

Sigmund Freud

(1856-1939)

Major contributions by Freud:

Existence of Irrationality

Interpretation of Dreams

Practice of Repression

Theory of Libido

Ego, Id, and Superego

Eros and the Death Instinct

Freud examined the irrationality of humans just as the Enlightenment and Science were overcoming feudalism.

What does "rational" mean?
Are humans basically rational or irrational?

What causes people to be irrational?

Physical: Chemical imbalances

Psychological: animalistic forces / sexual instincts / repressed wishes

Physical/Psychological: repressed wishes that are not channeled rationally

Interpretation of Dreams, Freud's View:

--Freud was interested in dreams from boyhood

--purpose of a dream is to fulfill a wish

--people's lust and hate are expressed in dreams

--Freud's work was discounted by the scientific and wealthy communities who preferred to believe they had developed beyond primitive sexuality

Freud proposed we have an unconscious.

Freud introduced psychoanalysis to study one's unconscious, understand one's motivations, and heal one's psyche.

Repression refers to ideas one has had that are pushed into the unconscious so that the person is unaware of having had the thought.

What would be an example?

What is a "Freudian slip" and how might it be related to repression?

According to Freud, Repression first takes place in childhood

at an early age the conscious and unconscious are not separate

a child freely plays with orifices, genitals, feces and is socialized to repress these animalistic desires

People's mental development moves from the "Pleasure" principle to the "Reality" principle (primary to secondary processes).

Child learns how to channel sexual desires into socially acceptable behavior

Neuroses appear to be unsuccessful channeling

Freud described Parents as "culture's agents"

Parents teach dominant social values and "correct" behaviors.

What are some behaviors encouraged by parents that are highly valued in the American culture?

The Theory of Libido

According to Freud, Libido is sexual energy (or tension) that needs to be released at least below a certain minimum threshold.

The Theory of Libido

Freud saw human nature as basically "asocial". Humans are social animals only by virtue of the need to satisfy the ravenous libido.

Is it human nature to be asocial, social, or does it depend (and if so on what)?

How might the "libido" be related to social cohesion (holding society together)?

Freud believed it was the "libidinal bond" rather than morals or rationality or economic interests that held society together.

Freud viewed the human psyche, as having three parts:

Id, Ego, Superego

Id: emotional or instinctual being (pleasure principle)

Ego: draws energy from the id and attempts to find a balance between the Id & superego (reality principle)

Superego: internalized social values (rulers attempt to take the role of the individual's superego)

Comparison of Freud to Nietzsche.

How might Nietzsche's work (which predates Freud) on the egotistical will and devious will compare to Freud's work?

What about irrationality?

Eros vs Death instinct

Eros: stands for sexual instincts and the perpetual desire to renew life

Death instinct: seeks to lead the living toward death ("to return from where we came")

Do you believe that humans have a death instinct?

Is the death instinct a rational explanation for wars, as Freud suggests?

How might the following statements be related to Freud's work:

"We can live our whole life in an illusion."

"We are victims of our own past."

Collins states that Freud dismissed religion because "Freud wanted to live without illusions and preferred to cultivate Reason's garden. (p.139)"

Is it unreasonable to believe in a higher power than humans?

How does Freud contribute to the understanding of society?

- Society mirrors the superego (leaders), ego (citizens) id (repressed desires)
- Social Movements

The End

Freud's biography (start at the 3 minute mark;
25 minutes—fast forward through dream
scene):

<https://libproxy.library.unt.edu:5162/video/freud-hidden-nature-man>

How might Durkheim's idea
that:

anomie (social disconnection)
can result from too many rules
and regulations

be related to Freud's concept
of neurosis?