Key ideas of psychoanalysis

• The aim is to find out what’s really going on in the hidden, unconscious recesses of the mind

• Psychic determinism
  – *Determinism* is the idea that everything that happens has a cause that—in principle, maybe not always in practice—can be identified
  – *Psychic determinism* is the assumption that everything that happens in a person’s mind, and therefore everything that a person thinks and does, also has a specific cause
    • There must be a reason that lies somewhere in the structure and dynamics of personality—the trick is to find it
    • There is a reason why you said one thing and did another
    • Many of the important processes that go on in the mind are unconscious

Key ideas of psychoanalysis (cont.)

• Internal structure
  – The mind has an internal structure
  – Distinction between the *mind* and *brain*
    • Brain is a physical organ; mind is the psychological result of what the brain (& body) does
    • Mind is divided into 3 parts
      1. Id—irrational and emotional part of the mind—operates accord. to pleasure principle
      2. Ego—rational part of the mind—operates according to reality principle
      3. Superego—moral part of the mind
        – These parts can work independently

Key ideas of psychoanalysis

• Psychic conflict (and compromise)
  – B/c the mind is divided into distinct and independent parts, it can be in conflict with itself
  – *Psychic conflict* is not always so dramatic
    • I.e. your id wants ice cream, but your superego thinks you don’t deserve it b/c you haven’t studied all week. The ego might make a compromise—get the ice cream *after* you’ve finished your HW
  – *Compromise formation*
    • The ego’s main job is to find a middle course between the competing demands of motivation, morality, and practicality, and among the many different things a person wants at the same time
    • The result of the compromise would be what the individual consciously thinks and actually does

Key ideas of psychoanalysis (cont.)

• Mental energy
  – The psychological apparatus of the mind needs energy to make it go
  – The special energy required is called *psychic energy* or *libido* and only a fixed, finite amount is available at any given moment
  – Therefore, energy powering one part of the apparatus isn’t available for any other part
    • I.e. energy spent doing one thing (pushing uncomfortable thoughts out of memory) is unavailable for other purposes (having new, creative ideas)
  – An original idea was that if a psychological impulse wasn’t expressed it would build up over time, like steam pressure building in a boiler, until you snapped
  – Research suggests that as a generalization, it’s wrong.
  – Expressing anger typically makes a person more angry, not less
  – So, one goal of psychoanalysis is to free up more psychic energy—or computing capacity—for the challenges of daily living, by removing neurotic conflicts one by one
Controversy

- Objections to psychoanalysis have changed with the times
- The Victorians looked at Freud’s emphasis on sex/sexual energy and complained that his theory was “dirty”
- 21st century look at Freud’s emphasis on what can’t be seen or conclusively proved and complain that his theory is “unscientific”
- Freud pointed out Copernicus was unpopular for thinking the earth wasn’t the center of the universe and Darwin for his claim that humans are another species of animal
- Keep your clever analyses of others to yourself—especially if your insights are accurate
  - It’s like stunt demonstrators say, “We are trained professionals. Don’t try this at home”

Freud himself

- Psychoanalysis is unlike any other psychological approach in that it’s so closely identified with one person—Freud
- Started as a research neurologist and moved into practicing psychiatry to make a living, but his interests were more in research
- He discovered that when patients talked about their problems, sometimes by itself, that was enough to make them better or cure them—the “talking cure”
- Freud thought talking helps b/c making your thoughts and fears explicit by saying them out loud brings them where the conscious, rational mind can deal with them
- Also, the psychotherapist can provide emotional support while the patient’s trying to figure out what’s going on
- Freud’s ideas came from the patients he treated and his observations of the workings of his own mind
- His ideas were influenced by the time and place where he lived and the patients he saw

Psychoanalysis, life, and death

- Freud believed 2 motives are fundamental
  1. Life drive or libido or “sexual drive” impels toward life
     - Sex is simply life
  2. Death or Thanatos impels toward death
     - Entropy

Psychoanalysis, life, and death

- Doctrine of opposites
  - Everything implies and requires its opposite
    - Life requires death, happiness sadness, etc.
  - Extremes on any dimension tend to be more similar to each other than either is to the middle
    - What happens when someone stops loving another? Does their new attitude move to the middle of the continuum to “mild liking” or to the other extreme?
Psychological development: “Follow the money”

- Psychic energy is always both absolutely necessary and absolutely limited, so where it goes tends to be what is really happen
- As the focus shifts repeatedly, the style and type of gratification the child seeks changes
- No matter where it’s focused at any moment, it’s still libido, the same psychic energy
- The focal points for psychic energy serve to define the stages of psychological development
  - oral, anal, phallic, and genital
- Each stage has 3 aspects:
  1. A physical focus where energy is concentrated and gratification obtained
  2. A psychological theme related both to the physical focus and to the demands being made on the child by the outside world as they develop, and
  3. An adult character type that’s associated with being “fixed” or staked, in that particular stage, rather than fully developing toward the next one

- If an individual fails to resolve the psychological issues that arise at a particular stage, that person will always have some psychological scar tissue in that location, and those issues will continue to be troublesome to them throughout life

Oral stage (birth-18 mos.)

- Newborns can suck as well as an adult
  - Complex action that many premies can’t do
- Mouth is primary source of pleasure for newborn and only place developed at this point to interact with environment
  - Infants explore by putting objects in mouth
- Physical focus: mouth, lips, tongue
- Psychological focus: dependency
  - Others provide for—id (pleasure principle)
- If needs are fulfilled, then attention and psychic energy will move to the next stage

Oral stage (birth-18 mos.)

- 2 things could go wrong
  1. Needs might not be fulfilled ➔ basic mistrust of world
  2. Needs are fulfilled instantly and doesn’t learn the world won’t be like this later
- Principle of opposites—either extreme ➔ pathology
- Adult personality type due to either extreme: oral character
  - 2 extreme types of obsession, discomfort, and irrationality about dependency and passivity
    1. Independent, refusing to accept help from anyone
      - I.e. students refusing to get help from teacher/tutor when struggling in a class
    2. Passive, believe wanting something badly enough should make it happen and angry when it doesn’t happen
      - I.e. students who want a certain grade, but don’t do the work in order to earn it
      - When they change, they go to the other extreme rather than the middle

Anal stage (18 mos-3.5 yrs)

- Because you can’t take care of yourself, you’re not expected to and can do and express whatever you feel like, whenever you want
- Breastfeeding child learns that biting the mother removes the source of food and must control this biting in order to receive food again
- As the child grows older, the demands of the world escalate quickly
  - The child is expected to do more for themselves—including controlling emotions and potty training
    - I.e. “no” and potty training
  - The ego (reality principle) develops to mediate between what the child wants and what is actually possible
- Physical focus: anus and elimination organs
  - Learning the sensations of “having to go” and dealing with appropriately
  - Also applies to “get your own drink of water” and “don’t touch that”
- Psychological focus: self-control and obedience
  - Ability to control urges such as the urge to defecate, cry, take a forbidden toy, hit, etc.
  - Authority figures begin to insist on child using these new self-control strategies
  - The child learns this by testing the parents to find out where the boundaries/limits are—“terrible twos”
### Anal stage (18 mos-3.5 yrs)

- **2 things could go wrong**
  1. Unreasonable expectations can be traumatic—demands child is not capable of meeting
  2. Never demanding that the child control their urges (i.e. neglecting toilet training)
    - A child will not learn if the environment is too harsh or too lenient
    - Authoritative parenting style is more effective than authoritarian or permissive
- **Adult personality type due to either extreme: anal character**
  1. Obsessive, compulsive, stingy, orderly, rigid, and subservient to authority
    - Tries to control all aspects of their life and often seem equally happy to be controlled by an authority figure
  2. Little or no self-control, be unable to do anything on time or b/c it's necessary, chaotic and disorganized, and have a compulsive need to defy authority
    - Doing something because someone told you to or told you not to both allow someone else to control you

### Phallic stage (3.5 yrs-7 yrs)

- **Recognition that boys and girls are different**
  - Boys have penises and girls don’t
- **The basic task is to come to terms with sex differences**
- **Physical focus: the penis**
  - Boys notice that girls don’t have one and wonder what happened and if the same thing will happen to them
  - Girls just wonder what happened
  - To resolve this anxiety/grief, each child identifies with the same-sex parent, taking on many of their values and ideals while lessening feelings of rivalry and jealousy that could reach a critical level
    - Oedipal crisis
- **Psychological focus: the need to figure out what it means to be a boy or girl**

### Phallic stage (3.5 yrs-7 yrs)

- **Identification**
  - A girl could act like mom and a boy like dad or take on the values/behaviors of an admired teacher, relative, or movie star
  - Themes of love, sexuality, fear, and jealousy
  - Development of morality
  - Eventual development of sexuality
  - Important result of an image of self as masculine or feminine and what that means to the person
    - The part of the mind that passes moral judgment on the other parts based on mixture of the moral lessons taught directly and by example of everyone they’ve ever identified with
    - When successfully developed, the superego provides a conscience and basis for reasonable morality
- **Adult personality type due to either: phallic type character**
  1. Developed a completely rigid moral code with no shades of gray or exceptions
    - i.e. extremely active and promiscuous in their sexual behavior
  2. Lacks a code completely
    - Someone who is completely asexual

### Genital stage

- **Chance to take a developmental breath and focus on learning tasks of childhood**
- **This rest period ends at puberty**
- **Physical focus: the genitals**
  - Not just the physical organ, but also the process of reproduction or giving life
- **The developmental task is to learn how to add something constructive to life and society, and to take on the adult responsibility to do just that**
- **Psychological focus: maturity—not everyone attains it**
  - Psychologically well adjusted and balanced
  - The essence of mental health is the ability to love and work
  - The good life contains both with a balance of both kinds of generativity—love and work
- **Difficulties of women balancing families and careers—seem to be in conflict with each other**
  - Workaholic men with little conflict between work and home b/c of delegating the home part
  - Arrested development vs. psych health to leave out 1 of the 2 things people must balance in life
Moving through stages

- An important consequence of movement through the stages of development is the building of basic psych structures.
- Oral stage—id—wants and needs
- Anal stage—frustration and delay lead part of mind to differentiate and separate from the id to form the ego
- The ego has the ability and duty to control and channel the urges of the id
- Phallic stage—identifications form the superego
- The superego is the conscience and sits in judgment on the person’s actions and urges and sometimes tries to stop them.

Thinking and consciousness

- Underneath the progression through the psychosexual stages, the mind is undergoing a subtle, profound, but incomplete shift between 2 kinds of thinking:
  1. Secondary process thinking—think
     - The conscious part of the ego—rational, practical, prudent that can delay or redirect gratification
     - "Secondary" in 2 ways
     1. Develops as the ego develops—newborn doesn’t have
     2. Freud believed primary process thinking was more interesting, important, and powerful throughout life, not just in infancy
  2. Primary process thinking
     - The way the unconscious mind operates and the infant’s (and later adult’s) id operates
     - It doesn’t contain the word (or idea) no
     - It’s thinking w/o negatives, qualifications, sense of time, or any practicalities, necessities, or dangers of life
     - It has 1 goal: the immediate gratification of every desire
     - Can use displacement to replace one idea or image with another
     - Condensation can cause many ideas to be compressed into 1
     - Symbolization in which 1 thing might stand in for another
     - Could emerge into consciousness under several limited circumstances
       - During fever deliriums and during dreams
       - Psychotic individuals—i.e. schizophrenic
       - Slips of the tongue, lapses of memory, etc.

Moving through stages

- The mind progressing through the stages of psychological development is like an army conquering a hostile territory
  - To secure ground after the battle, some troops are left behind as the army advances
  - If the battle was bitter and the local resistance stays strong, a larger part of the army must be left behind—leaving less to advance
  - The store of libido is the army that “battles” at each of the developmental stages
    - If the battle of the oral, anal, or phallic stage is not completely won, libidinal energy must be left behind at that point resulting in fixation
    - The adult will be dominated by issues from that stage and will tend to retreat there under stress
    - An oral character under stress becomes passive and dependent and may suck their thumb
    - An anal character under stress becomes more rigid (or more disorganized) than usual
    - A phallic character under stress may engage in promiscuous behavior (or become asexual)
  - Victory is making it through all of the stages to the final, genital stage with as much of the army as possible still intact
  - The more libido is left for the final stage of maturity, the better adjusted the adult will be

3 levels to consciousness—topographical model

- Conscious mind
  - Smallest, topmost, least important layer
  - Part of mental functioning you can observe when you turn your attention inward
  - I.e. weather outside? What ate for breakfast, president of US?
- Preconscious
  - Things you’re not thinking about at the moment, but you could easily bring into consciousness if you wanted
  - Slips of the tongue, lapses of memory, etc.
- Unconscious
  - Biggest, most important layer of the mind
  - Includes all of the id and superego and most of the ego
  - Buried deep and can only be brought to the surface by digging
  - Hypnosis
  - Clues from slips of the tongue, accidents, and lapses of memory
  - Free association
Psychoanalytic therapy

- The core purpose is to use all of the various clues to reveal the contents of the unconscious.
- Freud believed that the problems that make most people anxious and unhappy have their roots in conflicts within the unconscious mind.
- The way to resolve these conflicts is to bring them into the open, through dream analysis, analysis of slips and lapses, and free association.
- Once an unconscious conflict is brought into consciousness, the rational part of the ego is able to deal with it and the conflict no longer poses a problem.
- Unconscious problems must be dealt with not just rationally, but emotionally, which takes time and can be painful, and even dangerous.
- As people bring their conflicts to the surface, they often begin to feel worse anxiety in the short run; the prospect of losing one's neuroses can be disconcerting.
  - Freud called this running away from the solution to one's psychological problems the "flight from health"—"I don't want to talk about it."

Psychoanalytic therapy

- To comfort, guide, and support the client through this difficult healing process, there must be an emotional bond between therapist and client—the therapeutic alliance—gets its power through transference.
- Tendency to bring ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving that developed with an important person into a later relationship with a different person.
- The therapist may develop emotions for the patient—countertransference.
- The development of transference and countertransference in therapy is important, but can also be dangerous.
- The patient must get emotionally involved for the therapy to work, according to Freud, but the therapist must avoid acting on their involvement.
- Psychoanalysis is often criticized for the allegedly low cure rate and that it can last for years and possibly never end.