

Hey! I got an A- on this paper, so I guess it's pretty good!
I put my own personal spin to it in that not only did I compare Freud and Marx's viewpoints, I stated that perhaps what they saw in society was just a reflection of their own biases and personal inner feelings.

Humanities Assignment

Freud and Marx it can be argued were both, as individuals, dissatisfied with their societies. Marx more plainly than Freud, but Freud can also be seen as discontent in certain aspects such as his cynical view of human nature. Each were great thinkers and philosophers, but both seemed unhappy. Perhaps the social ills and trouble each perceived in the world about them were only the reflections of what each of the thinkers held within themselves. Each person observes the same world, but each of us interprets that information in a different way. They both saw the world as being unjust or base. Each understood the disfunctions in society as being caused by some aspect of human greed or other similar instinct. They did however, disagree on what the vehicle for these instincts' corrupting influences are. Freud claimed that tension caused by the struggle to repress anti-social instincts eventually was released and caused the social evils he observed. Marx also saw instincts at work but not the tensions and Id that Freud saw, Marx simply credited man's greed and the subsequent oppression of other men as the root to all that was wrong with civilization. It is interesting to note that both Freud and Marx saw conflict but each traced it back to sources each was respectively educated in.

Freud was a Psychoanalyst and his understanding of the mind was very conflict oriented. He saw man as a kind of glorified animal who had the same desires and needs as any other animal. The only true difference between the human-animal and other animals was that the human-animal possessed an intellect. Freud divided man's psyche into three parts, the Id, Ego, and SuperEgo. What differed the human-animal from any other animal was the SuperEgo, which arose from man's intellect. The Super-Ego as Freud theorised

it is the values of one's parents internalised. He went further to then explain that unhappiness in life is caused by the conflict between the Id and the SuperEgo. As stated, all of Freud's philosophy was very conflict oriented so it is not difficult to understand then how Freud applied this view macrocosmically to society as a whole.

Freud addressed this in his essay, "Civilization and It's Discontents". In it, Freud claimed that civilizations are developed through the channeling of anti-social erotic and aggressive urges into constructive outlets. He went further and explained that social ills are caused by those members of society who are not satisfied with the substitutes supplied by the channelling of anti-social instincts into social creative energies. Such repression causes a certain tension which after awhile cannot be repressed and is released in socially unacceptable behaviour. As Freud explained it, "Civilized society is perpetually menaced with disintegration through this primary hostility of men towards one another". Freud saw humanity as being destined to struggle as long as humanity exists. In his own words, "This struggle is what all life essentially consists of and the evolution of civilizations may therefore be simply describes as the struggle for the life of the human species".

Although like Freud, he saw conflict within society, Karl Marx had radically different ideas and perceptions about humanity and civilization. Marx saw the same things as Freud, but chalked it up to inter-economic class conflict instead of conflict within one's psyche. This class conflict was caused by one class, the Bourgeois, which he characterized as having the great majority of wealth and power and having rule over the lower class, or Proletariots, which worked for the Bourgeois. This view of economic class strife was just one stage of Marx's idea that all of history was leading up to some finality and that at such a time all of man would be able to live in a Utopia. Marx also applied this idea in reverse and attempted to explain that

the Proletariat class and Bourgeois class have existed in varying forms for all of mankind's history. He tried to illustrate using the example of slavery and feudalism that each time a form of oppression by a class of another class was destroyed a new form took its place. Marx felt that it was a Communist's responsibility to awaken the mostly ignorant Proletariat to this and help to abolish the concept of private property, which he also believed was the primary means of the Bourgeois to oppress the Proletariat workers. Marx predicted that Capitalism and its Bourgeois patrons would eventually become thin out due to competition and therefore the wealth would become increasingly more centralised in fewer people's pockets. The spread of wealth would eventually become so uneven and lop-sided that a revolution would occur and the Bourgeois would be overthrown. Marx believed that Capitalism was probably the last form of oppression and once overthrown, everyone would live as a single society where all men could live in peace without rule over one another, Utopia.

Freud and Marx although similar in some ways, held very different views about the world around them. Aside from the obvious difference that Freud believed the cause of social evils was within man himself and Marx saw the problem as being an economic one as long as history itself, there are other more specific differences. Freud saw the conflict as being internal and therefore expressed within the society in which a man is part of, but Marx saw the conflict in a more black-and-white sense. To Marx, it was between two groups of people, the oppressed and the oppressors. Marx however was also generally more optimistic, especially when it came to predictions of the future. He saw the underdogs, the Proletariats eventually overcoming adversity and establishing Utopia. Freud is much less exciting for all he could divine was that humanity would continue to struggle. Freud seemed perhaps to believe that the meaning of life was struggling. Freud saw nothing of the occasional revolutions Marx did, it was all one long struggle to him.

Freud and Marx theorised about and observed the world around them and

interpreted it in the terms and ways they were most accomplished at and familiar with. The question remains unanswered though, did Freud and Marx simply observe the true reality of the world and state what they saw, or was the world about them in actually reflecting themselves.