

Two personalities, one stripper

[Life](#), [Emotions](#)



For the past two and a half years I have been living with my best friend, “Bailey”, who is like a sister to me in a lot of ways. This is especially true in regards to the way in which we are able to openly confide in each other about everything and anything, just like some sisters do. In fact, our relationship is so strong Bailey even feels safe enough to trust me with the intimate, detailed stories she brings home with her every weekend after working at Shot Gun Willie’s.

If you haven’t guessed by now, my roommate moonlights as a stripper, and has been working as such for the past year. I chose to write about Bailey because of the various ways in which I have witnessed her having to mentally, and physically transform herself in order to cope with the trials and tribulations that come from working at a strip club. As well as the damaging repercussions this type of occupation has had on her overall perceptions of self, the world, and her relation to/in the world.

It is also because of Bailey’s repeated exposure to the lustful, perverted, and greedy sides of people that the need to develop a completely new and separate persona arose, and Bailey’s alter ego “ Kimber” was created.

Throughout this semester, we have learned about many different theorists and their philosophies on the different, complex environments and experiences that help to contribute to the development of the humanpersonality. For this paper I chose to use the concepts and ideas of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Melanie Klein, and Donald Winnicott.

Soon after learning about the diverse beliefs each of these theorists attributed to the creation, enhancement, and hindrance of an individual’s

personality, I started to see a correlation between them and the weekly conversations/stories my roommate and I had about her experiences working at Willie's, and the psychological effects that were beginning to develop from constantly being in this type of environment. When looking at Bailey's situation from a few of Freud's perspectives we can see the development of defenses starting to take root.

By this I mean that Bailey begins to unconsciously employ a number of "psychological means to help keep anxiety-provoking material out of her awareness in order to reduce or avoid anxiety" (Beneath the Mask, pg. 43).

One of the ways in which Bailey does this is through what Freud conceptualized as being a type of neuroses he referred to as Defense Neuroses. To Freud, this type of defense originally arose from the ego's attempt to protect our consciousness against threatening sexual thoughts.

To e, this kind of neuroses is depicted in the formation of Bailey's new belief that all men are lying, scummy perverts as a way of protecting herself against the idea that she is somehow dirty and perverted herself for being a stripper, and secretly liking to dance naked in front of strangers. This form of defense neuroses can also be seen through the way in which Bailey tries to keep her stripper life completely separate, and hidden from the rest of her life and the world by denying and suppressing any involvement in it, because of the fact that she feels guilty about finding some enjoyment in taking her clothes off for money.

Bailey also uses another one of Freud's neuroses techniques in order to avoid experiencing anxiety, called Obsessional Neuroses, which is a disorder

that involves individuals engaging in ritualistic acts to help keep them from feeling anxiety. This can be seen through the way in which Bailey routinely comes home from work, and before doing anything else (i. e. taking off her makeup, wig, or stripper clothes) she must immediately sit down, and smoke one to two bowls of weed in order to forget, as well as dull the experiences of that night's events.

While still being a little high, Bailey must take two showers so that she can thoroughly clean her entire body with exfoliating soap and a scrub brush before going to bed. She refers to these showers as her way of escaping from the people, mindset, and feelings work puts her in by watching all her problems being washed away and sucked down the drain. If Bailey does not perform one or both of these rituals she is unable to unwind from work, which in turn makes her become highly agitated, and overwhelmed with a sense of anxiety about being a bad person because of how she chooses to financially support herself.

Bailey's urge to incessantly scrub her body multiple times, represents her unconscious need to compulsively clean the outside of her body in order to no longer feel emotionally dirty or unclean on the inside. Another way in which Bailey uses obsessional neuroses to cope with being a stripper, and avoid the emotional anxieties that come with this occupation, is through her ritualistic preparation for work.

As in, the way in which she routinely transforms herself from Bailey into the completely separate Kimber. The metamorphosis from Bailey to Kimber begins with a head to toe makeover so extreme Bailey becomes nearly

unrecognizable. This detailed process involves such things as, the application of face makeup that is a few shades too dark for Bailey's natural complexion, in turn making her look like she is tanner than she really is, followed by thick amounts of pink blush, heavy eye makeup, and fake eye lashes.

Bailey then organizes an outfit for Kimber that contains such essential items as vibrantly colored fishnet stockings, eight inch silver platform stiletto high-heels, two G-strings, and last but not least a top and bottom set that barely leave anything to the imagination. The ritualistic transmutation into Kimber is finally complete when Bailey puts on her long platinum blonde wig, and modifies her voice to sound higher for the rest of the night until she removes the wig.

Bailey routinely performs these practices in order to try and repress all the anxieties that arise from working in such an atmosphere, as well as maintain a level of disconnect from the kind of anxiety-provoking experiences that take place in the stripper world. If for some reason Bailey does not have the opportunity to change into her Kimber self, then she is almost instantaneously plagued with a sense of worry about not being able to make money because she is too much like herself, as well as the fear that someone will recognize her as Bailey, which to her signifies the end of her life and her world as she knows it.

Through Freud's perspective, both of these types of compulsive behaviors can be seen as a form of avoidance by means of distraction, as well as a type of self-imposed penance for " having engaged in behaviors that were

pleasurable but deemed as being ‘ bad’ ” (Beneath the Mask, pg. 43). To me Bailey’s creation of “ Kimber” represents a lot of different components to Carl Jung’s theories on personality, and its development.

The first is Jung’s concept of the Persona Archetype, which is the “ front we present to others, because social living makes demands for certain kinds of behavior” (Beneath the Mask, pg. 65). Society does this by establishing “ certain expectations and certain roles around which we must hide our ‘ private’ selves” (Beneath the Mask, pg. 165). It is in this way that Kimber has become one of Bailey’s more predominant personas, in that Kimber is the mask Bailey wears in order to hide her private self from the people she encounters while working in the strip club. At first, the construction of the Kimber persona seemed like a good buffer between the people at the club and Bailey’s private self, however this persona soon began to envelope Baily’s psyche.

This happened because the Kimber persona was given the opportunity to take over the psyche through becoming too attached to certain aspects of the created persona, which was due to the need for its continual and constant use. It is in this way that Kimber’s experiences have altered Bailey’s views on life and the world. As a result of this, Bailey now perceives all of her interactions and experiences in the real world outside of the strip club too narrowly in relation to men, and their specific social role and function in the world.

For example, Bailey cannot help but only see men in one of two ways. To her they are either a form of testosterone driven, easily accessible capitol, that

takes little to no effort to manipulate and acquire, or they are cheap, dirt-bag assholes just looking to score with anything that walks. This type of black and white thinking is directly connected to the way in which Kimber categorizes, and views men at the club in order to make her nights there as lucrative as possible.

This alteration to Bailey's opinions of men represents just how strong and successful the persona of Kimber has become in taking over Bailey's psyche. These changes in Bailey's way of thinking have also coincidentally led to a break in her Continuity of Self, which is the way she has perceived herself as being throughout her life up until this point. Meaning that because of the modifications to Bailey's psyche that have developed out of the creation of her Kimber persona, Bailey now perceives her role within the world and society differently, due to repetitive personal and situational experiences in the club.

For instance, Bailey now sees herself as having more personal power over men and people in general, because of the ways in which she has learned to use her sexuality as a manipulative tool. Conversely she now also has a lower sense of her overall self-worth, due to the fact that because she makes money solely off of her looks and nothing else, Bailey has begun to believe that this is all that she is with nothing more to offer the world.

In turn this type of mindset has helped to create many diverse types of complexes ranging from the formation of different archetypal related complexes, as well as other male related issues. This can also be seen in the reverse way Bailey has begun to see the role of women within the world,

which is that they are either judgmental prudes or excepting sexual beings, in that they are either secure or not with their own sexuality enough to except or reject the fact that strippers are real people too, and that they shouldn't be judged simply on the basis of occupational choices. terms of what her specific social role, and purpose is within society in relation to men, and their use in the world.