

Personality

What makes us who we are?

Psychology 305A; Lecture 4

Psychoanalytic Approach: Freud

The Psychoanalytic Approach

Part 1: Freud

Why do we care about Freud?

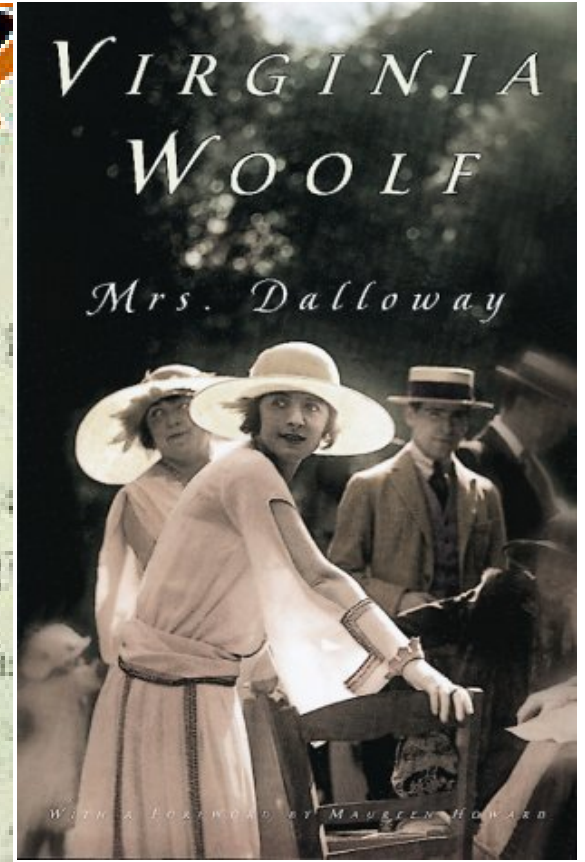
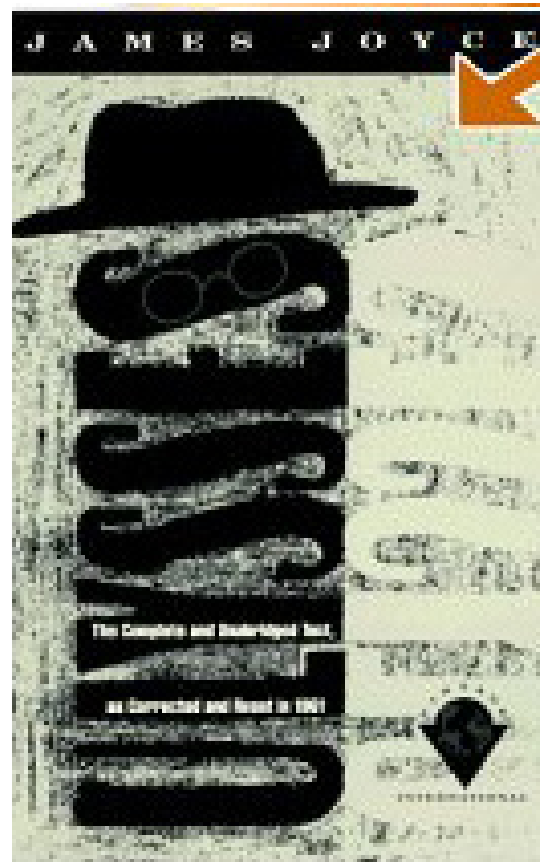


Sigmund Freud

- Founder/creator of psychoanalysis
 - One of the most influential schools of thought in the 20th Century
 - Considered one of 4 major revolutions in humans' understanding of the world:
 - Copernican, Darwinian, **Freudian**, DNA
- Influenced thinking and research in:
 - Therapy (“talk therapy”)
 - Philosophy
 - Science
 - Humanities: modern art, literature, films

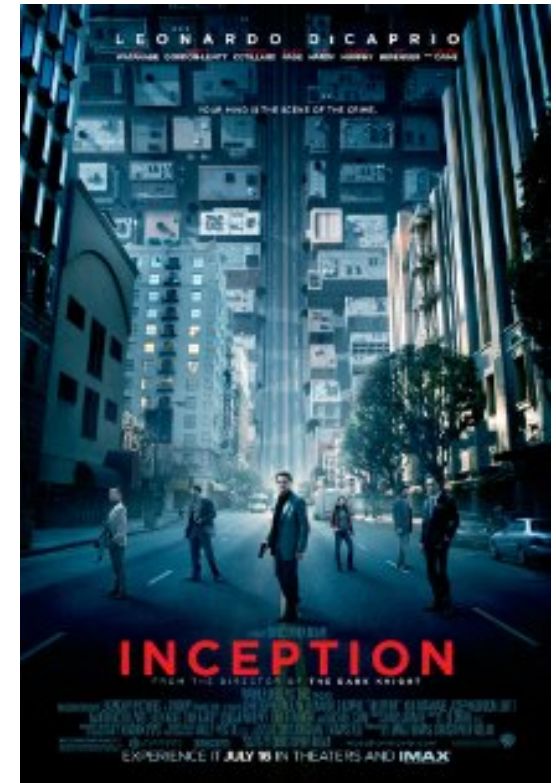


Modern artists (Dali) visually represented dream states and unconscious contents



Modern writers (Joyce, Woolf) used “stream of consciousness” style, emphasis on link between early life and adulthood

Freud in Film



The origins of Freudian Theory

- Viennese neurologist
 - Trained as a medical doctor, but more interested in research and understanding the mind
 - Worked with famous neurologist Dr. Breuer
 - Developed the “Talking Cure”
- They both picked up on the work of Charcot, another neurologist

Mental Illness in the late 19th Century

- Charcot's "Hysteria"



The Case of Anna O.

- Patient of Dr. Breuer, a neurologist colleague of Freud
- Numerous symptoms, contracted shortly after she nursed her father (who had TB)
 - coughing, hallucination, refusal to drink water, partial paralysis
- No physical cause
- Breuer would talk with Anna each night, and found her symptoms would improve the following day
- Anna called their talks “chimney sweeping”

A “talking cure”

- After Anna refused to drink for several weeks, she revealed to Breuer that she'd seen a dog drinking from her water glass
- After the revelation, asked for a drink
- Breuer had an epiphany!

Curing Hysteria

- The “talking cure”
 - Physical symptom (e.g., numb arm) with no physical origin (e.g., arm nerves not damaged)
 - The Cure
 - Step 1: Hypnotize patient, or allow for free association
 - Step 2: Talk with patient to reveal psychological anxiety/neurosis
 - Step 3: Patient has “catharsis”—insight into psychological problem
 - Step 4: Physical symptom disappears

October, 2006, New York Times Science Times...



- Neurologists continue to study hysteria
- Now called “conversion disorder”

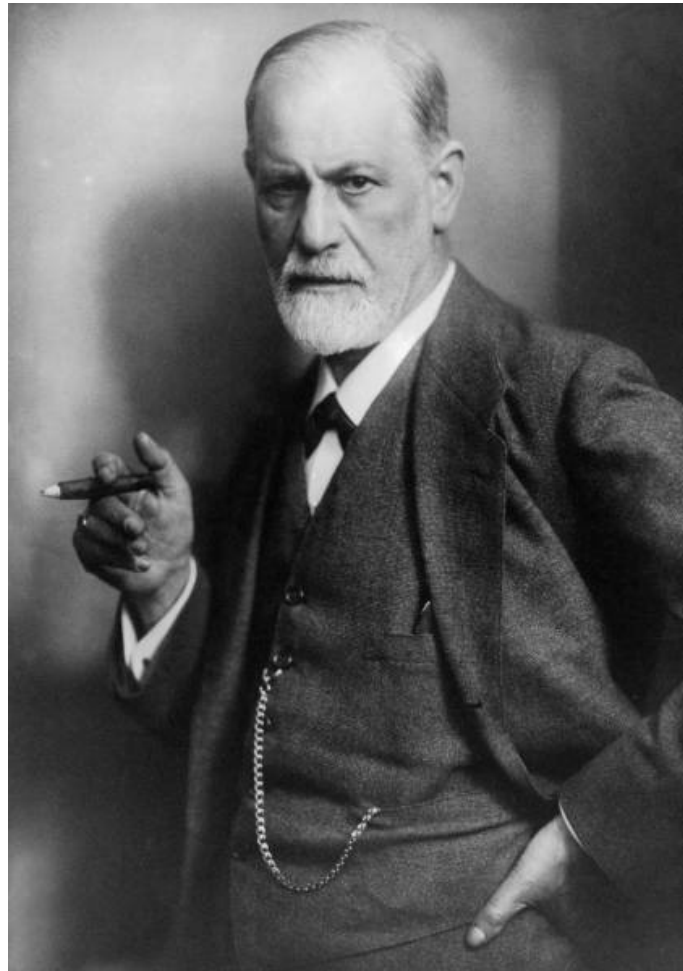
Current Research on Hysteria

- Neurologists analyzed brain function of a woman paralyzed on left side
 - no identifiable physical source
- When the woman tried to move her “paralyzed leg,” her motor cortex did not activate
- Instead, right orbitofrontal and anterior cingulate cortex activated
 - EMOTION brain areas
- Emotional areas of the brain may be suppressing movement in the leg

Neuroscientific Explanation for Conversion Disorder

- Cause of Hysteria
 - Emotional centers of the brain activated
 - Inhibit motor centers of the brain from coordinating movement
- So, there is a biological basis to hysteria!

Freudian Theory of Personality



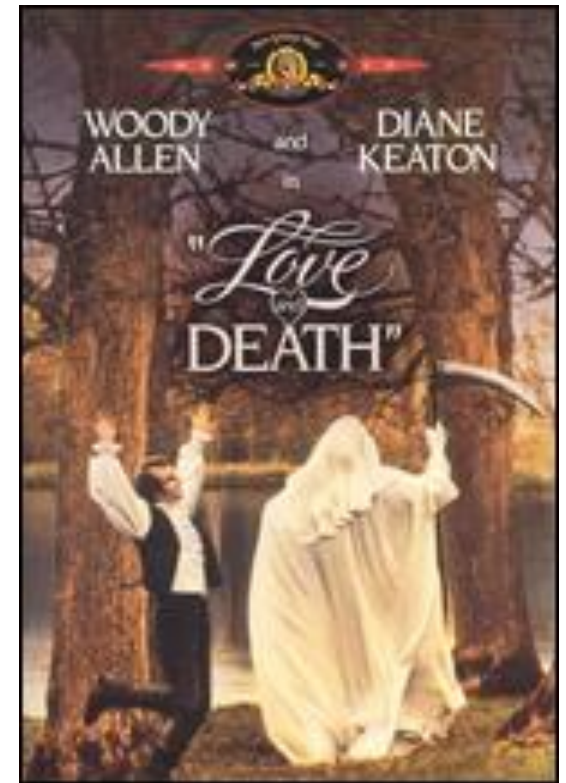
Psychoanalytic Theory: Basic Assumptions

1. Psychological Determinism
 - Life/sex instinct
 - Death/aggression instinct
2. Importance of the Unconscious
 - Dynamic processes
 - Intrapsychic Conflict (Id, Ego, Superego)
3. Defense Mechanisms
4. Importance of early childhood experiences

Part 1. Psychological Determinism: Basic Instincts

- Life – self preservation, sex
- Death – aggression, destruction

Are Love and
Death
the primary
motives
of human
behavior?

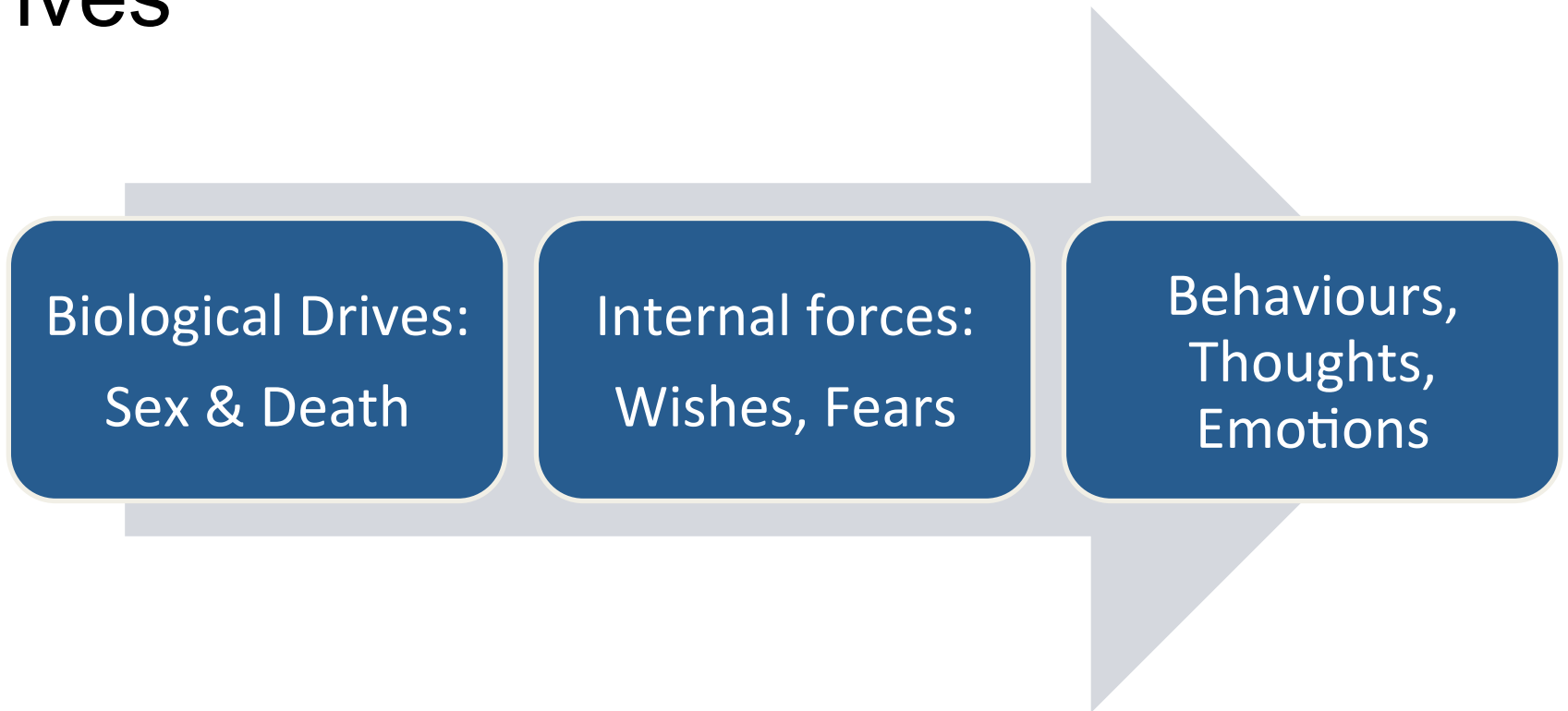


World War I led to Freud's view that death and destruction are instinctual aspects of human nature



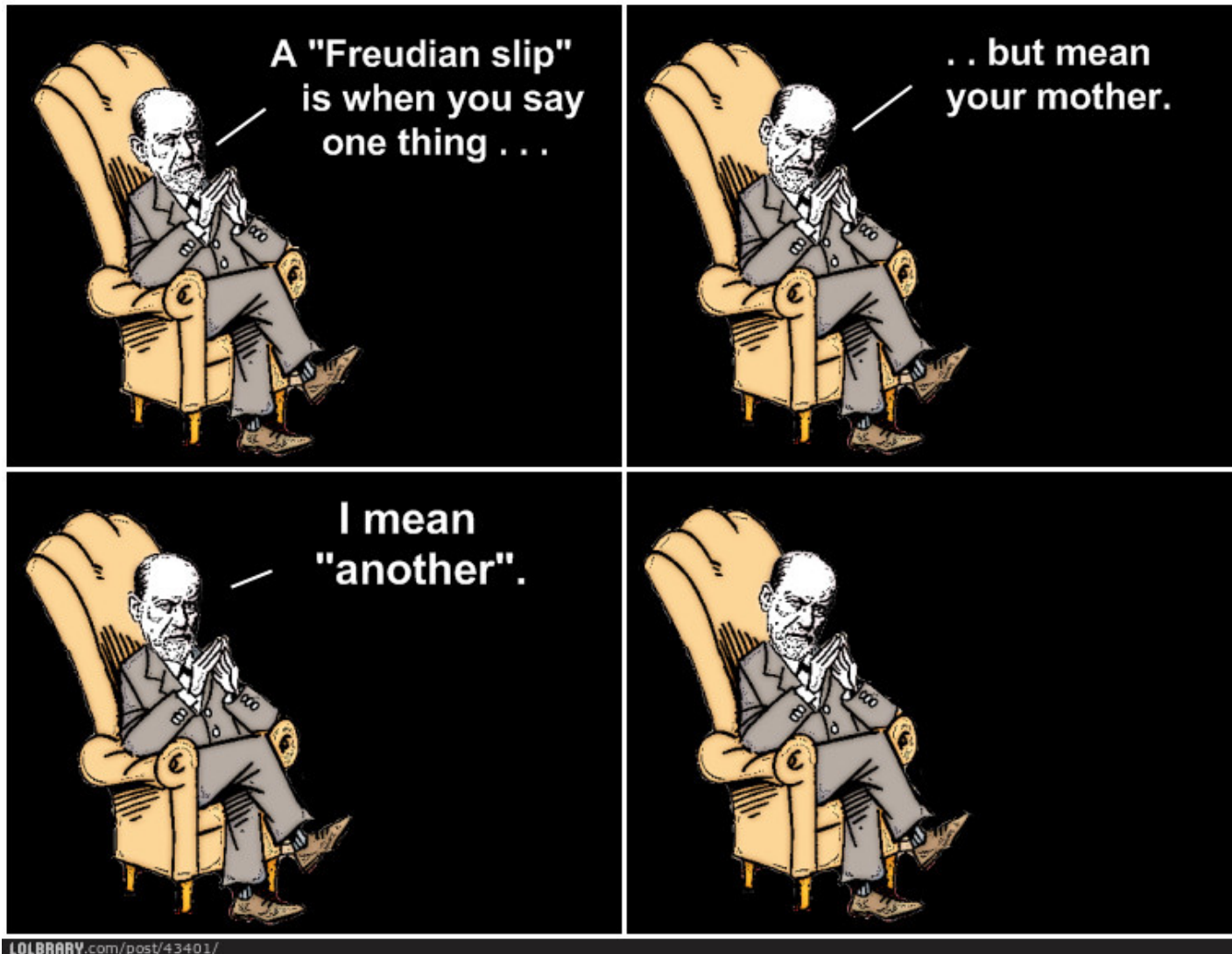
PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERMINISM

There are no accidents; all behaviors are caused by internal drives



PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERMINISM

Freudian Slips



Part II: Importance of Unconscious

- Levels of Consciousness
 - Pre-Conscious – easily retrieve, but not currently thinking about
 - E.g., what you had for breakfast
 - Consciousness
 - What you're thinking about RIGHT NOW
 - Unconscious
 - “The seething cauldron”
 - Repressed contents of the mind
 - Libido (sexual), aggressive instincts

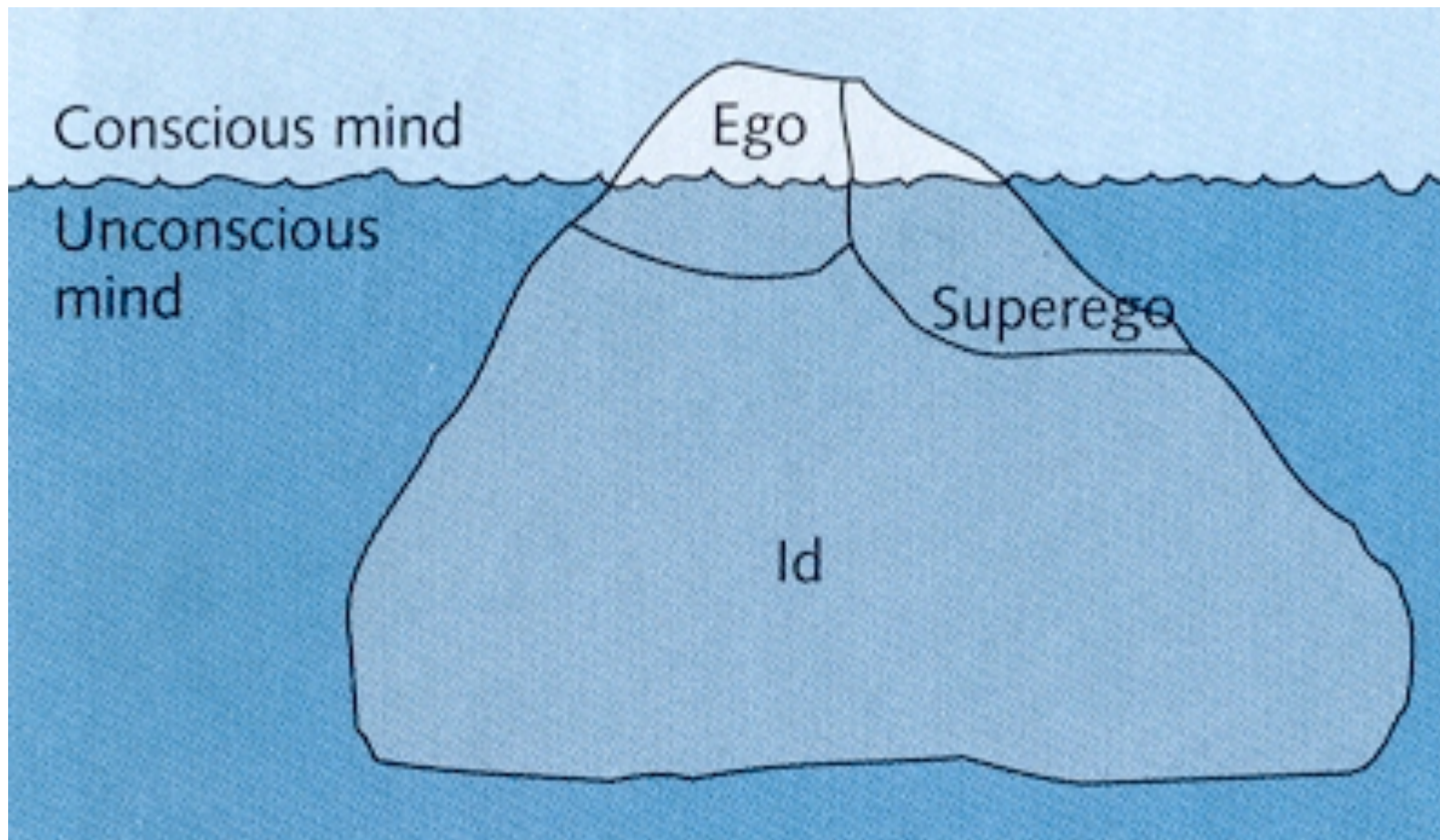
Carl Jung's Unconscious



- Student of Freud, but disagreed about the depravity of the unconscious
- Personal Unconscious
 - The Freudian Unconscious
- Collective Unconscious
 - Contents of unconscious shared by all humanity, passed down from ancestors
 - Primordial images: archetypes
 - E.g., mother = good; dark = evil

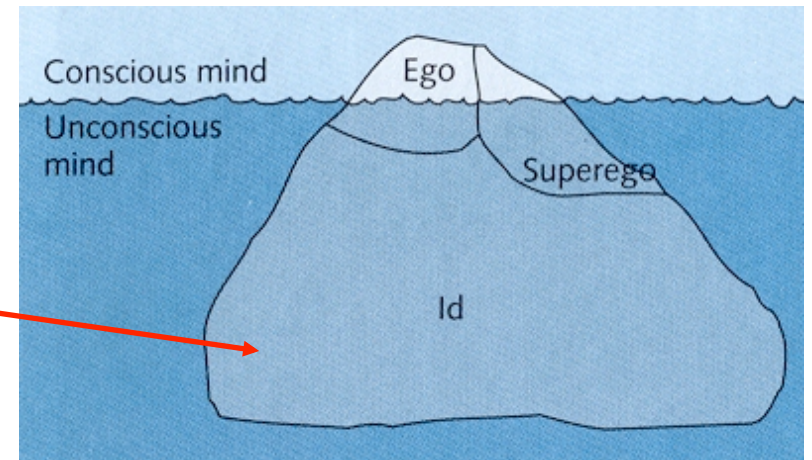
Freud's Unconscious

- Structure of personality according to Freud



Freud and the Structure of Personality

- Id
 - Infancy
 - All drives and urges
 - Pleasure Principle
 - Immediate gratification
 - Primary Process thinking (illogical)
 - Not bound by reality
 - The language of dreams



Structure of Personality

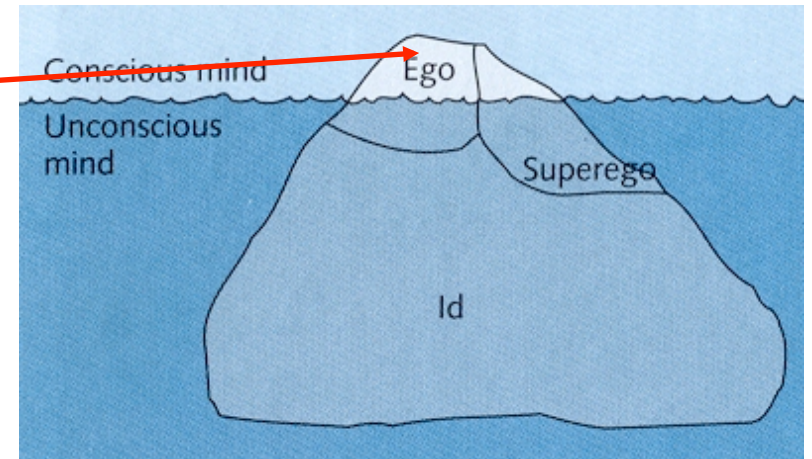
- Ego

- Develops at age 2
- Constrains the Id to reality
- Reality Principle

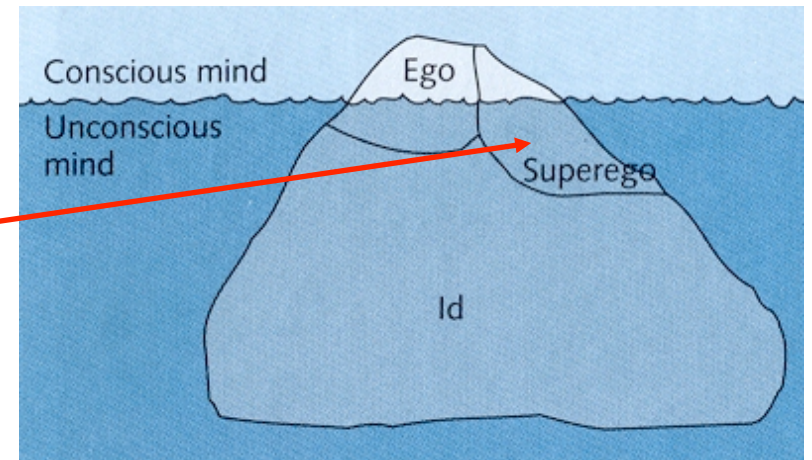
- Direct expression of id impulses can lead to problems
- Avoid, redirect, postpone id impulses

- Secondary Process thinking (logical)

- Strategies for solving problems in an acceptable way



Structure of Personality



- **Superego**
 - Develops at age 5
 - Internalized values, morality of parents and society
 - Promotes guilt, shame, embarrassment, pride (self-conscious emotions)
 - Like the Id, NOT bound by reality
 - Sets higher standards

CONFLICT

- Our lives are a constant negotiation of *opposing impulses* (desire/fear; love/hate)
- Id, Ego, and Superego are constantly battling to control our behavior
- Such conflicts produce *anxiety*

SUPEREGO

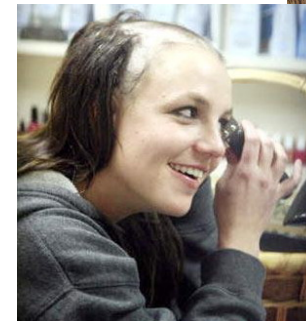


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ANXIETY !!

ID



How to Cope with Anxiety?

- Defense Mechanisms
 - Used to reduce anxiety and distress
 - Task usually falls on the ego
 - Distort reality in some way
 - Must operate unconsciously

Part III: Defense Mechanisms

- Repression:
 - Traumatic memories pushed out of awareness to avoid associated anxiety
 - Freud: Often sexual desires
 - Today: Protect from memories of childhood abuse

Defense Mechanisms

- Denial
 - Convincing yourself that a traumatic event did not occur or was not your fault
- Rationalization
 - Generating acceptable, logical reasons for outcomes that otherwise would not be acceptable
- Displacement
 - Threatening impulse or desire is redirected onto another target
 - “Taking it out on someone else”

Defense Mechanisms

- Reaction Formation
 - To stifle an unacceptable impulse, the exact opposite behaviors/desires are displayed
 - Examples?
 - “Homophobic? Maybe You’re Gay” – NYTimes
 - People who implicitly associate “gay” with “me” but say they are “straight” are more likely to show homophobia

Defense Mechanisms

- Projection
 - Seeing one's own unacceptable qualities in others and disliking them for possessing those qualities
 - Examples?
 - Men who have affairs are more suspicious that wives are unfaithful

Defense Mechanisms

- Sublimation
 - Most adaptive defense
 - Convert unacceptable desire into acceptable behavior that still helps relieve anxiety
 - Makes life easier for the ego
 - Examples?
 - Play sports rather than beat someone up

Assessment of Unconscious Personality

- Contents of unconscious personality will manifest themselves in conscious thoughts and behaviors

Next Class

- Friday: Exam 1
 - Good luck!
- Monday next week
 - Contemporary Psychoanalytic Approaches