

Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung: *Were They Wrong?*

THE FATHERS OF MODERN PSYCHOLOGY, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, famously offered two battling tripartite models of the human being. Freud's trinity of the Id, Ego, and Superego is perhaps the best known, though far from being widely understood. So would I, merely a casual enthusiast of the workings of the human mind dare to refute the works of these educated men of learning? In a word, yes.

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Let us compare these models of the soul, at least as best as I understand them. Freud's model begins with the Id: The Id is the primal core of a man, the primitive thought process that only wants to be satisfied. The Superego is the conscience, the moral side of man, whose makeup he attributed generally to society and institutions such as the church. Finally, the Ego ("I" in Latin) is the go-between that ensures that neither the Id or the Superego becomes solely powerful.

Jung, on the other hand, interpreted this triune relationship differently. The shadow was the base part of man; unlike Freud's Id, this is not simply primitive but also fundamentally opposite to the conscious self. He attributes this conscious self to the animus or anima (the gender distinction of this partition is the subject of another paper - for now, simply take it for what it is). Unlike the Superego, the animus/a is essentially good in all ways. Then finally the persona is the component that moderates the function of the other two.

The basic assumption of both of these models is that man is first an animal (controlled

by the Id or the shadow) then a creature of higher reasoning (the Superego or the animus) and finally a mediator (the Ego or the persona). There is no doubt that these assignments exist to some degree, but for the person of a religious worldview (myself included), there exists a significant switch.

Christianity in its truest form switches the places of the primal and pure creature. The persona or Id is simply the person, the mediating mind. The base Id or shadow is the "flesh," and the Superego or animus is the "soul." This worldview holds that the unredeemed man is controlled by the flesh. It is the intervention of the mediating mind that must give deference to

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the soul. The transformation brought about by redemption puts things backwards: the person is no longer tied to the flesh except as a sort of corrupt nagging force. The soul is in control. It is obvious that the flesh can never be absolutely obliterated; that would indicate perfection. But unlike Freud's view, this is an ideal of perfection and not a dangerous imbalance.

So Freud and Jung are not necessarily wrong (though perhaps they would have been unhappy to realize that Paul had predated their tripartite psychological theories by nearly two thousand years). However, their theories reflect their personal beliefs, especially the hopeless state of innate depravity; conversely, the hopeful Christian perspective on the redemption of this depravity demonstrates a more positive view of the human being.

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