



Freud: The Unconscious Basis of Mind

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Early life and Work

- Freud was an Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis. He was born on May 6, 1856, in Moravia. When he was four, his family moved to Vienna, where he spent most of his life.
- Freud studied medicine at the University of Vienna, where he became interested in the field of psychology. Around 1880s, he began developing his theories about the unconscious mind and the importance of childhood experiences in shaping adult behavior.
- In 1899, Freud published his landmark work, "The Interpretation of Dreams," which outlined his theories about the role of the unconscious mind in human behavior. He also introduced the concept of the Oedipus complex, which suggests that boys experience a subconscious desire for their mothers and a rivalry with their fathers.
- Freud started his career as a physiologist and his constant hope was to explain all the phenomena of human life scientifically.
- Freud's early work was not immediately well-received by the scientific community, but he continued to refine his theories and develop new ideas. He founded the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society in 1902, and by the 1920s, psychoanalysis had become a well-established field of study.

Psychoanalysis

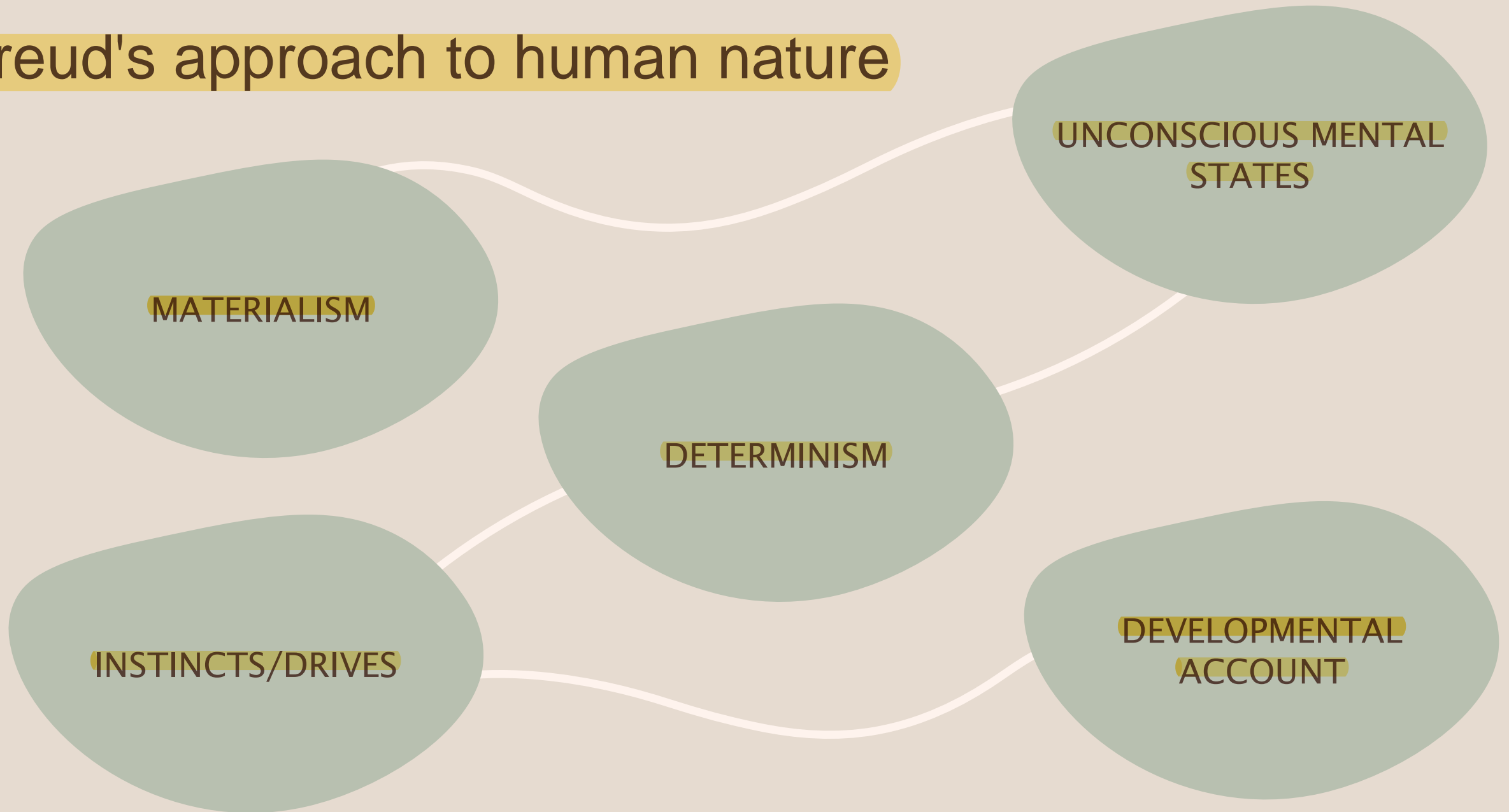
In the first phase of his intellectual career, Freud put forth the hypotheses about the nature of neurotic problems, and began to develop his distinctive method of treatment, which later came to be known as **psychoanalysis**.

Psychoanalysis is a set of theories and therapeutic techniques that deal in part with the unconscious mind, and which together form a method of treatment for mental disorders.

From his early experiences conducted with middle-class Viennese women, Freud hypothesized that emotional symptoms had their roots in a long-forgotten emotional trauma that needed to be recalled so that the emotions associated with it could be discharged.



Freud's approach to human nature



Freud's approach to human nature

MATERIALISM

- Freud acknowledged a distinction between mental states and physiological states of the nervous system, but for him this was only a difference in language, not a dualism of two substances (mind and body)
- He believed that mental processes, including thoughts, feelings, and behavior, are ultimately rooted in physical processes in the brain and body. **Freud argued that the mind is not separate from the body but is instead a product of it.**

DETERMINISM

- The principle that every event **has preceding causes**—to the realm of the mental. Thoughts and behavior that had formerly been assumed to be of no significance for understanding a person (such as slips of the tongue, faulty actions, dreams, and neurotic symptoms) Freud argued these could be highly significant. Nothing that a person thinks or does or says is really accidental; everything can in principle be explained by something in the person's mind.
- Denial of free will - for, even when we think we are choosing perfectly freely, Freud would claim that there are unknown causes that determine our choice.
- Parallel with Marx - both believed that the contents of our consciousness, far from being perfectly "free" and uniquely "rational," are determined by causes of which we are not normally aware.

UNCONSCIOUS MENTAL STATES

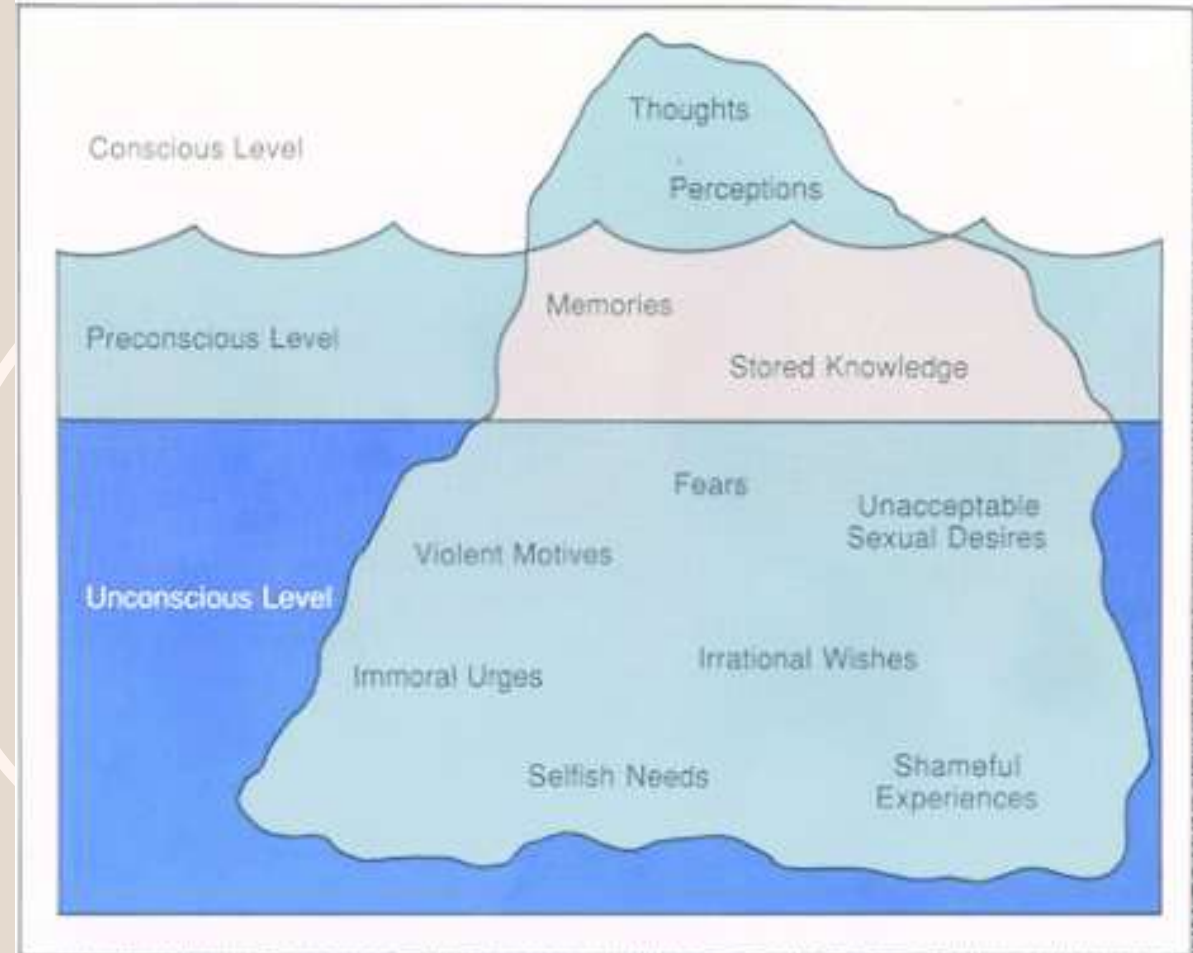
The **conscious state** refers to the thoughts, feelings, and perceptions that we are aware of in the present moment. It is the part of the mind that is in our immediate awareness and can be easily accessed.

The **preconscious state** refers to information that is not currently in our awareness but can be easily brought into consciousness. This includes memories, feelings, and thoughts that are just below the surface of our awareness and can be easily accessed with a little effort or prompting.

The **unconscious state** refers to thoughts, feelings, and memories that are hidden from our awareness and cannot be easily accessed. According to Freud, the unconscious mind plays a significant role in shaping our behavior and personality, as it contains repressed memories and emotions that have been pushed down below the surface of consciousness.

The mind is like an iceberg, with only a small proportion of it visible above the surface but with a vast hidden bulk exerting its influence on the rest.

PERS 5 Freud's View of the Human Mind: The Mental Iceberg



Distinguishing the three systems within the mind

- According to Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis, the mind is divided into three parts: the id, the ego, and the superego. Each part of the mind has a different role in shaping our behavior and personality.
- The **id** is the primitive, instinctual part of the mind that is driven by the pleasure principle. It is the source of our most basic desires and impulses, such as hunger, thirst, and sexual desires. The id operates on a subconscious level and seeks immediate gratification of our desires without regard for social norms or consequences.
- The **ego** is the rational, logical part of the mind that operates on the reality principle. It helps us navigate the external world and make decisions that are based on logic and reason, rather than purely on instinctual desires. The ego seeks to find a balance between the desires of the id and the demands of the external world.
- The **superego** is the moral part of the mind that represents our internalized values, beliefs, and social norms. It operates on a subconscious level and seeks to control the impulses of the id through feelings of guilt, shame, and anxiety.

INSTINCTS OR DRIVES

- Freud believed that human behavior was driven by two main instincts: the life instinct, or Eros, and the death instinct, or Thanatos.
- The life instinct is the drive for self-preservation and the continuation of the species. It includes basic biological urges such as hunger, thirst, and sexual desires. According to Freud, the life instinct is the primary motivator of human behavior.
- The death instinct, on the other hand, is the drive towards self-destruction and the return to an inorganic state. It includes destructive behaviors such as aggression, self-harm, and the desire for death. According to Freud, the death instinct is a more primitive and less understood force than the life instinct, and it can manifest itself in destructive behaviors and impulses.

DEVELOPMENTAL ACCOUNT

- Freud places particular emphasis on the crucial importance of childhood for future psychological development. In fact, he didn't believe you could understand any adult without knowing about facets of their childhood, including various sexual stages of development.
- He believed that, if individuals don't develop properly then psychoanalysis may be the only way one can reverse the damage of childhood.

Diagnosis

MENTAL HARMONY

- Like Plato, Freud held that individual well-being, happiness, or mental harmony depends on a harmonious relationship between various parts of the mind, and between the whole person and society.
- The ego seeks to satisfy its demands, but if there is a dearth of opportunities to do this, pain and frustration ensue.

REPRESSION & NEUROSIS

- Freud believed that repression was a primary cause of neuroticism. If someone experience, drives, or desires (or beliefs) that conflict with standards or norms they are supposed to adhere to, then such feelings are often repressed.
- Repression is a defense mechanism used to avoid mental conflict. But repression ultimately doesn't work, for the desires or drives remain in the unconscious exerting their influence. They may lead to irrational behaviors that we cannot control. Furthermore, much of the blame for neuroses Freud attributes to the social world. Parents and other parts of culture may make unrealistic demands upon people.

Discussion

- Freud As Moralist
- All human behaviors don't seem driven by bodily needs. But Freud thought that our behavior shows that we operate according to "the pleasure principle." We generally seek satisfaction of our impulses. But this makes us seem like non-human animals despite the fact that we derive satisfaction from, for example, the intellectual and artistic.
- Freud replied that these "satisfactions are mild" compared to eating, drinking, and sex.
- But what of the satisfaction of friendship, parenting, music and more which are more reliable and lasting forms of satisfaction?
- As for Freudian drives, how many there are? How do we distinguish one from another? How do we know that some drive, say a sexual one, is behind different behaviors, say artistic expression? We can sometimes be self-destructive, but does this imply we have a death instinct?
- Are dreams significant or just cognitive noise?

The background features a light gray base with large, soft-edged organic shapes in muted red and olive green. A thin white line outlines a shape on the right. In the top left, there is a faint sketch of a leafy branch.

thank you