

# Analysis on Paul's Personality Development from Freud's Personality Structure Theory

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**Abstract.** Personality is a mental mechanism to control people's behaviors. By using *Sons and Lovers* as the research material, based on the theory of personality structure by Freud which can construct multilevel personality to explore inner world of the people, the thesis makes an analysis of Paul's Id, Ego and Superego to find out the changes of the personality development and the real reasons why Paul loses the balance of personality. The author hopes that the research can have a little contribution to the studies of *Sons and Lovers*.

**Keywords:** personality structure; *Sons and Lovers*.

## 1. Introduction

Lawrence is a famed English novelist and poet. *Sons and Lovers* is one of his most famous works. In 1913 the novel is first published and causes great echoes at that time. In the novel the writer tells the story that happens at the very beginning of the 20th century. Industrialization, an unavoidable process spread the whole society. It is known that industrialization liberates men from working on the land. More and more people are out of job and they are pushed into factories and mines to earn money to support the family. Under such circumstance, many people have chance to make money but most of them have no chance to receive education when they are young. What's worse, it takes them much time to do exhausting work. Under such pressure they usually want to relax themselves by looking for some fun after work. The miners who live in Lawrence's hometown are no exception.

Houkai Wu writes in his works that *Sons and Lovers* is always regarded as the milestone of his writing life and the transition of his art style [1]. Some scholars describe Paul's personality development as a process from dependence to independence, from self-absence to a gradual consciousness of self.[2]

## 2. Explanation of Freud's Personality Structure Theory

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) is a great psychologist founder of psychoanalysis. The first version of Freud's personality structure theory focuses mainly on consciousness and sub consciousness. When Freud studies personality, he lays stress on unconsciousness. In his theory the process of the consciousness comes from the process of the unconsciousness. However, Freud thinks that the consciousness also concludes the preconscious process. Thus he states that the personality is made of the three processes, including consciousness, unconsciousness and preconscious process. Later, Freud puts forward the theory of personality. As the unity, the personality consists of three parts, the Id, the Ego and the Superego. These three parts can have an influence on each other for the people. The personality will take a control of the person during different periods. [3]

To the personality structure Sigmund Freud states there are three parts. Among these, he thinks that the Id is the basic and original part of the personality, totally in the sub-consciousness. He explains that it is a chaotic world of instinctive and unstable desires. To meet happiness, he says that the Id can release the psychic energy or reduce the anxiety without considering anything in one's body. He analyzes it is the first principle of life, the principle of happiness.

In his opinion the Ego exists between the Id and the outside world. The Ego expresses the rational and conscious Id. The Ego is the most powerful part of personality and the Ego has the ability to control the Id and the superego. The most important part of the Ego is that it can adjust the relationship

between the Id and reality. On the one hand, the Ego is thought to be in need to meet the desire of the Id. On the other hand, the Ego forbids the actions if they break the social ethics and the laws.

Freud explicates that the Superego is split from the Ego and the highest part of the personality. He says the Superego comes into being when someone has the education of social morality. The function of superego is to supervise the activities of the Id and guide the Ego. He states that the Superego has three functions. When people think these activities are not allowed by the society, the Superego suppresses different activities of the Id. The superego induces the Ego to act according to social standard of morality when the person behaves in the community. Another function is to guide the person to form perfect personality in his lifetime.

### **3. Analysis on Paul's Personality Development**

#### **3.1 Paul's Struggle between Id and Superego**

From the view of Freud, the Id is eager for the pleasure, aiming at avoiding the anxieties of the people. In the novel, most of the people are driven to the factories and miners, then they are lack of education, Walter Morel included. After work, he only has the way to relax himself by kind of gambling. He is non-intellectual and irrational sometimes. Especially he usually is drunk and hits his wife. They find it is hard for the husband and wife to communicate with each other. On the contrary, with high education, the heroine Gertrude is full of ration and she is noble with strong will. In the family all of these differences lead to the fact that none of the children talk more with their father, who is non-intellectual, constantly drunk, and rude to the family members. The role of father is replaced by strong mother in the family. As we know, Gertrude is the representative of the Superego who confines all her behaviors to the codes admitted by the society. In the meanwhile, Paul relies on his mother greatly. Therefore, Paul believes all the things that his mother requires are right and he must try his best to finish them because he believes in his mother.

As we know, in Freud's theory the Superego can help the person fight against the Id, which can relieve the anxiety of the Ego. In the process of growth, the role of father is almost absent. Paul's behaviors are not up to the standard of the Superego, such as pursuit for the sex, the alienated love to his mother, the hatred to father and so on. In his theory the Superego will try best to suppress these instincts for pleasure. Paul's desire to pursue instincts become fiercer when the time goes. In the personality development Paul has to be involved into the same anxiety of the Id. And the Ego has to be faced with much worse situation. Freud says that Ego consists of the rationality and common sense, and it has the contradictory reflection of the Id. [3]

Based on Freud's theory, we can find that the anxiety is just like a kind of signals which are always sent out by the Ego. It's common when the Ego cannot deal with the circumstances that result from the Id or sometimes from the Superego and the real world. In the novel, the father's role is absence because father's behaviors make him away from the family members. In Paul's life, he depends more on his mother and it is hard for him to get rid of the bond to his mother. Lack of communication with his father, most of times Paul just makes more attachment to his mother. Thus Paul is lost in the pursuit for the true Ego. The situation becomes worse and worse. With growth of Paul, his desire to look for sex gets stronger and stronger. Nevertheless his abnormal love to his mother becomes much heavier with time going. Therefore, in the personality development, the superego supervises the Ego. In such situation Paul tries his best to suppress such desires: such as sex, money, abnormal love and social class.

#### **3.2 Paul's Efforts to Balance his Personality During his Growth**

According to Freud's theory, when the Id releases so much libido of sex to some degree and one cannot meet the demand, the Id wins the Superego and the Id forces the Ego to pursue the sex. The problem is that Paul indulges himself into the sex desire. The result is that he is in anxiety of the sex too. To relieve the anxiety of the Id, Freud says, the Ego tries to take the defense mechanism. It's known that the defense mechanism can strengthen the frail Ego to get rid of the anxious state. But Paul fails to be out of the problem.

Paul is anxious in his life and tries to help himself. In order to keep his personality balanced, he hopes that Miriam or his father can be close to him instead of his mother. But in his spiritual mind he still dedicates to his mother. The consequence is that he cannot insist on the choices of the ego when he wants to better to find himself on the work and identity of class. The desire of sex awakens when he gets older. He longs to stay with Miriam, but he is shamed of the sex desire. It's pity for him because there is no chance to have balanced personality communicated with others by applying relationship between the man and woman. His mother and his girlfriend are hurt by his instinct. On the other side, the instinct also hurts him on the personality development.

### **3.3 Conflicts among the Id, the Superego and the Ego**

Paul's personality development is the result of joint action. The conflict between the Id and the Superego has been lasting in him. All the time the Id tries its best to be satisfied on the instincts. Obviously Paul is powered by the Id. Then he tries his best to seek for the satisfaction of desires, such as sex, love and hate. The Id forces the Ego to do what it likes. Thus Paul is lost into the desires of instincts. These desires drive Paul into a crazy way. In his life, Paul becomes the person as his selfish father, who just cares what he wants.

In Freud's view, the Superego takes the role of supervision. It's not correct for his excessive sex desire, the alienated love to his mother and the hatred to his father. The Superego forces the Ego to submit it and the Id has a serious conflict with the Superego. Under such condition the Superego is too weak to fight with the Id, so the Ego is lost in the anxiety. As a result Paul cannot break away from his unbalanced personality.

Based on the theory, the Ego has to find the way from the contradiction between the Id and the Superego. With the personality development, the Ego has to apply the defense mechanism to release and relieve the anxiety of Id. However the personality of Paul is still unbalanced because of the improper application.[4]

## **4. Conclusion**

During the personality development Paul is controlled by the Id. From his behavior it is obvious that he tries to seek the instincts satisfaction. All his life, Paul becomes the person who just is concerned about the desires and instincts. During his growth he has been controlled by the Id. [5] From the theory the Superego is more influenced by the parents and the environment. The personality of Paul is influenced fully by his mother, rather than his father. So the Superego of Paul has developed so limited that it cannot play fully part in supervision. At last, the Id is much stronger than the Superego and the Ego. Therefore, during the construction of the personality no matter which one is stronger than the other two, the personality will lose its balance. [6]When Paul applies the Ego defense mechanism he still does not succeed. Consequently, in daily life we should take the suitable defense mechanism to relieve the anxiety and to comfort ourselves. With proper application, both of the positive and negative defense mechanism can take positive role in personality development. Otherwise, the positive defense mechanism will have negative impact on the personality structure.

From perspective of Freud's theory of personality structure, the thesis tries to explore Paul's personality development. To sum up, the author hopes that the study above can have a little contribution to the studies of personality theory and famous literature works. There are still many different theory needed to be applied. It is worthwhile, because the research can help readers' understanding of the great works and encourage scholars to interpret the novel from new perspectives.

## **References**

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