

The Psychodynamic Approach

Psychoanalytic Perspective

Key Assumptions:

- Assumes that a large part of our mental life operates at an unconscious level
- It is assumed that unconscious sexual and aggressive instincts drive behaviour
- The personality is made up of the id, the ego and the superego, which are in constant conflict
- Defence mechanisms protect individuals from anxiety producing thoughts
- It is assumed that early childhood experiences are important to understanding current behaviour
- Children develop through psychosexual stages which involve conflict which must be resolved
- Assumes that dreams and slips of the tongue have unconscious explanations
- Assumes that the best method for understanding human behaviour is the case study

Freud

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

Personality Structure

- **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.

Defence Mechanism

Repression - Unconscious forgetting. Disturbing thoughts not allowed becoming conscious

Displacement - Transferring impulses and feelings to an originally neutral or innocent target

Projection - Attributing one's own unacceptable feeling onto another person

Identification – behaving in a similar way to someone you regard as a role model

Sublimation: Type of displacement where an activity is found to express an unacceptable desire.

Denial: Deny a situation you can't deal with

Mind is Split up into the following:

- Conscious
- Pre-Conscious
- Unconscious

Psychosexual Stages

1. **Oral** Stage **0-1** years
2. **Anal** Stage **1-3** years
3. **Phallic** Stage **3-6** years
4. **Latency** Stage **6-12** years
5. **Genital** Stage **12-18** years

- Each stage the **libido (sexual energy)** is focused on different things -mouth in the oral stage etc
- Children can become **fixated** with things due to experiences during these stages

1. **Oral Stage 0-1 years:**

- Mouth is the source of pleasure
- Lack of oral stimulation results in oral fixation

1. **Anal Stage 1-3 years:**

- Anal source of pleasure
- Aware and controlling bowels
- Potty training – going to the toilet in the right place at the right time
- Over strictness about forcing the child to go and cleanliness causes anal fixation and obsessive behaviour

1. **Phallic Stage 3-6 years:**

- Children become aware of their genitals
- Oedipus complex (boys)
- Electra Complex (girls)

1. Latency Stage 6-12 years:

- Move away from sexuality
- Concentrate on social and intellectual development

1. Genital Stage 12-18 years:

- Adult feelings develop and mature love becomes possible

Oedipus complex:

1. Develops strong desire for mother
2. Noticing a strong bond between parents
3. Becoming jealous of father
4. Being afraid of father who might discover boys true feelings
5. Fearing the punishment of castration
6. Resolves by **identifying** with the father

Electra complex:

1. Girls discovers no penis – develops penis envy
2. She blames mother for her lack
3. Transfer's love from mother to father
4. Resolves by **identifying** with mother to become like her.

Case Studies

- How psychoanalysis concepts applied to a real persons mental life
- Appeal to wider audience
- Show how psychoanalysis could help treat people

Post-Freudian Theories: Erik Erickson

- Relationships with people throughout life (Psychosocial Development)
- Strengthens and weakens the ego

- Positive and optimistic view of the human condition

Limitations:

- Unscientific – Based on case studies rather than experiments. No testable hypothesis.
- Interpretation problems
- Too deterministic
- Effectiveness of psychoanalysis treatment has not been demonstrated. Maybe effective for some and not others.