CHAPTER 3

THE PSYCHOANALYTICAL THEORY OF SIGMUND FREUD

part 2

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The Development of the Personality

Psychosexual Theory: Focuses on the development of the sex drive
Progression from one phase to the next due to changes in the source of the sexual drive energy
Oral Stage (first year of life)
Anal Stage (the second year)
Phallic Stage (third to the sixth year)
Latent Stage (sixth to the twelfth year)
Genital Stage (from puberty onwards)

The Development of the Personality: The Oral Stage

Ranges from birth to the end of the first year
Lips and mouth primary erogenous zone (source of sexual drive energy)
Weaning from breast / interrupted feeding frustrates the oral sexual drive and is perceived as punishment
Displacement – pillow, dummy
Excessive cuddling could make transition to next stage difficult (fixation, regression)
Simultaneous development of death drive
Directed at external objects (biting during feeding)
Ego and Superego begin to develop (Id is inborn)
Baby acquires knowledge about the external reality
This knowledge lays foundation for the development of the Ego
Punishment and reward: first moral rules are absorbed into the Superego
The Development of the Personality:
The Oral Stage

• Fixation in this stage:
  ▪ Oral Personality Type
  ▪ Dependence on others
  ▪ Narcissism
  ▪ Excessive Optimism
  ▪ Jealous and envious
  ▪ Reaction Formation – opposite characteristics

The Development of the Personality:
The Anal Stage

• Second year of life
• Anus and excretory canal are most important erogenous zone (main source of sexual drive energy)
• Toilet (‘potty’) training important for development of personality in this stage
  ▪ Important for absorbing social rules
  ▪ Punishment and reward further develops the Superego
• Expression of aggressive urges:
  ▪ Excrete at the wrong time
  ▪ Refusal to excrete

The Development of the Personality:
The Anal Stage

• Fixation in this stage:
  ▪ Anal Personality Type
  ▪ Excessive neatness
  ▪ Thriftiness
  ▪ Reaction Formation – opposite characteristics

The Development of the Personality:
The Phallic Stage

• 3yrs old to 5/6 yrs old
• Boys and Girls start developing along different lines
• Boys develop Oedipus Complex
  ▪ Penis becomes main source of drive energy for boys
  ▪ Develops sexual desires in relation to mother
  ▪ Jealous of the father
  ▪ Ridicule and punishment by others for this behaviour is experienced as a threat of castration (Castration Anxiety)
  ▪ Defense mechanisms: repression and identification
  ▪ Imitates the father, and develops Superego
The Development of the Personality: The Phallic Stage

- Girls develop Electra Complex
  - Girl observes she has no penis and holds mom responsible for this
  - Envies her father (penis envy)
  - Develops sexual desires in relation to father
  - Jealous of the mother
  - Defense mechanisms: repression and identification
  - Imitates the mother, and develops Superego

- Overly strict Superego (developed in this stage) can lead to Mental Disorders in later life
- Overly strict Superego can develop if:
  - Father is too strict (son internalizes these rules via identification)
  - Father is often or permanently absent
  - Father is not strict enough

The Development of the Personality: The Latent Stage

- 5/6 years old until puberty
- No new physical source of sexual drive energy
- Due to identification in Phallic Stage, children concerned with mastery of gender-roles

The Development of the Personality: The Genital Stage

- Puberty until the end of life
- Increase in sexual drive energy (multiple sources)
- Reawakening of pre-genital stage sexual wishes
- Repression is no longer sufficient to cope with the conflict between sexual urges and moral code
- A man falls in love with a woman who reminds him of his mother
- A woman falls in love with a man who is a suitable substitute for her father
### Optimal Development of the Personality

- Freud interested in explaining and treating psychic disturbances
- Humans fall on a continuum of psychic disturbance (from mostly healthy / not very disturbed to not at all healthy / mentally disturbed)

**Genital Character** personality type:
- The genital stage of development is reached without any fixations on earlier stages
- Strong Ego and a Superego that is not overly strict
- Ego is capable of effective reality-testing
- Uses the most effective defense mechanism (sublimation)

### Views on Psychopathology

- When the Ego is too weak to handle the anxiety caused by the conflict between the Id and the Superego
- Historical causes include:
  - Fixation in a stage of development
  - Development of an Ego that is too weak
  - Development of a Superego that is too strict
- Contemporary causes: stem from drastic change in lifestyle or during transition from one stage to the next

### Views on Psychopathology

- **Neurosis**
  - Develop because the Ego cannot handle the conflict between the Id and the Superego

- **Personality Disorders**
  - Fixation and the consequent regression to a pre-genital developmental stage

- **Psychoses**
  - Inability of Ego to deal with Anxiety
  - Total withdrawal from, and distortion of, reality
  - Ego disintegrates to the point that it cannot function by the reality principle any more

### Implications and Applications: Interpretation and handling of Aggression

- 9.1, 9.2, & 9.3 for self-study
- Aggression stems from our inherent death drive that is diverted (projected) outwards onto others
- Explanations for a sudden increase in violence:
  - Relaxation of the moral code in the area concerned
  - High levels of aggressive drive energy in the area
- May be managed by creating opportunities for sublimation of aggressive drives
Evaluation of the Theory

• Biological versus Psychic Determinism
• Freud’s theory widely used beyond the field of psychology
• Criticisms of Freud’s theory:
  ▪ Vagueness and ambiguity of his concepts
  ▪ Can explain past behaviour but cannot predict future behaviour
  ▪ How relevant is his theory in modern South Africa?