

EGO PSYCHOLOGY

This is the Adaptive Point of View

The adaptive point of view demands that the psycho-analytic explanation of any psychological phenomenon include propositions concerning its relationship to the environment.

Rapaport (1958)

Ego, not just the **organ of adjustment** —balancing a compromise between id instincts and society, but the **organ of adaptation**

Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation

Heinz Hartmann (1894-1970)

The ego does not form out of the id. The ego and the id develop the same time after birth from an **Undifferentiated Matrix**.

Conflict Free Sphere

Neutralization

To explain personality, ego psychologists look at

1. how the individual **adapted** to her or his environment
2. the person's success at doing so (resulting in more and more energy)
3. how successful the person is at dealing with conflict

Fitting in

Fitting together

Average Expectable Environment

“narrow” sense

“broad” sense

“Man does not come to terms with his environment anew in every generation; his relationship to the environment is guaranteed by—besides the factors of heredity—an evolution peculiar to man, namely the influence of tradition and the survival of the works of man. We take over from others (prototypes, tradition) a great many of our methods for solving problems. . . . The works of man objectify the methods he has discovered for solving problems and thereby become factors of continuity, so that man lives, so to speak, in past generations as well as in his own. Thus arises a network of identifications and ideal-formations which is of great significance for the forms and ways of adaptation. Freud has shown the important role of the superego in this process “...it becomes the vehicle of tradition and of all the age-long values, and transmits them from generation to generation.”

Hartmann, 1939

Equilibrium

The relationship of the individual to his environment is “disrupted” from moment to moment and must again and again be returned to an equilibrium. The “equilibrium” is not necessarily normal; it may be pathological.

Hartmann (1939)

Alloplastic Adaptation

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