

The Self and its Defenses

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The Self and its Defenses

From Psychodynamics to Cognitive Science

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This book is the result of a long-lasting cooperation between the authors. It arises from the confluence of two main lines of research. The first one relates to the themes of personal identity and the place of subjectivity in the world order. The second one pertains to the fruitfulness of a bottom-up, ontogenetic approach to human self-awareness, one that attempts to reconstruct how the complex psychological functions underlying the adult self-conscious mind evolve from more basic ones.

We have focused and pursued these lines of research for many years, and we obviously accumulated a great intellectual debt with quite a number of friends and colleagues, who offered criticism and advice, skepticism and support, over such a long period of gestation.

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Special reference needs to be made to the influence exerted by the psychiatrist Giovanni Jervis on this book. Jervis was a prominent figure in the Italian intellectual landscape of the second half of the twentieth century. Marraffa, who was his student and friend, has argued in a series of papers (2011b, 2012, 2013) that Jervis delivers us the premises of a philosophical anthropology that aims to integrate Ernesto de Martino's phenomenological psychology of identity and the psychodynamic theme of defense mechanisms into the naturalistic framework of biological and psychological sciences. The fourth chapter of our book has grown from these powerful insights.

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Contents

1	Introduction: Setting the Stage	1
2	The Unconscious Mind	9
2.1	The Mind and Cognitive Science	10
2.1.1	The Computational-Representational Mind	13
2.1.2	The Dissociation Between Mind and Consciousness	18
2.1.3	Levels of Explanation	21
2.2	The Freudian Unconscious	24
2.3	The Unconscious in Cognitive Science: A Critical Discussion	36
2.3.1	Searle Against the Cognitive Unconscious	37
2.3.2	Personal and Subpersonal in Dialectical Relationship	43
2.4	The Dynamic Unconscious in a Cognitive- Evolutionary Framework	46
3	Making the Self, I: Bodily Self-Consciousness	55
3.1	The Disappearance of the Self	57
3.1.1	The Exclusion Thesis	57
3.1.2	Selfless Minds?	61
3.1.3	Analytic Kantianism	67

3.2	The Bottom-Up Reconstruction of the Self	73
3.3	Consciousness and Self-Consciousness: The Case Against Pre-Reflective Self-Consciousness	76
3.4	The I as the Making of the Me	90
4	Making the Self, II: Psychological Self-Consciousness	95
4.1	The Nature of Introspection	98
4.1.1	Being Able to Say Why	100
4.1.2	Self/Other Parity or Inner Sense?	105
4.1.3	Self-Interpretation Plus Sensory Access	108
4.1.4	Remnants of Introspection	112
4.2	The Construction of the Virtual Inner Space of the Mind	114
4.2.1	Mindreading and Attachment	114
4.2.2	The Construction of Introspection in the Attachment Environment	118
4.3	The Emergence of a Continuous Self Through Time	129
4.3.1	Dissociation of the Jamesian Selves	134
4.3.2	The Thread of Life	140
5	The Self as a Causal Center of Gravity	147
5.1	A Baconian Approach to Defense Mechanisms	148
5.2	Construction and Defense of Subjective Identity	154
5.3	Scaling Up: Culture as a System of Defense Techniques	167
5.4	A Robust Theory of the Self	174
6	Epilogue	179
	References	187
	Index	211