

A Neuropsychanalytic Overview of Psychodynamic Defenses

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les mando a todo una copia de esta
presentación!

Some foundational books

The Brain and the Inner World, Mark Solms and Oliver Turnbull

Affective Neuroscience, Jaak Panksepp

The Archeology of Mind, Jaak Panksepp and Lucy Biven

Self Comes to Mind, Antonio Damasio

Consciousness and the Brain, Stanislas Dehaene

un contexto neuropsicoanalítica para empezar

Tanto el **cerebro** como la **mente** se puede dividir en dos secciones principales:



regulado por

2) un “manto” inhibidora, cognitiva, simbólica.



1) un base afectivo / instintivo



capacidades mediado por la corteja:

inhibir nuestros impulsos y reacciones

planear nuestro comportamiento

aprender nuevas asociaciones, basado en recompensas y castigos

pensar e imaginar; considerar alternativas, y crear cosas que antes no existían.

Estas capacidades son **más voluntarias, más abstractas y menos encarnadas.**



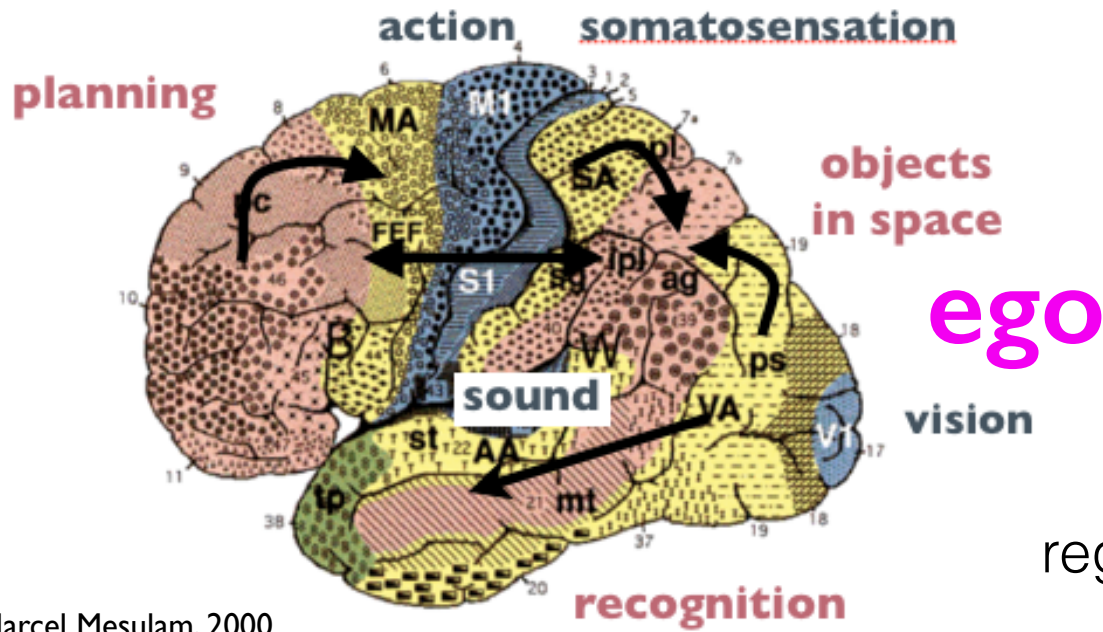
capacidades mediado por la brainstem and subcortical circuits:

somos animales con **pulsiones, instintos y emociones**

los deseos nos presionan para satisfacer nuestras necesidades

las emociones básicas (instintos) nos permite aprovechar de buenas oportunidades, y evitar peligros

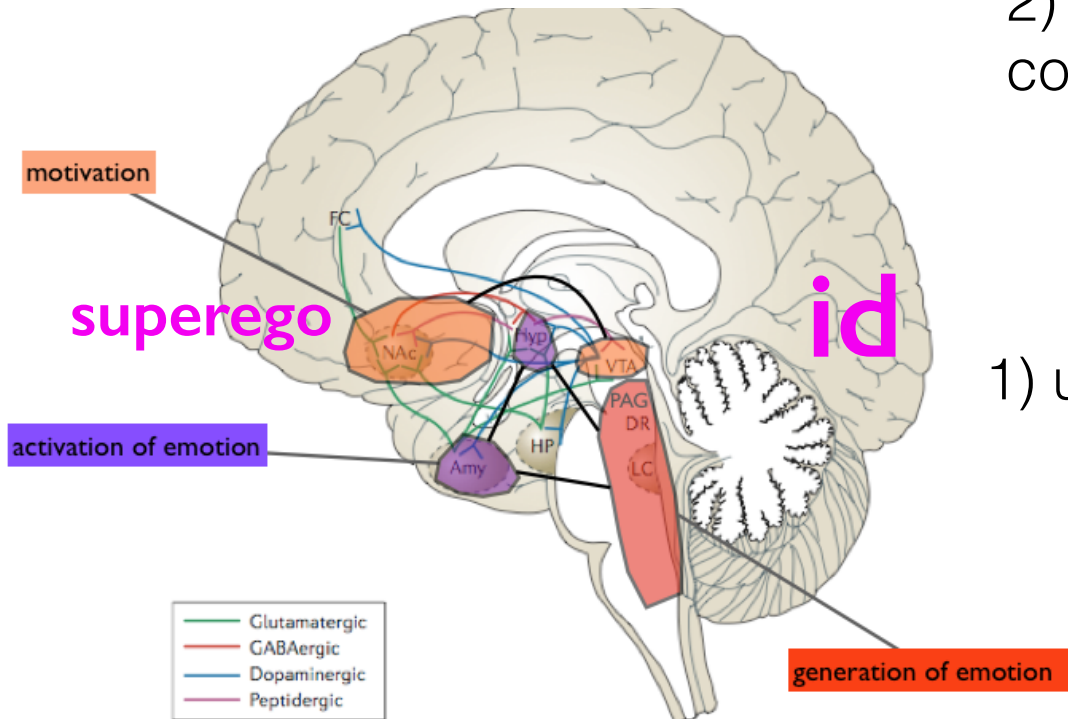
No necesitamos aprender cómo hacerlos. Son, por la mayor parte, **involuntarios y profundamente encarnados.**



adapted from Marcel Mesulam, 2000
Principles of Behavioral and Cognitive Neurology

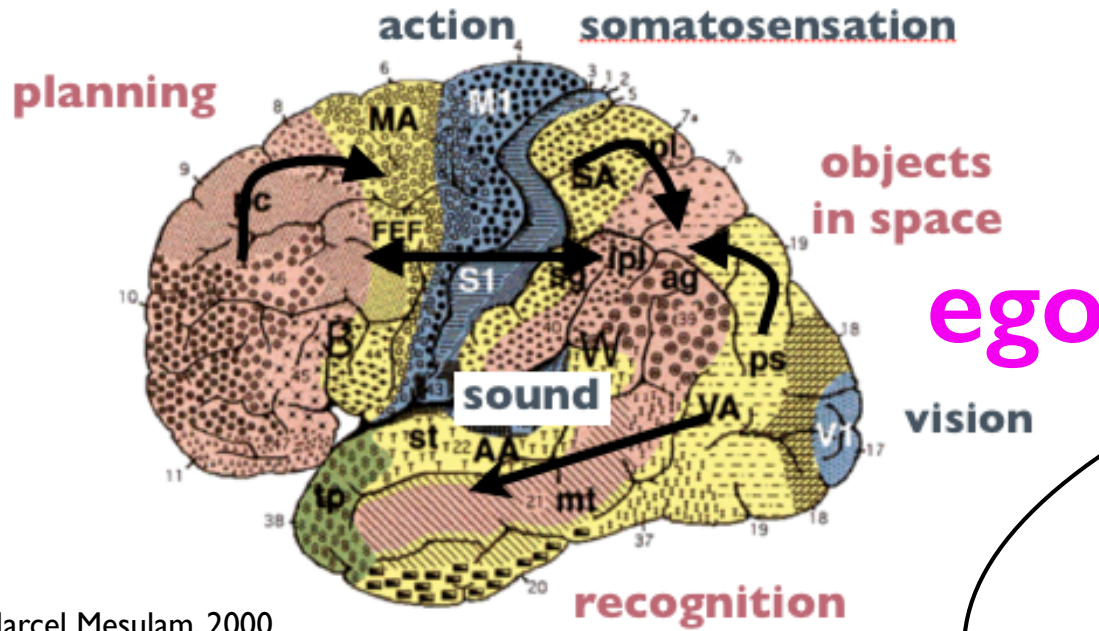
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2) un "manto" inhibidora,
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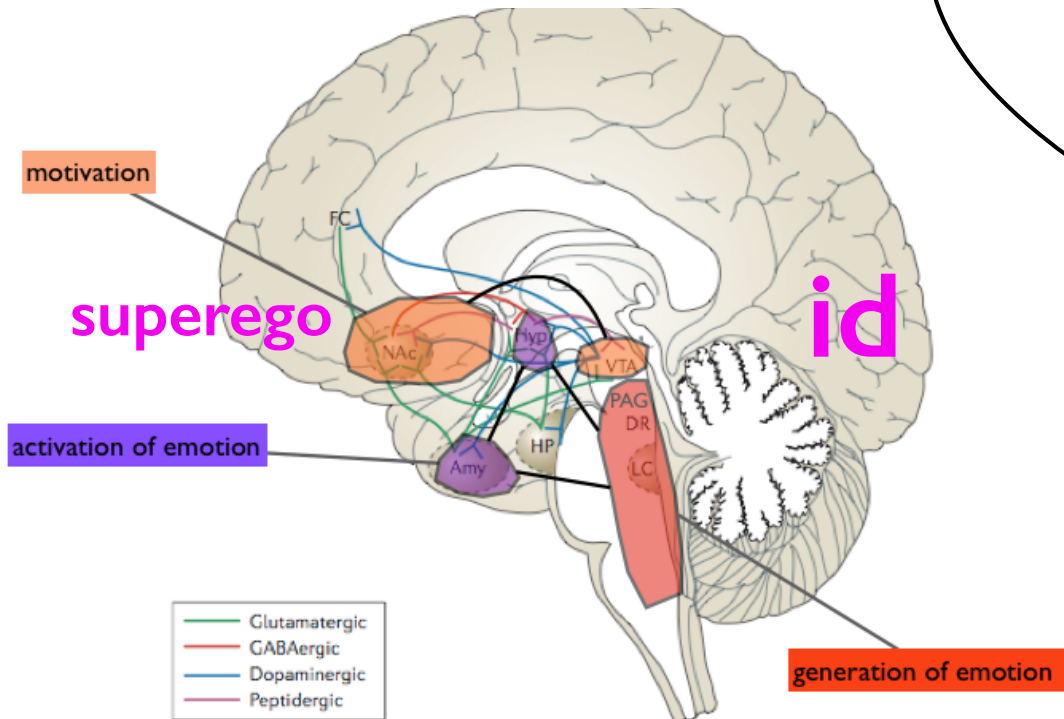


1) un base afectivo / instintivo

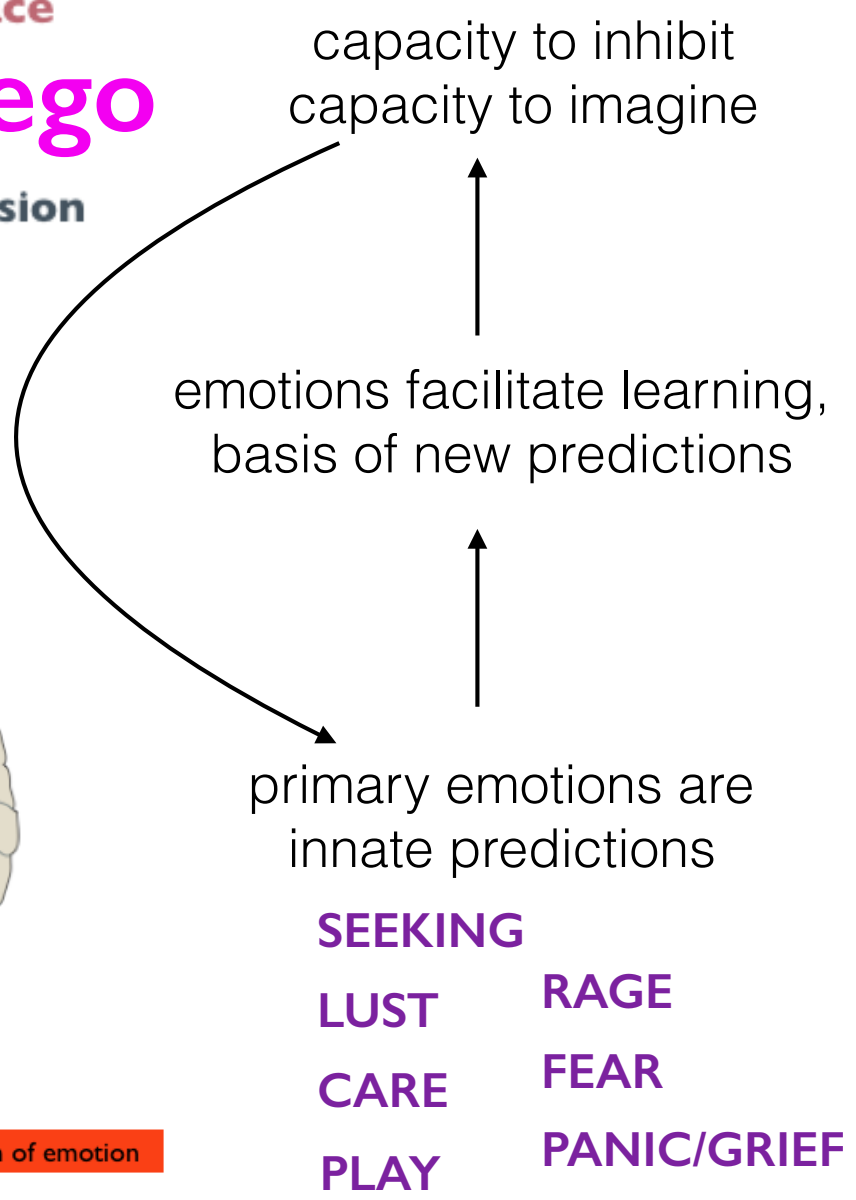
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 2006 *Nat Rev Neurosci*, Panksepp 1998, and Damasio 2014



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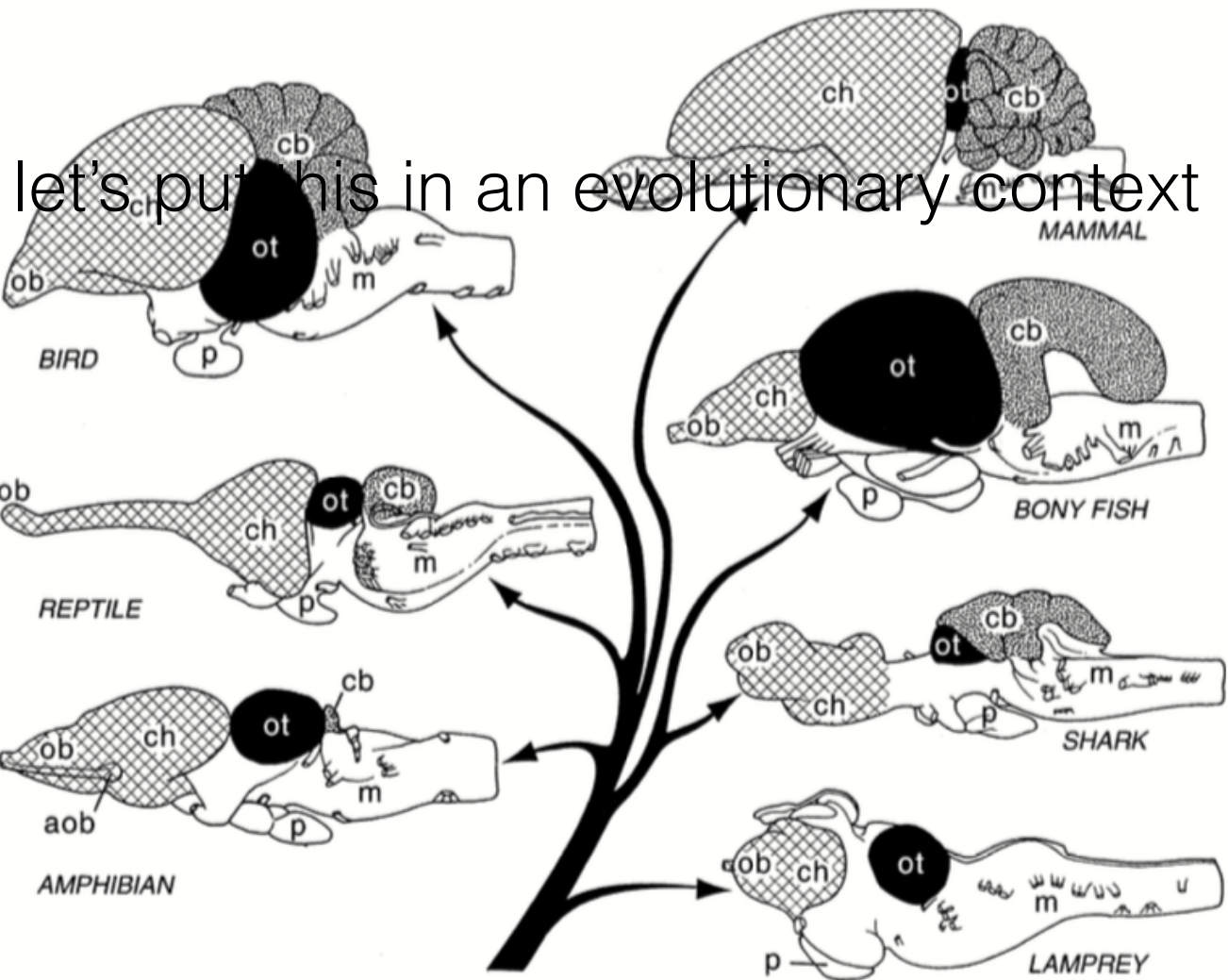
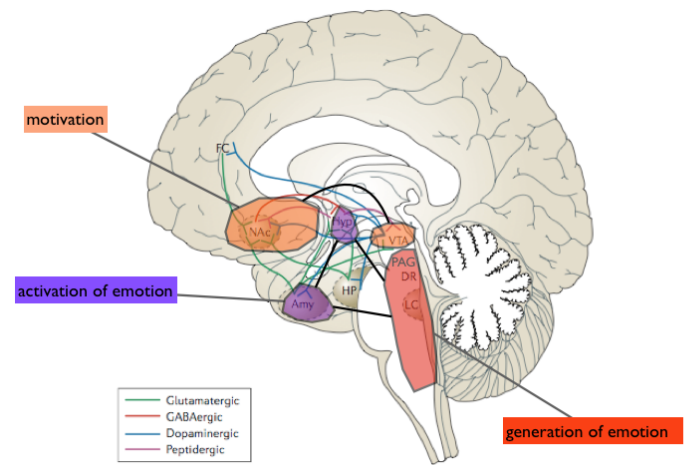
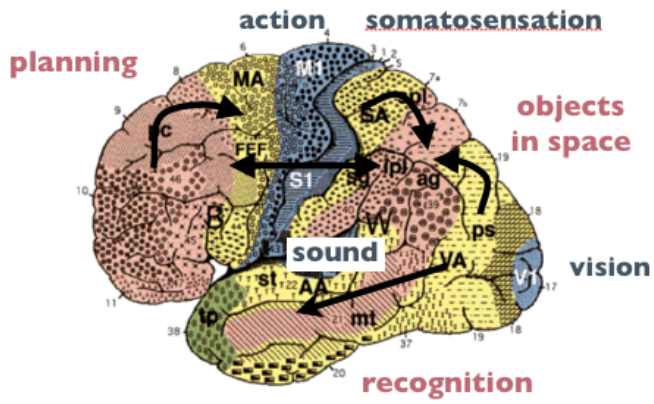
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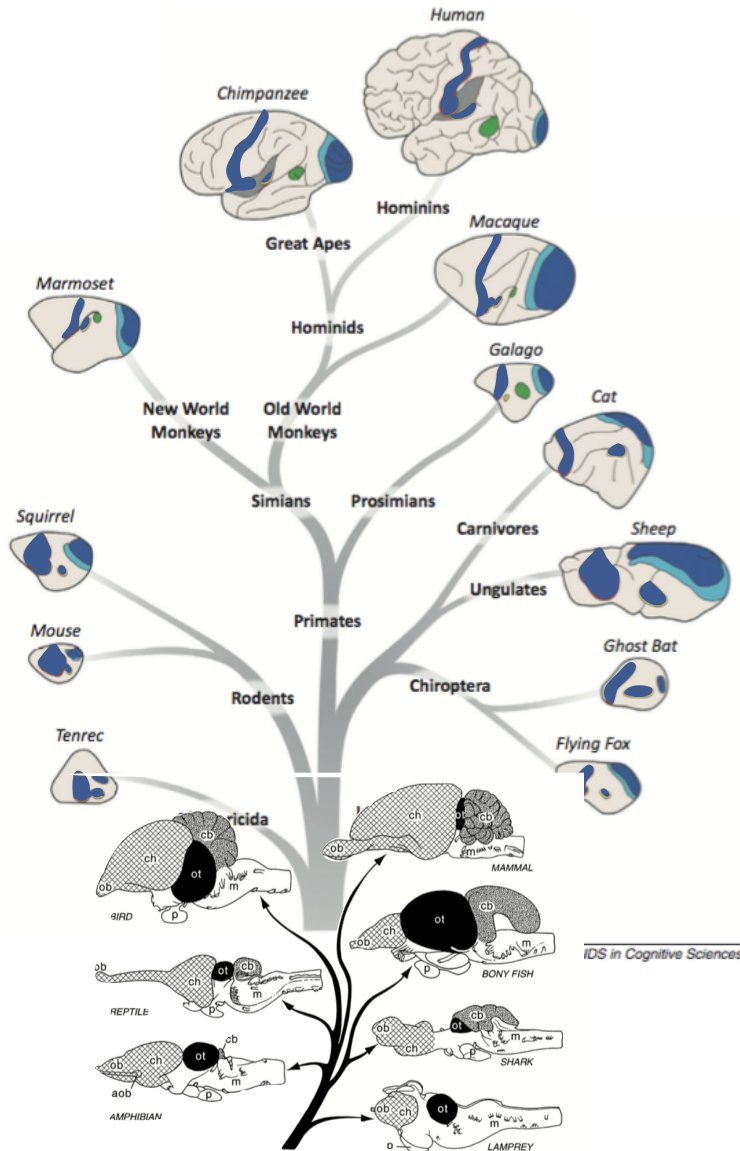
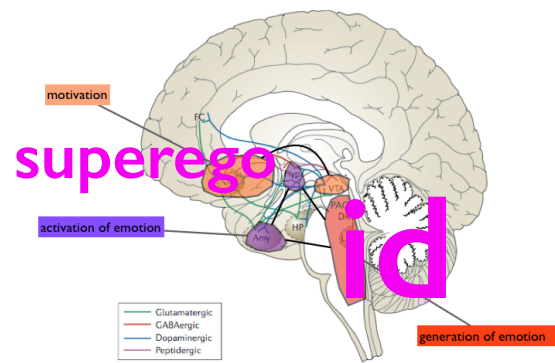
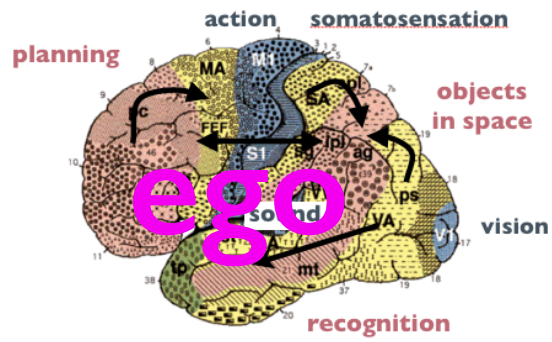


A possible neuropsychanalytic basis for psychodynamic defenses

La mayoría de los animales tienen la capacidad de inhibir sus *acciones*, hasta cierto punto. Los humanos tenemos una gran capacidad para hacer esto. Además, somos seres sociales, profundamente dependiente en la aceptación social para nuestra supervivencia. Así que, también desarrollamos formas de evitar *pensar* o *sentir* cosas para protegernos a nosotros mismos o proteger a los demás.

Most animals have the capacity to inhibit their *actions*, to some degree. Humans have a tremendous capacity to do this. Moreover, we are social beings, profoundly dependent on social acceptance for our survival. Therefore, to maintain relationships, we also develop ways to keep ourselves from *thinking* or *feeling* things, in order to protect ourselves or others.





fantasy, meta-awareness, symbolization

theory of mind

complex social relations

maternal nurturing, social bonding

memory and inhibition

perception of distant objects

instincts for survival and reproduction

basic phenomenological consciousness

“Defenses, like rainbows and shooting stars, exist but are difficult to capture. Defenses are, after all, metaphors; they are very complex affective and cognitive styles that the brain uses to alter conflictual inner and outer realities.”

George Vaillant

Am J Psychiatry 169:9, 2012

Some big-picture, empirically supported propositions

Vaillant (e.g., Vaillant, Bond, and Vaillant 1986)

- a hierarchy of defenses exists in adults
- the hierarchy matures over the adult life span
- maturity of defenses powerfully predicts the future

Perry and colleagues (e.g., Perry and Kardos 1995)

- defenses improve with psychotherapy
- change in defense is significantly associated with clinical change

Sigmund Freud, Anna Freud (1936)

Repression

Regression

Reaction formation

Isolation

Undoing

Projection

Introjection

Turning against the self

Reversal

Sublimation or displacement

Category	Defense Level	Individual Defenses
Mature	High adaptive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affiliation, altruism, anticipation, humor, self-assertion, self-observation, sublimation, suppression
Neurotic	Obsessional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation of affect, intellectualization, undoing
	Hysterical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repression, dissociation
	Other neurotic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaction formation, displacement
Immature	Minor image-distorting (narcissistic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devaluation of self or object images, idealization of self or object images, omnipotence
	Disavowal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denial, rationalization, projection
	Major image-distorting (borderline)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Splitting, projective identification
	Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting out, passive aggression, help-rejecting complaining

Empirical evidence for psychodynamic defenses

function outside of awareness

developmental chronology

present in normal personality

increases under stress

reduces conscious experience of negative emotion

connected to activity in autonomic nervous system (ANS)
even without subjective awareness

excessive use correlated with psychopathology

ways we address defenses

“a part of you feels/thinks, another part of you...”

“Is it possible you have been trying to protect yourself from feeling...”

“maybe it’s easier to _____ than to _____”

- make them reject you rather than to wait to be abandoned
- feel angry instead of sad (or feel sad instead of angry)
- focus on food/shopping/etc. than feel feelings

“I wonder if, when you act like your father, it feels better than what you felt like when he acted that way”

Thank you!

**Tell me
about your
mother.**

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