

Rollo may-existential analytic theory

Psychology



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Rollo May: Existential-analytic theory Rollo May was born in 21st April 1909 in Ada, Ohio, but he grew up in Michigan. He attended Oberlin College in Ohio where he got his bachelor's degree in 1930. He spent the next three years in Europe as an itinerant artist. On his return to the US, he joined the Union Theological Seminary where he became friends with Paul Tillich, his teacher and existentialist theologian, and got his Masters of Divinity degree. He worked as a pastor for two years but quit to pursue psychology. He later went to White institute to study psychoanalysis and finally to Columbia University where he received his PhD in clinical Psychology in 1949. He became a lecturer and a visiting professor in many universities. He also practiced private psychotherapy. His major publications include Existential Psychology (1961), Psychology and the Human Dilemma (1967), The Courage to Create (1975), Freedom and Destiny (1981) and Cry for the Myth (1991). Rollo May died at the age of 85.

Existential psychotherapy is a kind of dynamic psychotherapy which postulates a dynamic model of the personality structure (May, 1961). There are many dynamic models of personality structure; to differentiate them, we consider the content of internal, conscious and unconscious struggles, and the motives, forces, and fears that conflict with each other in a personality. Existential scope of internal struggle is better understood by contrasting it with the Freudian and the interpersonal (Neo-Freudian) models of personality. Existential model rests on the view that basic conflict is not with suppressed with significant adults or instinctual drives in an individual's life, but conflict exists between the individual and givens of existence. When we bracket the outside world, and the everyday concerns that usually fill our lives and echo our situation in the world, we must challenge and tackle some <https://assignbuster.com/rollo-may-existential-analytic-theory/>

concerns that are an unavoidable part of our existence (Weisman, 1965). May viewed stages in development. First is the Innocence stage or the pre-self-conscious, pre-egoic infant stage. The infant does only what must be done and has a degree of will that drives them to fulfil needs. Second is the rebellion stage. A rebellious person wants freedom but yet doesn't fully understand the consequential responsibility. Third is the decision stage when a person is in a transitional stage they want to break away from parents and move to the ordinary stage. The ordinary stage is when an adult acquires responsibility and it seems too demanding so they seek refuge in traditional values. Creative stage then comes along and here the adult accepts their destiny and confronts anxiety courageously (May, 1961).

The constituents of internal conflict according to existential frame of reference are the ultimate concerns that are spawned by the conscious and unconscious fears and motives. Its dynamic structure is:

AWARENESS OF ULTIMATE CONCERN → ANXIETY → DEFENSE MECHANISM

The ultimate concerns with considerable relevance in psychotherapy include death, freedom, isolation and meaninglessness. Confrontation with these contents the inner conflict in existential view. Death plays a very important part in internal experiences and haunts the individual as nothing else (Yalom, 1981). Psychopathology is to a great extent as a result of failed death transcendence and the maladaptive character structure which originate from the individual's terror of death. To survive with this terror, we make defences in contrast to death awareness. Isolation, especially interpersonal isolation also contribute to pathological behaviour. A gulf exists between a personal self and other people. This gulf results from insufficient social skills and psychopathology in the scope of intimacy (Binswanger, 1956).

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The main aim of May's psychotherapy is not to cure patients of their disorder; instead it is to make them fully human. The purpose is to set people free and allow them to make their own decisions and take responsibility for their actions.

References

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