



The Ego and the Id is the product of Freud's clinical work and thinking about the structure of the Psyche. A theme of the books is the way the largely unconscious and primal Id (or "It") conflicts with the Superego (or "Ego Ideal"), and how the Ego attempts to mediate between them.

This is a quick read, and Freud's writing and style of argument are very clear and easy to follow. Although someone with no knowledge of psychoanalysis or Freud's language would have to do some extra work to get a good handle on what's happening, the book is very engaging. A short little text like this can't fit in detailed descriptions of concepts like "object-cathexis", although the footnotes help. The translations, which Freud endorsed, don't have the clunky feel that often comes with translated texts.

For someone new to Freud and this kind of writing, I'd recommend you maybe start with another book, like *Beyond The Pleasure Principle*, or even just going through the Wikipedia entries on psychoanalysis. This book would be ideal for someone who knows the basic Freudian concepts (Oedipus complex, etc.) and would like to jump in and get a little more technical.

"The Ego and the Id" is an important work for the development of the psychoanalysis, in general. This study presents prominent theories about Personality structure and dynamics.

Freud divided personality into three structures: the id, the ego, and the superego. He states that his analytical study has a major role in one's personality, how it influences the individual's actions in the environment and how the individual character can be in constant conflict.

The Id is the unconscious part, the pleasure principle that dictates our urges, needs and instant gratification. This section is also the reservoir of the libido, a major biological component that affects our personality. Meanwhile, Ego is the reality principle, our own self that works in a realistic manner to obtain pleasure and avoid pain. The ego is

moulded by the external world. For example, it mediates one self's needs and pleasures according to other people needs.

Freud also claims that there's another section that works as an ideal ego, the Superego. This part is tied to the moral and ethics that is directed to us during our lives.

Based on all these features, the Ego is the strongest force. However, it's in constant conflict with the Id and entangled in an interplayed position against the Superego.

"The ego is not only the ally of the id; it is also a submissive slave who courts the love of his master"

Sigmund, regarding his views on Consciousness and Unconsciousness, states that *"there is nothing new to be said... the division of mental life into what is conscious and what is unconscious is the fundamental premise on which psycho-analysis is based"*. According to him, the interaction that exists within all these structures can result in many possible psychic conflicts, like Hysteria, Melancholia, etc. For that reason, the purpose of Freud's psychoanalysis methods is to connect the unconscious elements, transport them into consciousness and, hence, take them into words.

The last part of the book brings interesting points concerning The Ego and its tasks. The Ego has to mediate the desires of the id but, at the same time, it seats between the super-ego and the events of the external world.

Sigmund Freud's impact on the study of the individual personality is quite remarkable. His researches and theories had a controversial impact during his time, but his influence has also helped shape the approach towards personality, memory, sexuality and therapy.

Psychoanalysis is kind of it's own thing.

That's how I'm making peace with it.

Psychoanalysis is part of the western, secular wisdom tradition.

In a sense, psychoanalysis is the last myth of the west.

But it's not a an ordinary myth.

Its a myth in a mirror.

It's an origin myth of the self.

It's a myth that describes the universe within.

And like Buddhism, it's a myth with a method for awakening.

Psychoanalysis is a valiant attempt to gain purchase on the machinations of the human being, embedded in relationships, caught in the trap that that is human existence, and desperately groping in the dark for answers, for relief, and for an escape from the fetters and confines of the human condition.

The Ego and The Id represents an early attempt by Freud to model the anatomy of human psyche (i.e. soul, mind, spirit, whatever).

Freud proposed that the psyche was comprised of 'parts' with distinct agendas:

1. the Id (it), represents the bestial, primitive, instinctual, down and dirty, reactive, Jerry Springer guest that resides within all of us.
2. the super ego (over I), represents the uptight as fuck part of us that wants to screw the lid down on all of that Id shit.
3. the ego (I), represents the reasonable part of us that wants to broker a deal between 1 and 2.

Freud also postulated that people are driven by a sex-instinct and a death-instinct, and that these are also in conflict.

Freud viewed the human inner world as typified by boiling tension and conflict between all of these parts.

Darwin said that man originated from the monkey and the animal itself. Nietzsche said that person is only a step on

the road to the superhuman. And Freud said that a person can only think about sex - but since we are so humiliating, maybe we agree with this, we just do not want to admit ourselves? My lovely Freud, once someone asked me, "Do you love Freud? How can someone like a person whose whole theory is repeated on sex?" - people who say this, seem to read Freud between the lines. Someone likes light things, where everything is very clear, and someone tries to look deeper into himself, to come very close to the true essence of mankind. Every opinion has its place, I know that people accustomed to an easy narrative, faced with Freud, will understand that He sweep away all morality, holiness. Freud lowers a man to a primitive animal, reminding him that all he does is to satisfy his own self, his sexuality, and we can call it different names (I repeat, different kinds), and food, material well-being, social and other activities are many layers that hide sexuality. And the essence is that One, inside we all strive for the harmony of body and soul, just not all are ready to recognize that we are consumers on this planet, most of which having their primitive needs, step over their pride, losing their own i-to satisfy their desires, unable to control and go on self-sacrifice.

Psychoanalysis is an instrument to enable the ego to push its conquest of the id further than without analysis.

-The Oedipus complex is replaced by identification with the mother or intensified identification with the can become overbearing, leading to conditions such as obsessive neurosis or melancholia.

-The ego is the representative of the external reality, the super-ego is the representative of internal reality, the id has no voice.

-The superego is a substitute for longing for a father and is the basis of religious penance.

-The id which is inherited, is a vestigial store of previous existences led by former egos; the ego forms the super-ego out of the id based on the template of these former egos.

The major idea that Freud acknowledges in this book is that the human psyche is developed through the processing of three structures: Id, Ego, and Superego. The Ego is the basic component in this pot since it is considered as the mediator between the Id and the Superego or what can be extended to the internal and external human substances.

Freud was at the forefront of understanding the human mind, as the inventor of psychoanalysis. His reputation and new ways of thinking made The Ego and the Id very impactful. In this paper, Freud explains his theories on the unconscious as a whole with focus on the id, the ego, and the super-ego. While the paper was certainly fascinating, I would only recommend it for those who have a strong grasp on psychology, specifically Freud's work in the field. Freud's paper begins at the surface of the mind and then gradually goes deeper into its complexities. To give the reader a base to start from, he first defines consciousness and unconsciousness. It is in this first chapter where his idea of the preconscious is also introduced. The preconscious can be thought of as an area between the conscious and unconscious, containing ideas and thoughts that are usually repressed, as in the unconscious, but can become conscious. While these concepts are not the main points of Freud's paper, they are important to understand once he gets into the more complex ideas, beginning with the ego and the id. In addition to defining the ego and the id, Freud goes into the relationship the two concepts have stating, "The ego represents what may be called reason and common sense, in contrast to the id, which contains the passions," (Freud, page 19). He even goes as far as to provide diagrams in order to help visualize his explanations. Following the ego and the id comes the super-ego. As with the previous concepts, Freud defines the super-ego and explains the relationship it has with the other areas of the mind. Although, there is much more detail on the super-ego than any other concept.

Freud expands on the definition by going into how exactly the super-ego is formed. Given that the super-ego is what a person strives to be, he theorized that the super-ego is based off of your parents and the expectations they wanted you to meet. He continues, describing the role guilt plays, before wrapping up the paper with some reflection on the theories he explained.

This book is certainly full of fascinating insight and information, but despite being a short book it was not the easiest to get through. One thing I found interesting about this book was the amount of insight it provided on the field and society at the time. For example, when explaining parental influence on the mind, Freud provides his own explanation of some sexualities. When describing the complete Oedipus complex, he argues that it is, "due to the bisexuality present in children," (Freud, page 28). He goes on to give this scenario stating, "a boy has not merely an ambivalent attitude towards his father and an affectionate object-choice towards his mother, but at the same time he also behaves like a girl (...)," (Freud, page 28). Additionally, Freud does not shy away from being thorough and expanding on a subject. This can be a wonderful thing because the reader is provided with a lot of facts on the topic. Although, I think his desire to expand on many subjects is one of the reasons why this book is difficult to get through in some cases. There were many times when Freud transitioned to another topic and would explain it for the next few pages. I found that these explanations would interrupt his main points and make it difficult to follow along. Furthermore, Freud wrote this paper as though the reader is already familiar with the rest of his work, which makes perfect sense, but it also made it so that I could not follow all of his examples. In these instances, I

would have to do some of my own research in order to fully understand some of his points. That being said, this book is a valuable source of information, but would not be the best choice for those who have just started looking into psychology.

Freud's *The Ego and the Id* was undoubtedly impactful when it was first published in the early 20th century. While many of Freud's theories have been disproven overtime, this book is still an interesting read. I would say the key thing to have when it comes to reading this paper is patience. The length can be deceiving, as the content and organization is certainly complex, but if you take the time to understand it, it will be worthwhile.

The ego has the unenviable job of being the seat of anxiety as it is stuck between 3 masters trying to appease them all to the best of it's ability. It is stuck between the drives of the id which comprise eros and the death instinct, the environment, and the super-ego. The ego is tied in with the external environment and has a portion that is unconscious as well, but also houses reason and rationality, which can also be unconscious though. With the right verbal stimulus unconscious thoughts can be made precociousness and then conscious. The ego tries to bend the desires of the id to the external environment and also to bend the world to match the desires of the id

"The superego retains the character of the father, while the more intense the Oedipus complex was and the more rapidly it succumbed to repression (under the influence of discipline, religious teaching, schooling and reading) the more exacting later on is the domination of the superego over the ego—in the form of conscience or perhaps of an unconscious sense of guilt."

The ego and the id describes the structural model that is now common knowledge; the id, ego, and superego. Prior to this, Freud used the topographical model of unconscious, pre-conscious, and conscious. The notion of the unconscious having explanatory power over conscious life is the essence of psychoanalysis. The essay begins with this, and then proceeds to lay out the limitations of the topographical model. The question is how does the unconscious get into the pre-conscious. There must be a censor of some sort which part of it which censors the unconscious is itself unconscious. But how would this fit into the topographical model, a mechanism which straddles the conscious and unconscious? Here comes the structural model of id, ego, and superego. The ego operates according to the reality principle, restraining the pleasure principle of the id. The ego can therefore be conscious and unconscious so long as it operates to both fulfill the demands of the id and the limits of the external world. Because of the ego, we can sustain long periods of unease so long as there is an opportunity to find pleasure down the road.

Freud's concept of pleasure and pain described in the prior essay *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is a pessimistic one. Happiness is a sort of equilibrium, stability. It is pain that is a motivator to act. "Any given process originates in an unpleasant state of tension, i.e. with avoidance of pain or the production of pleasure". The pursuit of happiness is conservative, about conserving energy. Action doesn't reach toward any final goal, it is motivated by a quantitative disturbance. Pain and pleasure are only relevant according to this disturbance in the investment of energy. This energy "psychophysics" is beyond this book, but it does give insight into how nuanced Freud's argument is. This is the paradox of psychoanalysis, sometimes it appears to fit in with natural science. But then psychoanalysis posits unobservable explanations for naturalistic phenomena. However these unobservable explanations aren't supernatural. The job of the ego is to manage the expenditure of energy (called cathexis: the investing of energy into an object) to meet the competing demands of reality and the pleasure of the id. It may not be observable or measurable like the "physical" world but it is limited by it.

The ego is epiphenomenal. It rides atop the objective world described by physics and the unconscious realm of the id. Freud gives the metaphor of a man riding a horse, whose success entails satisfying the needs of the horse. He gets his power from the horse, his job is to direct the horse for his own needs as a conscious director working according to his foresight of environmental challenges (has a map I guess? I'm going a bit behind Freud's metaphor). But there is another demand on the poor ego, the superego. The superego is more complicated than I thought it was. Apparently it also gets its power from the unconscious despite being abstract. The superego is social morality. Although it seems abstract and universal like religion, it is inherently social. It emerges from the Oedipal desire to kill the father and love the mother. As this is not possible for the child, the child identifies with the father and seeks another woman to love. The female can also identify with the father apparently, but this isn't explained too much in this book. What happens is that the destructive desire of repressing the Oedipal desire becomes an ideal-self for the ego to achieve. The ego cannot fulfill its desire for the mother and hate for the father and must identify with them, and so the achievement of this is spurned by a negative emotion; guilt. This is explained in depth in other writings like *Totem and Taboo*, but the point is that the superego is an ideal ego which gets its power from repressed unconscious desire which internalizes social restriction.

With this tripartite model, conscious life seems very strained and weak. Freud says in *Civilization and Its Discontents* that "life as we find it is too hard for us". There are so many competing demands for the conscious self. The instincts, the external world, social obligations, and morality. But this is the cost of being a complex organism. Freud mentions that the long period of dependence on the parents from our Mammalian nature is responsible for this feeling of helplessness. We require so much to go right for us because of the complexity of our energy management and the limits of our budget. So we need to recognize the shortcuts that unconscious forces give us.

At the end of the *Interpretation of Dreams* Freud consoles us by saying we should not be held responsible for the seemingly immoral desires of the unconscious life.

"I think that the Roman emperor was wrong when he had one of his subjects executed because he had dreamt of murdering the emperor...would it not be right to bear in mind Plato's dictum that the virtuous man is content to dream what a wicked man really does? I think it best, therefore, to acquit dreams."

At the end of *Ego and Id*, he assured us that the id is neither moral or immoral. The superego of conscious is what provides morality. But we should not pretend that civilization can rid us of these undesirable feelings. These instincts in a controlled way make society and morality possible, and sure do take a load off of us. Surely the ego is at least strong enough to allow us to manage the instincts, fulfilling their needs.

The ego represents what may be called reason and common sense, in contrast to the id, which contains the passions»

«Thus in its (the ego) relation to the id it is like a man on horse back, who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse»

Takeaway points:

1. "The reason why such ideas cannot become conscious is that a certain force opposes them... The state in which the ideas existed before being made conscious is called repression*, and we assert that the force which instituted the repression and maintains it is perceived as resistance* during the work of analysis." (p4)
2. "The We have two kinds of unconscious-one which is latent but capable of becoming conscious, and one which is repressed and isnt in itself and without more ado capable of becoming conscious." (p5) [calls the latent "preconscious" and restricts unconscious to the unconsciously repressed]
- Note to self: Perhaps these intermediary stages between unconscious and conscious are just the susceptibility of a memory to be recalled
3. "In each individual there is a coherent organisation of mental processes called his *ego which controls the discharge of excitations into the external world and supervises its constituent processes, and which goes to sleep at night (but even then exercises censorship on dreams)" (p7)
4. "It is true that all that is repressed is unconscious, but not all that is unconscious is repressed. The ego too may be unconscious." (p8)
5. "We can only come to know the unconscious by making it conscious." (p9)
6. "The difference between the unconscious and preconscious consists in the unconscious carried out on some material by a process unknown, and the preconscious by word-presentations [note to self: same thing as subvocalisation?]" (p10)
7. An example of internal perceptions (eg feelings/thought processes. May be conscious or unconscious) which are distinguished from external perceptions are the pleasure/unpleasure principle. (p12) So what he's investigating is the process that causes pleasure/unpleasure to move from unconscious to conscious.
8. He believes they only come into consciousness if they have a relation to perception or the external world which would otherwise be blocked by repression to enter consciousness. (p12)
9. He calls the entity which begins in preconscious and ends in perception the 'ego' and the other part of the mind and which behaves as though it were unconscious the 'id'. (p13)
10. "The ego seeks to bring the external worlts to bear upon the id and endeavours to substitute the reality principle for the pleasure principle which reigns unrestrictedly in the id." (p15)
11. "The ego represents what may be called reason and common sense, in contrast to the id which contains the passions." (p15)
12. "The super-ego is a faculty of self criticism and conscience." (p16)
13. The two classes of instincts are the *eros (contains sexual instinct and self preservative instinct), and a death instinct (which contains sadism etc, the task of which is to lead organic life back into the inanimate state). (p3) It

may be viewed as anabolism or catabolism. It also expresses itself towards the world and others. (p31)

14. "From the point of view of instinctual control of morality, it may be said of the id that it is totally nonmoral, of the ego that it strives to be moral, and of the superego that it can be supermoral and then become as cruel as only the id can be." (p44)

15. "There are two processes by which the contents of the id can penetrate into the ego. The first is a reaction-formation by the ego against the instinctual processes of the id, the other is the poor id owing service to three masters and consequently menaced by three dangers (from the external world, from the libido of the id, and from the severity of the superego)." (p46)

Discusses the infamous dissection of brain into id, ego, and superego. It's too bad Freud seems to focus more on the male Oedipus complex desires, guilt, aggression, repression, etc. and kind of throws in the female perspective almost as an afterthought sometimes. But I know psychoanalysis was still new, and Freud even changed some of his statements slightly later on as per the notes.

Basically, we are all confused by our parents as small children. (I agree with that.) We either identify with or hate them or want to sleep with them. The superego is created by these dilemmas in our heads, and it is like the moral authority to our egos, which are our perception of reality, and from the superego also stems our creation of outside moral authorities like religion. This little book is pretty dry. You can't really discuss it without learning all of the psychoanalytic jargon. I did like Freud's "Civilization and Its Discontents", and I would like to pick up his "Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious".