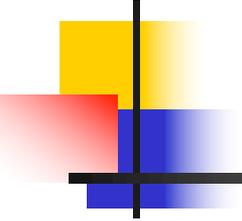


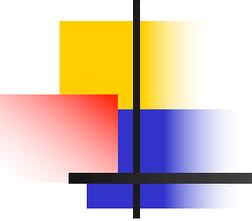
Symbolic Equation and Phantasy

IPI Satellite Program
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Patients A, B and C

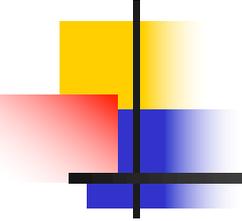
- Patient A: Violin = penis; playing violin = masturbation
- Patient B: Violin is associated to penis; playing duet is associated with intercourse
- Patient C: Wet shoes = traumatic attack; disinfecting wet shoes = fending off traumatic attack



Symbolic Equation v. Symbolic Representation

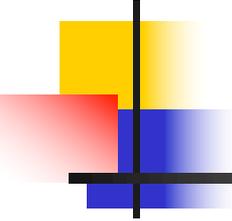
- Symbolic equation:
 - The symbol is equated with the object symbolized so that the two are felt to be identical
- Symbolic representation:
 - The symbol represents the object but is not equated with it.

(Segal, 1957, 1978, 1991)



Basic Questions

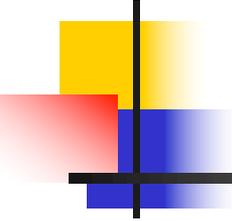
- Can patients A and C be said to be symbolizing at all?
- If so, how are they different than patient B?
- What conditions lead to the development of symbolic equation v. symbolic representation?
- What is the role of phantasy?



Phantasy in Freud

- Originates primarily as cs. or pcs. day-dreaming
- Formed by secondary process (rational thought)
- Wish-fulfilling (of unconscious wish)
- Appears relatively late in development (after capacity for play and rational thought)
- Phantasies are intermittent in psychic life ('A happy person never phantasies, only an unsatisfied one.' - 1908b)

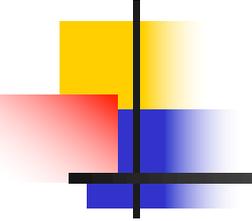
(Freud 1908a, 1908b, 1910, 1911, 1917a, 1917b)



Phantasy in Klein

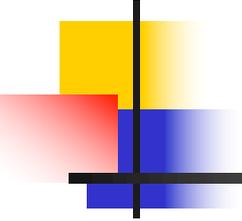
- Mental expression of instinct as the instinct aims at its objects
- Operates continuously from the outset
- Underlies introjection and projection - foundation of first object relations and creation of self- and object-representations
- Content of early phantasy is about body, but becomes elaborated (into defenses, wish-fulfillments, anxieties, ego-mechanisms, adaptation to reality, etc.) with experience
- Primary content of unconscious and conscious thought processes
- Changes over time with stages of psychological development

(Isaacs, 1948; Klein, 1952; Mitchell, 1998; Segal, 1964, 1991, 1994)



Phantasy in the Paranoid/Schizoid Position

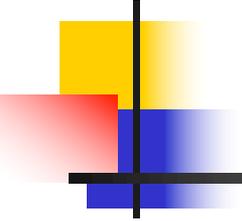
- **Omnipotence:** phantasy *defines* reality of the world
- **Splitting:** Objects - at first, largely constructed out of phantasy, then out of actual experience plus phantasy - are not experienced as whole, but are split into good and bad
- **Repression:** Rids the conscious psyche of frightening phantasies and phantasied objects
- **Projective Identification:** Aspects of self (self- or object-representations, also constructed in part via phantasy) are split off and projected into an object. Identification with projected parts leads to attempts to control them



Container/Contained

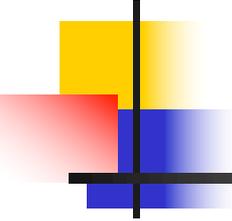
- The infant experiences primitive physical or emotional states with P/S phantasy
- Mother understands the infant's states
- Accepts them without regression or retaliation
- Processes them in her own mind to gain perspective and place them in context
- Gives them back to the infant in metabolized, mentalized and mature form

(Bion, 1963)



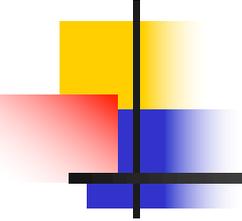
Phantasy in the Depressive Position

- Objects are felt to be whole objects
- Ambivalence toward objects is fully experienced
- Negative emotions will not destroy good objects
- Ambivalent feelings about the object create fears of loss or harm to the object, leading to guilt and attempts at repair
- Growing sense of reality
- Phantasy-constructed objects are moderated, placed in conjunction with objects of opposite valence, no longer define reality
- Phantasies are drawn back into the self as characteristics of one's own experiences



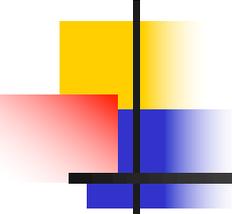
Phantasy and Symbolic Equation

- In symbolic equation, P/S level phantasy is in use
- Omnipotence, splitting, repression and projective identification create the symbol as identical to the thing symbolized
- Phantasy in symbolic equation represents a failure of differentiation of internal and external, reflecting a similar failure in differentiation of self and object



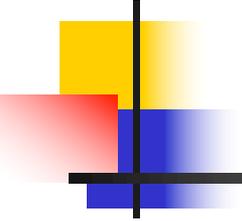
Phantasy and Symbolic Representation

- In symbolic representation, phantasy at the Depressive level is at work
- This phantasy:
 - Is not projectively identified in the object
 - Is understood to originate from the internal world, which is experienced as different than the external world
 - Creates the possibility of representation because of the separation between self and object



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