

MODULE 56 PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORIES AND MODERN VIEWS OF THE UNCONSCIOUS

THE NEW-FREUDIAN AND PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORISTS

- **PSYCHODYNAMIC THEORIES** are the modern-day approaches that view personality with a focus on the unconscious and the importance of childhood experiences.
- Neo-Freudians accept Freud's basic ideas: personality structures of id, ego, and superego; the importance of the unconscious; the shaping of personality in childhood; and the dynamics of anxiety and the defense mechanisms.
- Neo-Freudians broke away in two ways: 1. Placed more emphasis on the conscious mind's role in interpreting experience and in coping with the environment., and 2. Doubt that sex and aggression were all-consuming motivations. They tend to emphasize loftier motives and social interactions.
- Alfred Adler agreed with Freud that childhood is important but believe that childhood social, not sexual, tensions are crucial for personality formation. Adler himself struggled to overcome childhood illnesses and accidents, and he believed that much of our behavior is driven by efforts to conquer childhood inferiority feelings that trigger our strivings for superiority and power.
- Karen Horney agree with Freud as well that childhood is important but said childhood anxiety triggers our desire for love and security. Horney also countered Freud's assumptions, arising as they did in his conservative culture, that women have weak superegos and suffer "penis envy," and she attempted to balance the bias she detected in his masculine view of psychology.
- Carl Jung believed in Freud's repressed thoughts and feelings but also that we have a **COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS**, or a common reservoir of images, or archetypes, derived from our species' universal experiences.

ASSESSING UNCONSCIOUS PROCESSES

- **PROJECTIVE TESTS** is a personality test, such as the Rorschach, that provides ambiguous stimuli designed to trigger projection of one's inner dynamics. Henry Murray introduced one such test, the **THEMATIC APPERCEPTION TEST (TAT)**, is a projective test in which people express their inner feelings and interests through the stories they make up about ambiguous scenes.
- **RORSCHACH INKBLOT TEST** is the most widely used projective test, a set of 10 inkblots, designed by Hermann Rorschach; seeks to identify people's inner feelings by analyzing their interpretations of the blots. Critics argue that only a few of the many Rorschach-derived scores, such as ones for hostility and anxiety, have demonstrated validity – predicting what they are supposed to predict. Moreover, they say, these tests do not yield consistent results – they are not reliable.

THE MODERN UNCONSCIOUS MIND

- More than we realize, we fly on autopilot.
- **FALSE CONSENSUS EFFECT** is the tendency to overestimate the extent to which others share our beliefs and our behaviors.
- **TERROR-MANAGEMENT THEORY** is a theory of death-related anxiety; explores people's emotional and behavioral responses to reminders of their impending death.

BE ABLE TO ANSWER: What methods have been used by psychodynamic clinicians to assess unconscious processes?

PRACTICE FRQ: Name and accurately describe two projective tests.