

Erik H. Erikson - Identity Youth and Crisis 1(1968, W. W. Norton & Company) (1)

The original paper [↗](#) contains 10 sections, with 10 passages identified by our machine learning algorithms as central to this paper.

Paper Summary

SUMMARY PASSAGE 1

E.H.E.

They were impaired in that central control over themselves for which, in the psychoanalytic scheme, only the "inner agency" of the ego could be held responsible. Therefore, I spoke of a loss of "ego identity." Since then, we have recognized the same central disturbance in severely conflicted young people whose sense of confusion is due, rather, to a war within themselves, and in confused rebels and destructive delinquents who war on their society.

SUMMARY PASSAGE 2

7.

But there are also "pseudo" aspects in all identity which endanger the individual. For man's development does not begin or end with identity; and identity, too, must become relative for the mature person. Psychosocial identity is necessary as the anchoring of man's transient existence in the here and the now.

SUMMARY PASSAGE 3

4

tolerance of the superego (which will condemn special acts but -not the whole doer), and in the synthesizing power of the ego. To the last point we add the suggestion that the analysis of the ego include the individual's ego identity in relation to the historical changes which dominated his childhood, his adolescent crisis, and his mature adjustment. For the individual's mastery over his neurosis begins where he is put in a position to accept the historical necessity which made him what he is.

SUMMARY PASSAGE 4

School Age And Task Identification

But there is another danger to identity development. If the overly conforming child accepts work as the only criterion of worthwhileness, sacrificing imagination and playfulness too readily, he may become ready to submit to what Marx called "craft-idiocy," i.e., become a slave of his technology and of its dominant role typology. Here we are already in the midst of identity problems, for with the establishment of a firm initial relationship to the world of skills and tools and to those who teach and share them, and with the advent of puberty, childhood proper comes to an end.

SUMMARY PASSAGE 5

Adolescence

And yet no man (except a man aflame and dying like Keats, who could speak of identity in words which secured him immediate fame) can transcend himself in youth. We will speak later of the transcendence of identity. In the following "beyond identity" means life after adolescence and the uses of identity and, indeed, the return of some forms of identity crisis in the later stages of the life cycle.

SUMMARY PASSAGE 6

Genetic: Identification And Identity

If, in the following, we speak of the community's response to the young individual's need to be "recognized" by those around him, we mean something beyond a mere recognition of achievement; for it is of great relevance to the young individual's identity formation that he be responded to and be given function and status as a person whose gradual growth and transformation make sense to those who begin to make sense to him. It has not been sufficiently recognized in psychoanalysis that such recognition provides an entirely indispensable support to the ego in the specific tasks of adolescence, which are: to maintain the most important ego defenses against the vastly growing intensity of impulses (now invested in a matured genital apparatus and a powerful muscle system) ; to learn to consolidate the most important "conflict-free" achievements in line with work opportunities; and to resynthesize all childhood identifications in some unique way and yet in concordance with the roles offered by some wider section of society-be that section the neighborhood block, an anticipated occupational field, an association of kindred minds, or perhaps (as in Shaw's case) the "mighty dead." Identity Confusion in Life History, Case History

SUMMARY PASSAGE 7

Identity Confusion In Life History, Case History 159

Is THE sense of identity conscious? At times, of course, it seems only too conscious. For between the double prongs of vital inner need and inexorable outer demand, the as yet experimenting individual may become the victim of a transitory extreme identity consciousness, which is the common core of the many forms of "self-consciousness" typical for youth.

SUMMARY PASSAGE 8

Ego And Environment

No other inner agency could accomplish the selective accentuation of significant identifications throughout childhood and the gradual integration of self images which culminates in a sense of identity. It is for this reason that I at first called identity "ego identity." In choosing a name analogous to "ego ideal," however, I have raised the question of the relationship of ego ideal and ego identity.

SUMMARY PASSAGE 9

Confusion, Transference, And Resistance

In such cases the analysand may resist throughout the analysis any possible inroad on his identity of the analyst's values while surrendering on all other points; or the patient may absorb more of the analyst's identity than is manageable within his own means; or he may leave the analysis with a lifelong sense of not having been provided with something essential owed him by the analyst. In cases of acute identity confusion, this identity resistance becomes the core problem of the therapeutic encounter. Variations of psychoanalytic technique have this one problem in common: the dominant resistance must be accepted as the main guide to technique, and interpretation must be fitted to the patient's ability to utilize it.

SUMMARY PASSAGE 10

I, My Self, And My Ego

The selves are mostly preconscious, which means they can become conscious when the "I" makes them so and insofar as the ego agrees to it. The ego, however, is unconscious. We become aware of its work, but never of it.