

### **Try It Yourself (page 227)**

The notion that normal and abnormal behaviour are basically similar (differing only in degree) is central to Freud's theory. Do you accept this idea? Freud's view was based on beliefs about the underlying processes that govern behaviour, not on social judgments of normality, but our own perspective is likely influenced by social attitudes. Consider the following examples:

- Do you ever talk to yourself? "Oh Marilyn, be more careful!" mutters MH as she finds herself making typographical errors in preparing this text. Compare this to someone walking down the street while speaking loudly to themselves about their distaste for the government's latest policy. Is one instance normal and the other abnormal? Where is the cutoff point?
- Marjorie and Simone both keep an immaculate home. Marjorie enjoys having her grandchildren visit, but when they leave, she spends a great deal of time cleaning up after them. Simone, on the other hand, cleans every inch of her home with disinfectant before her grandchildren visit so they won't "pick up germs" and even removes the baseboards around her walls to clean behind them to make them sanitary. When the grandchildren leave, Simone repeats this procedure, and sterilises the glasses and dishes the children have used to remove any germs they may have deposited. Which woman would society consider a good housekeeper and which would be suspected of having an unhealthy preoccupation with cleanliness?

If we cannot readily draw a line between what is normal and what is abnormal, does that make Freud's assumption more plausible?

*There is a wide range of behaviours that are considered normal, and what is normal in one culture at one historical time is often considered abnormal in another. For this reason, mental health professionals are very careful about labeling a person as having a mental disorder. There are very strict guidelines governing the application of the diagnosis of a mental disorder. In most cases, people that are regarded as having abnormal behaviour by those around them are regarded as being within the normal range by mental health professionals because their behaviour does not conform to these guidelines. As WEG and MH can attest, many people think that psychologists are likely to judge them as 'crazy', but in fact, psychologists are far less likely to see them as anything other than perhaps a little extreme on the continuum of behaviour.*

### **Try It Yourself (page 231)**

We all dream perhaps five or six times each night, yet we rarely remember all of these dreams. You may have had the experience of waking up after a dream and thinking "Wow! I'll never forget that dream!" only to find, in the morning, that your memory of the contents of the dream is gone. By keeping a pad of paper and a pencil by your bed for a week, and trying to write down dream images as soon as you awaken, you will probably increase your memory of your dreams. After a week of doing this, look at what sorts of dreams you have had. Do any common themes emerge? Can you relate these themes to something that is happening in your life? For example, one of MH's students reported a series of dreams in which she was searching for something: for her hotel room in an unknown city, for her handbag at home, for someone to give her directions to a concert hall, etc. She immediately related this to her difficulty in choosing a programme of study at university, and was a little surprised. "I didn't realise it was bothering me so much," she said. "But if I keep dreaming about this, maybe it is and I should make a choice."

In exploring your dreams, it's useful to keep in mind two points: First, most dreams mean nothing (the 'daily residue', as Freud called them), and one isolated dream probably has little meaning. Second, even if dreams have deeper meanings, Freud (and most therapists) would say that self-analysis is generally neither productive nor advisable.

*There are popular books on the market discussing the ‘meanings’ of dreams. While these books are highly entertaining, they are of little practical value in deciphering the true meaning of dreams. Even Freudian symbols which may seem obvious are not necessarily accurate. For example, while a common interpretation of a large cigar in a dream is that the cigar represents a penis, this is unlikely to be the case for a person who is quitting smoking, or for a person who has just taken a job in a cigar factory! How a symbol (if there is one) is interpreted depends on the individual and his/her life circumstances and the meanings he/she gives to objects and situations. That is, what a dream means is particular to the individual and cannot be ascertained from a ‘one size fits all’ formula.*

### **Try It Yourself (page 233)**

As noted in the text, Freud developed three different models of motivation (pleasure vs. unpleasure, sexuality and aggression, or Eros vs. Thanatos). In the following examples, which model seems to explain each one best?

- Luke is upset about breaking up with his girlfriend. He starts drinking heavily, and then, while driving home, is nearly killed in an accident.

*This example may be best explained by Freud's sexuality and aggression model: Luke's sex drive has led him to form an attachment to his girlfriend and breaking up with her has frustrated the satisfaction of this drive; now his aggression drive leads him to be aggressive with himself in drinking heavily and driving, almost killing him.*

- Angela has an essay to write, but finds writing essays boring; so she decides to go shopping instead, hoping she will become ‘inspired’.

*This example may be best explained by Freud's model of pleasure vs. unpleasure: the desire to maximise pleasure (shopping for Angela), and to avoid that which is unpleasant*

*(writing an essay which she finds boring).*

- Damien has a crush on a girl in his chemistry class. However, whenever he attempts to talk to her, he ends up acting obnoxious in his attempts to impress her.

*This example is best explained by Freud's Eros vs. Thanatos model: Damien is driven by his Eros to be attracted to a girl and to talk to her, but Thanatos competes with Eros and leads him to be self-destructive when trying to satisfy Eros.*

Can you think of an example of behaviour (your own, or that of someone you know) that seems to support each model? Overall, which model makes the most sense to you?

### **Try It Yourself (page 236)**

Can you explain the following scenarios in terms of Freud's psychodynamic model?

- Tom is married, but finds himself attracted to Sarah, a co-worker. He decides that, if he is careful, his wife will never find out if he has an affair with Sarah.

*Tom's id is expressing the desire for sexual gratification with Sarah ("I want sex with Sarah!" is primary process thinking), but his ego is aware that if his wife finds out, he will be in trouble. Ego, the reality tester, uses secondary process thinking to devise a way to satisfy id's desires while preserving the reality of his marriage. Tom's superego does not seem to be involved here!*

- Margo cheated on her term test in psychology. She received a good mark, but she won't tell anyone what the mark is, and she finds her interest in psychology is diminishing.

*Margo's superego is causing her to feel badly about her lapse in moral behaviour. In dealing with this, ego is trying to resolve the conflict by not discussing her mark and by removing her interest from the situation in which the moral lapse occurred.*

- Helena knows she should eat a piece of fruit for dessert because she is dieting, but she craves chocolate. She goes to the store to buy some chocolate-covered raisins and happily eats them.

*Helena's id wants chocolate, but her superego says that the 'right' thing to do is to eat fruit for dessert instead. Helena's ego tries to resolve the conflict between id and superego by coming up with a compromise solution: fruit that is covered with chocolate!*

Can you think of any of your own behaviour that might be explained in terms of Freud's psychodynamic model as well?

### **Try It Yourself (page 243)**

In part, Freud defined his stages of development (especially the early stages) based on his behavioural observations. If you can, you might observe young children to see if their behaviour fits his descriptions. Also, if possible, ask your parents or other family members about your own behaviour as a child. Did you show any of the behaviours Freud described? For example, as a baby, did you ever play with your faeces? (As distasteful as this sounds, it's not uncommon!) Did you ever imitate your same sex parent? Did you have a 'crush' on someone when you entered puberty? Could Freud be right about what children do, without being correct about why they do it?

*Freud, like any other human being, brought his own biases and interpretations to what he observed (see Chapter 1). Freud's observations may be very accurate but there are several possible interpretations to any behaviour. For example, perhaps children play with faeces because it is an available sensory experience that is pleasant (without societal constraints against it, why not?). Perhaps children often imitate the same-sex parent because they are reinforced for this (see Chapter 3).*

**Try It yourself (page 245)**

Can you think of other behaviours or careers that seem to fit with Freud's ideas? Does being *consistent* with his theory prove that the theory is *correct*?

*Freud might say that people who are dieters or diet counselors might be fixated in the oral stage (denial of the oral impulses); compulsive shoppers, housecleaners, gardeners or personal assistants might be fixated in the anal stage; fashion designers or those who pay a great deal of attention to fashion might be fixated in the phallic stage; and salespeople, childcare workers or landscape photographers might be fixated in the latency stage. But there can be several interpretations of every behaviour and Freud's is not the only one, or necessarily the right one.*

Some Freudians have suggested that cultures, like individuals, can show fixations. If you were to apply Freud's model to our culture, at what stage would you say it is fixated? Does applying the theory in this way seem reasonable? Why or why not?

*Western society seems preoccupied with a number of issues that may be applied to several stages. For example, the preoccupation with food and drink seen in the proliferation of dining establishments suggests a fixation in the oral stage. The preoccupation with money and the material trappings of financial success suggests a fixation in the anal stage, and the preoccupation with sex and body image as seen in the sexual content of the media, including the equalisation of products in advertisements suggests a fixation in the phallic stage. Then again, the preoccupation with environmental concerns suggests a fixation in the latency stage, and the deep concern many people have to ensure world peace suggests a society in the genital stage. Societies such as ours are probably too widely varied to be explained by fixations in any one stage.*

### **Try It Yourself (page 255)**

Examples of Freudian symbols can be easily found in daily life. What do you think Freud would make of the following?

- Ads which use attractive models to sell products

*Freud would probably point out that attractive models stimulate the sexual drive in people, heightening their sexual desire. By pairing the models with the product, the advertisements attempt to connect the sexual desire with the product, thereby encouraging people to desire the product as much as they desire sexual gratification. In some highly effective advertising campaigns, the product actually becomes a symbol of sexiness (e.g., some cars, clothing, perfume).*

- Movie humour based on body functions like farting (e.g., *Dumb and Dumber*)

*Freud might suggest that finding humour in bodily functions suggests that the individual*



*is fixated in the anal stage of development. Since societal norms restrict the adult from playing with his/her faeces, for example, movies which depict bodily functions may serve a cathartic function: watching the movie allows the individual to engage in anal activities in symbolic form.*

- The difference between a Ferrari and a Hummer

*Automobiles are traditionally seen as phallic symbols in Freudian psychology. Their power, length, thrusting forward action all suggest the male organ in sexual intercourse, and the power associated with masculinity in Western culture. The Ferrari is a long, low, sleek Italian car known for its successes in racing events because of its capacity for great speed. Freud might suggest that this car capitalizes on the idea of masculinity as fast, powerful and winning at competition. The Hummer, a civilian adaptation of heavy duty military vehicles designed for all terrain driving, is a symbol of the power and ruggedness associated with masculinity in Western society.*

What symbols do you see in everyday life that Freud might have an interpretation for?

Does finding examples that fit with the theory prove that these interpretations are valid?

Do you think other interpretations are possible?

*Other interpretations are of course possible. See Jung's work with symbols, for example.*

### **Try It Yourself (page 265)**

Compare the symbols which Jung would call archetypes in Figure 5.4 with the Freudian symbols given. Which are easier to interpret for you? Is this a reasonable standard for determining their *validity*?

What do you think Jung and Freud would say is the meaning of each of the following?

- Harry has a dream in which he is dressed like a ballerina

*Freud might suspect that Harry's dream is indicative of his problems in the phallic stage: Harry might not have adequately identified with his father, so his development as a heterosexual male might be compromised. Freud might wonder whether Harry is harbouring secret desires for homosexual activity. Jung, on the other hand, would suggest that Harry's dream indicates that he is not paying enough attention to his anima, the feminine side of his nature. If an archetype is not given some expression in conscious life, Jung contends, it will manifest itself in other ways, such as in dreams.*

- Sharon is seeking a 'guru' who can teach to live a more fulfilled life

*Freud might suspect that Sharon has never quite resolved her Oedipal complex. She stills desires her father in some way and is searching for a father-substitute to guide and teach her. By becoming a guru's student, she symbolically becomes 'Daddy's little girl' again. Jung might suggest that Sharon is being drawn by the archetype of 'father' or 'wise man', or he might suggest that Sharon's behaviour is a healthy example of individuation. Her desire to live a more fulfilled life might be indicative of her ego's desire to expand her awareness of the world and herself and/or her self's desire to transcend her egotistical interests, achieving a union of the conscious with the unconscious.*

- Twelve year-old Jimmy wants to be Superman when he grows up.

*According to Freud, at twelve years old, Jimmy would be entering the genital stage of development. He probably would not really expect to gain the powers that the comic-book hero Superman has, but he might be using the notion of Superman in a symbol way. Freud might suggest that Jimmy wants to grow up showing the masculinity, strength, responsibility and heroism of Superman. This could be because of identification with his*

*father whom he regarded as all-powerful in the Oedipal period. Jung might suggest that Jimmy is drawn to the archetype of the Hero, and is expressing a desire for individuation. The process of individuation encompasses becoming the best one can be, a self-actualization of the individual that, to a child, might be symbolised by becoming Superman.*

Does being able to offer an interpretation prove that that theory is correct?

*Jung's interpretations are generally more positive than Freud's because Jung's view of humanity in general was more positive than Freud's. Many people find Jung's interpretations easier to comprehend and more attractive because of their positive tone and emphasis on personal growth. Because they find Jung's interpretations more attractive, people often assume that they are more likely to be correct. This is quite clearly a logical error, but one that people make very commonly. Sometimes we believe what we want to believe, not what is logically more reasonable or even what has been scientifically demonstrated.*

### **Try It Yourself (page 271)**

Suppose that, for curiosity, you decided to see a psychodynamic therapist. Which theoretical orientation that we have discussed would you choose? Why? Is it because you think their theories are closest to the truth? Or because their general perspective is appealing? What do you think is important for an effective therapeutic relationship? (This question will be discussed further in Chapter 9.)

*Many mental health professionals of various orientations choose to see a psychodynamic therapist if they enter therapy themselves. The intrinsic fascination of the psychodynamic orientations is undeniable to many people, and many feel well-served by the therapy they receive. The kind of therapy that is right for any individual depends on both the goals of the therapy (i.e., the goal of overcoming a phobia generally requires a different type of psychotherapy from the goal of increasing one's self-esteem), and the degree of comfort that the individual feels with a particular therapist and his/her orientation. Sometimes finding the right mix requires 'shopping' for a therapist. This is an individual's right—if you decide to enter therapy, recognise that you may have to visit more than one therapist to find the one that is right for you.*