

SIGMUND FREUD

IS THERE MORE TO US THAN WE THINK? (OR PERHAPS LESS?)

Presentation to Pinner Philosophy Group
3rd December 2025
Peter Lawson

The Central Question

- The question has been asked as to whether the premise should be reworded to, "Is there less to us than we think"?
- Although that reworded question might seem to mean the opposite, it can also be interpreted as the same question, alluding to the contention either way that what you see in another person, or what we see in ourselves, is not necessarily in line with reality.

Life & Context (1856–1939)

- Born in Moravia; raised in Vienna's Jewish community
- 20 Maresfield Gardens, NW3 is a wonderful empirical backdrop
- Complex relationship with Judaism: described himself as a "godless Jew"
- Yet identified with Jewish intellectual traditions and Talmudic hermeneutics
- His emphasis on textual interpretation mirrors Jewish scholarship methods

Influence on Psychiatry

- I often wonder how psychiatry and associated understandings about human beings would have been different had he not lived.
- I have similar thoughts about all sorts of individuals down the years. I often conjecture about there being and there having been non-existent individuals who might have lived and changed the world.
- British awareness of him might have been different had he not lived here at the very end of his life.



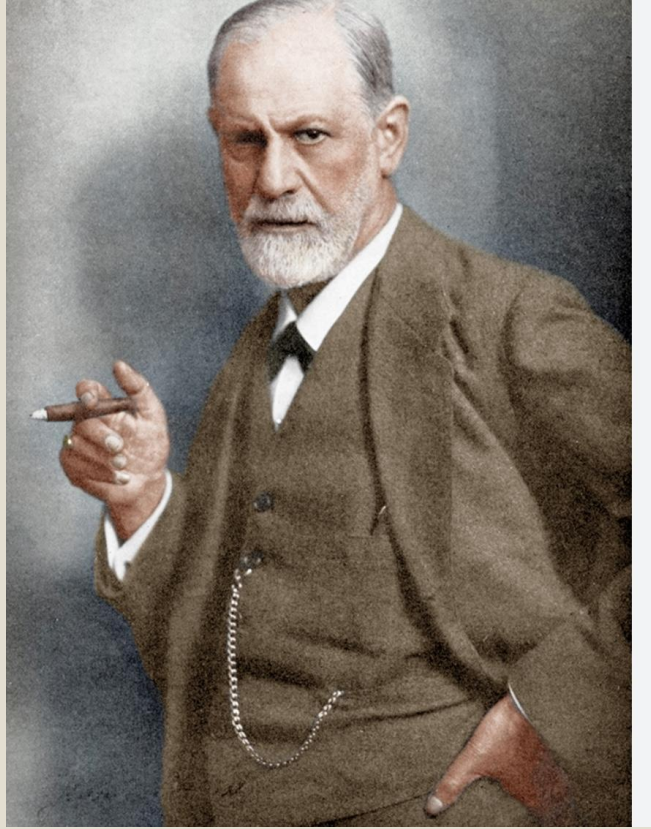
The Paradox: Breaking Down Preconception

- There is a fascinating disjunction: he breaks down preconception in his patients and facilitates the emergence of a new gestalt within them, yet hangs rigidly onto his own diagnostic frameworks.
- He allows himself to be hidebound by learnt attitudes and behaviours, while proscribing the same in his patients. How well did he even know himself?

His Own Childhood

- Eight children in the family, six siblings
- Sigmund had his own room in a 3-bedroom apartment
- As a child he complained about noise of his sister's piano practice
- The bulky Steinway was gone in 24 hours
- It was said he never questioned his own solipsism in this and other connections





20 Maresfield Gardens



Early Influence: Jean-Martin Charcot

- Freud started in neurology
- Spent several months at age 29 studying under Charcot in Paris
- Developed understanding of hysteria and hypnosis
- He called his first son Jean-Martin

J-M Charcot



The Shift: Neurology to Psychology

- **Legitimising psychological causes:** Physical and organic illness have psychological roots. Essential relationship between auto-suggestion and pathology.
- **Power of the unconscious:** Half the time we've no idea why we feel as we do—a hijacking of consciousness and physical body.
- **The talking cure:** The mapping of id, ego and superego. Structure and dynamics of the self.

The Body and Frame of Mind

- We all know that the body can change its constitution derivative from frame of mind: headaches, arousal, bowel movement, sweating.
- From the moment Freud began using hypnosis, mainly treating "hysterical women", he claimed he cured them. Symptoms have causes that are not physical.

On Hysteria

- Hysteria: not just in a philological sense, but in a semantic one too—is this word misogynistic?
- What about emotional gerrymandering in the attribution of hysteria? Good Friday story.
- Symptoms have causes that are not physical . (Holland & Barratt story)
- While in France, Freud could not persuade Parisians he was speaking comprehensible French. (Speak more loudly; they'll understand.)
- Once again, how well did he even know himself?

Psychosexual Development (Controversial)

- The psychosexual stages of development have taken the most notable kicking. Much of this is conjectural at best.
- **The Oral Phase:** First of all. Taking pleasure from operating via the mouth. Various embodiments: sucking, eating, shouting, etc.
- **The Anal Stage (1 to 3 years):** Anally retentive and expulsive. There is more sense here. Strange that the word 'anal' is so much a part of contemporary language.

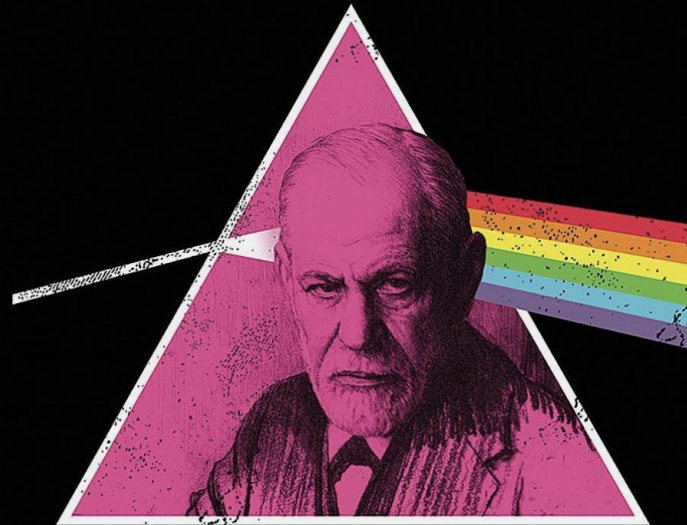
On Anal Retentiveness

- Some have argued that capitalism—while being entirely defensible economically—can easily subside into, and be attributed to, retentiveness.
- Computers can be said to be retentive of information; a useful paradigm to see the positives and negatives.
- Freud argued that retentiveness is not just a constipational negative.
- It can be positive, acting as a repository allowing the child to be a mannequin and make of him or herself what they will.

The Phallic Stage

- Ages 3 to 6, with the Oedipal/Electra stage beginning at ages 4 or 5 in boys
- Sexual desire is desire to possess
- Father as rival; father senses and fears castration
- This impedes the father/son relationship

PINK FREUD



THE DARK SIDE OF YOUR MOM

Latency Stage

Latency is pre-pubescent. Sublimation of sexualised urges. The individual constructs a calm before the adolescent storm by committing to activities such as sport and schoolwork.

Key Objections

- Lack of empirical evidence for these stages
- Strange that someone so disposed to analysing nuances failed to account for cultural differences
- No room for differences from New York to Papua New Guinea; nor from ancient times to modern
- A centrality about heterosexuality in Freud's constructs

In Defence of Pioneering Genius

- It's too easy to criticise creativity with hindsight. We must build tolerance into our critiques that such a pioneering genius was going to make mistakes.
- Ernest Rutherford was a pioneering researcher in atomic physics, but he made errors revealed by successors. These should not be a green light for researchers to traduce those who came before with astonishing insight. Churlish and insulting.

Freud & Homosexuality

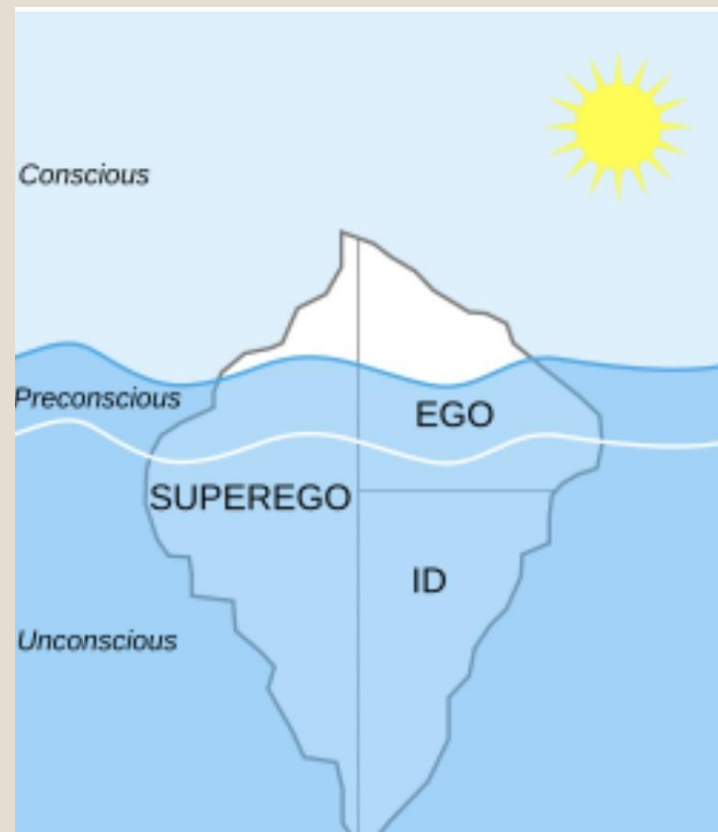
- Centricity about heterosexuality in Freud's constructs
- Conservative and censorious in context of homosexuality
- Later became more tolerant
- His own daughter Anna was probably a lesbian, conducting an affair with Dorothy Burlingham
- Unclear whether changing tides of his mind were independent or predicated on personal connection

Consciousness: Three Levels

- **Conscious:** What we are aware of
- **Preconscious:** Extension to conscious (having someone's phone number in the back of your mind you can readily retrieve)
- **Unconscious:** The element which evinces a self not known to oneself

The Consciousness as Iceberg

- Abuse and ill-treatment until age 3: no memory of it, but patterning of one's life according to it
- As for what's below the visibility line, it could be said to be a riddle wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma
- Possibility that with maturation, your person enables the healing with time of wounds caused by trauma
- Why necessarily would you want to bash off all the scabs that have organically formed as your knees' guardian angel?



Hypnosis as Revelator

- Does it work? Not for me, unfortunately.
- People isolate hypnosis into a hidebound and bewitching context as something done by psychiatrists or comedians with pocket watches
- Semi-hypnosis of journey to work or reading a boring book
- To be hoped that the genie released is one who is curative if not preventative

Therapeutic Hypnosis & the Bogeyman

- The goal of therapeutic hypnosis: the bogeyman of one's life took up residence in one's psyche at a stage when a child was unable to sift, doubt and process the authenticity of the bogeyman.
- It becomes concretised by lack of therapeutic attention, force of habit, and nursing of them as false friends. They introduce neurosis which the patient clings onto for fear of finding worse if released into the ether.
- There are many evil people out there who plant these demons. Ambulance chasers.
- In thew context of our myriad fallibilities and epistemological impotence, we are always like to be that vulnerable child

Religious Dogma & Consciousness

- Religious dogma defines the prescribed consciousness of the deity required by orthodoxy
- Over-simplistic, especially regarding sleep, amnesia, dementia—during which prescribed consciousness is not there
- Believers often say God takes everything into account, but this contradicts the bald question: "Have you adopted Christ as your redeemer? Yes or no?"

Freudian Slips: Parapraxes

- Slips represent confusion between two iterations of ourselves
- Perhaps redolent of Jung's 'Shadow Self'
- The slip reveals something unspoken or unknown to the utterer
- The unconscious mind finds expression for the slip of the tongue (spoonerised)
- MP from Hull Central. Victoria Derbyshire
- Tram story
- JP Morgan story

Minna Bernays

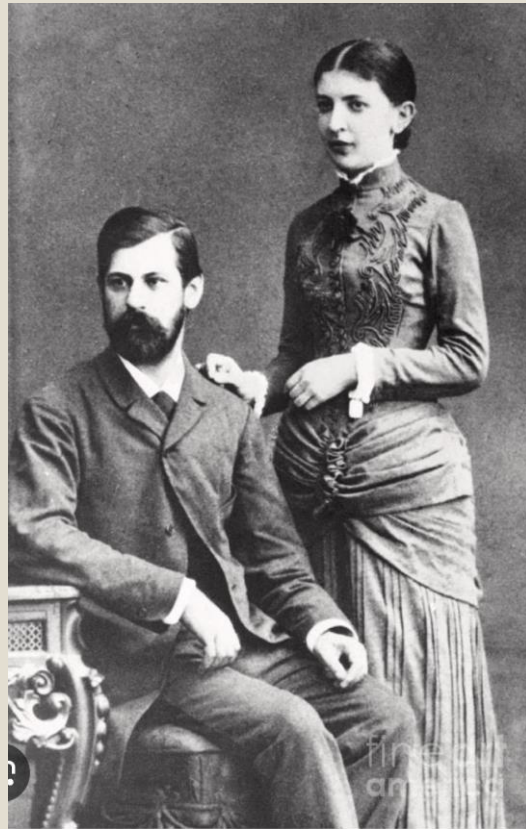
Without conclusive evidence, there was much gossip about an affair Sigmund had with Minna Bernays, who was far more intellectual than her Hausfrau sister, Martha.

Story of Clamence in 'La Chute' by Albert Camus. Casuistry; cognitive dissonance

Minna Bernays



Sigmund mit Martha



William James (1842–1910)

- "A man has as many social selves as there are distinct groups of people."
- We have glaring contradictions even at a conscious level, and attendant duplicity.

William James



Multiple Personas

- First awareness of this at university—not knowing how to mix discrete friendship groups
- Our diction, phrasing and spoken register alter depending on interlocutor
- Is this pusillanimous and hypocritical or pragmatic and considerate?
- We all adopt the personas of those around us, and hope they counterbalance by copying us
- Social proof; consensus validation

Truthfulness

It is taken as an axiom that truthfulness is the best option in life, firstly on an ethical basis (thereby humanising), but also on a practical level—it is easy to forget which lies one has told to whom.

The Surface Self

- Music tastes: we adopt different personas regarding aesthetic preference
- Traffic behaviour: we hide who we are as pedestrians (YouTube video)
- Grammatical correctness: I have two personas
- Judging physical appearance: one where I judge criteria (tattoos etc); one where I do not

On Crying

- We recently saw Rachel Reeves and Penny Mordaunt in tears in the House of Commons. The notion that women are weaker emotionally than men is preposterous, so what is going on here?
- I tend to the view that by suppressing their tears, men are repressing themselves.

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/USecYdDob18?app=desktop&cbrd=1&ucbcb=1>

The Paradox of Generosity

Generosity is so rewarding to be generous. This is counterintuitive from the point of being happy owing to a dwindling bank balance, but endorphins flow very pleasingly in ourselves when generous.

On Saying "I'm Sorry"

- One of the centralities of the hypocrisy of the double persona is embodied in "I'm sorry"
- Much of the time we mean "I'm sorry I was caught out"
- We also allow ourselves to self-refract into a different individual depending on circumstance
- Woody Allen story

The Psychopathology of Everyday Life (1901–1904)

- Considering numerous cases of deviations, Freud concludes the boundary between normal and abnormal psyche is unstable—we are all a bit neurotic.
- Such symptoms disrupt eating, sexual relations, work, and communication. The pathology unseats and hijacks the original self. Freud noted there is no limit to how long unconscious imagery dwells in the psyche.
- Within years, the book became well-known. When at sea to the USA in 1909, Freud noticed his cabin boy had a copy. (Einstein story)

6th floor Berlin

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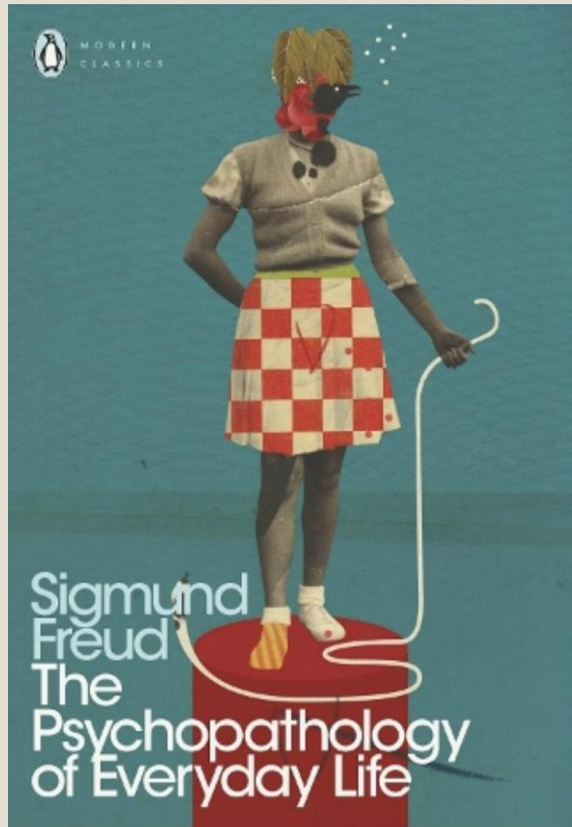
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PSYCHOPATHOLOGY
OF EVERYDAY LIFE
SIGMUND FREUD

COMPLETE



UNABRIDGED



Sigmund
Freud
The
Psychopathology
of Everyday Life

Hysteria & Mass Pathology

- Witch hunts, *The Crucible* (Arthur Miller), Pogroms, Beatles' records being burnt
- Hysteria is real, as is the attendant refraction splintering of personality
- (Though imputation solely to women is absurd)
- We sometimes do not face our own hypocrisy, adhering to morally upstanding ethics in one context while failing to hold to such laudatory ethics in an analogous situation. (Beckham scenario)

The Societal Self

- We all have a public self which is curated and at odds with the self we share with ourselves. This societal self is almost always more prudish and less prurient than the self we do not share.
- A chief reason: we have a default not to stray from safe, collective positions of morality.

On Language & Censorship

- Asterisks in print replace language we fear might betray vulgarity
- Euphemisms like "the N word" or "the C word" play the same role
- All language when used abusively could be effaced, but reporting news should not be fettered
- Words themselves carry no meaning—offensive or otherwise
- It is not the word that is offensive; it is the connotation

Reporters' Duty

- Reporters should have a duty to say or write what has happened, all the more so if something offensive has been said or written.
- It is often said readers' and listeners' sensitivities must be respected in reporting. But by this token, the words Hitler and Auschwitz should also be asterisked.
- Letter to The Times as follows:

Editorial Style

- Sir, In your editorial about a backbencher's response to the budget yesterday, you wrote that he had called the Chancellor a p****. Could I ask whether you meant a p**** or a p****?

How Easily Our Emotions Are Manipulated

- It is relatively straightforward to demonstrate how easily manipulatable our emotions are by circumstance.
- Two versions of a story about a housefire yield very different emotional responses.

Nazism: Evil Beneath Respectability

- The social self can be a mask covering one's evil underneath. There is a remarkable documentary by Alain Resnais (1955): "Nuit et Brouillard" (30 minutes).
- Regarding the social self, what is shocking is the insidiousness of Nazism—the self-conferred licence of respectability was precisely the anaesthetising influence on their conscience that allowed them to do what they did.

Two photos follow



Nuit et brouillard - Alain Resnais



Nuit et brouillard - Alain Resnais

Dreams

- Wish fulfilment is self-evidently an aspect of oneself not played out in everyday life. The classic Freudian interpretation is that dreams embody wish fulfilment.
- From personal experience, I must disagree. I find them preponderantly to figure a dreaded scenario. Leitmotif dreams reveal persistent fears. Rugby and herrings are not to you what they are to me.

Reality as Perception

- Reality is perceptual, not objective. If I got a broken nose playing rugby and don't like rugby, I won't perceive it reflective of another person's perception.
- This is a Proustian idea. Everyone knows about the madeleine cake.
- Our adopted self shifts significantly, contingent either on others' perception or on our own perception at different times or circumstances.

The Ego Not Master

- "The ego is not master in its own house"
- Painting a self buffeted by waves of circumstance, it is hardly surprising Freud wrote this. We are not unified, transparent beings.

Id, Ego & Superego

Later developed into the tripartite model, illustrating we are not unified beings. Instead, we are battlegrounds of competing forces most of which operate outside awareness.

The Id: The Hidden Engine

- Unconscious and not directly experienced by us
- Primitive instinct tool present from birth
- Operates on the pleasure principle
- Contains raw sexual and aggressive drives, basic needs and desires
- Not concerned with reality, morality or consequences—just instant gratification
- When you feel inexplicable surge of anger or inappropriate attraction—this is the id pushing from below

The Superego: The Internalised Judge

- Largely unconscious
- Develops through childhood as we internalise parents and society's moral standards
- Our conscience and embodies what we aspire to be
- We do not often realise why we feel guilt, shame or anxiety
- Operates like internal critic we cannot switch off, punishing us with feelings we cannot always interpret

The Ego: The Struggling Mediator

- Partly conscious, partly unconscious
- Attempts to balance demands of id and moral constraints of superego
- The ego uses defence mechanisms
- Relatively easy to track when conscious, but most operate unconsciously
- You don't decide to deploy denial or repression—they happen automatically
- These protect from anxiety hovering just out of awareness

Homosexuality & Social Validation

- Most people recognise homosexuality is more apparent now. Partly attributable to decriminalisation in UK (1967). Mainstream acceptability has validated many people coming out who yesteryear would have repressed who they were.
- Such release buttons are to be cherished. I sense preponderance in society that homophobia is ludicrous.

Freud's Revolutionary Model

- What we think we are—our conscious rational self—is the ego's conscious aspect trying to navigate between forces of which we are not fully aware.
- The person we present to others, and even to ourselves, is a compromise formation. Our actual motivations, true desires and fears are largely hidden.

Self-Knowledge & Hidden Forces

- For Freud, self-knowledge requires excavation given the conscious mind is routinely involved in acts of self-deception. Elemental acts such as choice of life partner are often engaged in according to these hidden factors.
- He believed we are mysteries to ourselves, conscious intentions are post hoc rationalisations, and genuine self-understanding requires looking beneath surface at forces we might prefer not to see.

Post Hoc Rationalisations

We create plausible explanations for our behaviour after the fact without realising unconscious motives that have driven us. It is a network of internalised sophistry.

Case Study: The Cold Woman

- A man with a censorious, critical mother finds himself attracted to cold, emotionally unavailable women who treat him poorly. When questioned, he says he likes independent, strong women, he likes a challenge, and other women are too clinging.
- Freud might say the man is compulsively trying to win love and approval he never got from his mother, unconsciously attempting to resolve that childhood wound. The rational explanation protects from uncomfortable truths.

More Examples

- threatened by that person
- Forgetting a dental appointment because one is scared of drills
- Criticising a trait in somebody that they unconsciously possess themselves, believing they are just being honest (projection)
- Alligators in front garden

Irish Hospitality

I often wonder about Hitler or Stalin being prepared to be psychoanalysed. When looking at footage of Martin McGuinness and Ian Paisley breaking bread together, I wonder if they had been on a couch.

Hatred, bigotry and remorseless violence metamorphose into bonhomie and giggling affability.



Plato's Charioteer (Phaedrus)

- **Noble horse:** Spirit/thumos—sense of honour, pride, righteous emotion
- **Unruly horse:** Appetite/epithymia—base desires and physical cravings
- **Charioteer:** Reason/logos—guides toward philosophical truth

Mapping Plato to Freud

- The charioteer can be seen to map onto the ego, both being mediators trying to navigate reality while managing competing internal forces.
- The charioteer balances the horses' different natures; the ego mediates between id and superego while dealing with external reality.

The Iliad: Internal Deliberation

- Scene in the Iliad where Achilles engages in internal deliberation, speaking with his soul (psyche). He debates two possible life paths.
- His mother Thetis prophesied he has two fates: stay at Troy, win eternal glory but die young; or return home for long, obscure life. He also debates whether to kill Agamemnon or restrain himself (ultimately does latter).
- Internal conflicts could be read through a proto-Freudian lens.

Politics & The Double Persona

- John McCain's 2008 concession speech: only gracious one of its kind ever heard
- Rachel Reeves and Sir Keir seem to be making it up as they go along—adopting positions representing pragmatism of retaining power
- New Labour in 1997 was first time this really reared up. Perhaps Kinnock to small extent. Mrs Thatcher had stiff creases ironed out. (Python story)

Democratic Celebration

- Does the fact that politicians do not celebrate victories of opponents represent triumph of baser forces within them, over celebration that people have voted?
- There is loud rhetoric that democracy is paramount. Should this not trump ephemeral disappointment of losing?

Socrates: Scepticism About Democracy

- Socrates believed voting was a skill requiring knowledge and wisdom, not random intuition
- Pessimistic about democracy—compared it to a ship where only skilled navigators should be in charge
- Feared uneducated masses would be swayed by demagogues using charisma and empty promises
- This leads to societal shipwreck

Jokes (1905)

- Freud wrote a whole book about jokes and what they reveal. He felt jokes were a way of releasing expressed aggression in such a way you would not have to play out that aggression.
- The humoristic context legitimised the cathartic expression of an unpleasant thought or emotion. Do I deserve opprobrium for telling an Irish joke?
- Restaurant joke

Woke, Cancel Culture & Catharsis

- This chimes extraordinarily with contemporary sensibilities and current argument about concepts loosely framed as 'woke' and 'cancel culture'.
- Should Alf Garnett and the Major in Fawlty Towers be cancelled? Writers say humour is at the expense of the bigots, not concordant with their views.
- On basis that claims are valid, the view that laughter is cathartic (betraying latent prejudice) might hold water.

A Freudian Joke

- "My therapist says I have a preoccupation with vengeance. We'll see about that."
- Very innocuous joke. Let us enjoy socially inappropriate aggressive thought by framing it as self-aware humour about therapy itself.

Behaviourism: There is **LESS** to us than we think

- A counter-philosophy usually associated with John B. Watson (1878–1958) and B. F. Skinner (1904–1990).
- These men posited the florid pretentiousness of Freud's convoluted theories about the 'inner life'.

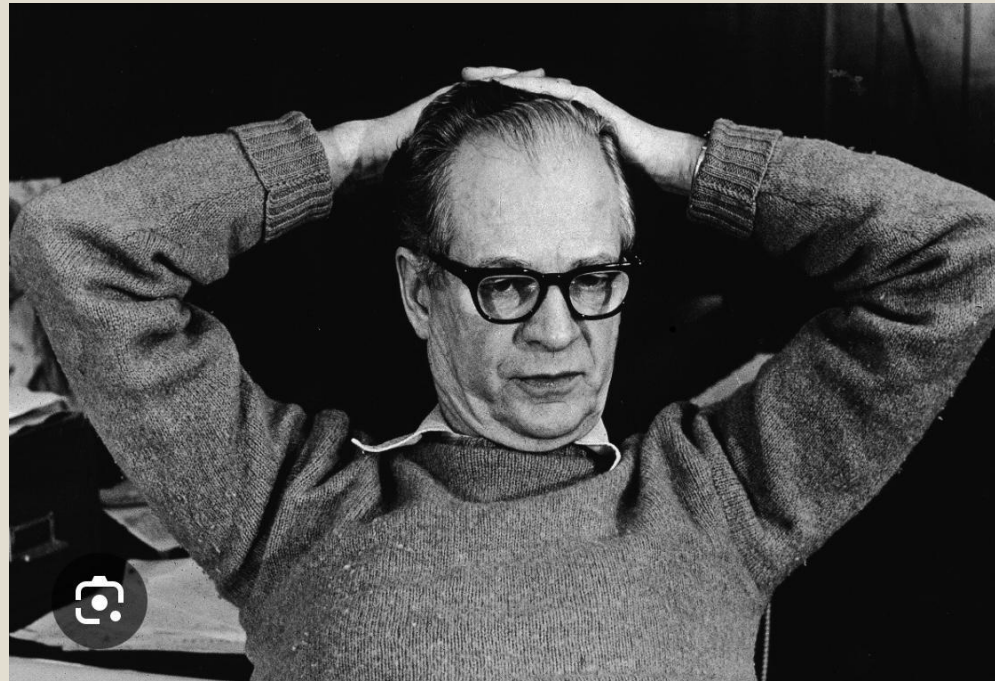
J. M. Watson



John B. Watson: Founder of Behaviourism

- Psychology should focus only on observable behaviour, not consciousness or introspection
- Rejected discussion of internal mental states or feelings as causes of behaviour
- Called these things part of the "black box"
- Viewed internal mental states as unnecessary to explain behaviour

B. F. Skinner



B. F. Skinner's Model

- Explained all behaviour by looking at: stimuli (what happens to us), responses (what we do), consequences (reinforcement or punishment).
- While Freud looked below consciousness tip, seeing churn of unconscious repression, Skinner traduced this unhelpful conjecture.
- Explained behaviour via observable environmental contingencies, not what he called invisible mental ghosts.

Internal States as Vague Language

- To talk about internal states is vague, imprecise language describing behavioural patterns shaped by reinforcement history.
- We are all aware of Pavlov's dogs and that pets respond to treats or punishment. Most dog owners think unless you treat them tough, you become the supplicant. Dogs have owners; cats have staff.

Skinner on Psychoanalysis Risks

- Skinner believed dangers of psychoanalysis are tantamount to those engendered by an incompetent surgeon.
- Given inherent suggestibility of many patients who choose Freudian enquiry, opportunities for charlatanry are tempting and lucrative in equal measure.

Simplicity's Double Edge

The simplicity of Skinner's philosophy is its attraction and its undoing. I am seeing barbarisms such as aversion therapy as having their roots in Skinner's discourse.

Defence Mechanisms & Survival

- We sometimes jump on an interpretational bandwagon and fail to take account of defence mechanisms' role in survival. We need them.
- We need to eat and concentrate on food, but must also be aware of predation and need to defend ourselves. One part of brain deals with job at hand; another, less visible, deals with contextual matters.

Political Leaders & Hidden Trauma

- Vladimir Putin, Bibi Netanyahu, and Hamas leaders are each dealing with something. Do they fully understand antecedents of contexts in which they act? Do they comprehend consequences? Do any of us?
- Are they able fully to place value on trauma and how it interlaces with geopolitics? I would love to know their dreams.

Personal Trauma & World Events

Freud would have argued that the actions of such men are attributable in some measure to their own pasts. It is sobering to think perhaps one man's maternal rejection and forgotten setbacks were causal to some degree of the Holocaust.

Hitler's Self-Reinforcing Delusion

- Hitler engineered mechanisms (propaganda, ritual, spectacle, suppression of dissent) that produced crowd responses he consumed as external validation.
- Each circle reinforces next: he creates conditions for acclaim, receives acclaim, interprets as independent verification of righteousness, emboldening more extreme actions, generating more orchestrated enthusiasm, spiralling inward toward concentrated delusion.
- Something Dante-esque in this hellish concentricity.

Freud & Organised Religion

- Freud was sceptical about organised religion, not least on grounds that clear mimesis going on in group worship situations.
- There is hegemony exercised by majority that naturally inveigles some outsiders. Fashion in naming babies: very few called Cyril or Brian anymore. Parents genuinely feel these are ugly names, not noticing aesthetic judgment not independently wrought.

Pascal's Wager

- Pascal (a Jansenist) exhorted faith in Christ to cynics: Christians go to heaven, everyone else to hell. It's a win/win. If Christianity untrue, you've lost nothing.
- Yet obviously, one possible outcome never occurs to him: What if another exclusive religion is true, and not Christianity?
- Blaise Pascal was serious theologian, but I feel his rationale was flawed.

Logical Flaws

- All cows are animals; some animals eat grass. Therefore, some cows eat grass.
- Sounds terribly plausible and logically tight, but is flawed. I do see Pascal's wager as shtik too. He was a man with fine mind whose belief structures were clearly refracted by circumstance.

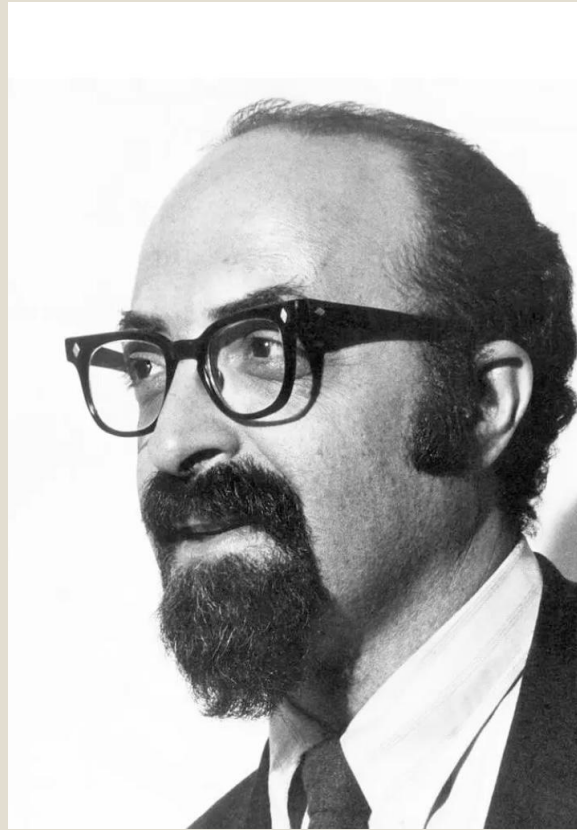
Religious Conversion & Social Matrix

- Many people convert to particular religious belief within social matrix or framework. Billy Graham rallies were good example.
- Yet imagine someone marooned on desert island, never hearing any religion. One day Bible washes up; next day Quran. Then five further books that week. Castaway reads them all with interest.
- My contention is very few people would make religious commitment based on that scenario. Everything depends on particular circumstances and human persuaders.

We Are Engaged in Constant Mimesis

- If we extend this drift to personality and behaviour, we are all engaged in constant mimesis. On basis of this view, I believe we float on the wind.
- I have hinted at the possibility that religious faith owes itself to hegemony. Think also of mimesis that seems part of human condition.

Chaim Potok



Personal Journey

- The person that I am and the possibilities that might have resulted from a different set of circumstances. My Judaism is very different from that of my cousins.
- Chaim Potok's novel, *The Chosen*



Pascal's Blindness as Defence Mechanism

I see Pascal's blindness to syllogistic truth as obvious defence mechanism. The notion that Christians can have their stake back in event of being wrong, but others cannot, is clearly not befitting his towering intellect.

Football Allegiance

Although I have in some sense self-administered Freudian analysis and seen random absurdity of my affiliation to a certain club, this has not straightened out emotions associated with defeat or victory.

The Plagiarism Paradox

- I am fascinated by concept of plagiarism, which is pejorative—implying underhand copying. What on earth would an 'unplagiarised' person look like? (Sartre's Roquentin in *La Nausée*)
- Nobody impugns better teachers having better pupils able to write good exam answers in plagiarism of that teacher. Mastery in one context and plagiarism in another. The distinction hinges on something nebulous.

Creative Influence

- Beethoven's music emerges from Haydn, Mozart and Mannheim school
- Beatles derived from Chuck Berry, Little Richard and Carl Perkins
- We don't call this plagiarism even though output derived from borrowed elements, recombined
- Cannot call this disingenuous. These musicians were part of continuum
- No lack of authenticity for that

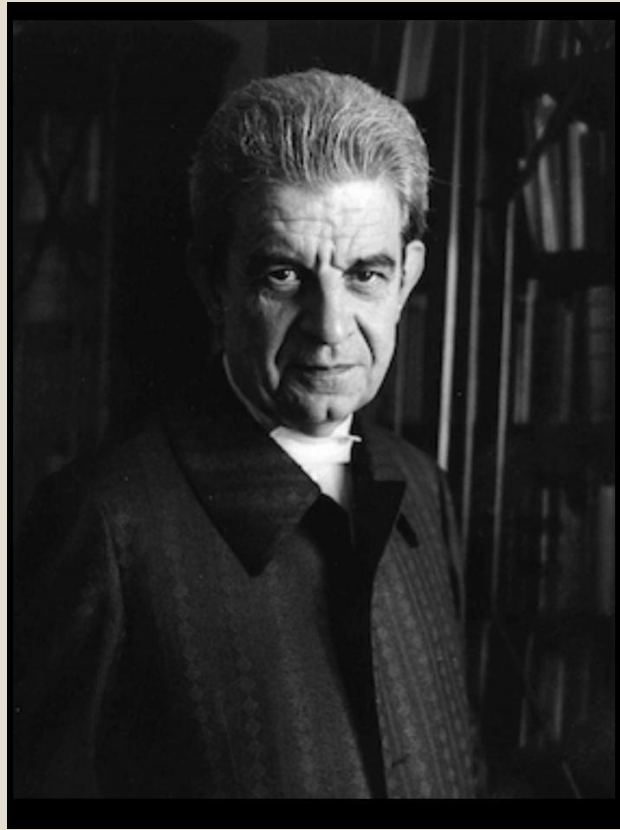
Taking This to Personality & Behaviour

- We are all engaged in constant mimesis—learning social scripts, copying mannerisms, internalising values and patterns from environment.
- Freud's concern isn't just about authenticity in abstract sense but psychological health: when does adaptive social learning become pathological identification? When does necessary ego-formation through imitation result in self that is more echo than voice?
- Something troubling about extent to which what we call 'ourselves' might be largely assemblage of unacknowledged plagiarisms.

Jacques Lacan (1901–1981)

- Seen as successor to Freud. Lacan did not so much advocate excavation of psyche as therapeutic goal of hypnosis. Rather, concentrated on distinction between self-identified by person and self as seen by others.
- Language itself took people into areas of themselves not previously seen.

Jacques Lacan





with
the
beatles

mono



The Split Subject

- As soon as child learns first person singular pronouns (I, me), they are learning to represent themselves through signifier (word). The split: 'I' who speaks is never quite the same as 'I' being spoken about.
- Dichotomy between subject of enunciation and subject of statement. Like surprise we get hearing recording of ourselves speaking or looking in mirror.

Thanatos: The Death Drive

- Takes me back to 'death drive' in Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920). Represents something darker and more baffling than repressed sexual desire.
- Freud meant silent drive towards dissolution and return to inorganic state—way of undoing tensions of life itself. Obviously appears counter-intuitive to any understanding of survival instinct.
- I'd argue that there is something exploratory and normal in some forms of masochism. Tooth wiggling, for example.

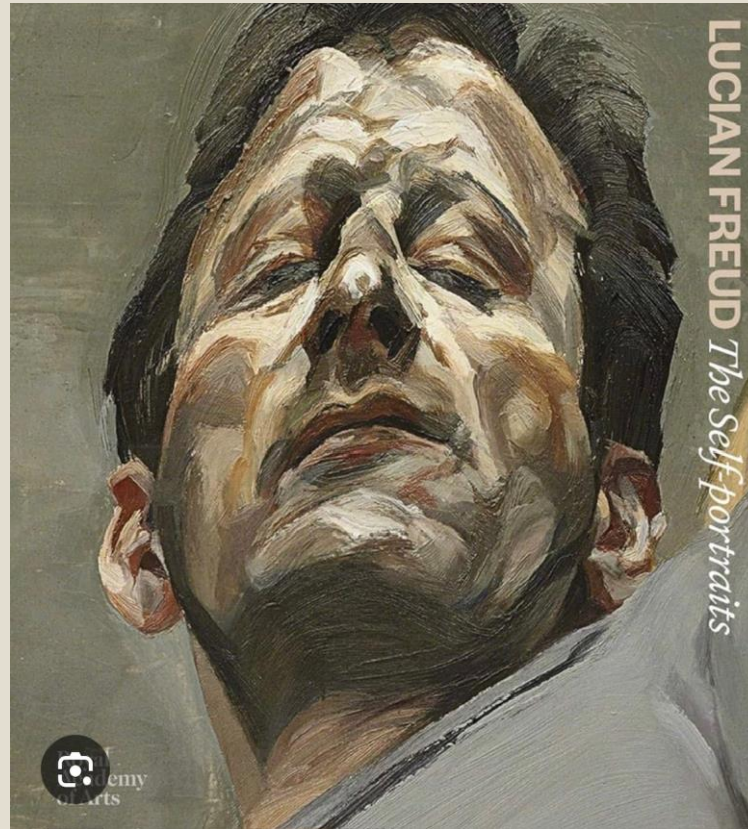
Repetition Compulsion

- In putative corroboration, Freud observed repetition compulsion: trauma victims replaying their trauma and people sabotaging their own happiness.
- I remain unconvinced and believe some forms and levels of masochism are part of human condition, simply as part of experimenting and explorational aspect of life.

Sigmund's Grandsons: Lucian & Clement

- People ask whether there are observable traits passed down by Sigmund to his famous grandsons, Lucian and Clement. Bit of a stretch, though intriguing.
- Lucian's nudes reveal flesh with honesty that can be uncomfortable. Willingness to look at what others turn away from and proclivity to looking beneath human mask.
- Clement's ability to observe human absurdity connects to psychoanalytic sensibility.

Lucian



Clement



Lady Freud

Actress, theatre director and widow of Sir Clement Freud who was a muse of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* writers

On September 1, 1939, two days before Britain declared war on Nazi Germany, the 12-year-old June Flewett said goodbye to her parents at Paddington station as she boarded a train to Oxford.

Germany had invaded Poland, leaving Neville Chamberlain's infamous "peace in our time" deal with Hitler in shreds. War was inevitable and June and her two sisters were among the capital's first evacuees escaping the Blitz that everyone knew was coming.

"London was in a state of high alert," she recalled more than 60 years later. "Gas masks were being issued, trenches dug and windows crossed with tape."

As she boarded, carrying a haversack containing two school books and a single change of clothes, she was embarking on an adventure that would create a unique link between two classics of children's literature written a century apart — *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.

The three Flewett girls were dispatched to different parts of the country and June was billeted with a retired Oxford tutor. When he died a few months later she was farmed out to the home of three ageing spinsters. "They had been Lewis Carroll's 'girls'. As children they had gone up and down the Cherwell in his punt while he told them stories," she said in a 2005 interview. "In their drawing room, they had a lot of games and toys which he had made for them. We would be allowed to play with them on Sundays. They would be worth a fortune now."

ALAMY



Freud married Clement in 1950, but said the first she knew about their engagement was seeing the notice in *The Times*.



year-old boy, John, the writer Will called with a woman referred to only as

Freud's husband was shocked when, at the age of 17, he had sexually abused her. He accepted the claim of sympathy from her, saying: "I sincerely hope she has some peace."

She is survived by her son, the public relations man, and her daughter, Nicola, an art director.



Conclusion

- Is there more to us than we think?
- Or perhaps, less than we think?
- Either way, we are far more complex and mysterious than conscious reflection reveals.