

GAP-DGB Neo-Classical-Psychoanalysis: A Distinction Between Superego, Ego, and Id Resistance

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Received: April 05, 2018; **Published:** July 19, 2018

Good day ladies and gentlemen!

After a Sabbatical of about a week -- aside from the Raptors essay I wrote a few days ago (which I find functions as a 'change of pace' for me, compared to these 'heavier duty' essays), I was contemplating whether this 'break from the writing action' was a symptom of my liver disease which was simply making me more and more lethargic, energy-less, and dis-spirited. Or was I feeling a certain alienation from my more regular readers who were perhaps growing more weary and dis-spirited relative to what I was writing. Or -- and this is how I got to this presentation right here (although I am not discounting the other two theories as well) -- was I making 'promises' to my readership about what was coming down the pipeline, and also to editors from journals who were asking me to write essays for them as well -- and then, 'resisting the execution of my own promises' -- what Gestalt Therapy calls 'promissory notes' -- which I see from looking up the word 'promissory' and finding the expression 'promissory notes' in other applications as well -- is an expression used beyond Gestalt Therapy. The Gestalt idea here is that too often we make 'promissory notes' that we either never intend to fulfill, or alternatively, we 'rebel' against once we have made them.

This sets up the 'battlefield of resistance' -- both 'external' and 'internal' resistance -- the first against him, her, or them whom we have made our 'promise' to, and the second against our 'internal self' -- or we might say our 'split self' which in turn can 'split' and 'split' and 'split' again -- just like 'cells splitting' for good or bad reasons -- and thus, this brings up the idea of 'what part of our self' is 'splitting' from 'what other part' -- and do we need to start making a series 'formal or technical distinctions' here?

To this last question, I say a definitive 'yes, we do need to make distinctions between different types of 'internal self-splits' -- and to my knowledge -- I probably make more such distinctions than any other psychoanalytic and/or neo-psychoanalytic writer out there.

Now, two such distinctions -- superego resistance and ego resistance -- have been well documented by Freud himself -- according to Freud, the two types of resistance superego and ego resistance tend to 'align' themselves together -- 'against the id' and against any 'perceived dangerous and/or threatening forays of the id -- or 'vicissitudes' of the id -- into the ego.

Is there really any need to distinguish between 'forays of the id into the ego' (which would imply 'the id entering our consciousness') and 'vicissitudes' of the id forays into the ego (which allowed Freud to maintain the idea that the id is always unconscious -- it is only 'vicissitudes' of the id that enter consciousness)?

Perhaps -- assuming you are willing to go this route with me as a theorist and/or therapist -- there is still a need for such a distinction -- just not 100 percent of the time like Freud did. Let's take his 'Classical Oedipal Complex Theory' as an example.

The crudest, bluntest version of Freud's Oedipus Complex Theory is that 'the little boy wants to have sex with his mother'. And likewise, the little girl with her father. Let's call this a 'Classic Oedipal-Id impulse-drive' although there are other more 'modified' versions of it such as this one coming from me -- 'the little boy -- starting in adolescence with the development of the sexual hormones -- wants to have sex with someone who is like his mother'; and alternatively, the little girl wants to have sex with someone who is like her father' -- and

these 'sexual attachments and detachments' are based on earlier 'Oedipal Period emotional attachments and detachments' that may or may not involve their mother and/or father, depending on the particular case. Or influences can become 'reversed' where 'the same sex parent becomes the unconscious focus of emotional and sexual desire -- and/or non-desire. Everything can be different as Adler used to say as there may be 'genetic influences' as well which can be distinguished from 'epigenetic' (Oedipal Period) influences. I will not go into any more concrete detail here. 'Concrete details' are often the 'substance' of what is coming down the line here -- a quick discussion of 'superego resistance'.

So from Freud's 'Classical Oedipal Theory' a distinction can perhaps be made here between 'unconsciously wanting to have sex with mom or dad' vs. 'consciously or unconsciously wanting to have sex with someone like mom or dad -- in effect, a 'mom or dad Oedipal Transference Surrogate'. In short, maybe there is a 'viable reason' for hanging onto the idea of 'vicissitudes of the id'. I say 'sometimes' -- and 'sometimes not'.

Let's make our final three distinctions here: 1. 'superego (or 'editor') resistance' is resistance that usually contains the strongest 'directives' and 'censorships' based mainly on 'cultural norms and taboos' -- 'taboos' often being connected to the more recent idea of 'political incorrectness'. A philosopher's or psychologist's 'worst enemy' sometimes -- in terms of trying to do his or her job properly -- is the 'eggshells of political correctness and incorrectness'. Thus, when censorship works properly (or inappropriately) -- the 'political eggshells' -- the 'taboos' -- are 'forced back underground' into what I call our 'id vaults' and/or 'Pandora's Boxes'.

The second distinction -- 'ego resistance'. Here more 'compromises' are made between 'the id and the superego by the ego'. These 'creative compromises' -- often in the form of '(neurotic) symptoms' -- 'split the difference between superego and id'. And keep both at least 'mildly happy' such that neither of them go 'offside against the other'.

The third and final distinction here is 'id resistance'. Here the id is 'resisting the censorship of the superego and/or ego'. Such as in 'passive aggression'. We say 'yes, mom', or 'yes, dad' -- and then 'secretly do what we wanted to do in the first place'. This 'particular pathway' can become 'serially entrenched' and 'projected and transferred onto 'authoritarian' or even 'all' other people in our adult lives -- a 'sneaky way of avoiding conflict and doing what we want to do anyway'. Sometimes it is also called 'cheating'.

Volume SPI Issue 1 August 2018

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