

Psychodynamic
theory founded by
sigmund freud
psychology essay



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The following essay will analyse the Psychodynamic theory founded by Sigmund Freud. It will focus on the components of the mind including the Conscious, the pre-conscious proper and the Unconscious. It will then examine his contribution into the structure of Personality with reference to The 'Id', 'Ego' and 'Super-ego'. Following this, the essay will discuss Freud's proposal of stages within his 'psychosexual development'. The essay will then focus on the Humanistic theory of Carl Rogers. It will explain his concept of the 'Actualizing tendency' and incorporate his creations of 'Self concept', the 'Organismic self' and the 'Ideal self'. As a contribution to Roger's work, the essay will also highlight the 'Hierarchy of needs' by Abraham Maslow. The two theories will then be compared and contrasted. This essay will focus on the human developmental stage of childhood.

According to Freud there are three levels of Consciousness within the mind. 'The conscious, this holds thoughts and feelings that we are fully aware of at any one time, it can be verbalised and logically thought about.

'The pre-conscious proper' holds memories that only when they are thought of can they be brought back into the 'Conscious' part of the mind.

Information is easily shared between the conscious and the pre-conscious proper.

Finally the 'Unconscious'. Material here is deemed too painful and is 'repressed' (locked away) yet still has the strength to influence our actions. 'We have conscious thoughts that we are aware of and unconscious thoughts that appear in our mind in the form of dreams. Moreover, what happens in our conscious mind in turn influences what thoughts filter through to our

unconscious mind' (Gross, The Science of Mind and Behaviour, 2010)
(Ingleby, 2006, p. 7)

Freud related this idea to a model of an Iceberg. The tip acts as 10% relating to the Conscious as only this is visible, the rest being submerged acting as the Pre-conscious and the Unconscious. (Kazlev, 2004)

Freud furthered his concept of personality of which he proposed was devised into the ' Id' or intrinsic drive, the ' Ego' and the ' Superego'

The ' Id' obeys the pleasure principle. It holds no morals and seeks instant gratification containing mostly sexual or aggressive impulses. " a cauldron full of seething excitations...it is filled with energy ... but... has no organisation... only a striving to bring about the satisfaction of instinctual needs subject to observance of the pleasure principle" (Freud, New introductory lectures in psychoanalysis, 1933, p. 73) Within the id lies the Eros (life or pleasure drive) and Thanatos (death instincts). Eros " helps the child to survive, it directs life-sustaining activities such as respiration, eating, sex and the fulfilment of other bodily needs" In contrast Freud believed " Destructive acts such as arson, fist fights, murder, war and even masochism were outward expressions of the death instincts" (R. Shaffer, 1946, p. 43)

The Ego Acts as the mediator between the Id and the super-ego. It is the rational part of the mind. It is governed by the ' reality principle'. Freud Created ' defence mechanisms' in an attempt to protect the ' ego' from constant threat from the ' super-ego'. These include ' Repression' meaning re-directing negative thoughts to the ' Unconscious '. As well as ' Projection' this being the shifting of blame or thoughts and feelings onto someone or
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something less intimidating. " The idea of psychological defence itself was not problematic; it was a normal operation of the human mind faced with unpleasant events. But normal defence did not generally lead to total forgetting: though usually absent from consciousness, unpleasant memories could be recalled by fresh perceptions". (Freud, The origins of Psychoanalysis, 1954)

The super-ego acts as the negative parent. This is learned from others and seen as the internalisation of social morals. It criticises decisions made by the ego and makes negative judgments. (Freud, The origins of Psychoanalysis, 1954) (Gross, Psychology- The Science and Mind of Behaviour, 2010)

According to Freud, sexuality is apparent in babies from birth allowing sexual pleasure and frustration. The progression of the ' Psychosexual stages' depends on the biological maturity but is influenced greatly by how individuals are treated, most importantly by their parents. If excessive frustration or gratification occurs during a stage, the individual will remain fixated. (Gross, The Science of Mind and Behaviour, 2010)

The Oral stage (0-1year) Sensitive nerve endings in the mouth and lips allow the baby to gain pleasure from Sucking and swallowing. Disturbances throughout this stage will lead to Oral fixation such as thumb sucking or over-eating

The Anal stage (1-3years) Muscles of the bowel are the source of pleasure. Whilst potty training, the parents love becomes dependent on the child's actions. The child is in control of where and when it defecates.

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The Phallic stage (3-5/6 years) introduces a new source of pleasure in the genitalia. The child focuses on their opposite-sex parent. In males the 'Oedipus conflict' suggests a young boy gains sexual feelings for his mother. In females the 'Penis envy' or 'Electra complex' suggests sexual feelings for the father in which time she is jealous of the mother. "a tragedy of destiny. Its tragic effect is said to lie in the contrast between the supreme will of the gods and the vain attempts of mankind to escape the evil that threatens them...It is the fate of all of us, perhaps, to direct our first sexual impulse towards our mother and our first hatred and our first murderous wish against our father". (Freud, The interpretation of Dreams., 1900)

The Latency Period (5/6 to puberty) involves the decline of sexual instincts. The traumas of the phallic stage are repressed thus allowing social skills to develop.

Finally, the Genital stage. The earlier sexual thoughts have been repressed; however the focus on the genitalia returns, enabling the control of the Id and its heterosexual demands. (Gross, Psychology- The science of Mind and Behaviour, 2010)

The Humanistic approach founded by Carl Rogers was a direct reaction to behaviourism and psychoanalysis, with the idea that both theories related more to the testing and the treatment rather than the perceptions/interpretations of the individual's external stimuli. (Gross, The science of the Mind and Behaviour, 2010)

In accordance to this, Rogers created the 'Person Centred theory'. Thus

being a theory based more on the client and their potential for personal
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growth. He adopts a holistic approach, considering all aspects of the individual and external stimuli. He stipulates an individual's equilibrium is based upon being congruent; However outside influences can cause incongruence (an unbalance in one's self).

" not from the point of view of simply accepting the standard view of science as postulated in myriad academic texts, but rather of creating a newer view of science as a human endeavour which calls on the whole person rather than just on the intellect" (Rowan, 2001, p. 291)

Rogers believed each living being had the ability to develop and reach their maximum potential. This introduced ' The Actualising Tendency'. Rogers developed this idea whilst observing a bin of potatoes stored in the basement during his childhood. In the unfavourable conditions the potatoes began to sprout, desperately reaching toward the light from a small window. Thus giving the example that regardless of the conditions, everyone and everything can strive to ' self actualise'.

" the mainspring of life... it is the urge which is evident in all organic and human life- to expand, extend, become autonomous , develop and mature" (Rogers, 1961, p. 193)

Rogers put forward his concept of personality, categorised into ' The self concept', ' The Organismic self' and the ' Ideal self'.

' The self concept', described as how we perceive ourselves and the environment. This is acquired through childhood and can reflect on the care given during such time.

' The Organismic self' is who we truly are with the ability to act how we please once free from judgement and social conformities.

' The Ideal self' is in continuation with the self concept. It is something we desperately want but will never achieve as once the goal is reached a new one is created.

" the organized consistent conceptual gestalt composed of perceptions of the characteristics of ' I' or ' me' and the perceptions of the relationships of the ' I' or ' me' to others and to various aspects of life, together with the values attached to these perceptions. It is a gestalt which is available to awareness though not necessarily in awareness. It is a fluid and changing gestalt, a process, but at any given moment it is a specific entity" (Rogers C. , 1959) (Gross, Psychology- The science of Mind and Behaviour, 2010) any given moment it is a specific entity. at any given moment it is a specific entity. the organized consistent conceptual gestalt composed of perceptions of the characteristics of ' I' or ' me' and the perceptions of the relationships of the ' I' or ' me' to others and to various aspects of lifethe organized consistent conceptual gestalt composed of perceptions of the characteristics of ' I' or ' me' and the perceptions of the relationships of the ' I' or ' me' to others and to various aspects of life, together with the values attached to these perceptions. It is a gestalt which is available to awareness though not necessarily in awareness. It is a fluid and changing gestalt, a process, but at any given moment it is a specific entity.

In conjunction with Rogers, Abraham Maslow introduced the ' Hierarchy of Needs'. He devised a model in the shape of a pyramid into stages of human

development. Before progressing to a higher level, the previous needs to be fully attained, beginning with the foundation which includes basic Physiological needs such as food, oxygen and sex. Other levels include safety needs, love and belongingness, Esteem needs, cognitive needs, aesthetic needs and finally Self actualization, this being the ultimate an individual can become. However it can only be gained through experience rather than the prominent biology found in the lower levels. (Gross, Psychology- The Science and Mind of Behaviour, 2010)

With regards to similarities between Freud's Psychoanalysis and Rogers Humanistic Approach both theorists include a division of personality. Freud's ' Id' can be compared to Rogers ' Organismic self' in the sense that the Organismic self is who we truly are, this however is contained once in public, much like the ' Id' of which the desires are controlled by the ' Ego', both related to the true self and what it desires.

Much like Freud's ' Ego', Rogers ' Self Concept' is logical and the part of personality both shaped by external stimuli built from childhood.

The ' Eros' Within Freud's concept of the ' Id' is similar to Rogers ' Self Actualising Tendency' for the reason that the ' Eros' directs ' life sustaining activities' enabling us to progress and develop to fulfil our life potential.

Both are male perspectives and may be biased, most noticeable in Freud's concept of ' Penis envy', implying that not having a penis makes women feel inferior.

In relation to the differences, Freud's idea of the development of personality includes psychosexual stages, these directly relate to childhood and uses specific ages throughout, whereas Rogers disregards age as an importance and focuses primarily on the individual in a holistic manor.

Rogers's concept of ' Self Actualization' relates to all living beings from humans to potatoes; however Freud only concerns himself with humans.

Freud believes babies are born with bad psychic energy in order to satisfy basic needs referring to them as a " Seething cauldron". However Rogers expressed the process of ' becoming a fully functioning person' meaning how they become is all that is relevant.

This essay has identified key aspects of both Freud's Psychodynamic theory into personality and also Carl Rogers Humanistic theory. It Focused on Freud's perception of the ' Mind' including the ' conscious', the ' pre-conscious proper' and the ' Unconscious'. As well as his structure if personality broken into the ' Id', the ' Ego' and the ' Super-ego' and finally the stages into his conception of the ' Psychosexual stages'. The essay then focused on Carl Rogers Humanistic theory, explaining ' The Actualising Tendency', the three ' Self's' and also briefly highlighted the work of Maslow as a continuation to Rogers theory. Whilst focusing on Childhood it finished by emphasising the similarities and differences within the two theories. However it may be prominent to believe " the events of its first years are paramount importance for its whole subsequent life". (Freud, An Outline of Psychoanalysis., 1949, p. 283)