

MOTIVATION & EMOTION

Unconscious motivation



Dr James Neill
Centre for Applied Psychology
University of Canberra
2011

Image source
1

Psychoanalytic → psychodynamic

- **Psychoanalytic:** Traditional Freudian approach to unconscious including Dual-instinct theory
- **Psychodynamic:** More generally, study of unconscious psychological processes (e.g., prejudice, depression, though suppression, defense mechanisms), without necessarily subscribing to Freudian tradition
- This lecture is about **psychodynamic unconscious motivation**, but starts with a historical perspective.

Based on Reeve (2009, p. 393)

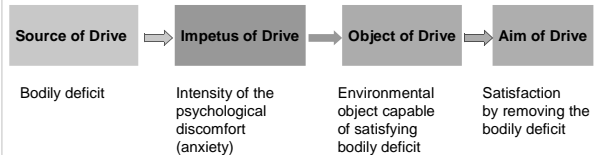
4

Unconscious motivation

Reading:
Reeve (2009)
Ch 14
(pp. 391-416)

2

Freud's drive theory



Development of mental representations of self through your relationships with others.

Based on Reeve (2009, p. 30)

5

Outline – Unconscious motivation

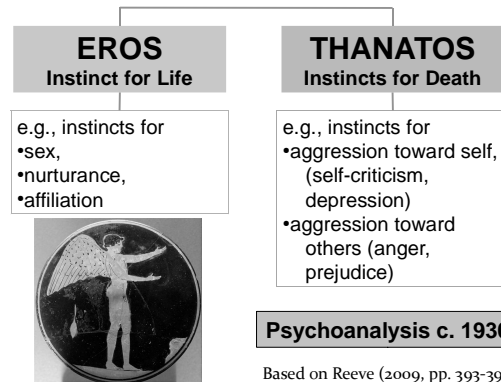
- **Psychodynamic perspective**
 - Psychoanalytic → psychodynamic
 - Dual-instinct theory
 - Drive → wish?
 - Contemporary psychodynamic theory
- **The Unconscious**
 - Freudian unconscious
 - Adaptive unconscious
 - Implicit motivation
 - Subliminal motivation
- **Psychodynamics**
 - Repression
 - Suppression
 - Do the Id & Ego actually exist?
- **Ego psychology**
 - Ego development
 - Ego defense
 - Ego strength
- **Object relations theory**
- **Criticisms**

Based on Reeve (2009, p. 391)



3

Freud's dual-instinct theory



Psychoanalysis c. 1930

Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 393-394)

6

Drive → wish

- Unlike hunger and thirst, neither sex nor aggression conform to a physiological model of drive
- Drive theory evolved into a “wish model” - a discrepancy theory - i.e., motivation arises from a mismatch between “present state” and “ideal state”
- Contemporary psychoanalysts
 - propose that psychological wishes, not instinctual drives, regulate and direct behaviour
 - Focus on helping people recognise, improve upon, or avoid problematic interpersonal relationships

Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 394-395) **7**

Subliminal motivation

- Subliminal stimuli are “below threshold” (absolute threshold) for conscious perception.
- Information processed at an unconscious level has emotional effects.
- However, people do not necessarily act on subliminal information (to the disappointment of marketers).



Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 400-401)

Contemporary psychodynamic perspective

1. The Unconscious

Much of mental life is unconscious.

2. Psychodynamics

Mental processes operate in parallel with one another.

3. Ego Development

Healthy development involves moving from an immature socially dependent personality to one that is more mature and interdependent with others. → Ego effectiveness

4. Object Relations Theory

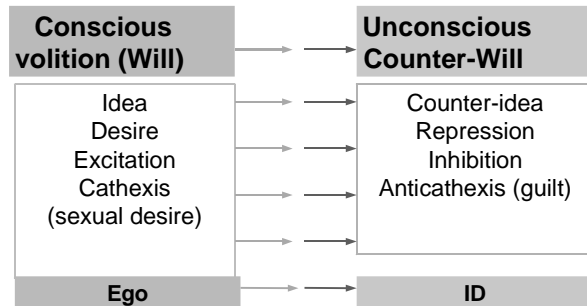
Mental representations of self and other form in childhood that guide the person’s later social motivations and relationships.

Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 395-396)

8

Psychodynamics

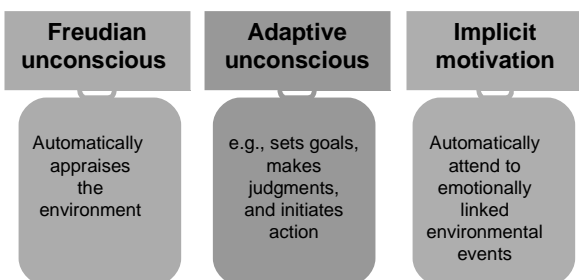
The clashing of psychological forces



Based on Reeve (2009, p. 401)

11

Three contemporary views on the unconscious



Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 396-400)

9

Illustration of psychodynamics

1. Repression

- Process of forgetting information and an experience by ways that are unconscious, unintentional, and automatic.
- Ego’s counterforce to the Id’s demanding desires.

2. Suppression

- Process of removing a thought from attention by ways that are conscious, intentional, and deliberate.

Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 402-404)

12

Do the Id and the Ego actually exist?

The limbic system makes for a pretty fair **Id**:

- Hypothalamus, thalamus, amygdala, medial forebrain bundle,...
- Pleasure-unpleasure brain centers.

The neocortex makes for a pretty fair **Ego**:

- Learning, memory, decision-making, intellectual problem-solving
- Executive control center that perceived the world and learns to adapt to it.

Intricately interrelated neural pathways and structures of the neocortex and limbic systems

- Interrelationships show how one structure affects another (e.g., how the amygdala excites and inhibits the neocortex).

Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 404-405)

13

Ego defense

Changes in Internal Or External Reality

- **Environmental Dangers** (conflict with environment)
- **Instinctual Presses** (from Id) (conflict with impulses)
- **Superego Demands** (conflict with conscience)

Defense Mechanisms to Buffer and Reduce Anxiety

Anxiety, Distress, Depression

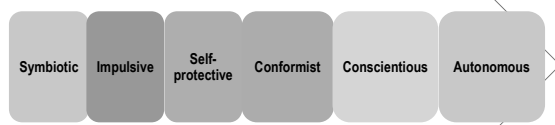
Figure 14.1 Role of Defense Mechanisms in Buffering the Ego from Anxiety-Generating Events

Based on Reeve (2009, p. 406)

16

Ego psychology

Ego Development (Loevinger, 1976)



Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 405-406)

14

Ego strength (maturity of defense mechanisms) discriminated men who suffered career, social, psychological and medical problems

	Predominant Adaptive Style (%)	
	Mature (N = 25)	Immature (N = 31)
Overall adjustment		
1) Top third in adult adjustment	60%	0%
2) Bottom third in adult adjustment	4%	61%
3) "Happiness" (top third)	68%	16%
Career adjustment		
1) Income over \$20,000/year	88%	48%
2) Job meets ambition for self	92%	58%
3) Active public service outside job	56%	29%
Social adjustment		
1) Rich friendship pattern	64%	6%
2) Marriage in least harmonious quartile or divorced	28%	61%
3) Barren friendship pattern	4%	52%
4) No competitive sports (age 40-50)	24%	77%
Psychological adjustment		
1) 10+ psychiatric visits	0%	45%
2) Ever diagnosed mentally ill	0%	55%
3) Emotional problems in childhood	20%	45%
4) Worst childhood environment (bottom fourth)	12%	39%
5) Fails to take full vacation	28%	61%
6) Able to be aggressive with others (top fourth)	36%	6%
Medical adjustment		
1) 4+ adult hospitalizations	8%	26%
2) 5+ days sick leave/year	0%	23%
3) Recent health poor by objective exam	0%	36%
4) Subjective health consistently judged excellent since college	68%	48%

N = sample size. Based on Reeve (2009, Figure 14.2, p. 409). Source: From Adaptation to Life (p. 87, by Vaillant, 1977; Little, Brown & Company. Copyright 1977 by George E. Vaillant.

Motivational importance of ego development

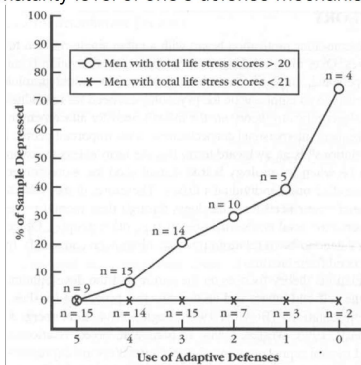
The Ego develops to defend against anxiety

The Ego develops to empower the person to interact more with **Conscious volition (Will)** effectively and more proactively with its surroundings.

Based on Reeve (2009, p. 406)

15

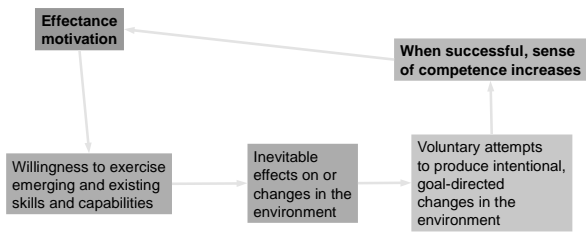
Likelihood of depression as a function of life stress and the maturity level of one's defense mechanisms



Based on Reeve (2009, Figure 14.2, p. 410)

Ego effectance

White's Model of Effectance Motivation



Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 410-411)

19

Criticisms of the psychodynamic perspective

Many of Freud's concepts are **not scientifically testable**.

Motivational concepts **arose from case studies of disturbed individuals**.

Many points about human motivation and emotion was simply **wrong**. (e.g., Freud's theory of superego formation; Fisher & Greenberg, 1977)

Methods of data collection.

Psychoanalytic theory is **woeful as a predictive device**.

Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 414-415)

22

Object relation theory

The quality of anyone's mental representation of relationships can be characterised by three chief dimensions:

Unconscious tone

(benevolent vs. malevolent)

Capacity for emotional involvement

(selfishness/narcissism vs. mutual concern)

Mutuality of autonomy with others

(objects perceived as autonomous and relationships present no risk to the integrity and autonomy of participants)

Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 411-414)

20

Summary

- Freud: Biologically-based motivation model based on two instinctual drives – sex and aggression – which supply the body with its physical and mental energy
- Contemporary psychoanalysts emphasise psychological wishes (rather than biological drives) and cognitive information processing
- Four postulates:
 - Much of mental life is unconscious
 - Mental processes operate in parallel
 - Ego development → ego maturity
 - Mental representations in childhood → guide adult social motivations

Based on Reeve (2009, pp. 415-416)

23

One woman's representation of her relationships with men

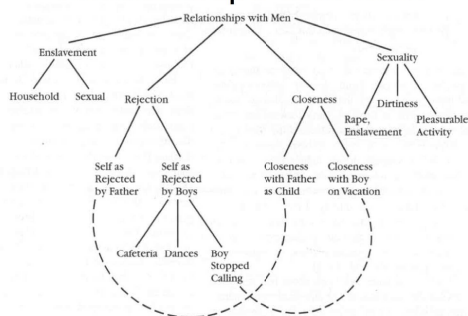


Figure 14.3 One Woman's Representation of Her Relationships with Men

Based on Reeve (2009, p. 413); Source: From "Social Cognition and Object Relations," by D. Westen, 1991, Psychological Bulletin, 109, pp. 429-455. Copyright 1991 by American Psychological Corporation.

Upcoming lectures

- Individual differences
- Growth psychology (Ch 15)
- Summary & conclusion (Ch 16)



24

References

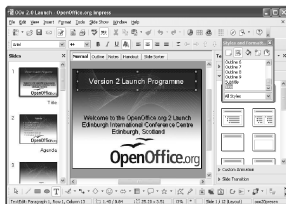
- Reeve, J. (2009). *Understanding motivation and emotion* (5th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Note: Image credits are in the slide notes

25

Open Office Impress

- This presentation was made using Open Office Impress.
- Free and open source software.
- <http://www.openoffice.org/product/impress.html>



26