

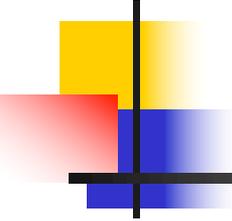
The Development of the Mind and the Role of the Unconscious

IPI SLC

Core Concepts in Object Relations

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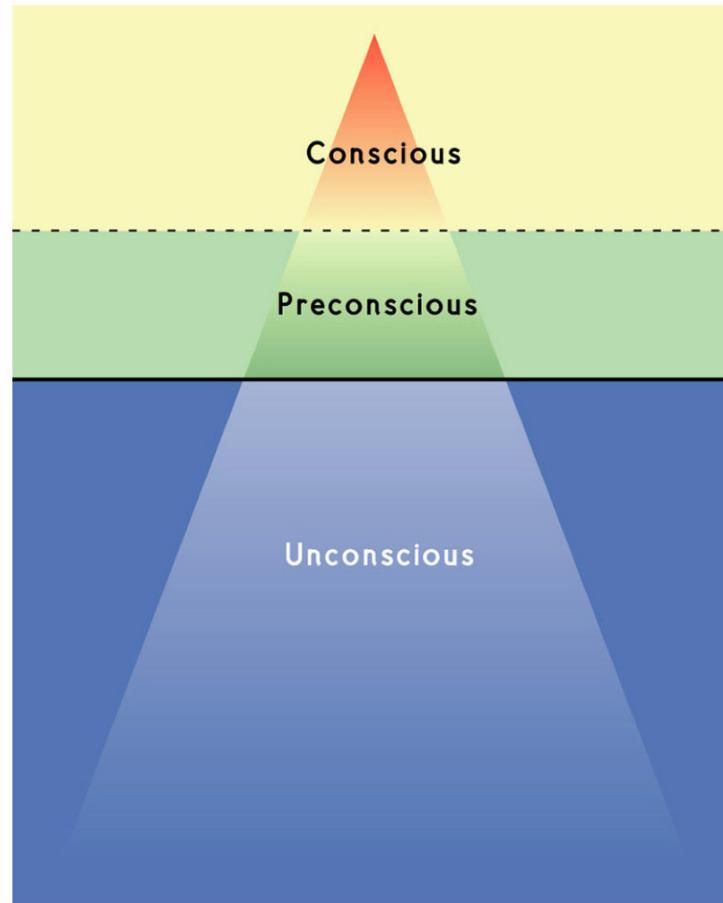
February 20, 2021

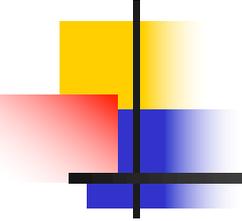


Overview

- Topography and Structuring of the Mind
- Why do we talk about the unconscious?
- What is the unconscious?
- What role does phantasy play?
- How do the “positions” structure experience?
 - Paranoid Schizoid
 - Depressive
 - Autistic/Contiguous

Topography of the Mind





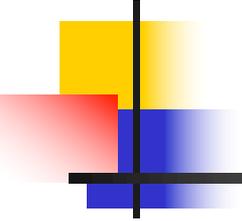
Structuring of the Mind

- **Internal working models**

- Used to approach, understand and predict our world and our relationships
- Are both conscious and unconscious
- Working models contain representations of (1) actual experiences with objects and (2) our emotional/instinctual phantasies and reactions
- Working models are also called **internal object relationships**

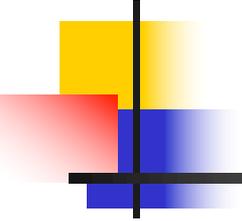
- **Why internalize?**

- Frustration (Fairbairn)
- Innate process or ‘primary identification’ (Winnicott)
- Neurophysiological process (mirror neurons)



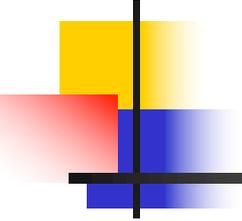
Why Talk about the Unconscious?

- Unconscious conflicts/dynamics are responsible for most instances of psychopathology.
- Goal of psychoanalytic treatment: “to make the unconscious conscious” – Freud
- “Unconsciousness-raising” (Jacobs, 2001).



Three Major Forms of the Unconscious

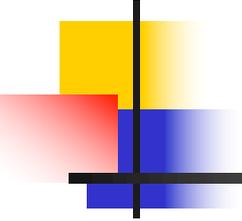
- Primary unconscious
 - Present at birth
- Prereflective unconscious
 - Experiential content that was never conscious
- Dynamic, repressed unconscious
 - Content moved into the unconscious because awareness is too difficult



What are We Born With?

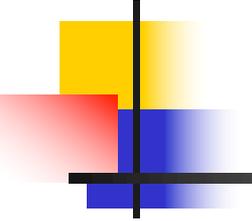
The Primary Unconscious

- Example: The breast crawl
- Inborn, inherent
- The source of phantasy: thoughts, emotions and images that emerge into the mind from the body



The Role of Phantasy

- First appears in the primary unconscious
- “Direct manifestation of instincts” interwoven with sensations and affects
- Experienced as part of a relationship to an object
- Early phantasy is about body, but becomes elaborated over time, particularly into defenses against anxieties



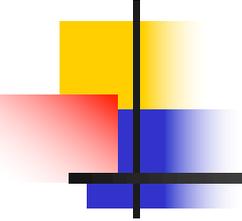
What Happens Next?: The Prereflective Unconscious

- Example: The mother who held her infant at arm's length (Mitchell)
- Contains organizing principles that shape experience without awareness or reflection
- Not the product of defenses
- Implicit procedural knowing

Then What?

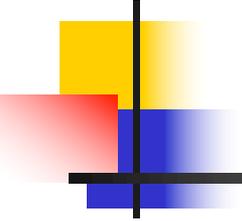
The Dynamic Unconscious

- Example: “My mother would give you the shirt off your back!”
- Created by three essential mechanisms: splitting, repression and projection



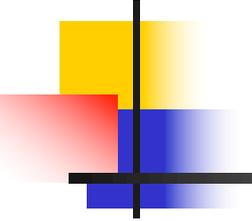
The Dynamic Unconscious, Cont'd

- **Splitting** occurs when some part of the mind – an emotion, a part of an internal object, a desire – is too frightening or threatening. It becomes **split off** from the rest of the mind
- **Repression** rids the mind of these frightening elements by banishing them to the unconscious
- **Projection** also rids the mind of frightening content by locating it in someone or something else



What is a “Position”?

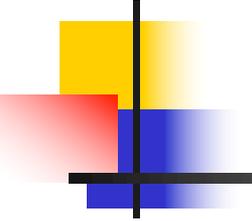
- Basic ways experience is organized
- Constellation of anxieties, defenses and internal/external relationships with objects
- Many anxieties and defenses are unconscious and are linked to phantasy
- Each position present throughout life



The Paranoid/Schizoid Position

- Example: Hank and the retaliating bosses
- Predominant in first few months
- Persecutory anxiety
- Minimal cognitive processing
- Objects are polarized (all-or-none, good/bad), unintegrated
- Phantasy plays strong role
- Defenses: splitting, projection, repression

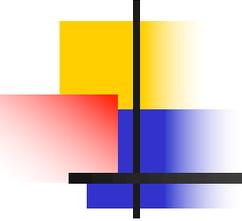
(Klein 1946)



The Depressive Position

- Example: Sally's attempt to reverse her attack on Steve
- Begins 3-4 months
- More complete image of the object
- Anxiety: harming the object - guilt and concern
- Toleration of ambivalence: pain is now borne by reliance on the (integrated) good object
- Phantasy-constructed objects moderated by reality

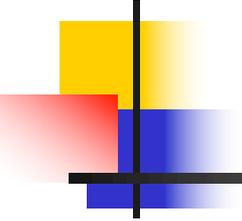
(Klein 1946)



The Autistic-Contiguous Position

- Example: the girl who was drowned
- Pre-symbolic
- Sensory-contiguity of skin surface and rhythmicity
- Creates background of sensory boundedness in all states, rudimentary sense of "I-ness"
- Anxiety: disintegration
- Defenses attempt to re-establish bounded sensory surface and ordered rhythmicity

(Ogden, 1989)



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