

II. Psychoanalysis and Freud

A. Biography and Theories of Freud

Sigmund Freud was born on May 6, 1856, in a small town Freiberg in Moravia, and when he was four or five, the family moved to Vienna where he lived most of his life. Being a brilliant child always at the head of his class, Freud went to medical school and became involved in research under the direction of a physiology professor named Ernst Brücke. Freud was very good at his research, concentrating on neurophysiology and inventing a special cell-staining technique. Brücke helped him to get a grant to study, first with the great psychiatrist Charcot in Paris, then with his rival Bernheim in Nancy. Both of them were investigating the use of hypnosis with hysterics. After spending a short time as a resident in neurology and director of a children's ward in Berlin, Freud came back to Vienna, married his wife Martha Bernays, and set up a practice in neuropsychiatry with the help of Joseph Breuer.

Freud's books and lectures brought him both fame and exclusion from the mainstream of the medical community. He drew around him a number of people who became the core of the psychoanalytic movement. Unfortunately, Freud had the tendency to reject people who did not totally agree with him, so some of them separated from him and went on to found competing schools of thought. Freud immigrated to England just before World War II when Vienna became an increasingly dangerous place for Jews. Not long afterward, he died of the cancer of the mouth and jaw that he had suffered from for almost twenty years.

Freud left many famous writings and lectures, in which I intend to deal with mainly on Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex, The Complete Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis (A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis), Beyond the Pleasure Principle, and The Ego and the Id, and partly on The Interpretation of

Dreams, The Future of an Illusion, and Civilization and Its Discontents. The earlier theory of Freud was established on the foundation of the effect and variation of sexuality. Through the technique of psychoanalysis and the data examples of his patients, Freud did a systematical research to illustrate his theory of sexuality, in the aspect of sexual object, sexual aim, and sexual expression. He used “libido” to present the sexual instincts of human beings, just like the need to take nourishment. Afterwards, the concept of libido and its related consumptions became the basic element of Freud’s theory.

The basic background theory of Freud is about the conscious and the unconscious mind. Freud didn't actually invent this theory, but he certainly was responsible for making it popular. The conscious mind is what you perceive at any moment, such as your memories, thoughts, fantasies, and feelings. Working closely with the conscious mind is what Freud called the preconscious, including anything that can easily be made conscious, or the memories you can readily bring to mind. The largest part is the unconscious. It includes all the things that are not easily available to awareness. The existence of the unconscious is brought about by the analysis of neuroses: “The fact that it is possible to find meaning in neurotic symptoms by means of analytic interpretation is an irrefutable proof of the existence . . . of unconscious mental process” (Riviere, Psychoanalysis¹, 247). Some things have their origins there, such as our drives or instincts; some things are put there because we cannot bear to look at them, such as the memories and emotions associated with trauma. The unconscious is the source of our motivations, and yet, we often tend to deny or resist becoming conscious of these motives. That is because we obtain “our concept of the unconscious from the theory of repression”

¹ In this thesis it represents Freud’s A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis.

(Freud, Ego and Id², 5), so some forbidden motives or instincts proceed and some emotional frustration stay there.

In Freud's view, the sex drive, the most important motivating force, is a primary one for people of all ages. Beside intercourse, Freud found that sexuality means all pleasurable sensation from the skin, for it is clear that people enjoy the experiences like caresses, kisses, and so on. Freud noted that, at different times in our lives, we get great pleasure from different parts of our skin which are called erogenous zones later. Freud thought that the infant find its greatest pleasure in sucking, and in fact babies do bring everything into their mouths. By sucking the infant creates for himself a substitute for "the sucking from the mother's breast", which "must have acquainted him with this pleasure" (Brill, Theory of Sex³, 554). A bit later in life, the child focuses on the anal pleasures. It is because the erogenous zone must be "a portion of skin or mucous membrane in which stimuli produce a feeling of pleasure of definite quality" (Theory of Sex, 555), and in excretion he finds the pleasure by holding it in and letting go. By three or four, the child may discover the pleasure of touching or rubbing his or her genitalia, but only later in sexual maturity do people find their greatest pleasure in sexual intercourse.

In these observations, Freud made a psychosexual stage theory. The oral stage lasts from birth to about 18 months: The focus of pleasure is the mouth, and sucking and biting are favorite activities. The anal stage lasts from about 18 months to three or four years old: The focus of pleasure is the anus, and holding it in and letting it go are enjoyed. The phallic stage lasts from three or four to five, six, or seven years old: The focus of pleasure is the genitalia, and masturbation is common. The latent stage lasts from five, six, or seven to puberty, somewhere around 12 years old: The sexual

² In this thesis it represents The Ego and the Id.

³ In this thesis it represents Freud's Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex.

impulse is suppressed for learning. The genital stage begins at puberty, and represents the reanimation of the sex drives during teenage: The more specific focus of pleasure is sexual intercourse. With the application of the psychosexual stage theory, Freud felt that masturbation, oral sex, homosexuality, and many other things we find acceptable in adulthood, are immature. And Freudians believe that we all go through these stages in this order.

Another important point of Freud's theory is the Oedipus complex, named after the ancient Greek story of king Oedipus who killed his father and married his mother. Here's how Oedipus complex works: The first love-object for the boy is his mother. He wants her attention, affection, and caresses in a broadly sexual way, because "the object adopted proves almost identical with the first object of the oral pleasure impulse" (Psychoanalysis, 289), either the mother or her breast. So the young boy views his father as a rival when he senses that his father is bigger, stronger, smarter, and gets to sleep with his mother while he is alone in his bed. About the time the little boy recognizes this archetypal situation, he has become aware of some of the more subtle differences between boys and girls beside hair length and clothing styles. Accordingly, recognizing his father's superiority, the boy engages some of his ego defenses: He displaces his sexual impulses from his mother to girls and women; and he identifies with the aggressor father and attempts to become more and more a man like him. After some years of latency, the boy then enters adolescence and the world of mature heterosexuality. The process that the boy's libido finds his mother as an object is called object-cathexis⁴, and the process that he displaces the sexual impulses and identifies with his father is called identification. Only by completing the whole

⁴ The psychic representative of the concept of the libido is designated by Freud as the ego-libido, which can only become "accessible to psychoanalytic study if its psychic energy is invested or occupied (cathexis) in sexual object" (Brill, 579); that is the process it becomes object-libido. So the process that the libido finds its object is called object-cathexis.

process can the boy have normal relationships of other girls.

Furthermore, in Freud's theory there is a very special object, the organism, which functions to survive, reproduce, and fulfill its needs—hunger, thirst, the avoidance of pain, and sex. And a very important part of the organism is the nervous system, which is little more than that of any other animals—the id. The nervous system, as the id, translates the organism's needs into motivational forces like instincts or drives (Freud called wishes), and this translation from need to wish is called the primary process. The id works in keeping with the pleasure-principle, which is like a demand to serve needs immediately. A hungry infant would scream for his needs, and in Freud's view, the infant is pure with the nearly pure id. Unfortunately, although a wish for food might satisfy the id, it isn't enough to satisfy the organism. The need just gets stronger and the wishes just keep coming. The wish or drive then breaks into consciousness.

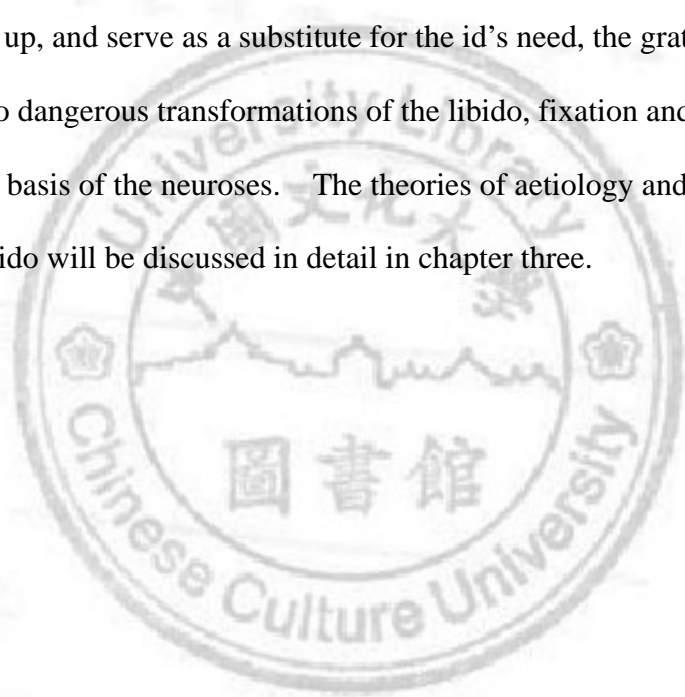
Luckily, the conscious is linked to the world through the senses. During the beginning years of one's life, some of the id becomes ego. The ego relates the organism to reality and it searches for objects to satisfy the wishes that id creates to represent the organism's needs. This problem-solving activity is called the secondary process. The ego functions according to the reality-principle, which takes care of the id's need to find an appropriate object to as possible. However, as the ego struggles to fulfill the id, it faces the obstacles of stopping it from attaining its goal in the world, and it keeps a record of them. This record of things to avoid and how to deal with them becomes the superego. There are two aspects of the superego: One is the conscience, which is an internalization of punishments and warnings; the other is the ego ideal, which derives from rewards and positive models. The conscience and ego ideal require and rule the ego by some feelings like pride, shame,

and guilt. Therefore, ego serves as a mechanism of modulating and coordinating the needs of both sides, and it is seen as “a poor creature owing service to three masters and consequently menaced by three dangers: from the external world, from the libido of the id, and from the severity of the super-ego” (Ego and Id, 46). The conflicts among id, ego, and superego, then contribute a lot to psychological researches on the way they influence people.

In addition, in Freud’s view, all human behaviors are motivated by the drives or instincts, which in turn represent the physical needs in neurology. At first, he referred to them as the life instincts. These instincts perpetuate the life of the individual, by motivating people to seek food and water, and the life of the species, by motivating people to have sex. The motivational energy of these life instincts are the libido, and since Freud thought of sex as much more important than other needs, the libido has come to mean the sex drive. However, life instincts do not tell the whole story. The pleasure principle keeps us in perpetual motion, and yet the goal of all this motion is to be satisfied and to have no more needs. Therefore, the goal of life may be death, and under the life instincts there is possibly a death instinct—every person has an unconscious wish to die because death promises release from the struggle of life. The gradually clear evidence of the death instinct shows in the desire for peace and for escape from stimulation, such as losing ourselves in books or movies, or dying for rest and sleep. Sometimes it presents itself as suicide and suicidal wishes, and sometimes it presents in the form of aggression, cruelty, and murder.

Accordingly, by those theories, the system of Freud’s theories and the pattern of psychoanalysis are showed clearly. Originating from the conflicts between the pleasure-principle and the reality-principle, the conflicts among the id, the ego, and

the super-ego are actually under the influence of the libido's transformation. The transformation of the libido then participates in the development of neurotic symptoms, becoming the basis of aetiology. Neurotic symptoms basically represent the frustration and transformation of the libido, with which the two dangers fixation and regression are associated. The purpose of fixation and regression is trying to bring the libido to its gratification: Some sexual impulses may remain in an early stage of development and form fixation points, and when they are frustrated in the way to its final goal, they regress back to those fixation points. Thus the neurotic symptoms show up, and serve as a substitute for the id's need, the gratification of the libido. The two dangerous transformations of the libido, fixation and regression, then become the basis of the neuroses. The theories of aetiology and the problems related to the libido will be discussed in detail in chapter three.



B. Application of the Theories

The theories of Freud may have great function on the analysis of the purposes and behaviors of the juvenile delinquency of the two protagonists, Pinkie and Alex. To begin with, the influence of the whole environment on them is closely related to the connections and the conflicts among their id, ego, and superego, and at the same time we can find their identities are floating. In addition, the conflicts between the pleasure principle and the reality principle and between the life instinct and the death instinct will be well illustrated with their gangster behaviors. It is for certain that the id along with the pleasure principle on Pinkie and Alex are prepotent, while the death instinct makes its function of destruction. So the combination of those elements leads to both their physical and mental violence. Furthermore, I believe that home does influence Pinkie and Alex a lot. The relationships between their parents and them reveal the possible problems on family education and the parents' behaviors. And their abnormal attitudes toward sex and the strong power of their ids can be corresponded to Freud's theories of sexuality. Within those theories there is a vital one called the Oedipus complex, which may contribute to the interpretation of the abnormal attitudes of sex.

In chapter two, I intend to adopt the historical background and the societal condition at that time to demonstrate the change and possible influence on people. Meanwhile, with the application of Freud's theories, it can be revealed that the change of social order may lead to floating identity, which will be proved by the conflicts and interaction of the id, ego, and super-ego of Pinkie and Alex. The environmental effect, therefore, will be a vital reason to construct their delinquency. Analyzing family background is also a way to contribute to the environmental effect on them, because within it the effect of the Oedipus complex along with object-cathexis plays a

determinative role of the two protagonists' change and interaction of the super-ego.

In my opinion, the Oedipus complex has a great function on their behaviors.

In chapter three, I will adopt Freud's way and theories of psychoanalysis mainly and culture study partly to analyze the influence of the home, which is a more specific and the most influential one that builds up people's characteristics and thoughts among all the environmental effects. With the belief that family is the seedbed of neuroses and crimes, family breakdowns take an important part in my analysis, and the historical and economic family backgrounds of Pinkie and Alex are under consideration. Family breakdowns are the external factor to cause the symptoms of neuroses; in contrast, the transformation and the development of the libido are the internal factor. Also, the fixation and the regression of the libido play a crucial and decisive role in the development of neurotic symptoms. Thus the theories of neurology and aetiology will be discussed, and by applying them to the neurotic symptoms of Pinkie and Alex, their patterns of mental conflict will be revealed. Obviously, all these factors originate from the unbalance of the libido affected by the ego, so the questions or problems that it brings about lead to Pinkie's and Alex's abnormal attitudes toward sex and abnormal behaviors. What's the most important, by experiencing those family breakdowns and mental conflicts, the order of their life is lost and their identities are floating. The disequilibrium and the dislocation of Pinkie's and Alex's families, therefore, lead to their abnormal and antisocial acts.

In my opinion, Freud's way of psychoanalysis will give us not only a good interpretation of Pinkie and Alex's criminal acts but also a proof that their abnormal behaviors are under the environmental effect, so that the question of being good and evil on Pinkie and Alex should be reconsidered.