Personality
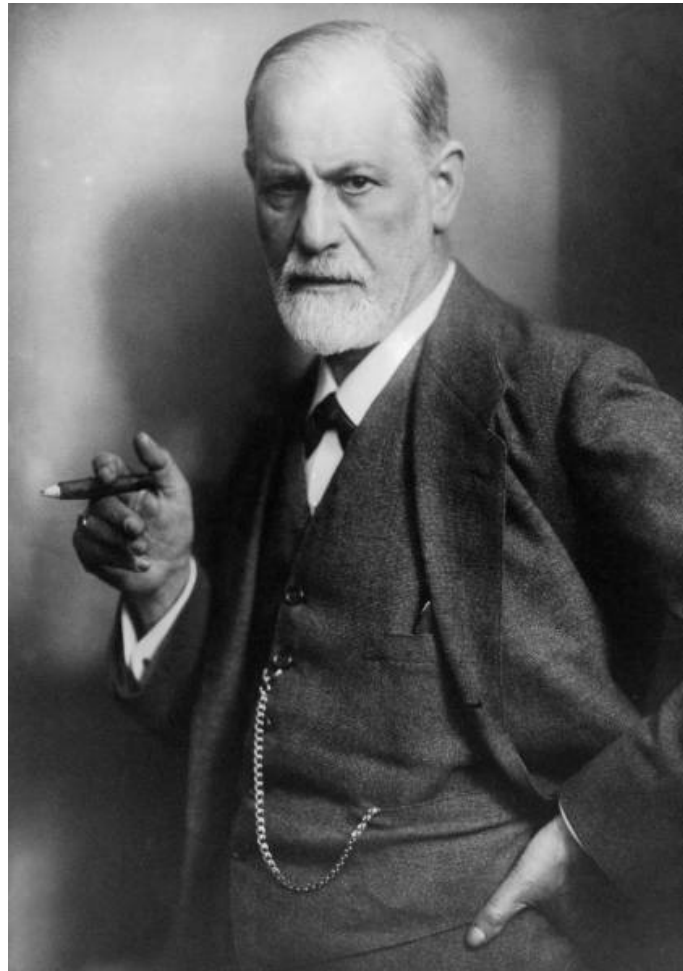## What makes us who we are?

Freud Part 2

# 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

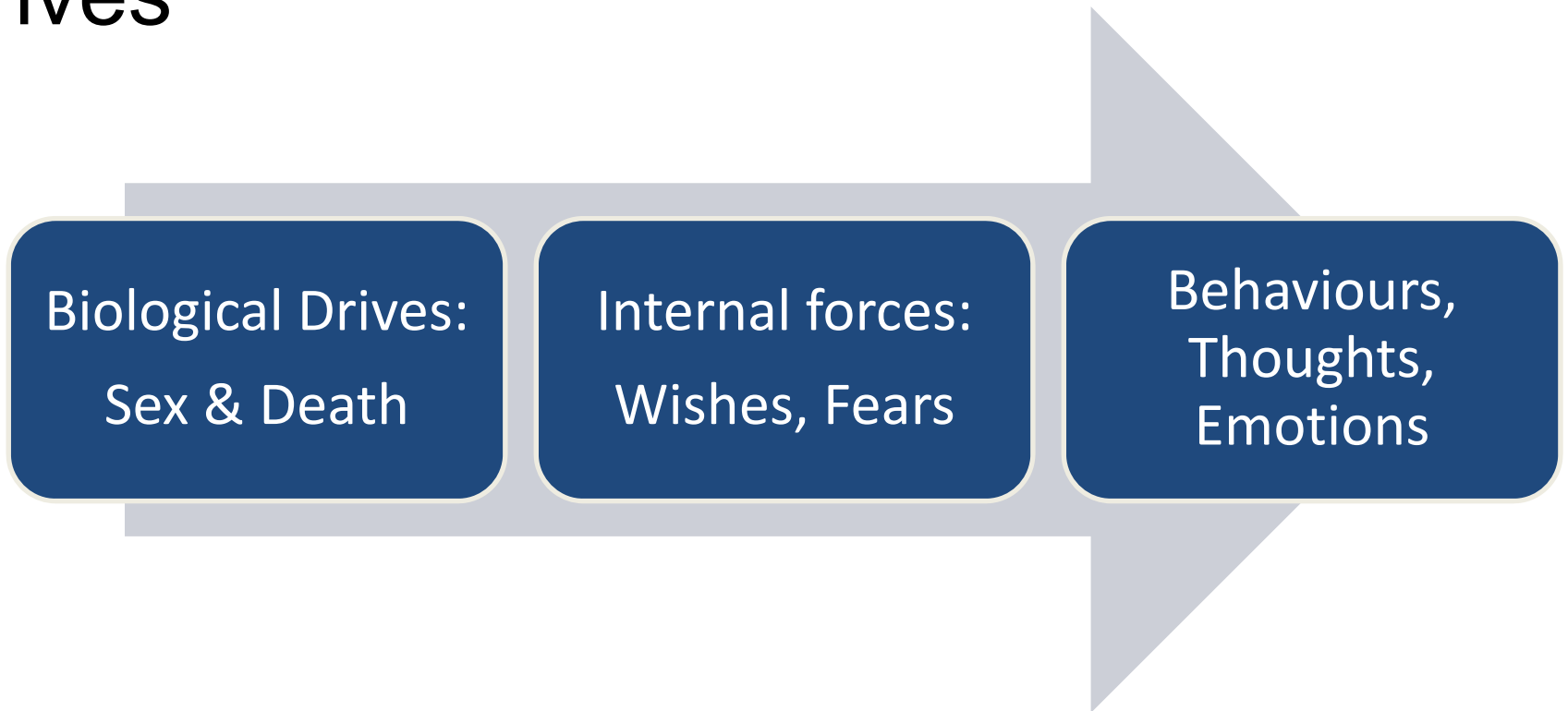Are Love and Death the primary motives of human behavior?
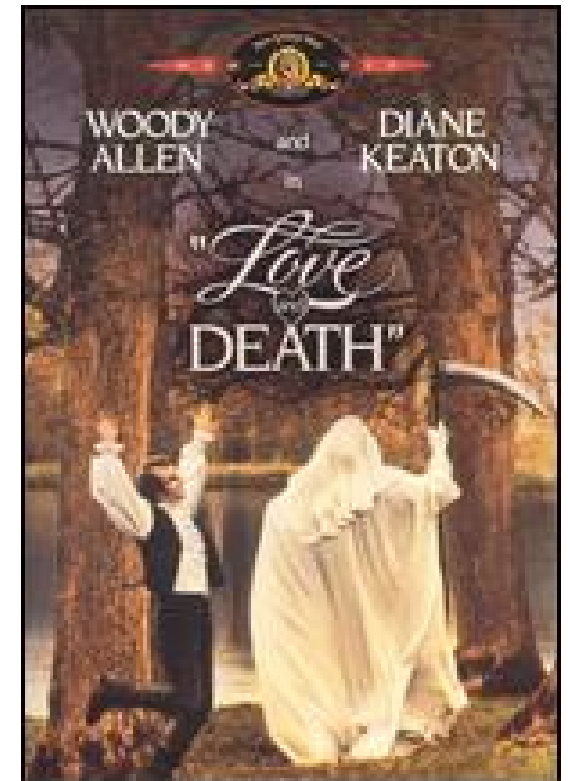
World War I led to Freud's view that death and destruction are instinctual aspects of human nature
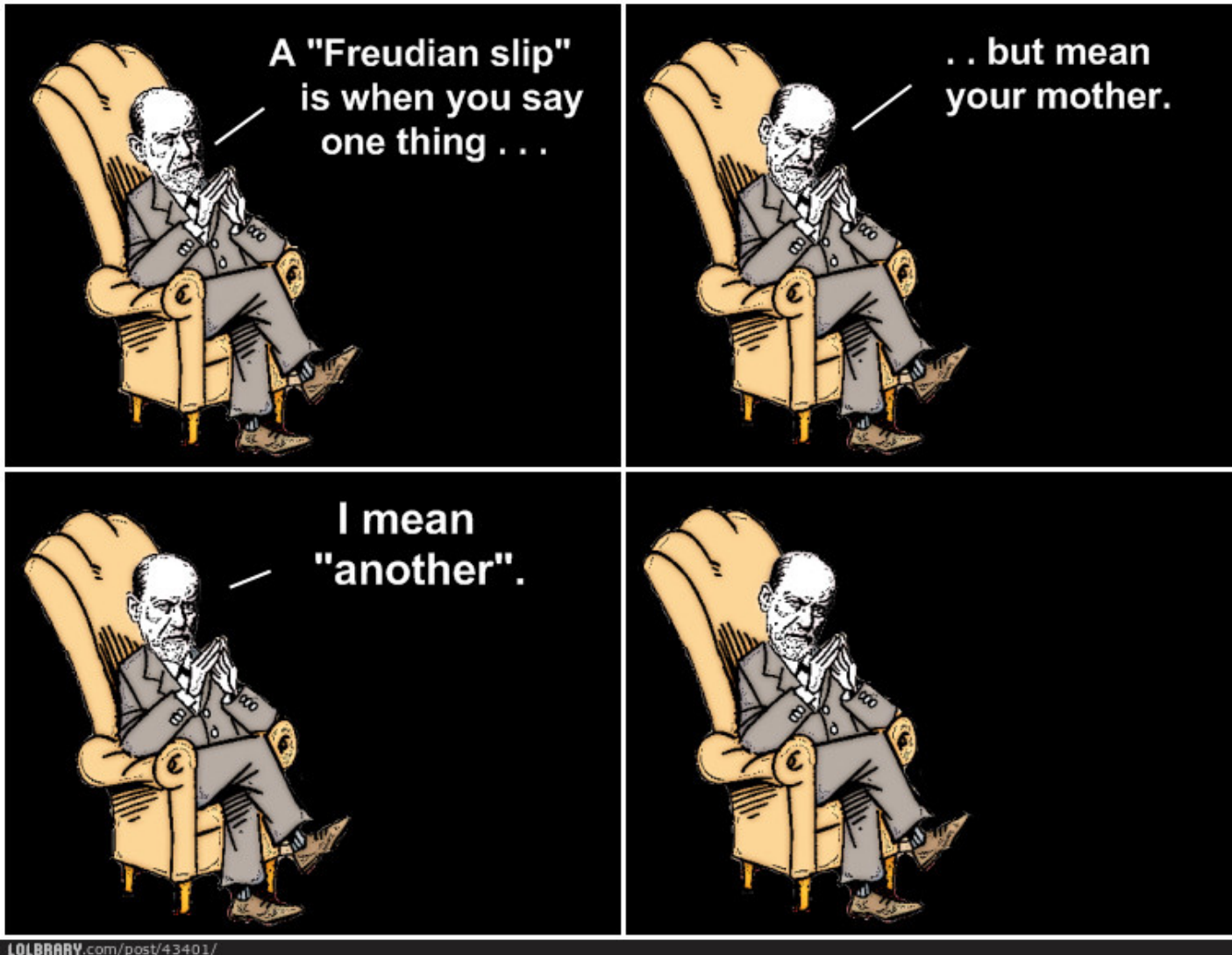
There are no accidents; all behaviors are caused by internal drives

Biological Drives:
Sex & Death

Internal forces:
Wishes, Fears

Behaviours,
Thoughts,
Emotions

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
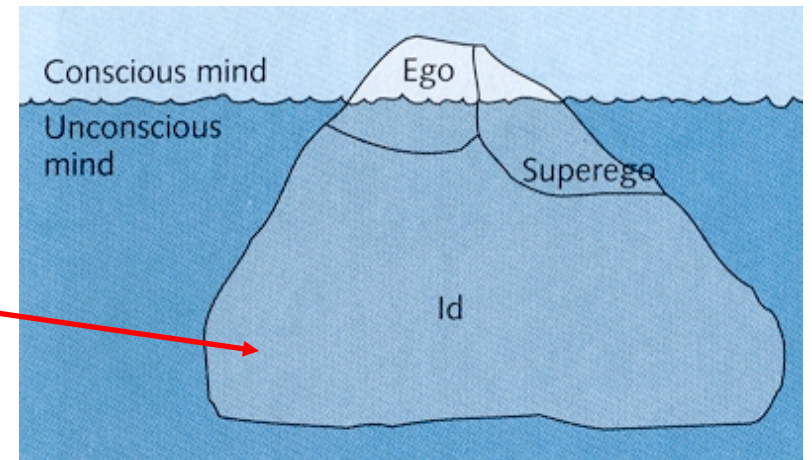   - E.g., mother = good; dark = evil

Freud's Unconscious

- Structure of personality according to Freud
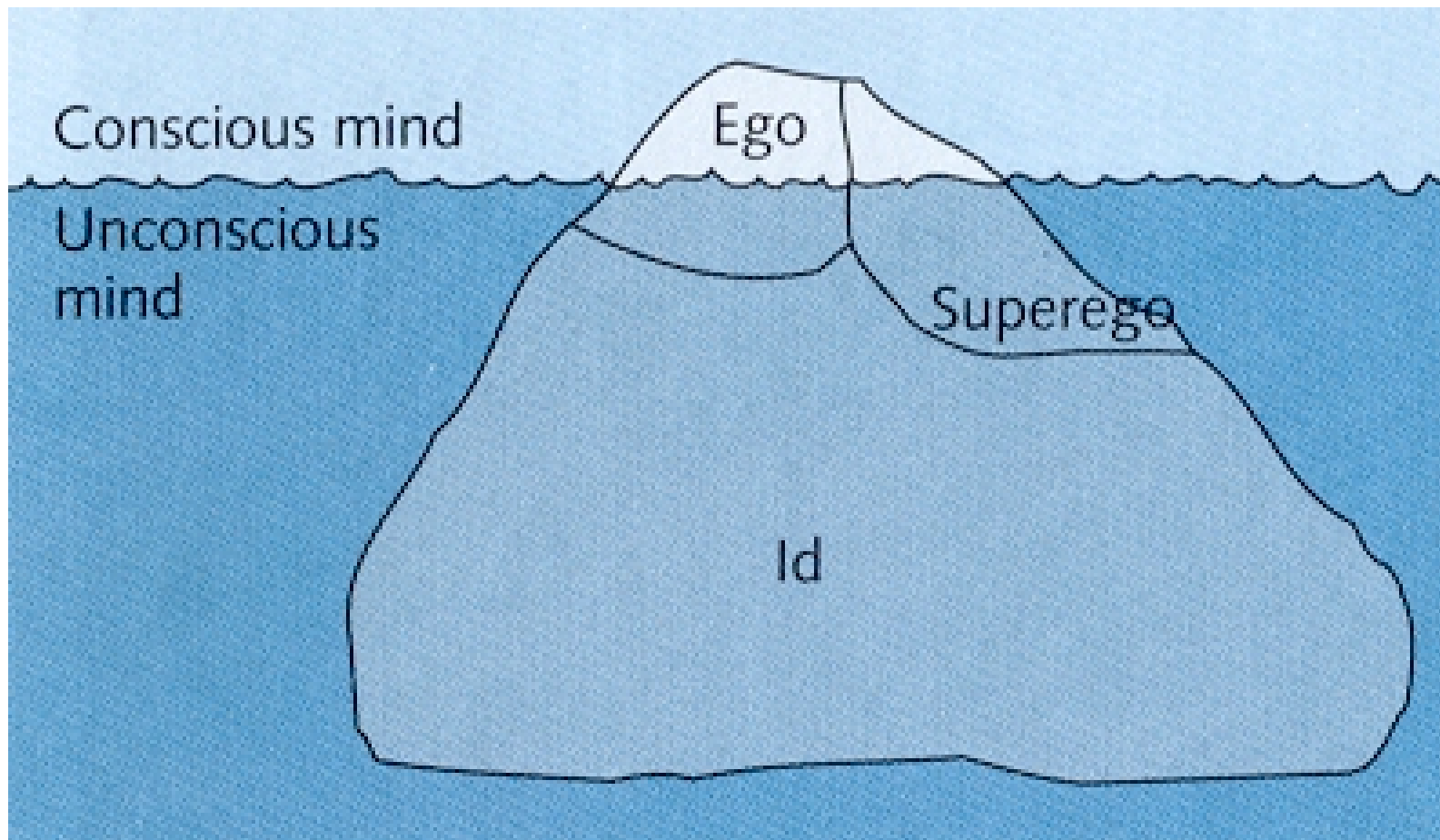
Freud and the Structure of Personality

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

Conscious mind — Ego

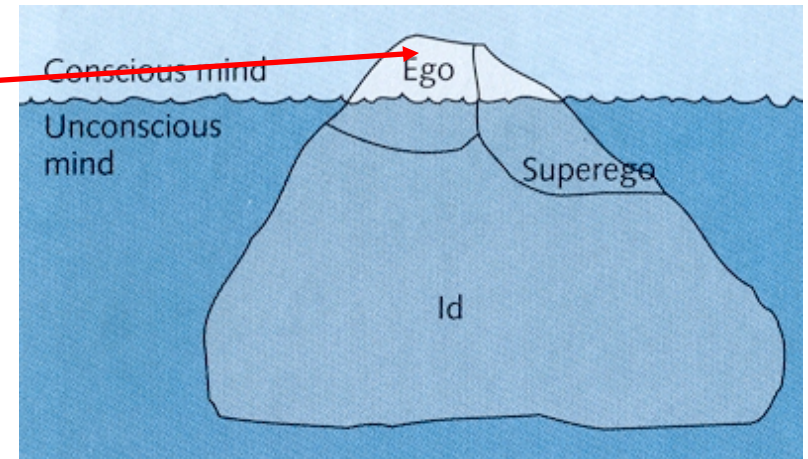Unconscious mind — Superego

Id

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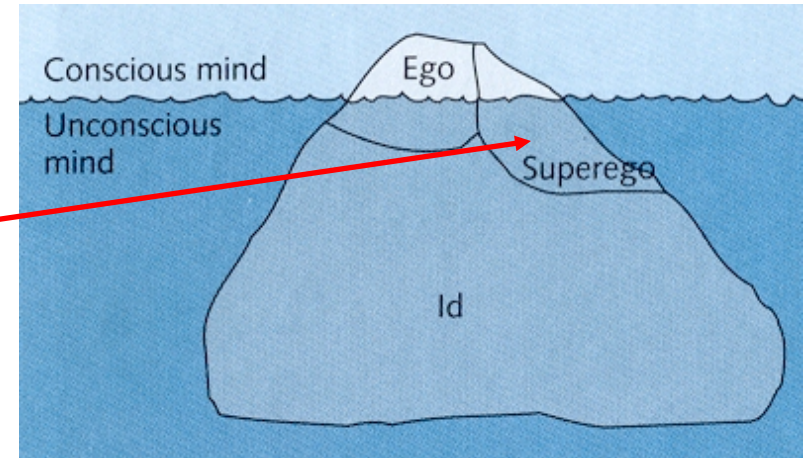
- Superego
  - Develops at age 5
  - Internalized values, morality of parents and society
  - Promotes guilt, shame, embarrassment, pride (self-conscious emotions)
  - Like the Id, NOT bound by reality
    - Sets higher standards

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

ID

?

ANXIETY !!

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

Techniques - Free Association

- Patient lets his or her mind wander
- Therapist notes both verbal and non-verbal output
  - Weird stories
  - Slips of the tongue
  - Sighs
  - Groans
  - Exclamations

Freud's couch

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Techniques - Projective Tests

- Inferring personality from someone's description of or production of stimuli
  - Rorschach test
  - Thematic Apperception

  Test (TAT)
  - Draw-a-person test
  - Graphology (handwriting test)

Projective Techniques

- Millions of people tested annually
  - Diagnosing mental illness
  - Predicting convict behavior
  - Deciding custody battles in court
  - Probing a child's past for hints of sexual abuse

  - People's lives and liberties are at stake!

Projective Techniques

- They are no good!
  - Lack of reliability
    - No standard scoring systems
      - What is a high or low score?
    - Clinicians use intuition and don't agree on scores
  - Lack of validity
    - Tests don't accurately detect problematic personalities
      - No prediction of real-world behavior
    - Tests don't reveal special "unconscious" personality

Freud's Importance and Influence

- Clinical psychology and psychotherapy
- Importance of childhood socialization
- Defense mechanisms in everyday life
- Unconscious mental processes impact behavior
  - Not exactly as Freud envisioned

Next Classes

– Test Next Class (Monday)
  • Good luck!
– Wednesday
  • No Class – Observance of Opening of West Coast National Event of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission