



**ÇAĞ UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY of ARTS &  
SCIENCES  
PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT  
PSY 313 FUNDAMENTAL  
CONCEPTS IN  
PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY  
COURSE  
WEEK 14**

# **Self-Psychology: Contemporary Freudian Approaches**

# Psychologies of Identity and Self

How does a being become a human being? Are human qualities overlapped on animal nature? Are they innate potentials awaiting conditions to emerge? Or is the infant receptive, requiring cultural education to shape potentials?

Different psychoanalytic schools offer different answers, leading to distinct understandings of mind, difficulties in living, and treatment approaches.





# Freud's View of Human Nature



## The Beast Within

Freud was fascinated with the beast in men and women, not humankind's godlike visage.



## Thin Veneer (Covering)

He illuminated primitive impulses beneath the thin veneer of civilized conduct.



## Taming Process

For Freud, socialization involved taming the beast through rerouting sexual and aggressive energies.

# Psychoanalytic Theory: A Historical Overview

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## From Id to Ego Psychology



### Freud's Early Focus

Initially centered on id and drives, emphasizing channeling infantile sexual and aggressive energies.



### Anna Freud's Contribution

Study of the complexities of defenses expanded understanding of ego functions.



### Hartmann's Addition

Introduced importance of adaptation and autonomous ego functions to psychoanalytic theory.



### Developmental Focus

Explorations into early relations with caregivers established ego development as crucial area of concern.

# Shifting Psychoanalytic Frameworks

1

## Id Psychology

Explored implications of Darwinian revolution for the human psyche.

2

## Ego Psychology

Studied how individuals develop a distinct and secure sense of themselves.

3

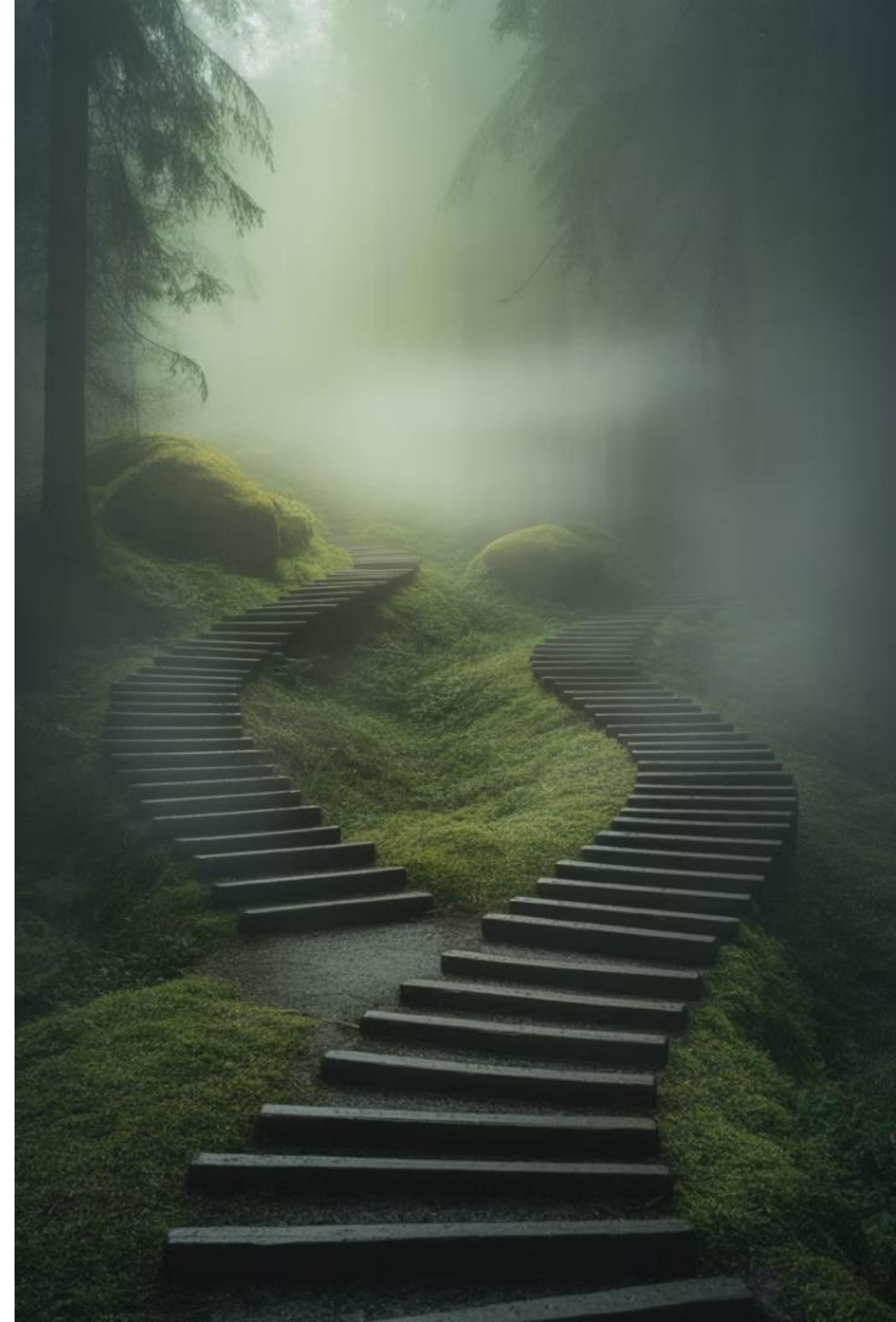
## Erikson's Identity

Traced development within interpersonal and cultural contexts.

4

## Kohut's Self Psychology

Explored the phenomenology of selfhood and personal subjectivity.



# Erik Erikson: Life and Influences



## Cultural Wanderer (Explorer)

Born to Danish parents, raised in Germany, later moved to America.

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## Psychoanalytic Education

Joined Anna Freud's inner circle, analyzed by her directly.

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## Cross-Cultural Perspective

Combined psychoanalysis with cultural anthropology and direct observation.

# The Psyche and Culture

## Freud's Psychobiological View

The psyche as extension of the body, with drives demanding discharge. Society as necessary control of instincts.

From a traditional psychoanalytic viewpoint, society is simply an extension of the ego in its campaign to regulate the drives: cultural leaders are quasiparents; social forces are camouflaged defenses; group processes are psychodynamics in large.

## Erikson's Psychosocial Dimension

Culture and individual interpenetrate (merge) and create each other. Society gives meaning to infantile anxieties and bodily experiences.

The individual psyche is generated and shaped within the requirements, values, and sensibilities of a particular cultural context; cultural and historical change are effected by individuals struggling to find meaning and continuity in their lives.



# Cultural Shaping of Personality

## Sioux Culture

Plains hunters with centrifugal world organization. Valued strength. Anxiety centered on emasculation (castration) and immobilization.

## Yurok Culture

Salmon fishermen with centripetal world organization. Valued control and cleanliness. Anxiety centered on being left without provisions (supply).

## Child-Rearing Impact

Yurok practices stressed restraint and prohibited greed, creating an infantile nostalgia for abundance - adaptive for salmon fishermen.

# Erikson's Dialectical Approach

A dialectical relationship is a relationship in which two phenomena or ideas mutually impact each other, leading to development and negation

## Beyond Reductionism

Rejected psychoanalytic "originology" that reduces every situation to an infantile precursor.

## Identity Formation

Located in both the core of the individual and the core of communal culture.



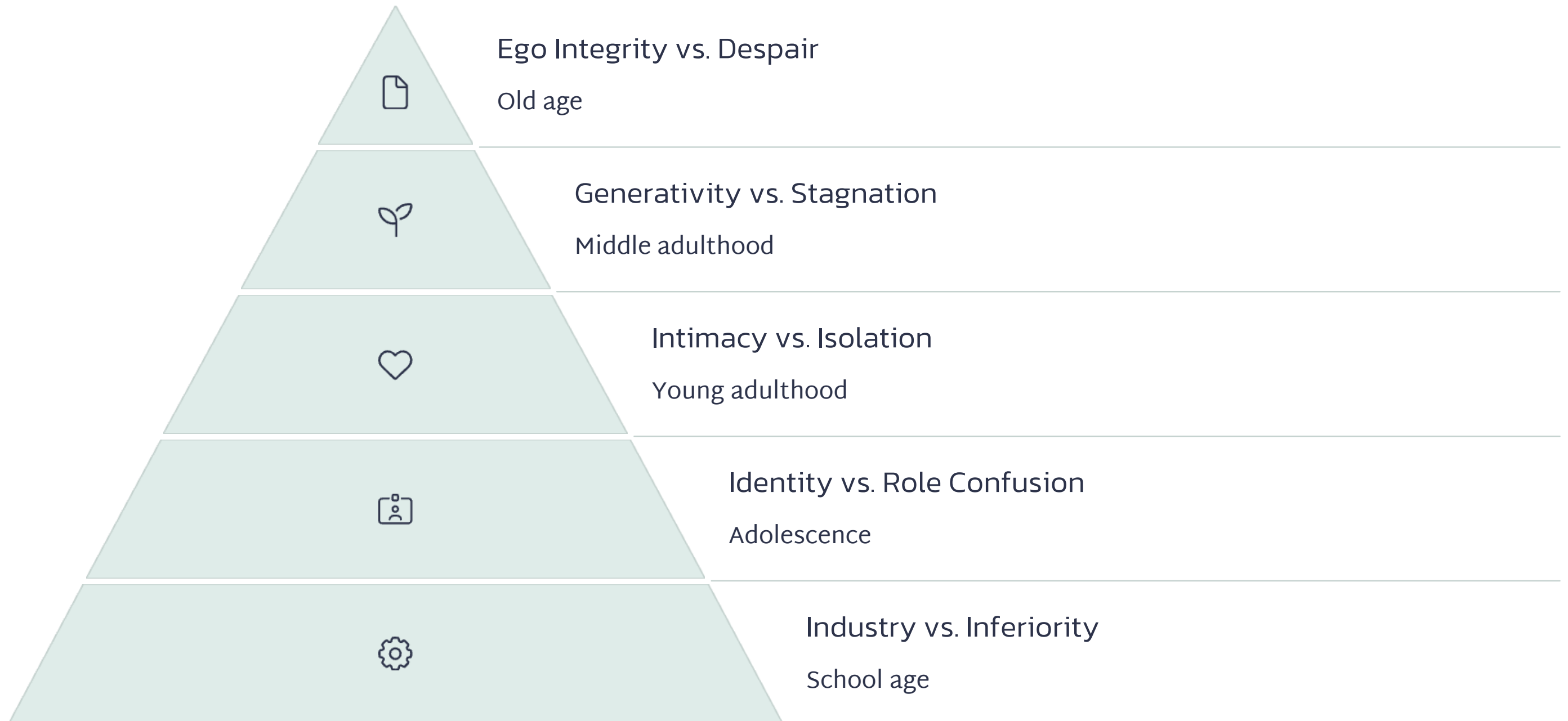
## Dual Centers

Created framework with two centers - individual and culture - in complex dialectical relationship.

## Psychosocial Relativity

Established identity formation as interplay between psychological and social, developmental and historical.

# Erikson's Eight Stages of Development



A photograph of a woman with dark hair, seen from the side, holding a baby. The baby is wrapped in a white cloth and is looking up at the woman. They are both smiling. The background is a light green curtain.

# Epigenesis and Development

## Trust vs. Mistrust (Oral Phase)

Infant struggles with orientation to the world. Can external supplies be comfortably taken in? Is the world sustained in a way that allows relaxation?

## Autonomy vs. Shame (Anal Phase)

Child develops control and independence while navigating feelings of doubt and shame about capabilities.

## Initiative vs. Guilt (Phallic Phase)

Child explores and tests boundaries, balancing creative drive against potential feelings of guilt.

# Erikson's Psychosocial Stages

Stage	Basic Conflict	Virtue	Description
<b>Infancy</b> 0–1 year	Trust vs. mistrust	Hope	Trust (or mistrust) that basic needs, such as nourishment and affection, will be met
<b>Early childhood</b> 1–3 years	Autonomy vs. shame/doubt	Will	Develop a sense of independence in many tasks
<b>Play age</b> 3–6 years	Initiative vs. guilt	Purpose	Take initiative on some activities—may develop guilt when unsuccessful or boundaries overstepped
<b>School age</b> 7–11 years	Industry vs. inferiority	Competence	Develop self-confidence in abilities when competent or sense of inferiority when not
<b>Adolescence</b> 12–18 years	Identity vs. confusion	Fidelity	Experiment with and develop identity and roles
<b>Early adulthood</b> 19–29 years	Intimacy vs. isolation	Love	Establish intimacy and relationships with others
<b>Middle age</b> 30–64 years	Generativity vs. stagnation	Care	Contribute to society and be part of a family
<b>Old age</b> 65 onward	Integrity vs. despair	Wisdom	Assess and make sense of life and meaning of contributions

# Erikson's Expansion Beyond Freud



## Lifelong Development

Extended ego growth significantly beyond Freud's oedipal endpoint.



## Dialectical Tensions

Viewed crises as creative tensions rather than battles with winners and losers.



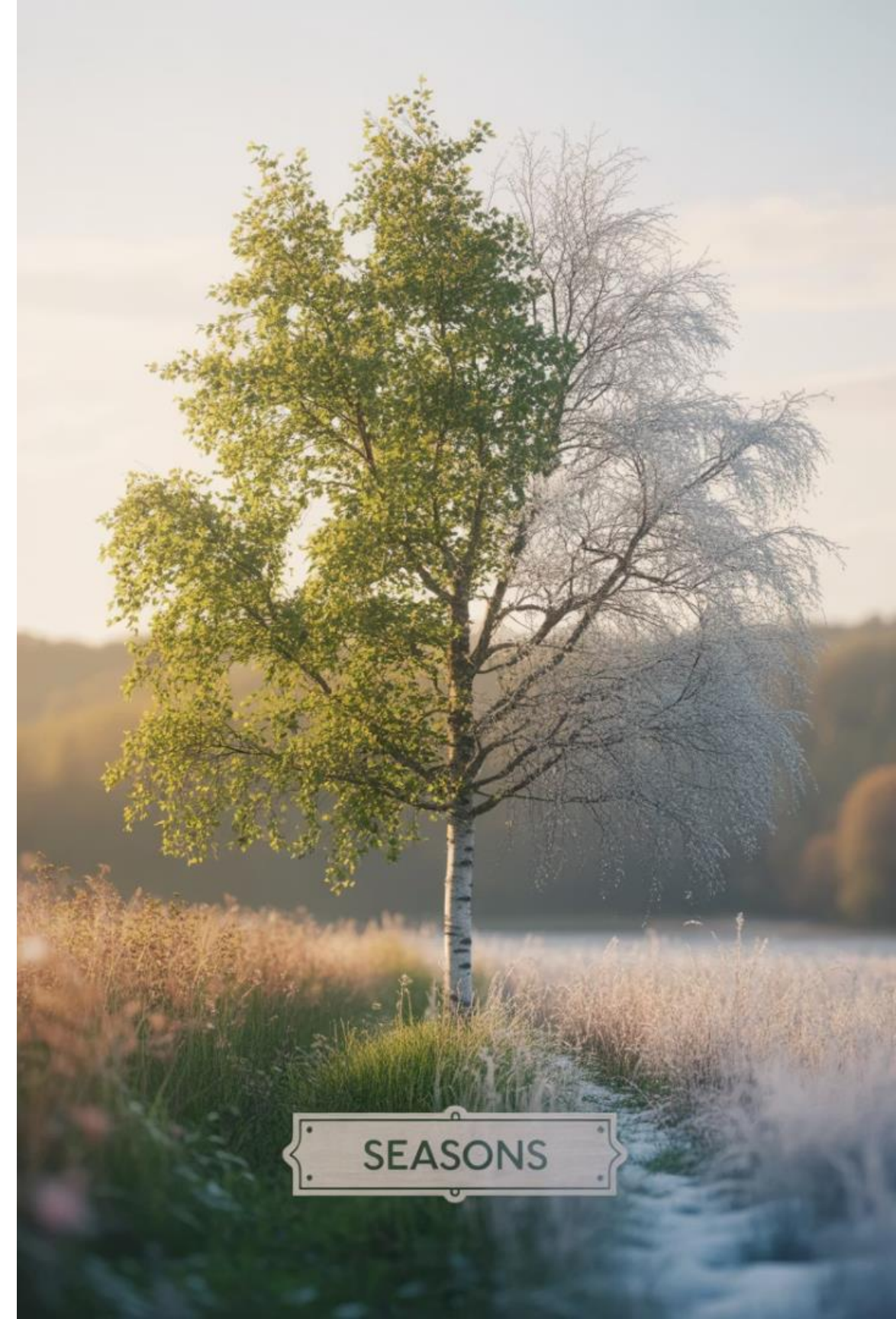
## Complex Integration

Envisioned development as vital tensions in constant resonance with each other.



## Cultural Shaping

Transformed understanding of both drives and social world through integration.



# Heinz Kohut: A Different Vision

## Freud's Man

Riddled (full) with guilt over forbidden wishes. Battling between animal appetites and civilized standards.

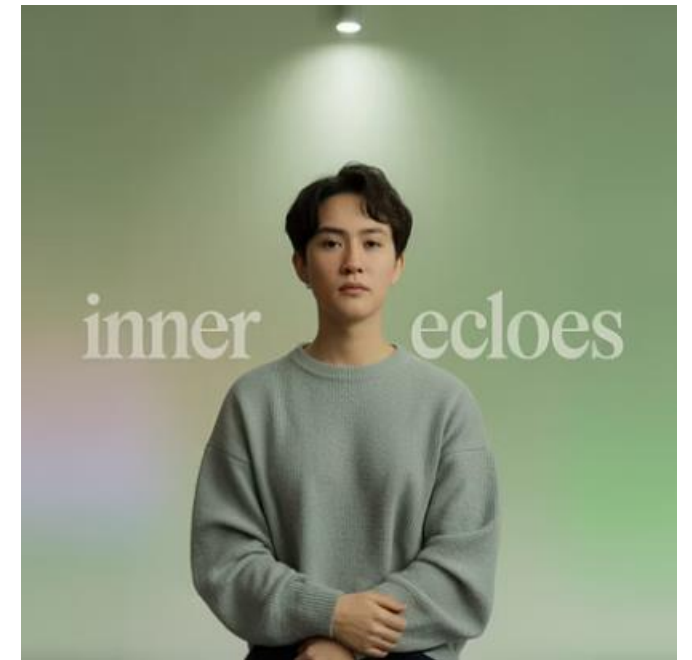
Psychopathology, for Freud, reflected an imbalance in these necessarily conflictual internal forces.

## Kohut's Man

Moving through life without meaning. Experiencing life as drudgery (hard work), accomplishments as empty. Tragic rather than guilty.

he was held captive on an emotional roller-coaster, where enthusiastic bursts of creative energy alternated with painful feelings of inadequacy in response to disrupting perceptions of failure.

# Narcissistic Character Disorders



Kohut's innovations came from encountering patients who seemed opaque (not transparent) and intractable (incurable) within existing theory - those with narcissistic character disorders. According to Kohut, human beings, must be designed to flourish in a certain kind of human environment. That environment must in some way provide necessary experiences that allow a child to grow up **not only being human but feeling human**, an energized, connected member of the human community. Kohut attempted to identify these crucial environmental conditions in a child's early life.

## FREUD'S POINT OF VIEW FOR NARCISSISM

- Freud believed that all the infant's libidinal energy was initially self-directed, a state that he termed primary narcissism.
- The infant's early experience was magical and fantastical. Caught up in what Freud called the omnipotence of thought, the infant feels herself to be perfect and all powerful.
- Early instances of frustration in gratifying herself through these fantasies of omnipotence and grandeur interrupt the infant's narcissistic self-absorption.
- Unable to secure gratification via this route, the infant turns her libidinal energy outward toward others in her search for palpable, albeit imperfect, satisfaction. In this process, narcissistic libido normally becomes transformed into object libido, and the child takes her parents as the crucial love objects of her infancy.
- This attachment to the parents, and the oedipal fantasies that develop within it, pose the next psychic hurdle; if the child is unable to relinquish these oedipal fantasies, her libido becomes fixated on her infantile love objects and she becomes neurotic.
- Later, when she enters psychoanalytic treatment as an adult, the transference of those enduring infantile attachments onto the person of the analyst allows them to be both intensely experienced as well as available to curative analytic interpretation.



# The Case of Eduardo



## Surface Presentation

Sophisticated, gentlemanly manner. Vague depression and feeling "at loose ends. I can't seem to find myself."



## Unrealistic Ambitions

Wanted to be a millionaire but lacked awareness of difficulties or need for effort.



## Relationship Pattern

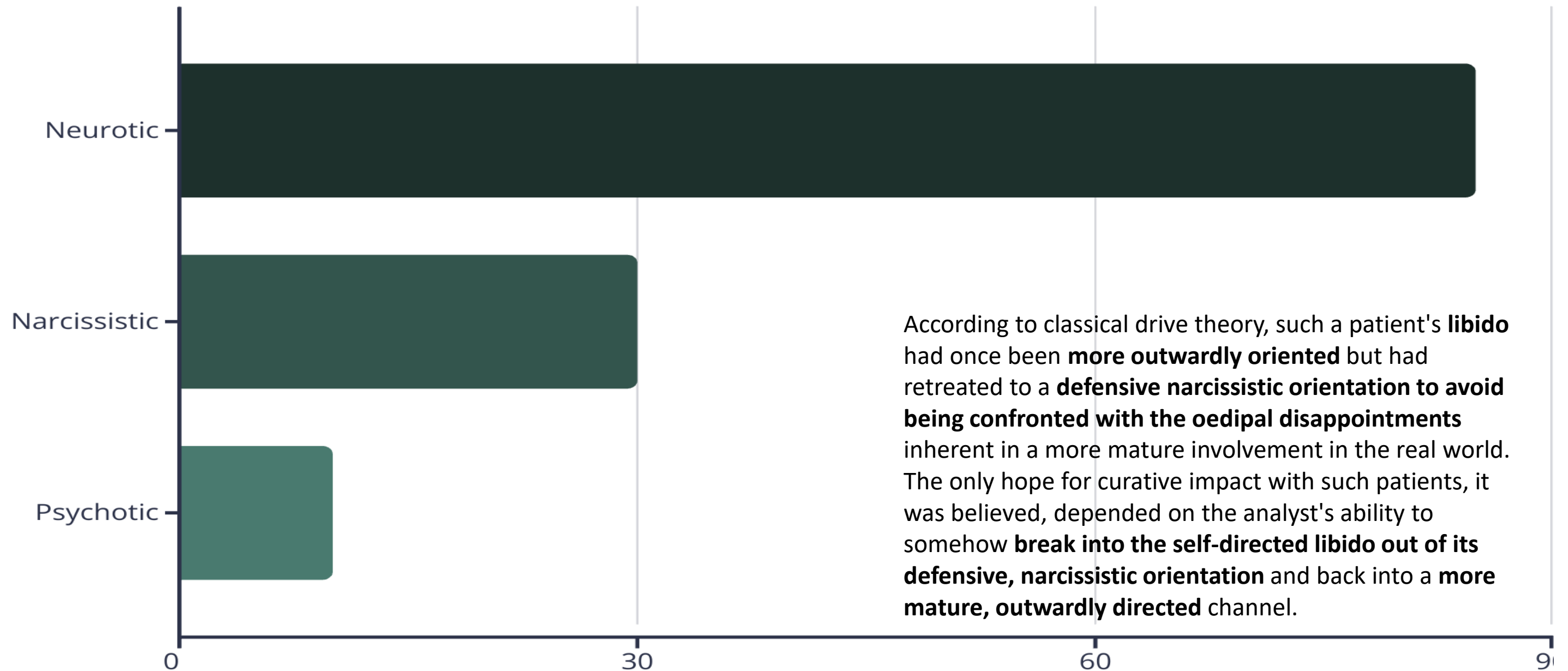
Continuously searching for perfect other. Had contempt, disdain against those interested in him.



## Therapeutic Challenge

Ignored analyst's observations. Made analyst feel invisible, as if she didn't exist.

# Narcissistic Transference: Classical View



In classical theory, transference is crucial for treatment. Narcissistic patients like Eduardo pose a problem - not psychotic but seemingly impenetrable. Their self-absorption makes true transference difficult to establish.

# Kohut's Clinical Dilemma



## Classical Approach

Analyze resistance and defenses.  
Confront narcissistic self-centeredness  
and entitlement (claim).



## Unexpected Results

Confrontation exposed deep  
inadequacy and humiliation. Patients  
collapsed from superiority to despair.



## Hollow (meaningless) Victory

Even "successful" treatment left  
patients with emotional shallowness  
and joyless functioning.



# The Case of Mr. Z



## Initial Treatment

Classical approach confronting narcissism and unrealistic grandiosity.



## Apparent Success

Moved out of mother's house, began dating, showed more career assertiveness.



## Lingering (Persisting) Issues

Returned five years later with emotionally shallow relationships and joyless work.



## Theoretical Challenge

Existing theory offered no way to conceptualize this particular problem.

# Questioning Freud's Theory of Narcissism

1

Love vs. Self-Love

Is love of self really contrary to love of others?

2

Healthy Narcissism

Is abandoning self-regard truly in the interest of mental health?

3

Relationship Quality

Are relationships worthwhile if pursued at expense of loving oneself?

4

Positive Integration

Might good feelings about oneself contribute vitality to encounters with others?



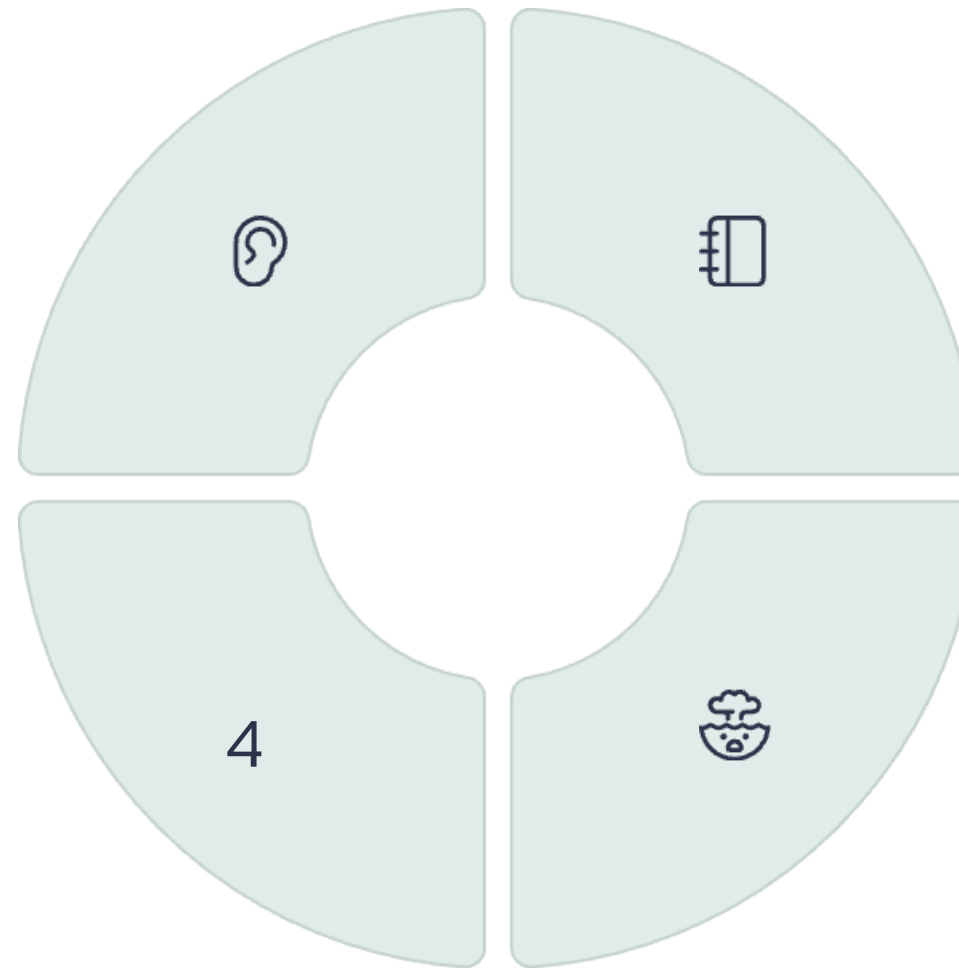
# Kohut's Loyalty to Psychoanalytic Method

## Open Listening

The defining moment of psychoanalysis: when Breuer told Anna O. "go ahead" and recorded her words.

## Multiple Perspectives

"This doesn't mean there are not other ways of ordering data."



## Data Collection

The scientist sitting down to write what the patient says, bringing order to the data.

## Theory as Tool

Theories are ways of ordering data, not sacred texts. Freud as "Newton of psychoanalysis."

# Theory vs. Process in Psychoanalysis

Rigid Theory Adherence

Imposes preformed belief system

Fits patient into predetermined categories

Prioritizes theoretical consistency

Open Analytic Process

Formulates tentative hypotheses

Remains receptive to unique experience

Prioritizes understanding the patient

Kohut concluded that rigid adherence to Freud's theories had come to have a destructive impact on the process of psychoanalysis - Freud's true gift to posterity (next generation).



# Vicarious Introspection and the Narcissistic Character

Heinz Kohut had revolutionary approach to understanding narcissism. Through empathic immersion in the patient's subjective experience, Kohut discovered that narcissism isn't simply pathological self-absorption, but a developmental process essential to a healthy, vital self.





# The Empathic Approach



## Vicarious Introspection

Kohut suspended preconceived (prejudged) ideas and put himself in his patient's shoes.



## New Perspective

This methodology revealed meanings previously unavailable to him.



## Patient Experience

Understanding the patient's point of view became the defining feature of his approach.

# Eduardo's Case

## Apparent Self-Absorption

Despite seeming narcissistic, Eduardo worked hard to get people involved with him. His needs were intense but highly specific.

## Two Key Needs

Eduardo sought an attentive other who would allow him to show himself without disruption. He also sought connection with an idealized, powerful other to feel strong himself.

## Self-Esteem Effects

When these relationships seemed possible, Eduardo was confident and alive. When disrupted, he collapsed emotionally.

# The Puppet Dream

## Dream Image

Eduardo dreamed he was a skinny wooden puppet hanging from strings manipulated by his mother.

## True Experience

Far from being a "spoiled prince," Eduardo felt he had no self—he was an inhuman, fragile performer with no personal volition (free will).

## Mother's Role

His mother showed him off but used him for her own needs, with little sense of who he really was.





# The Raw Egg Self



## Perfect Shell

Eduardo established a smooth, apparently capable persona.



## Fragile Interior

Inside was "a raw egg inside a thin and perfect shell."



## Developmental Problem

Not "too much" narcissism, but a fundamental problem in self-organization.

# Normal vs. Pathological Narcissism



## Healthy Narcissism

Internal solidarity (unity), vitality, harnessed (collected) talents, reliable self-esteem

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## Disrupted Development

Normal developmental process interrupted

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## Pathological Result

Intense grandiosity coupled with inability for sustained effort

# The World of Childhood

1

## Childhood Experience

Children live in a world of superheroes and superforces, imagining themselves perfect and caregivers all-powerful.



## Traditional View

Classical theory saw this as infantile fantasy to be overcome for mature development.

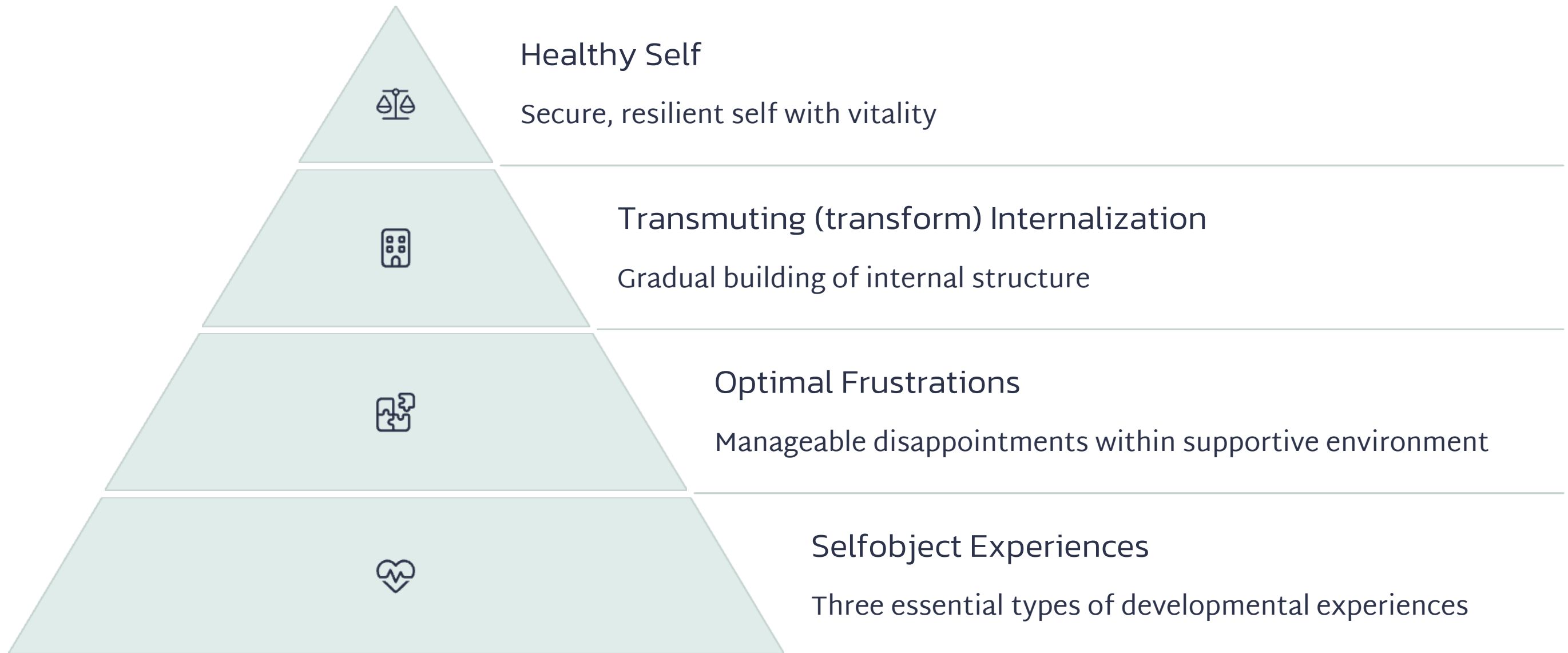


## Kohut's Fresh Look

Kohut saw vitality, exuberance (enthusiasm), and creativity often missing in adults' lives.



# Healthy Self Development



# Three Essential Selfobject Experiences

## Idealizing

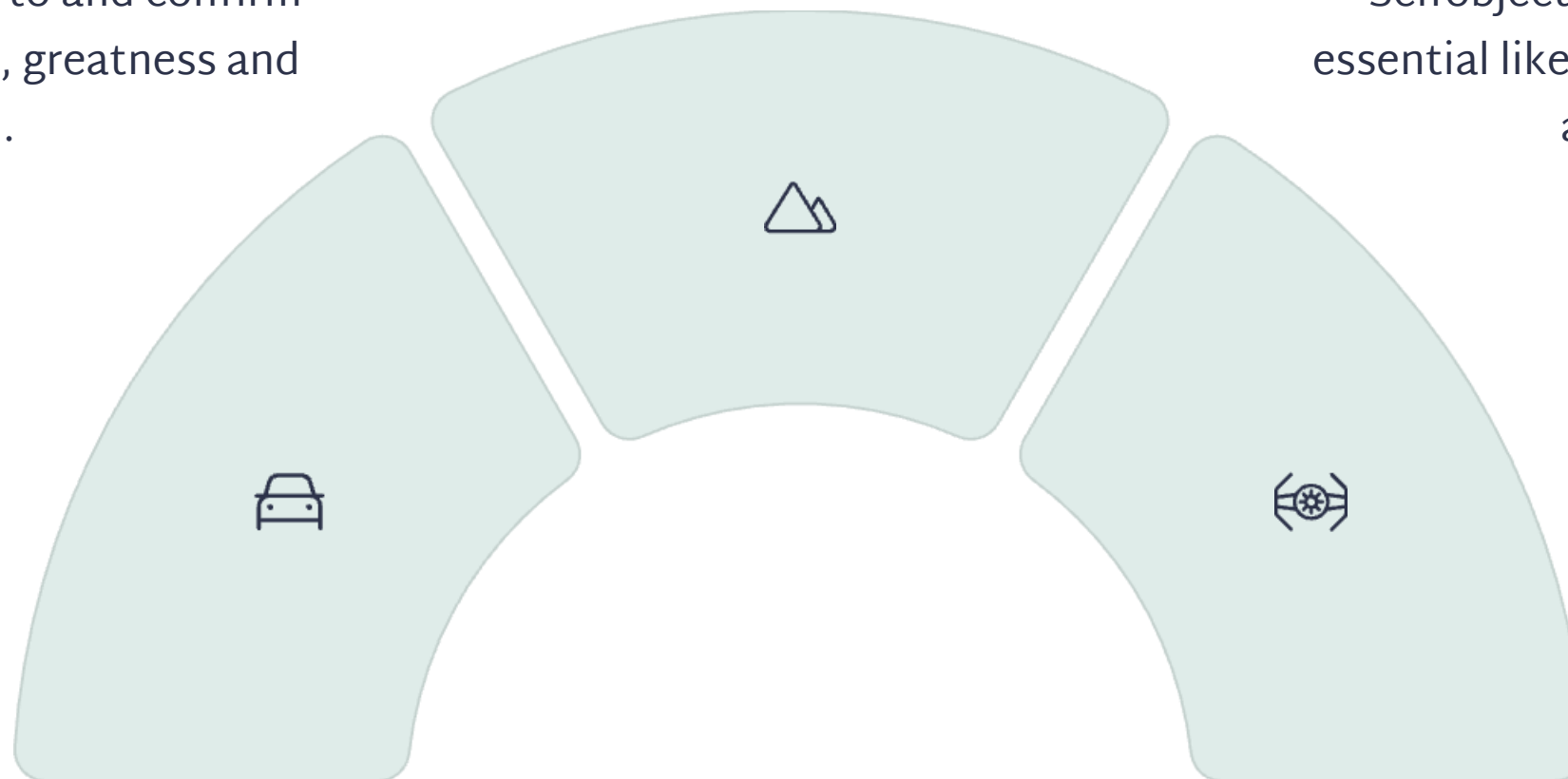
Powerful others to whom the child can look up and with whom they can merge as an image of calmness and strength.

## Mirroring

Selfobjects who respond to and confirm the child's sense of vigor, greatness and perfection.

## Twinship

Selfobjects who evoke a sense of essential likeness between themselves and the child.





# Transforming Childhood Narcissism



## Childhood States

Child's exuberance and grandiosity contain kernels (seeds) of healthy narcissism.



## Slow Transformation

These states must transform gradually through exposure to reality.



## Optimal Frustration

Ordinary disappointments within supportive environment build resilience.



## Healthy Outcome

Realistic self-image that retains original vitality and excitement.



# Selfobject Transferences



## Clinical Clues

Kohut found clues about infantile narcissism in his patients' transferences.



## Misunderstood Dynamics

Earlier analysts missed these patterns because they expected traditional neurotic transferences.



## Different Approach

Narcissistic patients treat analysts as extensions of themselves, not separate people.



## Growth Attempt

These transferences represent the patient's spontaneous attempt to grow.



# Three Types of Selfobject Transference

## Mirroring Transference

Patient needs analyst to grasp and reflect back their experience, creating a nurturing context where they can feel seen and real.

## Idealizing Transference

Patient regards analyst as perfect and wonderful, feeling stronger through connection to this powerful other.

## Twinship/Alter Ego Transference

Patient desires to feel an essential likeness with the analyst, not in external resemblance but in significance or function.

# Working with Narcissistic Transferences



## Allow to Flourish

Rather than interpreting these transferences, Kohut found they needed to be allowed to flourish.



## Avoid Interpretation

Interpretation can be disastrous, causing collapse of self-esteem or rage.



## Developmental Result

Extended immersion (absorption) leads to more cohesive, resilient sense of self.

# Technical Innovations



# From Modest Beginnings to Revolutionary Theory

1

1971

Kohut introduces his work modestly as an observation of a new type of transference.

2

Mid-1970s

His vision expands beyond classical theory, emphasizing traumatic environment rather than primitive urges.

3

1977

"The Restoration of the Self" presents his theory as applicable to all patients, not just narcissistic ones.

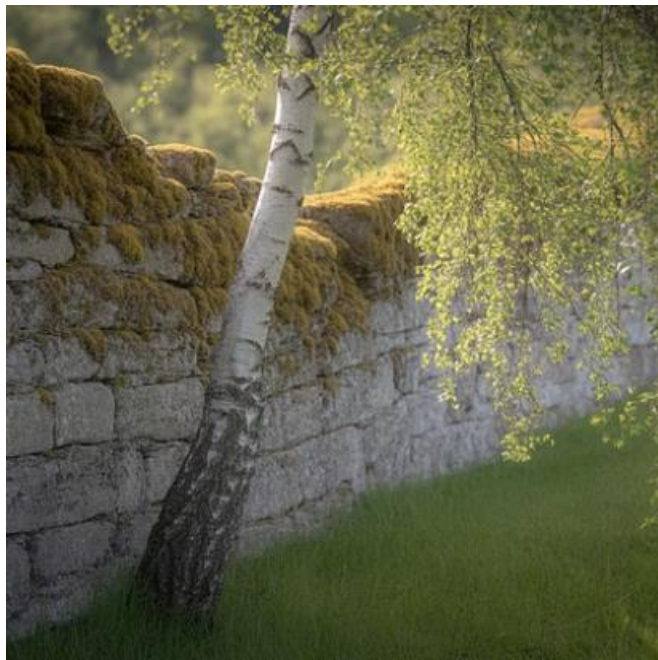
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By 1981

Self psychology emerges as a comprehensive alternative to Freud's drive theory.



# Reconceptualizing Human Motivation



Kohut fundamentally reconceptualized the basic human project. He saw aggression and sexuality as secondary to the primary human need for self-realization and vitality. Like a tree growing around obstacles to reach sunlight, the self seeks development despite adversity.



# The Healthy Self

2

Core Components

Vitalizing ambition and idealized goals

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Lifelong Need

Selfobject needs continue throughout life

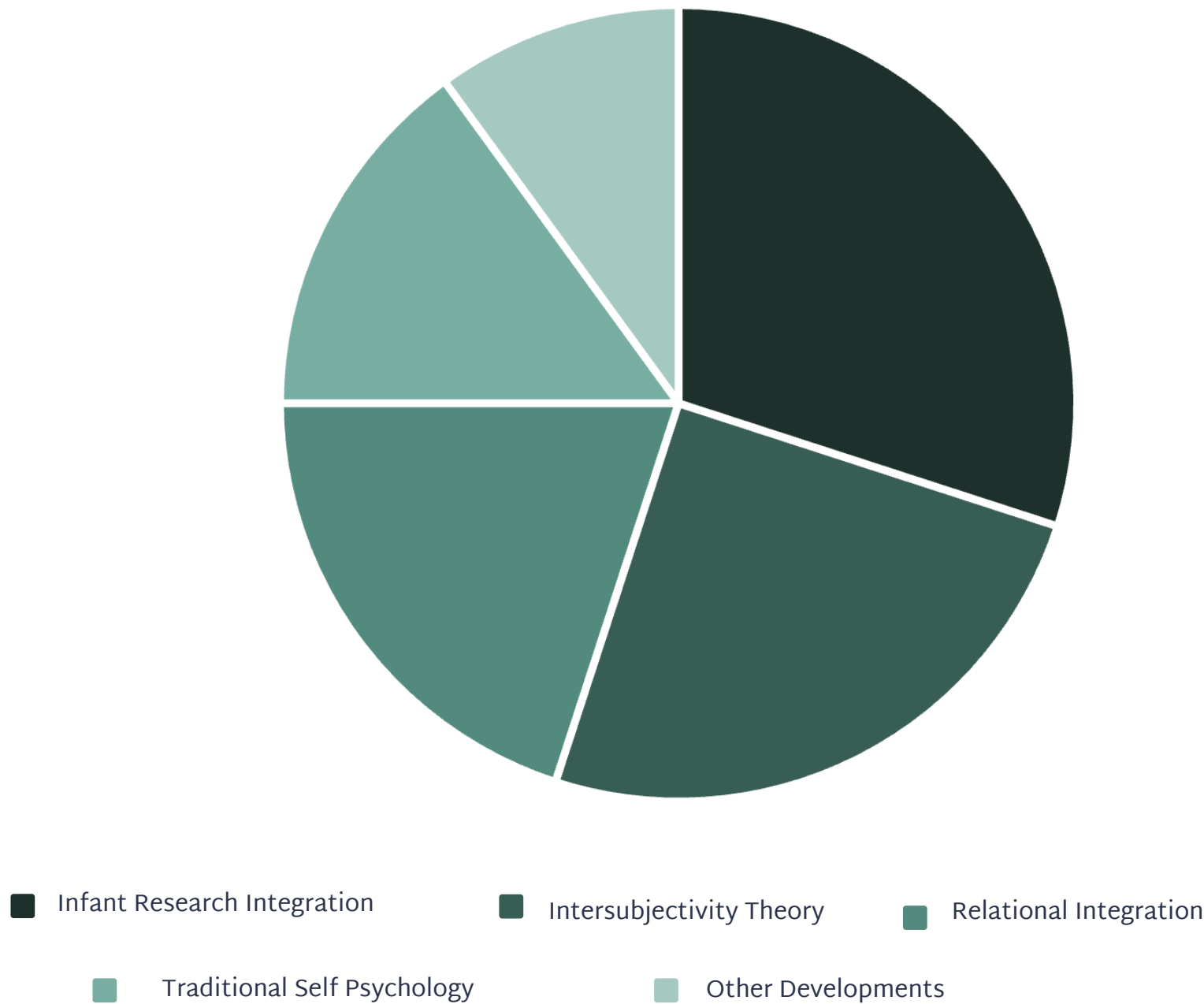
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Key Experiences

Mirroring, idealizing, and twinship

# Post-Kohut Developments

Since Kohut's death in 1981, self psychology has evolved in multiple directions. Some theorists integrate infant research, others develop intersubjectivity theory, while some combine self psychology with object relations. All share Kohut's emphasis on empathic immersion and selfobject concepts.



Many artists have regarded psychoanalysis as a threat to their creativity; they feared that analytic understanding, while relieving their neurotic misery, might also deplete the source of their artistic inspiration.



# Creativity and Passion

## The Artist's Fear

"If my devils are to leave me, I am afraid my angels will take flight as well." - Rilke

## Classical Limitation

Traditional analysis was pervaded (penetrated) by rationalism that could undermine creativity and passion.

## Kohut's Revolution

Reconceptualized narcissism from infantilism to a source of vitality, meaning, and creativity.

## Postmodern Shift

Emphasis moved from rationalism to subjectivism and personal meaning.

# The Legacy of Self Psychology



## Empathic Methodology

Vicarious introspection became central to psychoanalytic practice.



## Narcissism Reframed

From pathology to essential component of healthy development.



## Evolving Theory

Kohut's ideas continue to influence contemporary psychoanalysis through multiple theoretical branches.