

PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY OF PERSONALITY

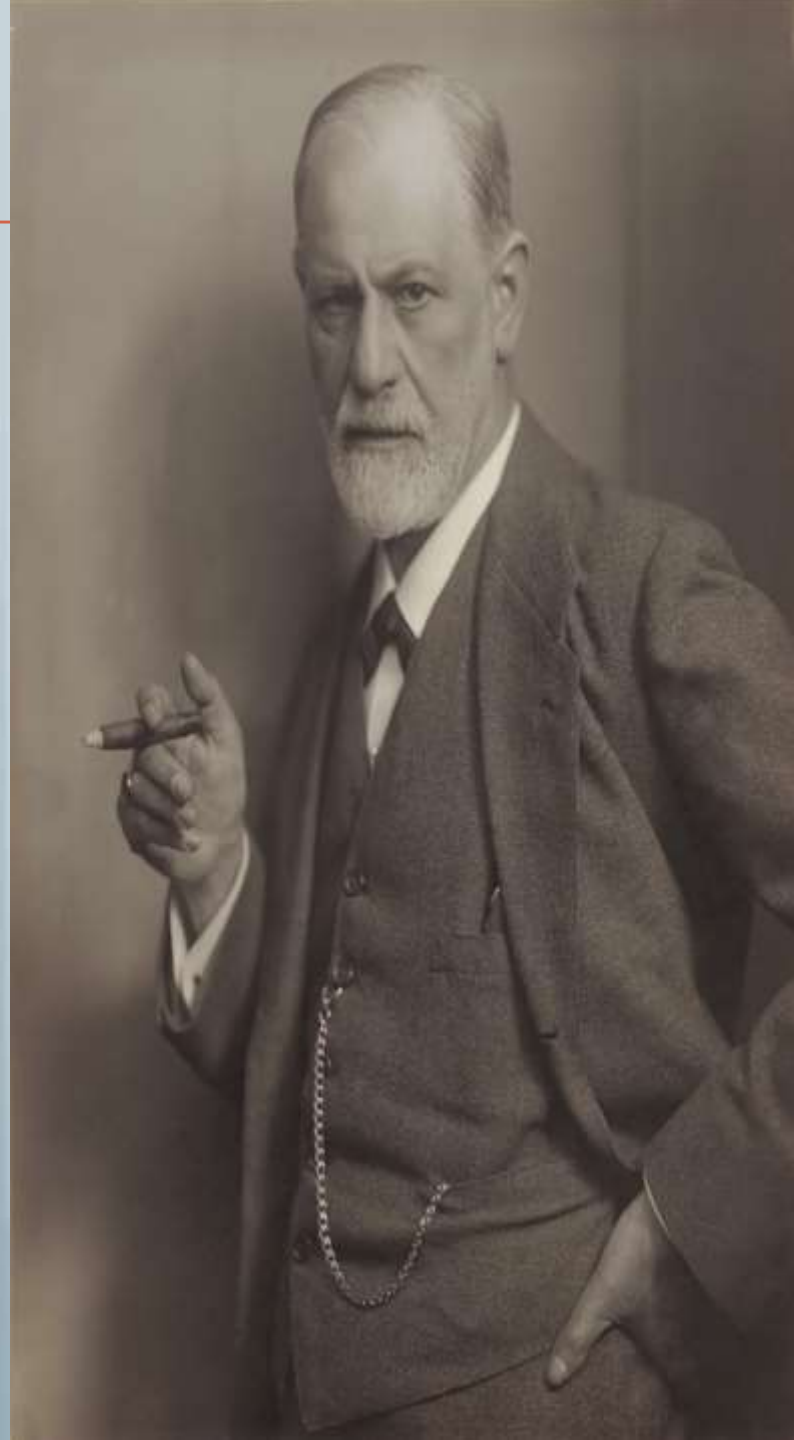
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PROPONENT:

Sigmund Freud

**(regarded as the Father of
Psychoanalysis)**



KEY FEATURES

Role of the **UNCONSCIOUS**;

Influence of **EARLY EXPERIENCES** in shaping personality;

Presence of different **PSYCHO-SEXUAL STAGES OF PERSONALITY**;

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

- Principle of **PSYCHIC DETERMINISM**:
- According to Freud, no aspect of human behaviour is accidental.

- Existence of an **UNCONSCIOUS LEVEL** of the mind:
- Role of the dynamic unconscious.

- **GOAL-DIRECTED BEHAVIOUR**:
- This principle asserts that all behaviour is motivated and goal-directed in nature.

- **DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH**:
- Adult behaviour derives from the experience of the growing child. In psychodynamics, the first five years of life are seen as the source of experiences and conflicts that are crucial to the development of personality.

FIVE DIFFERENT ASPECTS: META-PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH IN PERSONALITY



Topographical
aspect

**Structural
aspect**

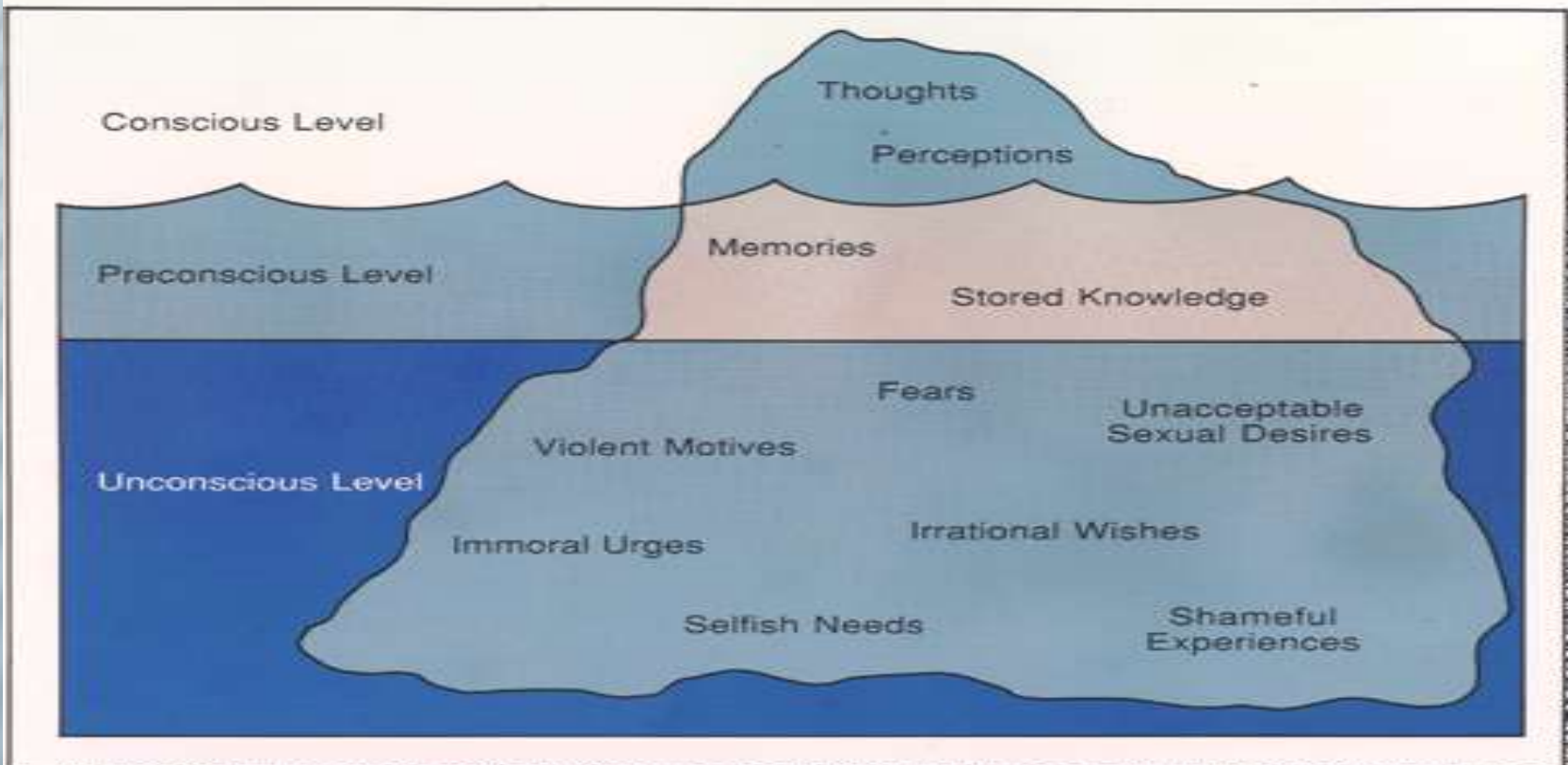
**Genetic
aspect**

**Dynamic
aspect**

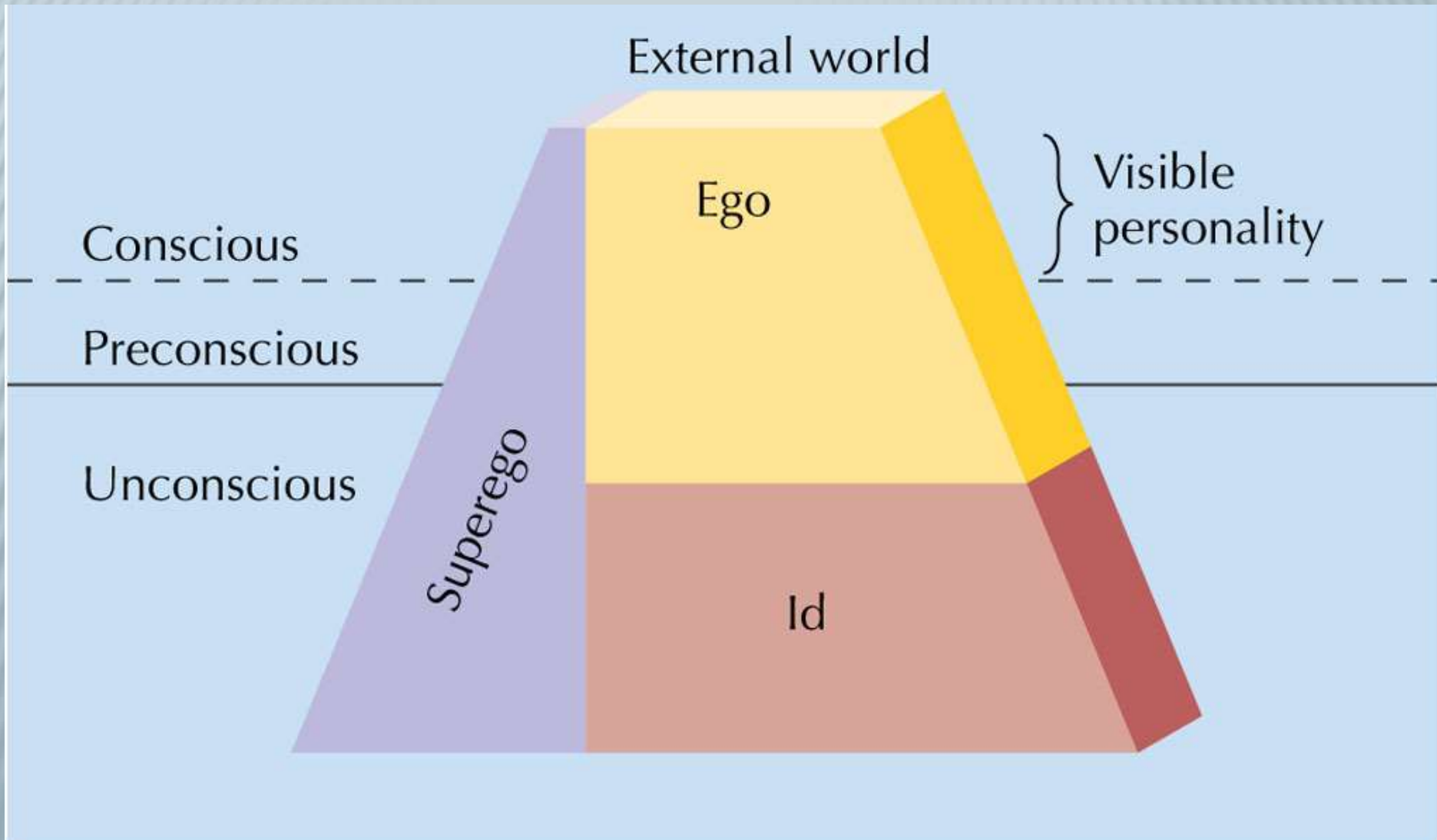
**Economic
aspect**

I. TOPOGRAPHICAL THEORY OF MIND

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



II. STRUCTURAL THEORY OF PERSONALITY



ID

- × Innate biological instincts and urges; self-serving, irrational, and totally unconscious
- × Works on **PLEASURE PRINCIPLE**: Wishes to have its desires (pleasurable) satisfied **NOW**, without waiting and regardless of the consequences

EGO

- × Executive; directs Id energies
 - + Partially conscious and partially unconscious
 - + Works on **REALITY PRINCIPLE**: Delays action until it is practical and/or appropriate

SUPEREGO

- × **Judge or censor for thoughts and actions** of the ego
 - + Superego comes from our parents or caregivers; guilt comes from the superego
- × Two parts:
 - + **CONSCIENCE**: Reflects actions for which a person has been punished
 - + **EGO IDEAL**: Second part of the superego; reflects behavior one's parents approved of or rewarded

III. GENETIC ASPECT OF PERSONALITY

Is based on two premises:

- The first, the genetic approach, emphasizes that **adult personality is shaped by various types of early childhood experiences.**
- The second is that a **certain amount of sexual energy (libido) is present at birth and thereafter progresses through a series of psychosexual stages** that are rooted in the instinctual processes of the organism.

LIBIDO has been conceived of by Freud to be an **energy-force** that was capable of multiple shifts and transformation, within the psychic system. It is the basic mental fuel in one's life. It is of two types:

- × **Eros (life energy)**
- × **Thanatos (death energy)**

Eros refers to the whole complex of **life-preservative instincts**. It has been regarded as the Greek God of love.

Thanatos (Greek God of Death) refers to the theoretical **generalized instinct for death**, as expressed in such behaviours as denial, rejection and turning away from pleasure.

FREUDIAN PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

- × Develops in stages; everyone goes through same stages in same order
- × Majority of personality is formed before age 6
- × **Erogenous Zone:** Area of the body capable of producing pleasure
- × **Fixation:** Unresolved conflict or emotional hang-up caused by overindulgence or frustration

- ✗ **Oral stage (Birth -18 months)**

Oral cavity – erogenous zone; activity: sucking & biting

- ✗ **Anal stage (18 months – 3 yrs.)**

Anal sphincter muscles – erogenous zone; activity: expulsion & retention

- ✗ **Phallic stage (3 yrs. – 6 yrs.)**

Phallus: erogenous zone

Oedipus & Electra Complex; activity: affinity toward opposite sex parent

- ✗ **Latency stage (7 yrs – 11 yrs.)**

Dormant stage; activity; same-sex peer affiliation

- ✗ **Genital stage (Puberty – Adulthood)**

Genital area: Erogenous zone; activity; mature heterosexual relationship

Stage (approximate ages)	Sexual Interests at This Stage	Effects of Fixation
<i>Oral stage</i> (birth to 1 year)	Sucking, swallowing, biting	Lasting concerns with dependence and independence; pleasure from eating, drinking, and other oral activities
<i>Anal stage</i> (1 to 3 years)	Expelling feces, retaining feces	Orderliness, stinginess, stubbornness
<i>Phallic stage</i> (3 to 5 or 6 years)	Touching penis or clitoris; Oedipus complex	Difficulty feeling closeness. Males: fear of castration Females: penis envy
<i>Latency period</i> (5 or 6 to puberty)	Sexual interests suppressed	—
<i>Genital stage</i> (puberty onward)	Sexual contact with other people	—

Table 1: Freud's Stages of Psychosexual Development

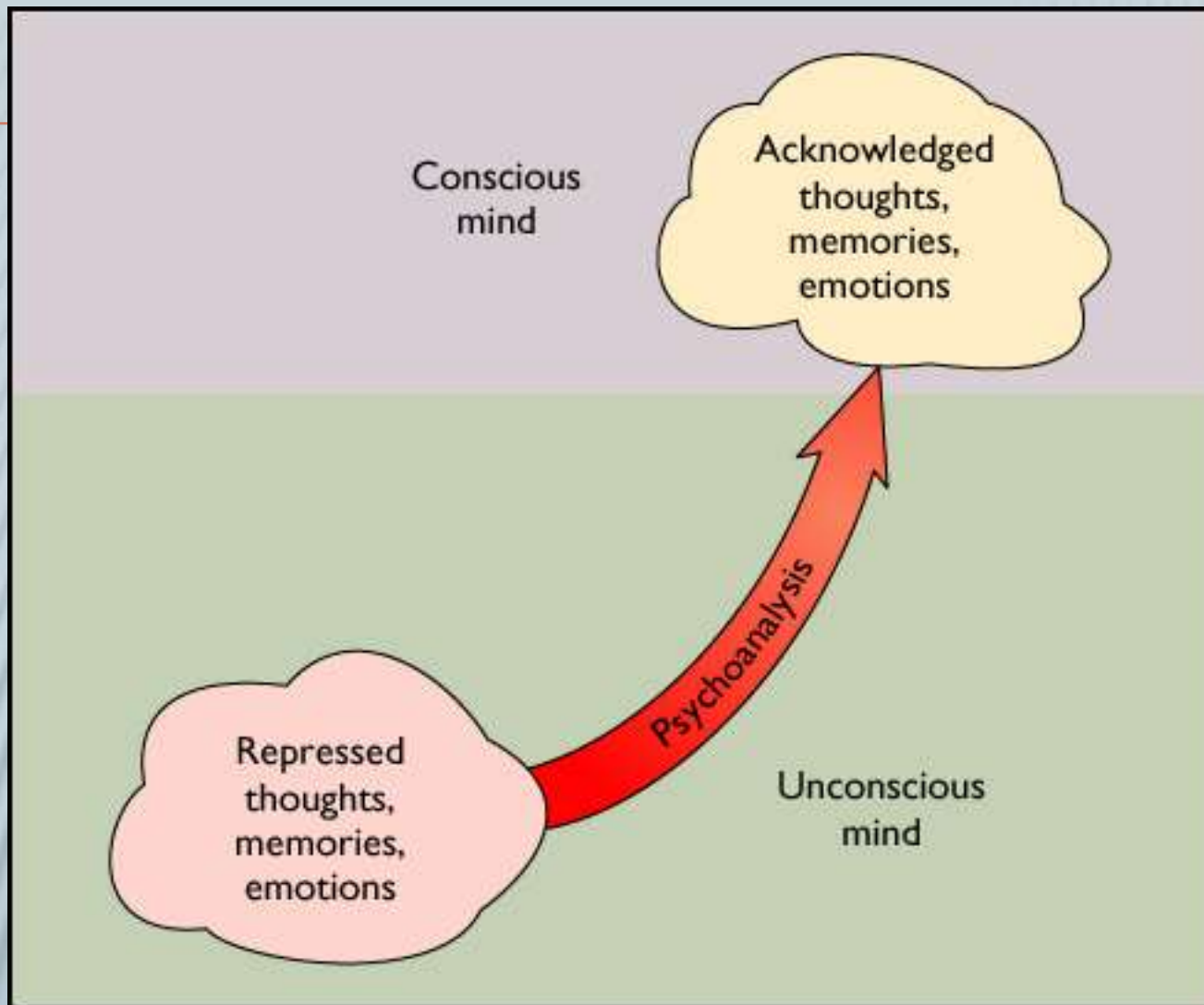


Figure 3: Freud believed that psychoanalysis could bring parts of the unconscious into the conscious mind, where the client could deal with them.

IV. DYNAMIC ASPECT OF PERSONALITY/ INSTINCT/ DRIVE THEORY

- × There are psychological forces.
- × The psychological forces are defined by their direction and magnitude.
- × The effect of simultaneously acting psychological forces may be the simple resultant of the work of each of these forces or may not hold true.

FEATURES OF AN INSTINCT

SOURCE: The source of the instinct is the bodily condition or need from which it arises. The source of life instincts are clearly embedded in neurophysiology.

Eg. Hunger, thirst

AIM: The aim of an instinct is always to abolish or reduce the excitation/ tension deriving from its need, i.e., to seek immediate gratification while that of a wish is to seek gratification only.

OBJECT: The object refers to any person or thing in the environment or within the individual's own body that provides for the satisfaction (i.e., the aim) of an instinct.

IMPETUS: The impetus refers to the amount of energy force or pressure that is used to satisfy or gratify the instinct.

V. ECONOMIC POINT OF VIEW/ ECONOMIC ASPECT OF PERSONALITY

Assumptions:

- × There are **psychological energies**.
- × Psychological energies follow a **law of conservation**.
- × Psychological energies are subject to a **law of entropy**, ie., they seek a state of balance or equilibrium.
- × Psychological energies are **subject to transformations**.

FREUDIAN DEFENSE MECHANISMS:

Habitual and unconscious (in most cases) psychological processes designed to reduce anxiety.

Adopted by the Ego to adapt to situations.

FREUDIAN DEFENSE MECHANISMS: SOME EXAMPLES

- × **DENIAL:** Most primitive; refusing to believe, denying reality; usually occurs with death and illness
- × **REPRESSION:** When painful memories, anxieties, and so on are held out of our awareness
- × **PROJECTION:** When one's own feelings, shortcomings, or unacceptable traits and impulses are seen in others; exaggerating negative traits in others lowers anxiety
- × **RATIONALIZATION:** Justifying personal actions by giving “rational” but false reasons for them
- × **REACTION FORMATION:** Impulses are repressed and the opposite behavior is *exaggerated*

CLASSIFICATION OF DEFENSE MECHANISMS:

- Denial
- Distortion
- Projection

- Acting out
- Blocking
- Introjection'
- Regression
- Somatization etc.

Narcissistic

Immature

Mature

Neurotic

- Altruism
- Sublimation
- Humour etc.

- Displacement
- Rationalization
- Reaction formation
- Repression etc.