

Freud - The Psychodynamic Approach

Psychodynamic Theory: Sigmund Freud

While psychology was developing as a science, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) was formulating a theory of human behaviour that would greatly affect psychology and psychiatry, and change thinking altogether. Freud began his career as a neurologist, so his work was originally firmly rooted in biology. He soon became interested in behavioural and emotional problems and began formulating his psychodynamic theory of personality, which would evolve over his long career. Although his approach was based on observation of patients and not scientific experiments, he remained convinced that the biological basis of his theory would eventually be established.

His theory of the mind included structure, but his structuralism was quite different from Wundt's. He devised his concepts of ego, superego, id and other mental structures though taking with his patients, but not through laboratory experiments - as compared to Wundt who preferred the more experimental approach to psychology. His hypothetical mental operations included many that were unconscious and hence not available to introspection. Unlike Wundt, Freud emphasised function; his mental structures served biological drives and instincts and reflected out animal nature.

Psychodynamic Approach

- Focuses on unconscious/internal conflicts.
- Unconscious motivation
- Adult behaviour shaped by childhood experiences.
- Developed therapy called psychoanalysis - unconscious can be looked into consciously

Mind consists of the following parts of personality:

Id - Pleasure principle, unconscious urges and desires

Ego - Reality principle, decides what actions are appropriate

Superego - Value and morals. It's also the conscience and ego-ideal.

Mind is also split up into:

- Conscious
- Pre-Conscious
- Unconscious

Criticisms:

- Unscientific - Based on case studies rather than experiments
- Too deterministic