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PSY 441- Theories of Personality

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### Week 2- Freud Essay Question 1

According to the famous Viennese theorist, Sigmund Freud, mental processes in humans are divided three parts, the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious. The conscious refers to ideas and sensations that we are aware of, like the thoughts that are happening right now, as you read and as I type. It refers information that most individuals readily know, like their name, address, date of birth... you get the picture. And speaking of pictures, Freud likened the human personality to an iceberg. In his illustration, conscious thoughts are represented by the peak of the iceberg- it is easily seen from any angle protruding out of the water.

Just beneath the surface of the water is the part of the iceberg that Freud would say represents our preconscious. The preconscious refers to information and experiences that have been stored in our unconscious- perhaps because we haven't had to call them into remembrance in a while- but not so deep as to be beyond recall. Although technically unconscious, they are relatively close to the "surface of awareness" (Ryckman, 2013), or in this case the surface of the water in which the iceberg floats, and with a little effort, (thought), we can retrieve the information and bring it into consciousness again.

The lowest or deepest part of the iceberg, that remains hidden from optical view, Freud calls the unconscious. The unconscious operates on the deepest level of personality. It consists of our

earliest experiences and memories, and though it is the part of our mental processes that we remain unaware of, according to Freud, the unconscious plays the greatest role in shaping the personality. The unconscious may contain painful memories, forbidden desires, feelings of shame and or humiliation, and though these memories are repressed from awareness, they often manifest in outward expressions of that interfere with conscious thought and rational behavior.