special case of 'chaos theory' is the presence of 'distractions'.

Acknowledgments

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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How to cite this article: A Pathak (2016), Personality, Language and Distractions in Society, International Journal of Indian Psychology, Volume 3, Issue 4, No. 63, ISSN 2348-5396 (e), ISSN: 2349-3429 (p), DIP: 18.01.110/20160304, ISBN: 978-1-365-32518-2