

Psychodynamic Theory and Ordinary People

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The psychodynamic theory focuses on the unconscious parts of the human mind. It emphasizes the effects and influence of the unconscious mind on human emotions, thoughts and behavior. Psychodynamic theory derives from psychoanalytic theory and is founded on the ideas of Sigmund Freud and the works of his followers. Psychodynamic theory is based on self-reflection and free-speaking. Patients are encouraged to free associate , which is to speak freely about anything that comes to their mind without the need for censorship. Psychodynamic theory emphasizes the effects of past experiences stored in are unconscious. It is the belief that a person's past experiences throughout childhood influences their adult lives and personality. Events/experiences that take place in someone's childhood has a lasting effect into adulthood. According to this theory, experiences such a traumatic events can also impact a person's mental health. Traumatic events are pushed into the unconscious mind leading to mental disorders

In Psychodynamic theory, the psyche or the structure of personality consists of three components; Id, Ego and Super-ego. The id operates on an unconscious level and refers to a person's primitive and instinctive part of the personality. It is what drives our needs and "selfish" desires (Corey, 2017). The Ego is the idealized self ruled by the reality principle. The Ego is decision making component of personality that serves as a mediator between the Id and Super-ego. The Super-ego is the part of person's personality that strives for morality. It is composed of the morals and values people obtain from society. Freud believed that each component of a person's personality interacts to shape human behavior. In this theory personality develops in 5 psychosexual stages known as the oral stage(ages birth to 1 year), Anal (ages 1-3 years), Phallic (3 to 6 years), Latent (6 to puberty), Genital (puberty to death). In each stage of development, conflicts arise that can either help or hinder growth and development (Corey, 2017).

In the film, *Ordinary People*, the protagonist, Conrad suffers from major depressive disorder. Conrad is troubled due to the death of his brother during a boating accident. Conrad and his family are deeply affected by this tragedy. In this film, we see the unresolved issues within each family member. Conrad not only blames himself for his brother's death but feels like his mother blames him as well. The Psychodynamic theory can be applied when treating Conrad. Throughout the film, we see that there are past experiences in Conrad's life that affect his present life. Conrad has always felt like his mother loved him less than his brother. Not only does this affect his relationship with his parent but with himself as well. These conflicts that arise throughout these important psychosexual developmental phases have hindered his growth and development. Some techniques I would use in this theory are free association. In the film, we see how by allowing Conrad to free associate, he was able to gain insight through self-realization/self-knowledge. Part of this technique would also be interpretation. As Conrad speaks, as a therapist, I would explain the meaning of what he is revealing to me. These techniques will help Conrad make connections with the issues/conflicts of the past with his present behavior and feelings that have been repressed. I believe that this form of therapy can be effective in uncovering issues in Conrad's unconscious. The techniques used can possibly help Conrad because this theory looks at personality from childhood into adulthood. However, the theory lacks a scientific approach and focuses too much on the unconscious mind. It also lacks objectivity as it requires interpretation from the therapist.

References:

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