

## **Section 1**

### **Learning and Applying the Theories**

## **Sigmund Freud**

### **Case Study 1**

#### *Application Questions*

Use Freud's states of consciousness and stages of psychosexual development to help explain Hank's behavior by answering the following questions.

**1. What personality (or character) type does Hank display according to Freudian theory? Provide evidence for your answer. At what stage is Hank fixated, according to the Freudian perspective? Find evidence of fixation in the case study. What would have caused this fixation?**

Hank displays the oral aggressive personality as evidenced by his sarcasm and argumentative nature. There is evidence of fixation at the oral stage. It includes his chain smoking, continuous eating, and chewing on his fingernails, and, in particular, eating the ice cream and smoking while thinking about his stressful week. Fixation at this stage would be due to either overindulgence or neglect in feeding during infancy. The case study implies that his mother overindulged Hank by feeding him a bottle often.

**2. Would Freudian theory describe Hank's eating and argumentative behaviors as being internally or externally motivated? Explain the motivation.**

Behavior is internally motivated according to Freud. It is due to the libido being cathected to the mouth in Hank's case. There is also the possibility that thanatos is influencing Hank's unhealthy habits.

**3. Find an example of a Freudian defense mechanism that Hank uses in this description. Explain it.**

Hank uses rationalization as evidenced by him explaining Sally breaking up with him as being due to his weight (and her shallowness) rather than his personality.

**4. Find an example of regression in the case study. Explain it.**

Regression occurred when Hank would chew his fingernails when he was nervous and eat or smoke when he was anxious. The eating of ice cream and smoking because he was stressed about his work are examples of it.

**5. Would a Freudian therapist view Hank's weight problem as a behavioral problem, in and of itself, or as a symptom of another problem? Explain.**

Freudian therapists would view Hank's weight problem as a symptom of an underlying, unresolved, unconscious conflict.

**6. What therapeutic techniques would a Freudian therapist, like the one in the case study, likely use? What state of consciousness would be the focus of therapy? How does healing/improvement occur during Freudian therapy?**

Psychoanalysis uses such processes as free association and dream analysis. The unconscious will be the focus of therapy and therefore the therapist will attempt to make the unconscious conscious, which will create healing.

### *Theory Comparison Questions*

**1. What is an alternate explanation (besides Freud's) of Hank's eating and argumentative behaviors?**

One possible explanation from a behaviorist perspective is that he was reinforced for being loud as a child by receiving food and attention. His weight may also be partly genetically determined.

**2. What aspect of Hank's behavior would be the focus of a therapist who is behaviorally oriented? What aspect would be the focus if the therapist were psychodynamically oriented?**

A behaviorally oriented therapist would focus on the behavior itself, i.e., Hank's eating behaviors and his argumentativeness. A psychodynamically oriented therapist, however, would see those overt behaviors as a sign of some other underlying problem.

**3. Use Erikson's concept of lack of intimacy to explain Hank's problems in establishing long-term relationships with women. How does this differ from the Freudian explanation?**

According to Erikson intimacy is developed during the early (or young) adulthood stage when the crisis of intimacy versus isolation is successfully resolved. A Freudian explanation, however, would have to revolve around an unresolved Oedipus complex. In Erikson's theory, social adaptation influences the outcome of the crises, however, in Freud's theory the emphasis is on psychosexual factors.

## **Sigmund Freud**

### **Case Study 2**

#### *Application Questions*

Use Freud's states of consciousness and stages of psychosexual development to help explain Steve's behavior by answering the following questions.

**1. Does the Freudian perspective indicate that Steve's relationships with women are internally or externally motivated? Which system of personality is most involved? How?**

Steve's behavior is internally motivated and influenced primarily by the id, which works on the pleasure principle.

**2. According to Freudian theory, is Steve aware of why he interacts with women on only a sexual basis? Which state of consciousness is most involved in controlling this behavior?**

Steve is not aware of his behavior because it is motivated unconsciously.

**3. What type of Freudian psychic energy motivates Steve's relationships with women?**

The libido motivates Steve's behavior with women.

**4. Which of Freud's personality types does Steve display? What evidence is there for it? What would have caused it?**

Steve displays the phallic personality, as evidenced by his use of women for sex. An unresolved Oedipus Complex is the cause.

**5. At what Freudian stage is Steve fixated? What evidence is there of it? Describe the stage and how it contributed to the fixation. What would have caused this fixation?**

Steve appears to be fixated at the phallic stage of development as evidenced by his using women for sex. (Have students describe the phallic stage including the Oedipus Complex.) This would have been caused by an unresolved Oedipus complex.

**5. Others might express their behavior differently than Steve if they were fixated at the same stage. Give some examples of how they might behave.**

Some can become homosexual. Women might become cold, calculating, career women or women who flirt and tease men.

## *Theory Comparison Questions*

### **1. How could Fromm's relatedness need explain Steve's relationships with women? How does this compare with the Freudian explanation?**

Fromm's relatedness need suggests that humans have a drive for union with other humans. This need can be met only through genuine love. Steve is attempting to fulfill this need but will be unable to do so because his relationships with women are not genuine love relationships. Genuine love relationships, according to Fromm include feelings of caring, responsibility, respect and knowledge.

According to the Freudian explanation Steve would be fixated at the phallic stage of development which would have been caused by an unresolved Oedipus Complex.

While both Fromm's and Freud's theories can be considered psychodynamic, they differ in that Fromm's is more humanistic. Fromm also emphasized social and cultural influences on personality more than did Freud, who emphasized more psychosexual influences.

### **2. How could Horney's concept of basic anxiety explain Steve's relationships with women?**

Basic anxiety, a feeling of insecurity, according to Horney, develops out of feelings of being unloved. We combat basic anxiety in any number of ways. One way is through withdrawal, which is when someone distances themselves from others by becoming emotionally detached. Although Steve develops sexual relationships with women, he does not become emotionally involved with them. He is using withdrawal, most likely due to the fact that his mother was emotionally detached, which probably made him feel unloved.

### **3. How does Melanie Klein's conceptualization of the Oedipus Complex differ from that of Freud? Do these distinctions make a difference in explaining Steve's relationships with women? If so, how?**

Klein's theory actually de-emphasized the Oedipal period. Whereas Freud thought that this was one of the most important organizing factors in personality, Klein believed that the pre-Oedipal period was more important. She also suggested that the death instinct, which according to her, resulted in aggressive behavior in children, was just as, or more important than, the sexual drive in personality development. She therefore might suggest that Steve's relationships are not due to influences of libido, but rather due to influences of thanatos.

Klein also discussed the possibility that our relationships with others help us to develop how we think about and experience the world. Because loved ones can have both good and bad qualities, it is possible that Steve's experiences with an emotionally detached mother caused him to be unable to form emotional attachments to the women he dates.

**4. Use May's types of love to describe the types of relationships with women that Steve typically establishes.**

May suggested four types of love: Sex is the biological urge that goes by the same name. Eros is a tender union with another, which can also be sexual in nature. Philia is brotherly love or friendship. Agape' is an unselfish giving of oneself, without concern about what you will get back from the relationship. Steve establishes relationships really only based on physical pleasure or the type of love that May calls sex.

*Suggestions for additional discussion on Freud's theory*

1. Describe alternate explanations for Hank's behavior (case study 1) besides behaviorism.
2. Compare Freud's theory to that of other analysts such as Melanie Klein and Anna Freud.
3. Discuss Steve's phallic narcissism (case study 2) according to other approaches (e.g., Adlerian social interest; Kohut's self psychology).
4. Discuss feminist criticism of Freudian theory.