

ON COGNITIVE TENSIONS. THE MEDIATING FUNCTION OF A SYMBOL THROUGH THE LENS OF KLEINIAN PSYCHOANALYSIS AND PEIRCE SEMIOTIC

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ABSTRACT

Aim. The foundation of symbolisation is a substitution: a mediation between a Representamen and Object. The paper leverages this core mechanic to examine the substitutions within the conscious and unconscious parts of the mind, which compose every act of thinking. Recognising it is a single instance: the Ego, which regulates this parallel mediation, the paper focuses on the exploration of dichotomies that result from the necessity to perform two symbolisations simultaneously.

Concepts. The study's theoretical framework is determined by Charles S. Peirce's (1998) concept of sign and Melanie Klein's (1948) psychoanalytic theory. From semiotic and psychoanalytic angles, this paper explores possible comprehensions of the object in the quasi-mind (Interpretant in infinite semiosis) and actual realisation of code in the act of individual thinking (Ego mediating between conscious and unconscious symbolisation).

Results and conclusion. The main result of the study is the exposure of dichotomies that structure the shared ground for the conscious and the unconscious symbolisation. This, in turn, highlights tangible constraints that the mind is subjected to in the act of thinking.

Cognitive value. The study's main contribution is the high-level scheme of dynamics that hold the Ego in reality through the means of unconscious and conscious symbolisation. The study also incorporates into coherent model unexamined aspects of individual sign usage: it deploys psychic continuity into the conscious symbolisation process (by basing the model on the instance of Ego), which allows addressing the issues arising at the border of conscious and unconscious symbolisation.

Key words: Charles S. Peirce, Melanie Klein, symbolisation, conscious, unconscious



INTRODUCTION

The principle that conscious and unconscious aspects of the mind influence each other and determine thinking (Di Ceglie, 2005) applies to the mechanics of the most powerful device that the mind can use in the act of thinking, namely: a symbol. Transformations that shape the frame for conscious symbol recognition were most extensively explored by Peirce (1998), mainly through his concept of Interpretant. And while Peirce was making his discoveries on how symbol and code exist, Sigmund Freud (1960) revealed that the unconscious content of the mind also tends to manifest itself through symbols and seeks understanding within the code. These two discoveries created new ground for reflection on the symbol and its relation to the human mind. Interestingly, when the two perspectives are applied in examining symbol and code organisation, the mediating role of the symbol, stressed by Peirce (1998) and Freud (1960), gains central focus and unexpected relevance. This distinctive feature of the symbol – to recognise differences and mediate between them – will become the paper's central theme.

The article consists of four sections: an introduction covering the theoretical foundation, a description of the psycho-semiotic model, an analysis of the dichotomies mediated within it, and conclusions.

THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATION: INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The psycho-semiotic model – that will be used as a base for exploration of the mediating role of the symbol – combines Peirce (1998) view on a sign (mainly on the symbol so a specific type of the sign) and Melanie Klein (1948) concept of unconscious symbolisation, with its impact on dynamics of ego development.¹ The reasoning for matching these two theories is explained in the dedicated section, but for introduction, it should be marked that the match for Peirce and Klein symbolisation models comes from resemblances of Interpretant and Ego functions concerning code/mind structure.

On the theoretical ground, it is also worth acknowledging that Peirce's perspective on the symbolic sign will be presented mainly through its conceptualisation by Umberto Eco (1976), and Klein's views on the symbol will be outlined through Hanna Segal's (1990, 1997, 1998, 2002) works. While it might seem controversial to use the perspective of the successors rather than the authors themselves, there is a good reason for that. Both Klein (1948) and Peirce (1998) were pioneers in comprehending mind and code mechanics; hence their works were highly dispersed. It was only the time and maturation of the field they

1 Klein concept of symbol mirrors (on unconscious part of the mind) Peirce mechanics of sign (psychoanalysis uses term symbol for signifying any unconscious content). Classification of signs that Peirce proposes (symbol, icon, index) is less relevant for generic psycho-semiotic perspective, hence paper aligns with symbol definition for unconscious and conscious part. Such an approach additionally facilitates discussion within most explored linguistic space.

worked on which allowed their excellent followers to produce crisp definitions for their brilliant discoveries.

THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATION: SEMIOTICS

Peirce definition of a sign, applied in the paper, is very generic:

I define a Sign as anything which is so determined by something else, called its Object, and so determines an effect upon a person, which effect I call its Interpretant, that the latter is thereby mediately determined by the former. (Peirce, 1998, p. 478)

This basic definition is further expanded and refined by application of Eco's (1976) interpretation, which grounds the definition of a sign in the code constraints while emphasizing alignment between the sign and the mind through the prism of Interpretant:

The Interpretant is not the interpreter (even if a confusion of this type occasionally arises in Peirce). The Interpretant is that which guarantees the validity of the sign, even in the absence of the interpreter. According to Peirce it is that which the sign produces in the quasi-mind which is the interpreter; but it can also be conceived as the definition of the Representamen (and therefore its intention). However, the most fruitful hypothesis would seem to be that of conceiving the Interpretant as another representation which is referred to the same 'object'. In other words, in order to establish what the Interpretant of a sign is, it is necessary to name it by means of another sign which in turn has another interpretant to be named by another sign and so on. At this point there begins a process of unlimited semiosis, which, paradoxical as it may be, is the only guarantee for the foundation of a semiotic system capable of checking itself entirely by its own means. (Eco, 1976, pp. 68-69)

THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATION: PSYCHOANALYSIS

The base for the Kleinian angle is based on the fundamental work of Melanie Klein (1948) *The importance of symbol-formation in the development of the ego*, where she defines the symbol through its function of establishing a linkage between the mind and internal (and so also external) object, and the effect such linkage has upon the Ego:

Some years ago I wrote a paper (...) in which I drew the conclusion that symbolism is the foundation of all sublimation and of every talent, since it is by way of symbolic equation that things, activities and interests become the subject of libidinal phantasies. I can now add (...) that, side by side with libidinal interests, it is the anxiety (...) *which sets going the mechanism of identification* [emphasis mine]. (...) Thus, not only does symbolism come to be the foundation of all phantasy and sublimation but, more than that, upon it is built up the subject's relation to the outside world and to reality in general. (Klein, 1948, pp. 237-238)

Hanna Segal (1990) further enriched Klein's concept by incorporating to genuinely psychoanalytic approach semiotic perspective of Charles Morris:

I find it helpful, following Morris (1938), to consider symbolising as a three-term relation, i.e. a relation between the thing symbolised, the thing functioning as a symbol, and a person for whom the one represents the other. In psychological terms, symbolism would be a relation between the Ego, the object, and the symbol.

Symbol formation is an activity of the Ego attempting to deal with the anxieties stirred by its relation to the object and is generated primarily by the fear of bad objects and the fear of the loss or inaccessibility of good objects. Disturbances in the Ego's relation to objects are reflected in disturbances of symbol formation. In particular, disturbances in differentiation between Ego and object lead to disturbances in differentiation between the symbol and the object symbolised and therefore to the concrete thinking characteristic of psychoses. (Segal, 1990, pp. 52)

THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATION: COMBINING PSYCHOANALYSIS AND SEMIOTICS

Although Segal herself made the direct connection between the psychoanalytic and the semiotic understanding of symbol, it is worth pointing at two other features that combine these two perspectives. One resides in Peirce and Klein theories themselves: Peirce's (1984) concepts of immediate object and dynamic object roughly mirror Klein's (1948) concepts of part object and whole object, for they outline the opposition between the object as it is versus object as shaped by a given moment (Ransdell, 1977; Segal, 2002).

Another important linking element is a concept of intersemiotic function, as comprehended by Riccardo Steiner (2007), who extends the initial, Jakobson's (1959) definition of intersemiotic translation onto the psychoanalytic ground:

By 'intersemiotic function' I mean a function able to register all aspects of human communication and able to make sense of them through verbal language and interpretation without losing contact with the immediacy of their non-verbal and pre-verbal components, related to all our perceptions, not only the acoustic or the visual ones. All this would probably mean another way of looking at Bion's alpha function. (Steiner, 2007, pp. 260-261)

As can be recognised in Steiner's proposal, the ground for combining the two fields is not merely a matter of sensed overlap of the two domains. It is an actual need to develop psychoanalysis, so it explores in a structured frame ways of putting non-communicable into communicable.

A similar urge to connect the two fields can be found among linguists. An example here can be Noam Chomsky's (2013) insistence on the incorporation of the impact of psychic continuity to language examination. As Chomsky proves, it is psychic continuity that largely determines the denotation. The impact indicated by Chomsky (2013) can be taken forward if we consider psy-

chic continuity to be echoed in the code through semantic dependency that is put on syntax rules (which impedes syntax to be the sole source of organising qualities of a language).

PSYCHO-SEMIOTIC MODEL DESCRIPTION

The psycho-semiotic model combines the two concepts of symbol triangles (conscious and unconscious) to create a perspective on language code usage through the lens of the Ego. Such a view exceeds the natural tendency to keep isolated subjective from the objective. Instead, it offers a scheme of code utilisation that incorporates the natural constraints of the individual mind that every person is subjected to in a language mechanics. (It is worth reminding that such a match is a necessary one if the psychic continuity – the function responsible for recognising the object's identity – is to be included in a reflection on the language).

The conscious symbolisation part of the model is based on Peirce's (1998) concept of a sign (with emphasis on symbol). It explains elements that symbol consists of and the relations between them by indicating that the Interpretant role is the recognition that relation between Object and Representamen exists, and by recognising that Object determines Representamen and by that also its effect on a person. That basic dynamic of a sign is further deployed into unlimited semiosis through the devices of Interpretant, as indicated earlier.

The unconscious symbolisation triangle consists of the Ego, internal unconscious object² and symbol (a substitute, a Representamen in semiotic terms). The two triangles are matched in the model, and Interpretant gets connected to a singular, unique Ego. The match has far-reaching consequences, for it opens a venue to translate Peirce's quasi-mind into the actual act of thinking. It further highlights that such an individual mind usage is by no means a random event but an activity constrained by unconscious dynamics.

Although multiple unconscious factors alter conscious cognition (and so access to Interpretant resources), the most fundamental are two basic psychic positions, described by Klein (1948), and further clarified by Segal (1990). One of them, the paranoid-schizoid position, is the state of mind when thinking is disfigured by severe annihilation anxieties and relation to the partial object. The position means that when a person is confronted with distinctive elements of a sign (Representamen), he/she remains unable to think about the variety of meanings the symbol sends to. The captivity of the Interpretant is twofold: it is either read by the Ego in a narrow way (in comparison to actual meanings it carries), or it is replaced – on a token of unconscious association – by content extraneous to the set of meanings that given Interpretant contains (for quasi-mind).

2 Internal unconscious object is defined here as internal representation of object shaped by unconscious phantasy and infused with experiences coming from relation with external object. (Although internal objects may be more or less unconscious, for the purpose of the model it is useful to consider most unconscious form of it, so to be able to cover paranoid-schizoid disfigurations of thinking.)

What prevents the Ego in this position from accessing meanings carried by the Interpretant are primitive defence mechanisms. These are splitting and projection. Both disable the move to more coherent thinking by fuzzing the distinctions between the Ego and object, symbolised and substituted, conscious and unconscious. This blurring impact alters Ego's cognition of all three elements of the unconscious symbol triangle (the Ego, internal unconscious object, and substitute) in such a way that distinction between them is weakened and so relations between them cannot accurately take place, and as a result process of unconscious symbolisation must fail.

The second position is called the depressive position. It is the state of mind when the unconscious stresses thinking with optimal pressure, and so separation anxieties can be transformed into less extreme anxiety for the object. This shift alone proves that cognitive interest is moved from self to the internal object and so can be further transposed to an external object. That alteration has a tremendous impact on the Ego capacity to benefit from meanings carried by the Interpretant. The elevated pressure and orientation to object enable the Ego to establish a stable connection between unconscious meaning and multiple meanings carried by the Interpretant. The solid linkage between unconscious and conscious meanings translates to the Ego's greater sense of connection to the object that the Interpretant mediates to the mind. In such circumstances, unconscious meaning cannot replace the conscious one (as it happens in the paranoid-schizoid position), but instead, it fuels the exploration of possible meanings carried by the Interpretant.

The depressive position is shaped by less severe manic defences, which are remnants of splitting and projection. Since manic defences are less extreme, they do not disrupt linkages between the Ego and object, symbolised and substituted, conscious and unconscious, and so allow for the unconscious symbol triangle to perform its function. Therefore, when the mind resides in the depressive position, the meaning carried by the Interpretant for quasi-mind becomes largely available for the individual, and that is not only due to weakening defences but mainly for the object being cathected and so mind energy being invested into exploration and cognition.

The description of psychic positions – and how they impact the Ego capability to source from the Interpretant – already indicates that the match between Peirce's (1998) and Klein's (1948) concept of the symbol is located at the overlap of the Ego and Interpretant. This overlap by itself implies that the substitute signifies simultaneously for both conscious and unconscious parts of the mind. It would be hard to establish whether it is the same set of distinctive features of one substitute or two different sets of distinctive features of the substitute that signify to conscious and unconscious. Early works of Melanie Klein (1948) would indicate that it is a different set of distinctive features that communicates to and stands for the unconscious and a different set of features that enables conscious meaning.

The psycho-semiotic model can therefore be displayed as two triangles that outline the code and mind constraints that shape the Ego's capacity for the code usage (and hence for thinking):

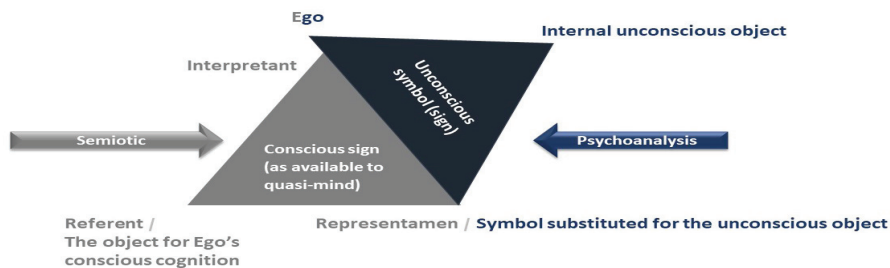


Fig. 1. The psycho-semiotic model

Note: The scheme of the psycho-semiotic model, built from Melanie Klein's (1948) concept of the unconscious symbol, and Charles S. Peirce's (1998) notion of the symbolic sign, based on ideas he outlined in his letter to Lady Welby. Drawing issued for the purpose of this paper.

Source: Own research.

DICHOTOMIES MEDIATED IN THE SYMBOL USAGE

Only dichotomies that are stretched between the conscious and unconscious symbolisation are of interest for the paper since these are the oppositions that constitute the dynamics of the applied model. The cognitive tensions that will be elaborated on are Ego versus Object, Individual versus Collective, External versus Internal, Conscious versus Unconscious, Symbolised versus Substituted, Dynamic versus Static.

Ego versus Object

As presented in the below scheme, the opposition between the Ego and the object is twofold. On the one hand, the Ego is in opposition to an external³ object, a referent for the Ego to cognise. On the other hand, there is an opposition between the Ego and the internal unconscious object. Ego relation to a consciously cognised object is dependent on the Ego relation to the internal unconscious object. (As we learn from the symptoms of psychotic states, Ego must maintain a good relation to this internal object if conscious cognition is to take place). Acknowledging the primacy of the unconscious in the act of cognition and the secondary influence of conscious cognition to internal object relation, unarguably, both oppositions are indispensable for cognition and communication through the symbol.

Nevertheless, the Ego dependency on the unconscious has far-reaching implications. When the Ego is weakened by defences of paranoid-schizoid position and so internal unconscious object stirs dread, the mediation between external and internal object through Ego must fail (and so Interpretant meanings remain unavailable). A similar mechanic can be observed when an external object stirs extreme anxiety. However, the effect of this mechanic is much weaker and can occur only if fear of external object resemblances anxieties trig-

3 Understood as externalised to Ego.

gered by the internal object. For the Ego disassembly can only take place from within. It is, therefore, Ego's capability to cooperate with unconscious phantasy on the internal object that it is itself primarily subjected to, what ultimately decides on the capacity to recognise and explore the external object.

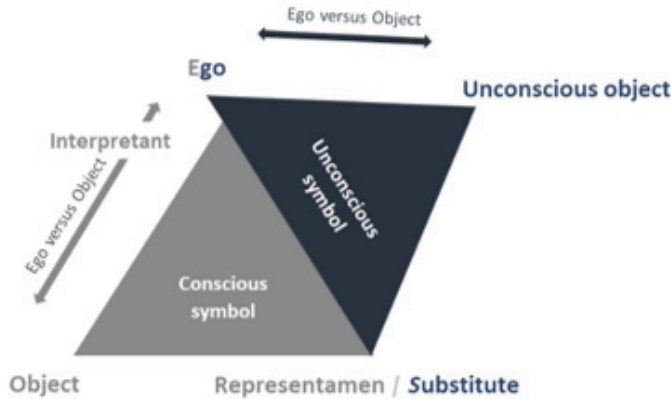


Fig. 2. Dichotomy Ego versus Object embedded in the psycho-semiotic model

Note: The scheme of the psycho-semiotic model, built from Melanie Klein's (1948) concept of the unconscious symbol, and Charles S. Peirce's (1998) notion of symbolic sign, based on ideas he outlined in his letter to Lady Welby. Drawing issued for the purpose of this paper.

Source: Own research.

Individual versus Collective

In the model, the individual part is covered by the symbolisation of unconscious content and the collective part by Peirce's (1998) concept of a sign. The mediating role between the two is performed by the Ego, which must combine the two aspects of the meaning of the sign in such a way as to maintain the most connection with the object of conscious cognition and internal, unconscious object. This effort of Ego resembles the features of linguistic meaning, which is formed (and shared) in the act of relating/connecting to.

This dichotomy can also be explained by the opposition between meaningful events available to the Ego and meanings existing in the code available to the quasi-mind. While the meanings available to the quasi-mind are well defined through the concept of Interpretant, the crisp definition meaningful events available to the Ego would be that these are events that become available to the Ego according to the individual's psychic position and unique experiences (both conscious and unconscious), which – mostly – find their reflection in Interpretant meanings (its explanations and its development capability).⁴ Such a definition of the dichotomy highlights that the relationship between individual and collective is not a one-way street. Unarguably, the Ego – to give

⁴ Interpretant definition follows Eco (1976) and covers Interpretant meanings considered as meanings available in Interpretant for explaining sign meaning, as well as meanings available through Interpretant ability to inferentially develop logic capabilities postulated by the sign.

shape to its mental events – utilises the Interpretant (understood as a reservoir of available meanings for Representamen-Object linkage), but it is also well justified to consider that it is an individual, creative sign usage that fuels the expansion of Interpretant meanings according to code rules and implements the new comprehension to language. The mediation between individual and collective would then come down to the Ego recognising its cognitive events in the language (with all linguistic constraints imposed by the code), and language bearing the mark of human mental and developmental events (with all mechanics that mind imposes on them).

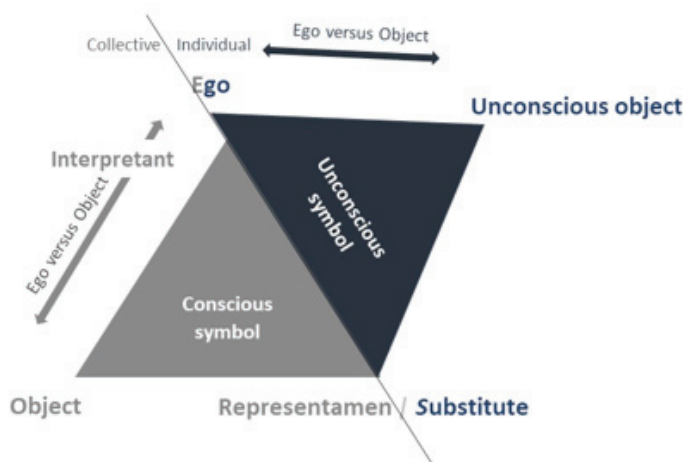


Fig. 3. Dichotomies: Ego versus Object, Individual versus Collective embedded in the psycho-semiotic model

Note: The scheme of the psycho-semiotic model, built from Melanie Klein's (1948) concept of the unconscious symbol, and Charles S. Peirce's (1998) notion of symbolic sign, based on ideas he outlined in his letter to Lady Welby. Drawing issued for the purpose of this paper.

Source: Own research.

External versus Internal

The dichotomy External versus Internal is indicated in a reference to the Ego, for the external is considered all content externalised to the Ego that can be incorporated into thinking and communication. The opposition is then of spatial type and is defined by the Ego's reach: while object external (or internal but captured by the Ego and so externalised to it) may become the subject of reflection using language or other culture codes, the truly internal object resides beyond the Ego's reach (and so remains unconscious content). To put it in other words: external is all that is outside of the Ego or can be externalised by the Ego to become the Ego's object. The internal manifests itself through the shape of the Ego.

This opposition introduces many issues. It brings back the matter – known from opposition Ego versus Object – of what Interpretant actualises in the Ego: is it mostly mind delusion supported by the language, or is it an actual external

object. Another grey zone for External versus Internal (in relation to the Ego) can be spotted at the edge of language capabilities: how much of uniquely individual content (externalised to the Ego, but internal in the sense of having its source in the mental experience, that is distinctive to a person) can be captured by language, and is that – what is left outside the language, and yet sensed by the Ego – internal, or external.

Despite many blind spots, the mediation between the external and internal resides at the core of linguistic cognition, for it is a move from the internal to external that introduces the comprehension of any phenomenon. That very move makes available to the mind what – even if directly visible – remained beyond cognition. Importantly, such an update is likely to populate further down the system, so the comprehension and the code accurately describe available knowledge on reality. All these updates likely have their reflection in the language. However, such changes pass unnoticed, as an inquiry on the language refrains itself from drawing a line between thoughtful language usage and thoughtless repetition of linguistic phrases.

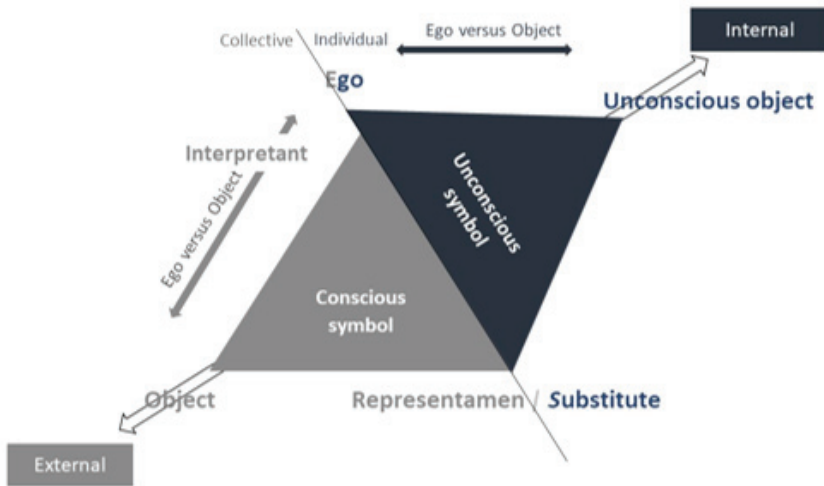


Fig. 4. Dichotomies: Ego versus Object, Individual versus Collective, External versus Internal embedded in the psycho-semiotic model

Note: The scheme of the psycho-semiotic model, built from Melanie Klein’s (1948) concept of the unconscious symbol, and Charles S. Peirce’s (1998) notion of symbolic sign, based on ideas he outlined in his letter to Lady Welby. Drawing issued for the purpose of this paper.

Source: Own research.

Conscious versus Unconscious

The opposition of conscious and unconscious requires the definition of the unconscious as such. Unconscious here is defined, according to Kleinian view, as an unconscious phantasy which has a nature of motion:

All impulses, all feelings, all modes of defence are experienced in phantasies which give them mental life and show their direction and purpose.

A phantasy represents the particular content of the urges or feelings (for example, wishes, fears, anxieties, triumphs, love or sorrow) dominating the mind at the moment. In early life, there is indeed a wealth of unconscious phantasies which take specific form in conjunction with the cathexis of particular bodily zones. Moreover, they rise and fall in complicated patterns according to the rise and fall and modulation of the primary instinct-impulses which they express. The world of phantasy shows the same protean and kaleidoscopic changes as the contents of a dream. These changes occur partly in response to external stimulation and partly as a result of the interplay between the primary instinctual urges themselves (Isaacs, 2002, pp. 83-84).

Such a dynamic definition of the nature of the unconscious skips the matter of Jung's collective unconscious (Jung, 1975), but importantly it also alters Freud's topographical iceberg model (Freud, 1981). The alteration is necessary, for there is no premise that unconscious content is a fixed and compacted one, and so less that there is a fixed set of preconscious content that remains in the Ego's reach. Both spaces seem to be highly dynamic and responsive to external for them, which is the Ego and its development capabilities.

Perception of the unconscious as a motion of the liquid nature content (particularly with respect to its role in symbolisation) is deeply rooted in Kleinian theory. According to Klein (1948) and Segal (1997, 1998), in a paranoid-schizoid position, what is attempted to be symbolised is the phantasy of a partial object: part of the body (often of sexual nature). This attempt must fail, for it confronts in raw form with the most challenging aspect of the human condition: the body that is a venue for living and, at the same time, captivity in a death sentence. Under such pressure, linkages between the Ego, object, and substitute must withdraw. The content of the unconscious that is of partial and sexual nature was clear to Freud (1960) as well, and it remains a prerequisite to an inquiry on any severe disturbances having their origins in psychotic issues. But as Klein (1948) proved, in addition to the paranoid-schizoid position, there is a state shaped by the whole object: depressive position. A point perhaps not so crucial for treatment, but essential to understand unconscious mechanics. Yet, the whole object in Kleinian theory remains largely unknown, apart from the recognition that it is not partial. Given the function of unconscious symbolisation, there are good reasons to believe that the content of the whole object is actually everything (and in that sense, it strongly resembles the unconscious). It would be misleading, however, to consider the relation to the whole object as a relation to everything, for the wholeness of the object at the level of the Ego comes down to all that the Ego needs in a given point in time for reassurance, that object can be safely and satisfyingly related to.

In the psycho-semiotic model, the unconscious is located within the internal and becomes released to the Ego (in the form of individual content) according to dynamics that shape it internally and factors that influence it externally. Its function is twofold: to give a form to the Ego by internal content (in the form of dynamic unconscious phantasies) and to allow cognition by enabling

internal and external linkage.⁵ Regulated by that setting, the Ego performs mediation between conscious and revealed unconscious content so that the meanings of the Interpretant can be uncovered to it. When unconscious phantasy of the internal unconscious object is depressive, the comprehension – that Representamen (substitute of unconscious symbol) sends to – will be extensive and multidimensional, successfully connecting singular with universal, and so possessing the quality of the depth. On the other hand, when the unconscious phantasy of the internal unconscious object is coloured with paranoid-schizoid anxieties, only a narrow part of the Interpretant will be available to the Ego. Moreover, if the anxieties are severe, the meanings delivered by the Interpretant will be replaced directly by unconscious content (and with that, Ego will become detached from the object of its conscious cognition).

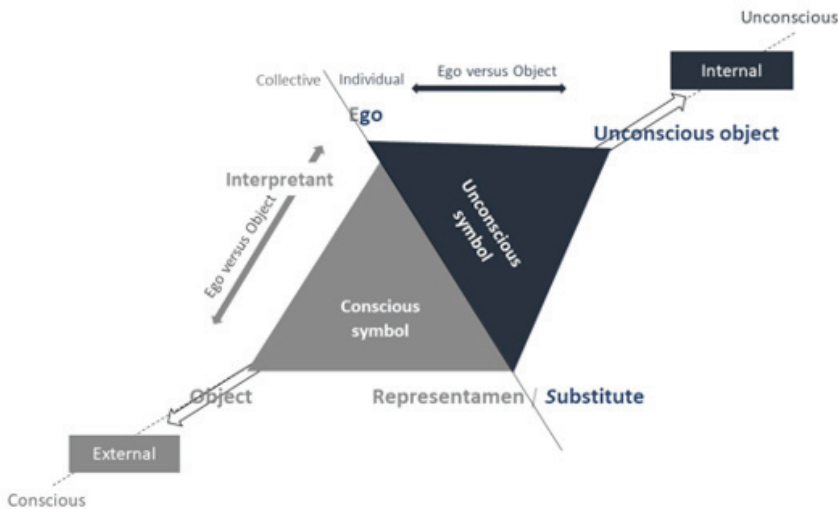


Fig. 5. Dichotomies: Ego versus Object, Individual versus Collective, External versus Internal, Conscious versus Unconscious embedded in the psycho-semiotic model

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Source: Own research.

5 The distinction between unconscious and internal allows to keep separate "spatial" nature of conscious and unconscious (location of the content), from highly dynamic and functional nature of the content itself. This has significant implications to understanding unconscious, for it allows to make a distinction between its passive (released content) and active (forming function) impact, by differentiating unconscious content that is emerging to Ego's reach in given moment from the unconscious content that shapes the Ego in given moment. Furthermore, these are the complex patterns shaping an ongoing unconscious phantasy transformation (mechanics of its motion), which have to be explored if the grammar rules of unconscious language are to be cognised.

Symbolised versus Substituted

The content of the unconscious phantasy, and so a form that the internal unconscious object takes, is at the core of the next opposition: symbolised and substituted. A well-known – in the semiotic field – rule of substitution (substitute stands for an object) is equally present in the psychoanalytic concept of symbolising an internal object. However, while the mediation between Representamen and object is performed by the Interpretant, the mediation between substitute for internal object and the internal object itself is performed by the Ego. Substitute for internal object is brought to Ego by the same symbolic sign which serves as the foundation of the Representamen for external object, though it seems to be defined through different set of distinctive features.

Although Interpretant in its linking role is subjected to multiple alterations resulting from unlimited semiosis and development of logic capabilities postulated by sign, it remains resilient to any abrupt, significant changes. In that respect, the Ego is far more vulnerable to internal and external disruptions. This significant difference between Interpretant and Ego diminishes with the growth of Ego strength and its capabilities.

For the semiotic part of the model, the matter of substitution introduces the fundamental question of the existence of linkage between mind-independent object and language. One of the most wholesome answers to this issue is Chomsky's (2013) suggestion to keep meaning as an array of perspectives rather than the object.

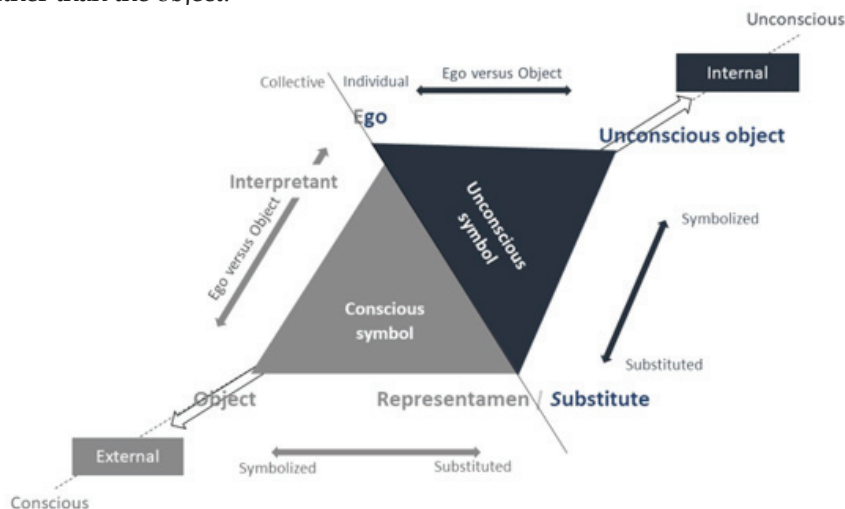


Fig. 6. Dichotomies: Ego versus Object, Individual versus Collective, External versus Internal, Conscious versus Unconscious, Symbolised versus Substituted embedded in the psycho-semiotic model

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Source: Own research.

Dynamic versus Static

The psycho-semiotic model is highly dynamic, for it is described through the lens of the Ego that must maintain the connection with constantly and rapidly transformed unconscious so to get into reality cognition. The main lever that the Ego has on its disposal to manage that task is language and Interpretants it delivers, which enable thinking and communicating, and so development of the Ego. All these three elements: unconscious content⁶, the Ego, and Interpretant can be considered to be transformed at a fast-pace (though significantly varying in the degree of the speed). In contrast, Representamen and external objects are much slower in their transformation: while the Representamen is preserved by language rules, the object is pinned to its content (identity) by psychic continuity.

The intricacy of the dichotomy reveals itself, however, with a substitute for the internal unconscious object. The internal object (and unconscious phantasy about it) might be symbolised by multiple substitutes. Furthermore, the same substitute may stand for many different unconscious meanings. These are all phenomena known from natural language usage, yet the language of the unconscious deploys them so heavily that—unlike with natural language—it is never clear, at a glance, what the substitute of unconscious content stands for (Freud, 1960). The reasons for that seem to lie in the nature and function of unconscious language: since it connects to the internal world of a person to enable external world recognition, the substitutes here must cover a variety of meanings. A substituted here may be: duration, someone's gesture, distance, air temperature, core values one holds, size, colour, bodily sensation, unspoken thought etc., for all that constitutes self-awareness of a human being in the world. This polymorphic, multilevel language of the unconscious is still not understood, but that instability of the substitute in unconscious symbolisation serves as a good indicator of the complexity and motion deployed in the process of unconscious symbolisation. Such a dynamic nature of unconscious symbolisation also suggests that it is best to use all types of signs Peirce (1984) outlines when examining conscious and unconscious symbolisation.

6 Unconscious content here should be understood as unconscious phantasy about internal unconscious object that shapes ego relation to it. Such content should not be confused with individual tendency to reside more in paranoid-schizoid or in depressive position. Such tendency seems to be loosely connected with variety of unconscious content come and go in symbolisation process (content released by unconscious for the Ego to work on) and more with unconscious active, formative function that it performs against the Ego.

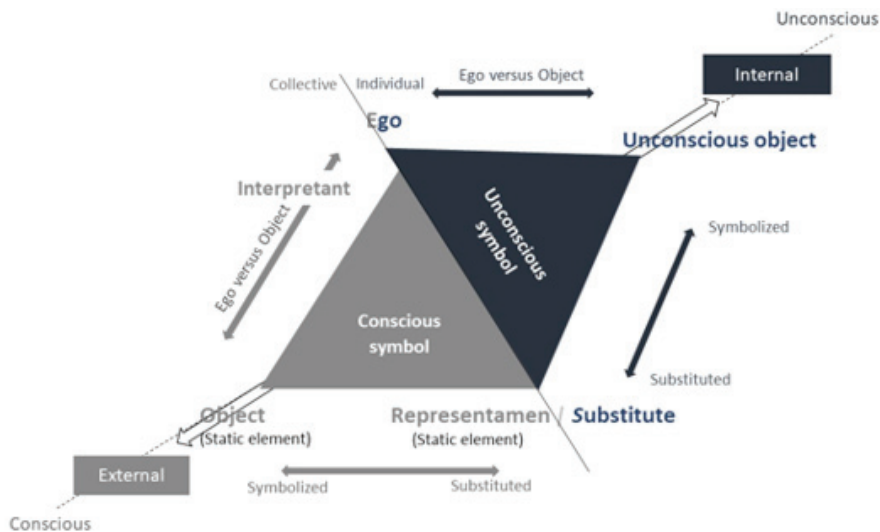


Fig. 7. Dichotomies: Ego versus Object, Individual versus Collective, External versus Internal, Conscious versus Unconscious, Symbolised versus Substituted, Dynamic versus Static embedded in the psycho-semiotic model

Note: The scheme of the psycho-semiotic model, built from Melanie Klein's (1948) concept of the unconscious symbol, and Charles S. Peirce's (1998) notion of symbolic sign, based on ideas he outlined in his letter to Lady Welby. Drawing issued for the purpose of this paper.

Source: Own research.

CONCLUSION

Matching the concept of a sign (proposed by Charles S. Peirce (1984, 1998)) and the idea of unconscious symbolisation (described by Melanie Klein (1948)) aims to examine mutual influence between conscious and unconscious symbolisation on the operational level. The model does not explore the unconscious or conscious but focuses on overlaps and the impact these two have on each other in the symbolisation process. Despite its highly mechanistic construction, the model displays how the language and the unconscious hold the Ego in reality through symbolisation. It also allows putting under scrutiny several vague aspects of symbolisation by placing them in the context of mutual dependency of the language (code) and individual's unconsciousness. Many of these aspects reside in dichotomies that the match is based on.

The dichotomy Object versus the Ego displays that good relation to the internal object is a prerequisite to cognise any external object, and that experiences with external object influence relation with the internal object. Furthermore, the presentation of the twofold dichotomy (the Ego versus internal object, the Ego versus external object) helps to keep clear that the Ego symbolises two objects simultaneously (aspect often very fuzzy in psychoanalytical literature). The instance of the Ego in the dichotomy also creates a linkage to Chomsky's

notion of psychic continuity, enabling a linguistic lens in the exploration of the entity that creates/recognises object identity in any individual act of cognition.

The dichotomy Internal and External (externalised to the Ego) combined with the dichotomy Conscious versus Unconscious enables separating the content's location (in reference to the Ego) from functions that the unconscious performs towards the Ego. Such a twofold perspective allows observing the impact that the unconscious has on both: conscious and unconscious symbolisation. It also facilitates monitoring how conscious recognitions alter unconscious phantasy. Putting spatial structure on unceasing dynamic aids in capturing how features of the content change in content's move from unconscious to conscious. The matter is interesting when unconscious phantasy enables recognition, which restructures multiple conscious comprehensions. The opposition between Internal and External becomes useful also in conjunction with opposition Individual versus Collective (which comes down to resources unique for the Ego versus cultural and social resources), for it helps to capture the point when unconscious content is revealed to the person, but due to being unique for the individual, it does not find its rough reflection in linguistic devices and with that becomes a challenge to the Ego.

The dichotomy Substitute versus Symbolised is a broad topic. This opposition, highlighting differences between conscious and unconscious symbolisation, confronts multiple uneasy facts. The substitution in the language of the unconscious—due to its function of ultimate embedder of the Ego into reality—is multimodal, polymorphic, and performs its tasks fast by deploying a high volume of multiple types of signs. The substitution on the language (and so conscious side) is, however, also less reassuring than it may appear. As Chomsky observes, using analogy to phonetic description and act of pronunciation, the relation between the word and the object is a bit more artificial than we are ready to admit (Chomsky, 2013, pp. 39-40).

Acknowledging the blind spots that are part of knowledge on thinking and communication through signs, the model based on Klein's (1948) and Peirce's (1998) discoveries helps to outline the structure of an act of code deployment by the individual psyche. The description of the dichotomies stretched between conscious and unconscious symbolisation and the mediation that is performed between them in the act of code usage allows for understanding dynamics that constitute and regulate that act.

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