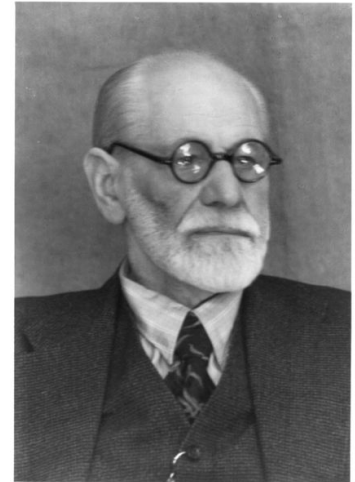
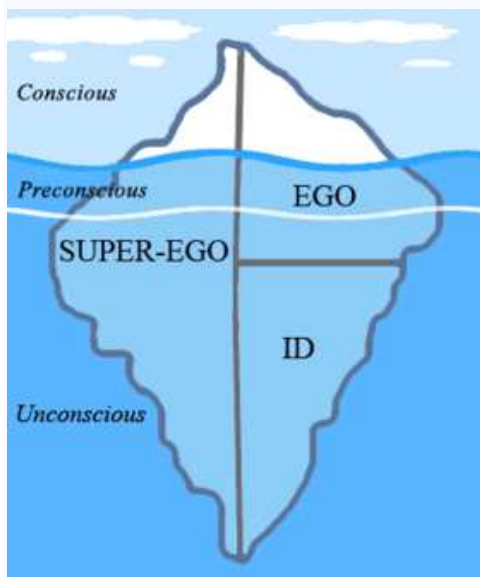


# PSYCHOANALYSIS. THE GAZE



Sigmund Freud (May 6, 1856 – September 23, 1939) was an Austrian neurologist and the founder of the psychoanalytic school of psychology. Freud is best known for his theories of the unconscious mind, especially involving the mechanism of repression; his redefinition of sexual desire as mobile and directed towards a wide variety of objects; and his therapeutic technique, especially his understanding of transference in the therapeutic relationship and the presumed value of dreams as sources of insight into unconscious desires.

Freud's structural theory



"Tip of the Iceberg" – Structural and Topographical Models of Mind

The id, as previously stated, is the source of our drives and Freud considered it to be the reservoir of libido. 'The libido' or simply 'libido', is the form of energy cathected upon objects or an affect received from objects, predominantly sexual, which underlies all mental processes.

Our drives (Freud had very theoretically specific "-drives" such as the death-drive, but drives can often be equated to 'instincts') surge forth from the id and apply libidinal energy to objects, which may result in aggressive or erotic attachments/actions upon chosen objects. The drives of the id are considered to be inborn, operating within the primary psychical processes (those of the unconscious) and are absolutely determined according to the pleasure principle. It is said that the id behaves as though it were unconscious, the reason thought to be is that our ego and our super-ego's ideals and pressures are often in conflict with the id's, causing repression, as the gratification of the id's drives would often be devastating in terms of social- and self-image. (the id is)"a chaos, a cauldron of seething excitations"-Freud

## Ego

In Freud's theory, the ego mediates among the id, the super-ego and the external world. Its task is to find a balance between primitive drives, morals, and reality while satisfying the id and superego. Its main concern is with the individual's safety and allows some of the id's desires to be expressed, but only when consequences of these actions are marginal. Ego defense mechanisms are often used by the ego when id behavior conflicts with reality and either society's morals, norms, and taboos or the individual's expectations as a result of the internalization of these morals, norms, and taboos.

Although in his early writings Freud equated the ego with the sense of self, he later began to portray it more as a set of psychic functions such as reality-testing, defence, synthesis of information, intellectual functioning, and memory.

## Super-ego

Freud's theory says that the super-ego is a symbolic internalization of the father figure and cultural regulations. The super-ego tends to stand in opposition to the desires of the id because of their conflicting objectives, and is aggressive towards the ego. The super-ego acts as the conscience, maintaining our sense of morality and the prohibition of taboos. Its formation takes place during the dissolution of the Oedipus complex and is formed by an identification with and internalization of the father figure after the little boy cannot successfully hold the mother as a love-object out of fear of castration. "The super-ego retains the character of the father, while the more powerful the Oedipus complex was and the more rapidly it succumbed to repression (under the influence of authority, religious teaching, schooling and reading), the stricter will be the domination of the super-ego over the ego later on — in the form of conscience or perhaps of an unconscious sense of guilt" (The Ego and the Id, 1923). In Sigmund Freud's work *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930) he also

discusses the concept of a "cultural super-ego". The concept of super-ego and the Oedipus complex is subject to criticism for its sexism. Women, who are considered to be already castrated, do not identify with the father, and therefore form a weak super-ego, apparently leaving them susceptible to immorality and sexual identity complications.

## Narcissism

The term narcissism is derived from clinical description...

"On Narcissism: An Introduction" begins with a move that is characteristic of Freud's developing approach to theorizing about the psyche. Freud refers to a psychological state that other theorists have described as abnormal—in this case, exclusive auto-eroticism—and suggests that it might be a more pervasive condition than previously thought, then expands this suggestion even further to indicate that it might actually be a condition common to the psychological makeup of all human beings.

"Loving oneself," Freud argues, is the "libidinal complement to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation" (74). We all have impulses to nourish ourselves and to protect ourselves from danger; these impulses are bound up with our desires, and we can't neatly separate our sexual desires (directed at other humans) from our inwardly directed desire to care for ourselves.

Freud calls this basic, sexually charged desire directed at the self "primary" or "normal" narcissism. He contrasts primary narcissism with a "secondary narcissism" which arises in pathological states such as schizophrenia in which the person's libido withdraws from objects in the world and produces megalomania. The secondary narcissism of the mentally ill is, Freud suggests, a magnified, extreme manifestation of primary narcissism which exists in all individuals.

Other clues to the existence of primary narcissism come from observations of children and what Freud calls "primitive peoples," who engage in what Freud in *Totem and Taboo* calls "magical thinking": for example, believing that wishing for something will make it appear, or that uttering a spell will have real effects. These behaviors reflect a sense of the self as powerful, able to have an influence on external reality, and Freud believes that such an investment in the self is a part of human development. He calls it "an original libidinal cathexis of the ego"

Freud imagines a libidinal economy in which object-libido (directed outward) and ego-libido (directed inward) exist in a ratio. Being in love is at the extreme end of object-libido; being a paranoid schizophrenic is at the extreme end of ego-libido.

Scopophilia: Literally, the love of looking. The term refers to the predominantly male gaze of Hollywood cinema, which enjoys objectifying women into mere objects to be looked at (rather than subjects with their own voice and subjectivity). The term, as used in feminist film criticism, is heavily influenced by both Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis.

Voyeurism is a practice in which an individual derives sexual pleasure from observing other people. Such people may be engaged in sexual acts, or be nude or in underwear, or dressed in whatever other way the "voyeur" finds appealing. The word derives from French verb voir (to see) with the -eur suffix that translates as -er in English. A literal translation would then be "seer" or "observer", with pejorative connotations.

Unsuitable Substitutes for the Sexual Object - Fetishism, from Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (1905)

There are some cases which are quite specially remarkable - those in which the normal sexual object is replaced by another which bears some relation to it, but is entirely unsuited to serve the normal sexual aim. From the point of view of classification, we should no doubt have done better to have mentioned this highly interesting group of aberrations of the sexual instinct among the deviations in respect of the sexual object.

What is substituted for the sexual object is some part of the body (such as the foot or hair) which is in general very inappropriate for sexual purposes, or some inanimate object which bears an assignable relation to the person whom it replaces and preferably to that person's sexuality (e.g. a piece of clothing or underlinen). Such substitutes are with some justice likened to the fetishes in which savages believe that their gods are embodied.

A transition to those cases of fetishism in which the sexual aim, whether normal or perverse, is entirely abandoned is afforded by other cases in which the sexual object is required to fulfil a fetishistic condition - such as the possession of some particular hair-colouring or clothing, or even some bodily defect - if the sexual aim is to be attained. No other variation of the sexual instinct that borders on the pathological can lay so much claim to our interest as this one, such is the peculiarity of the phenomena to which it gives rise. Some degree of diminution in the urge towards the normal sexual aim (an executive weakness of the sexual apparatus) seems to be a necessary pre-condition in every case. The point of contact with the normal is provided by the psychologically essential overvaluation of the sexual object, which inevitably extends to everything that is associated with it. A certain degree of fetishism is thus habitually present in normal love, especially in those stages of it in which the normal sexual aim seems unattainable or its fulfillment prevented.

The situation only becomes pathological when the longing for the fetish passes beyond the point of being merely a necessary condition attached to the sexual object and actually takes the place of the normal aim, and, further, when the fetish becomes detached from a particular individual and becomes the sole sexual object. These are, indeed, the general conditions under which mere variations of the sexual instinct pass over into pathological aberrations.

## LACAN



Jacques-Marie-Émile Lacan (April 13, 1901 – September 9, 1981) was a French psychoanalyst, psychiatrist, and doctor. He considered his work to be an authentic "return to Freud", in opposition to ego psychology. This entailed a renewed concentration upon the Freudian concepts of the unconscious, the castration complex, the ego conceptualised as a mosaic of identifications, and the centrality of language to any psychoanalytic work. His work has a strong interdisciplinary focus, drawing particularly on linguistics, philosophy, and mathematics, and he has become an important figure in many fields beyond psychoanalysis, particularly within critical theory.

Lacan's work has had a profound impact on the development of psychoanalysis worldwide. Within the Lacanian community itself a number of different schools have emerged, particularly in France, but the vast majority of practitioners fall under the auspices of the World Association of Psychoanalysis (WAP), headed by Jacques-Alain Miller, Lacan's son-in-law. Yet, in the aspirations of worldwide expansion, historians, sociologists, and analysts have cautioned that the attempt to transmit psychoanalysis through the bloodline of the daughter – whether of Freud's daughter Anna or Lacan's daughter Judith (to whom Miller is married) – opens serious questions as to its validity, for this has historically resulted

in institutionalizations of psychoanalysis in a manner that begins to resemble churches (IPA) and not secular analytic associations. Be that as it may, outside Europe, Lacanian psychoanalysis has gained particular prominence <sup>[citation needed]</sup> in the USA, Brazil and Argentina.

### The 'Return to Freud'

Following Freud's death, psychoanalytic practice split into many differing schools of thought. Against the backdrop of these divergent currents of psychoanalytic theory, Lacan called for a "return to Freud". Lacan accused later psychoanalysts of a superficial understanding of Freud (who encountered a similar problem himself on his first trip to North America, where his interpreters appeared to have "sugar-coated" his theories to make them more popular to the masses), claiming they had so cautiously adhered to his ideas that they had served to block rather than to induce scientific investigation of the mental process. Lacan wanted to return to Freud's thought, and expand it in light of its own tensions and currents. In fact, near the end of his life he remarked to a conference, "It is up to you to be Lacanians if you wish; I am Freudian."

It should be emphasised that Lacan insisted that his work was not, in his eyes, an interpretation but a translation of Freud into structural-linguistic terms. Freud's ideas of "slips of the tongue", jokes and suchlike, Lacan insisted, all emphasised the agency of language in subjective constitution, such that had Freud lived contemporaneously with Lévi-Strauss, Barthes and, principally, had Freud been aware of the work of Saussure, he would have done the same as him. In his famous essay "Freud and Lacan", the structuralist Louis Althusser makes this point particularly well:

"In his first great work *The Interpretation of Dreams* [...], Freud studied the 'mechanisms' and 'laws' of dreams, reducing their variants to two: displacement and condensation. Lacan recognized these as two essential figures of speech, called in linguistics [respectively] metonymy and metaphor. Hence slips, failures, jokes and symptoms, like the elements of dreams themselves, become signifiers, inscribed in the chain of an unconscious discourse, doubling silently, i.e. deafeningly, in the misrecognition of 'repression', the chain of the human subject's verbal discourse. [...] Hence the most important acquisitions of de Saussure and of the linguistics that descends from him began to play a justified part in the understanding of the process of the unconscious as well as that of the verbal discourse of the subject and of their inter-relationship, i.e. of their identical relation and non-relation in other words, of their reduplication and dislocation (*décalage*)."

(Althusser, 'Freud and Lacan' in

*Lenin and Philosophy and other essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1971), pp. 191 – 192).

The "return to Freud", therefore, is primarily the realisation that the pervading agency of the unconscious is to be understood as intimately tied to the functions and dynamics of language, where the signifier is irremediably divorced from the signified in a chronic but generative tension of lack. It is here that Lacan began his work on "correcting" Freud from within. As Malcolm Bowie puts it:

"For Lacan, Freud's central insight was not [...] that the unconscious exists, but that it has structure, that this structure affects in innumerable ways what we say and do, and that in thus betraying itself it becomes accessible to analysis". (Malcolm Bowie, 'Jacques Lacan' in John Sturrock (ed.), *Structuralism and Since: From Lévi-Strauss to Derrida* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 118).

## Major concepts

### The mirror stage (*le stade du miroir*)

The mirror stage is described in Lacan's essay, "The Mirror Stage as formative in the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience", the first of his *Écrits*, which remains one of his seminal papers. Some have crudely put this as the point at which the child 'recognises' him- or herself in the mirror image, but this is unfaithful to what Lacan has in mind and also confuses his terminology. Lacan's emphasis here is on the process of identification with an outside image or entity induced through, as he puts it, "insufficiency to anticipation – and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic – and, lastly, to the assumption of the amour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development" (Lacan, *Écrits* (rvd. edn., 2002), 'The mirror stage', p. 5).

### The Other

In contrast to the dominant Anglo-American ego-psychologists of his time, Lacan considered the self as something constituted in the "Other", that is, the conception of the external. This belief is rooted in Lacan's reading of Ferdinand de Saussure and structuralism, and more specifically his belief that Freud's concept of the unconscious prefigured structuralist linguistics. Lacan picks up on Saussure's observation that a signifier is distinguished and identified through its difference from other signifiers. (For example, "love" is understandable, in part, only through its opposition to "hate," which is in turn

understandable only in relationship to "love") As a result, language is never completely contained - it always contains things beyond what is intended, and these things form an endless chain of signifiers. This signifying chain, and more broadly the ordering structures of language in general constitute the Other (always capitalized in Lacan's work).

### The Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic

Lacan also formulated the concepts of the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic, which he used to describe the elements of the psychic structure.

The Imaginary constitutes Lacan's version of the ego - the structured conception of identity, beginning with the mirror stage. The imaginary depends on a division between self and "other," but this division already relies on reference to the Other.

The Other, in this triad, is contained in the Symbolic - the ordering structures of language and grammar in which the Imaginary self-formulates.

All of this is coupled with the Real - the world as it exists before the mediation of language. The Real, therefore, can never truly be grasped or engaged with - it is continually mediated through the imaginary and the symbolic. Lacan's notion of the Real is a very difficult concept which he, in his later years, worked to present in a structured, set-theory fashion, as mathemes.