

Sigmund Freud

Personal Background

Sigmund Freud was born in what is now the Czech Republic in 1856 and was the eldest in a family of eight children. The family moved to Vienna, Austria when Sigmund was 4 years old and he lived there until he fled from the Nazis in 1939; shortly before his death. His parents were a somewhat mismatched couple between whom strife was frequent. His father was a small businessman about 20 years older than his wife. His father was negativistic and highly critical of both Sigmund and what he considered his wife's overprotection and coddling of his son. Sigmund's mother was a young, attractive, vivacious, flirtatious woman who was fond of stroking her son and holding him to her bosom. His mother doted on her first born son whom she often referred to as "My golden Siggy." Sigmund Freud reported that his mother always told him he was destined for great things. In his early adulthood Sigmund resented the fact his father could not support the physiological research he wanted to conduct.

Sigmund Freud was a brilliant student and his mother attached great importance to his studies. When Sigmund was in the equivalent of high school he complained to his mother that his sister's practicing the piano disturbed him while he was doing his homework. Consequently his mother sold the piano despite the fact that his sister's ambition was to become a concert pianist.

Freud went to medical school and was recognized as a brilliant student once again. He was interested in research and was the first one to recognize the value of cocaine as an anesthetic for the eye. He failed to make any public reports of this and a fellow student subsequently did so and so gained the notoriety of it. Freud personally experimented with cocaine and supplied his fiancée with it as well. He later regretted this period as a waste and as having negative consequences for them both.

Freud specialized in neurology and was moderately successful as a neurological researcher. He was very frustrated as he wanted to pursue a career of academic research and could not as his father lacked the means to support him in this. Research was not generally publicly funded at that time. He also wanted to be a professor and could not due primarily to the virulent anti-Semitism of the time.

In middle class society of that time and place a man did not marry until he was financially secure and could support a wife and family. Consequently Freud had a prolonged engagement as he remained in medical school doing research for several years after he could have graduated. Freud probably had a homosexual affair with a fellow student named Fliess during this period. In one of his letters to his wife he said that after they were married she would discover what a fine strong man she had as Fliess had discovered the night before. Homosexual affairs of this kind were fairly common in this period during long engagements although society strongly condemned homosexuality generally.

Eventually Sigmund Freud's father refused to pay for him to stay in school any longer and so he had to graduate and begin to earn a living. He was not very successful at first, partly because he was Jewish in a rabidly anti-Semitic society and partly to Freud's not being able to promote and

ingratiate himself with people who would refer patients to him. He was recognized as an authority in the field of neurology and got some referrals on this basis. He had to take any patient he could and the lowest status patient of the time were those that today we would call neurotic ones.

He was called in by an older and established physician named Josef Breuer to consult on a case that later became known as the case of Anna O. Anna O. had many symptoms, among which was a condition called glove anesthesia. In this the hand and lower wrist that would be covered by a glove simply went numb and immobile. Freud knew that the nerves in the wrist and hand run in long strips so that there was no one place that damage or disease could occur and produce these symptoms. The two physicians spent a lot of time talking with this patient and eventually noted that the more she spoke with them the better she got. They begin to call this process the "talking cure." They also noted that Anna O. began remarking on the resemblance of Breuer to her invalid father for whom she acted as a nurse. She also fell in love with Breuer who was an overweight man in his 50's. Freud and Breuer decided that the basis of Anna's problem was repressed sexual feelings toward her father and her symptoms were a result of the inner conflict this produced in her. They published this theory in a book called Studies in Hysteria which was published in 1893.

This book produced an immense public outcry. Breuer and Freud were condemned in pulpit and press as immoral and unscientific. A hospital to which Breuer sent his patients threatened to stop allowing him to admit patients which would have ruined him financially. Some doctors wanted to expel both men from the medical society. Breuer backed down; publicly admitting they had been mistaken and went back to his practice and avoided working with neurotic patients. Freud took the alternate approach and fought for his ideas. He seemed to have an image of himself as a lone profit of science fighting against the superstitions of his age. He maintained this pugnacious approach and sense of his isolation for many years after he became one of the most famous men in the world.

Social and Intellectual Background

Freud came of age intellectually during the 1870's in Vienna. This was a society in the midst of what is commonly called the Victorian era in Europe. It was a period marked by material prosperity due to industrialization, wealth from world trade and the siphoning of vast amounts of resources from militarily primitive societies which were colonized by the European countries. Social classes were accepted as the norm and it was nearly impossible to rise above one's social place at birth. The lower classes were ruthlessly suppressed and exploited by those higher in social standing.

This period was also marked by rigid social rules and a harsh public suppression of sexuality. Children were sometimes strapped into bed with their hand in thumb less mittens outside the covers so they couldn't bring their hands under the covers and touch their genitals at night. Mentioning the words "arm" or "leg" in mixed company could result in being shunned and fired from one's employment. It was thought that those words were too coarse and vulgar to be used publicly and so one referred to "upper and lower limbs or extremities." It was also a period of

nearly unimaginable hypocrisy regarding sexuality. A census of London in 1900 recorded more prostitutes than married women. Prostitution was publicly condemned but also accepted as an acceptable way for upper and middle class men to satisfy their sexual appetites while protecting upper and middle class women from them. Upper and middle class women were assumed to be nearly asexual submitting to their husbands only for purposes of procreation.

The intellectual world into which Freud came of age was one dominated by the thinking of two men. One was Charles Darwin whose ideas on natural selection and the evolution of species was widely accepted in the intellectual world though condemned and reviled by the clergy and the public. The other was Herman Von Helmholtz who also had wanted to be a university researcher, lacked the funds and had to go to medical school and become a doctor. Thus Helmholtz ended up studying physiology instead of physics and chemistry as he desired to do. His work intended to replace the antiquated ideas of bodily humors with a rigorous science based on physical and chemical principles thus describing all biological processes as one would inorganic ones. This went against the previous tendency to regard biological processes as being ordained by god and beyond the capacity of science to understand. This was particularly held to be true of human processes and particularly the processes of the human brain and so the human mind. It is useful to think of Sigmund Freud's theory within the frameworks of evolution and the reduction of the human and biological to the physical and chemical.

Freud thought that our mind was the product of evolution by natural selection and so the structure of the mind was determined by the necessities of evolution. The mind was therefore structured to achieve two goals: survival and procreation. He thought explaining the mind in these terms would be the ultimate scientific explanation.

The Functional Model of Mind

Freud also thought that the mind must work like the rest of the body's physiology; on the basis of chemical energy derived from metabolism. He knew that science was not yet able to describe the metabolism of the mind but thought we could describe the processes and effects of the energy derived from that metabolism. Thus he describes the mind as working on the basis of this biological energy which he came to call Libido.

So here we have a man determined to build a model of mind with survival and procreation as goals and psychic energy as the mechanism which needs to be described. How would an intelligent person describe such a system? Well first there must be a source of energy. He called this source of energy the Id. This is a Latin word which translates into English as "it". Thus we have some biological energy which is the "it" which allows us to function as a human being.

Having the Id as a source of energy next we must have a system whereby that energy produces the goals we want which are survival and procreation. He said that the biological energy builds up in the brain and this is experienced as tension or anxiety and the tension is released when we get what we need to survive or to procreate. The release of tension that occurs when we get what we need we experience as pleasure. The Id thus functions on what He called the Pleasure Principle. The Id wants what it wants when it wants it and seeks the pleasure it gets from

releasing the tension. Freud also said the Id must also have some basic or primary mental processes which allow the system to tell what produces survival and leads to procreation from those that do not. He said these primary processes include the capacities to notice and remember sensory impressions, to associate different memories and the capacity to create mental images from memories. These produce the capacity to learn to recognize what external things meet one's needs and those that do not. So most babies soon remember their mother as she is associated with need satisfaction and imagine her when they need something. We get pleasure from imagining or creating mental image of the object of our desires because that imagining causes a partial release of the tension or energy of the desire.

Freud also said we start out in life with the capacity to have our needs met by any different things and for this he used the term Polymorph Perversity. Poly means many. Morph means body. By perversity he meant free of moral and social constraint. So we start life free of moral and social constraint and with the capacity to be satisfied by many different physical things.

This is probably most easily understood if we think about food. You probably have some favorite foods. My guess is that they do not include earth worms. This is a little irrational on our part as earthworms are very high in protein and minerals and quite low in cholesterol. In fact, we would probably eat a healthier diet were we to eat earthworms instead of chicken or beef. My guess is also that none of you readers are going to switch your diets to earthworms.

I remember watching a nature program on TV in which a little boy who was a member of the peoples we call Australian Aborigines. His father came home from a hunt carrying several things; one of which was a lizard about two feet long. They built a fire and threw the lizard along with other small animals directly on the fire with out cleaning them and waited until they were somewhat charred. Then the father generously gave the lizard to the boy who ran up right in front of the camera and bit off half of the lizard's head and chewed it up with obvious relish. I felt a little queasy in watching this. But the truth is that if I or you were raised in that culture we too would relish eating a partially charred lizard head. The truth is that we can have our hunger satisfied by many different things. The same is true, Freud said, of almost all of our needs.

We learn to direct our needs toward particular things through our associating our experiences of pleasure and frustration. Freud called this process Cathexis. I personally have cathected large, thick and juicy hunks of partially charred flesh cut from dead bovines. My oldest daughter, who is a strict vegetarian, finds them utterly disgusting. She prefers steaming the flesh or embryos of various plants which I often find similarly repulsive. Thus we have followed different routes of cathexis although the basic process of associating particular things with need gratification is the same.

We remember many of the details of the satisfaction of our needs and so we come to also cathect these associated things as well.

We associate not only food with the satisfaction of hunger but things related to food; like the smells that waft out of a kitchen, knives, forks, dining rooms, tables, etc. We thus come to desire and to be pleased by things linked in our mind with the things that produce pleasure.

The same process of cathexis works with all of our desires including sex. We are not born with a

particular direction for our sexual urges but create them through associations in the course of our early life. I will describe this in more detail later in the chapter.

Freud thought all pleasure was the release of energy which is experienced as mental tension. This being the case there is only one basic kind of pleasure even though we get this pleasure in many different ways. Freud reasoned that pleasure is primarily associated with sex rather than survival and so all pleasure was sexual in nature. The pleasure we get from eating a nice crisp, tart and sweet apple is the same pleasure we get from having an orgasm - we just have it in different body parts and it is associated with different ideas. Pay close attention the next time you are eating something you enjoy. See if it really is very like the pleasure you get from sexual stimulation. See if the pleasure you get in swallowing isn't very similar to the pleasure you get from having an orgasm - only in a different part of the body.

One of the things that we know about babies is that they are not very good at getting what they want. Freud suggested that this leaves them very frustrated which must leave a lot of accumulated mental energy as it is not discharged by the satisfaction of desires. Simply noticing what feels good and what doesn't wishing for the objects of our desires doesn't work any better for babies than it does for us as adults. Consequently babies utilize this energy to construct a second aspect of themselves that Freud called Ego. Ego is the Latin word for "I" or one's self. In German he used the German word for "I" but felt that ego worked better for people who spoke English. This construction of the ego from frustrated energy of the id implies we do not start off life with a sense of self or identity - which is what Freud believed.

What is the role or function of the ego? It is to help satisfy the desires of the id - or put another way to help relieve the tension created by the creation of libido within the mind. It does this by using what Freud called secondary processes which are logical thinking. So we construct a sense of self and think logically about the world in order better be able to satisfy the desires which our basic biological nature creates within the constraint of the external world into which we are born. Thus logical thought is a mechanism for the satisfaction of animalistic desire. Or, as the writer Aldous Huxley put it:

*Surely it is obvious.
Doesn't every school boy know it?
Ends are ape chosen.
Only the means are mans.*

The ego takes control of the mind and directs behavior in reasonable and planned ways to maximize the satisfaction of as many needs of the id as is possible. Thus the ego becomes like the chief executive of the mind. The ends towards which the ego works are set by the id in which the tension arises and in which pleasure of tension release occurs. So in one sense at least the id is like the owners of the corporation for whom the executive ego works. And like an executive the ego needs to obtain real results in order to satisfy the owners. Thus the ego works on what Freud called the Reality Principle which entails hinking realistically and getting results in the external world.

Figuring out how to satisfy our desires is not easy. In fact we can never fully do so on a

continuous basis and so the ego always has a job to do. In fact we have so much psychic energy we constantly need to discharge the tension created through several desires. We are not like dogs or cats that can sleep much of the day - we have so much more psychic energy we sleep only a about a third of the time and are nearly always doing something when are awake. We even have trouble sleeping at times because there is so much psychic energy in our minds. I will describe this more later.

Because it is so hard to meet all of our needs we must form plans some of which take a long time to carry out. We also need to carry out our plans despite the fact that other needs arise which do not fit with the plans we have formulated. This means the ego must delay the gratification of some needs in order to do its job of satisfying as many needs as possible within the constraints of reality. The ability to do this - to delay gratification - is one sign of a healthy and mature ego.

An implication of this understanding of our self as the executive of the personality or mind in service to the owner/id is that there is no reason to have a self if it is not better at satisfying the desires of the id than the id by itself. If a child is severely neglected so that its attempts to interact in predictable ways with its mother or other caretaker are not successful to at least some degree than there is no point to having an ego or sense of self. One thing we know about babies raised in such a way is that they mostly die. And if they do not die they usually mature with marked difficulties in social relationships. Many, Freud suggested, also become psychotic in that they do not work with reality in rational ways but remain like a newborn mostly in wish fulfilling fantasies that we call hallucinations.

In fact we all experience times in which the ego is not very successful at gratifying our desires. We tend then to retreat into wishful thinking - which is the id's way of coping. We also are likely to return to less complex ways to gratify our desires which often do not involve either complex planning or delaying gratification of desires. Most people have experiences like a client of mine who was dumped by her boyfriend. Her reaction was to go home, get into bed, pull the covers over her head and eat chocolate while imagining a future perfect love at a time when her present boyfriend would be lonely, helpless and broke. And like us she shortly returned to a more mature level of coping which involved more complex, integrated and long range pleasure seeking.

We also develop a third major component of our personality that Freud called the Super Ego when he wrote in English (in German it was the uber ich or higher self). This is composed of abstract ideals for our self. It includes both rules and ideas about right and wrong as well as an Ego Ideal or ideal self which is an image of the person we would like to be. We either construct or take in these ideals from our parents or parental figures around us when we are children. We do so because to follow rules gets us more of what we want in life. Thus in one sense morality is a way of serving the animalistic impulses of the id just as is rational thought. The chief difference is that morality is not rational nor reality oriented. It operates on moral thinking which Freud sometimes referred to as tertiary processes. For many people morality involves not having some of the desires we do have. This creates a desire in us to be other than who we are. In this situation our ego tries to hide the part of us that is unacceptable to the super ego from ourselves and still find ways of satisfying the desire without having to do so in a way that directly offends our moral sense. This processes involved in this are called defense mechanisms

and are among of Freud's major contributions to the field of Psychology.

We could think of the super ego as like a governmental regulatory body which imposes regulations on the functioning of the person. So the id sets the goals of the company, the ego is the executive who must find a way to get things done and the super ego sets limits on acceptable behavior including thinking. The limits set by the super ego are imposed from the outside and often are not rational as we cannot not be someone other than who we are; nor can we not want what we want. And the ego, like many corporations, seeks ways around the regulations imposed by the super ego in seeking the objects of the id's desire.

So let us now consider Freud's idea of the job of the ego again. It is caught between the demands of the id, the constraints of opportunity in the external world and the limits imposed by the super ego. So, from Freud's point of view, our self is constantly pressured from several sides. Is this how you feel in life? Pressured from both the inside and the outside with limited opportunities to get what you want in the world?

Topological Model of Mind

In addition to the functional parts of our selves, Sigmund Freud decided we must describe the mind as having sorts of areas. One area was the Conscious which consists of the things we are aware of at any moment in time. He regarded this as a very small part of the immensely complex machine he believed the brain to be. The second area was the Unconscious which consisted of the vast majority of our mind and its workings. He believed almost all mental processes were unconscious and largely unavailable to the conscious mind. All major decisions are made unconsciously although there are some conscious aspects of a few of the decisions. Control of the mind is almost entirely unconscious. Finally he described us as having a preconscious area which consists of the things of which we are not conscious at any one moment but of which we could become conscious. This includes things like your phone number, your mother's maiden name and the name of your best friend when you were nine years old.

Most of the id, ego and super ego are unconscious. We do not know and cannot know most of the workings of our mind. Freud called our consciousness the tip of a great ice berg most of which is permanently out of sight below the surface.

Desires and thoughts in the unconscious are less closely regulated by the super ego than those in consciousness. This allows the ego wiggle room in which it attempts to accomplish things outside of the regulations of the super ego. These processes are called defense mechanisms and they will be discussed in a later section.

Stages of Development

It is obvious to anyone who has ever paid attention that our minds work differently as adults than they do when we are infants. Freud explained these differences as arising in a set of five stages of development. Being a medical doctor and having specialized in neurology in school, Freud knew that in a physical sense our nervous system is quite different when we are born than when

we are adults and he incorporated what was known about these differences into his ideas of mental development. One of the most obvious differences between new born infants and adults is that infants are shaped differently. Their heads comprise about thirty percent of their body weight. Infants also have little control over most of their bodies. The only parts of the body that have well functioning nervous systems at birth are those involved in basic survival. Our internal organs are almost all functioning normally at birth. The only parts of our body which we could move voluntarily at birth are those around the face and particularly the mouth, lips, tongue and throat which are necessary for nursing. The rest of the body not only is outside our control but the nervous system itself is poorly developed - although most of the basic parts are there. The nerves to our voluntary muscles and the sensory nerves which give us information about them lack myelin which is a coating kind of like the insulation on wires which makes them work more efficiently. So when we are first born we could not control our body well even if we already know how because we have less capacity to both send and receive messages from them. The development of our nervous system and our control of the rest of our body develops over time with the earliest development coming in controlling our face, then our upper body and later our lower body. Developmental psychologists refer to this general movement from upper to lower in development as the Cephalocaudal Principle. Cephalous is Latin for head and Caudus is Latin for tail. So the cephalocaudal principal is a shorthand way of noting that our nervous system and so both bodily control and sensation develop from head to foot (since we lack a tail).

Oral Stage

When we are first born we tend to be focused on our mouth and its parts. This is partly because it is the only part of our body in which the nervous system is sufficiently developed so that we can both learn control and gain accurate sensory impressions of the world. If you watch babies they try and put everything into their mouths. They seem to get great pleasure in sucking and feeling things with their mouths even when it doesn't result in them getting any nourishment. Freud said our pleasure is centered in our mouths for around the first year of life. We continue to enjoy oral pleasures all of our lives but we are never as focused on them as we are in our first year.

Freud suggested that several things become obvious if you observe infants in their first year of life. One is that they start out nearly helpless and unable to communicate with the world around them which often leaves them frustrated. They also develop rapidly so that by the time they are six months old they have figured out how to relate with their mothers in somewhat cooperative but still imperfect ways. By the time they are a year old, normal infants have well established relationships and communication patterns with their caregivers and are much better at getting what they want. He also suggested they have no sense of morality, or right and wrong, during their first year of life. From these Freud induced the idea that the development of ego begins in this stage but super ego has not yet begun to form. Thus, our first sense of self comes from learning to cooperate in nursing and caring for ourselves.

Our ego and the rational thought of the ego also owe to the frustration of animal impulses and the redirection of the energy into these more useful expressions. A corollary to this idea is that if the ego is not more successful than the id at fulfilling the desires of the id then there is no use in

its existence. And this is what we tend to find in many abused and neglected Children. Their efforts at trying to deal rationally with their uncaring parents yield no positive result and so their egos do not develop or do not develop much. In extreme cases the ego does not develop and so the child does not develop any sort of sense of self but remains in a state of wishful thinking which we call psychosis. In cases of partial ego development, the ego is weak and unable to plan and follow through on plans because other impulses arise and disrupt the original plans. Thus people with weak egos tend to be impulsive, to act immediately on their desires which means the ego has insufficient energy to restrain the id. A hallmark of a healthy ego is the ability to delay gratification of desires in order to obtain greater desires in the future. If the ego is too weak to do this then impulses and changes of mind constantly interfere and disrupt orderly behavior.

Anal Stage

As children develop they begin to learn to recognize sensory signals from lower and lower in their bodies and to learn to control those lower body parts in line with the cephalocaudal principle. By the time they are about a year old their nervous system is well enough developed for them to begin to perceive and control their lower abdomens including their bowels. He said their anus and bowels become a particular focus for them at this point in time and seem to remain so for a year or two. Children lack the repulsion to feces that we do. They will explore it including tasting it, making shapes of it and wiping it on walls and other things unless restrained by parents.

If you watch little children they change the way they defecate beginning around a year of age. When they are very young it seems to happen at random and uncontrollable times. As the child matures they are better and better at recognizing their internal states and so better able to both recognize and later control bowel movements. They get a sort of far away look as they withdraw from the external world and focus on their internal sensations. They often furrow their brows in concentration when they have bowel movements. They begin to derive a lot of satisfaction both from the sensations of moving their bowels as well from controlling them.

Parents begin to have an interest in having the children control their bowel movements at about this time. In our culture we speak of potty training. If you think about the mental processes this uses within the child you can realize what an accomplishment it is. As this is the main focus of pleasure for the child at this age to interfere and control their bowel movements requires a tremendous amount of mental energy. The ego has to be strong enough to notice and delay this immense sort of gratification. The rewards gained have to be large in order for the ego to do this.

This also involves not only delaying gratification but also doing so within the boundaries set up by the parents. This involves learning somewhat abstract and arbitrary parental rules and acting according to them. This is the birth of super ego; the first following of rules on the part of the child. By learning their parents' ideas about proper bathroom behavior and so controlling the main focus of their desires of the time, the child acquires immense new ego strength as well as the first beginnings of morality. Most parents refer to feces as dirty and so dirty becomes the first moral negative for the child. This also why, Freud said, we generally regard negative things as dirty. Dirty is our most primitive idea of right and wrong and we often connect dirt

with sin and vice-versa as in the phrase “Cleanliness is next to Godliness.”

Phallic or Oedipal Stage

By the time a child is about three years of age they have mastered their bowels fairly well and the final stage in the maturation of the nervous system moves toward completion. The last part of our neuronal anatomy to fully develop is that of our genitals. At about age three our genitals begin to have more sensation and draw the child’s interest just as have the mouth and anus at earlier stages. The child essentially has found a new toy and begins to thoroughly enjoy playing with it. Both little boys with their penises and little girls with their clitorises begin to enjoy playing with them and enjoying a sense of arousal not felt before. This is the age at which they want to play horsie on their parent’s knees over and over again. They enjoy the stimulation of their genitals in this game just as they will genital stimulation by their lovers later on. The full maturation of the nervous system brings new libido or psychic energy which is focused on the genitals. Children of this age still have a somewhat immature ego and so their minds are not fully rational. Although they can think rationally to a degree, fantasy – the thinking of the id – is still a powerful factor in their minds. And so when they think about their genital play they are not really rational in an adult way. But in some ways their thinking is like an adults thought as I describe below. But here the story begins to diverge for boys and girls so I will discuss them separately for the next few paragraphs.

Most little boys love their mothers by the time they are three years old and I will begin with them. They love their mothers and when they begin to find joy in the stimulation of their penis, just like adult men, they want enjoy their genital play with the one they love. So they fall in love with their mother in a sexual though immature way. This sexual love is mostly doomed to frustration though for two reasons. First their genitals are immature and so they are incapable of having an orgasm which is the culmination and satisfaction of sexual desire. Second their mothers are not interested in sex with their sons – the proportion of women who find three year old boys sexually desirable is miniscule. Mothers don’t take their sons love seriously in a sexual way. The sons notice this and feel rejected just as an adult male would. And like a spurned adult male they think “there must be someone else.” And there is – Dad. And just like adult males in romantic competition they compare themselves to Dad and find themselves lacking. He is a huge monster and knows all kinds of stuff they don’t. In almost every way they compare themselves to their fathers they come up short. And just like adult men when they compare themselves unfavorably to their competitor in love they come to hate their rival. They may also love their fathers but the hate is also present. And just like an adult male they wish to get rid of their rivals by killing or castrating them. And, like adults, they imagine their rivals return their feelings of competition, hate and desire to castrate. This is frightening for the little boy. In their mind, father is now a monster who hates and wishes to castrate and kill them while mother is a rejecting lover.

Eventually this imagined love triangle becomes too much for the little boy to bear and he pushes it into his unconscious where he does not have to think about it consciously nor act on it directly. This is a huge effort on his part as genital pleasure is the most intense pleasure of which humans

are capable. Doing so creates the need to deal with huge amounts of psychic energy that is no longer directly expressed. Freud asked the question “Where does this energy go?” His answer is that the energy goes into the ego and superego immensely increasing their strength. They direct this energy into becoming their ideal of a man. The goal of this is to eventually “marry a girl just like the girl who married dear old dad” as the old song goes. Overt sexuality is repressed into unconscious and thus the boy enters the stage called Latency. This repression takes so much energy and is related to so many memories of childhood that most men have little or no memories left of their lives before the age of about five when this great repression takes place.

Latency for Boys

The boy’s super ego uses its new energy to create an idealized version of what it is to be a man and direct the boy’s path into that idealized role. Little boys become harshly critical of anything that is not related to this. They hate and reject girls and girlie things. The ideal of a man establishes a fairly strict and coercive sex role the boy must follow to achieve his ultimate aim of adult sexual satisfaction. The ego uses its new energy to try and learn all the things a man must know to be a man. This is the age at which boys become educable. They are now willing – at least at times – to learn to read, do arithmetic, play sports and do all the other things a man must know. They become very competitive with other boys in a way in which they were not before. Overt or open sexuality is nearly completely repressed and so sexuality is what is latent during the period of latency.

Notice what Freud has done with his ideas of the emergence and repression of sexuality in childhood. He has explained, sexual orientation and sex role. He has explained why boys become able to and sometimes willing to learn things previously they would and could not. He has explained childhood amnesia – the inability to remember before around age five. He has also explained how we move from polymorph perversity to a specific form of sexuality without actually trying out sex directly as we do with food. Sexuality becomes a temporarily unattainable ideal for the boy though he works indirectly for it with great diligence for the next several years.

You may be wondering about what happens if the story doesn’t go as the one I have described. What if the boy doesn’t love his mother or his father is absent, or he is raised by his grandmother or a nanny or some other of the innumerable variations in human lives that occur. The answer is that men are variable in their sex roles and sexual desires. We tend to think that if a man is heterosexual he is normal in some sense. This ignores the tremendous variation in male heterosexual sexual desires. Each man has a somewhat different idea of what is sexually pleasurable and desirable and these derives from the variety of associations they have with their mothers in childhood as well as their differing childlike ideals of what it is to be a man.

No what about variations in the life situations of boys? If father is absent, Freud said children imagine them. Just like adults who imagine “There must be someone else.” when they are rejected by a lover - so do little boys. And if father is dead they still imagine there must be someone else. It might be the mailman, Uncle Fred or any man with whom mother seems friendly.

If the little boy does not love his mother, there will almost always be someone else he does love.

Usually this someone else is another woman and so the little boy goes through the whole cycle with a different object of desire. If he loves his father or another male then he may turn out to be homosexual and may idealize mother as the sex role model which will attract father to him. Freud said that the mothers of homosexual men were often cold and domineering in a way that discouraged little boys from the dreamy sexual attachment which most boys have for their mothers. So Freud's model can deal with any sort of deviance from normal sexuality and explain it in terms of childhood desire and redirection. Endless variations are possible.

Phallic Stage for Girls

Just as for little boys, by age three most little girls love their mothers. Like little boys, they discover a newly sensitive organ of pleasure around the age of three. For little girls it is the clitoris. Just like little boys they love to play with their clitoris. They enjoy the excitement of clitoral stimulation and want to bring their pleasure together with the one they love the most who is usually their mother. They are doomed to frustration, according to Freud, both because they are incapable of having orgasms and their mothers are not interested in being sexual with them.

Just as boys and adults do when feeling rejected by a desired sexual partner they suppose their must be someone else with whom their object of desire is involved. In this case it is usually their father. Like adults and little boys they then wonder "What has he got that I don't." The answer in this case is a penis. This is immensely frustrating to the little girl for there seems to be no way they can overcome this deficit. Unlike adults there is no one else that can fill the bill and so they stay focused on their relationship with mother. Little girls begin to feel as if something (a penis) has been taken away from them. They infer their father, toward whom they feel jealousy, must have been responsible for this just as we adults tend to blame our rivals for our shortcomings. Their jealousy of their father centers on his penis and they begin to want a penis – not for itself but for the power it seems to have to obtain mother's love. Thus penis envy is not envy of the penis in itself but of the power the penis seems to have to attract mother.

So the little girl feels injured in lacking a penis and often feels as if there is something wrong with her body. She may even suppose her father has castrated her to prevent her from having sex with mother. She feels powerless and jealous of her father's power embodied in his penis and betrayed by her mother on whom she is accustomed to rely for help and protection. Mother seems, to the little girl, to have failed in her motherly duty to protect and/or provide. If only the little girl had a penis everything would be alright. The little girl is gradually caught up more and more in a cycle of frustration, jealousy and blame. Her emotional state becomes too much for her to tolerate. She represses it and redirects the energy that was going into clitoral sexuality into becoming a woman.

Latency Stage for Girls

The little girl internalizes an idealized image of womanhood and what she should be like and these ideals become the larger part of her consciences. Overt sexuality is disappears and she

enters the latency stage at around age five or six. The ultimate goal of this redirection of energies tends towards the end of acquiring control of a penis which will give the girl the power to be loved by her mother. The expression of this is not only in having sex with a man but also in marrying. Weddings are, in some sense, mostly about mothers and daughters and the groom sometimes seems almost an afterthought or accessory. In marrying the daughter takes a public step in acquiring power over the penis. The second step is having a child. In an emotional sense this is a complete union with mother in that the daughter actually becomes mother. And there is often conflict with mother over control of the child and particularly so if the child is a boy.

Girls' idealizations generally match the societal ones for women which tends to differ from that of the ideal male which little boys seem to emulate. Girls tend to enter latency later than do boys. This, Freud said, was because they don't have as much fear as do little boys who fear being castrated or killed by their fathers. Little girls tend to feel "Father has already done it to me so I am no threat." This lesser fear also results in a less complete repression than is generally the case for boys which has several effects on girls. One effect is that childhood amnesia tends to be less complete for girls as opposed to boys and so girls generally have better memories for childhood events than do boys. Girls are also generally less rigid in their sex role stereotyping - consequently it is not as bad for a girl to do boy things as for a boy to do girl things. Another effect of the lesser repression is that girls also are able to enjoy more different forms of sensory pleasures including physical contact with others of their own sex and with children than are boys - remembering that all pleasure is sexual in nature. Another effect is that girls have less repressed energies for which they need to find outlet and so are less driven to work and towards creativity. The ultimate effect of this latter has been that women make more contribution to society through human relationships while men do so more by creating and maintaining the external aspects of culture such as business, art and science.

Each individual girl is unique in her particular way of creating an ideal of womanhood which she is pursuing. There are endless variations possible and so girls, like boys, may turn out quite different from one another in their sex role and sexual aspirations. But because they tend to be less repressed than men, women have less need to engage in obviously divergent sexual practices than do men when their sex roles and objects differ from the norm.

Genital Stage

For both men and women the Latency Stage comes to an end with the onset of puberty and genital maturity. As the genitals mature we all feel a surge of new energy which is too strong for the ego to keep repressed. So we enter adulthood with a new awareness of sexual energy surging in our bodies. This surge of energy is disruptive to the planning of our egos and we tend to feel threatened and embarrassed as well as proud of our maturity. The task of the ego in this stage of development is to reincorporate overt sexuality into our understanding of who we are and to do so within the constraints of both reality and our super ego. For women there is also a shift in focus from the clitoris to the vagina as an instrument of sexual pleasure. So while clitoral stimulation remains very pleasant, women gradually learn to reach orgasm from stimulation centered in the vagina.

A simple truth about human beings, according to Freud, is that we have more mental energy than do other species. We have so much energy that we cannot express all of it in direct expression of sexuality. One of Freud's disciples put it very bluntly saying "Humans simply cannot fuck enough." And so we must continue to find ways to dissipate our psychic energy in other than sexual ways. And so we continue to act out our internalized roles of man or woman even after we become sexually active and orgasmic and Freud thought that much of what we do in life has to do with how we use that excess energy.

Defense Mechanisms

Let us return to thinking about the relationships between the id, ego and super ego and consider them from an adult perspective. In trying to satisfy the urges of the id the ego has constantly to cope with the constraints of the super ego as well as the limited opportunities of the real world. Freud wrote that our conscience seem to be bothered mostly by things we consciously think about and much less by things about which our thought is not conscious. The ego tries to get around the constraints of the super ego by keeping many of the impulses of the id and its plans from the scrutiny of super ego by keeping them in the unconscious and then satisfying them in a number of somewhat devious ways. This is possible because of our polymorph perversity – that is our ability to have a need satisfied in many ways.

The first defense mechanism, and the one that seems to underlie most of the others, is called Repression. In repression we simply keep an impulse and the cathected object of that impulse in the unconscious without immediate use of the energy that is thus accumulated. Most of the rest of the defense mechanisms describe the later expression of energy in the case of repression. A famous phrase of Freud's is "the return of the repressed." This refers to his notion that energy is conserved in the mind just as in the physical world and so when an impulse is repressed it never disappears. It remains there in the form of tension until some way is found of satisfying it.

Let me tell you an old joke which illustrates this as well as the next two defense mechanisms. A high church official in a small town is sitting in his office reading his morning newspaper. He notices an advertisement for the Pink Pussycat Theater and the content of the ad increase his blood pressure considerably. He decides it is his duty to rid the community of this den of iniquity and his first step in doing so should be to arouse his fellow worshippers by preaching a stern sermon the topic. He quickly realizes that he really doesn't know much about the Pink Pussycat Theater and wants lots of details with which to outrage his flock. Consequently he calls in one of the local ministers whose special duty is the part of town in which the Pink Pussycat Theater lies. He informs the minister of his intentions and asks him for details. Unfortunately the minister says he knows no more than his superior in that he never goes to such places and members of his congregation never mention it. Between them they decide it is their moral duty to investigate this blight on the community as a step in getting rid of it. So they don their ministerial costumes including their characteristic hats and approach the Pink Pussycat Theater. Glaring at the ticket taker the high official ask the price of admission to this hellish den of iniquity. He pays for both of them and the two holy men enter and sit down. The local minister notices a couple members of his flock hurriedly leave by a side exit when they enter the theater. The sit down and the high official wonders aloud at why so many men wear long over

coats and bring baseball gloves to a movie theater which results in a couple more patrons leaving. The movie begins and it shows just the sort of thing you might expect at the Pink Pussycat Theater. The two clerics make various loud comments on the disgusting nature of the various activities and on the moral degeneracy of people who are aroused by it which causes a few more patrons to slink out of the theater. Pretty soon the younger one becomes enthralled with what he is watching on the screen and the older one swats him with his hat and says "Remember yourself!" Finally the show ends and the two clergymen emerge and stand outside. The elder says to his subordinate "I think we have learned enough to give this place of evil a good broadside in our sermons. The only sadness is that I have forgotten my hat and must momentarily further dirty myself by re-entering that den of iniquity." The younger man, much embarrassed says "Uh well sir, ... you see, ... I mean sir, Well you don't have to go back in for your hat as it is hanging on your lap."

The clergymen – from Freud's point of view have repressed their own sexuality and redirecting the energy in two ways. One is acting exactly the opposite of their actual though subconscious desires. This is called Reaction Formation. Reaction formation occurs anytime we repress a desire and its object and then act exactly the opposite of the way in which we unconsciously would like to act.

They also perceive others as having the things they are repressing in themselves and condemning them for it. This is called Projection. Projection occurs when we repress a desire and its object and then perceive another as having that desire and object. And often the energy goes into blaming or persecuting them for having the same desire that we do.

Another defense mechanism is called Displacement. In Displacement we repress the object of our desire and redirect our desire towards an acceptable object. So one might reject one's sexual desire for a cousin and instead go have sex with one's spouse. Or one might be angry and want to harm one's mother and instead kick the dog.

The last of the major defense mechanisms is called Sublimation. In sublimation the original desire and its object are repressed and the energy redirected towards something acceptable to the super ego and bearing obvious relation to the original desire or its object. Freud did a historical psychoanalysis of Michelangelo Buonorati, the famous Renaissance sculptor and painter. Michelangelo was a scholar and writer as well as being an artist. He wrote many things including extremely angry attacks on homosexuality including a recommendation that homosexuals be tortured and killed. Freud suggested that Michelangelo had strong unconscious homosexual desires and was using the defense of Reaction Formation in these attacks on homosexuality. But of more interest was his art itself. Freud suggested that Michelangelo redirected his repressed homosexuality mainly into creating art which has a strong undercurrent of homosexuality. His most famous sculpture is a statue of a naked David around which you can usually find a group of gay guys ooh-ing and ah-ing. And his most famous work, the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel which it took him seventeen years to paint is another example. The center piece is a huge, scantily clad, super-masculine God the father reaching his hand out to a cute little stud-muffin Adam who is also naked and lying back in a very submissive and receptive pose.

Freud suggested that all of art and science and culture itself was the result of sublimation of surplus sexual energy. That we owe our rise above other animals and the creation of all that is worthwhile in human society to the control and redirection of unconscious impulses. Thus the repression and redirection of impulses is a necessity for human beings and desirable in the creation and maintenance of human society and for scientific exploration. So, in some sense at least, frustration is not a bad thing but a necessary one both for the development of our personality and the furtherance of human society.

One might then ask “When are defense mechanisms healthy and when are they unhealthy.” Freud was once asked what a healthy person was like. He replied a healthy person was someone who could work and love. In his understanding of mental energy this means a healthy person is someone who can both be successfully sexual and also sublimates energy in productive ways. So defense mechanisms are healthy when they help a person to work or love and unhealthy to the degree that they interfere with them.

There are a variety of less important strategies the ego uses to deal with its burden of planning and decision making that might be called minor defense mechanisms that often do not include repression. These include Identification, Regression, Mental Undoing, and Denial. In Identification the ego forms a mental bond between the self and someone or something that is able to get or be what the person wants. So many young boys in the past few years have wanted Air Jordan shoes or Chicago Bulls jackets because they all wanted “to be like Mike.” By having these things they get the same kind of pleasure we get in fantasizing about getting what we want. There is a partial release of tension and experience of pleasure in these fantasies.

In regression we experience frustration in the pursuit of our plans. We then give up those plans and behave in ways we found pleasurable at an earlier stage of development. So, for instance, I had a client back in the 1970’s who described being dumped by her boyfriend. She said she went home got into bed and ate chocolate while clutching her teddy bear until she began to feel a little better. Regression typically occurs when people experience strong frustration along with a sense that their plans are not going to meet their needs. Most of the time regression lasts only a short while but can sometimes be prolonged to the point of disrupting the person’s life.

Mental Undoing is when something occurs that is very frustrating to us. We then imagine that events had taken a different course and then act and feel as if this imagined history were reality. Mental Undoing usually does not involve repression in that we could tell what really happened were we asked but, at the same time, we think and feel as if what we imagined was the truth. Let me give you an example. When I was twenty one I was going to school full time and working about sixty hours a week. My job title was Stockpile Inspector. What I actually did was to drive way out into the Cascade Mountains in Oregon and sit in a pick up truck beside a large gravel pile about twelve hours a day. About every fifteen or twenty minutes a dump truck would come up, I would check to make sure it was full and then give the driver a receipt for the gravel which he would dump into the pile. In some ways it was a wonderful job. I especially loved the morning time as I had to get there by the time the dump trucks started arriving at 6 am and would watch the sun rise over a vista of mountain tops and listen to the birds singing.

Unfortunately the schedule was too demanding for me to keep up and one morning I went to

sleep while driving out to the gravel pile. I woke up with my government truck at right angles to the road in a sharp curve. I spun the steering wheel around and the truck rolled six times down the middle of the highway. As I stood in looking at the mess I had made of the truck I began wishing I had gone to bed earlier the night before. I then imagined my wife had not talked me into going out to listen to music the night before and I had gone to bed at my normal time. I then imagined I would be eating breakfast and listening to the birds singing in the beautiful clearing beside the stockpile. I was feeling quite happy for a moment or two in my imagined world. Then a state trooper came up and gave me a ticket which brought me back into the real and momentarily painful world.

Mental Undoing often goes along with trauma; when someone close to us dies or something similar. If Grandma gets run over by a truck while walking to the post office we might imagine “If only I had driven her that morning she would still be alive. We then might picture her still alive and avoid feeling our loss until something reminds us of it. We might, in this state, think how much grandma loves mints and think we will pick some up on the way home from work or school today – or something similar.

Another classical maneuver by the ego is called Rationalization. In rationalization we attempt to disguise something from the super ego by calling it something else. We often hear people say things like “It isn’t stealing.” Or “They are a big corporation they will never miss it.” What we are doing here is trying to avoid feeling guilty for having broken one of the super ego’s ideals by pretending our offense belongs in some other category of behavior than the immoral one we are trying to avoid recognizing.

Denial is an ego maneuver in which the ego simply refuses to acknowledge some truth about the person, their actions or the situation as a way of being able to continue pleasurable behavior without interference by the super ego – or sometimes the rational thought of the ego. So we will frequently hear alcoholics deny that they are alcoholic. They may say things like “I just have a little nip before supper” “It is only wine not hard liquor.” The utility of these denials is that it allows the ego to continue its plan without interference of the super ego or, in individuals with weak egos, keeps the id impulse from being interfered with by the rational ego that is trying to formulate long term plans and recognizes the ultimate futility of alcoholism or other destructive courses of action. Denial can sometimes be of real help in aiding us to deal with extreme situations. At such times we do the best we can while ignoring the things that we cannot change. As an examples consider a former client of mine who was a medic during the Vietnam war. He told me that he ignored the possibility of his own death because when he thought about it he became so afraid he was unable to function. Instead he simply did not think about the danger and carried on his job - for which he later received two medals.

Dreams

Freud wrote that he considered his discoveries about dreams to be the most important of his life. He reasoned that dreams must have some function or we would not have evolved so as to have them. He concluded that the function of dreams is to protect sleep. If we did not dream, he thought, we would waken when an impulse in the id arose during sleep. Dreams are method of

partially discharging the energy or tension of these impulses so that we can continue sleeping which we need in order to regain energy and repair the physiological damage of the previous day.

You might ask “How do dreams discharge energy?” If you recall, the act of imagining the object of our desire releases some part of the tension of that desire. So dreams are images of wish fulfillment which discharge enough energy to allow the person to keep sleeping. And though our super ego is less vigilant during sleep it is still active enough so that the ego has to disguise unacceptable impulses in dreaming. And so each dream is created using what Freud called the Dreamwork. This is a process of using the “residues of the day” - recent memories and associations to weave into a story in which we get what we want without having to create an image of the unacceptable parts of it.

Let me give you an example. Suppose we secretly hated Uncle Harry and lusted after his wife, Aunt Harriet and that both of these desires were morally unacceptable to us. In our sleep an impulse to kill Harry and have sex with Harriet (or the other way around) might arise in our id. If we did not find some way of reducing the energy in our mind these impulses would awaken us. Suppose also that we had met the mail carrier the previous day who reminded us in some way of Uncle Harry. We might dream of the mail carrier getting run over by a bus and of us hugging and consoling the mail carrier’s wife who just happens to wear the same kind dress that Aunt Harriet wears. So you see we get what we want without having to dream openly about it.

Many things in dreams are symbolic forms of something else. As dreams are very often sexual in nature many things become sexual symbols. Thus a cigar, a pencil a poplar tree and almost anything long and slender might be a penis. Holes, caves, alleys and other things might be a vagina. Spiders may be hairy pubic mounds, the ocean is usually the unconscious and flying may be having sexual intercourse. Of course things might be just what they are too – as Freud once wrote “Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar.”

Things get even more complicated too. Usually we have many impulses at the same time. So we might not only want to kill Uncle Harry and have sex with Aunt Harriet we might also want to have sex with another woman as well as wanting to better our reputation. And so in our dream the mail carriers wife wears shoes like that woman wears and someone sees us consoling the mail carriers wife and says what a deeply caring individual we were. These multiple levels of causation Freud called Over-Determination. Not only our dreams but many of our waking actions are over determined as well. When we eat lunch we might not only be taking in food but also establishing status for ourselves by where we eat and how we hold our eating utensils. We might also choose to sit in a place where we might be noticed by someone we wanted to spend time with – and all of these but the desire to eat could be unconscious were they unacceptable to the super ego.

One of the characteristics of dreams is also that we fail to react normally in many situations and in particular we fail to have normal emotional reactions. In fact, Freud said, dreams usually don’t have emotions in them – although we frequently have strong emotions when we wake and remember them. Thus we may run away from a tiger but will not actually dream of being afraid of the Tiger – though when we wake we may feel afraid. When emotions are actually part of the dream, Freud wrote, they are “invariably” a screen for their opposite feeling. Thus if our dream

includes fearing something we actually want to move towards whatever the real it is that is being represented in the dream by some other object. If we love something in a dream then we actually hate the thing that that dream object is disguising. If in the previously mentioned dream, we were to dream of feeling anguish over the bus driver's death it is a disguise for feeling glee over Uncle Harry's death.

Let us work through an example. A five year old boy had a repetitive dream of being chased by a tyrannosaurus. He would run furiously from it and dreamed of being afraid and of having a very strong impulse to get away from it. He would run up a mountain pathway and hide in a dark cave that was too small for the tyrannosaurus to enter and there the dream would end.

Many interpretations of this dream are possible and the correct one could be arrived at only through the process of psychoanalysis. But let us present one reasonable one – which was actually given me by a psychoanalyst. What is the most prominent large thing in a little boy's life? Usually his mother or father. So the tyrannosaurus is likely to represent either mother or father. In the dream, the boy feared the tyrannosaurus and had an impulse to get away from it and so the reality was that he probably wanted it and to move towards it. The dream ends with him running into a dark cave as a way of getting away from it. The cave is likely symbolic of a vagina and entering a vagina is a way to describe heterosexual intercourse. So the dream could be interpreted as one about a little boy's desire to have sex with his mother while denying the fact to his conscious mind.

Summary

Freud came of age intellectually at a time when the dominant intellectual trends were Darwinian Evolution and the Physiology of Helmholtz. He created a theory to account for a wide variety of clinical observations using these as his base. His theory is still of so much interest because it was the first comprehensive modern theory of personality, is still found a useful way to understand individuals by many clinicians and served as a point of departure for many later theories about personality. In some ways the psychoanalytic tradition is still the richest in terms of the amount of thought and elaboration that a hundred years of psychoanalytic thinkers have added to Freud's original ideas. We next turn our attention to Erik Erikson who was one among many students of Freud and who was perhaps the most original in his expansion of psychoanalytic thinking.

Glossary

Anal Stage – a stage of growth from about ages one to three in which the child is focused on sensations from the bowels. It is in this stage that we first begin to develop a conscience and our ego or self becomes stronger.

Cathexis – the process of selecting an object or set of objects as the ones we want when a particular desire arises.

Conscious – the part of our mind of which we are aware. It is a small fraction of the whole mind.

Defense Mechanisms – a variety of maneuvers the ego engages in which allow it to simultaneously satisfy the urges of the id and to avoid the opposition of the super ego. This includes repression, Reaction Formation, Projection, Displacement and sublimation.

Displacement – a defense mechanism in which we substitute one object for another.

Ego – the personality's rational thinking and decision making part which include our sense of self.

Ego Ideal – an internalized image of what we would like ourselves to be like which is created at the end of the Phallic Stage of development.

Genital Stage – the adult stage of human life in which we have fully matured genitalia and our sexual focus is mainly on the genitals and in which direct sexual pleasure is primarily from genital stimulation culminating in orgasm.

Id – the basic human nature including psychic energy and mental processes with which we are born.

Identification – a mental mechanism whereby we achieve some satisfaction of frustrated desires through imagining ourselves like or associated with someone or something that has what we desire to have.

Latency – the fourth stage of mental development that runs roughly from ages five or six until puberty which is characterized by the absence of overt sexuality.

Libido – the name Freud gave to psychic energy and which is sexual in essence.

Mental Undoing – a mental maneuver in which we imagine history taking a different and preferable course after which we think and feel as if this imagined history were truth without repressing the truth.

Oral Stage – the first stage of mental development during which pleasure is chiefly derived from oral sensations and which usually lasts about the first year of life.

Phallic Stage – the third stage of mental development from about ages three to five and which is characterized by seeking immature pleasure from genital stimulation. In this stage most children first hate and then idealize one of their parents. In this stage Ego and Super Ego reach mature levels of functioning.

Polymorph Perversity - the notion that we are capable of having most of our needs met by a variety of objects which are not always in accord with either social or moral ideals.

Pre-conscious – the small part of our mind containing things of which we are not presently conscious but could easily bring into consciousness.

Primary Processes – the basic mental processes with which we are born including, instinctual desires, the capacity to associate and to create mental images.

Projection – a defense mechanism in which we repress an impulse and its object and use the energy to imagine another has our unacceptable impulse and usually also to condemn them for having it.

Rationalization – a mental maneuver by which we change the name which we assign to something in order to avoid knowing something unacceptable about ourselves or our actions.

Reaction Formation - defense mechanism in which an impulse and its object are repressed and the energy is then directed into acting in exactly the opposite way as we actually desire.

Regression - a mental maneuver in which we give up on some aspect of our plans to please ourselves and return to methods we used to gain pleasure earlier in our development.

Repression – the pushing of an impulse and its object into the unconscious with an immediate expression of the energy.

Secondary Processes – rational thought directed toward finding methods of obtaining pleasure in the real world.

Sublimation – a defense mechanism in which an impulse and its object are repressed and the energy is then redirected into something which bears no obvious relationship with the original impulse or object. Most of what we do in life is the result of sublimation.

Super Ego - our conscience.

Unconscious – the part of our mind of which we are not aware and most of which we cannot become aware. Almost all of our mental workings are unconscious.