

Unit 3 Development in Psychodynamic Theory

Contents

Alfred Adler	2
Carl Jung	5
Jung's structure of the psyche	6
Symbolic language	11
Archetypes	13
Therapeutic insights	18
References	19

Aims of this unit

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- suggest whether a spiritual dimension is valid counselling territory
- contrast Jung's view of the unconscious with Freud's
- describe briefly Jung's theory of the collective unconscious
- explain what Jung meant by 'archetypes'
- explain what Jung's theory of 'individuation' involves.

The pioneering work of Freud influenced the thinking of his contemporaries, near contemporaries and others since. In particular, his theory was taken up and developed by Adler, Horney, and Sullivan and Fromm – who are sometimes called the 'neo-Freudians'. Melanie Klein's work with children and Erik Erikson's developmental model of psychological growth (both of which will be looked at later) were also directly indebted to Freud. The name that is most linked to Freud's – partly because, although he admired him, he realised that his own psychodynamic theories differed in many respects – is **Carl Jung** (1875–1961). It is his work that is the main focus of this unit, though we begin with a brief look at **Alfred Adler** (1870–1937) and his view of humans as social beings.

Alfred Adler

Adler was a member of Freud’s Psychoanalytic Circle in Vienna. He founded the Society of Individual Psychology as he became increasingly involved in working with children and applying his psychodynamic theories to education and child guidance. From the name that he gave to his society, you will not be surprised to know that Adler regarded each person as a unique mixture of motives, traits, interests and values. One of the ‘Why?’ questions that you thought about in Unit 1 may have been ‘Why am I different from everyone else?’ In Unit 2 we asked you to look at your ego – ‘What makes me, me?’ It is a fundamental question of psychology, and the notion of uniqueness was important in Adler’s theorising.

Activity 1

What do you think has made you, you? Spend up to fifteen minutes considering your response to this question. Make a note of it below:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Comment

One of the influences that you might have considered is your environment, the society or culture into which you were born. For Adler this is crucial; we are all born with a social interest, but the types of relationships we make and the way in which this social interest develops and expresses itself depends upon the society around us.

Does this sound a bit like the heredity/environment debate? It certainly has links to it, but Adler’s view is more complex. He theorises that we have a creative self that searches for experiences to fulfil our *unique* needs, within our society, and if we don’t find them there, this aspect of self will try to create them.

Activity 2

Can you think of any examples to support this view? Have you, for instance, ever felt that there was something seriously missing in your life and then set about trying to fill the gap in a way very personal to you?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Comment

You might perhaps have pointed to the imaginary ‘friend’ that lonely children often create and seem to have a vivid relationship with as one example.

Adler also considered that we are very conscious of inferiorities in ourselves. This is balanced by a consciousness of goals for which we are striving in order to rid ourselves of the deficit. Furthermore, we are capable of planning and guiding actions in order to achieve these goals.

Activity 3

Do you detect any contrasts with Freud here?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Comment

You might have noted that Adler sees us as *pulled* towards goals (of socialisation) rather than *pushed* by the demands of the id. Adler is sometimes criticised as being preoccupied with the human drive towards gaining mastery. A further difference is that Adler viewed the individual as ‘indivisible’ – in contrast to Freud’s tripartite division of the personality.

Adler was very interested in a person’s position in the family, seeing this as influential in creating what sort of self we become. If you have a sibling, think how your position in relation to him/her may have influenced you.

Would things have been different had you been the first/second/etc., born? Knowing the position in the family is a key reference point in Adlerian therapy.

Adlerian therapy also requires a close examination of the client’s lifestyle and how it came to be this way. You can perhaps see how Adler, while acknowledging early influences, sees external forces as equally important.

Briefly, the key issues in Adlerian theory are that:

- we are social beings who want to belong. This is why unhappiness and anxiety are linked to relationship or social problems
- because we sense inferiority, the psychodynamic movement is towards getting away from the minus and achieving a plus
- this means that we are goal orientated. We cannot change causes, but our dynamic strivings offer the opportunity for change
- the uniqueness of the individual means that the subjective truth (the way we see things) is part of this dynamic striving
- we strive to find a holistic pattern to life events, which Adler called the **Life Style** – the task or goal of Adlerian therapy is to help the client synthesise all aspects of the Life Style.

This superficial overview does not do justice to the depth of Adler’s thinking, but it does indicate how, while acknowledging the power of the psyche, some psychodynamic theorists take greater account of the external world than Freud did.

Activity 4

What do you think Adler would see as the main areas of obligation or opportunity faced by all individuals? Try to suggest two or three.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Comment

Adler saw three main areas of opportunity and obligation, which he referred to as ‘life tasks’.

- 1 **Work** – finding a suitable occupation helps us to adjust to obligations and responsibilities in society.

- 2 **Group** and friendship links, which help us in the goal of co-operation.
- 3 **Love and sex**, which help us in the goals of role value, adequacy and intimacy.

Carl Jung

On the other hand, Jung considered that the most urgent task facing us is not a conquest of the external world, but to study ourselves in order to develop **integration**. This is one of his chief differences from Freud who saw the need for ego strength as a means of controlling or policing the forces of the psyche. Jung saw a need for wholeness, oneness. The concepts he worked on all lead towards what he termed **individuation**.

Jung was the son of a Swiss pastor and throughout his life was preoccupied with ideas of religion (perhaps it would be more accurate to say ideas of the religious), as were many of the great thinkers of his time. As his voluminous diaries reveal, Jung read extensively in theology and philosophy, as well as his medical studies. He was also interested in the occult. As a result he came to see humans as spiritual beings, whose ‘wholeness’ depended on being able to incorporate this spiritual dimension. Like all spiritual and abstract notions, Jung’s concept of individuation is difficult to define – he himself once said,

‘I have such a hell of a trouble to make people see what I mean!’

If we explore the aspects of his thinking that led to it, his theory will become clearer.

Activity 5

But first, would you agree that there is a spiritual aspect to human nature? If you think there is, how would you describe it? Can you offer any evidence?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Comment

You might have mentioned some experiences that could be described as spiritual, or ‘holy’ (in a broad sense), like being inspired or awed by natural phenomena, being moved by art (poetry, plays, music, painting), feeling a sense of wonder, perhaps in particular places.

Jung’s structure of the psyche

For Jung the psyche is the whole state of psychological being – mind, spirit and soul. Freud’s basic division of the psyche into unconscious, preconscious and conscious is rather different from Jung’s (although they agreed that much psychological material is repressed). Jung also saw the psyche as tripartite, but for him the segments were:

- consciousness
- personal unconscious
- collective unconscious.

Consciousness

You will remember that Adler saw humans as confronted by a series of life tasks; Jung had a similar idea that the process of maturation involves a series of tasks. However, they are not, like Adler’s, primarily linked to the external world, but rather to the psyche. Jung termed the tasks **obligations**. These obligations take us through the natural process of maturation and ageing. This led him to see the problems of neuroses as when we get, as he said, ‘stuck’ and fail to meet these obligations. That is, the causes of anxiety and its attendant unhappiness are in the *present*.

Activity 6

Consider how this contrasts with Freud. Note your thoughts down below.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Comment

You will remember that Freudian thinking is that neuroses are rooted in the past and caused by becoming fixated at some point in early psychosexual development, to which we revert. This is a strong contrast with Jung’s thinking. An example might help. If a young man found it very difficult to leave home, for work or marriage, say, what would be the likely Freudian interpretation?

I expect you have written something about an unresolved Oedipus complex. Jung, however, would interpret it as an unwillingness to accept that the psychological ‘obligation’ for young men (and women, no doubt) is to make an independent ‘space’ for themselves.

Activity 7

For Jung, **consciousness** is the state of being ‘awake’, of being aware of ‘obligations’ and being self-aware of anxieties or reluctances to meet them. Think of some significant challenges in your psychological maturation; for instance, leaving home for the first time. How did you meet them?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Comment

Your experience will be personal to you. However, consider now whether your responses were the result of your psychosexual development (i.e. Freudian), or whether they followed a more Jungian model of being aware of ‘obligations’ and meeting them?

Activity 8

You might try the exercise again, but this time recalling a *crisis* (for instance, a divorce) rather than the natural progression of ageing.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Comment

Some people find that meeting crises leads them to a more Freudian interpretation! If you have time you might find it fun to take a well-known fairy story and attempt both a Freudian and a Jungian interpretation. What would the prince's sword mean, for instance? The novel *Jane Eyre* is also a fruitful area for this kind of work – the heroine has to endure a variety of tribulations, most of them related to men. She is a fatherless virgin; she runs away from marriage (despite the hero's strong sexual appeal); she has mystical experiences of the hero calling to her on the wind. Yet Charlotte Brontë, as far as we know, had no Freudian- or Jungian-type education.

The **ego**, for Jung, is the centre of the conscious mind. (Although, paradoxically, it might not be a single, unified entity.) Unlike the Freudian ego, its function is not a policing/mediating role. Instead, for Jung, its function is to make and to preserve consciousness, and to promote a sense of personal identity and continuity.

Much of Jung's earlier thinking resulted from his clinical work with schizophrenics and psychotics in what was then called an asylum (the Burghhözli in Zurich). With this background, you can see how important ego strength was in maintaining a hold on reality – which is also rather different in emphasis from Freud's view.

Personal unconscious

This area of the psyche most nearly coincides with Freud's view of the unconscious, in that Jung saw it as containing much repressed material – impulses, wishes, fears, memories. An interesting feature of Jung's view of the personal unconscious is that it contains our creativity. Look back at your Johari Window (Unit 2). Would you say that window 4 – the area unknown to both you and others – could contain abilities you are unaware of and which could be brought into being?

For Freud, much of the material in the unconscious is sexual, whereas for Jung there would be a greater emphasis on the spiritual (in the broadest sense) content. That Jung called this the **personal** unconscious may also be relevant to the value he (like Adler) placed on subjective experiencing. However, it has more to do with his need to distinguish it from the third area of the psyche.