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FACULTY of ARTS & SCIENCES
PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT
PSY 313 FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS
IN PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY
COURSE
WEEK 3

FUNDAMENTALS OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

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CHILDHOOD SEXUALITY

- Another discovery of Freud was **disturbing secrets** he was reaching in his psychic excavations.
- With his clinical experience, Freud found that **symptoms** (thought to have been removed with the cathartic method) (adapted from Breuer's treatment of Pappenheim) **often returned**.
- When he inquired into these symptoms further, it turned out that **the event** (that was considered to be the origination of the symptom) **concealed an earlier unpleasant experience**.
- **Unless** the symptom was **traced to the earlier episode**, the symptom was **likely to recur**.
- A series of associatively linked episodes, beginning in early childhood, needed to be exhumed (dug up).
- **Current conflicts and symptoms** were always **tied to** events in **early childhood**.

CHILDHOOD SEXUALITY

- Freud found that **many of his patients**, not just hysterics, were **suffering from** troubling memories of **earlier experiences**.
- He believed that **all symptoms** could be **traced to traumatic incidents** during early childhood (before the **age of six**).
- Even more surprising, these incidents always had to do with an **precocious (early) involvement with sexuality**.
- *Gloria and her analyst gradually discovered the central importance of Gloria's early relationship with her father. She had many memories of her father's semi-nakedness. She was both fascinated and disgusted by his penis, which seemed huge and demonic. Sexuality in general and her father in particular seemed both intensely exciting and profoundly dangerous.*

CHILDHOOD SEXUALITY

- According to Freud, if the **memories of childhood sexuality** were systematically peeled back to their troublesome core, they were **always connected to an actual sexual encounter**. These discoveries led Freud to the **controversial theory of infantile seduction**:
- The **root cause of all neurosis** is the **premature introduction of sexuality** into the experience of the child.
- The child's innocence does **not allow her to process the experience** and the child becomes **victimized** by it again when her own sexuality naturally blossoms **at puberty**.
- The new, **intense feelings of adolescence** rekindle (awaken) the **earlier memories and feelings** which were trapped in their unprocessed form beneath the surface of the child's mind, and **create a powerful pressure** that produces **neurotic symptoms**.
- Freud **expanded** and developed his **theory of infantile seduction**, despite **considerable criticism** from his medical colleagues.

CHILDHOOD SEXUALITY

- Freud was dealing with the interpretation of his dreams, trying to figure out his own past.
- In 1896, his father died, and Freud had a **series of dreams** that revealed **feelings about his parents** which were surprising to him.
- Freud had wondered about the **possibility of a sexual encounter in his own childhood**.
- If all **neurosis begins with seduction**, and he himself **had neurotic symptoms**, he himself must have been seduced. But he had not uncovered any such memories. The dreams about his father seemed to suggest something else:
- As a small boy, he'd had **sexual longings for his mother**; he had regarded **his father as a dangerous rival**; he felt a triumph in connection with his father's recent death. It seemed as if Freud had **not been seduced** as a child, but rather, he had **longed to be seduced!**

CHILDHOOD SEXUALITY

- Neurotic symptoms were **very common**. Was it possible that **so many upper-middle-class Viennese children** were routinely abused by their caretakers?
- Ironically, **the more** data Freud accumulated in support of his theory, **the less** probable the theory appeared. Putting these together, Freud concluded in 1897 that many of the encounters probably had **never taken place**. They were the **memories of wishes and longings**.
- The theory of **infantile seduction** had seemed so **compelling** because it accounted for the introduction of sexuality into the innocence of childhood by an adult seducer.
- The whole assumption of **childhood innocence** needed to be **rethought**.

CHILDHOOD SEXUALITY

- The collapse of the theory of infantile seduction led in 1897 to the **emergence of the theory of infantile sexuality**.
- Freud believed that the impulses, fantasies, and conflicts beneath the neurotic symptoms of his patients derived **not from external contamination, but from the mind of the child itself**.
- Freud became increasingly convinced that **intensely conflictual sexuality** dominates the childhood not only of future neurotics, but of **all men and women**.
- But why is sexuality such a **powerful motivator** of difficulties in living?
- Freud's clinical discoveries led him to rethink the nature of sexuality and its role in the mind in general.

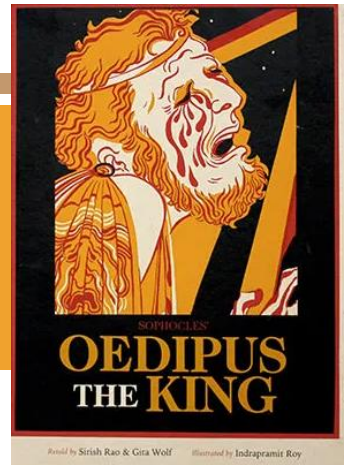
THE THEORY OF INSTINCTUAL DRIVE

- The theory of sexuality that Freud developed over the next several years (1905) is based on the notion of **instinctual drive**, which became Freud's **fundamental building block** for all his subsequent theorizing.
- According to Freud, the **mind** is an apparatus for **discharging stimuli** that affect it. There are **two kinds** of stimuli, external (such as a threatening predator) and internal (such as hunger).
- **External stimuli** can be avoided; **internal stimuli** keep mounting (increase). The mind becomes structured so as to **contain, control**, and, if possible, **discharge internal stimuli**.
- **Sexual instincts** are the central internal stimuli. These create **tensions** arising from different body parts, and **activity** is needed for their **discharge**.
- For example, **oral libido** arises in the **oral cavity** (its source), creates a need for **sucking activity** (its aim), and becomes **targeted toward** and **attached to** something (generally external to the person) such as **the breast** (its object), which is required **for satisfaction**.

THE THEORY OF INSTINCTUAL DRIVE

- Freud believed that **the source** and **aim** are inherent properties of the drive, and **the object** is discovered through **experience**.
- Thus, in feeding for purposes of self-preservation, the infant discovers that the **breast is a source of libidinal pleasure**; hence, through experience, the **breast becomes the first libidinal object**.
- The "**erogenous zones**" always have the **potential for sexual excitation**, but at **different points** during childhood one or another zone has **prominence**, Freud believed, and **activity** involving that zone becomes the **central organizing focus** of the child's emotional life.
- Freud proposed a **sequence of psychosexual stages**, through which one or another body part and its accompanying libidinal activity assumes prominence: **oral, anal, phallic**, and **genital**.

THE OEDIPUS COMPLEX



- The **centerpiece of Freud's theory of development** was the Oedipus complex.
- Freud believed that the **various elements of sexuality** converge (merge) around the **age of five or six** in a **genital organization**, in which the component pregenital instincts (such as orality and anality) are subsumed (include) under a genital hegemony.
- The **aim of all the child's desires** becomes genital intercourse with the **parent of the opposite sex**. The parent of the **same sex** becomes a dangerous, feared **rival**.
- The Oedipus complex **for each child depends** considerably on the course of the **earlier, pregenital organizations**.
- For the child with a strong **oral fixation**, genitality will take on **oral themes** (sexuality becomes infused with **dependency issues**).
- For the child with a strong **anal fixation**, genitality will take on **anal themes** (sexuality is characterised with images of domination and control).
- (*Oedipus chooses to blind himself as a serious act of self-punishment and acknowledgment of his tragic fate. This decision occurs after he discovers that he has unwittingly fulfilled a prophecy: he killed his father, King Laius, and married his mother, Jocasta.*)

THE OEDIPUS COMPLEX

- Freud believed that the **Oedipus complex is resolved** through the **threat of castration anxiety**.
- A boy wants to remove the threat posed by **his rival by castrating** him, and assumes that **his father will punish** him. The child's **oedipal ambitions are abandoned** only because of the threat of castration.
- In 1923, Freud introduced the concept of the **superego**, as "the heir of the Oedipus complex" to account for the **internalization of parental values** that accompanies the **resolution of the oedipal struggle** and **holds infantile sexuality in check**.
- Freud had a great deal of **difficulty accounting for the resolution of the Oedipus complex** and the **establishment of the superego in girls**, for whom, presumably, castration would pose less of a threat.
- For **all of us**, Freud suggested, the **central themes of childhood sexuality** become **organized in the Oedipus complex**, and that organization becomes **the underlying structure for the rest of life**.
- (*The **Electra complex** is a term used to describe the **female version of the Oedipus complex**. It involves a girl, aged between 3 and 6, becoming subconsciously sexually attached to her father and increasingly hostile toward her mother. Carl Jung developed the theory in 1913.*)

PSYCHIC CONFLICT

- What we experience as our minds, Freud suggests, is merely **a small portion** of it; the rest is by no means transparent to our weak consciousness. The real meaning of much of what we think, feel, and do is determined **unconsciously, outside our awareness**.
- The mind has elaborate **devices for regulating the instinctual tensions** that are the **source of all motivation** and that exert (apply) a **continuous pressure for discharge**.
- The apparent **transparency of mind is an illusion**; the **psyche and the personality** are **highly complex**, inseparably textured layers of **instinctual impulses, transformations** of those impulses, and **defenses** against those impulses.
- For Freud, **personality** is woven out of **impulses and defenses**.

PSYCHIC CONFLICT (THE CASE OF GLORIA)

- In Gloria's analysis, it became apparent that some of the **central issues she had struggled with in childhood** involved **conflicts over wishes and impulses**, which subsequently became **embedded in her adult personality** in different ways.
- Gloria's childhood emerged with increasing vividness over the first several months of treatment. She began to realize that her **first neurotic symptom** had appeared around the **age of eleven or twelve**, when her widespread **obsessive ruminations** became quite troubling and evolved into a **disturbing compulsion**.
- Gloria would **lie awake at night, ruminating on patterns of hot and cold**. She would go into the **bathroom** and turn on the **hot and cold faucets in sequence**: hot-cold-hot-cold; hot-hot-cold-cold; hot-cold cold-hot-hot-cold-cold-hot, until she gave up in a state of unsettled **exhaustion**.
- The **onset** of Gloria's **symptom** coincided with the **onset of puberty**, when her body, her reactions, and her feelings were changing in ways she found quite frightening. Her developing breasts and her initial menstrual periods attracted great attention from her father, who would make frequent excited, congratulatory comments about both.

PSYCHIC CONFLICT (THE CASE OF GLORIA)

- Her own enhanced capacity for **sexual excitement** was **extremely problematic**, because **sexuality** was so bound up for her with **frightening images** of damaging surrender to bigger, stronger, intimidating **male figures**.
- Perhaps the **flow from the faucet** represented the **eruption of her womanhood and her sexuality**, and the **hot-cold of the water** represented the **hot-cold of her feelings**.
- Within Freud's understanding of symptoms, Gloria's **struggle with the water faucets** was a displaced and camouflaged enactment of her **intense conflicts** over wanting to **be turned on** and wanting to turn herself **off**, her wish to surrender to the **natural processes** surging in her body and her **desperate efforts to gain control and mastery over them**.
- What happened to this central conflict, this struggle between forbidden impulses and defenses against those impulses, as Gloria grew older?
- Sex had been largely **unpleasurable** and sometimes **painful**. Similarly, virtually every area of her own life was constricted by her conviction that **she needed to watch and vigilantly control all her natural physical and emotional expressions** less they grow out of control and endanger her.

THE AGGRESSIVE DRIVE

- Freud regarded the **sexual drive as the source of all conflict** and psychopathology.
- Issues involving aggression, sadism, and power found an increasingly important place in Freud's clinical descriptions during the 1910s; yet in terms of theory, he regarded **aggression and sadism as pieces of sexuality**, components of the sexual drive (as, for example, in oral sadism or anal sadism).
- In 1920 Freud introduced what has come to be known as his **dual instinct theory**, which granted **aggression equal status with sexuality** as a source of the **basic instinctual energy** that drives **mental processes**.
- Increasingly, and especially after 1920, Freud's **view of human nature** darkened. What is repressed are **not just harmless sexual wishes**, he came to believe, but **a powerful, savage destructiveness** deriving from a **death instinct**.

FROM TOPOGRAPHY TO STRUCTURE

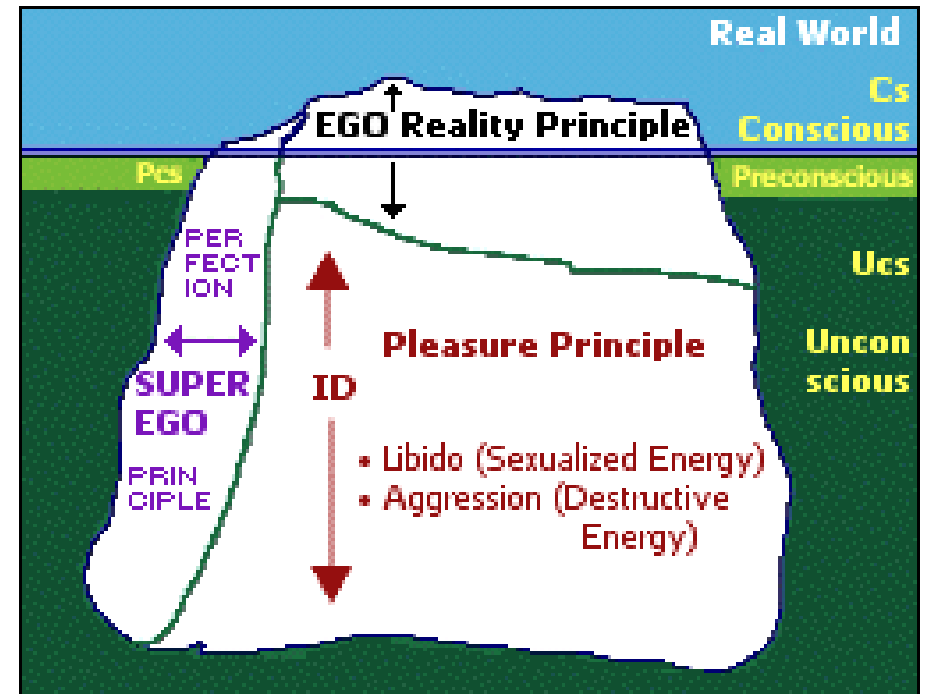
- From his earliest differences with Breuer on the cause of **repressed memories**, Freud regarded **conflict as the central clinical problem underlying all psychopathology**.
- His favorite metaphors for the mind (and the analytic process) were military. **One part of the mind was at war with another part of the mind**, and the **symptoms** were a **direct**, although **masked consequence** of this hidden, underlying **struggle**.
- By the early 1920s, **the topographical model** (conscious, conscious and preconscious) was proving **insufficient** as a map of conflict.
- With growing clinical experience and conceptual sophistication, Freud theorized that **the unconscious wishes and impulses are in conflict with the defenses**, not with the conscious and preconscious, and that the **defenses cannot possibly really be conscious or accessible to consciousness**.
- Freud's patients not only did **not know their own secrets**, they also did **not know that they had secrets**. **Not just the impulses and wishes were unconscious, but the defenses seemed to be unconscious as well**.

FROM TOPOGRAPHY TO STRUCTURE

- Freud had discovered **something else** in the unconscious: **guilt, prohibitions, self-punishments**. Gloria's longings for her father, for example, were linked with a **sense of self-blame** (she deserved the punishment she imagined herself). Her unconscious contained **not just forbidden wishes, but also defenses** against them, as well as **self-accusations and punishments** for them.
- When Freud began to perceive the **basic conflictual seam in the psyche** as **not between conscious and unconscious but inside the unconscious itself**, a new model (**the structural model**) became necessary to define the primary components of mind.
- The **structural model** puts all the **major components of the self in the unconscious**, and the significant boundaries are between the **id, ego, and superego**.

FROM TOPOGRAPHY TO STRUCTURE

- **The id** is a "pot full of boiling excitations" of **raw, unstructured, impulsive** energies;
- **The ego** is a collection of **regulatory functions** that keep the **impulses of the id** under control;
- **The superego** is a set of **moral values** and **self-critical attitudes**, largely organized around **internalized parental imagoes**.



FROM TOPOGRAPHY TO STRUCTURE

- Drawing heavily on the **Darwinian metaphors** of his day, Freud portrayed **humankind** as only **incompletely evolved**.
- Humankind as torn by a fundamental **rift between animalistic motives and civilized conduct** and demeanor (between an animal nature and cultural aspirations).
- And the very **process of socialization** brought about self-alienation and self-deception.
- According to Freud, human beings are "driven" to **seek pleasure** in a single minded and greedy fashion.
- In order to become acceptable, both to others and to oneself, one **has to conceal** from oneself these purely **hedonic motives**.
- The **ego**, with the aid of the internalized parental presences in the **superego**, represses and regulates bestial impulses in the **id** to maintain safety in a world of other people.
- The result is a mind **largely unknown to itself**, filled with **secrets and disowned impulses**, sexual and aggressive.

SUMMARY

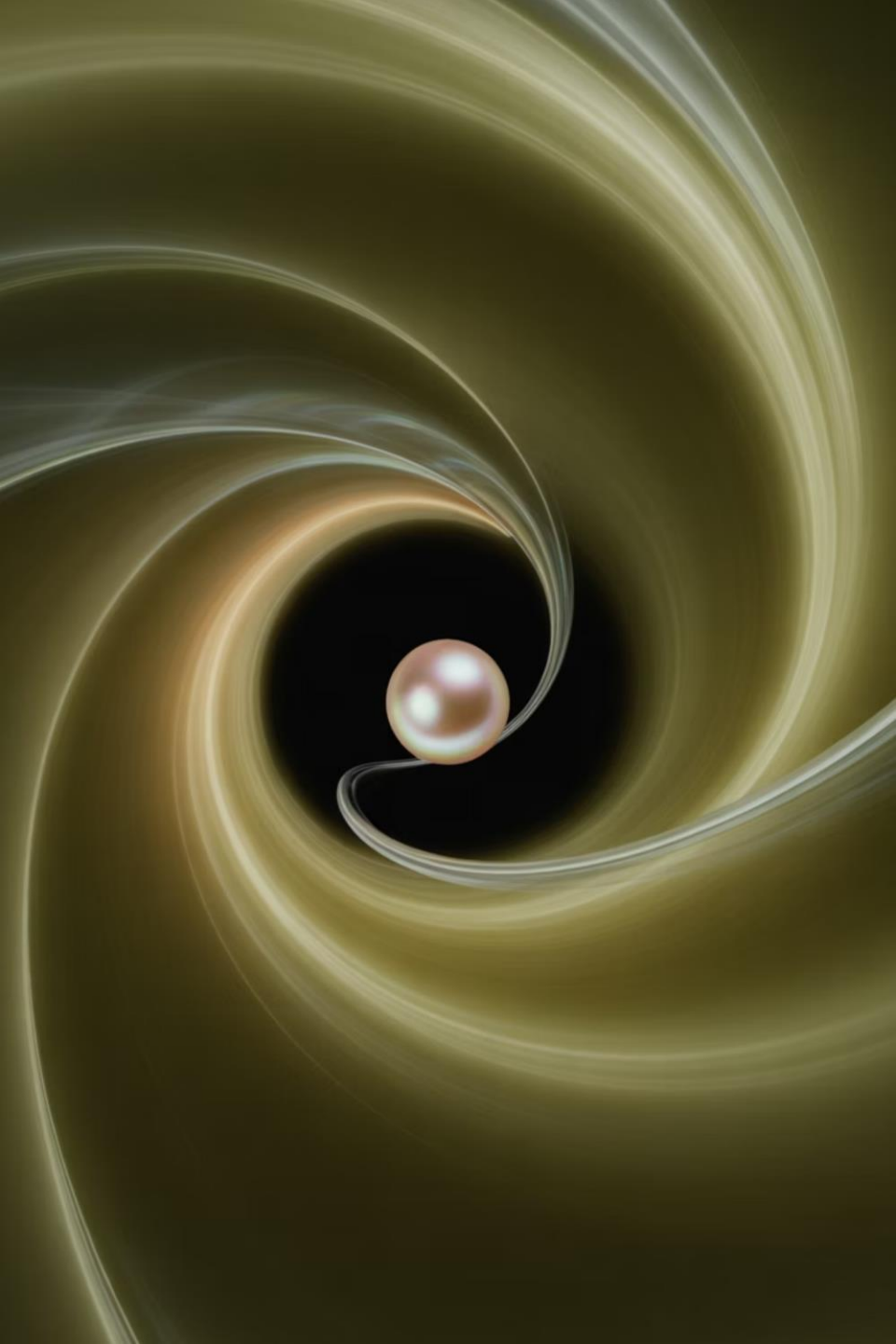
- **Instinct** is the **psychological** expression of **biological** arousal.
- **Need** is the **physical** arousal that instinct derives from.
- **Desire/wish** is the **psychological** representative of need.
- Desire **motivates** behavior. It also determines the **direction of behavior**.
- Freud has categorized instincts under two headings: Life instinct (**eros**) and death instinct (**thanatos**).
- He calls the energy that drives life instinct as **libido**, and covers physiological needs in this group.
- At first, he was interested in the **sexual part of the life instinct** and explained all human behavior with this instinct.
- **Aggression** is the strongest representative of the **death instinct**.

SUMMARY

- According to Freud's definition of **aggression**, the individual directs his **self-destructive tendencies** towards **objects in the outer world**.
- When a person's desire to destroy himself is thwarted (obstructed) by the life instinct, then he fights with other people and becomes destructive.
- The life and death instincts can **neutralize** each other or **replace** each other. For example, in the act of eating, hunger and destructiveness are intertwined; satisfaction is provided by the movements of biting, chewing and swallowing food.
- Or, love, a derivative of the sexual instinct, can neutralize hatred, a derivative of the death instinct. Love can replace hate or hate can replace love.

SUMMARY

- Freud wrote more about Eros than Thanatos, because Thanatos was added to the theory later. Eros is called as libido.
- Eros is responsible for the continuation of the human species
- Instinctual energy/libido is always in search of objects to attach
- Libido in the newborn/primary narcissism
- First object of libido/mother
- Other people or objects
- As an adult/opposite sex
- According to Freud, symptoms are defenses against unacceptable desires (Glove anaesthesia/a defense against masturbation)



Freud's Levels of Mental Life

Freud's greatest contribution to personality theory is his exploration of the unconscious and his insistence that people are motivated primarily by drives of which they have little or no awareness.

Mental life is divided into distinct levels that operate both as processes and hypothetical locations within the mind.

The Three Levels of Mental Life



Unconscious

Contains drives, urges, and instincts beyond our awareness that motivate most of our words, feelings, and actions. The deepest level of mental life.



Preconscious

Elements not currently conscious but can become conscious readily or with difficulty. Acts as a bridge between unconscious and conscious.



Conscious

Mental elements in awareness at any given time. The only level directly available to us, playing a relatively minor role in psychoanalytic theory.



The Unconscious Mind

The unconscious contains all drives and instincts beyond our awareness. Though we may be conscious of our behaviours, we often aren't aware of the mental processes behind them. A man may know he's attracted to a woman but not fully understand all the reasons, some seemingly irrational.

Dreams

Rich source of unconscious material. Childhood experiences can appear in adult dreams without conscious recollection.

Slips of Tongue

Unconscious thoughts breaking through into speech, revealing hidden motivations and desires.

Repression

Certain kinds of forgetting where anxiety-producing memories are forced into the unconscious.

The Guardian and Censor System

Freud used the analogy of a guardian blocking passage between unconscious and preconscious, preventing undesirable anxiety-producing memories from entering awareness. Unconscious images must be sufficiently disguised to slip past the primary censor, then elude (escape) a final censor watching the preconscious-conscious passageway.



Primary Censor

Guards threshold between unconscious and preconscious, blocking threatening content.



Disguised Content

Unconscious material transforms into pleasant, non-threatening experiences to pass censors.



Final Censor

Last barrier preventing preconscious elements from reaching consciousness.

Origins of Unconscious Content

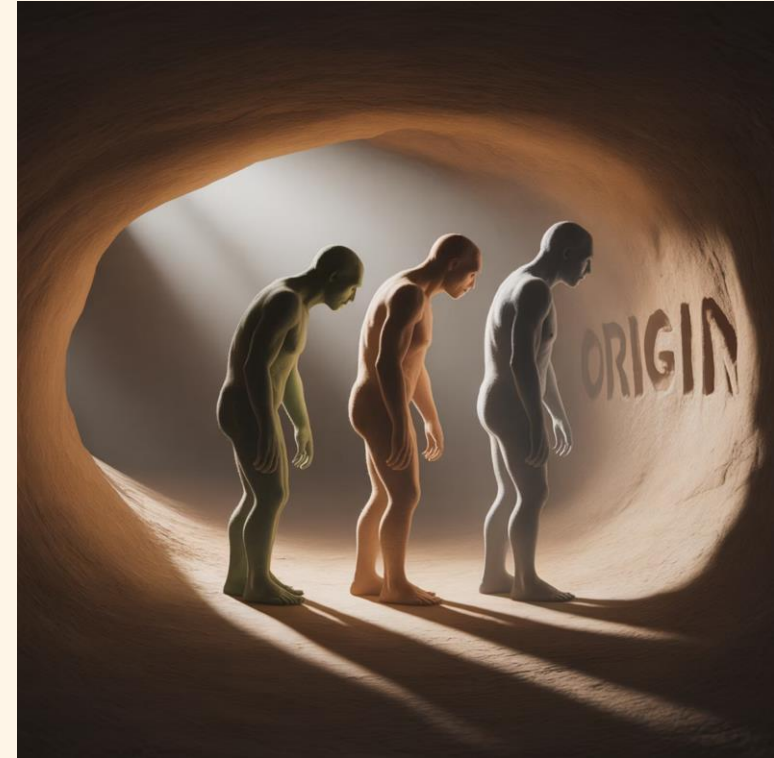
Individual Repression

Childhood sexual and aggressive behaviours are frequently punished or suppressed, creating anxiety. This anxiety stimulates repression - forcing unwanted, anxiety-ridden experiences into the unconscious as defence against pain.



Phylogenetic Endowment

Freud believed some unconscious content originates from early ancestors' experiences, passed down through hundreds of generations. He used this concept as last resort when individual experiences couldn't explain certain phenomena like the Oedipus complex.



The Preconscious Bridge

The preconscious contains elements not currently conscious but can become conscious readily or with difficulty. Content comes from two sources: conscious perception that quickly passes into preconscious when attention shifts, and disguised unconscious ideas that slip past the vigilant censor.

1 — **Conscious Perception**

Ideas alternate easily between conscious and preconscious, largely free from anxiety

2 — **Disguised Entry**

Unconscious ideas slip past censor in disguised form to enter preconscious

3 — **Selective Awareness**

Some images remain preconscious to avoid anxiety; others reach consciousness when well-disguised



Freud's Reception Room Analogy

Freud compared the unconscious to a large entrance hall with diverse, energetic, disreputable people milling about, striving to escape to a smaller adjoining reception room. A watchful guard protects the threshold, preventing undesirables from reaching an important guest seated behind a screen.

Entrance Hall

Represents the unconscious - chaotic, energetic forces seeking expression

Reception Room

The preconscious - smaller space where some unconscious content gains temporary access

Important Guest

Consciousness - the final destination, protected by multiple barriers and censors

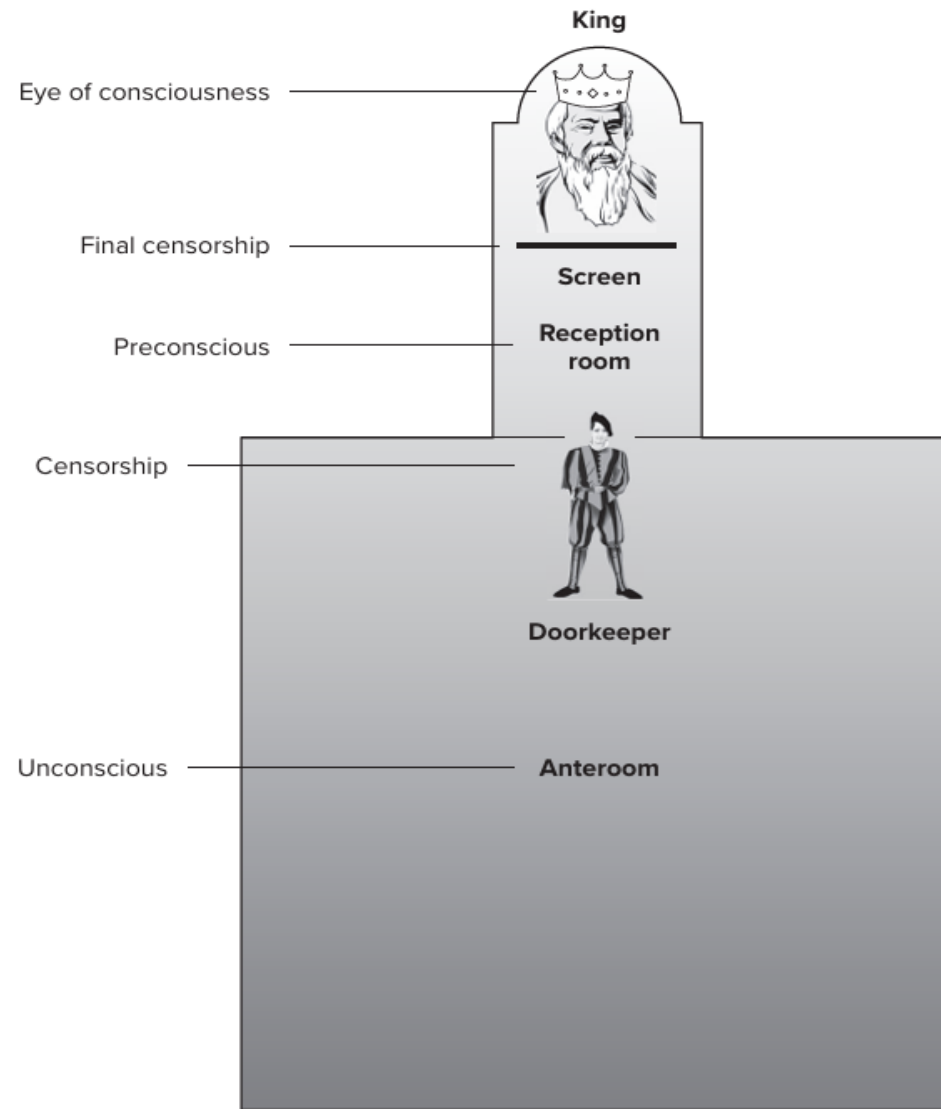
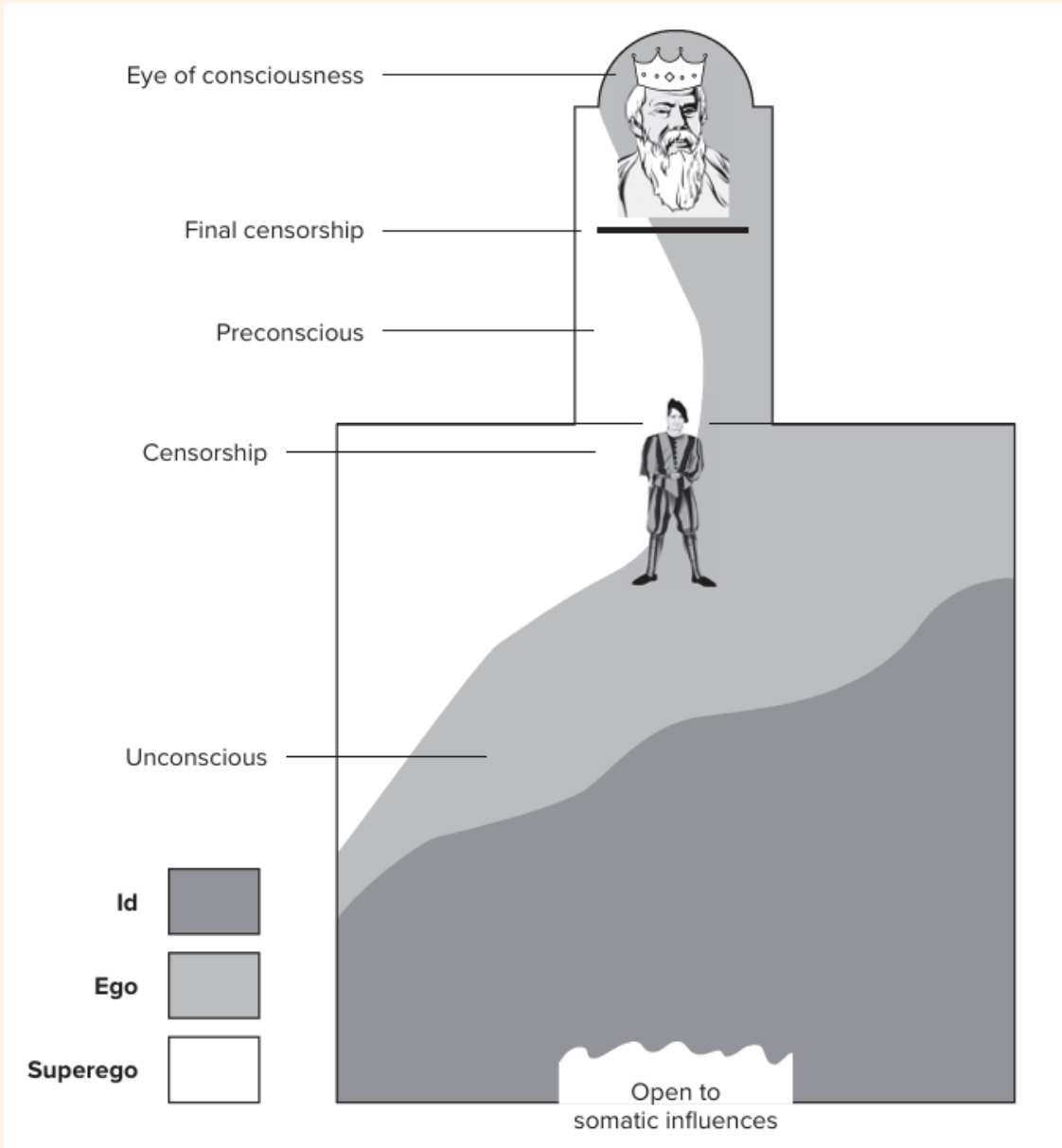


FIGURE 2.1 *Levels of Mental Life.*



Provinces of the Mind

For nearly two decades, Freud relied solely on his topographic model of the mind. Then, during the 1920s, he introduced a revolutionary three-part structural model that would transform our understanding of human psychology.

This structural model divided the mind into three provinces based on their functions: the id (das Es), ego (das Ich), and superego (das Über-Ich). These hypothetical constructs interact with conscious, preconscious, and unconscious levels of mental life.



The Id: The Primitive Core

Pleasure Principle

Seeks immediate gratification without regard for reality or consequences. Operates purely on the desire to reduce tension.

Completely Unconscious

Has no contact with reality and remains unchanged by time or experience. Childhood impulses persist for decades.

Amoral & Illogical

Cannot distinguish between good and evil. Can simultaneously entertain incompatible ideas without conflict.

The id represents our most primitive instincts—chaotic, unorganised, and filled with energy from basic drives. A newborn infant perfectly embodies the id, seeking gratification without considering what's possible or proper.

The Ego: Reality's Executive

The Decision Maker

The ego serves as the executive branch of personality, making decisions across conscious, preconscious, and unconscious levels. It's the only region in contact with external reality. Governed by the reality principle, it attempts to substitute realistic thinking for the id's pleasure-seeking impulses.

Serving Three Masters

The ego must reconcile demands from three sources: the irrational id, the perfectionist superego, and the external world. Like a rider controlling a powerful horse, the ego checks id impulses but remains at the mercy of its stronger, poorly organised energy.

This constant balancing act creates anxiety, leading the ego to employ defence mechanisms for protection. The ego borrows energy from the id but can sometimes achieve near-complete control during psychological maturity.

The Superego: Moral Guardian

The Conscience

Develops from experiences with punishment, telling us what we should not do. Creates guilt when the ego acts contrary to moral standards.

The Ego-Ideal

Forms through experiences with rewards for proper behaviour, guiding what we should do. Produces inferiority feelings when standards aren't met.

The superego represents morality and idealism, growing from the ego around ages 5-6 through identification with parents. Unlike the ego, it has no contact with reality and makes unrealistic demands for perfection.

It controls sexual and aggressive impulses through repression, watching over the ego like a strict moral judge. The superego strives blindly toward perfection, unconcerned with the ego's happiness or practical limitations.



Personality Integration Patterns



Id-Dominated

Weak ego and feeble (weak) superego allow the id's demands to dominate. Person constantly strives for pleasure regardless of consequences or propriety.



Superego-Dominated

Strong superego with weak ego creates constant conflict. Person experiences guilt, inferiority, and mood fluctuations between self-confidence and self-deprecation.



Healthy Integration

Strong ego includes demands from both id and superego. Achieves psychological health with minimal conflict and smooth functioning.

Individual development varies widely. Some people's superego never grows beyond childhood, whilst others may be dominated by guilt and inferiority feelings throughout life.

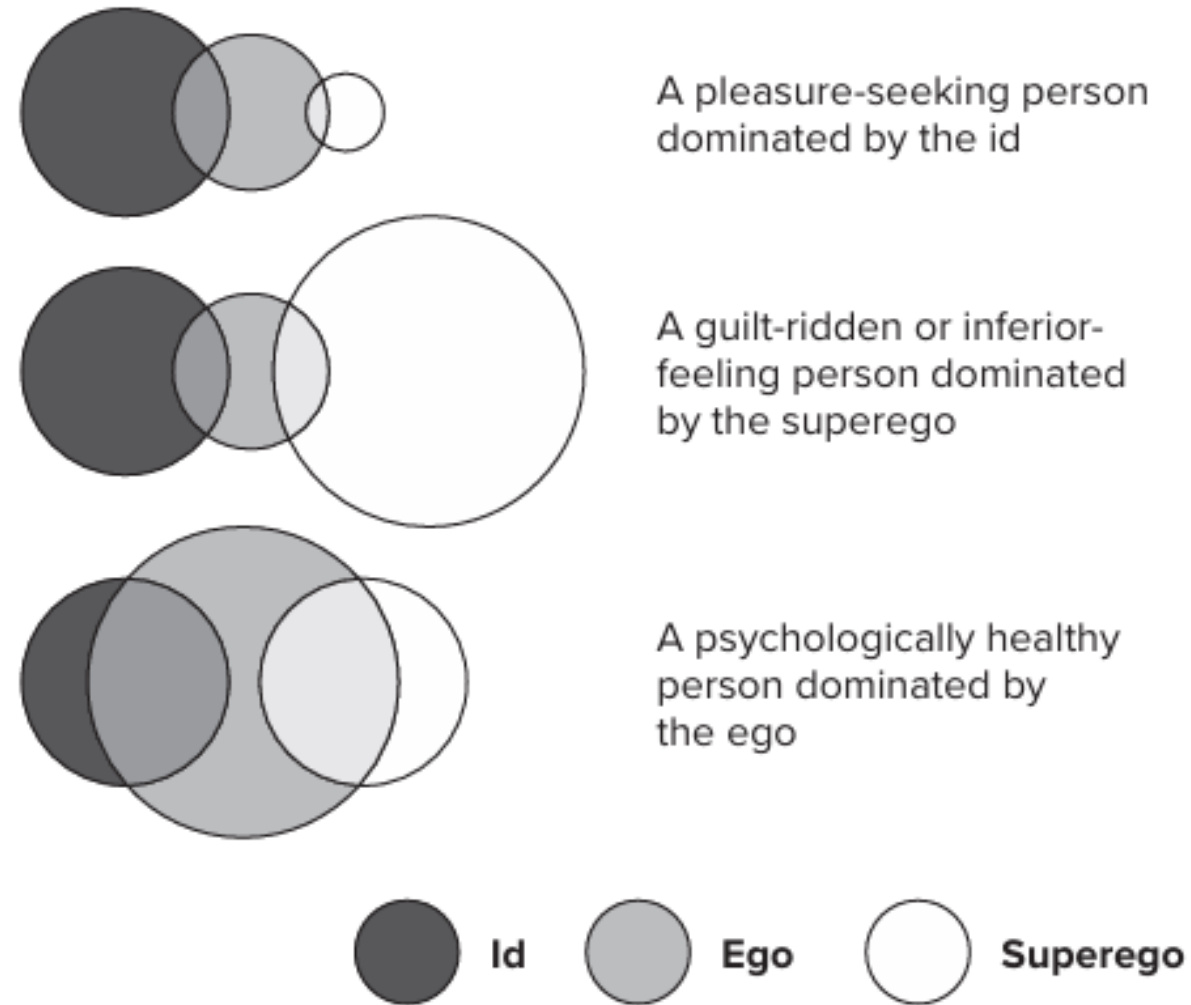


FIGURE 2.3 *The Relationship among Id, Ego, and Superego in Three Hypothetical Persons.*



The Driving Forces: Eros and Thanatos

Freud's dynamic theory explains what motivates human behaviour through two fundamental drives that originate in the id but come under ego control.

Eros (Life Drive)

The sexual drive powered by libido energy. Seeks pleasure through the entire body, not just genitals. Includes mouth and anus as erogenous zones.

Thanatos (Death Drive)

The aggressive drive aimed at returning organisms to an inorganic state. Ultimate goal is self-destruction, explaining wars, cruelty, and persecution.

Each drive has four characteristics: impetus (force exerted), source (bodily region of tension), aim (pleasure through tension reduction), and object (means of satisfaction). These drives constantly struggle against each other whilst bowing to reality's demands.

Manifestations of the Sexual Drive



Narcissism

Primary narcissism in infants with libido invested in their own ego. Secondary narcissism during puberty with preoccupation with appearance and self-interests.



Love

Develops when libido is invested in others. Includes aim-inhibited love for family members where original sexual aims are repressed.



Sadism & Masochism

Sadism seeks sexual pleasure through inflicting pain on others. Masochism finds pleasure in receiving pain, making masochists less dependent on others.

The flexibility of sexual objects allows libido to be withdrawn from one person and reinvested in another, including the self. For example, an infant prematurely forced to give up the nipple as a sexual object may substitute the thumb as an object

of oral pleasure. This explains the disguised nature of much behaviour originally motivated by Eros. To Freud, all pleasurable activities are traceable to the sexual drive.



The Aggressive Drive Unleashed

Following World War I and personal tragedy (death of his beloved daughter Sophie), Freud elevated aggression to equal status with the sexual drive in his theory. This destructive force aims to return organisms to their ultimate inorganic state—death.



Subtle Forms

Teasing, gossip, sarcasm, humiliation, and deriving pleasure from others' suffering.



Social Controls

Commandments like "Love thy neighbour" serve as reaction formations against unconscious hostile impulses.



Universal Presence

Explains wars, atrocities, and religious persecution as expressions of this fundamental drive.

The aggressive tendency exists in everyone, necessitating the barriers society has erected to check destructive impulses. Life and death drives constantly struggle for ascendancy (dominance) throughout our lifetime.

Three Types of Anxiety

Anxiety serves as an ego-preserving mechanism, warning of upcoming danger. Only the ego can produce or feel anxiety, but each type stems from different sources of conflict.

1

Neurotic Anxiety

Apprehension about unknown danger originating from id impulses. May manifest around authority figures due to unconscious destructive feelings toward parents.

2

Moral Anxiety

Stems from conflict between ego and superego. Results from sexual temptations or failure to behave according to moral standards.

3

Realistic Anxiety

Related to fear but involves possible rather than specific danger. Experienced in objectively dangerous situations like heavy traffic.

These anxiety types often exist in combination and serve self-regulating functions by accelerating repression, which reduces anxiety's pain whilst protecting the ego through defensive behaviours.

The Dynamic Interplay

Freud's structural model reveals personality as a dynamic system where three provinces constantly interact across multiple levels of consciousness. The ego serves as mediator between primitive id impulses and perfectionist superego demands whilst navigating external reality.

Drives Create Tension
Sexual and aggressive drives generate psychic energy demanding expression.

Balance Restored
Temporary equilibrium achieved until new tensions arise.



Anxiety Signals Danger

Ego detects threats from internal impulses or external demands.

Defences Activate

Repression and other mechanisms protect ego from overwhelming anxiety.

This perpetual dance between structure and dynamics shapes human behaviour, revealing the complexity beneath our conscious experience. Understanding these forces offers insight into the universal struggles of human existence.