

THE PSYCHODYNAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Richard C. Clark

PSY 249

3/16/2023



ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Grading Check in 2 nearly done!
- Questions on check in 3?

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- Do you believe that humans have an unconscious/Subconscious? (A level of consciousness deeper and/or more expansive that influences our thoughts, feelings, and actions)
 - If yes: Why? What are some ways this might influence human personality?
 - If no: Why not? What do you use to explain seemingly outlandish or even random emotion/behavior?

SOME FACTS

- The psychodynamic perspective was developed by Sigmund Freud between 1900-1939. It was one of the first theories on personality that encompassed both personality development AND characteristics
- The psychodynamic approach sees personality as an interplay between three parts of consciousness the Conscious, Preconscious, and Unconscious
- Many psychologists and theorists have gone on to challenge, complicate, continue, and combine psychodynamic theory.
- The psychodynamic approach to personality is still widely used by many though its initial misogynistic and psychosexual Freudian framing has been largely shifted away from

3 CENTRAL ASSUMPTIONS

1. Primacy of the Unconscious

- Most of our psychological processes (thus a large part of our personality) are based in the unconscious

2. Importance of Early Experiences

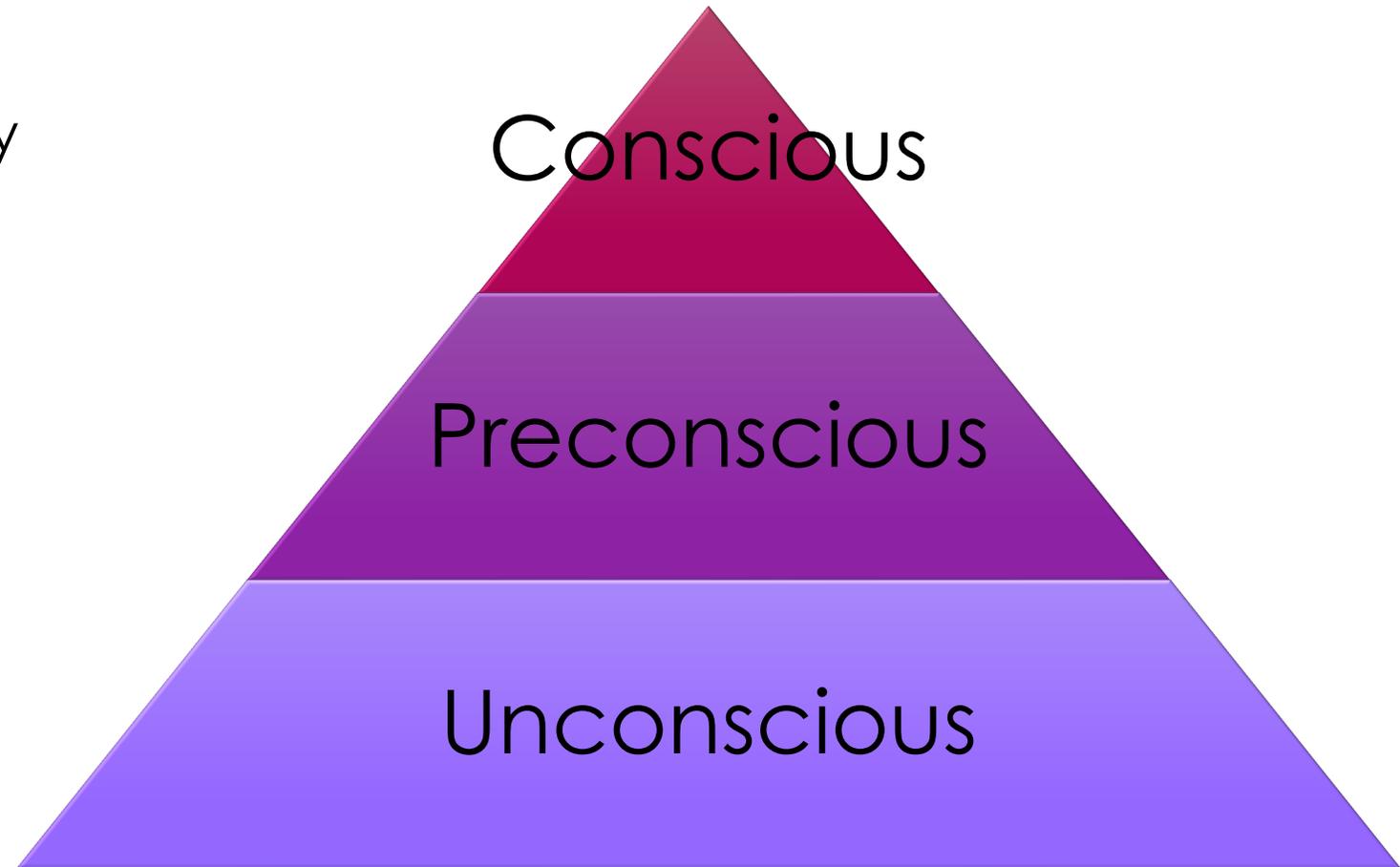
- Experiences we have even as early as in our first weeks of life set personality development in motion and influence us throughout our lives.

3. Psychic Causality

- None of our actions or behaviors are determined by chance. There is no such thing as a random thought, feeling, or motive. Thus personality is all due to biological or psychological influences.

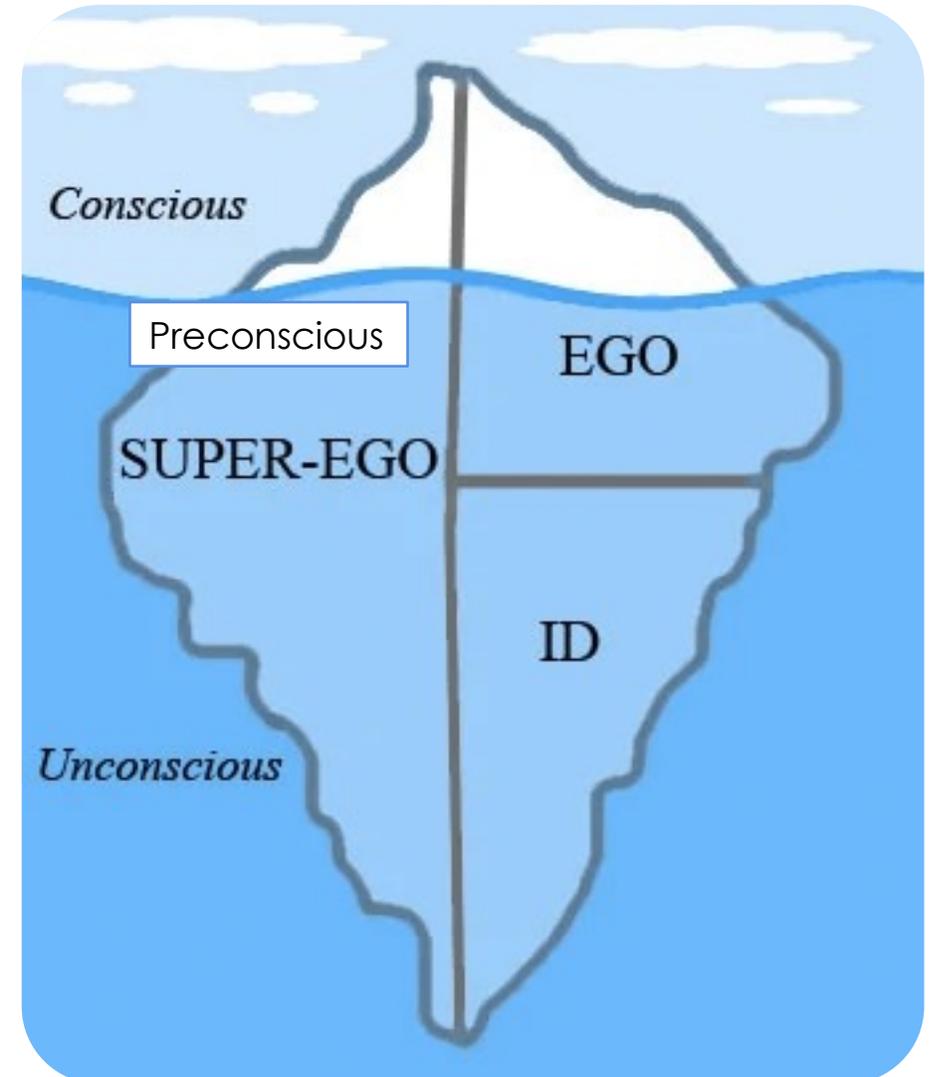
BREAKDOWN OF CONSCIOUSNESS

- The conscious is made up of all our thoughts, feelings, memories, desires, that we are aware of at any given moment
- The preconscious is made of all the thoughts, feelings, memories, desires, that we have access to if called upon
- The unconscious is made up of all the thoughts, feelings, memories, desires that cannot easily be brought to our awareness



ASPECTS IN THE PSYCHE

- According to the psychodynamic perspective the Id, Ego, and Superego are the three elements of our psyche that combine with experiences and the environment to shape our personality.
- Id = Primal urges, gratification, action
- Ego = Sense and understanding of self
- Superego = Moral Compass and Character lessons
- Personality characteristics in this perspective are determined by the consistent outcome of these interactions.
- All three aspects have the potential for good and violence so balance is needed



ACTIVITY: SOLVE THE CASE

CW: HYPOTHETICAL VIOLENCE/MURDER

A serial killer is on the loose! Everything rests on you being able to determine which aspect of their psyche most influences the reason they kill. What you know: The killer is extremely volatile and often kills unexpectedly. The killer was raised by extremely religious and abusive parents. The killer has sent anonymous letters to media outlets boasting about their kills. Saying "I am the only one trying to make this world better!". Finally, although each kill is different, they always carve their initials somewhere in the scene. Using your understanding of the Id, ego, and super-ego. Which do you feel is the strongest leading this person to kill?

EGO DEFENSES

- Ego defenses or defense mechanisms are important because they also give us personality characteristics.
- An Ego defense is a tactic that our ego develops in order to shield itself from unpleasant or damaging complications that arise dealing with the demands of the real world, the id, and the superego

Denial

Displacement

Repression

Projection

Intellectualization

Sublimation

Rationalization

Regression

Reaction
formation

Compensation

Avoidance

Humor

Dissociation

Altruism

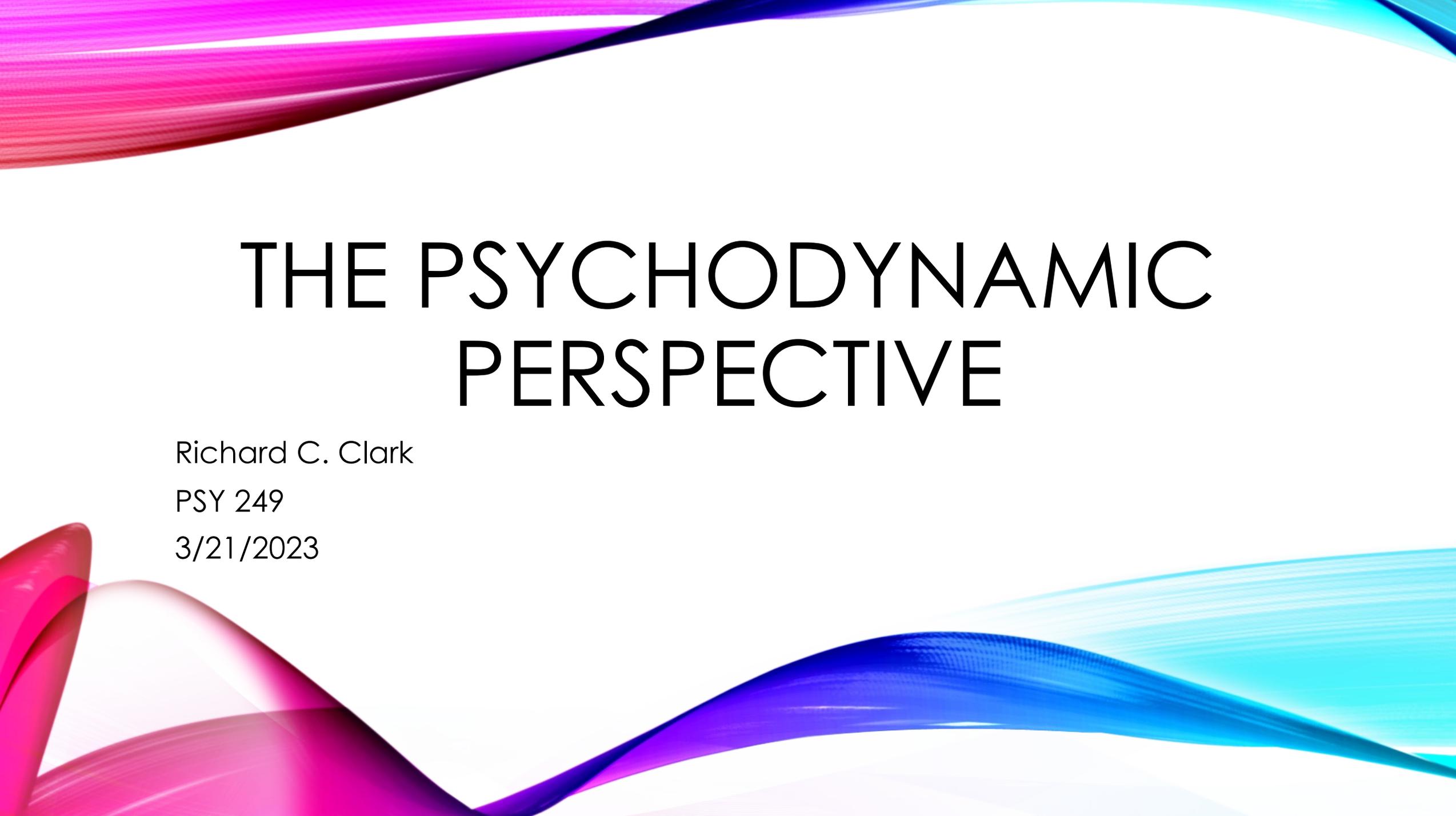
Aim inhibition



HOW WE DEFEND

According to Freud every living person develops some sort of ego defense. Typically denial is our first then we branch out from there.

Did any resonate with you? Discuss in small groups how this ego defense manifests in your own life.



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3/21/2023



ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Assignment 2 Re-do deadline Friday! (feedback issue)
- Assignment 3 due Next Friday! Questions?
- Assignment 4 will be available soon

SCENARIO QUESTION

“Marco really dislikes when men are effeminate. Whether they are gay, bi, or whatever he thinks that they are annoying. He regularly gets the urge to hit them. He thinks that they deserve to be hurt, but he knows that he’ll get in trouble if he hits them. He thinks that if more and more men are effeminate then there will be no more real men left. So, he heckles guys every time he sees them not acting masculine enough!”

Talk about about Marco’s Id, Ego, Superego

Talk about early childhood experiences

Talk about any ego defenses that might be present

SCENARIO QUESTION

“Zeta is an incredibly compassionate, hilarious, and kind person. They’re like Mother Teresa! All they do is spend their time helping other’s they never seem to take any time for themselves. They tell me they’re just doing what’s right. Their also so funny they always make the most hilarious self-deprecating jokes that leave the room in stitches. It’s impossible to have a serious moment with them around!”

Talk about about Zeta’s Id, Ego, Superego

Talk about early childhood experiences

Talk about any ego defenses that might be present



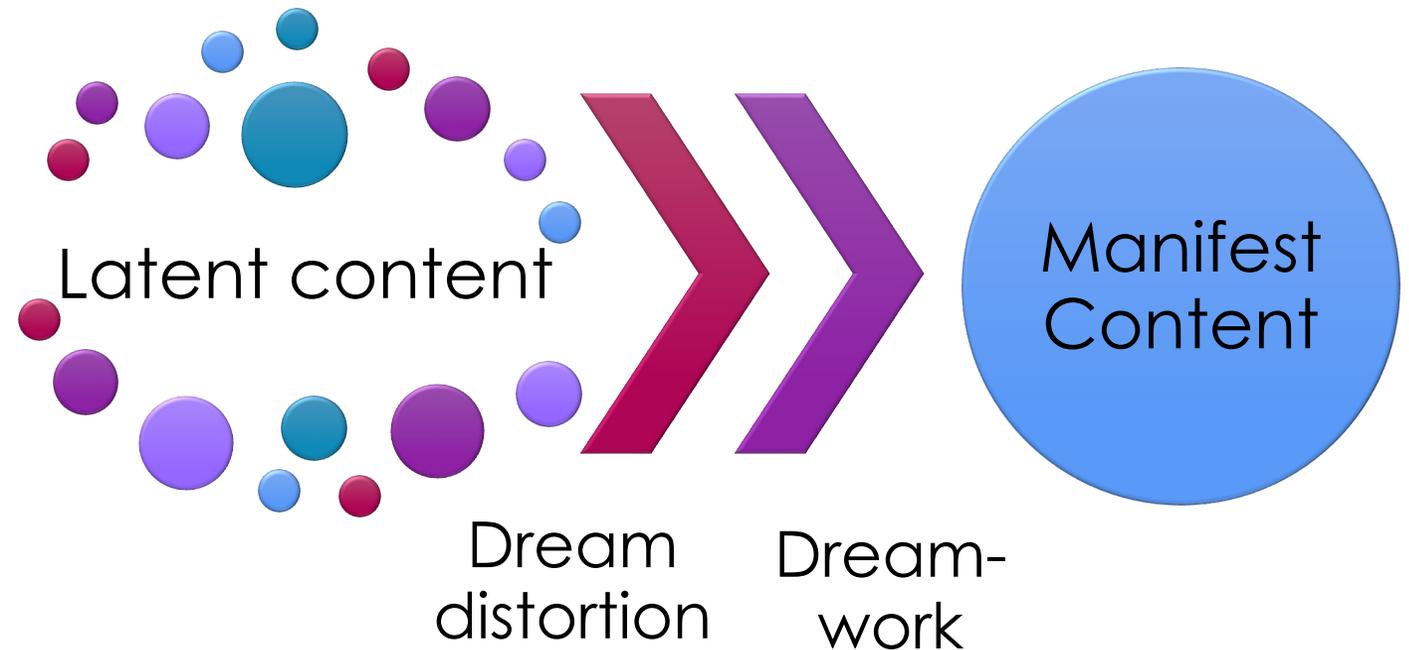
DREAMS & PERSONALITY

- Psychodynamic perspective recognizes the importance of dreams as windows into who we really are.
- Psychodynamic dream analysis understands dreams to be representations of hidden unconscious desires, needs, parts of self.
- In short dreams are the manifestations of our unconscious that can give us a clearer picture of exactly who we are and what we may be struggling with.
- Dreams show us the parts of our personality that we let go of, suppress, aspire to, and run away from.

PSYCHODYNAMIC: DREAM ANALYSIS

The task of psychodynamic dream analysis is to uncover the hidden meanings within the dreams. In other words decipher the latent content from the manifest content and interpret its many meanings.

- Condensation: Tendency for ego to create unity out of a variety of unconscious elements
- Displacement: Tendency for ego to replace objects/themes with less threatening ones
- Symbolic Representation: Tendency for ego more abstract symbols in order to represent more threatening objects/themes
- Secondary Elaboration: tendency for ego to fill in gaps and connections which further distorts meaning



ACTIVITY: DREAMS & THEMES

- Part 1: Take 5 minutes write about the last dream you had or you can just write about a dream you remember. What happened? Who/what was involved? How did you feel during the dream and after you woke up?
- Part 2: In groups go around and share your dreams (if comfortable of course) and answer the following questions:
 - What are some aspects/themes of the dream that stand out to you?
 - How might these aspects/themes speak to the latent content?
 - What can this dream tell us about this person's personality?
- Remember to be respectful of one another in your analyses.

HISTORICAL EBBS & FLOWS

- Every it seems every 20 years or so since its inception the psychodynamic perspective moves through a period of crisis and reform. The last happening in the late 70s.
- Freud's original theories which lacked an objective or empirical backing began to lose favor. As psychology was now embarking on a journey to become a hard science.
- It was also during this time that people were beginning to understand the deeply misogynistic nature of Freud's life and work.
- Standing on the shoulders of cultural and psychological theorists, Nancy Chodorow pioneered Psychoanalytic Feminism and the now important "Object Relations" Theory (1999).
- Object relations is an reformation of the psychodynamic perspective that was said to:
1. to eliminate the misogynistic lenses of the original theory, 2. while retaining the important elements supported by other theorists, while ALSO 3. Allowing for more objective and empirical testing and analysis.
- I would argue that they are currently moving through a period of crisis so we'll see...

3 EMPIRICALLY BACKED FINDINGS

1

Unconscious process influence our behavior as the Psychodynamic perspective predicts. (Bornstien, 2009; Bornstien, 2010; Robinson & Gordon, 2011)

2

We all use ego defenses and they help to determine our psychological adjustment and physical health. (Bond, 2004; Cramer, 2006)

3

Mental representations of self and others DO serve as blueprints for later relationships. (Benjamin, 2002; Silverstein, 2007; Wachtel, 1997).

PROS AND CONS

Pros

- So comprehensive that it can be used to explain ANY human behavior or personality
- Terms and processes that deeply resonate with people and are understood intuitively by many
- Dynamic and adaptable approach where new and complicated ideas are readily taken on and discussed

Cons

- Bit of a checkered past
- Not a lot of empirical evidence or support as with other perspectives (especially trait and biological). As such Many aspects are still completely theoretically based.
- Complex and Time consuming perspective to take in order to understand personality.