



**ÇAĞ UNIVERSITY
FACULTY of ARTS &
SCIENCES
PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT
PSY 313 FUNDAMENTAL
CONCEPTS IN
PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY
COURSE
WEEK 6-7**

DREAM ANALYSIS & DEFENSE MECHANISMS & THE ROLE OF EGO

Dream Analysis

Unlocking the Unconscious Mind



Freud's consulting room.

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Freud's revolutionary approach to understanding the hidden meanings behind our dreams and everyday slips reveals the powerful influence of unconscious wishes on our conscious lives.

The Architecture of Dreams

Manifest Content

The surface meaning or conscious description given by the dreamer. This is what we remember when we wake up—the storyline and images that seem obvious.

*Often relates to **experiences from the previous day** and has **little psychoanalytic significance** on its own.*

Latent Content

*The unconscious material and true psychological meaning hidden **beneath the surface**. This is where the **real wish fulfillment** resides.*

*Only **dream interpretation** can **uncover** these deeper wishes, which typically **trace back to childhood experiences**.*



<https://ehyde.wordpress.com/2017/10/03/using-dreams-in-therapy-comparing-freud-jung-and-perls/>

Dreams as Wish Fulfillments

Freud's basic assumption was that nearly *all dreams are wish fulfillments*. *Some* wishes are **obvious** and expressed through **manifest content**, like dreaming of eating when hungry. *Most* wish fulfillments, however, hide in the **latent content**.



Obvious Wishes

Direct fulfillment through manifest content—going to sleep hungry and dreaming of delicious food.



Hidden Wishes

Expressed in latent content, requiring interpretation to uncover the true desire.



The Exception

Traumatic dreams follow repetition compulsion rather than wish fulfillment, common in PTSD patients.



The Guardians of Consciousness

Dreams are formed in the unconscious but must slip past censors to reach consciousness. Even during sleep, these guardians maintain their vigil (watch), forcing unconscious material to adopt a disguised form.



Unconscious Formation

Dreams originate in the unconscious mind with raw, unfiltered wishes.



Primary Censor

First line of defense transforms threatening content into acceptable forms.



Final Censor

Last checkpoint before material enters conscious awareness.



Conscious Recall

Disguised dream emerges in manifest form that can be remembered.



The Dream Work: Condensation & Displacement

Condensation

*The manifest dream content is **not as extensive as the latent** level, indicating that unconscious material has been **abbreviated or condensed before** appearing on the manifest level.*

*Multiple unconscious ideas merge into single dream images, creating **compact symbolic representations**.*

Displacement

*The dream image is replaced by **some other idea** only remotely related to it. **Emotional intensity shifts** from important to trivial elements.*

*This allows **threatening content** to appear in **harmless disguise**, protecting the dreamer from **anxiety**.*

Universal Dream Symbols

Certain images are almost universally represented by seemingly innocuous (harmless) figures. Freud identified common symbols that appear across cultures and individuals.



Phallic Symbols

*Elongated (long) objects such as sticks, snakes, or knives represent **male sexuality** in disguised form.*



Feminine Symbols

*Small boxes, chests, or ovens often appear as representations of the **vagina**.*



Parental Figures

*Parents appear in the form of **authority figures** like presidents, teachers, or bosses.*



Castration Anxiety

*Expressed through dreams of **growing bald**, losing teeth, or any act of cutting.*

The Deception of Affect

*Dreams can deceive the dreamer by inhibiting or reversing emotional responses. What we feel in the dream may be the **opposite of our true unconscious feelings**.*

Inhibited Affect

A man with homicidal feelings for his father may dream of his father's death but feel neither joy nor sorrow—his affect is inhibited.

Reversed Affect

*A woman who unconsciously hates her mother may dream of her death but experience the **unconscious joy and hatred as sorrow and love** during the manifest dream.*



The Royal Road to the Unconscious

Dream Interpretation Methods

*Freud believed **dream interpretation** was the most reliable approach to studying unconscious processes. He employed two primary methods to uncover latent content.*

01

Free Association Method

*Ask patients to relate their dream and all associations to it, **no matter how unrelated or illogical**. These associations reveal the **unconscious wish behind the dream**.*

02

Dream Symbols Method

*When the dreamer **cannot relate association material**, use **universal dream symbols** to discover unconscious elements underlying the manifest content.*

*"**Dream interpretation** is the royal road to knowledge of the unconscious."*

Three Typical Anxiety Dreams

*Anxiety dreams offer no contradiction to the rule that dreams are wish fulfillments. The **anxiety** belongs to the preconscious system, while the **wish** belongs to the unconscious.*

Embarrassment Dream of Nakedness

*The dreamer feels shame at being naked before indifferent strangers. Originates from **childhood experiences** of being naked **before disapproving adults**.*

- *Fulfills wish that **adults refrain from scolding***
- *Fulfills **repressed wish to exhibit oneself***

Death of a Beloved Person

*Dreams of a **younger person's death** express **childhood rivalry wishes**. Dreams of a **parent's death** fulfill **Oedipal wishes** from childhood.*

- *Affect is often **reversed to sorrow***
- *Traces back to **infantile desires***

Failing an Examination

*Dreamer always dreams of **failing an already-passed exam** when anticipating **a difficult task**. The ego reasons: "I passed before, I'll pass again."*

- *Fulfills wish to be **free from worry***
- ***Never** involves **actually failed exams***

The Clever Woman's Challenge

One woman who despised her mother-in-law told Freud she dreamed of her coming for a visit. She challenged him: "Where was the wish?"

- ❏ **Freud's Brilliant Response:** *The woman was aware of Freud's belief that a wish lies behind every nontraumatic dream. By dreaming of spending time with a hated mother-in-law, she fulfilled her wish to spite Freud and disprove his wish fulfillment hypothesis!*

*This example demonstrates Freud's creativity in finding **wish fulfillments** even in **seemingly contradictory dreams**. The unconscious finds ingenious (brilliant) ways to express desires, even the desire to prove a theory wrong.*



1. The Core Idea: Dreams Are Disguised Wish Fulfillments

Freud said every dream begins **with a wish in the unconscious** — something we desire but often cannot admit to ourselves (because it might be unacceptable, embarrassing, or socially forbidden). To protect our waking mind, the dream-producing system **transforms this hidden wish into a safe, disguised version** we can tolerate while sleeping. That transformation happens **through dream work** — the mental mechanisms that distort the original wish into the dream we actually remember.

2. Dream Distortion (The Work of the Unconscious)

Dream distortion is the process that masks the true meaning of a dream. In *the mother-in-law dream*, the woman's unconscious used **reversal and displacement**: her defiant wish (to disprove Freud) was **disguised** as an innocent-looking dream about a visit.

3. Secondary Revision (Making the Dream "Make Sense")

After the dream's raw, symbolic content emerges, **the ego steps in** during or just after sleep to "tidy it up." This process is called **secondary revision** — it smooths out the dream's chaotic or nonsensical parts into a story that feels coherent when we wake up. The **unconscious produces** a jumble of symbols. The **ego edits** it into a "logical" narrative (like a short film), so the sleeper can remember it without feeling disturbed. In the example: The dreamer's mind turned an abstract feeling of rebellion ("I'll prove him wrong") into a simple scene — "My mother-in-law is coming to visit." It looks ordinary, but it **conceals deeper defiance**.

4. Why the Dream Seems Contradictory

Because of these **two processes**: **Dream distortion hides** the wish. **Secondary revision reshapes** the dream into something believable. The final dream can look like the opposite of the original desire. That's why Freud said: "*A dream is the disguised fulfillment of a repressed wish.*" So, even a dream that feels unpleasant or absurd may **still fulfill a wish** — just in disguise.

In the Mother-in-Law Example:

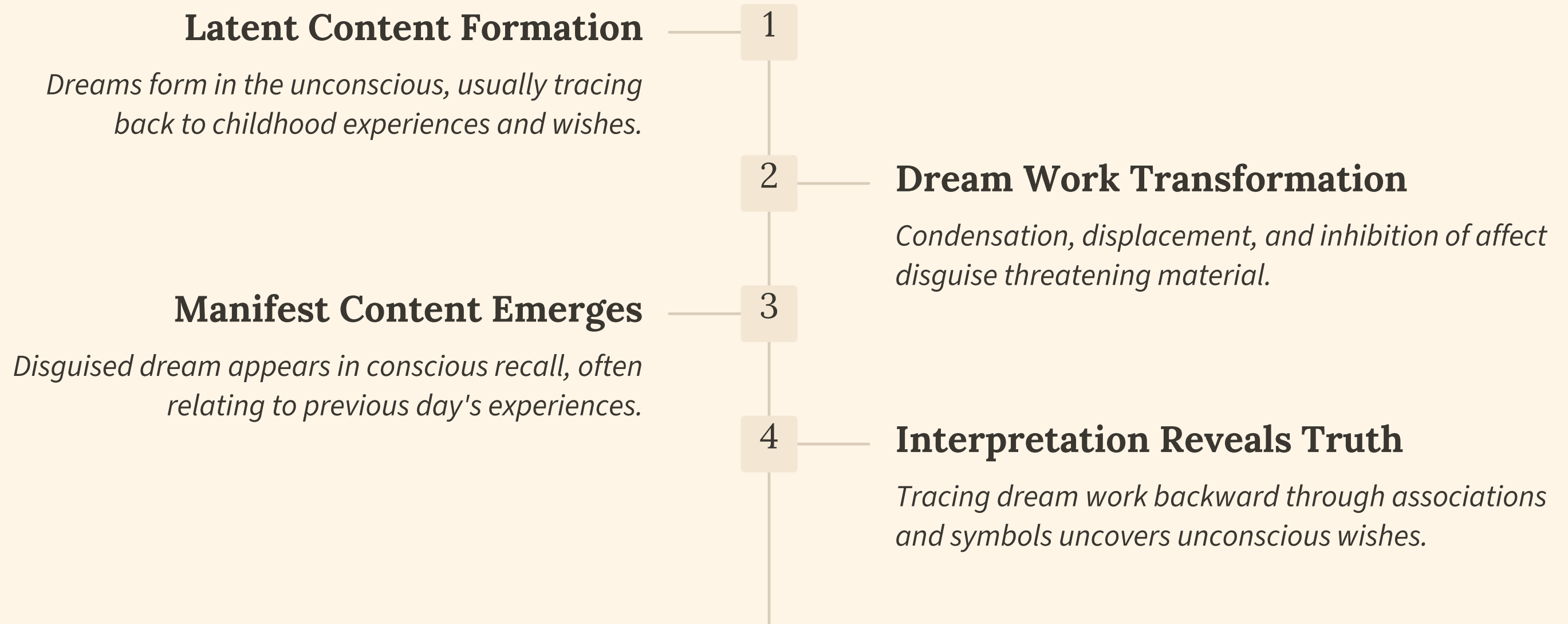
Latent wish (hidden): "I want to prove Freud's theory wrong."

Dream work: Reverses and disguises this wish → turns it into a dream about the mother-in-law's visit.

Manifest dream (surface): "My mother-in-law came to visit."

Freud's interpretation: Even here, the **wish is fulfilled** — she got to challenge Freud.

Summary: The Dream Process



Freudian Slips: Parapraxes

When Accidents Aren't Accidents

*Freud believed that everyday slips of the tongue or pen, misreading, incorrect hearing, misplacing objects, and temporarily forgetting names are **not chance accidents but reveal unconscious intentions.***

*In German, Freud used Fehlleistung or "**faulty function.**" His translator James Strachey invented the term **parapraxes** to refer to what many now call "**Freudian slips.**"*



Elijah H. Woods (Podcast on Spotify)

The Meaning Behind the Slip

*"They are not chance events but **serious mental acts**; they have a sense; they arise from the **concurrent actions**—or perhaps rather, the **mutually opposing action**—of **two different intentions**."*

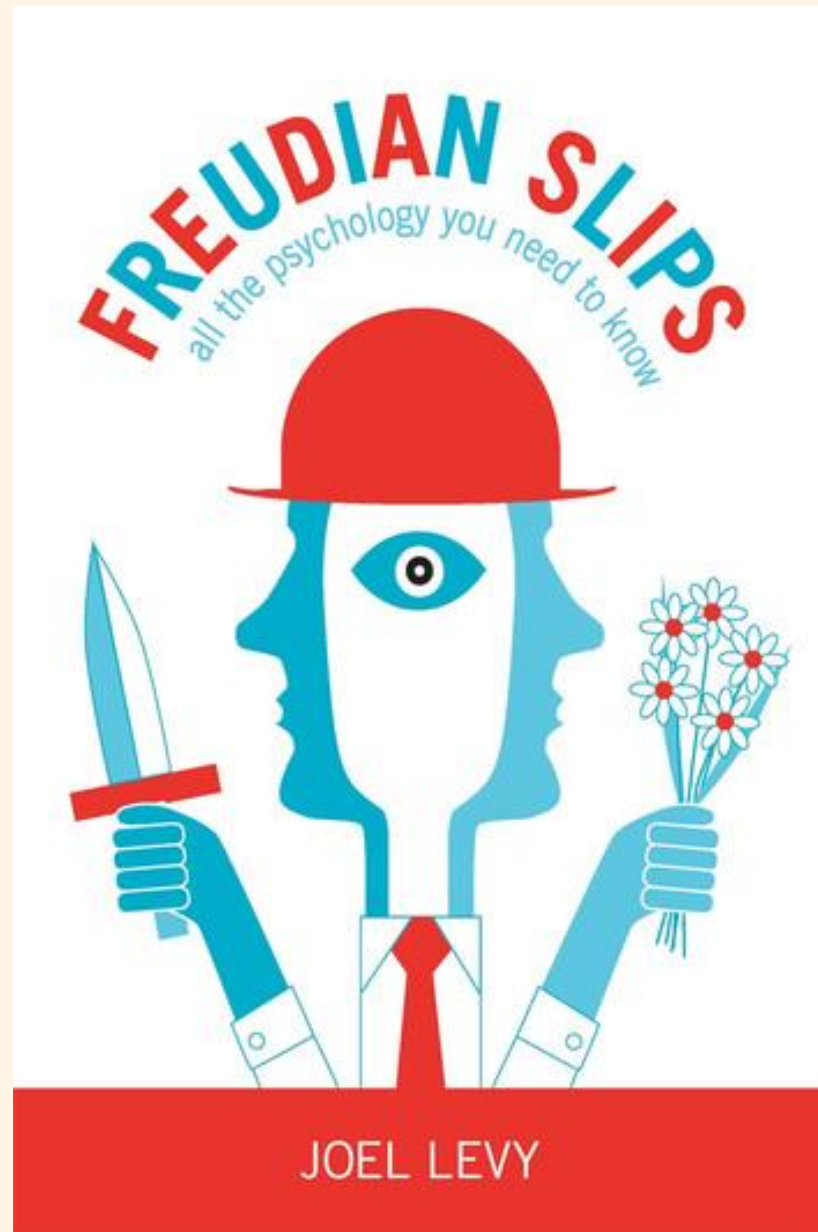
Unconscious Intention

*The dominant force that **interferes with and replaces the preconscious intention**. This reveals the person's **true purpose**.*

- *Unconscious slips are **similar to dreams**—they are **products of both the unconscious and preconscious**, with the **unconscious intention being dominant**.*
- *The fact that **people strongly deny** meaning behind their parapraxes was seen by Freud as evidence that **the slip had relevance to unconscious images that must remain hidden**.*

Preconscious Intention

*The **weaker, conscious plan** that **replaced by the stronger unconscious desire**.*



Classic Examples of Parapraxes

The Six-Pack Slip

A young man walked into a convenience store, became attracted to the female clerk, and asked for a "sex-pack of beer" instead of a six-pack. He strongly protested his innocence when accused of improper behavior.

Freud's Cigar Incident

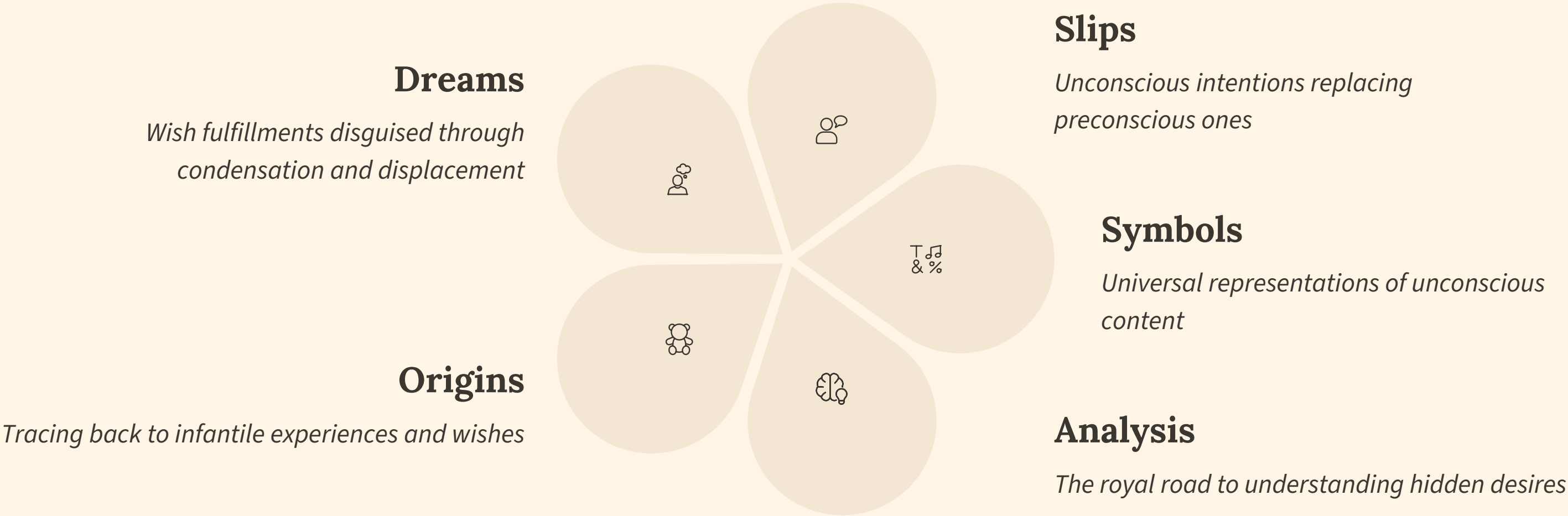
After worrying about monetary matters, Freud visited his usual tobacco store, picked up his cigars, and left without paying. He attributed his neglect to earlier thoughts about budgetary issues.

(The "forgetting" expresses an unconscious wish not to spend money)

*These examples demonstrate how **unconscious preoccupations**—attraction, financial worry—**override conscious intentions**, revealing our true mental state.*

The Unconscious Revealed

Both dreams and Freudian slips serve as windows into the unconscious mind. They share a common mechanism: unconscious wishes and intentions breaking through into conscious awareness, though in disguised or unexpected forms.



Freud's insights into dreams and parapraxes revolutionized our understanding of the human psyche, revealing that our unconscious mind continuously influences our thoughts, behaviors, and experiences in ways we rarely recognize.

Defense Mechanisms

Understanding Freud's Theory of Psychological Protection



The Foundation of Defense

Origins

*Freud first elaborated on defense mechanisms in 1926, with daughter Anna further refining the concept. These mechanisms are **normal** and **universally** used.*

The Cost

*Defense mechanisms require **psychic energy to maintain**. The more defensive we are, the less energy remains to satisfy id impulses—precisely the ego's purpose.*

When Extreme

*When carried to extremes, defense mechanisms lead to **compulsive, repetitive, and neurotic** behavior patterns.*



Repression: The Foundation

*The **most basic defense** mechanism, involved in all others. The ego forces **threatening feelings** into the **unconscious** to protect itself from anxiety.*

1

Impulse Arises

Undesirable id impulses threaten the ego

2

Repression Occurs

Ego forces threatening feelings into unconscious

3

Disguised Expression

Impulses emerge as symptoms, dreams, or other defenses

Example: *A young girl may permanently repress hostility toward a younger sister because hateful feelings create too much anxiety.*

Reaction Formation & Displacement

Reaction Formation

Repressed impulse becomes conscious by adopting a disguise directly opposite its original form. Identified by exaggerated, obsessive character.

Example: *A woman who unconsciously hates her mother shows exaggerated, showy "love" instead.*

Displacement

Redirecting unacceptable urges onto various people or objects so the original impulse is disguised or concealed.

Example: *A woman angry with her roommate displaces anger onto employees or pets while remaining friendly to roommate.*

Fixation & Regression

Fixation

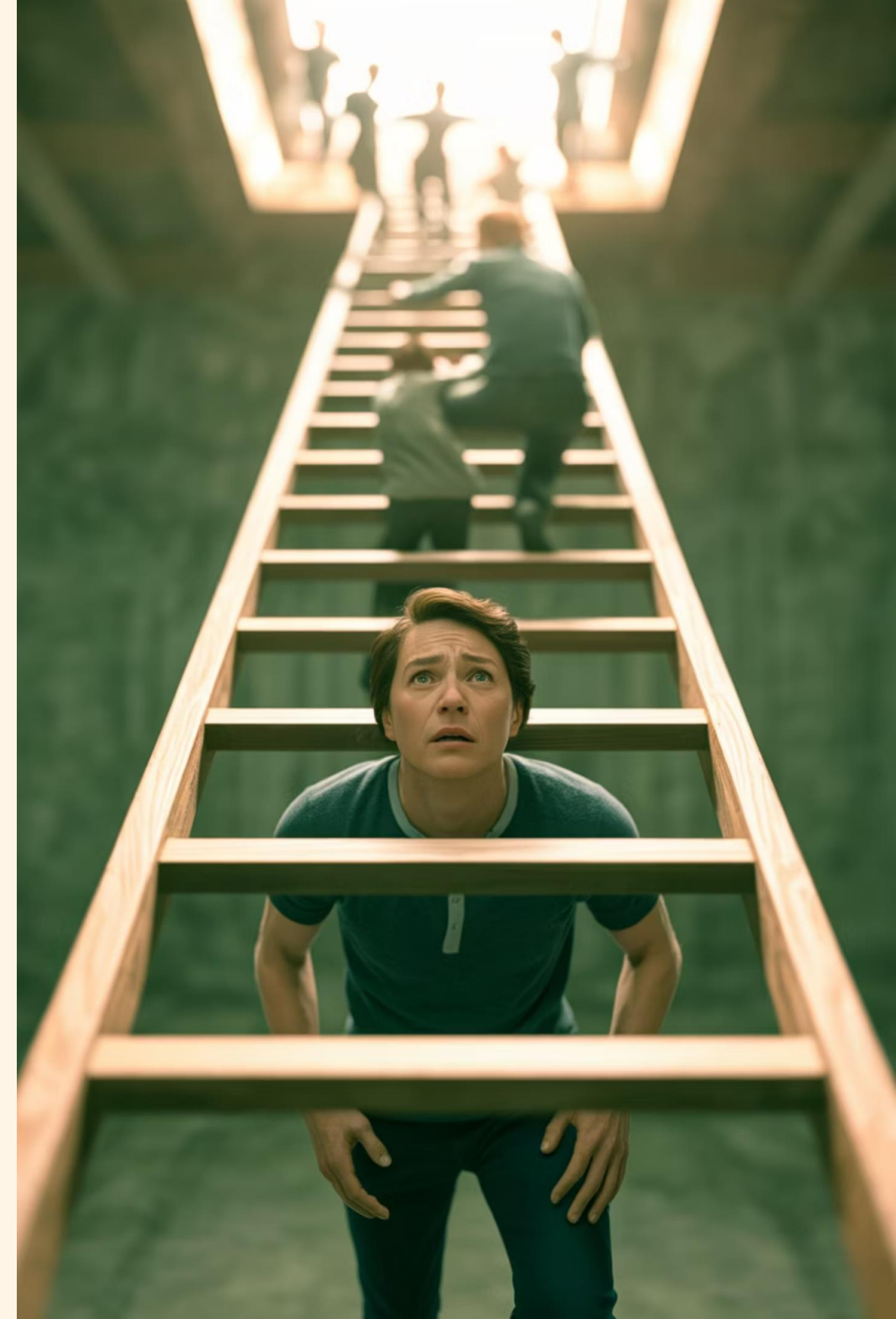
Permanent attachment of libido onto an earlier, more primitive stage of development when taking the next step becomes too anxiety-provoking.

- **Oral fixation:** pleasure from eating, smoking, talking
- **Anal fixation:** obsession with neatness and orderliness

Regression

*During stress and anxiety, reverting **back to an earlier developmental stage**. Common and visible in children and adults.*

- *Child demands bottle when sibling is born*
- *Adult adopts fetal position under extreme stress*



Projection

Attributing unwanted internal impulses to external objects, usually other people. Seeing in others unacceptable feelings that actually reside in one's own unconscious.

Basic Projection

A man may interpret older women's actions as seductions, when unconsciously he harbors strong erotic attraction to them.

Paranoia: Extreme Projection

Characterized by powerful delusions of jealousy and persecution. Always involves repressed homosexual feelings toward the persecutor.

The Transformation

"I love him" becomes "I hate him" becomes "He hates me"—disclaiming all responsibility.

Introjection

A defense mechanism whereby people incorporate positive qualities of another person into their own ego.

01

Identification

Adolescent adopts mannerisms, values, or lifestyle of admired figure

02

Incorporation

Qualities become part of one's own ego, inflating self-worth

03

Protection

Keeps feelings of inferiority to a minimum

The resolution of the Oedipus complex serves as the prototype of introjection, setting into motion the beginning of the superego.



Sublimation: The Beneficial Defense

The only defense mechanism that helps both individual and society. Sublimation is the repression of the genital aim of Eros by substituting a cultural or social aim.



Creative Expression

Expressed in art, music, and literature. Michelangelo's work exemplified sublimation—finding indirect outlet for libido through painting and sculpting.



Social Pursuits

Part of all human relationships and social accomplishments, combining with direct expression of Eros.



Healthy Balance

Most people sublimate part of their libido for cultural values while retaining sufficient drive for personal erotic pleasure.



The Eight Principal Defense Mechanisms

Repression

*Forcing threatening feelings into
unconscious*

Sublimation

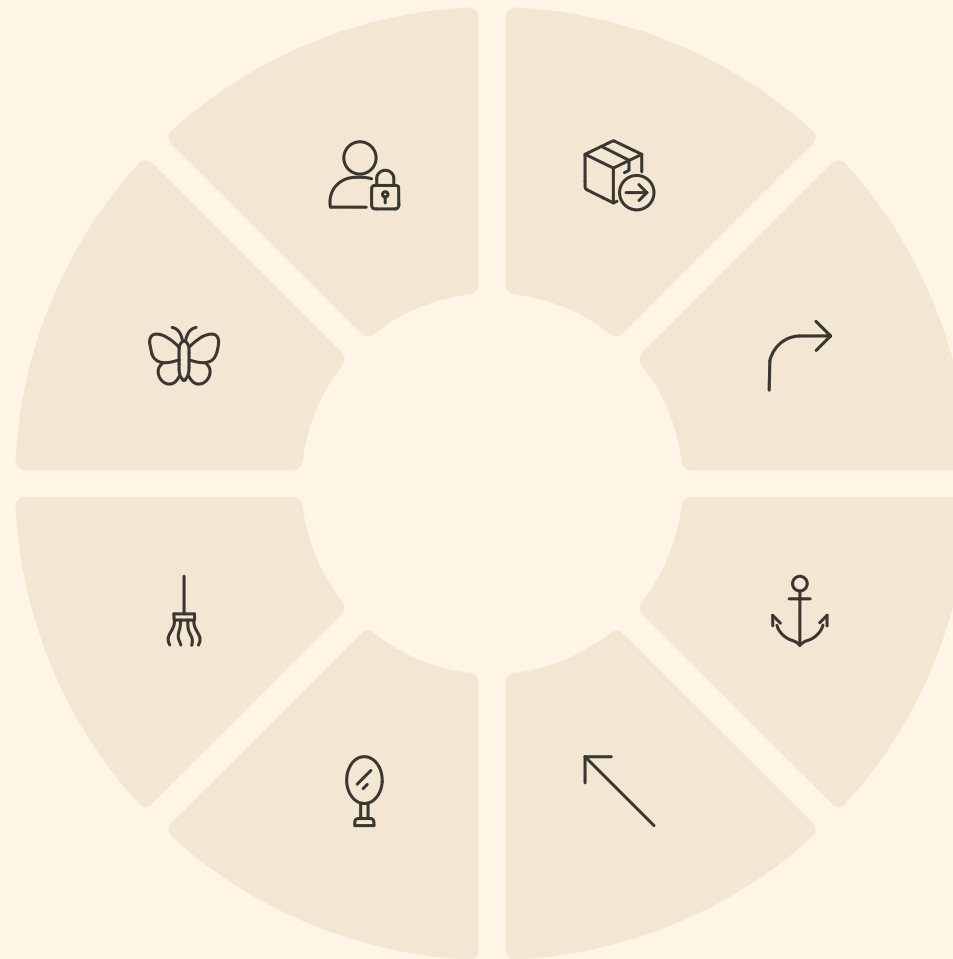
Channeling drives into cultural aims

Introjection

Incorporating others' positive qualities

Projection

*Attributing unwanted impulses to
others*



Reaction Formation

*Adopting opposite impulse in
exaggerated form*

Displacement

Redirecting urges onto other objects

Fixation

*Remaining at earlier developmental
stage*

Regression

Reverting to earlier stage under stress



Key Takeaways

Universal & Normal

All defense mechanisms are universal—everyone engages in defensive behavior to some degree. They protect the ego against anxiety.

Repression at the Core

Each defense mechanism combines with repression, the most basic mechanism involved in all others.

Balance is Key

Normally beneficial and harmless, but each can be carried to the point of psychopathology when extreme.

Sublimation Benefits All

One defense mechanism—sublimation—usually benefits both the individual and society through creative and cultural expression.



Anna Freud: The Building Blocks of Defense Theory

Exploring how Anna Freud revolutionized psychoanalytic technique by shifting focus from unconscious impulses to the ego's defensive operations.

From Topographical to Structural Model

Early Model (Pre-1923)

*Sigmund Freud's topographical model depicted a clash between conscious and unconscious functioning—**id impulses pushing against ego defenses**.*

*Treatment success depended on **suspending defenses** through free association.*

Structural Model (1923)

*A **more complex psyche** emerged: ego, id, and superego in constant struggle.*

*Neurosis became understood as **unconscious compromise formations** among these three opposing agencies.*

The Neurotic Compromise



*The ego disguises id impulses, preventing social censure while allowing limited gratification—**but at a price.***



Anna Freud's Strategic Discovery

Anna Freud (1895-1982), Freud's daughter and child analysis pioneer, detected a crucial technical problem in the 1923 structural model.

*If all three psychic agencies **operate unconsciously**, why would the ego and superego reveal themselves in treatment? Unlike id impulses seeking expression, **unconscious ego defenses gain nothing** from exposure.*

- Id impulses → want to be expressed (they “seek exposure”).
- Ego defenses → try to stay hidden (they “avoid exposure”).

That’s why the ego and superego don’t easily reveal themselves in treatment unless the therapist helps uncover them indirectly — which is exactly what Anna Freud’s discovery of defense mechanisms helped achieve.

The Problem with Defenses

Ego-Syntonic

Unconscious defenses feel perfectly acceptable to the patient—often central to personality organization.

Reaction Formation Example

Hostile impulses transform into their opposite. The angry person becomes overly nice, insistently helpful, even suffocatingly kind.

The Threat

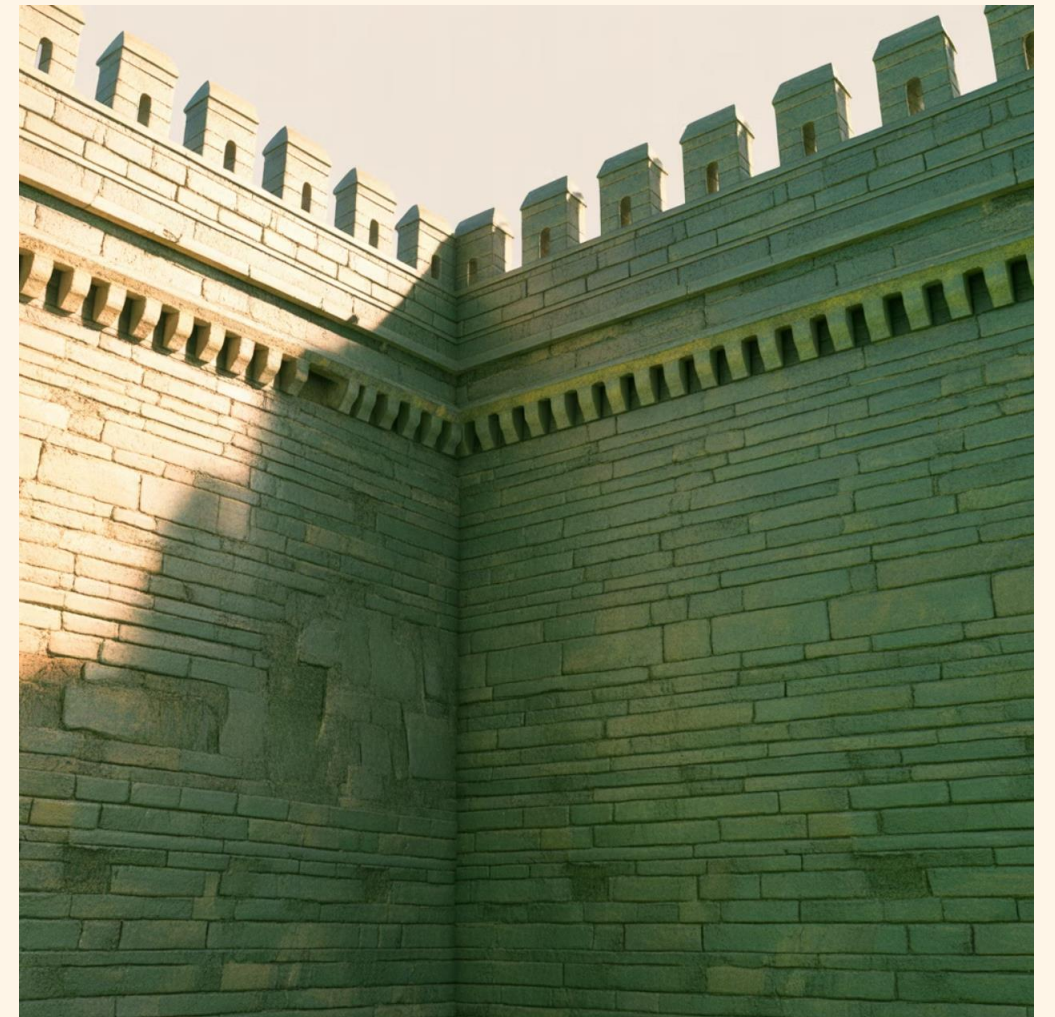
Unmasking defenses threatens an entire way of life, not just releasing impulses but attacking a carefully crafted personality structure.

When something is ego-syntonic, it feels right or normal to you, even if others think it's a problem.

Character Defenses

*Anna Freud's exploration revealed that **defensive operations** **infuse entire character structures**—aspects of basic personality style rooted in defensive processes.*

*Simply **bringing id impulses into consciousness** fails to address the **continuing existence of the defensive system**.*



Redefining the Analyst's Role

01

Free Association Reconsidered

No longer immediately available—now viewed as a goal rather than a starting point

02

Unconscious Operations

Defensive patterns and superego attitudes always operating outside awareness and control

03

Analytic Neutrality

Taking a stand equidistant (equal distance) from id, ego, and superego—evenhanded (objective) attention to all three

The Missing Piece

Distinguishing defended from undefended communication proves challenging.

"We are aware of it only subsequently, when it becomes apparent that something is missing."



Common Defense Mechanisms



Isolation of Affect

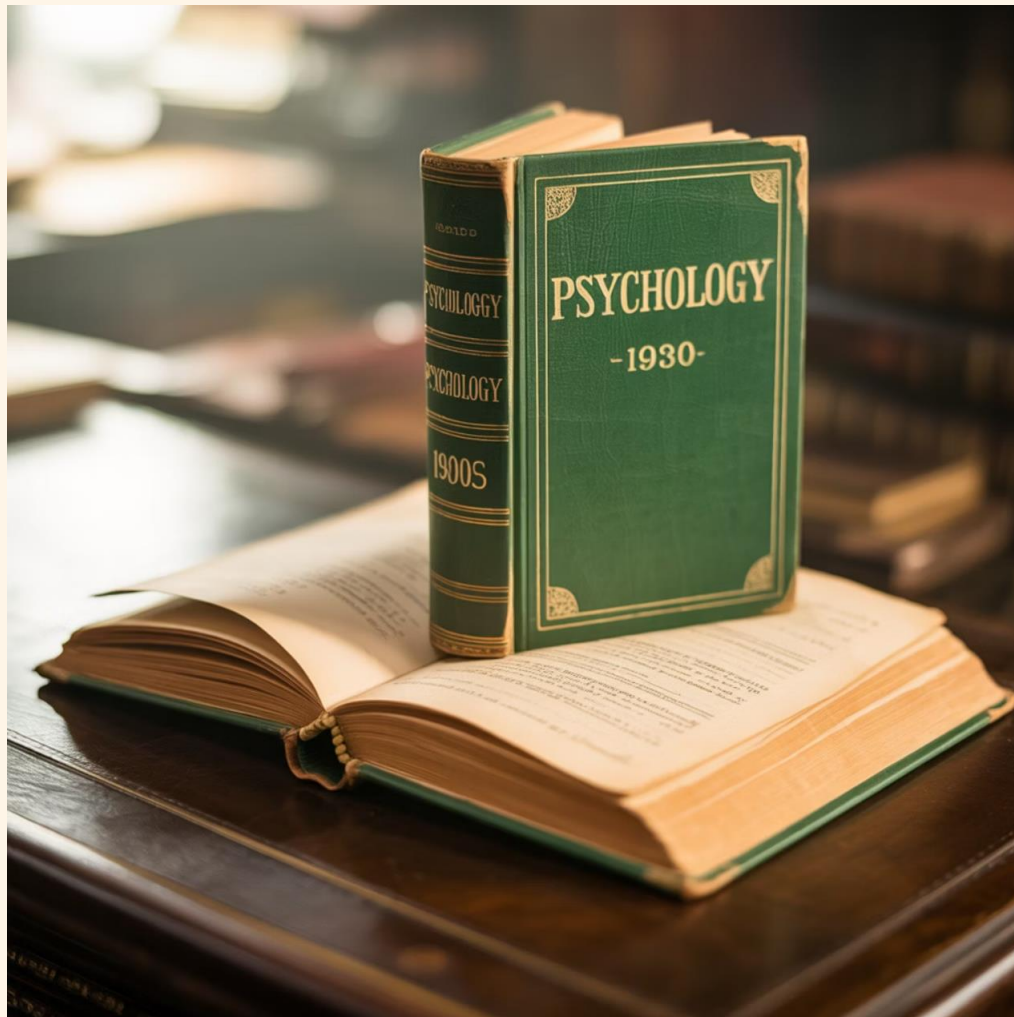
*Conflictual ideas allowed into consciousness intellectually; disturbing **feelings blocked**. Patient discusses intense experiences in detached manner.*



Projection

Denying own feelings while being preoccupied with those feelings in others. Patient sensitive to anger in others but unaware of own rage.

The Ego and Mechanisms of Defense (1936)



*Anna Freud's important book became like a guidebook for therapists — it explained the **hidden defense mechanisms** people use and taught therapists how to **recognize them** in their patients.*

*Her work shifted psychoanalysis away from only studying the id (our instinctual drives) to keeping **a balanced focus on all three parts of the mind** — id, ego, and superego — and how they interact in a person's inner conflicts.*

Ernst Kris and the Plagiarist Who Wasn't

A young scientist went to analysis because he was terrified of accidentally stealing his friend's ideas. He admired this friend greatly and was unable to work because of his guilt and fear of plagiarism.

In an earlier analysis, this fear had been explained as a form of “oral aggression”—a symbolic wish to take in or steal ideas from others. But even after this interpretation, his problem continued, so Ernst Kris reanalyzed him to find what deeper defense was still operating.



The Startling Discovery

1

The Reality

The scientist actually had original ideas and discussed them with his friend.

2

The Friend's Action

The friend later published those ideas as his own, without giving credit.

3

The Defense

The scientist, unaware that those ideas were his, believed he was stealing from his friend when he recognized them in print.

In reality, he wasn't a plagiarist—he was a ghostwriter for his friend!

Projection and the Impressive Father

Behind the defensive distortion: a boyhood wish to admire and learn from a disappointing father whose inhibitions prevented professional success.

He projected his own creative abilities onto his friend — he saw in his friend the brilliance that actually belonged to himself. By doing this, he could continue to admire and depend on his friend, rather than face his own ambition or rivalry.

Oedipal conflicts added guilt over symbolically stealing the father's penis—Deep down, the scientist wanted to surpass his father but also felt guilty for it. So, his mind found a compromise: he gave away his success to someone else (his friend) and punished himself with guilt and self-doubt.

- **Defense used:** Projection
- **Deeper root:** Unresolved feelings toward his father (wanting to outshine him but feeling guilty)
- **Result:** The patient unconsciously handed over his own talent to others and blocked his own progress.

The Technical Shift

Traditional Approach

Revealing instinctual conflicts and unconscious infantile longings

Ego Psychology Addition

Detailed analysis of ego operations and surface behavior

The Result

Greater concreteness, covering behavioral details, linking present and past

The crucial innovation: "exploration of the surface" rather than direct access to the id.

Expanding the Scope

*Anna Freud's work with children revealed that defenses like **denial** appear normally in **early development**. Children regularly "get rid of unwelcome facts" while overall reality testing remains intact. (A little boy's dog dies, and when his parents tell him, he calmly says, "No, he didn't die. He's just sleeping in the garden."- he's just temporarily using denial to cope with something too painful to accept.)*

*Her investigations expanded psychoanalytic applications from symptoms to character style, **from psychopathology to normal personality functioning**.*



The Case of Angela: Behind the Wall

Angela, a 23-year-old bank teller, had reached an emotional breaking point. The self-control she usually relied on was falling apart — she was snapping at her coworkers, feeling empty and numb inside, and spending her nights at wild parties where she hooked up with strangers.

“

"I'm behind a wall. No one can get in, and I can't get out. Go ahead, try and get me to talk."

”

She didn't care about anyone and became openly hostile toward her therapist—calling them incompetent and demanding to see their qualifications. This behavior mirrored the way she felt about her own mother, whom she had always seen as weak and inadequate.

A New Clinical Approach

Classical Interpretation

*View behavior as **transference resistance**—fighting with analyst to gratify hostile feelings toward mother*

***Result:** Interpretation fell on deaf ears*

Angela is a dramatic example of a **resistant patient**; far from freely revealing "all that comes to mind," she was unwilling to report anything at all.

Ego Psychology Approach

*Respect **the wall as important ego protection**. Express interest in the defensive structure itself*

***Result:** Dialogue gradually developed*



Understanding Angela's Wall

1

Triggers

Angela's **wall appeared whenever she felt anxious**, often after someone was "too nice" to her, or when she was very angry and feared a loss of self-control.

2

Function

Behind the wall **she felt protected**, but **at a price**, because the wall made her **feel distant from people** and not a part of life.

3

Early Manifestation

Her **earliest memory of the wall-like experience was at age five**, when she started school and was **frightened to be close to the other children** lest she throw something at them. During that year she began to **feel there was a large hazy circular space all around her**.

4

Consequences

Once this sensation began, Angela **felt paralyzed and unable to move or to respond**. Her increasing social withdrawal apparently went unnoticed. She began to feel she was "an idea in someone else's head."



Angela's Internal World



The Wall

Appeared at age five—a hazy circular space when anxious or angry.

Protected her but made her feel distant, "an idea in someone else's head." Angela's complex internal world, shaped by her difficult relationship with her mother and manifested in her protective "wall," illustrates the importance of understanding psychic structure when working with resistant patients.

The Fat Greedy Baby

Greedy, wanting things forever, easily frustrated, could "rip people's eyes out if they left." When one such highly envied schoolmate was hit by a car and killed, Angela became terrified that her hostile thoughts had caused the tragedy (magical thinking).

The Man in the Basement

There was a man "who lives in the basement and is just waiting for me to do something wrong so he can come up and hurt me." This man ordered a sequence of punishments for wrongdoings, however minor, that took the form of inescapable preoccupying fantasies of initially physical and later sexual torture.

The Legacy of Ego Psychology



Structural Understanding

Assessing psychic structure, not just uncovering secrets



Direct Engagement

Respecting defenses as crucial aspects of personality organization



Character Analysis

*From symptoms to character style, **pathology to normal functioning***

*Anna Freud established **the ego as worthy of study in its own right**, fundamentally transforming psychoanalytic technique and expanding its applications.*

Summary of Ego Psychology



Ego psychology **expanded psychoanalysis** from a narrow focus on pathology to a broader understanding of normal development and personality functioning. By **studying the ego "in its own right,"** analysts gained tools to help patients with more severe disturbances whose treatment required **strengthening psychic structures rather than merely uncovering repressed content.**

This approach influenced subsequent psychoanalytic traditions including **object relations theory and self psychology**, all of which addressed **normal development and the impact of early relationships.** What distinguished ego psychology was its **careful preservation of Freud's drive theory while expanding the clinical focus to include the adaptive functions of the ego.**