

# Psychoanalytical Feminism

## Freud's Psychoanalytical Theory

Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic theory states that human personalities evolve through a series of phases: the Id, the ego, and the super ego. According to Freud, these phases are developed by the unconscious mind's inner struggles; he theorized that there are three levels of consciousness: consciousness, preconsciousness and unconsciousness. He believed these three levels also influenced the Id, the Ego and the Superego.

## Freud's Psychoanalytical theory of Personality

It states that there are three separate aspects of human personality that work together to form its substance: the Id, the Ego and the Superego. These Freudian personality types form the basis of human thoughts and emotions, beginning in the mind.

## The Mind

Freud believed that a person's ego operates in three states of the mind: conscious, preconscious and unconscious. The conscious consists of the meager amount of mental activity of which humans are aware. The preconscious is made up of things we could aware of if we made the effort.

The unconscious is comprised of things we are not aware of and do not have the capability to become so.

Freud's model of the mind as an iceberg places the conscious at the iceberg's tip. It includes the thoughts and events that are our current focus. The preconscious consists of everything we can recover from our memories; it is the level below the conscious. Below that lies the unconscious where everything we can never be aware of is stored: memories, instincts and a variety of fears. At the base of the iceberg the id resides, an extension of the unconscious mind.

### The Id

The id is the part of the human mind that contains all of the human mind's psychic energy, forming the personality's most primitive component and residing in the human mind since birth. The id is completely unconscious, based on the drive to survive and encompasses all of a person's behaviours both primitive and instinctive.

For Ex: An infant and its refusal to quiet until its needs are met particularly hunger or thirst.



## The Ego

According to Freud, the Ego is derived from the Id and bears the responsibility of providing the mind's ability to cope with reality. The Ego's operation is based on the reality principle, which attempts to quench the Id's desires in realistic ways by weighing both the pros and cons of impulses before deciding to either satisfy or discard them. The Ego also contains defense mechanisms, which are always that it safeguards the mind from anxiety.

Ex: The Ego might present itself while a person is sick and in the hospital. The patient might want to go home, believing there is nothing wrong, so the Ego would decide that the patient should remain in the hospital to get well instead of leaving and prolonging the illness.

## The Superego

Emerging at five years of age, the superego is a person's sense of right and wrong as learned from parents and society. It contains two parts: the conscience and the ego ideal.

The ~~conscience~~ <sup>conscience</sup> contains thoughts of unacceptable behaviours, possible punishments and guilty feelings. The ego ideal is made up of

the behavioural standards that the ego aims to exhibit. The ego acts as a suppressant for those behaviors, attempting to civilize human thoughts and actions.

Ex: If a person is in a hurry and is attempted tempted to drive through a red light, the superego would work to influence that person to stop by reminding them of the potential for an ~~so~~ accident by disobeying the traffic light's command to stop.

### Freud's theory of Personality Development

Freud proposed that personality development in childhood takes place during five psychosexual stages, which are oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital stage. During each stage sexual energy (libido) is expressed in different ways and through different parts of the body.

#### Oral stage (Birth to 1 year)

In the first stage, the libido is centred in a baby's mouth. During the oral stages, the baby gets much satisfaction from putting all sorts of things in its mouth to satisfy the libido, and thus its id demands. Which at this stage in life are oral, such as sucking, biting, and breastfeeding.



### Anal Stage (1-3 years)

During the anal stage, the libido becomes focused on the anus, and the child derives great pleasure from defecating. The child is now fully aware of that they are a person in their own right and that their wishes can bring them into conflict with the demands of the outside world (i.e. their ego has developed). Freud believed that this type of conflict tends to come to a head in potty training in which adults impose restrictions on when and where the child can defecate.

### Phallic Stage (3-6 years)

At this stage, the child becomes aware of anatomical sex differences, which sets in motion the conflict between erotic attraction, resentment, rivalry, jealousy and fear which Freud called the Oedipus complex (in boys) and the Electra complex (in girls).

This is resolved through the process of identification, which involves the child adopting the characteristics of same sex parent.

### Latency Stage (6y- puberty)

During this stage the libido is dormant and no further psychosexual development takes place (latent means hidden). Freud thought that most sexual impulses are repressed during latent stage, and sexual energy can be sublimated toward school work, hobbies and friendships.

Much of the child's energy is channeled into developing new skills and acquiring new knowledge and play becomes largely confined to other children of the same gender.

### Genital Stage (puberty to adult)

It is a time of adolescent sexual experimentation, the successful resolution of which is settling down into <sup>a loving</sup> one-to-one relationship with another person in our sexual instinct is directed to heterosexual pleasure, rather than self-pleasure like during the phallic stage.

For Freud, Fixation at the oral stage result in a person gaining sexual pleasure primarily from kissing and oral sex, rather than sexual intercourse.



## Psychoanalytical Feminism

Freud's theory of personality development centres on the Oedipus complex - the detachment from the mother.

Psychoanalytic feminism claims that the source of men's domination of women is men's unconscious two-sided need for women's emotionality and rejection of them as potential castrators.

Women submit to men because of their unconscious desires for emotional connectedness.

These gendered personalities are the outcome of the Oedipus complex - the separation from the mother.

It has the following main points

- Men's double standard Behaviour

Psychoanalytic feminism believed that the main source of men's domination of women is men's unconscious need for women's emotionality and rejection of them as potential castrators. Women submit to men because of their unconscious desires for emotional connectedness.

- Oedipus Complex

Though infants irrespective of their sex are connected more closely with their mother than father but boys upon reaching a certain age are detached from mother in order to their masculinity.

## • Identity Generation

Boys and girls upon reaching a certain age are trained to establish their identity as being a man or boy and a woman.

## • Ego Development

According to Psychoanalytic Feminism in society boys are trained to develop strong boundaries and a capacity of independence, objectivity and rational thinking and behavior. Girls on the other hand are trained to develop fluid ego boundaries that make them sensitive, empathic and emotional.

## How To Change the Common Psyche?

To change the common psyche of people to break the cycle of the reproduction of gendered personality structures, P.F. suggests shared parenting and the development of nurturing capabilities in men.



## Conclusion

Psychoanalytic Feminism held common psyche of people responsible for gender inequality and all gender-related issues. According to Psychoanalytic Feminist the chain of psyche can be broken only by encouraging shared parenting in our society.