

# FREUD AND THE FILIPINO YOUTH: REVISITING FREUD'S THEORY ON GENDER, SEX, AND LOVE

<sup>1</sup>JINAMARLYN B. DOCTOR

**ABSTRACT** --Freud's theory on gender, sex and love has been constantly viewed as a relevant topic in social science and education spheres. As there are many aspects in this theory that need to be investigated because of the ever changing social landscape, this paper revisits the views of selected college students on specified constructs of the theory. It tried to discover significant findings from the philosophy of Freud to understand whether his concepts are resonated through the perspectives of selected college students. By means of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), a qualitative approach exploring the lived experience of the participants. The study discovered that Freud's knowledge on sexuality is still manifested by both Filipino male and female sexes. This was revealed by comparing how Filipino male and female fall in love in this day and age. Based on the results, the college students described Filipino male as passive, much faster in being aware of their sexuality, wild and harsh, responsible, hard-working and a good provider in the family; while women are conservative, powerful than before, and surprisingly no tradition exists for them. Moreover, the students claim that male and female differ in how they express their love such as male cry but it is usually hidden, showing sincerity, and honesty. On the other hand, female are too expressive and emotional; expresses love by kissing, hugging, etc. In this study, the role of society is very vital in establishing sexuality.

**Keywords**---Love, Freud's Philosophy, Gender, Sex, Filipino youth

## I. INTRODUCTION

Freud's philosophy concern many aspects of sexuality. He made a huge impact on Western thought and dared every belief about human character by suggesting that people are driven by motives and conflicts which we are unconscious and with that our individuality is formed by our childhood experiences.

Shaffer & Kipp (2010) mentioned that to Freud human development is a conflictual process that humans have essential sexual and aggressive instincts that must be given attention. He thought that sex was the most imperative instinct because of his discovery that his patients' mental fracas frequently orbit on childhood sexual conflicts.

Filipino youth as participants of this study are considered to be the most important resource or hope of the country. This period of one's life is considered to be the most challenging part of a human's existence. Though Freud's theory became commonly read and has fascinated many followers, there are also those who disagree with him who even tried modifying his ideas.

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<sup>1</sup> College of Social Science and Development, Polytechnic University of the Philippines Sta. Mesa, Manila, Philippines, College of Arts and Sciences, Eulogio "Amang" Rodriguez Institute of Science and Technology, Nagtahan, Sampaloc, Manila, Philippines, doctor\_jina@yahoo.com

Freud suggested that love begins at an early age. He posited that a ‘universal event at the heart of the ‘kernel complex’ which is “Oedipus” describes that every infant is subject to physiological, emotional, mental needs but not yet possessed of understanding, and capacity to fend for itself—is locked in the relationship with parents whose love – and power—it both resents and craves (Whiteside,xv). For instance, infantile sexuality arises with the indulgence in sucking, hence “Oedipus” was created. The term Oedipus complex expounds a child’s emotional state or desire with the parent of the opposite sex; that the father becomes a disturbing rival to the boy and the mother to the girl (xv). Other important seminal works of Freud are about fetishism, psychosexual, hysteria, penis envy, and desires.

According to Freud (trans. Whiteside, 2006) who a person loves redounds to its “object-choice”, meaning the first passionate love of a young man, the object of affection, is often on a mature woman, and vice versa for a young girl who is attracted to an older and authoritative man. With this strong attraction to the older counterpart it can be surmised that the image of parent figures – mother or father – become apparent. One task that is seemingly implicit in object-choice is to ensure that one finds the opposite sex. Therefore, the ramifications of this statement will form part of the corpus of this research.

On the other hand, Melanie Klein on object-relations theory (Zgourides, 2000), offered her idea on infant personality development and believed that the central part of personality originates from near the beginning relationships with the mother. She said that the important influence for a child’s need is a powerful mother. So, therefore, the basic human force is to be in affiliation with others.

Jeri Johnson wrote an introduction to Freud’s “Psychology of Love (trans. Whiteside, 2006) stating that Freud was responsible for changing people’s ideas and perceptions about sex. Hence, everything revolves on the topic on sex that eventually placed people in a lamentable state of knowing. Freud’s theories in modern time have become a form of serious reading when the knowledge being sought is about sexuality (viii).

Furthermore an understanding of the sharp distinction between male and female during puberty stage must be understood. This is the time that crucially shapes and influences the lives of human beings. Corey (2013) described this as the phallic stage (the final stage of psychosexual development). A more thorough analysis of female sexuality can also be understood from Freud’s successors in the field of psychoanalysis like of Luce Irigaray who is a French feminist scholar. For Luce Irigaray (1987), while following Freud’s theory on castration, little girls are always being prepared for their sexuality even before they reach their age of knowing how to manipulate and experience feminine pleasure. This stage is usually considered as the “turning point” in women’s life that occurs when they hit the puberty stage.

Freud’s contribution to the field of psychology is no doubt fascinating and very useful, however, in some cases, it is important to note and understand that cases might still vary, maybe not to an extreme situation but in minor or minimal ways, considering the changes that might occur over time and differences in terms of culture. To put this in context, important criticisms on Freud’s theory met contentions regarding its cultural relevance. Projections on universality of the theory are noted on the basis of family constellation composed of mother, father, and child which according to an argument by Malinowski may not apply to all cultures. Hence, this was taken as a remarkable insight by Freud in terms of how children identify themselves based on the roles of adults around them (Crain, 1992). In the local context for instance, Cristina Hidalgo (2009), a Filipina literary scholar, gave an example on how love and power are perceived by Filipina(s) through different literary pieces. She elaborated how

women are being suppressed by either their relationships with men or by their duties with their families. Her analysis showed that women tend to be more submissive in terms of their relationship especially with their fathers. Moreover, she also explained some notion of love and how women perceived it as either their way to liberation or how love can work as a mode of oppression. The study conducted by C. Hidalgo on how love and power operate in the Filipina experience is even more strengthened by the research of J. de Ilara, A. Osorio, C. del Burgo, V. Belen, F. de Guzman, M. Calatrava and A. Toralba (2009) describing the feelings and thoughts of Filipino youth about relationships, love, and sexuality. On the same token, de Ilara, Osorio, del Burgo, Belen, De Guzman, Calatrava, and Torralba (2009) focused on youth perception on topics that seemed to be still censored and sensitive. They believed that probing into this fragile chord may help in formulating public policies for issues like AIDS and STD's even though the research is for public health and the findings it still taps and stresses some concerns on gender and sexuality and understanding it from the vantage of Filipino youth. The research found out that more girls are capable of handling their sex drives. This is attributed to the reason that boys are more open about exploring their desires from experiences to materials or objects they encounter while girls are more afraid to converse about this issue even to their parents.

Sexuality and love are the subject matter that taps the heart of every human being. In our society today, understanding sexuality and what it means to love can be complex. Thus, taking into account the perspectives of college students on the philosophy of Freud's theory can be helpful in understanding sexuality and love as it is taken as a 19<sup>th</sup> century idea and how it transcends in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It is for this reason that the researcher found Freud's "Psychology of Love" as an interesting subject matter for love has been defined in many spheres (academic, scientific, etc.) for many centuries, yet, it has never lost its flare in these spheres. Therefore, as a way of investigating how Freud's ideas come into play with college students perspectives especially on how they see men and women in today's world. This study shall present their concept of love and how it is expressed by Filipino male and female

The study sought to identify points from participants' perceptions that align with Freud's Theory on sexuality and love. This is to see whether his 19<sup>th</sup> century ideas are resonated in any of the participants' views. Specifically, it sought answers to these specific questions: What is the participants' description of male and female today? What is the participants' idea on love? And, how is love expressed by Filipino male and female?

## **II. EXPERIMENTAL, MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This research was conducted for the reason that the researcher is interested in analyzing the views of college students on how they describe Filipino male and female today, their ideas on love and how they express their love based on Freud's Philosophy. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to investigate how participants are making sense of their personal and social world through interview (Smith and Osborn, 2007). The researcher organized the participants in a focused group discussion. The participants are composed of six (6) 4<sup>th</sup> year college students who major in Psychology and share particular knowledge about the topic at hand. For ethical considerations, an informed consent form was given to participants explaining the purpose of the research. They were informed of the value of the research and clarified about the process. It was coded using an

assigned number to each participant for confidentiality. Documentary analysis was also used to collect information regarding writing of Freud on sexuality.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research are presented in the tables that follow. The researcher conveys understanding on the reader's part on statements made by the participants on the language aspect. However, effort was made by participants to speak in English in order to express their views on the topic at hand.

**Table 1:** Description of Participants of Filipino Male and Female

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
1	Passive because women are more dominant, responsible	Powerful than before, superior, they were more celebrated in terms of politics, tradition still exists.
2	Much faster in being aware in their sexuality. With the availability of social media and other tools. Being promiscuous	Encapsulated and portrayed to be more conservative. Freedom to speak, act and be able to divulge their sexuality.
3	Wild and harsh, doesn't want to get involve in serious relation .	Wild and harsh, doesn't want to get involve in serious relation, liberated.
4	Responsible to do the hard task that female cannot handle or the one who work hard for the family.	Responsible in taking care and loving the family or a good house wife, more open-minded.
5	Hardworking, a good provider in the family, aggressive in some other way.	Women are more superior, emotional closeness with their partners, intimate.
6	More open to their sexuality.	No tradition exists for females of today, more open-minded, more liberated.

Shown on Table 1 are the participants' descriptions of Filipino male and female of today. Based on their perspectives, males are passive due to the fact that women are dominant, much faster in terms of being aware in

their sexuality brought by the availability of social media and other tools that they become much more open in their sexuality which leads sometimes to being promiscuous. It is also described that males are wild and harsh and doesn't want to get involve in serious relation. Furthermore, males are responsible to do the hard task that female cannot handle or the one who work hard for the family, a good provider in the family, may be aggressive in some other way.

On the other hand, females are viewed in terms of being powerful than before, superior; they are more celebrated in terms of politics; tradition still exists for them; they are encapsulated and portrayed to be more conservative if only given the chance to explore and express their sexuality. They also have the freedom to speak, act and be able to divulge their sexuality. The participants also describe females as wild, harsh, doesn't want to get involve in serious relation, liberated, responsible in taking care and loving the family or a good house wife, they were more open-minded, superior, emotional in terms of closeness with their partners, intimate, and as if tradition doesn't exists for them.

The relationship with the notion on "reproduction" and family values are still observable based on the responses of the participants; just like how this idea is supported in the article written by Irigaray's (1987) extension of Freud's analysis, girls are being prepared even before reaching puberty stage for their future roles as of becoming a woman, however, some responses are also different considering the changes that occurred over time these responses follow the way Hidalgo (2009), and de Ilara at al (2009) view both male and female. Accordingly, they know better themselves in the current time and both genders know how to manipulate and explore their identities.

**Table 2:** Ideas on Love and parallels with Freud's Philosophy

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Ideas</i>	<i>Freud</i>
1	Male are not so much expressive (like crying) while women are overacting in expression of love, too emotional.	Eros (the life instinct driving all humanity)
2	(Male) Instant gratification and apps and media that promote fast hook-ups love, has evolved into sex equals love formula. (Female) Affected by instant hook-ups and dating sites, still dreams and desires of a male who can provide them with something long term but otherwise they are also consenting to have sex as part of love.	Libido (a quantifiable energy required to keep the human engine operating)
3	Love start with mother and the feeling of security, they feel safe when they are with their mother.	Oedipus complex

4	Love is feeling secured always safe when you are with your loved ones, having an affection to our loved ones.	Eros (the life instinct driving all humanity)
5	Do crazy things like making love to each other, a thing that drives a person.	Libido (a quantifiable energy required to keep the human engine operating)
6	Blinded by emotions, a great feeling when you are in love.	Instinct

Table 2 shows the parallels between the participants' and Freud's views.

Participant 1's idea on love revealed that males are not so much expressive (like crying) while women are overacting in expression of love and too emotional. Participant 4 said that love is feeling secured always safe when you are with your loved ones, having an affection to our loved ones both of the responses of the informants can be viewed on the philosophy of Freud's Eros for which it is explained that it is the life instinct driving all humanity. This is also a revelation of the participant's traditional view of love based on the conservative practice of Filipinos when it comes to revealing their emotions.

Participant 2 described male as having instant gratification through apps and media that promote fast hook-ups love; male has evolved saying "sex equals love" formula. Furthermore, females are affected by instant hook-ups and dating sites; they still dream and desire of a male who can provide them with something long term but otherwise they are also consenting to have sex as part of love.

Meanwhile, Participant 5 said that when a person is in love he/she does crazy things like making love to each other, a thing that drives a person. Similarly, Freud's perspective on this is on the libido wherein a quantifiable energy is required to keep the human engine operating.

For Participant 3 love starts with mother and there is a feeling of security, they feel safe when they are with their mother. This runs parallel with the description of the phallic stage. It can be explained that infants and adults manifest secure attachment meaning if an infant is left in a bizarre situation, they depend largely on the presence of their mother, happily discovering this bizarre environment. But when the mother leaves, the infant gets distressed (Myers, 2002). It implies that youths find easy to get close to someone because of being secured during their early years of childhood and they find relationships as lasting and rewarding.

Finally, Participant 6 shared that individuals who are in love are blinded by emotions or there is a great feeling when you are in love will be anchored on the Freudian approach on instincts. This could relatively be a point that when you let your feelings control you then you will lose the chance of being aware of your surroundings because of being blinded by it.

**Table 3:** Expression of Love by Filipino Male and Female

<i>Participants</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
1	Crying is usually hidden, not that expressive.	Too expressive and emotional.
2	Today in the modern era, where chivalry is overrated and instant is the norm of the Filipino male still have something that cannot be overlooked. Once a Filipino fell in love, truly in love mind you, you can see some changes and minute movements that makes you see how willing he is to go for his girl. A true Filipino man, once in love would go to great lengths to prove his love to his woman. Whatever the cost, the time or the effort is nothing is too little or too big. He would wait, he would persevere and he would always put his woman first.	In the Philippines where we have always practiced that females are our gem and put treasure due to some changes in our generation some have been put to dust as being too conservative. However, even today there are still flashes where they comply with the times but they are always looking, searching and yearning for that chivalrous male that their fathers have always taught them with. A Filipina would be open but closed still enough to make a guy work for her
3	Showing sincerity, honesty, simplicity and unaffectedness to their partner.	Same as male
4	Both sexes are the same in terms of love or they express their love or attachment to their loved ones by giving full trust, effort, care, loyalty and love, etc. as long as they love each other there is always way to express the love not just by the couple but also to the family and friends.	Both sexes are the same in terms of love or they express their love or attachment to their loved ones by giving full trust, effort, care, loyalty and love, etc. as long as they love each other there is always way to express the love not just by the couple but also to the family and friends
5	Saying to the one you love that you care and love her.	Female usually express their love by making love
6	Making love with the person he loves.	Kissing, hugging, etc.

discussion

It can be gleaned on Table 3 the comparison between male and female's expression of love. The participants perceived that Filipino males of today still try to hide their tears by stating that "crying is not usually seen" and that Filipino males are "not expressive". This implies that even though Filipinos view male crying as being "soft" because men have to maintain their "macho" image, hence, this observation by the Participant 1.

On the other hand, Participant 2 has this to say about Filipino male: "Once a Filipino fell in love, truly in love mind you, you can see some changes and minute movements that make you see how willing he is to go for his girl. A true Filipino man, once in love would go to great lengths to prove his love to his woman. Whatever the cost, the time or the effort is nothing; [neither is it] too little [nor] too big. He would wait, he would persevere and he would always put his woman first. He also shows sincerity, honesty, simplicity and unaffectedness to their partner." However, said participant views that both sexes (male and female) are the same in terms of love or they express their love or attachment to their loved ones by giving full trust, effort, care, loyalty and love, etc. Accordingly, this participant said that "as long as they love each other there is always a way to express the love not just by the couple but also to the family and friends. Saying to the one you love that you care and love her and making love with the person he loves."

Female on the other hand, are too expressive and emotional. In the Philippines, its people have followed the Filipina image of meekness. To Filipinos this has to be preserved. This is a value that is often neglected by the youth of today; that females are our gem and we must treasure them. Due to some attitudinal and behavioral changes in the younger generation some of these authentic Filipino values are transformed into dust. Young people seem to depart from the conservative notion. However, even today there are still flashes where they comply with the times but females are always looking, searching and yearning for that chivalrous male that they find in the image of their own father, as Freud frequently mentions in his "Psychology of Love". Yet, a Filipina would be open but closed at the same time, meaning, she would still make a guy work for her. In addition, she shows sincerity, honesty, simplicity and unaffectedness to her partner. This concept is supported by Cordero, Jr. (2018) who revealed that in any relationship respect must be given in order to control the high level of intimacy towards the partner.

Based on the views of Participant 3 and 4, to them both sexes are the same in terms of love or they express their love or attachment to their loved ones by giving full trust, effort, care, loyalty and love, etc. as long as they love each other there is always way to express the love not just by the couple but also to the family and friends, female usually express their love by making love, and kissing, hugging, etc. This may imply, on the point of view of Freud, that there is a strong dependence on the love given by both sexes. This may stem from their experience as a child. One study that has similar findings was conducted by Bernarte, Jalandra, Jarquio & Sanggo (2016) when they found that both male and female are concerned with their prospective mate's competence of being trustworthy which can be a great factor for sexual fidelity.

The data revealed some universal concepts about male and female; love and expression of love. It also provided other insights into the Filipino male and female construction of love and its expression. The researcher determined that Filipino male and female of today exhibit known characteristics based on how these sexes act in the Philippine society. Filipino male are described as hard workers especially when it comes to establishing their own family. They are more open and aware of their sexuality; hence they are aggressive, wild and harsh, and



promiscuous. On the other hand, Filipino female are superior, liberated and open-minded; which in the opinion of more conservative Filipinos is a departure from the Filipino female image.

In terms of the participants' views on love, it was determined that love is an expression, equated with sex and hook-ups; is about one's mother; is being secure and having affection with loved ones; is a thing that drives a person to do crazy things and is being blinded by emotion or a great feeling. It parallels with Freud's ideas in terms of Eros (expression, being secure and having affection), Libido (hook-ups, sex, doing crazy things); Oedipus complex (love is mother); and Instinct (being blinded by emotion or a great feeling).

The researcher determined two ways in which Filipino male and female express love. They express this either implicitly or explicitly in several ways. Implicit expression is through preservation of females by males (may be considered as "protection" of the love object), sincerity, honesty, simplicity and unaffectedness. On the other hand, explicit expression of love is through chivalric acts, making love, crying, kissing, hugging, and making love.

Further exploration may be undertaken most especially on the undeniable belief that did not depart from Freud's posited idea that male and female roles are rooted in the identification of one's sexuality with parents.

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