



An Introduction to Social Psychology

Social Psychoanalytical Definitions

Ontology :

Identity is formed both psychically and socially in dynamic intersubjective relation with others. Human behavior and consciousness are partly shaped by unconscious motivations. These unconscious motivations are frequently in conflict with conscious thoughts and intentions. And this conflict provokes unconscious anxiety, which is defended against through unconscious defence mechanisms. These defences play an important part in the construction of individual, social, cultural and institutional lives.

Methodology:

Social psychoanalytic methodology is qualitative and interpretative. It assumes that to understand social life you need to understand how language is used and how meanings are constructed. It also takes from psychoanalysis the notion that people are never consciously aware of everything that motivates them, or all the meanings of what they say and do. People are viewed as having unique biographies and identities that are made up of psychic defences which are partly developed from their social context.

Methods:

Social psychoanalytic methods explore the ways that people make sense of their every day life. Many researchers use narrative interviews because these allow research subject to talk at length and as freely as possible. Researchers seek to analyse the contradictions and conflicts that arise from unconscious desires, defences against anxiety and the demands of the outside world. And they do this through an application of concepts, such as splitting, projection and projective identification.

Unit of Analysis:

The focus of analysis is the interconnections between the internal world of the psyche and a person's understanding of their responses to and actions on their external world. Meanings can only be understood in relation to a larger whole. So analysis is informed by the whole interview plus all the other data that's been collected in relation to that case, such as the researcher's field notes.