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THE EGO AND THE ID
(1923)

Freud, S. "The Ego and the Id." *Standard Edition*, Vol. 19, pp. 3 - 66.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

DAS ICH UND DAS ES

- (a) GERMAN EDITIONS:
1923 Leipzig, Vienna and Zurich: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag. Pp. 77.
1925 G.S., 6, 351-405.
1931 *Theoretische Schriften*, 338-91.
1940 G.W., 13, 237-289.

(b) ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

- The Ego and the Id*
1927 London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis. Pp. 88. (Tr. Joan Riviere.)

The present is a very considerably modified version of the one published in 1927.

This book appeared in the third week of April, 1923, though it had been in Freud's mind since at least the previous July (Jones, 1957, 104). On September 26, 1922, at the Seventh International Psycho-Analytical Congress, which was held in Berlin and was the last he ever attended, he read a short paper with the title 'Etwas vom Unbewussten [Some Remarks on the Unconscious]', in which he foreshadowed the contents of the book. An abstract of this paper (which was never itself published) appeared that autumn in the *Int. Zeitschrift Psychoanal.*, 5 (4), 486,¹ and, although there is no certainty that it was written by Freud himself, it is worth while recording it:

'Some Remarks on the Unconscious'

The speaker repeated the familiar history of the development of the concept "unconscious" in psycho-analysis. "Unconscious" was in the first instance a purely descriptive term which accordingly included what is temporarily latent. The dynamic view

¹ A translation was published in the *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.* the next year, 4 (3), 367. (The date of the reading of the paper is there misprinted 'Sept. 25'.) It is reprinted here in a slightly modified form.

of the process of repression made it necessary, however, to give the unconscious a systematic sense, so that the unconscious had to be equated with the repressed. What is latent and only temporarily unconscious received the name of "preconscious," and, from the systematic point of view, was brought into close proximity to the conscious. The double meaning of the term "unconscious" undoubtedly involved disadvantages, though they were of little significance and were difficult to avoid. It has turned out, however, that it is not practicable to regard the repressed as coinciding with the unconscious and the ego with the preconscious and conscious. The speaker discussed the two facts which show that in the ego too there is an unconscious, which behaves dynamically like the repressed unconscious, two facts of a resistance proceeding from the ego during analysis and of an unconscious sense of guilt. He announced that in a book which was shortly to appear—*The Ego and the Id*—he had made an attempt to estimate the influence which these new discoveries must have upon our view of the unconscious.

The Ego and the Id is the last of Freud's major theoretical works. It offers a description of the mind and its workings which is at first sight new and even revolutionary; and indeed all psycho-analytic writings that date from after its publication bear the unmistakable imprint of its effects—at least in regard to their terminology. But, in spite of all its fresh insights and fresh syntheses, we can trace, as so often with Freud's apparent innovations, the seeds of his new ideas in earlier, and sometimes in far earlier, writings.

The forerunners of the present general picture of the mind had been successively the 'Project' of 1895 (Freud, 1950*a*), the seventh chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900*a*), and the metapsychological papers of 1915. In all of these, the inter-related problems of mental functioning and mental structure were inevitably considered, though with varying stress upon the two aspects of the question. The historical accident that psycho-analysis had its origin in connection with the study of hysteria led at once to the hypothesis of repression (or, more generally, of defence) as a mental function, and this in turn to a topographical hypothesis—to a picture of the mind as including two portions, one repressed and the other repressing. The quality of 'consciousness' was evidently closely involved in

these hypotheses; and it was easy to equate the repressed part of the mind with what was 'unconscious' and the repressing part with what was 'conscious'. Freud's earlier pictorial diagrams of the mind, in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (*Standard Ed.*, 5, 537-41) and in his letter to Fliess of December 6, 1896 (Freud, 1950*a*, Letter 52), were representations of this view of the position. And this apparently simple scheme underlay all of Freud's earlier theoretical ideas: functionally, a repressed force endeavouring to make its way into activity but held in check by a repressing force, and structurally, an 'unconscious' opposed by an 'ego'.

Nevertheless, complications soon became manifest. It was quickly seen that the word 'unconscious' was being used in two senses: the 'descriptive' sense (which merely attributed a particular quality to a mental state) and the 'dynamic' sense (which attributed a particular function to a mental state). This distinction was already stated, though not in these terms, in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (*Standard Ed.*, 5, 614-15). It was stated much more clearly in the English paper written for the Society for Psychological Research (1912*g*, *ibid.*, 12, 262). But from the first another, more obscure notion was already involved (as was plainly shown by the pictorial diagrams)—the notion of 'systems' in the mind. This implied a topographical or structural division of the mind based on something more than function, a division into portions to which it was possible to attribute a number of differentiating characteristics and methods of operating. Some such idea was no doubt already implied in the phrase 'the unconscious', which appeared very early (e.g. in a footnote to the *Studies on Hysteria*, 1895*d*, *Standard Ed.*, 2, 76). The concept of a 'system' became explicit in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900*a*), *ibid.*, 5, 536-7. From the terms in which it was there introduced, topographical imagery was at once suggested, though Freud gave a warning against taking this literally. There were a number of these 'systems' (mnemonic, perceptual, and so on) and among them 'the unconscious' (*ibid.*, 541), which 'for simplicity's sake' was to be designated as 'the system *Ucs.*'. In these earlier passages all that was overtly meant by this unconscious system was the repressed, until we reach the final section of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (*ibid.*, 5, 611 ff.), where something with a much wider scope was indicated. Thereafter the question remained in abeyance

until the S.P.R. paper (1912*g*) already referred to, where (besides the clear differentiation between the descriptive and dynamic uses of the term 'unconscious'), in the last sentences of the paper, a third, 'systematic', use was defined. It may be noted that in this passage (*ibid.*, 12, 266), it was only for this 'systematic' unconscious that Freud proposed to use the symbol '*Ucs.*'. All this seems very straightforward, but, oddly enough, the picture was blurred once more in the metapsychological paper on 'The Unconscious' (1915*e*). In Section II of that paper (*ibid.*, 14, 172 ff.) there were no longer *three* uses of the term 'unconscious' but only two. The 'dynamic' use disappeared, and was presumably subsumed into the 'systematic' one,¹ which was still to be called the '*Ucs.*', though it now included the repressed. Finally, in Chapter I of the present work (as well as in Lecture XXXI of the *New Introductory Lectures*, 1933*d*) Freud reverted to the threefold distinction and classification, though at the end of the chapter he applied the abbreviation '*Ucs.*', inadvertently perhaps, to all three kinds of 'unconscious' (p. 18).

But the question now arose whether, as applied to a system, the term 'unconscious' was at all appropriate. In the structural picture of the mind what had from the first been most clearly differentiated from 'the unconscious' had been 'the ego'. And it now began to appear that the ego itself ought partly to be described as 'unconscious'. This was pointed out in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in a sentence which read in the first edition (1920*g*): 'It may be that much of the ego is itself unconscious'; only a part of it, probably, is covered by the term "pre-conscious": In the second edition, a year later, this sentence was altered to: 'It is certain that much of the ego is itself unconscious . . .; only a small part of it is covered by the term "pre-conscious"'.² And this discovery and the grounds for it were stated with still greater insistence in the first chapter of the present work.

It had thus become apparent that, alike as regards 'the

unconscious' and as regards 'the ego', the criterion of consciousness was no longer helpful in building up a structural picture of the mind. Freud accordingly abandoned the use of consciousness in this capacity: 'being conscious' was henceforward to be regarded simply as a quality which might or might not be attached to a mental state. The old 'descriptive' sense of the term was in fact all that remained. The new terminology which he now introduced had a highly clarifying effect and so made further clinical advances possible. But it did not in itself involve any fundamental changes in Freud's views on mental structure and functioning. Indeed, the three newly presented entities, the id, the ego and the super-ego, all had lengthy past histories (two of them under other names) and these will be worth examining.

The term '*das Es*',¹ as Freud himself explains below (p. 23), was derived in the first instance from Georg Groddeck, a physician practising at Baden-Baden, who had recently become attached to psycho-analysis and with whose wide-ranging ideas Freud felt much sympathy. Groddeck seems in turn to have derived '*das Es*' from his own teacher, Ernst Schweninger, a well-known German physician of an earlier generation. But, as Freud also points out, the use of the word certainly goes back to Nietzsche. In any case, the term was adapted by Freud to a different and more precise meaning than Groddeck's. It cleared up and in part replaced the ill-defined uses of the earlier terms 'the unconscious', 'the *Ucs.*' and 'the systematic unconscious'.²

The position in regard to '*das Ich*' is a good deal less clear. The term had of course been in familiar use before the days of Freud; but the precise sense which he himself attached to it in his earlier writings is not unambiguous. It seems possible to detect two main uses: one in which the term distinguishes a person's self as a whole (including, perhaps, his body) from

¹ There was to begin with a good deal of discussion over the choice of an English equivalent. 'The id' was eventually decided upon in preference to 'the it', so as to be parallel with the long-established 'ego'.

² The symbol '*Ucs.*' disappears after the present work, except for a single belated occurrence in *Moses and Monotheism* (1939*d*), Chapter III, Part I (E), where oddly enough it is used in the 'descriptive' sense. Freud continued to use the term 'the unconscious', though with diminishing frequency, as a synonym for 'the id'.

¹ The two terms seem to be definitely equated in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920*g*), *ibid.*, 18, 20.

² [I.e. not merely in the descriptive but also in the dynamic sense.] Freud had actually already spoken in the opening sentence of his second paper on 'The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence' (1896*f*) of the psychological mechanism of defence as being 'unconscious'.

other people, and the other in which it denotes a particular part of the mind characterized by special attributes and functions. It is in this second sense that the term was used in the elaborate account of the 'ego' in Freud's early 'Project' of 1895 (Freud, 1950a, Part I, Section 14); and it is in this same sense that it is used in the anatomy of the mind in *The Ego and the Id*. But in some of his intervening works, particularly in connection with narcissism, the 'ego' seems to correspond rather to the 'self'. It is not always easy, however, to draw a line between these two senses of the word.¹

What is quite certain, however, is that, after the isolated attempt in the 'Project' of 1895 at a detailed analysis of the structure and functioning of the ego, Freud left the subject almost untouched for some fifteen years. His interest was concentrated on his investigations of the unconscious and its instincts, particularly the sexual ones, and in the part they played in normal and abnormal mental behaviour. The fact that repressive forces played an equally important part was, of course, never overlooked and was always insisted on; but the closer examination of them was left to the future. It was enough for the moment to give them the inclusive name of 'the ego'.

There were two indications of a change, both round about the year 1910. In a paper on psychogenic disturbances of vision (1910²), there comes what seems to be a first mention of 'ego-instincts' (*Standard Ed.*, 11, 214), which combine the functions of repression with those of self-preservation. The other and more important development was the hypothesis of narcissism which was first proposed in 1909 and which led the way to a detailed examination of the ego and its functions in a variety of connections—in the study on Leonardo (1910c), in the Schreber case history (1911c), in the paper on the two principles of mental functioning (1911b), in the paper on 'Narcissism' itself (1914e) and in the metapsychological paper on 'The Unconscious' (1915b). In this last work, however, a

¹ In a few places in the *Standard Edition* where the sense seemed to demand it, 'das Ich' has been translated by 'the self'. There is a passage in *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930a), towards the beginning of the fourth paragraph of Chapter I, in which Freud himself explicitly equates 'das Selbst' and 'das Ich'. And, in the course of a discussion of the moral responsibility for dreams (1925²), p. 133, below, he makes a clear distinction between the two uses of the German word 'Ich'.

further development occurred: what had been described as the ego now became the 'system' *Cs.* (*Par.*).¹ It is this system which is the progenitor of the 'ego' as we have it in the new and corrected terminology, from which, as we have seen, the confusing connection with the quality of 'consciousness' has been removed.

The functions of the system *Cs.* (*Par.*), as enumerated in 'The Unconscious', *Standard Ed.*, 14, 188, include such activities as censorship, reality-testing, and so on, all of which are now assigned to the 'ego'. There is one particular function, however, whose examination was to lead to momentous results—the self-critical faculty. This and the correlated 'sense of guilt' attracted Freud's interest from early days, chiefly in connection with the obsessional neurosis. His theory that obsessions are 'transformed self-reproaches' for sexual pleasure enjoyed in childhood was fully explained in Section II of his second paper on 'The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence' (1896b) after being outlined somewhat earlier in his letters to Fliess. That the self-reproaches may be unconscious was already implied at this stage, and was stated specifically in the paper on 'Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices' (1907b), *Standard Ed.*, 9, 123. It was only with the concept of narcissism, however, that light could be thrown on the actual mechanism of these self-reproaches. In Section III of his paper on narcissism (1914e) Freud began by suggesting that the narcissism of infancy is replaced in the adult by devotion to an ideal ego set up within himself. He then put forward the notion that there may be 'a special psychical agency' whose task it is to watch the actual ego and measure it by the ideal ego or ego ideal—he seemed to use the terms indiscriminately (*Standard Ed.*, 14, 95). He attributed a number of functions to this agency, including the normal conscience, the dream-censorship and certain paranoid delusions. In the paper on 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917e [1915]) he further made this agency responsible for pathological states of mourning (ibid., 14, 247) and insisted more definitely that it is something apart from the rest of the ego, and this was made still more clear in *Group Psychology* (1921c). It must be noticed, however, that here the distinction between the 'ego ideal' itself and the 'agency' concerned with its enforcement had been dropped: the

¹ These abbreviations (like the '*Ucs.*') go back to *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900a), *Standard Ed.*, 5, 540 n.

'agency' was specifically called the 'ego ideal' (*Standard Ed.*, 18, 109-10). It is as an equivalent to the 'ego ideal' that '*das Über-Ich*'¹ makes its first appearance (p. 28 below), though its aspect as an enforcing or prohibiting agency predominates later. Indeed, after *The Ego and the Id* and the two or three shorter works immediately following it, the 'ego ideal' disappears almost completely as a technical term. It makes a brief re-emergence in a couple of sentences in the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933*a*), Lecture XXXI; but here we find a return to the original distinction, for 'an important function' attributed to the super-ego is to act as 'the vehicle of the ego ideal by which the ego measures itself'—almost the exact terms in which the ego ideal was first introduced in the paper on narcissism (*Standard Ed.*, 14, 93).

But this distinction may seem to be an artificial one when we turn to Freud's account of the genesis of the super-ego. This account (in Chapter III) is no doubt the part of the book second in importance only to the main thesis of the threefold division of the mind. The super-ego is there shown to be derived from a transformation of the child's earliest object-cathexes into identifications: it takes the place of the Oedipus complex. This mechanism (the replacement of an object-cathexis by an identification and the introjection of the former object) had been first applied by Freud (in his study of Leonardo, 1910*c*) to the explanation of one type of homosexuality, in which a boy replaces his love for his mother by identifying himself with her (*Standard Ed.*, 11, 100). He next applied the same notion to states of depression in 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917*e*), *ibid.*, 14, 249. Further and more elaborate discussions of these various kinds of identifications and introjections were pursued in Chapters VII, VIII and XI of *Group Psychology* (1921*e*), but it was only in the present work that Freud arrived at his final views on the derivation of the super-ego from the child's earliest object-relations.

Having once established his new account of the anatomy of the mind, Freud was in a position to examine its implications, and this he already does in the later pages of the book—the

¹ Jones (1957, 305 *n.*) remarks that the term had been used earlier by Münsterberg (1908), though, he adds, it was in a different sense and it is unlikely that Freud had come across the passage.

relation between the divisions of the mind and the two classes of instincts, and the interrelations between the divisions of the mind themselves, with special reference to the sense of guilt. But many of these questions, and in particular the last one, were to form the subject of other writings which followed in rapid succession. See, for instance, 'The Economic Problem of Masochism' (1924*e*), 'The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex' (1924*d*), the two papers on neurosis and psychosis (1924*b* and 1924*e*), and the one on the anatomical distinction between the sexes (1925*j*), all in the present volume, as well as the still more important *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* (1926*d*), published only a little later. Finally, a further long discussion of the super-ego, together with an interesting examination of the proper use of the terms 'super-ego', 'conscience', 'sense of guilt', 'need for punishment' and 'remorse' will be found in Chapters VII and VIII of *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930*a*).

Extracts from the earlier (1927) translation of this work were included in Rickman's *General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud* (1937, 245-74).

THE EGO AND THE ID

[PREFACE]

The present discussions are a further development of some trains of thought which I opened up in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920g), and to which, as I remarked there,¹ my attitude was one of a kind of benevolent curiosity. In the following pages these thoughts are linked to various facts of analytic observation and an attempt is made to arrive at new conclusions from this conjunction; in the present work, however, there are no fresh borrowings from biology, and on that account it stands closer to psycho-analysis than does *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. It is more in the nature of a synthesis than of a speculation and seems to have had an ambitious aim in view. I am conscious, however, that it does not go beyond the roughest outline and with that limitation I am perfectly content.

In these pages things are touched on which have not yet been the subject of psycho-analytic consideration, and it has not been possible to avoid trenching upon some theories which have been put forward by non-analysts or by former analysts on their retreat from analysis. I have elsewhere always been ready to acknowledge what I owe to other workers; but in this instance I feel burdened by no such debt of gratitude. If psycho-analysis has not hitherto shown its appreciation of certain things, this has never been because it overlooked their achievement or sought to deny their importance, but because it followed a particular path, which had not yet led so far. And finally, when it has reached them, things have a different look to it from what they have to others.

¹ [*Standard Ed.*, 18, 59.]

CONSCIOUSNESS AND WHAT IS UNCONSCIOUS

I

In this introductory chapter there is nothing new to be said and it will not be possible to avoid repeating what has often been said before.

The division of the psychical into what is conscious and what is unconscious is the fundamental premiss of psycho-analysis; and it alone makes it possible for psycho-analysis to understand the pathological processes in mental life, which are as common as they are important, and to find a place for them in the framework of science. To put it once more, in a different way: psycho-analysis cannot situate the essence of the psychical in consciousness, but is obliged to regard consciousness as a quality of the psychical, which may be present in addition to other qualities or may be absent.

If I could suppose that everyone interested in psychology would read this book, I should also be prepared to find that at this point some of my readers would already stop short and would go no further; for here we have the first shibboleth of psycho-analysis. To most people who have been educated in philosophy the idea of anything psychical which is not also conscious is so inconceivable that it seems to them absurd and refutable simply by logic. I believe this is only because they have never studied the relevant phenomena of hypnosis and dreams, which—quite apart from pathological manifestations—necessitate this view. Their psychology of consciousness is incapable of solving the problems of dreams and hypnosis.

¹ [*'Bewusst sein'* (in two words) in the original. Similarly in Chapter II of *Lay Analysis* (1926a), *Standard Ed.*, 20, 197. *'Bewusstsein'* is the regular German word for 'consciousness', and printing it in two words emphasizes the fact that *'bewusst'* is in its form a passive participle—'being used'; but in these discussions it is always to be taken as active or a passive note at the end of the Editor's Note to Freud's metapsychological paper on 'The Unconscious', *Standard Ed.*, 14, 165.]

character. Experience goes on to show that a psychical element (for instance, an idea) is not as a rule conscious for a protracted length of time. On the contrary, a state of consciousness is characteristically very transitory; an idea that is conscious now is no longer so a moment later, although it can become so again under certain conditions that are easily brought about. In the interval the idea was—we do not know what. We can say that it was *latent*, and by this we mean that it was *capable of becoming conscious* at any time. Or, if we say that it was *unconscious*, we shall also be giving a correct description of it. Here 'unconscious' coincides with 'latent and capable of becoming conscious'. The philosophers would no doubt object: 'No, the term "unconscious" is not applicable here; so long as the idea was in a state of latency it was not anything psychical at all.' To contradict them at this point would lead to nothing more profitable than a verbal dispute.

But we have arrived at the term or concept of the unconscious along another path, by considering certain experiences in which mental *dynamics* play a part. We have found—that is, we have been obliged to assume—that very powerful mental processes or ideas exist (and here a quantitative or *economic* factor comes into question for the first time) which can produce all the effects in mental life that ordinary ideas do (including effects that can in their turn become conscious as ideas), though they themselves do not become conscious. It is unnecessary to repeat in detail here what has been explained so often before.¹ It is enough to say that at this point psycho-analytic theory steps in and asserts that the reason why such ideas cannot become conscious is that a certain force opposes them, that otherwise they could become conscious, and that it would then be apparent how little they differ from other elements which are admittedly psychical. The fact that in the technique of psycho-analysis a means has been found by which the opposing force can be removed and the ideas in question made conscious renders this theory irrefutable. The state in which the ideas existed before being made conscious is called by us *repression*, and we assert that the force which instituted the repression and maintains it is perceived as *resistance* during the work of analysis.

¹ [See, for instance, 'A Note on the Unconscious' (1912g), *Standard Ed.*, 12, 262 and 264.]

Thus we obtain our concept of the unconscious from the theory of repression. The repressed is the prototype of the unconscious for us. We see, however, that we have two kinds of unconscious—the one which is latent but capable of becoming conscious, and the one which is repressed and which is not, in itself and without more ado, capable of becoming conscious. This piece of insight into psychical dynamics cannot fail to affect terminology and description. The latent, which is unconscious only descriptively, not in the dynamic sense, we call *preconscious*; we restrict the term *unconscious* to the dynamically unconscious repressed; so that now we have three terms, conscious (*Cs.*), preconscious (*Pcs.*), and unconscious (*Ucs.*), whose sense is no longer purely descriptive. The *Pcs.* is presumably a great deal closer to the *Cs.* than is the *Ucs.*, and since we have called the *Ucs.* psychical we shall with even less hesitation call the latent *Pcs.* psychical. But why do we not rather, instead of this, remain in agreement with the philosophers and, in a consistent way, distinguish the *Pcs.* as well as the *Ucs.* from the conscious psychical? The philosophers would then propose that the *Pcs.* and the *Ucs.* should be described as two species or stages of the 'psychoid', and harmony would be established. But endless difficulties in exposition would follow; and the one important fact, that these two kinds of 'psychoid' coincide in almost every other respect with what is admittedly psychical, would be forced into the background in the interests of a prejudice dating from a period in which these psychoids, or the most important part of them, were still unknown.

We can now play about comfortably with our three terms, *Cs.*, *Pcs.*, and *Ucs.*, so long as we do not forget that in the descriptive sense there are two kinds of unconscious, but in the dynamic sense only one.¹ For purposes of exposition this distinction can in some cases be ignored, but in others it is of course indispensable. At the same time, we have become more or less accustomed to this ambiguity of the unconscious and have managed pretty well with it. As far as I can see, it is impossible to avoid this ambiguity; the distinction between conscious and unconscious is in the last resort a question of perception, which must be answered 'yes' or 'no', and the act of perception itself tells us nothing of the reason why a thing is or

¹ [Some comments on this sentence will be found in Appendix A (p. 60).]

is not perceived. No one has a right to complain because the actual phenomenon expresses the dynamic factor ambiguously.¹ In the further course of psycho-analytic work, however, even

¹ This may be compared so far with my 'Note on the Unconscious in Psycho-Analysis' (1912*g*). [Cf. also Sections I and II of the meta-psychological paper on 'The Unconscious' (1915*g*).] A new turn taken by criticisms of the unconscious deserves consideration at this point. Some investigators, who do not refuse to recognize the facts of psycho-analysis but who are unwilling to accept the unconscious, find a way out of the difficulty in the fact, which no one contests, that in consciousness (regarded as a phenomenon) it is possible to distinguish a great variety of gradations in intensity or clarity. Just as there are processes which are very vividly, glaringly, and tangibly conscious, so we also experience others which are only faintly, hardly even noticeably conscious; those that are most faintly conscious are, it is argued, the ones to which psycho-analysis wishes to apply the unsuitable name 'unconscious'. These too, however (the argument proceeds), are conscious or 'in consciousness', and can be made fully and intensely conscious if sufficient attention is paid to them.

In so far as it is possible to influence by arguments the decision of a question of this kind which depends either on convention or on emotional factors, we may make the following comments. The reference to gradations of clarity in consciousness is in no way conclusive and has no more evidential value than such analogous statements as: 'There are so very many gradations in illumination—from the most glaring and dazzling light to the dimmest glimmer—therefore there is no such thing as darkness at all'; or, 'There are varying degrees of vitality, therefore there is no such thing as death.' Such statements may in a certain way have a meaning, but for practical purposes they are worthless. This will be seen if one tries to draw particular conclusions from them, such as, 'there is therefore no need to strike a light', or, 'therefore all organisms are immortal'. Further, to include 'what is unnoticeable' under the concept of 'what is conscious' is simply to play havoc with the one and only piece of direct and certain knowledge that we have about the mind. And after all, a consciousness of which one knows nothing seems to me a good deal more absurd than something mental that is unconscious. Finally, this attempt to equate what is unnoticed with what is unconscious is obviously made without taking into account the dynamic conditions involved, which were the decisive factors in forming the psycho-analytic view. For it ignores two facts: first, that it is exceedingly difficult and requires very great effort to concentrate enough attention on something unnoticed of this kind; and secondly, that when this has been achieved the thought which was previously unnoticed is not recognized by consciousness, but often seems entirely alien and opposed to it and is promptly disavowed by it. Thus, seeking refuge from the unconscious in what is scarcely noticed or unnoticed is after all only a derivative of the preconceived belief which regards the identity of the psychical and the conscious as settled once and for all.

these distinctions have proved to be inadequate and, for practical purposes, insufficient. This has become clear in more ways than one; but the decisive instance is as follows. We have formed the idea that in each individual there is a coherent organization of mental processes; and we call this his *ego*. It is to this ego that consciousness is attached; the ego controls the approaches to motility—that is, to the discharge of excitations into the external world; it is the mental agency which supervises all its own constituent processes, and which goes to sleep at night, though even then it exercises the censorship on dreams. From this ego proceed the repressions, too, by means of which it is sought to exclude certain trends in the mind not merely from consciousness but also from other forms of effectiveness and activity. In analysis these trends which have been shut out stand in opposition to the ego, and the analysis is faced with the task of removing the resistances which the ego displays against concerning itself with the repressed. Now we find during analysis that, when we put certain tasks before the patient, he gets into difficulties; his associations fail when they should be coming near the repressed. We then tell him that he is dominated by a resistance; but he is quite unaware of the fact, and even if he guesses from his unpleasant feelings that a resistance is now at work in him, he does not know what it is or how to describe it. Since, however, there can be no question but that this resistance emanates from his ego and belongs to it, we find ourselves in an unforeseen situation. We have come upon something in the ego itself which is also unconscious, which behaves exactly like the repressed—that is, which produces powerful effects without itself being conscious and which requires special work before it can be made conscious. From the point of view of analytic practice, the consequence of this discovery is that we land in endless obscurities and difficulties if we keep to our habitual forms of expression and try, for instance, to derive neuroses from a conflict between the conscious and the unconscious. We shall have to substitute for this antithesis another, taken from our insight into the structural conditions of the mind—the antithesis between the coherent ego and the repressed which is split off from it.¹

For our conception of the unconscious, however, the consequences of our discovery are even more important. Dynamic

¹ Cf. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920*g*) [Standard Ed., 18, 19].

considerations caused us to make our first correction; our insight into the structure of the mind leads to the second. We recognize that the *Ucs.* does not coincide with the repressed; it is still true that all that is repressed is *Ucs.*, but not all that is *Ucs.* is repressed. A part of the ego, too—and Heaven knows how important a part—may be *Ucs.*, undoubtedly is *Ucs.*¹ And this *Ucs.* belonging to the ego is not latent like the *Pcs.*; for if it were, it could not be activated without becoming *Cs.*, and the process of making it conscious would not encounter such great difficulties. When we find ourselves thus confronted by the necessity of postulating a third *Ucs.*, which is not repressed, we must admit that the characteristic of being unconscious begins to lose significance for us. It becomes a quality which can have many meanings, a quality which we are unable to make, as we should have hoped to do, the basis of far-reaching and inevitable conclusions. Nevertheless we must beware of ignoring this characteristic, for the property of being conscious or not is in the last resort our one beacon-light in the darkness of depth-psychology.

¹ [This had already been stated not only in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (loc. cit.) but earlier, in 'The Unconscious' (1915e), *Standard Ed.*, 14, 192-3. Indeed, it was implied in a remark at the beginning of the second paper on 'The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence' (1896b).]

II

THE EGO AND THE ID

PATHOLOGICAL research has directed our interest too exclusively to the repressed. We should like to learn more about the ego, now that we know that it, too, can be unconscious in the proper sense of the word. Hitherto the only guide we have had during our investigations has been the distinguishing mark of being conscious or unconscious; we have finally come to see how ambiguous this can be.

Now all our knowledge is invariably bound up with consciousness. We can come to know even the *Ucs.* only by making it conscious. But stop, how is that possible? What does it mean when we say 'making something conscious'? How can that come about?

We already know the point from which we have to start in this connection. We have said that consciousness is the *surface* of the mental apparatus; that is, we have ascribed it as a function to a system which is spatially the first one reached from the external world—and spatially not only in the functional sense but, on this occasion, also in the sense of anatomical dissection.¹ Our investigations too must take this perceiving surface as a starting-point.

All perceptions which are received from without (sense-perceptions) and from within—what we call sensations and feelings—are *Cs.* from the start. But what about those internal processes which we may—roughly and inexactly—sum up under the name of thought-processes? They represent displacements of mental energy which are effected somewhere in the interior of the apparatus as this energy proceeds on its way towards action. Do they advance to the surface, which causes consciousness to be generated? Or does consciousness make its way to them? This is clearly one of the difficulties that arise when one seriously considers the spatial or 'topographical' idea of mental life; there must be a third alternative.²

¹ *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* [*Standard Ed.*, 18, 26].

² [This had been discussed at greater length in the second section of 'The Unconscious' (1915e), *Standard Ed.*, 18, 173-6.]

I have already, in another place,¹ suggested that the real difference between a *Ucs.* and a *Pcs.* idea (thought) consists in this: that the former is carried out on some material which remains unknown, whereas the latter (the *Pcs.*) is in addition brought into connection with word-presentations. This is the first attempt to indicate distinguishing marks for the two systems, the *Pcs.* and the *Ucs.*, other than their relation to consciousness. The question, 'How does a thing become conscious?' would thus be more advantageously stated: 'How does a thing become preconscious?' And the answer would be: 'Through becoming connected with the word-presentations corresponding to it.'

These word-presentations are residues of memories; they were at one time perceptions, and like all mnemonic residues they can become conscious again. Before we concern ourselves further with their nature, it dawns upon us like a new discovery that only something which has once been a *Cs.* perception can become conscious, and that anything arising from within (apart from feelings) that seeks to become conscious must try to transform itself into external perceptions: this becomes possible by means of memory-traces.

We think of the mnemonic residues as being contained in systems which are directly adjacent to the system *Pcpt.-Cs.*, so that the cathexes of those residues can readily extend from within on to the elements of the latter system.² We immediately think here of hallucinations, and of the fact that the most vivid memory is always distinguishable both from a hallucination and from an external perception;³ but it will also occur to us at once that when a memory is revived the cathexis remains in the mnemonic system, whereas a hallucination, which is not distinguishable from a perception, can arise when the cathexis does not merely spread over from the memory-trace on to the *Pcpt.* element, but passes over to it *entirely*.

Verbal residues are derived primarily from auditory perceptions,⁴ so that the system *Pcs.* has, as it were, a special

¹ 'The Unconscious' [ibid., 201 ff.].

² [Cf. Chapter VII (B) of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900a), *Standard Ed.*, 5, 538.]

³ [This view had been expressed by Breuer in his theoretical contribution to *Studies on Hysteria* (1895d), *Standard Ed.*, 2, 183.]

⁴ [Freud had arrived at this conclusion in his monograph on aphasia (1891b) on the basis of pathological findings (ibid., 92-4). The point

sensory source. The visual components of word-presentations are secondary, acquired through reading, and may to begin with be left on one side; so may the motor images of words, which, except with deaf-mutes, play the part of auxiliary indications. In essence a word is after all the mnemonic residue of a word that has been heard.

We must not be led, in the interests of simplification perhaps, to forget the importance of optical mnemonic residues, when they are of *things*, or to deny that it is possible for thought-processes to become conscious through a reversion to visual residues, and that in many people this seems to be the favoured method. The study of dreams and of preconscious phantasies as shown in Varendonck's observations¹ can give us an idea of the special character of this visual thinking. We learn that what becomes conscious in it is as a rule only the concrete subject-matter of the thought, and that the relations between the various elements of this subject-matter, which is what specially characterizes thoughts, cannot be given visual expression. Thinking in pictures is, therefore, only a very incomplete form of becoming conscious. In some way, too, it stands nearer to unconscious processes than does thinking in words, and it is unquestionably older than the latter both ontogenetically and phylogenetically.

To return to our argument: if, therefore, this is the way in which something that is in itself unconscious becomes preconscious, the question how we make something that is repressed (pre)conscious would be answered as follows. It is done by supplying *Pcs.* intermediate links through the work of analysis. Consciousness remains where it is, therefore; but, on the other hand, the *Ucs.* does not rise into the *Cs.*

Whereas the relation of *external* perceptions to the ego is quite perspicuous, that of *internal* perceptions to the ego requires special investigation. It gives rise once more to a doubt whether we are really right in referring the whole of consciousness to the single superficial system *Pcpt.-Cs.*

Internal perceptions yield sensations of processes arising in the most diverse and certainly also in the deepest strata of the

is represented in the diagram reproduced from that work in Appendix C to the paper on 'The Unconscious', *Standard Ed.*, 14, 214.]

¹ [Cf. Varendonck (1921), a book to which Freud contributed an introduction (1921b).]

mental apparatus. Very little is known about these sensations and feelings; those belonging to the pleasure-unpleasure series may still be regarded as the best examples of them. They are more primordial, more elementary, than perceptions arising externally and they can come about even when consciousness is clouded. I have elsewhere¹ expressed my views about their greater economic significance and the metapsychological reasons for this. These sensations are multilocular, like external perceptions; they may come from different places simultaneously and may thus have different or even opposite qualities.

Sensations of a pleasurable nature have not anything inherently impelling about them, whereas unpleasurable ones have it in the highest degree. The latter impel towards change, towards discharge, and that is why we interpret unpleasure as implying a heightening and pleasure a lowering of energetic cathexis.² Let us call what becomes conscious as pleasure and unpleasure a quantitative and qualitative 'something' in the course of mental events; the question then is whether this 'something' can become conscious in the place where it is, or whether it must first be transmitted to the system *Psyt.*

Clinical experience decides for the latter. It shows us that this 'something' behaves like a repressed impulse. It can exert driving force without the ego noticing the compulsion. Not until there is resistance to the compulsion, a hold-up in the discharge-reaction, does the 'something' at once become conscious as unpleasure. In the same way that tensions arising from physical needs can remain unconscious, so also can pain—a thing intermediate between external and internal perception, which behaves like an internal perception even when its source is in the external world. It remains true, therefore, that sensations and feelings, too, only become conscious through reaching the system *Psyt.*; if the way forward is barred, they do not come into being as sensations, although the 'something' that corresponds to them in the course of excitation is the same as if they did. We then come to speak, in a condensed and not entirely correct manner, of 'unconscious feelings', keeping up an analogy with unconscious ideas which is not altogether justifiable. Actually the difference is that, whereas with *Ucs.* ideas connecting links must be created before they can be

brought into the *Cs.*, with feelings, which are themselves transmitted directly, this does not occur. In other words: the distinction between *Cs.* and *Ps.* has no meaning where feelings are concerned; the *Ps.* here drops out—and feelings are either conscious or unconscious. Even when they are attached to word-presentations, their becoming conscious is not due to that circumstance, but they become so directly.¹

The part played by word-presentations now becomes perfectly clear. By their interposition internal thought-processes are made into perceptions. It is like a demonstration of the theorem that all knowledge has its origin in external perception. When a hypercathexis of the process of thinking takes place, thoughts are *actually* perceived—as if they came from without—and are consequently held to be true.

After this clarifying of the relations between external and internal perception and the superficial system *Psyt.-Cs.*, we can go on to work out our idea of the ego. It starts out, as we see, from the system *Psyt.*, which is its nucleus, and begins by embracing the *Ps.*, which is adjacent to the mnemonic residues. But, as we have learnt, the ego is also unconscious.

Now I think we shall gain a great deal by following the suggestion of a writer who, from personal motives, vainly asserts that he has nothing to do with the rigours of pure science. I am speaking of Georg Groddeck, who is never tired of insisting that what we call our ego behaves essentially passively in life, and that, as he expresses it, we are 'lived' by unknown and uncontrollable forces.² We have all had impressions of the same kind, even though they may not have overwhelmed us to the exclusion of all others, and we need feel no hesitation in finding a place for Groddeck's discovery in the structure of science. I propose to take it into account by calling the entity which starts out from the system *Psyt.* and begins by being *Ps.* the 'ego', and by following Groddeck in calling the other part of the mind, into which this entity extends and which behaves as though it were *Ucs.*, the 'id'.³

¹ [Cf. Section III of 'The Unconscious' (1915e), *Standard Ed.*, 14, 177-8.]

² Groddeck (1923).

³ [See Editor's Introduction, p. 7.]—Groddeck himself no doubt followed the example of Nietzsche, who habitually used this grammatical term for whatever in our nature is impersonal and, so to speak, subject to natural law.

¹ [Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920g), *Standard Ed.*, 18, 29.]

² [Ibid., 8.]

We shall soon see whether we can derive any advantage from this view for purposes either of description or of understanding. We shall now look upon an individual as a psychical id, unknown and unconscious, upon whose surface rests the ego, developed from its nucleus the *Pcpt.* system. If we make an effort to represent this pictorially, we may add that the ego does not completely envelop the id, but only does so to the extent to which the system *Pcpt.* forms its [the ego's] surface, more or less as the germinal disc rests upon the ovum. The ego is not sharply separated from the id; its lower portion merges into it.

But the repressed merges into the id as well, and is merely a part of it. The repressed is only cut off sharply from the ego by the resistances of repression; it can communicate with the ego through the id. We at once realize that almost all the lines of demarcation we have drawn at the instigation of pathology relate only to the superficial strata of the mental apparatus—the only ones known to us. The state of things which we have been describing can be represented diagrammatically (Fig. 1);¹ though it must be remarked that the form chosen has no pretensions to any special applicability, but is merely intended to serve for purposes of exposition.

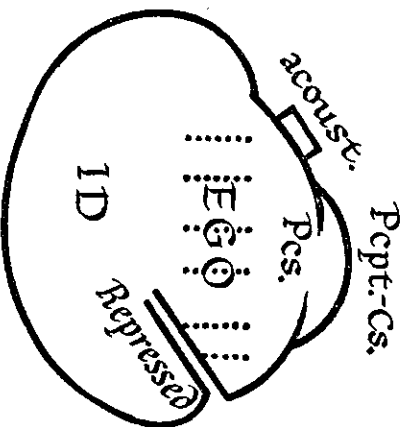


Fig. 1.

¹ [Compare the slightly different diagram near the end of Lecture XXXI of the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933a). The entirely different one in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900a), *Standard Ed.*, 5, 541, and its predecessor in a letter to Fliess of December 6, 1896 (Freud, 1950a, Letter 52), are concerned with function as well as structure.]

Wernichtadd, perhaps, that the ego wears a 'cap of hearing'¹—on one side only, as we learn from cerebral anatomy. It might be said to wear it awry.

It is easy to see that the ego is that part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world through the medium of the *Pcpt.-Cs.*; in a sense it is an extension of the surface-differentiation. Moreover, the ego seeks to bring the influence of the external world to bear upon the id and its tendencies, and endeavours to substitute the reality principle for the pleasure principle which reigns unrestrictedly in the id. For the ego, perception plays the part which in the id falls to instinct. The ego represents what may be called reason and common sense, in contrast to the id, which contains the passions. All this falls into line with popular distinctions which we are all familiar with; at the same time, however, it is only to be regarded as holding good on the average or 'ideally'.

The functional importance of the ego is manifested in the fact that normally control over the approaches to motility devolves upon it. Thus in its relation to the id it is like a man on horseback, who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse; with this difference, that the rider tries to do so with his own strength while the ego uses borrowed forces. The analogy may be carried a little further. Often a rider, if he is not to be parted from his horse, is obliged to guide it where it wants to go;² so in the same way the ego is in the habit of transforming the id's will into action as if it were its own.

Another factor, besides the influence of the system *Pcpt.*, seems to have played a part in bringing about the formation of the ego and its differentiation from the id. A person's own body, and above all its surface, is a place from which both external and internal perceptions may spring. It is seen like any other object, but to the *touch* it yields two kinds of sensations, one of which may be equvalent to an internal perception. Psychophysiology has fully discussed the manner in which a person's own body attains its special position among other objects in the world of perception. Pain, too, seems to play a part in the process, and the way in which we gain new knowledge of our organs

¹ [*Hörkappe*]. I.e. the auditory lobe. Cf. footnote 4, p. 20 above.]

² [This analogy appears as an association to one of Freud's dreams in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *Standard Ed.*, 4, 231.]

during painful illnesses is perhaps a model of the way by which in general we arrive at the idea of our body.

The ego is first and foremost a bodily ego; it is not merely a surface entity, but is itself the projection of a surface.¹ If we wish to find an anatomical analogy for it we can best identify it with the 'cortical homunculus' of the anatomists, which stands on its head in the cortex, sticks up its heels, faces backwards and, as we know, has its speech-area on the left-hand side.

The relation of the ego to consciousness has been entered into repeatedly; yet there are some important facts in this connection which remain to be described here. Accustomed as we are to taking our social or ethical scale of values along with us wherever we go, we feel no surprise at hearing that the scene of the activities of the lower passions is in the unconscious; we expect, moreover, that the higher any mental function ranks in our scale of values the more easily it will find access to consciousness assured to it. Here, however, psycho-analytic experience disappoints us. On the one hand, we have evidence that even subtle and difficult intellectual operations which ordinarily require strenuous reflection can equally be carried out pre-consciously and without coming into consciousness. Instances of this are quite incontestable; they may occur, for example, during the state of sleep, as is shown when someone finds, immediately after waking, that he knows the solution to a difficult mathematical or other problem with which he had been wrestling in vain the day before.²

There is another phenomenon, however, which is far stranger. In our analyses we discover that there are people in whom the faculties of self-criticism and conscience—mental activities, that is, that rank as extremely high ones—are unconscious and unconsciously produce effects of the greatest importance; the example of resistance remaining unconscious during analysis is

¹ [I.e. the ego is ultimately derived from bodily sensations, chiefly from those springing from the surface of the body. It may thus be regarded as a mental projection of the surface of the body, besides, as we have seen above, representing the superficialities of the mental apparatus.—This footnote first appeared in the English translation of 1927, in which it was described as having been authorized by Freud. It does not appear in the German editions.]

² I was quite recently told an instance of this which was, in fact, brought up as an objection against my description of the 'dream-work'. [Cf. *The Interpretation of Dreams, Standard Ed.*, 4, 64, and 5, 564.]

therefore by no means unique. But this new discovery, which compels us, in spite of our better critical judgement, to speak of an 'unconscious sense of guilt',¹ bewilders us far more than the other and sets us fresh problems, especially when we gradually come to see that in a great number of neuroses an unconscious sense of guilt of this kind plays a decisive economic part and puts the most powerful obstacles in the way of recovery.² If we come back once more to our scale of values, we shall have to say that not only what is lowest but also what is highest in the ego can be unconscious. It is as if we were thus supplied with a proof of what we have just asserted of the conscious ego: that it is first and foremost a body-ego.

¹ [This phrase had already appeared in Freud's paper on 'Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices' (1907b), *Standard Ed.*, 9, 123. The notion was, however, foreshadowed much earlier, in Section II of the first paper on 'The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence' (1894a).]

² [This is further discussed below, p. 49 ff.]

THE EGO AND THE SUPER-EGO (EGO IDEAL)

If the ego were merely the part of the id modified by the influence of the perceptual system, the representative in the mind of the real external world, we should have a simple state of things to deal with. But there is a further complication.

The considerations that led us to assume the existence of a grade in the ego, a differentiation within the ego, which may be called the 'ego ideal' or 'super-ego', have been stated elsewhere.¹ They still hold good.² The fact that this part of the ego is less firmly connected with consciousness is the novelty which calls for explanation.

At this point we must widen our range a little. We succeeded in explaining the painful disorder of melancholia by supposing that [in those suffering from it] an object which was lost has been set up again inside the ego—that is, that an object-cathexis has been replaced by an identification.³ At that time, however, we did not appreciate the full significance of this process and did not know how common and how typical it is. Since then we have come to understand that this kind of substitution has a great share in determining the form taken by the ego and that it makes an essential contribution towards building up what is called its 'character'.⁴

¹ [See Editor's Introduction, pp. 9–10.] Cf. 'On Narcissism: an Introduction' (1914c), and *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921c).

² Except that I seem to have been mistaken in ascribing the function of 'reality-testing' to this super-ego—a point which needs correction. [See *Group Psychology* (1921c), *Standard Ed.*, 18, 114 and n. 2, and the Editor's Note to the metapsychological paper on dreams (1917d), 14, 220.] It would fit in perfectly with the relations of the ego to the world of perception if reality-testing remained a task of the ego itself. Some earlier suggestions about a 'nucleus of the ego', never very definitely formulated, also require to be put right, since the system *Psyt.-C.* alone can be regarded as the nucleus of the ego. [In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920g) Freud had spoken of the unconscious part of the ego as its nucleus (*Standard Ed.*, 18, 19); and in his later paper on 'Humour' (1927d) he referred to the super-ego as the nucleus of the ego.]

³ 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917e) [*Standard Ed.*, 14, 249].

⁴ [Some references to other passages in which Freud has discussed

At the very beginning, in the individual's primitive oral phase, object-cathexis and identification are no doubt indistinguishable from each other.¹ We can only suppose that later on object-cathexes proceed from the id, which feels erotic trends as needs. The ego, which to begin with is still feeble, becomes aware of the object-cathexes, and either acquiesces in them or tries to fend them off by the process of repression.²

When it happens that a person has to give up a sexual object, there quite often ensues an alteration of his ego which can only be described as a setting up of the object inside the ego, as it occurs in melancholia; the exact nature of this substitution is as yet unknown to us. It may be that by this introjection, which is a kind of regression to the mechanism of the oral phase, the ego makes it easier for the object to be given up or renders that process possible. It may be that this identification is the sole condition under which the id can give up its objects. At any rate the process, especially in the early phases of development, is a very frequent one, and it makes it possible to suppose that the character of the ego is a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes and that it contains the history of those object-choices. It must, of course, be admitted from the outset that there are varying degrees of capacity for resistance, which decide the extent to which a person's character fends off or accepts the influences of the history of his erotic object-choices. In women who have had many experiences in love there seems to be no difficulty in finding vestiges of their object-cathexes in the traits of their character. We must also take into consideration cases of simultaneous object-cathexis and identification—cases, that character-formation will be found in an Editor's footnote at the end of the paper on 'Character and Anal Eroticism' (1908b), *Standard Ed.*, 9, 175.]

¹ [Cf. Chapter VII of *Group Psychology* (1921c), *Standard Ed.*, 18, 105.]

² An interesting parallel to the replacement of object-choice by identification is to be found in the belief of primitive peoples, and in the prohibitions based upon it, that the attributes of animals which are incorporated as nourishment persist as part of the character of those who eat them. As is well known, this belief is one of the roots of cannibalism and its effects have continued through the series of usages of the totem meal down to Holy Communion. [Cf. *Totem and Taboo* (1912–13), *Standard Ed.*, 13, 82, 142, 154–5, etc.] The consequences ascribed by this belief to oral mastery of the object do in fact follow in the case of the later sexual object-choice.

is, in which the alteration in character occurs before the object has been given up. In such cases the alteration in character has been able to survive the object-relation and in a certain sense to conserve it.

From another point of view it may be said that this transformation of an erotic object-choice into an alteration of the ego is also a method by which the ego can obtain control over the id and deepen its relations with it—at the cost, it is true, of acquiescing to a large extent in the id's experiences. When the ego assumes the features of the object, it is forcing itself, so to speak, upon the id as a love-object and is trying to make good the id's loss by saying: 'Look, you can love me too—I am so like the object.'

The transformation of object-libido into narcissistic libido which thus takes place obviously implies an abandonment of sexual aims, a desexualization—a kind of sublimation, therefore. Indeed, the question arises, and deserves careful consideration, whether this is not the universal road to sublimation, whether all sublimation does not take place through the mediation of the ego, which begins by changing sexual object-libido into narcissistic libido and then, perhaps, goes on to give it another aim.¹ We shall later on have to consider whether other instinctual vicissitudes may not also result from this transformation, whether, for instance, it may not bring about a defusion of the various instincts that are fused together.²

Although it is a digression from our aim, we cannot avoid giving our attention for a moment longer to the ego's object-identifications. If they obtain the upper hand and become too numerous, unduly powerful and incompatible with one another, a pathological outcome will not be far off. It may come to a disruption of the ego in consequence of the different identifications becoming cut off from one another by resistances; perhaps

¹ Now that we have distinguished between the ego and the id, we must recognize the id as the great reservoir of libido indicated in my paper on narcissism (1914c) [*Standard Ed.*, 14, 75]. The libido which flows into the ego owing to the identifications described above brings about its 'secondary narcissism'. [The point is elaborated below on p. 46.]

² Freud returns to the subject of this paragraph below, on pp. 45 and 54. The concept of the fusion and defusion of instincts is explained on pp. 41-2. The terms had been introduced already in an encyclopaedia article (1923d), *Standard Ed.*, 18, 258.]

the secret of the cases of what is described as 'multiple personality' is that the different identifications seize hold of consciousness in turn. Even when things do not go so far as this, there remains the question of conflicts between the various identifications into which the ego comes apart, conflicts which cannot after all be described as entirely pathological.

But, whatever the character's later capacity for resisting the influences of abandoned object-cathexes may turn out to be, the effects of the first identifications made in earliest childhood will be general and lasting. This leads us back to the origin of the ego ideal; for behind it there lies hidden an individual's first and most important identification, his identification with the father in his own personal prehistory.¹ This is apparently not in the first instance the consequence or outcome of an object-cathexis; it is a direct and immediate identification and takes place earlier than any object-cathexis.² But the object-choices belonging to the first sexual period and relating to the father and mother seem normally to find their outcome in an identification of this kind, and would thus reinforce the primary one.

The whole subject, however, is so complicated that it will be necessary to go into it in greater detail. The intricacy of the problem is due to two factors: the triangular character of the Oedipus situation and the constitutional bisexuality of each individual.

In its simplified form the case of a male child may be described as follows. At a very early age the little boy develops an object-cathexis for his mother, which originally related to the mother's breast and is the prototype of an object-choice on the anaclitic model;³ the boy deals with his father by identifying himself with him. For a time these two relationships proceed

¹ Perhaps it would be safer to say 'with the parents'; for before a child has arrived at definite knowledge of the difference between the sexes, the lack of a penis, it does not distinguish in value between its father and its mother. I recently came across the instance of a young married woman whose story showed that, after noticing the lack of a penis in herself, she had supposed it to be absent not in all women, but only in those whom she regarded as inferior, and had still supposed that her mother possessed one. [Cf. a footnote to 'The Infantile Genital Organization' (1923e), p. 145 below.]—In order to simplify my presentation I shall discuss only identification with the father.

² [See the beginning of Chapter VII of *Group Psychology* (1921c), *Standard Ed.*, 18, 105.]

³ [See the paper on narcissism (1914c), *Standard Ed.*, 14, 87 ff.]