

Examrace

Psychology Study Material: The Psychodynamic Approach and Model

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The Psychodynamic Approach/Model

The approach that concentrated on the unconscious forces that drive our behaviour; belief that the inner forces over which individuals have little control motivate behaviour.

- Founded by Sigmund Freud, the most influential figure in the history of psychology.
- The basis of motivation and behaviour lies in inner forces; forces that are predetermined, and forces over which humans have little control, which the person is not aware of i.e., unconscious determinants of behaviour
- It maintained that instincts are the driving force behind individual's personality; there are life instincts as well as death instincts that play a role in human life.

Significance of Psychodynamic Approach

- The most influential theory of the 20th century, that affected psychology and related disciplines in a revolutionary manner
- Gave an entirely new perspective to the understanding of behaviour and mental processes as well as mental illness
- The first theory to raise the awareness that not all behaviour is rational
- Gave an impressive, broad based, therapeutic approach
- Provided a basis to understand everyday life phenomena e. g. interpersonal relationships, aggression, prejudice
- Many other, later, approaches built their paradigms on this approach - some by refining it, some by deviating from it
- One of the main ideas is that there is an inner tension for the fulfilment of instincts, the tension leads to action for fulfilment, the fulfilment leads to reduced tension.

Sigmund Freud 1856 - 1939

Founder of Psychoanalysis

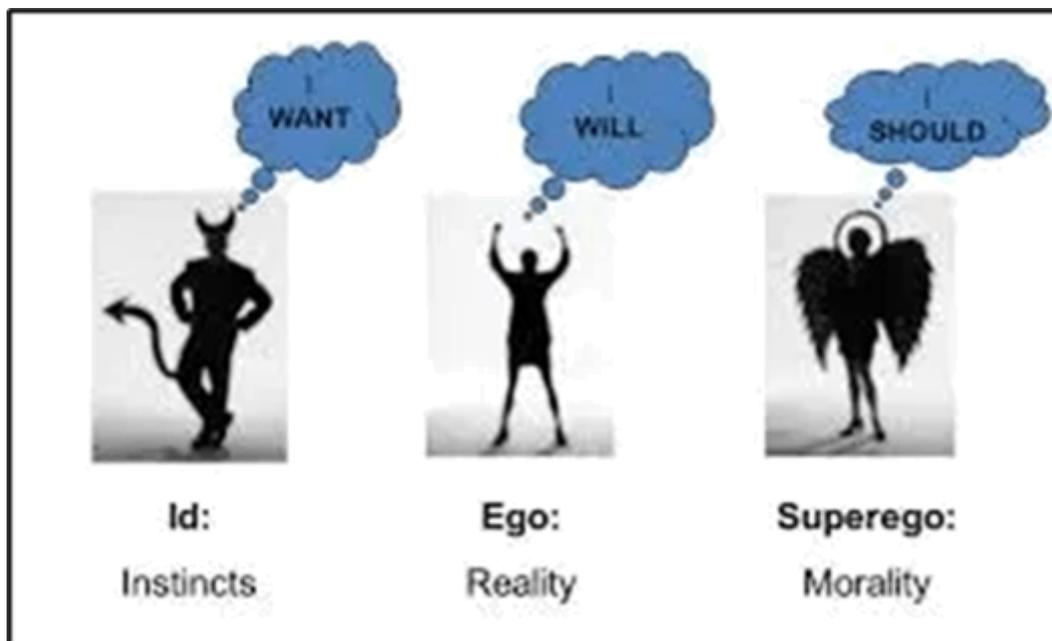
- Austrian physician, neurologist, psychologist
- Born in Moravia (Czech Republic) in a middle-class family
- Studied at Vienna University where he became interested in neurological research

- Spent three years at General Hospital Vienna and worked in nervous diseases, psychiatry, and dermatology
- 1885: Became professor of neuropathology at Vienna University
- 1885: Following a government grant went to Paris as a student of French neurologist Jean Charcot, who was treating nervous diseases through hypnotic suggestion
- Freud's interest in psychopathology was heightened as a result of his studies of hysteria, under Charcot
- 1886: Established private practice in Vienna specializing in nervous disease. His interest shifted from physiological to psychological explanation of psychopathology
- Started collaborative work with Josef Breuer
- 1895: wrote "Studies on Hysteria" ; main emphasis was that uncharged emotional energy associated with forgotten psychic traumas resulted into hysterical symptoms
- Therapy, at that stage, involved putting the patient in a hypnotic state, where he recalled and re-enacted the traumatic experience = Catharsis
- Hence the formal beginning of Psychoanalysis

Foundations of Psychodynamic Approach

Psychic Determinism

All behaviour is determined i.e., has a cause that lies in the mind/psyche.



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Role of Consciousness

- A significant part of our behaviour is generated by unconscious forces
- Continuity of Normal and Abnormal Behaviour
- Normal and abnormal behaviour are different only in terms of degree and not in kind
- Emphasis on Clinical Observation
- Clinical observation/case studies were the main source of data

Structure of Consciousness

Conscious

Contains thoughts and feelings of which one is immediately aware

Subconscious

Mind level below the level of conscious awareness

Preconscious

Part of the sub conscious that can be accessed by deliberate choice

Unconscious

Part of the sub conscious that cannot be accessed directly although impulses, ideas, and feelings may permeate out through other sources e. g. dreams, slips of tongue etc.

Dreams in Freudian Approach

- Dreams reflect unconscious needs, desires, and impulses.
- Dreams have two levels of dream content: manifest and latent.

Manifest Content

- The obvious, apparent part: what a dream appears to be to the dreamer.
- Latent content
- The dream's true meaning, which is usually disguised or distorted by dream work.

Symbolism

- The manifest content is in a symbolic form
- The latent content is converted into this form by the ' dream censor, a mechanism that ensures that sleep is not disturbed by unconscious desires, and those desires are presented in a socially acceptable form. The manifest content is in the symbolic form of the latent content. Only the psychoanalyst can interpret it.

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