[Template:Other uses](/wiki/Template:Other_uses" \o "Template:Other uses) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Gaslight_1944_trailer(3).jpg)[Ingrid Bergman](/wiki/Ingrid_Bergman) in the 1944 film [*Gaslight*](/wiki/Gaslight_(1944_film))*.*

**Gaslighting** or **gas-lighting** is a form of [mental abuse](/wiki/Mental_abuse) in which a victim is manipulated into doubting their own [memory](/wiki/Memory), [perception](/wiki/Perception), and [sanity](/wiki/Sanity).[[1]](#cite_note-1)[[2]](#cite_note-2) Instances may range from the [denial](/wiki/Denial) by an abuser that previous abusive incidents ever occurred, up to the staging of bizarre events by the abuser with the intention of [disorienting](/wiki/Disorientation) the victim.

The term owes its origin to the 1938 play [*Gas Light*](/wiki/Gas_Light) and its film adaptations. The term has been used in clinical and research literature.[[3]](#cite_note-3)[[4]](#cite_note-4)

## Contents

* 1 Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]
* 2 Clinical examples[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]
  + 2.1 Introjection[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]
  + 2.2 Resisting[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]
* 3 In the media[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]
* 4 See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]
* 5 References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]
* 6 Further reading[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]
* 7 External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

## Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

The 1938 stage play [*Gas Light*](/wiki/Gas_Light), known as *Angel Street* in the United States, and the film adaptations released in [1940](/wiki/Gaslight_(1940_film)) and [1944](/wiki/Gaslight_(1944_film)) motivated the origin of the term because of the systematic [psychological manipulation](/wiki/Psychological_manipulation) used by the main character on a victim. The plot concerns a husband who attempts to convince his wife and others that she is insane by manipulating small elements of their environment, and subsequently insisting that she is mistaken, remembering things incorrectly, or delusional when she points out these changes. The original title stems from the dimming of the [gas lights](/wiki/Gas_lighting) in the house that happened when the husband was using the gas lights in the attic while searching for hidden treasure. The wife accurately notices the dimming lights and discusses the phenomenon, but the husband insists she just imagined a change in the level of illumination.

The term "gaslighting" has been used colloquially since the 1960s[[5]](#cite_note-5) to describe efforts to manipulate someone's sense of reality. In a 1980 book on [child sexual abuse](/wiki/Child_sexual_abuse), [Florence Rush](/wiki/Florence_Rush) summarized [George Cukor's](/wiki/George_Cukor) 1944 [film version](/wiki/Gaslight_(1944_film)) of *Gas Light,* and writes, "even today the word [gaslighting] is used to describe an attempt to destroy another's perception of reality."<ref name=Rush1992>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

## Clinical examples[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[Sociopaths](/wiki/Antisocial_personality_disorder) frequently use gaslighting tactics. Sociopaths consistently transgress social [mores](/wiki/Mores), break laws, and exploit others, but typically are also [charming](/wiki/Superficial_charm) and convincing [liars](/wiki/Lie) who consistently [deny](/wiki/Denial) wrongdoing. Thus, some who have been [victimized](/wiki/Victimized) by sociopaths may doubt their perceptions.<ref name=Stout2006>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

Some [physically abusive](/wiki/Physical_abuse) spouses may gaslight their partners by flatly denying that they have been violent.[[4]](#cite_note-4) Gaslighting describes a dynamic observed in some cases of marital infidelity: "Therapists may contribute to the victim's distress through mislabeling the woman's reactions. [...] The gaslighting behaviors of the spouse provide a recipe for the so-called '[nervous breakdown'](/wiki/Mental_breakdown) for some women [and] suicide in some of the worst situations."[[6]](#cite_note-6) Gaslighting may also occur in parent–child relationships, with either parent, child, or both, lying to each other and attempting to undermine perceptions.[[7]](#cite_note-7) Furthermore, gaslighting has been observed between patients and staff in inpatient psychiatric facilities.[[8]](#cite_note-8)

### Introjection[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

In an influential 1981 article *Some Clinical Consequences of Introjection: Gaslighting*, Calef and Weinshel argue that gaslighting involves the [projection](/wiki/Psychological_projection) and [introjection](/wiki/Introjection) of psychic conflicts from the perpetrator to the victim: "this imposition is based on a very special kind of 'transfer'... of painful and potentially painful mental conflicts."<ref name=WeinshelWallerstein2003>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

The authors explore a variety of reasons why the victims may have "a tendency to incorporate and assimilate what others externalize and project onto them," and conclude that gaslighting may be "a very complex highly structured configuration which encompasses contributions from many elements of the psychic apparatus."<ref name=WeinshelWallerstein2003/> Dorpat (1994) describes this as an example of [projective identification](/wiki/Projective_identification).[[2]](#cite_note-2)

### Resisting[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

With respect to women in particular, [Hilde Lindemann](/wiki/Hilde_Lindemann) argued emphatically that in such cases, the victim's ability to resist the manipulation depends on "her ability to trust her own judgments."<ref name=Nelson2001>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> Establishment of "counterstories" may help the victim reacquire "ordinary levels of free agency."<ref name=Nelson2001/>

## In the media[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

British film-maker [Adam Curtis](/wiki/Adam_Curtis) has suggested that "nonlinear" or ["asymmetric" war](/wiki/Asymmetric_warfare) (as described by [Vladislav Surkov](/wiki/Vladislav_Surkov), political advisor to [Vladimir Putin](/wiki/Vladimir_Putin)) is a form of gaslighting intended for political control.[[9]](#cite_note-9) A 2016 [domestic abuse](/wiki/Domestic_abuse) story line in the British radio soap opera [The Archers](/wiki/The_Archers) is considered to involve classic gaslighting.[[10]](#cite_note-10)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:Columns-list](/wiki/Template:Columns-list)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

## Further reading[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

* [Template:Cite journal](/wiki/Template:Cite_journal) [**Template:Subscription**](/wiki/Template:Subscription)
* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book) (thesis/dissertation) (offline resource)
* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book) (offline resource)
* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book) (limited preview available online)

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

* [*Gaslighting as a Manipulation Tactic: what it is, who does it, and why*](http://counsellingresource.com/features/2011/11/08/gaslighting/) by [George K. Simon](/wiki/George_K._Simon), Ph.D., article on the topic of gaslighting published by Counselling Resource on November 8, 2011
* Sarah Strudwick (November 16, 2010) [Dark Souls - Mind Games, Manipulation and Gaslighting](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwWBHRKFYCA&feature=youtu.be) based on her book *Dark Souls: Healing and Recovering from Toxic Relationships*

[Template:Abuse](/wiki/Template:Abuse) [Template:Bullying](/wiki/Template:Bullying) [Template:Gas Light](/wiki/Template:Gas_Light)

[Category:Bullying](/wiki/Category:Bullying) [Category:Deception](/wiki/Category:Deception) [Category:Mind control](/wiki/Category:Mind_control) [Category:Psychological abuse](/wiki/Category:Psychological_abuse) [Category:Denialism](/wiki/Category:Denialism)