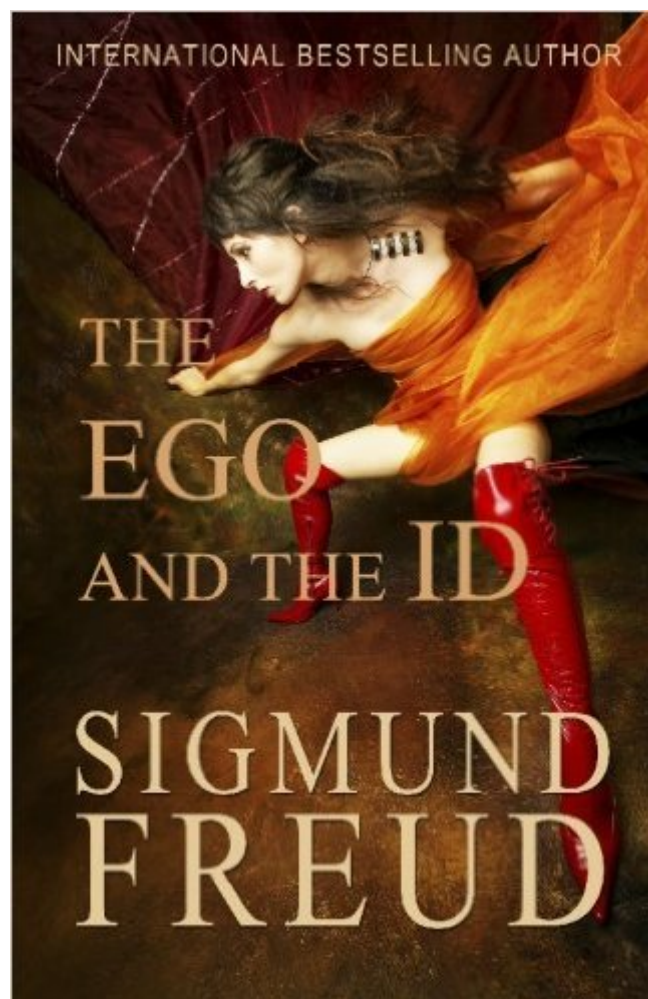


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The Ego And The Id



Synopsis

In what is considered one of his most prominent ideas, Austrian psychiatrist, Sigmund Freud explains the dynamic of the human psyche in terms of the roles and conflicts produced by the id, ego, and super-ego. Freud suggests that all human behaviors and traits, including personality disorders, are created by the complex conflicts and workings of these three components of human personality.

Book Information

Paperback: 98 pages

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (March 22, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1451537239

ISBN-13: 978-1451537239

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.2 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (53 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #115,213 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #56 in [Books > Medical Books > Psychology > Reference](#) #64 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Psychology & Counseling > Reference](#) #97 in [Books > Medical Books > Psychology > Movements > Psychoanalysis](#)

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Id- Unconscious part of the mind which consists of natural instincts, urges, and drives that are repressed. It includes "internal events" which stem from the influence of heredity. Although the id is the cause of all activity, the thoughts are often unconscious and repressed. The id represents biological forces. It is also a constant in the personality as it is always present. The id is governed by the "pleasure principle", or the notion of hedonism (the seeking of pleasure).
Ego- A defense mechanism that is partly conscious and contains the capacities to calculate, reason, and plan. As the Id relates to internal events, the Ego is occupied with the external world. Its task is to regulate and control the instincts provided by the id. However, in times of sleep, the ego detaches itself from the outside world and changes, its organization. The prime function of the ego is determined by the individuals experiences. The ego is the surface of the personality, the part you show the world. The ego is governed by the "reality principle," or a pragmatic approach to the world. For example, a child may want to snatch a cookie from the kitchen, but will not if a parent is present. Id desires are still present, but the ego realizes the consequences of brazen cookie theft.
Super-ego- the

connection between the id and ego. The super ego is the mind's link to reality and society. It contains the influence of what is learned from other people. The super-ego, unlike the id, is not intuitive from birth, but acquired from childhood. Once established, one begins to feel guilt. The superego consists of two parts, the conscience and the ego-ideal. The conscience is the familiar metaphor of angel and devil on each shoulder. The conscience decides what course of action one should take.

Sigmund Freud is not known for his easy-to-read writing style. Those that translated Freud's works have recently been under fire for being misleading or inaccurate. When I set out to read this book, I felt it necessary to make as many notes necessary and to dig beneath and between to bring out what Freud really meant by "ego" and "id." To my conclusion, the reason Freud is argued against so much is because of the confusion that surrounds his theories. The words "ego" and "id" are Greek, and we have carried them into the English language and then nominalized. By doing this our consciousness solidifies them as things within our brains. The word "ego" means "I" or "self". The word "id" means "non-I" or "non-self", or "it." We don't say "the I" when we refer to ourselves. But so often we say "the ego" as if to refer to a specific part or thing of our minds. The other confusion that adds to nominalization is then believing the rest of the book is about things in space. Yet, Freud specifically says, "The state of things which we have been describing can be represented diagrammatically, though it must be remarked that the form chosen has no pretensions to any special applicability, but is merely intended to serve for purposes of exposition (p. 18)." What Freud is saying is that in order to communicate clearly what is happening in one's psyche, or mind, there needs to be a working model of the psyche. That is to say, a model meaning a diagram with its parts that do not act as the psyche itself (or of reality), but shows what the psyche consists of. He does this by discerning that which is "descriptive," and that which is "dynamic." The descriptive only describes through language or imaginative use, while dynamic is more at the process that actually occurs.

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