**November 22, 2017**

1. Summarize the distinction that Butt makes between the light and dark forms of social construction.

2. Causal science, reductionism, and individualism are terms that we have associated with contemporary Psychology during our course. Which of these terms, if any, is consistent with social constructionism as described by Butt? Explain.

3. Moghaddam says that for social constructionists “language is recognized as not just descriptive, but constructive”. Butt introduces (p. 68) the concept of language games and says that promising, warning, and cajoling are examples of such games. Is the concept of language games more consistent with the idea of language as descriptive or with the idea of language as constructive? Explain.

4. Social constructionism questions our sense that many social phenomena and our ideas about them are “natural” or based in “human nature.” Create a list of phenomena or ideas that many people (perhaps you yourself at some time in the past) take for granted as natural but that seem on closer examination to actually be social constructions.

5. Gergen has written that social constructionism challenges “four overarching presumptions in modern psychology: the existence of a basic subject matter; the ultimate discovery of universal properties; an emphasis on experimental method; and a belief in research as progressive” (Butt, p. 62). Summarize what is involved in each of these presumptions and in what way social constructionism takes a different position.

6. Give a brief description of what is meant by each of the following terms and how they are used by Butt in his description of social constructionism and other approaches to the understanding of people:

Pragmatism

Hermeneutics

Discourse and discourse analysis

Agency

Internalisation, externalisation, objectivation

*Verstehen*

phenomenological

7. Berger and Luckmann argue that we are both free agents and mere puppets (Butt, p. 74), that we are both constructed by society and constructors of society. Provide an example of one or more situations in your everyday life where you are both a free agent and a puppet in the sense intended by Berger and Luckmann.

8. Butt is giving us (and Psychologists, in general) advice about how to understand people. One possibility he suggests is that we try to interpret people in the same way that we interpret texts. He cautions, however, "If we want to appreciate a text, we will never do it by learning the alphabet" (p. 88). Explain what you think his comment means about how Psychologists should go about studying people.