

Sigmund freud paper

Profession



Many believe Freud to be the father of modern psychiatry and psychology and the only psychiatrist of any worth. He is certainly the most well known figure, perhaps because sex played such a prominent role in his system. There are other psychologists, however, whose theories demand respectful consideration. Erik Erickson, born Eric Homburger, whose theories while not as titillating as Freud's, are just as sound. This paper will compare the two great men and their systems. In addition, this paper will argue that Freud offers the more useful foundation for understanding the Jenny Masterson's confused psyche.

Sigmund Freud showed signs of independence and brilliance well before entering the University of Vienna in 1873. He had a prodigious memory and loved reading to the point of running himself into debt at various bookstores. Among his favorite authors were Goethe, Shakespeare, Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche. To avoid disruption of his studies, he often ate in his room. After medical school, Freud began a private practice, specializing in nervous disorders. He was soon faced with patients whose disorders made no neurological sense.

For example, a patient might have lost feeling in his foot with no evidence to any sensory nerve damage. Freud wondered if the problem could be psychological rather than physiological. Dr. Freud evolved as he treated patients and analyzed himself. He recorded his assessment and expounded his theories in 24 volumes published between 1888 and 1939. Although his first book, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, sold only 600 copies in its first eight years of publication, his ideas gradually began to attract faithful followers and students - along with a great number of critics.

While exploring the possible psychological roots of nervous disorders, Freud spent several months in Paris, studying with Jean Charcot, a French neurologist from whom he learned hypnosis. On return to Vienna, Freud began to hypnotize patients and encouraging them while under hypnosis to speak openly about themselves and the onset of their symptoms. Often the patients responded freely, and upon reviewing their past, became quite upset and agitated.

By this process, some saw their symptoms lessened or banished entirely. It was in this way that Freud discovered what he termed the "unconscious. Piecing together his patients' accounts of their lives, he decided that the loss of feeling in one's hand might be caused by, say, the fear of touching one's genitals; blindness or deafness might be caused by the fear of hearing or seeing something that might arouse grief or distress. Over time, Freud saw hundreds of patients. He soon recognized that hypnosis was not as helpful as he had first hoped. He thus pioneered a new technique termed "free association." Patients were told to relax and say whatever came to mind, no matter how mortifying or irrelevant.

Freud believed that free association produced a chain of thought that was linked to the unconscious, and often painful, memories of childhood. Freud called this process psychoanalysis. Underlying Freud's psychoanalytic perception of personality was his belief that the mind was akin to an iceberg - most of it was hidden from view. The conscious awareness is the part of the iceberg that is above the surface but below the surface is a much larger unconscious region that contains feelings, wishes and memories of which persons are largely unaware.

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Some thoughts are stored temporarily in a preconscious area, from where they can be retrieved at will. However, Freud was more interested in the mass of thought and feeling that are repressed – forcibly blocked from conscious thought because it would be too painful to acknowledge. Freud believed that these repressed materials unconsciously exert a powerful influence on behavior and choices. Freud believed that dreams and slips of tongue and pen were windows to his patient's unconscious.

Intrusive thoughts or seemingly trivial errors while reading, writing and speaking suggested to Freud that what is said and done reflects the working of the unconscious. Jokes especially were an outlet for expressing repressed sexual and aggressive tendencies. For Freud, nothing was accidental. Freud believed that human personality, expressed emotions, strivings, and beliefs arise from a conflict between the aggressive, pleasure-seeking, biological impulses and the social restraints against their expression.

This conflict between expression and repression, in ways that bring the achievement of satisfaction without punishment or guilt, drives the development of personality. Freud divided the elements of that conflict into three interacting systems: the id, ego and superego. Freud did not propose a new, naive anatomy, but saw these terms as “useful aids to understanding” the mind's dynamics. The id is a reservoir of unconscious psychic energy that continually toils to satisfy basic drives to survive, reproduce and aggress. The id operates on the pleasure principle – if unconstrained, it seeks instantaneous gratification.

It is exemplified by a new born child who cries out for satisfaction the moment it feels hungry, tired, uncomfortable - oblivious to conditions, wishes, or expectations of his environment. As the child learns to cope with the real world, his ego develops. The ego operates on the reality principle, which seeks to superintend the id's impulses in realistic ways to accomplish pleasure in practical ways, avoiding pain in the process. The ego contains partly conscious perceptions, thoughts, judgements, and memories. It is the personality executive.

The ego arbitrates between impulsive demands of the id, the restraining demands of the superego and the real-life demands of the external world. Around age 4 or 5, a child's ego recognizes the demands of the newly emerging superego. The superego is the voice of conscience that forces the ego to consider not only the real but also the ideal. Its focus is on how one should behave. The superego develops as the child internalizes the morals and values of parents and culture, thereby providing both a sense of right, wrong and a set of ideals.

It strives for perfection and judges our actions, producing positive feelings of pride or negative feelings of guilt. Someone with an exceptionally strong superego may be continually upright and socially correct yet ironically harbor guilt-, another with a weak superego may be wantonly self-indulgent and remorseless. Because the superego's demands often oppose the id's, the ego struggles to reconcile the two. The chaste student who is sexually attracted to someone and joins a volunteer organization to work alongside the desired person, satisfies both id and superego.

Analysis of his patients' histories convinced Freud that personality forms during a person's first few years. Again and again his patients' symptoms seemed rooted in unresolved conflicts from early childhood. He concluded that children pass through a series of psychosexual stages during which the id's pleasure-seeking energies focus on distinct pleasure-sensitive areas of the body he called "erogenous zones." During the "oral stage," usually the first 18 months, an infant's sensual pleasure focuses on sucking, biting, and chewing.

During the "anal stage," from about 18 months to 3 years, the sphincter muscles become sensitive and controllable, and bowel and bladder retention and elimination become a source of gratification. During the phallic stage, from roughly ages 3 to 6 years, the pleasure zones shift to the genitals. Freud believed that during this stage boys seek genital stimulation and develop unconscious sexual desires for their mothers along with jealousy and hatred for their father, whom they consider a rival. Boys feel unrecognized guilt for their rivalry and a fear that their father will punish them, such as by castration.

This collection of feelings he named the "Oedipus Complex" after the Greek legend of Oedipus, who unknowingly killed his father and married his mother. Originally Freud hypothesized that females experienced a parallel "Electra complex." However, in time Freud changed his mind, saying, (1931, p. 229): "It is only in the male child that we find the fateful combination of love for the one parent and simultaneous hatred for the other as a rival." Children eventually cope with these threatening feelings by repressing them then identifying with and trying to become like the rival parent.

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Through this identification process children's superegos gain strength as they incorporate many of their parents' values. Freud believed that identification with the same-sex parent provides our gender identity - the sense of being male or female. With their sexual feelings repressed and redirected, children enter a latency stage. Freud maintained that during this latency period, extending from around age 6 to puberty, sexuality is dormant and children play mostly with peers of the same sex. At puberty, latency gives way to the final stage - the genital stage - as youths begin to experience sexual feelings towards others.

In Freud's view, maladaptive behavior in the adult results from conflicts unresolved during earlier psychosexual stages. At any point in the oral, anal, or phallic stages, strong conflict can lock, or fixate, the person's pleasure-seeking energies in that stage. Thus people who were either orally overindulged or deprived, perhaps by abrupt, early weaning, might fixate at the oral stage. Orally fixated adults are said to exhibit either passive dependence (like that of a nursing infant) or an exaggerated denial of this dependence, perhaps by acting tough and macho.

They might continue to smoke or eat excessively to satisfy their needs for oral gratification. Those who never quite resolve their anal conflict, a desire to eliminate at will that combats the demands of toilet training, may be both messy and disorganized ("anal expulsive") or highly controlled and compulsively neat ("anal-retentive"). To live in social groups, impulses cannot be freely acted on. They must be controlled in logical, socially acceptable ways. When the ego fears losing control of the inner struggle between the demands of the id and the superego, the result is anxiety.

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Anxiety, said Freud, is the price paid for civilization. Unlike specific fears, the dark cloud of anxiety is unfocused. Anxiety is therefore, difficult to cope with, as when we feel unsettled but have no basis for feeling that way. Freud proposed that the ego protects itself against anxiety with ego defense mechanisms. Defense mechanisms reduce or redirect anxiety in various ways, but always by distorting reality.

Although Freud was known to change his mind, he was deeply committed to his ideas and principles, even in the face of harsh criticism. Although controversial, his ideas attracted followers who formed a dedicated inner circle. From time to time, sparks would fly and a member would leave or be outcast. Even the ideas of the outcasts, however, reflected Freud's influence. Erik Erikson was one of these outcasts. He agreed with Freud that development proceeds through a series of critical stages. But he believed the stages were psychosocial, not psychosexual.

Erikson also argued that life's developmental stages encompass the whole life p According to Erikson, a crisis is equivalent to a turning point in life, where there is the opportunity to progress or regress. At these turning points, a person can either resolve conflicts or fail to adequately resolve the developmental task. Delving further into these differences, Erikson contended that each stage of life has its own psychosocial task. Young children wrestle with issues of trust, then autonomy, then initiative. School-age children develop competence, the sense that they are able and productive human beings.

In adolescence, the task is to synthesize past, present, and future possibilities into a clearer sense of self. Adolescents wonder: " Who am I as an individual? What do I want to do with my life? What values should I live by? What do I believe in? " Erikson calls this quest to more deeply define a sense of self the adolescent's " search for identity. " To refine their sense of identity, adolescents usually try out different " selves" in different situations - perhaps acting out one self at home, another with friends and still another at school and work.

If two of these situations overlap - like when a teenager brings a friend home from school - the discomfort can be considerable. The teen may ask, " Which self is the real me? Which self should I be? " Often, this role confusion gets resolved by the gradual reshaping of a self-definition that unifies the various selves into a consistent and comfortable sense of who one is - an identity. But not always, Erikson believes that some adolescents forge their identity early, simply by taking on their parents' values and expectations.

Others may adopt a negative identity that defines itself in opposition to parents and society but in conformity with a particular peer group, complete perhaps with the shaved head or multi-colored coif. Still others never quite seem to find themselves or to develop strong commitments. For most, the struggle for identity continues past the teen years and reappears at turning points during adult life. During the first social stage, trust versus mistrust, an infant's basic task is to develop a sense of trust in self, others, and the world.

The infant needs to count on others and develop a sense of acceptance and security. This sense of trust is learned by being caressed and cared for. From

Erikson's viewpoint, if the significant others in an infant's life provide the necessary love, the infant develops a sense of trust. When love is absent, the result is a general sense of mistrust in others. Clearly, infants who feel accepted are in a more favorable position to successfully meet future developmental crises than are those who do not receive adequate nurturing.

However, Erikson postulates that since development is an ongoing lifelong process, personality is not fixed at any given time. Events, circumstances, and social relationships are dynamic and changing. Thus, even a child who emerged from the first stage of life with a strong sense of trust may become mistrustful and cynical if betrayed in later social relationships. Hence, personality is not viewed as fixed by the fifth year of life, as Freud believed, but remains fluid throughout the life span. Between the ages of one and three (Freud's anal stage), children are developing a growing sense of control over their lives.

They can now walk, run, climb, and get into all sorts of mischief. A sense of autonomy develops as they learn new skills and achieve a feeling of control over their environment. Thus Erikson titles this stage Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt. During this period, some parents, out of concern or impatience with their children's progress may intervene and do things that the children should be doing by themselves. Other parents may demand a level of competence of which their children are not yet physically and/or emotionally capable.

In either case, these children begin to doubt their own abilities and feel ashamed when they fail to live up to parental expectations. Children who fail

to master the tasks of establishing some control over themselves and coping with the world around them develop a sense of shame and feelings of doubt about their capabilities. During the next stage, Initiative versus Guilt, which takes place during the preschool years (ages 4 to 6 - Freud's phallic stage), children seek to find out how much they can do. According to Erikson, the basic task of preschool years is to establish a sense of competence and initiative.

Preschool children begin to initiate many of their own activities as they become physically and psychologically ready to engage in pursuits of their own choosing. If they are allowed realistic freedom to choose their own activities and make some of their own decisions, they tend to develop a positive orientation characterized by confidence to initiate actions and follow through on them. On the other hand, if they are unduly restricted, or if their choices are ridiculed, they tend to experience a sense of guilt and ultimately withdraw from taking an active and initiating stance.

By the age of six, the child should enter elementary school. It is during this age that the stage of Industry versus Inferiority occurs. During the ensuing five years, the most important events in the child's life revolve around setting and accomplishing goals related to school situations. When children are successful in mastering the many behaviors expected of them during these years, they develop feelings of competency and a sense of industry. They may express such feelings as: " I can do anything if I just work hard enough.

Children who encounter failure during the early grades may experience severe handicaps later on. A child with learning problems may begin to feel like a worthless person. Such feelings may drastically affect his or her relationships with peers, which are also vital at this time. During the adolescent years, teens experience Identity versus Role Confusion. Typically, adolescents feel they are on center stage and everyone is looking at them. They are often highly critical of themselves and feel that others are equally critical. Their thoughts often turn inward.

They look at themselves and question whether or not they measure up to their peers. They also begin thinking about lifelong goals and careers, wondering whether they will make it in the world of the adult. Their ruthless self-appraisal is often beneficial. It results in the development of values, social attitudes, and standards. This inward focus appears to be necessary for the development of a firm sense of self and of broader roles in the social order. During the stage of Intimacy versus Isolation, adolescence is now behind the individual and the early adult years loom ahead.

Energies are focused on building careers, establishing lasting social ties, and achieving then maintaining intimate relationships. Marriage or cohabitation creates new demands on the individual - sharing, compromising, and relinquishing social mobility to some degree. Also, many young adults begin having children and raising families. Those who were unsuccessful in resolving their identity crises may find themselves isolated from mainstream society and unable to maintain healthy intimate relationships.

The years between the ages of 35 and 60 are a time for learning how to live creatively with others; this period can be the most productive stage of an individual's life. According to Erikson, the stimulus for continued growth in middle age is the crisis of Generativity versus Stagnation or Self-Absorption. By generativity, Erikson meant not just fostering children, but being productive in a broad sense – for example through creative pursuits in careers, in leisure-time activities, in volunteer work or caring for others.

Two important qualities of the productive adult are the ability to love well and the ability to work well. Adults who fail to achieve a sense of productivity begin to stagnate, which is a form of psychological death. The years of maturity are typified by the stage of Integrity of the Self versus Despair. This is the most illuminating stage of a person's life. If all the crises of earlier stages are resolved, looking back with satisfaction of a life well led is a healthy manifestation of self. Maintaining a sense of worth and personal integrity during the final years is natural.

Those who could not resolve earlier crises will look upon the prospects of old age and death with a deep sense of dread and despair. Another primary concept to Erikson's system is ego identity development and the ego strengths that delineate each of the eight stages. His system stresses the ego's complete and stabilizing influences in a person's life history. He depicts the ego from a psychosocial viewpoint as the hub of individual identity. As the ego develops through life crises, it gains the capacity to master in increasingly sophisticated ways the puzzles posed by inner and outer reality.

Erikson proposed that ego strength is achieved in a sequence of psychosexual stages. Beginning in infancy, the child's ego must first learn to trust itself and others to become autonomous and self-sufficient. With trust and autonomy come the virtues of hope and will, forms of ego strength that foster sufficient security for the child to risk the potential disappointment that hope entails, and sufficient independence of spirit for children to dare to initiate willingly their personal adaptation to their inescapable realities.

Once these fundamental ego strengths are acquired, the child is able to acquire a sense of purpose, competence, fidelity, love, care and wisdom – the ego strengths associated with each stage. Erikson's theory embodies a well-balanced concern for nonmotherly or universal psychological “ laws” with some traditional psychoanalytic concern for the uniqueness of the individual, especially in the areas of clinical application and psychohistory. So where does all this theorizing leave Jenny Masterson? A Freudian psychoanalyst may have Jenny free associate to certain terms.

Perhaps her free association would turn out something like this:

Psychoanalyst: Jenny, I want you to relax and lay back. Close your eyes.

Now, I want you to give me the first word that pops into your head when I say a certain word. For instance, if I said “ Dog,” you might say, “ Cat. ”

Jenny: No, if you said, “ dog,” I would say “ dependent. ” Psycho: Interesting, why do you think you would say “ dependent? ” Jenny: “ Well, they are aren't they? I have to feed them, I have to bathe them, I have to wash them, I have to walk them – just like a small child.

Except they won't disobey you, and I expect they'd be a little more respectful of all that I would do for them. Psycho: Okay, the next word is religion. Jenny: Futile. Non-lasting. Psycho: Love Jenny: Useless. Really, love means nothing, just like marriage is meaningless. Psycho: I see. Next word, sex. Jenny: Ugh. So vulgar, dirty, disgusting. So beastly. Psycho: Okay. How about children? Jenny: Ungrateful. Possessions. Really, children just do not realize all that we do for them. We sacrifice, we slave so that their existence may be better and what do they do for us? Nothing. Just heartbreak, never ending heartbreak.

Psycho: Okay, just one last word, woman. Jenny: Prostitute. Chip. Unclean. Most women are just so ugly, inside and out. I simply cannot stand their smiles – so inviting, those little trollops. Jenny had some major hang-ups in the area of sexuality. Perhaps all her “ problems” stem from this one subject. Sex. Her hostility towards other women, her hinted-at incestuous relationship with Ross, her extreme jealousy of Ross' girlfriends, her possessiveness, her lack of close friends – all of these can be traced back to her most important subject. Jenny might have been characterized as an anal character.

It can be speculated that during her toilet training stage, she refused to give, was prudish and was retentive. It can be speculated that perhaps through unwise parental insistence, she may have come to value yet fear this psychological function and all the features associated with it. According to Freud, this type of person becomes orderly to the point of obsession, egocentric, picayunish, preoccupied with money and material things and obstinate. Jenny is all of these things. His theory also holds that sadomasochism is also a trait of the anal character. Jenny exhibits this.

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She inflicts and receives suffering all of her life. She is constantly asking for suffering from Glenn and Isabel when she continually insults them, yet they never give in and make her suffer. She creates situations where only suffering can result for her and others, like when Ross and her moved into the same flat. That was doomed to fail. She constantly obsessed over where he was, whom he was with, why he wasn't paying rent - she drove herself crazy, and in the process alienated her son. Like any masochist, she seems in a strangely perverted way to relish her martyrdom and enjoy her distress.

Freudian theory holds that the instincts seek pleasure and therefore that Jenny's persistence in her treacherous behavior must give her some gratification. While her behavior goes against the very grain of survival, and therefore must be neurotic, it serves to gratify her masochistic needs.

Continuing with this theme, Jenny believed sex to be dirty, and beastly. It is not known much about her marriage, but one can hardly picture Jenny as a wanton woman, or even as a woman with normal sexual drives. Her marriage may have even been a product of rebellion, again an anal trait, against her family.

The principle explanation for Jenny in a Freudian analysis would turn to Jenny's confused sexual identity. It might be said that she never worked through her oedipal complex successfully. She did identify with her mother, according to her sister however. By identifying with her mom, she may have taken on masculine role. After all, by 18 she was the main breadwinner in the house. Perhaps she wished to possess her mother, since she had taken

on the male role. When she married, this psychosexual confusion was not resolved. In fact, it may have been worsened by her husband's death.

It is said that Jenny did not grieve for her husband. Perhaps she merely transferred her womanly affection onto Ross, expecting a relationship from him that was like that of a lover and not a son. Her jealousy over his girlfriends and her kisses under the moonlight certainly point towards unnatural feelings towards him. Perhaps, with Ross' birth, she was able to find a replacement for her lack of penis. Ross may have been a projection of her true masculine nature. She was able to live her life in the masculine image by being one with Ross.

When he died, she kept his robe and pipe, thus cherishing the remnants of her/his masculine identity. Her love of Ross gives an impression of an incestuous relationship. She has fits of jealousy over his lovers, calls him, "sex mad" and talks of him like a lover ("kissed under the stars"). She is very delusional when she believes that to Ross, she is responsible for his existence but that he owes her nothing. Her actions speak contrary to this. She is the perfect martyr, constantly making exaggerated sacrifices for Ross. In reality, she expected him to repay her with undying devotion. She wanted to possess him.