

Psychological Conflict, Subjectivity, and the Divided Self: A Psychoanalytic Inquiry into Freud, and Lacan

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores psychological conflict and the formation of subjectivity through the psychoanalytic concept of the divided self, drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. Freud's structural model of the psyche conceptualizes psychological conflict as an intrinsic feature of mental life, emerging from the tension between instinctual drives, moral regulation, and conscious mediation. The Freudian subject is thus marked by internal division, shaped by repression and the operations of the unconscious. Lacan redefines subjectivity as fundamentally split, emphasizing the role of language, the symbolic order, and the mirror stage in constituting the self. For Lacan, psychological conflict is not limited to intrapsychic struggle but arises from the subject's alienation within linguistic and symbolic structures that mediate desire. This paper argues that psychological conflict is a constitutive condition of subjectivity rather than a pathological deviation. The study highlights how the divided self remains central to understanding identity, desire, and psychic instability in modern contexts. By situating psychoanalytic insights within contemporary debates on self-hood, this paper offers a theoretical contribution relevant to psychology, psychoanalysis, philosophy, and interdisciplinary humanities research.

Keywords: Psychological conflict, Divided self, Subjectivity, Psychoanalysis, Freud, Lacan, Unconscious.
