



An Introduction to Social Psychology

Research

Narrator:

Social psychoanalytic research uses a qualitative interpretive approach to look at the interconnections between the internal world of the individual and the external world of groups and society.

Ann Phoenix:

For research to be social psychoanalytic it has to be able to deal with the unconscious, to say something about unconscious processes. And that means that in doing interviews for example, that it's important that we can see what associations people are making between ideas, what emotional associations.

Dr Helen Lucey:

Interviewing and other qualitative methods of data collection are used, and that's in order to get at those unconscious processes.

(Drama reconstruction)

Dr Helen Lucey: Could you tell me a bit about your relationship with your ...

Dr Helen Lucey:

More recently I've been doing some research on siblings.

(Drama reconstruction)

Lolita:

...very close to them. I love them very much.

Dr Helen Lucey:

Because I want to develop a social psychoanalytic perspective on siblings, ethnicity, race, religion, location, class and gender, all of those things really merge with the internal processes, so that the relationships that siblings have with one another are shaped by those both psychic and social processes.

(Drama reconstruction)

Dr Helen Lucey: So Lolita, when you've written the names of all your brothers and sisters on the stickers, what I'd like you to do then is sort of map them on here, so the ones that you feel closest too, you could put closest to yourself, and the ones that you don't feel so close to or more distant from, put further away for yourself.

Lolita:

Okay.

Dr Helen Lucey:

Thank you. And whereabouts' are you in the family?

Lolita:

I'm third from the top.

Dr Helen Lucey:

Okay.

Lolita:

And this sister of mine, Mality ...

Dr Helen Lucey:

Mality ...

Lolita:

... she is closest to me. My eldest sister was the second in command, we were all under her. She was also our professor, so you know, her authority was doubly strong on all of us. In fact, we were always scared of her.

Dr Helen Lucey:

I'm really interested in the significance of sibling relationships for identity construction, for how our subjectivity develops in families and in family relationships. My own sibling history is quite interesting cos I'm one of eight, so I have got quite an interest in siblings. But I was also struck by how siblings in psychoanalytic theory were kind of quite marginalised, and when they do appear in psychoanalytic theory, in Freud's theory particularly, they only emerge as figures of the most terrible, murderous rivalry and, and hate really. So they're kind of placed in a very contradictory position, as not very important on the one hand, but as when they do appear, is provoking the most terrible kind of rivalrous feelings.

Also because Freud emphasised the importance of the Edipus Complex on the development of individual subjectivity and the psyche, siblings are completely written out of that drama. But actually, lately, psychoanalytic writers have started to kind of bring siblings back in and say: well actually, you know, siblings become quite important internalised figures in children's lives.

(Drama reconstruction)

Dr Helen Lucey:

When your older sisters left home, did that change your relationship with your younger brothers and sisters, because now you, you were the oldest sister at home?

Lolita:

No, actually nothing happened because my younger brother and sister treated me just like I was one of them. So I never commanded authority that my elder two sisters had. And even till today I find that they treat me as an equal. I don't know for what reason, but that is how it is.

Dr Helen Lucey:

Mm. I wonder who you're most like in the family, out of your brothers and sister?

Lolita:

I honestly can't say because we are all so different. This is something that I'm really amazed at, the same mother and father, yet you have five, six, seven children, and they're all so different in their characters, in their attitudes, in their achievements.