Abstract:

Historically, repression has been considered a cornerstone of psychoanalytic theory. However, explaining how the ego maintains repression without knowing the repressed appears to create a logical paradox of knowing in order not to know. Maze and Henry’s realist analysis of the problem provides an important new direction for framing possible solutions. However, their proposed explanation in terms of ‘affective blocking’ is found to be limited with respect to explaining important features of repression, such as the clinical phenomenon of resistance. Alternatively, the present thesis proposes that a solution can be provided in terms of strong partitioning and neural inhibition. The resolution of the paradox hinges upon the recognition that repression inhibits knowledge of knowing the repressed. Implications of this position for understanding self-deception are discussed.