

of tension relate to the *absolute* quantum, or perhaps level, of cathexis, whilst the incidence of pleasure/unpleasure reflects *changes* in the quantum of cathexis within a particular period of time? We also cannot fail to be struck by the fact that the life drives have so much more to do with our inner perception, since they behave as troublemakers and constantly bring tensions, the resolving of which is perceived as pleasurable, whereas the death drives appear to do their work unobtrusively. The pleasure principle seems to be positively subservient to the death drives; but it *does* also watch for any stimuli from without that are adjudged by both kinds of drives to be dangerous, and more particularly for any increases in stimulation emanating from within that make the task of living more difficult.

This all leads on to countless other questions to which at present we have no answers. We have to be patient and wait for new means and opportunities for research. And we must also be prepared to abandon any path that appears to be going nowhere, even though we may have followed it for quite some time. Only those fond believers who demand of science that it take the place of the catechism they have forsaken will object to a scientist developing or even changing his ideas. For the rest, let us take consolation for the slow progress of our scientific knowledge from the words of a poet (Rückert in his *Makamen des Hariri*):

Was man nicht erfliegen kann, muss man erhinken.

...

Die Schrift sagt, es ist keine Sünde zu hinken.

(Whatever we cannot achieve on the wing, we have to achieve at a patient limp . . . Scripture tells us clear enough: it never was a sin to limp.)

(1920)

The Ego and the Id

the most direct and certain kind. Now experience tells us that as a rule a psychic element – a notion, for instance – is conscious for no great length of time. Indeed, states of conscious awareness are typically very short-lived. A notion tends to be conscious one moment, then no longer conscious the next – though it can become so again in certain circumstances that are easily brought about. What became of it in the meantime, we do not know. We can say that it was *latent*, and what we mean is that it was *capable of becoming conscious*³ at any moment. And if we say that it was *unconscious*, that too is an accurate description. ‘Unconscious’ in this context thus amounts to the same thing as ‘latent and capable of becoming conscious’. True: the philosophers would object and tell us ‘No! The term “unconscious” is *not* applicable here! So long as the notion was in a state of latency, it wasn’t in any sense *psychical*.’ But if we started arguing with them at this early stage, we would slither into a polemic that would get us nowhere.

‘Unconscious’, however, is a term or concept that we have arrived at by a different route, namely by looking at experiences in which the *dynamics* of the psyche play a role. We have found – or rather, we have been compelled to assume – that there exist very powerful psychic processes or notions (a quantitative and hence *economic* factor enters the picture for a moment here), all of which can have a considerable effect on the subject’s inner life, just like any other notions, but which themselves remain unconscious even though their *effects* may in turn become conscious as notions.⁴ There is no need to repeat at length here what has so often been propounded before. Suffice it to say that psychoanalytical theory comes into play at this point, arguing that the reason such notions cannot be conscious is that a certain force actively opposes such an outcome, and that otherwise they would indeed be able to become conscious, whereupon it would become clear how little they differ from other psychic elements already acknowledged as such. This theory is rendered irrefutable by the fact that psychoanalysis has devised techniques enabling us to neutralize the opposing force and make the relevant notions conscious. We use the term *repression* to describe the status in which these notions existed before they were

made conscious, and we argue that the force that brought about the repression and then kept it in place makes itself felt during the psychoanalytic process as *resistance*.

We thus derive our concept of the unconscious from the theory of repression. The repressed⁵ is in our view the paradigm for the unconscious. As we can see, however, we have two forms of the unconscious: one that is latent, but capable of becoming conscious, and one, consisting of the repressed, that is not inherently and spontaneously capable of becoming conscious. The insight we have gained into the dynamics of the psyche inevitably influences both our nomenclature and our definitions. For the latent component – which is unconscious only in the descriptive⁶ and not the dynamic sense – we use the term *pre-conscious*; we restrict the term *unconscious* to the dynamically unconscious repressed. Thus we now have three terms – ‘conscious’ (*Cs*), ‘pre-conscious’ (*Pcs*) and ‘unconscious’ (*Ucs*), none of which any longer has a purely descriptive meaning. The *Pcs*, so we assume, is much closer to the *Cs* than the *Ucs* is; and having defined the *Ucs* as *psychical*, we shall do so all the more readily in the case of the latent *Pcs*. But wouldn’t it be preferable for us to stay in line with the philosophers, and rigorously separate the *Pcs* as well as the *Ucs* from the conscious psychic element? The philosophers would then suggest that we describe the *Pcs* and the *Ucs* as two forms or levels of the *psychoidale*⁷ – and hey presto, harmony would reign between us. But endless expositional difficulties would result from this, and the singularly important fact that these ‘psychoids’ correspond in almost all other respects to the *psychical* as it is generally understood, would be pushed into the background for the sake of a prejudice – and a prejudice dating from a period when nothing was yet known of these ‘psychoids’, or at any rate of their most important aspect.⁸

We can now operate very happily with our three terms *Cs*, *Pcs* and *Ucs*, provided we bear in mind that whereas there are two kinds of unconscious in the *descriptive* sense, there is only one in the *dynamic* sense. For the purposes of our account of things, we can in some cases ignore this distinction, while in others it is of course indispensable to the argument. After all, we have become quite

accustomed to this ambiguity regarding the unconscious, and we have coped with it perfectly well. We cannot get rid of it, so far as I can see: whether something is conscious or unconscious is ultimately a question of perception that can only be answered 'yes' or 'no', and the act of perception itself tells us nothing whatever about the reason why something is or is not perceived. We have no right to complain about the fact that when the dynamic element happens to become manifest, it does so only in an ambiguous form.⁹

As our psychoanalytical work proceeds, however, it soon becomes clear that these categories, too, prove to be inadequate, to be quite simply insufficient for practical use. Amongst the various situations that demonstrate this, let us single out one in particular – and the most important of them all. We have evolved the notion of a coherent organization of the psychic processes present within each individual, and we call this organization their *ego*.¹⁰ It is this ego that consciousness attaches to; it controls the pathways leading to motor activity, i.e. to the release of excitations into the external world; it is the arbiter¹¹ that controls all the psyche's constituent processes and, despite going to sleep at night, still contrives to censor dreams. This ego is also the source of the repressions that are intended to exclude certain psychic tendencies not only from consciousness, but also from all other areas where they might come into their own or be otherwise activated. In psychoanalysis, these tendencies, having been thrust aside by the repression process, present themselves in direct opposition to the ego, and it is the job of the analysis to remove the resistances mounted by the ego against any involvement with what has been repressed. Now in the course of analysis we find that the patient encounters difficulties when we set him certain tasks: his associations fail to work whenever they are meant to get anywhere near the repressed element. We then tell him that he is under the sway of a resistance, but he is wholly unaware of this fact, and even if his feelings of unpleasure cause him perchance to guess that a resistance is at work within him, he is incapable of identifying or defining it. But since this resistance undoubtedly emanates from his ego and entirely belongs to it, we find ourselves confronted with an unexpected situation. We have come upon something within the

very ego itself that is *also* unconscious, something that behaves exactly like the repressed element in producing powerful effects without becoming conscious itself, and which we can render conscious only by working on it in a special way. The implication of this discovery for psychoanalytic practice is that we shall incur endless difficulties and ambiguities if we carry on doggedly using our accustomed terminology, and thus for instance seek to attribute neurosis to a conflict between the conscious and the unconscious. On the basis of our insight into the structural conditions that obtain in the life of the psyche we need to replace this antithesis with a different one – namely that between the coherent ego and the repressed element that has been split off from it.¹²

The implications are even more significant, however, with respect to our general conception of the unconscious. We first corrected our position as a result of considering the *dynamic* aspect, and a second correction is necessitated by our insight concerning *structure*. We now realize that the *Ucs* and the repressed are not conterminous; while it remains correct to say that all of the repressed is *Ucs*, it is not also the case that all of the *Ucs* is repressed. Part of the ego – God alone knows how important a part – may also be *Ucs*, indeed is undoubtedly *Ucs*. And this *Ucs* component of the ego is not latent in a *Pcs* sense, otherwise it could surely not be activated without becoming *Cs*, and it would surely not be so enormously difficult to render it conscious. If we thus find ourselves compelled to postulate a third kind of *Ucs*, i.e. a non-repressed one, then we have to admit that 'unconsciousness' as a category loses some of the significance that it otherwise holds for us. It becomes a multivalent quality that allows no scope for the far-reaching and definitive conclusions that we would have liked to draw from it. And yet we must be careful not to disregard it, for in the end the attribute 'conscious/unconscious' is our one and only beacon in the darkness of depth psychology.¹³

II

The Ego and the Id

Pathological¹⁴ research has focused our attention too exclusively on 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. The only touchstone available to us throughout our investigations so far has been the designation 'conscious' or 'unconscious' – and we have finally realized how ambiguous this can be.

Now our entire knowledge depends at all times on consciousness. Even the *Ucs* can only become known to us in so far as we make it conscious. But wait a moment: how is that possible? What does 'making something conscious' actually mean? How on earth can such a thing happen?

We already know exactly where to start in order to answer this question. We have said that consciousness constitutes the *outer surface* of the psychic apparatus, which is to say that we have defined it as a function of a system that is spatially the closest to the external world – a spatial proximity, incidentally, that applies not only in terms of function but also, in this particular case, in terms of anatomical location.¹⁵ For the purposes of our present investigations, too, we need to take this 'perceiving surface' as our starting point.

All perceptions that come from without (sense perceptions) and from within – what we call 'sensations' and 'feelings' – are *Cs* from the very first. But what is the position with respect to those inner processes that we might sum up – albeit crudely and imprecisely – as 'thought processes'? These processes that occur somewhere in the depths of the apparatus as displacements of psychic energy on its path to becoming action – do they betake themselves to the outer surface that gives rise to consciousness? Or does consciousness

betake itself to them? As we can see, this is one of the difficulties that result once we make any serious attempt to envisage the workings of the psyche in spatial, *topical* terms. Both alternatives are equally inconceivable, and the truth must surely lie in a third.

I have already put forward the hypothesis elsewhere¹⁶ that the real difference between a *Ucs* and a *Pcs* notion resides in the fact that the former runs its course wholly within the context of material of which the subject remains unaware, whereas in the case of the latter the connection with *word-notions* supervenes as well.¹⁷ This represents our first attempt to propose identifiers for the two systems *Pcs* and *Ucs* that rely on something other than their relationship to consciousness. The question 'How does something become conscious?' can thus be more pertinently formulated as follows: 'How does something become pre-conscious?' And the answer would be: 'By being connected to the corresponding word-notions'.

These word-notions are residual memories; they were once perceptions, and like all residual memories they are capable of becoming conscious again. Before we deal with their nature in more detail, however, the following new insight suddenly dawns on us: the only things that can become conscious are things that have already at some point been *Cs* perceptions; and anything – apart from feelings – that wants to become conscious from within has to try to convert itself into an external perception. This is made possible by means of memory traces.

We conceive of residual memories as being contained within systems that are immediately adjacent to the *Pept-Cs* system,¹⁸ with the result that the cathexes of these residues can easily extend outwards onto the constituent elements of the *Pept-Cs* system. One immediately thinks of hallucinations at this point, and of the fact that even the most vivid memories remain readily distinguishable from hallucinations and from external perceptions – but an answer to this problem presents itself no less quickly, namely that when a memory is revived its cathexis is retained within the memory system, whereas a hallucination that is indistinguishable from a perception may well arise when the cathexis passes completely from the memory trace to the *Pept* system instead of making simply a minor incursion.

Verbal residua derive in the main from *auditory* perceptions, and this means that the *Pcs* system may be said to have a specifically sensory origin, as it were. For the time being we can disregard the *visual* components of word-notions, these being secondary elements acquired through reading, and the same applies to the *dynamic* images of words,¹⁹ which play the role of auxiliary signals (except in the case of deaf-mutes²⁰). After all, a word is strictly speaking the memorative residuum of a word that has been *heard*.

We should not be tempted – for the sake of simplicity, for instance – to forget the importance of *optical* memorative residua (in respect of physical objects), or to deny that it is possible to make thought processes conscious by reverting to the relevant visual residua, and that for many people this seems to be the preferred method. We can get an idea of the specific nature of this visual thinking from the study of dreams and pre-conscious fantasies written on the basis of his own observations by [Julian] Varendonck.²¹ We discover that in most cases only the concrete matter of the thought becomes conscious, whereas the various relations and connections that give the thought its particular character find no visual expression at all. Thinking in pictures thus only makes for a very imperfect form of consciousness. It is also rather more akin to unconscious processes than is thinking in words, and it is without any doubt both ontogenetically and phylogenetically older than the latter.

To return to our argument: given that this is indeed the way in which something intrinsically unconscious becomes pre-conscious, then the question ‘How do we make something that has been repressed (pre)conscious?’ may be answered as follows: we do so by generating precisely such *Pcs* intermediary links through our psychoanalytical work. Consciousness thus stays where it is – but so too does the *Ucs*, which does not for instance move up to the level of the *Cs*.

While the relationship of *external* perceptions to the ego is perfectly obvious, the relationship to the ego of *internal* perceptions calls for special consideration. It once again raises doubts as to whether we really are right to associate the whole of consciousness with the one surface system of the *Pcpt-Cs*.

Internal perceptions yield sensations of processes that emanate from extremely diverse layers of the psychic apparatus, probably including the very deepest. These sensations are not at all well known, those forming the pleasure/unpleasure group being perhaps still the best example. They are more primal, more elemental than perceptions that come from outside, and can arise even in an imperfect state of consciousness. I have written elsewhere about their greater economic importance, and about the metapsychological reasons for this.²² Like external perceptions, these sensations are multilocular: they can come from several different places at the same time, and in consequence can possess different, even contrary qualities.

Sensations of a pleasurable kind generate no pressures at all; unpleasurable sensations, on the other hand, exert pressure to an extreme degree. They press for change, for release, and because of this we believe that unpleasure entails an *increase* in energy-cathexis, and pleasure a *decrease*.²³ Suppose that whatever it is that becomes conscious as pleasure or unpleasure be defined as quantitatively and qualitatively ‘other’²⁴ within the workings of the psyche: the question then arises whether this ‘other’ is capable of becoming conscious in situ, or first has to be transmitted to the *Pcpt-Cs* system.

Clinical experience clearly points to the latter. It shows that this ‘other’ behaves like a repressed impulse. It can develop powerful energies without the ego noticing the intense pressure that these exert. It is only the onset of resistance to the pressure, the arresting of the release-reaction, that suddenly makes the ‘other’ conscious as unpleasure: just as the tension caused by unmet needs can remain unconscious, so too can pain – this half-and-half thing, somewhere between external and internal perception, that behaves like an internal perception even when it derives from the world without. It is thus still correct to say that sensations and feelings, too, only become conscious if they manage to reach the *Pcpt* system; if the transmission pathway is blocked, then they never actually become sensations, even though the ‘other’ that corresponds to them in the excitatory process remains just the same as it would otherwise be. We then – using a shorthand and not entirely accurate formulation

-- speak of 'unconscious sensations', thereby adhering to the not altogether justifiable analogy with unconscious *notions*; the difference being that in the case of *Ucs* notions, connecting links have to be created first before they can be brought into the *Cs*, whereas this is not necessary in the case of sensations, which are directly transmitted. To put this another way: the distinction between *Cs* and *Pcs* is meaningless in the case of sensations;²⁵ they are either conscious or unconscious, and the *Pcs* doesn't come into it at all. Even when they are attached to word-notions, they by no means depend on them in order to become conscious: they do this directly.

The role of word-notions now becomes fully clear: they are the intermedium that enables inner thought processes to become perceptions. The proposition might thus seem to have been duly proved that 'All knowledge derives from external perception'. When thinking becomes highly cathected, individual thoughts really *are* perceived -- just as if they came from outside -- and are therefore regarded as true.

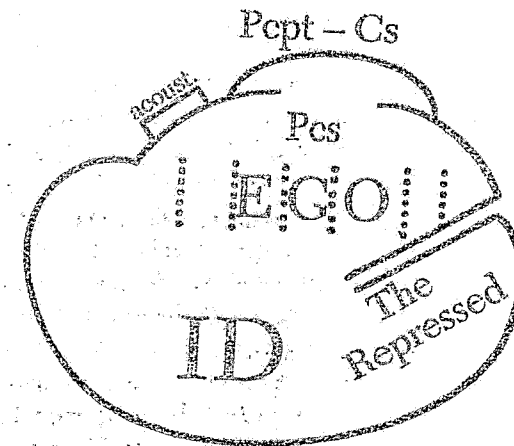
Having thus clarified the relationship between external/internal perception and the surface system of the *Pcpt-Cs*, we can now go on to elaborate our notion of the ego. We see it as proceeding from the *Pcpt* system, this being its essential nucleus,²⁶ and going on next to embrace the *Pcs*, which is chiefly dependent on memorative residua. But, as we have already learned, the ego is also unconscious.

Now I think it will profit us greatly if we take our cue from a writer who for his own particular reasons, and quite in vain, would have us believe that his work has nothing to do with the stern, exalted realm of science. I am referring to Georg Groddeck and his tireless insistence that what we call our ego very largely remains passive throughout our life; that rather than living our lives ourselves, we are 'lived' -- to use Groddeck's expression -- by unknown and uncontrollable forces.²⁷ We have all had the same sort of experience, even if it has not overwhelmed us to the exclusion of all others, and we do not shrink from according Groddeck's insight its due place within the edifice of science. I suggest that we take account of it by employing the term *ego* for the entity that proceeds first from the *Pcpt* system and is then *Pcs* -- but the term *id*, as used by Groddeck,

for the other psychic realm that constitutes the further continuation of that same entity, and behaves in a *Ucs* way.²⁵

We shall soon discover whether we can derive any benefit from this approach in terms of understanding and description. We now see the individual as consisting in a psychic id, unrecognized and unconscious, on top of which sits the ego, having duly developed out of its nucleus, the *Pcpt* system.²⁹ If we are aiming to represent this diagrammatically, then we need to add that the ego does not envelop the id completely, but only to the extent that the *Pcpt* system constitutes its²⁹ outer surface, rather in the way that the germinal disk sits on the top of the egg. The ego is not sharply separated from the id, but flows on down into it, such that both then merge.

But the repressed merges into the id as well, indeed is merely a part of it. The repressed is cut off from the ego only by the resistances generated by repression, and can communicate with it via the id. We immediately realize that almost all the distinctions that we have drawn on the basis of our pathological³¹ work relate solely to the *surface* layers of the psychic apparatus -- the only ones that are known to us. This disposition of things may be shown by a diagram



-- the contours of which are purely illustrative, however, and are not meant to betoken any particular interpretation. We might perhaps add that the ego sports an 'acoustic cap', but on one side only, in line with the evidence of cerebral anatomy. It sits at a crooked angle, so to speak.

As we can readily see, the ego is that part of the id that has been altered by the direct influence of the external world as mediated by the *Pcpt-Cs*; in a sense it is an extension of the process of surface differentiation.³³ Furthermore, the ego endeavours to bring the influence exerted by the external world fully to bear on the id and its designs, and makes every effort to substitute the reality principle³³ for the pleasure principle that reigns supreme within the id. Perception plays the same role for the ego that the drives are required to play in the id. The ego represents what may be called reason and calm consideration, in contrast to the id, which harbours the passions. While all of this accords with well-known popular conceptions and distinctions, it should none the less be understood as having validity only in a normative or theoretical sense.

The functional importance of the ego is manifest in the fact that it is normally given control of the pathways leading to motor activity. In its relationship to the id it thus resembles the rider charged with bridling the superior power of his horse -- with the difference that the rider tries to do this by using his own strength, the ego by using strength it has borrowed from elsewhere. This analogy can be carried a little further. Just as the rider who doesn't wish to be parted from his horse often has no alternative but to lead it where it wants to go, so too the ego habitually enacts the will of the id as though it were its own.

The genesis of the ego and its separation from the id appear to have been influenced not only by the *Pcpt* system but also by another factor. Our own body, and particularly its surface, can be a point of origin for both external and internal perceptions at the same time. We see it as a distinct object -- but touching it produces *two* sensations, one of which can be equated to an inner perception. Psychophysiology has dealt in ample detail with the way our body has its own special place within our world of perception. Pain also seems

to play a role in this, and the manner in which we gain a new awareness of our organs when we suffer painful illnesses is perhaps paradigmatic for the way in which we arrive at our notion of our own body.

The ego is above all a *corporeal* entity; it is not merely a surface entity, but is itself the *projection* of a surface.³⁴ If we seek an anatomical analogy for it, then we can identify it most readily with the anatomists' 'cerebral homunculus', which stands on its head in the cortex with its heels sticking upwards, its eyes pointing backwards, and its speech-area located, as we know, on the left-hand side.³⁵

There have been numerous detailed appraisals of the relationship between the ego and consciousness, but there are still some important new facts that need to be set out here. Accustomed as we are to viewing things according to a scale of social or ethical values that we take with us wherever we go, we are not at all surprised to learn that the machinations of the baser passions take place in the unconscious, but we rather assume that the higher a psychic function comes in that scale of values, the easier it is for it to gain access to the realm of consciousness. Our expectations in this respect are confounded by our actual experience in psychoanalysis, however. For one thing, we see clear evidence that even subtle and complex intellectual tasks that normally demand sustained and strenuous thought can also be carried out pre-consciously, without entering consciousness at all. There is no doubt whatever that such cases occur; they happen during sleep, for example, and are evidenced by the fact that on waking up, the person concerned immediately knows the answer to a difficult mathematical or other problem that they had vainly struggled to solve the day before.³⁶

However, we also encounter another, far more disconcerting phenomenon. We discover in analysis that there are people in whom the faculties of self-criticism and conscience -- that is, psychic activities to which we attach an extremely high value -- are unconscious, and as such produce effects of the greatest importance; resistance in analysis is thus by no means the only such feature to remain unconscious. But this second new discovery, which compels

us despite our better judgement to speak of an *unconscious guilt-feeling*, perplexes us far more, and sets us new puzzles – particularly once we begin to realize that in a large number of neuroses precisely such an unconscious guilt-feeling plays a crucial economic role, and puts extremely powerful obstacles in the way of recovery. If we want to return to the topic of our ‘scale of values’, then we need to make the point that it is not only the basest appurtenances of the ego that can remain unconscious, but also the most elevated ones. It is as if proof were being thus vouchsafed to us of what we said a moment ago about the conscious ego – that it is above all a *corporeal ego*.³⁷

III

The Ego and the Super-Ego (the Ego-Ideal)

The situation confronting us would be straightforward indeed if the ego were simply the portion of the id that is influenced and thus modified³⁸ by the perceptual system; if it were the representative within the psychic realm of the objective external world. But another factor comes into the picture as well.

We have explained in other contexts the various considerations that led us to postulate a separate level within the ego – a differentiation that has come about inside the ego itself – that may be termed the *ego-ideal* or *super-ego*.³⁹ These considerations remain entirely valid.⁴⁰ What is new here, and very much in need of explanation, is the fact that this part of the ego is less firmly and clearly connected to consciousness.

We need to range a little further afield at this juncture. We managed to throw light on the painful affliction of melancholia with our hypothesis that it involves resurrecting a lost object within the ego, in other words substituting identification for object-cathexis.⁴¹ At that time, however, we did not yet realize the full significance of this process, or how frequent and typical it is. Since then we have come to understand that surrogation of this kind plays a major part in shaping the ego, and contributes signally to forming what may be termed its *character*.

Right at the very beginning, in the primitive oral phase of an individual, object-cathexis and identification probably cannot be distinguished from one another. At a later stage, one can only suppose that object-cathexes emanate from the id, which registers erotic urges as needs. The ego – initially still in a somewhat puny state – becomes aware of the object-cathexes, and either puts up with