

The human life cycle in
psychology and
anthropology: Freud, Erikson
and Malinowski

Lecture 4

Nature vs. Nurture in child development

Interest in the life cycle

– Seen as **Universal** based on **biology**

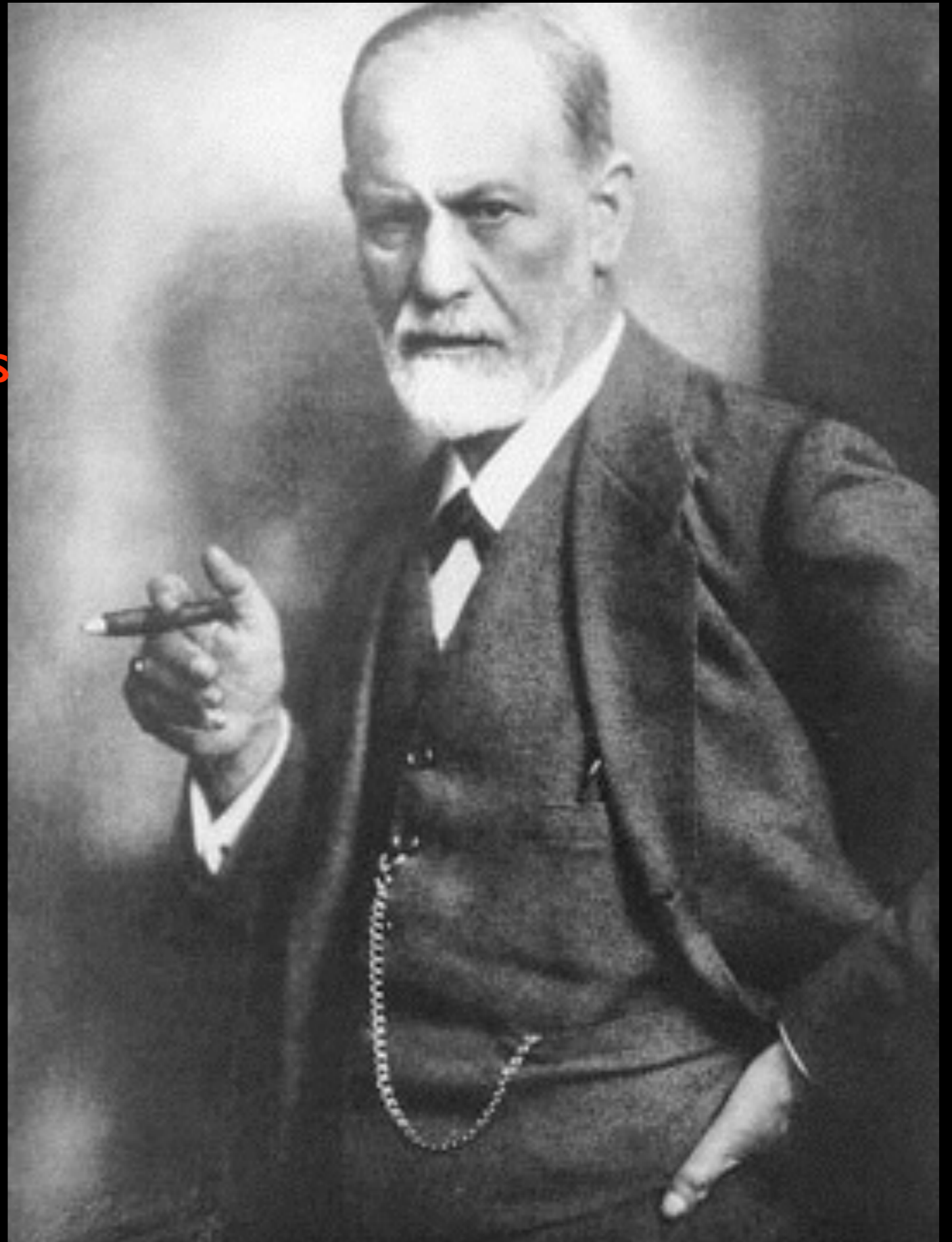
- Started by Freud
- Erikson made the life cycle a popular concept - wrote Childhood and Society
- Both enormous impact on psychologists and social psychologists

Why important?

- background to the periods or stages of life we are going to look at in the context of different cultures

Freud (1856-1939)

Biological and universal stages
and conflicts



Main theory:

- personality is developed by a person's childhood experiences

Interesting aspects
about his career -

Theory: *Universal*

(biological) stages in childhood
which all revolved around

- Oedipus complex after the Greek tragedy
Oedipus Rex
- (Oedipus = boys lust after mother/ Electra =
girls lust after father)

Main ideas:

- Progression through stages was vital for “normal” development
- Developmental process = movement through a series of conflicts that must be successfully resolved
- If not resolved at the appropriate stage **FIXATION** can occur and the individual gets “stuck”. = Mental illness, particularly hysteria

Freud's views have been called “**phallogentric**”

- Theories are based on the idea that both males and females have an unconscious desire for the penis.
- EX: penis envy

Stages

age

- Oral (0-1)
- Anal (1-2)
- Phallic (---5/6)
- Latency (6)
- Genital (adolescence)

conflict

- weaning
- toilet training
- Oedipus Complex
- erotic limbo
- authoritative constraints

Carl Jung
(1875-1961)
Swiss
psychiatrist



Main contributions

- Developed a conception of the entire life cycle
- Emphasized importance of social institutions, religion and mythology.
- took issue with universality - culture imp.
- Development the product of internal and exterior cultural forces

- **UNFORTUNATELY** his work and ideas were not developed upon

**Erik Erikson
(1902-1994)**



**Biological &
universal stages/
crises**

Main ideas:

- Child's physical development proceeds in a prescribed sequence.
- Social interaction and physical growth lead to certain psychosocial crises, which the child has to resolve.

Crises

- Crises follow a prescribed sequence
- Successful resolution = next one will most likely be successfully resolved.
- Crises are never completely “solved” – individual carries these problems through life.

ERICKSON'S PSYCHOSOCIAL STAGES

<i>Stages</i>	<i>Crisis</i>	<i>Favorable Outcome</i>	<i>Unfavorable Outcome</i>
Childhood			
1st year of life	<i>Trust vs. Mistrust</i>	Faith in the environment and future events	Suspicion, fear of future events
2nd year	<i>Autonomy vs. Doubt</i>	A sense of self-control and adequacy	Feelings of shame and self-doubt
3rd through 5th years	<i>Initiative vs. Guilt</i>	Ability to be a "self-starter," to initiate one's own activities.	A sense of guilt and inadequacy to be on one's own
6th year to puberty	<i>Industry vs. Inferiority</i>	Ability to learn how things work, to understand and organize.	A sense of inferiority at understanding and organizing.
Transition years			
Adolescence	<i>Identity vs. confusion</i>	Seeing oneself as a unique and integrated person.	Confusion over who and what one really is.
Adulthood			
Early adulthood	<i>Intimacy vs. isolation</i>	Ability to make commitments to others, to love.	Inability to form affectionate relationships
Middle age	<i>Generativity vs. self-absorption</i>	Concern for family and society in general.	Concern only for self— one's own well-being and prosperity.
Aging years	<i>Integrity vs. despair</i>	A sense of integrity and fulfillment; willingness to face death.	Dissatisfaction with life; despair over prospect of death.

contemporary
psychoanalysts still mainly
view life stages to be
biological & universal

Anthropologists disagree

- Stresses and emotional strains - a great degree the result of the society/culture.
- Could be some biology but **ALSO culture**

- Not enough to merely acknowledge that history, culture and social institutions influence the life of the individual.
- Must look at other societies and develop a **comparative perspective.**
- **This is what we are going to do in this class**

Now -

- Question the **universality** of these crises or psychodramas and examine the wide variation in how **cultures** deal with biological changes as individuals mature.

Early Socialization Studies by anthropologists

- Why done? Revolve around the nature/nurture controversy
- Test questions of universal human nature

- **How** individuals in other cultures become the kinds of individuals they are, how they acquire personality characteristics and behavior required of them.

First studies of socialization

Bronislaw Malinowski
(1884 -1942)



Book = **questioned** Freud and Erikson's
assumptions that people everywhere go
through the same crises and
psychodrama.

Trobriand society and family

- **Matrilineal descent-** trace descent through females exclusively (v.s. patrilineal or bilateral descent)

A group of kinsmen

- a mother includes:
- her sons and daughters
- (not her husband)
- her brother
- (not her brother's children)
- (not her son's children)
- her sister and her children

Stages

conflict

- Oral (0-1)
- Anal (1-2)
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- Oedipus Complex
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Concludes:

- Because of matrilineal descent **NO** Oedipus Complex
- Also, because of other cultural differences don't have the same conflicts and crises of child development

Malinowski's position:

- Human nature is not necessarily tabula rasa, there is a core, but this core is very small compared to what culture made.

What is the biological core?

- Biological needs, drives, capacities

- Malinowski's findings (early 20s) met with criticism by Freudians and is still controversial
- **BUT** other anthropologists followed - clear culture is imp!

Tonight's reading:

- Gladwell, Chapter 8