


# TOPOGRAPHICAL MODEL OF THE MIND



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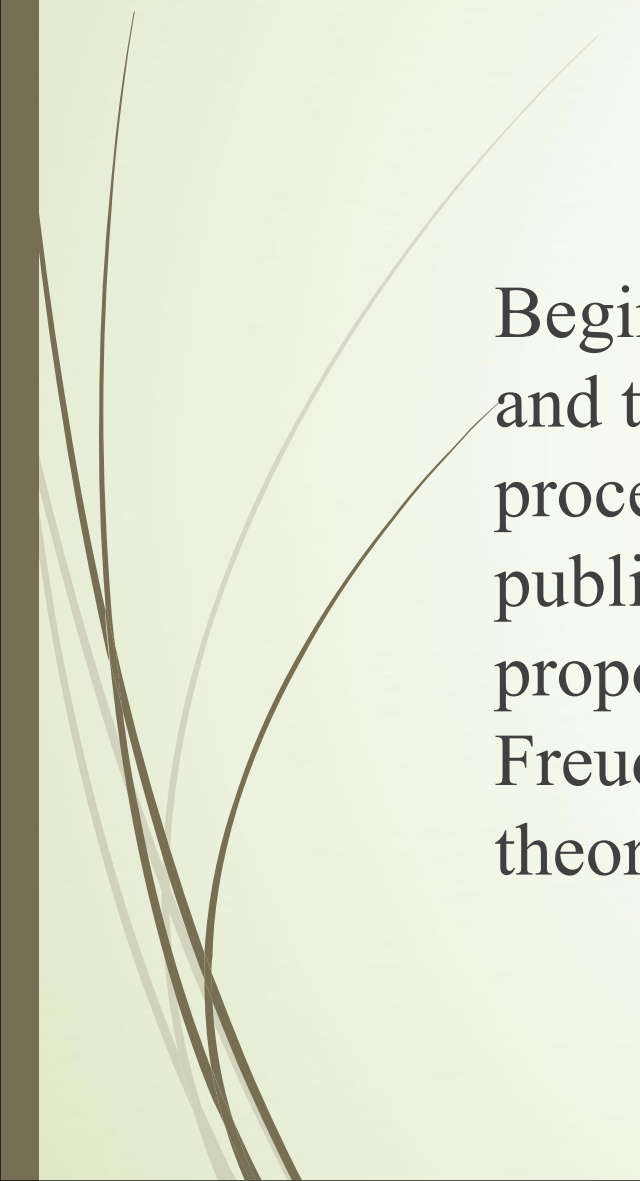
# INTRODUCTION



- ❖ Freud's Topographical model represents his “**configuration of the mind.**”
- ❖ According to Freud there are 3 levels of consciousness:
  - Conscious
  - Preconscious
  - Unconscious



# TOPOGRAPHIC THEORY



Beginning with abandonment of the seduction hypothesis and the concomitant turning of Freud's interests to inner processes of fantasy and dream formation, and ending with publication of *The Ego and the Id* in 1923, in which Freud propounded his structural model of the psychic apparatus, Freud's thinking was cast largely in terms of the topographic theory.



# TOPOGRAPHIC THEORY

## × Basic Assumptions

There were a number of assumptions underlying Freud's thinking that served as **lines of continuity between various stages of his investigations** and helped him to organize his thinking in terms of successive models of the mental apparatus.



# TOPOGRAPHIC THEORY

**cont.**

- × The first assumption was that of “**Psychological determinism,**” according to which all psychological events, including behaviors, feelings, thoughts, and actions, **are caused by that is, are the end result of a preceding sequence of causal events.**



# TOPOGRAPHIC THEORY

**cont.**

- × This assumption derived from **Freud's Helmholtzian** convictions and represented application of a basic natural-science principle to psychological understanding
- × But it was also reinforced by Freud's **clinical observation that apparently meaningless hysterical symptoms**, which had been previously attributed to somatic etiology, could be relieved by relating them to past, apparently repressed, experiences



# TOPOGRAPHIC THEORY

**cont.**

- × The second assumption is that of “**Unconscious psychological processes.**”
- × This assumption derived from a considerable amount of evidence gathered through the use of hypnosis, but it was also **consolidated by Freud's experience of the free associating of his patients in which unconscious and past experiences came to awareness.**





# TOPOGRAPHIC THEORY

**cont.**

- × The **unconscious material, which survived** and **was able to influence present experience, was found to be governed by specific regulatory principles**



# TOPOGRAPHIC THEORY

## cont.

- × The third assumption was that “**Unconscious psychological conflicts**” between and among psychic forces formed the basic elements at the root of psychoneurotic difficulties.
- × This assumption related to Freud's experience of resistance and the drive to repression in his patients.



# TOPOGRAPHIC THEORY

## cont.

- × The full realization of this aspect of psychic functioning came only with awareness that the reports of patients represented not memories of actual experiences but, rather, unconscious fantasies.
- × The assumption of unconscious forces accounted for the process that created those fantasies and brought them into consciousness during free association



# TOPOGRAPHIC THEORY

## cont.

- × The final assumption of the topographic theory was that there existed “**Psychological energies**” that originated in instinctual drives.
- × This assumption was derived from the observation that recall of traumatic experiences and their accompanying affects resulted in disappearance of symptoms and anxiety.



# TOPOGRAPHIC THEORY

## cont.

- × This suggested, therefore, that a displaceable and transformable quantity of energy was involved in the psychological processes responsible for symptom formation.
- × Freud originally assumed that this quantity was equivalent to the affect, which became dammed up or strangulated when it was not appropriately expressed and, thus, was transformed into anxiety or conversion symptoms.



# TOPOGRAPHIC MODEL

- × Freud's thinking about the mental apparatus at this time was based on the classification of mental operations and contents according to regions or systems in the mind.
- × These systems were described neither in anatomical nor spatial terms but were specified, rather, according to their relationship to consciousness.



# TOPOGRAPHIC MODEL

## cont.

- × The topographic model has essentially fallen into relative disfavour because of its limited utility as a working model of psychoanalytic processes and largely because it has been surpassed and supplanted by the structural theory.
- × The topographic viewpoint, however, is still useful for classifying mental events descriptively in terms of the quality and degree of awareness.



# TOPOGRAPHIC MODEL

## cont.

- × There is a tendency currently to revive aspects of the topographic model of the mind in viewing mental processes as descriptively **more or less** conscious or unconscious, rather than as a reflecting operation of a mental structure as in the systemic unconscious of classic metapsychology.
- × This reflects a current tendency to see **conscious and unconscious mentation** as a continuum of levels of consciousness or the lack of it.





# TOPOGRAPHIC MODEL

❖ Three levels of consciousness:

- Conscious
- Preconscious
- Unconscious

# Freud's topographical model of the mind

## PERS 5 Freud's View of the Human Mind: The Mental Iceberg





# CONSCIOUS

- × The conscious system was that region of the mind in which perceptions coming from the outside world or from within the body or mind were brought into awareness.
- × Internal perceptions could include introspective observations of thought processes or affective states of various kinds.
- × Consciousness was by and large a subjective phenomenon, the content of which could only be communicated by language or behavior



# CONSCIOUS

- × It has also been regarded psychoanalytically as a sort of superordinate sense organ, which can be stimulated by perceptual data impinging on the CNS.
- × It was assumed that the function of consciousness used a form of neutralized psychic energy called attention cathexis.



# PRECONSCIOUS

- × The preconscious system is composed of those mental events, processes, and contents that **can be brought into conscious awareness by the act of focusing attention**
- × **The preconscious interfaces with both unconscious and conscious regions of the mind.**
- × **To reach conscious awareness, contents of the unconscious must become linked with words and thus become preconscious**
- × **The preconscious system also serves to maintain the repressive barrier and to censor unacceptable wishes and desires.**



# UNCONSCIOUS

- × The unconscious system is **dynamic**. Its **mental contents and processes are kept from conscious awareness through the force of censorship or repression** and it is **closely related to instinctual drives**.
- × At this point in **Freud's theory of development**, instincts were **thought to consist of sexual and self-preserved drives**, and the unconscious was thought to **contain primarily the mental representations and derivatives of the sexual instinct**




# UNCONSCIOUS

- × The content of the unconscious is **limited to wishes seeking fulfillment**. These wishes provide the motivation for dream and neurotic symptom formation
- × The unconscious system is characterized by **primary process thinking**, which is principally aimed at **facilitating wish fulfillment and instinctual discharge**.
- × It is **governed by the pleasure principle** and, therefore, disregards logical connections; it has **no concept of time**, represents wishes as **fulfillments**, permits contradictions to exist simultaneously, and denies the existence of negatives



# UNCONSCIOUS

- × The contents of the unconscious can become conscious only by passing through the preconscious. **When censors are overpowered, the elements can enter consciousness.**
- 





# LIMITATIONS OF THE TOPOGRAPHICAL THEORY

- × Freud soon realized that two main deficiencies in the topographical theory limited its usefulness.
- × First, many patients' **defense mechanisms that guard against distressing wishes, feelings, or thoughts were themselves not initially accessible to consciousness.** Thus, repression cannot be identical with preconscious, because by definition this region of the mind is accessible to consciousness.



# LIMITATIONS OF THE TOPOGRAPHICAL THEORY

- × Second, Freud's patients frequently demonstrated an unconscious need for punishment.
- × This clinical observation made it unlikely that the moral agency making the demand for punishment could be allied with anti-instinctual forces that were available to conscious awareness in the preconscious.



# LIMITATIONS OF THE TOPOGRAPHICAL THEORY

- × These difficulties led Freud to discard the topographical theory, but certain concepts derived from the theory continue to be useful, particularly, **primary and secondary thought processes**, the **fundamental importance of wish fulfillment**, the **existence of a dynamic unconscious**, and a **tendency toward regression under frustrating conditions**



# DYNAMICS OF MENTAL FUNCTIONING

- × Freud conceived of the psychic apparatus, in the context of the topographic model, as a kind of reflex arc in which the various segments have a spatial relationship.
- × The arc consisted of a perceptual or sensory end through which impressions were received; an intermediate region, consisting of a storehouse of unconscious memories and a motor end, closely associated with the preconscious, through which instinctual discharge could occur.
- × In early childhood, perceptions were modified and stored in the form of memories



# DYNAMICS OF MENTAL FUNCTIONING

- × According to this theory, in ordinary waking life the mental energy associated with unconscious ideas sought discharge through thought or motor activity, moving from the perceptual end to the motor end of the apparatus.
- × Under certain conditions, such as external frustration or sleep, the direction in which energy travels along the arc was reversed, and it moved from the motor end to the perceptual end instead of the other way around.



# DYNAMICS OF MENTAL FUNCTIONING

- × Freud subsequently abandoned this model of the mind as a reflex arc, he retained the central concept of regression and applied it later in somewhat modified form in the theory of neurosis.
- × The theory states that libidinal frustration results in reversion to earlier modes of instinctual discharge or levels of fixation, which had been previously determined by childhood frustrations or excessive erotic stimulations.
- × Freud called this kind of reversion to instinctual levels of fixation libidinal or instinctual regression.



# CONCLUSION

- × Topographical model represents his configuration of the mind
- × Conscious (small) preconscious (small-medium) unconscious (enormous)
- × Only 10% of an iceberg is visible (conscious) whereas the other 90% is beneath the water (preconscious and unconscious).
- × The preconscious is allotted approximately 10% -15% whereas the unconscious is allotted an overwhelming 75%-80%.



# REFERENCES

- × Kaplan & sadock's comprehensive textbook of psychiatry, 9th edition
- × Kaplan & sadock's synopsis of psychiatry





THANK YOU