

Week 5 Day 2: The Avant- Garde

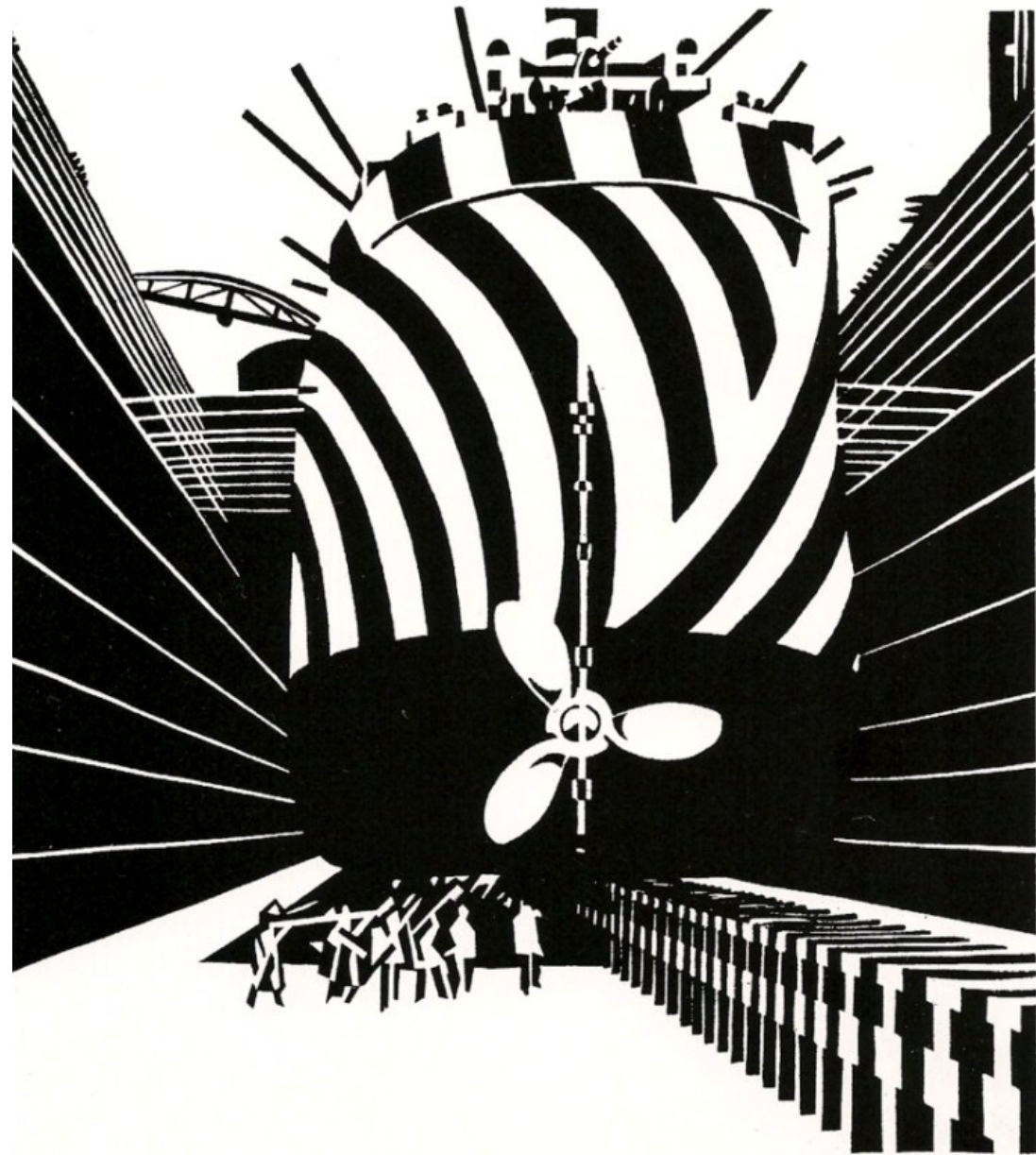
ENGL201: Introduction to Modernism

Schedule

- Overflow (15 mins)
- The Avant-Garde, Surrealism, and Psychoanalysis (35 mins)



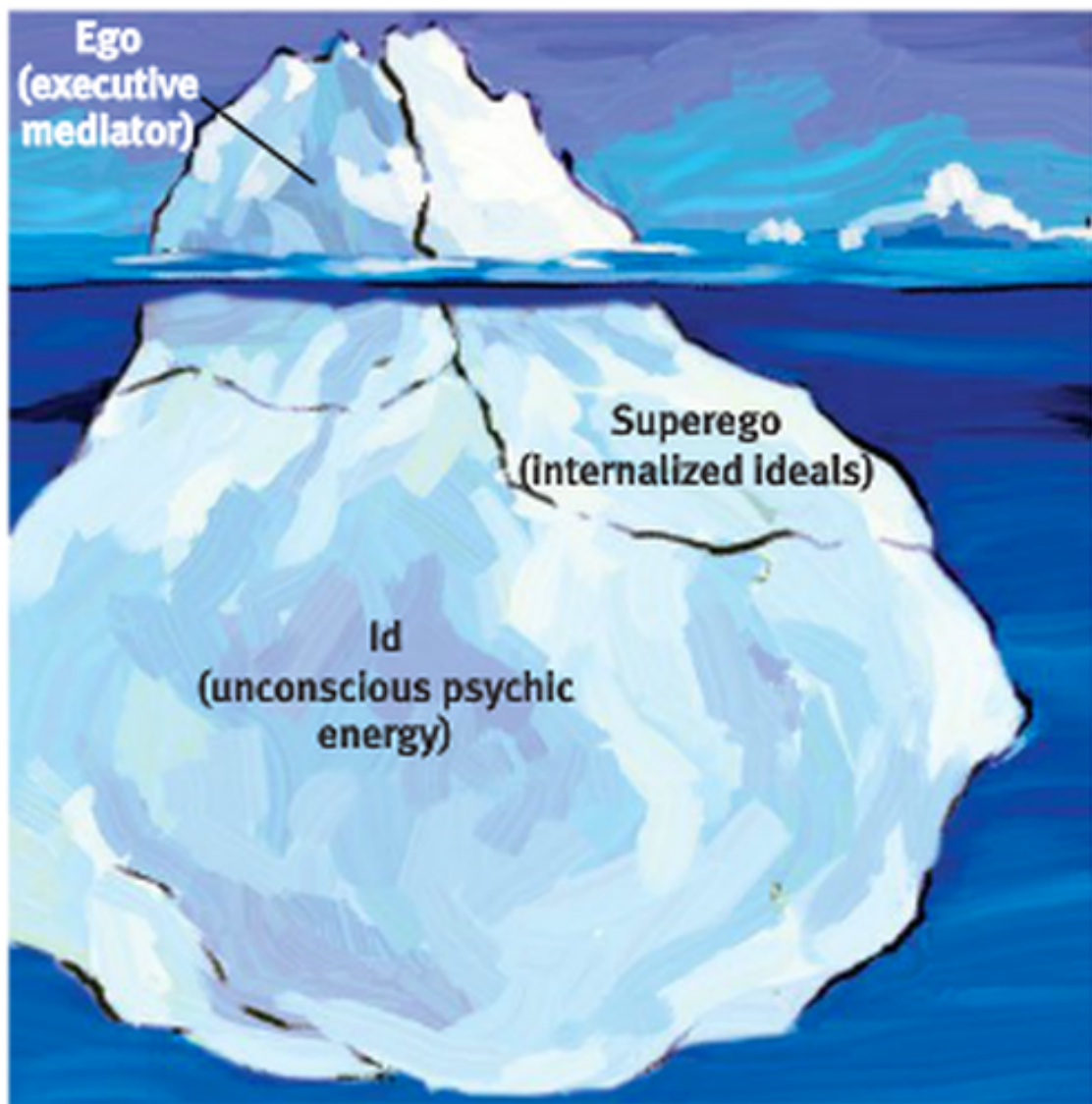
What
audience do
manifestos
construct?



Psychoanalysis

- *A mentalist* movement in psychology
 - Mentalist → interested in the symbolic structure of the mind as the source of disease
 - Somatic/physicalist → interested in the physical structure of the body or brain as the source of disease
- Founded by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)
 - Grew out of early work on hysteria
 - Expanded to examine the structure of the unconscious mind, psychosexual development, neurosis as all part of the symbolic structure of the mind
 - *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899)





Ego
(executive
mediator)

Conscious
mind

Preconscious
(outside awareness
but accessible)

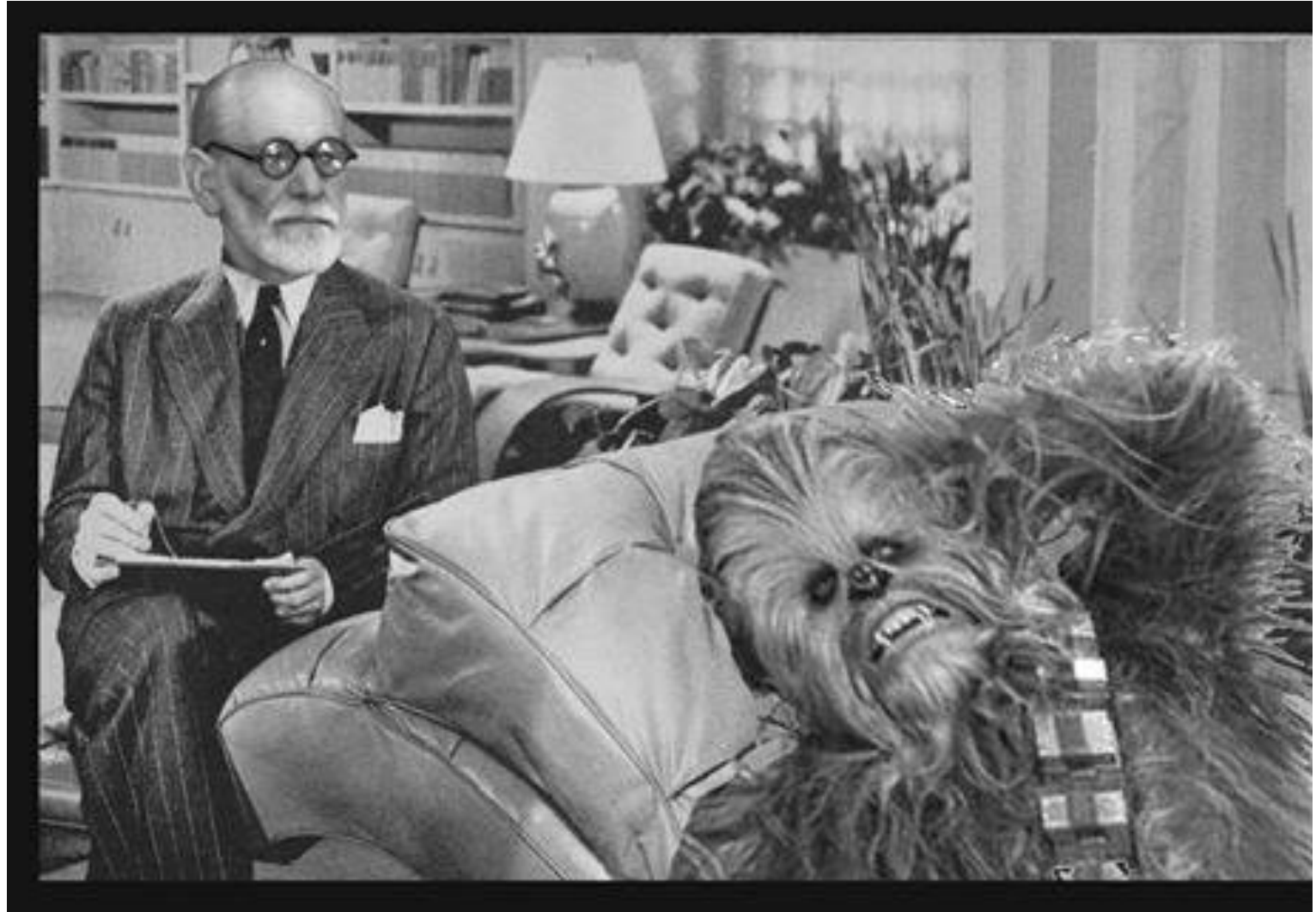
Superego
(Internalized Ideals)

Id
(unconscious psychic
energy)

Unconscious mind

...we can now observe a huge range of experiments, interventions, and developments of psychoanalytic ideas happening across a range of international experimental cultures, and in response to diverse points of contact with the theory itself. Neurosis and sexual desire feature prominently, but so also do dreams, myths, memories, jokes, symbolization, free association, aggression, melancholia, and the structure of the mind and its unconscious mental processes.

(Matt Ffytche, "The Modernist Road to the Unconscious," *Oxford Guide to Modernism*, 413)



I believe in the future resolution of these two states, dream and reality....into a kind of absolute reality, a *surreality*.

(André Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism," 1924)



René Magritte "Man in the Mirror"



Pure psychic automatism through which it is intended to express, either orally or in writing, or in any other way, the actual way thought works.

(Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism," 1924)

Yves Tanguy, Joan Miró, Max Morise, Man Ray, "Nude," 1927

The Avant-Garde

- Artistic movements that are experimental or radical
- *Historical Avant-Garde*: mostly French artistic movement that entailed other cultural formations like Surrealism, 1900-1930
- Peter Bürger (1984): artistic movements that attempt to disrupt the *institutions* of art
 - Institutions of art provide it with its function and prestige in society
 - They also render art “safe” —they set aside a place for social and cultural critique through art
 - Avant-gardes attempt to attack and dismantle these institutions, restoring the political import (and therefore danger) to art

The superficial aspect of dreams, holds no interest to me. I have been concerned with the 'latent content' which can be derived from the manifest dream by psychoanalytical interpretation. A collection of dreams without associations and knowledge of the context in which it was dreamed does not tell me anything, and it is hard from me to imagine what it can mean to anyone else.

(Freud to Breton, 1937)



André Breton (1896-1966)

- French novelist, essayist, poet
- “Pope” of Surrealism
- Worked as a psychiatric nurse during WWI
- Began experimenting in automatic writing in 1919
- Interested in developing a *stylistic* rendering of unconscious thought
- *Manifeste du surréalisme* (1924)
- *La Révolution surréaliste* (1924-29)
- *Nadja* (1928)



Leonora Carrington (1917-2011)

- English-born, lived primarily in Mexico
- Painter, novelist, short-story writer
- Suffered a “breakdown” in the early 1940s in Spain and was institutionalized
 - Given convulsive therapy; several escape attempts; abusive conditions
- *La Maison de la Peur* (1938)
- *The Hearing Trumpet* (1976)
- *Down Below* (1988)





