

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

them, or seeks to fight them off through the process of repression.⁴²

Where an individual is required or compelled to give up a sexual object, there is not uncommonly a compensatory process in the form of that particular ego-alteration⁴³ that we can only describe as 'erecting the object within the ego', just as occurs in melancholia. We do not yet know the precise circumstances in which this surrogation process takes place. Perhaps the ego uses this introjection, which is a form of regression to the mechanism of the oral phase, in order to make it easier to give up the object, or even to make it possible in the first place. Perhaps this identification is the one and only condition under which the id will give up its objects. Be that as it may, the process is a very frequent one, especially in the early phases of development, and gives grounds for the view that the character of the ego is a residual imprint of the object-cathexes that have been given up, and contains the entire history of those object-choices. Needless to say, it must be granted from the outset that there is a considerable range in the capacity for resistance that determines whether a person's character rejects or accepts these influences deriving from his or her cumulative history of erotic object-choices. In the case of women who have had numerous amorous experiences it would appear to be quite easy to demonstrate that vestiges of their various object-cathexes are present in their character traits. We must also consider the possibility that object-cathexis and identification can occur simultaneously, in other words, that there can be a character-alteration⁴⁴ *before* the object has been given up. In this event the character-alteration may well last beyond the subject's relationship to the object, and in some sense preserve it.

Looked at from another point of view, this process of converting an erotic object-choice into an ego-alteration can also be seen as a device enabling the ego to gain control of the id and strengthen its links to it, albeit at the cost of showing considerable complaisance with regard to its experiences. When the ego adopts the features of the object, it so to speak presses *itself* on the id as a love-object; it seeks to make good the id's loss by saying 'There, you see, you can love me too - I look just like the object.'

The conversion of object-libido into narcissistic libido that takes

place here clearly entails an abandonment of sexual goals, a desexualization – in other words a kind of sublimation. Indeed the question arises – and would merit detailed analysis – whether this is not perhaps the standard path to sublimation; whether *all* sublimation doesn't perhaps take place via the medium of the ego, which first transforms sexual object-libido into narcissistic object-libido, in order perhaps then to set it a different goal.⁴⁵ At a later stage we shall consider whether this transformation cannot perhaps affect the destiny of the drives in other ways too, for instance by bringing about a demergergence⁴⁶ of the various drives that are interfused with one another.

Even though it diverts us from our main objective, we really cannot avoid focusing our attention for a moment on the ego's object-identifications. If these get out of hand, if they become excessive in number and intensity and prove incompatible with one another, then a pathological outcome is altogether likely. Fragmenting of the ego may occur as a result of the separate identifications shutting themselves off from one another by means of resistances, and in cases of so-called *multiple personality* the secret may well be that the separate identifications take turns seizing hold of consciousness. Even if things do not reach such a pass, there is certain to be an issue with regard to conflicts between the various identifications that the ego separates out into – conflict that in the end cannot all be described as pathological.

But whatever may be the *subsequent* capacity of a person's character to resist the influence of object-cathexes that have been given up, the effects of that person's *initial* identifications, those that occur at a very young age, will be pervasive and long-lasting. This leads us back to the origins of the ego-ideal, for behind it lurks the individual's first and most important identification: that with the father during his personal pre-history.⁴⁷ This first identification does not itself seem to be the fruit or end-product of an object-cathexis: it occurs in its own, without any mediation, and at an earlier stage than any object-cathexis. But it seems that the object-choices that belong to the first sexual period, and involve the father and mother, culminate in normal circumstances in precisely the same identification, and hereby reinforce the primary one.

However, these relationships are so complicated that we are going to have to analyse them in rather more detail. Two factors are to blame for this complexity: the triangular nature of the Oedipus situation, and the constitutional bisexuality of the individual.

Reduced to its essentials, the picture that presents itself in the case of a male child is as follows: at a very early age he develops an object-cathexis in respect of his mother, the starting-point for which is the mother's breast, and which constitutes a paradigmatic example of the imitative type of object-choice;⁴⁸ the boy takes possession of the father through identification. The two relationships continue in tandem for a while, until the intensification of the boy's sexual desire for the mother and his recognition that the father constitutes an obstacle to this desire bring the Oedipus complex into being.⁴⁹ The father-identification now takes on a hostile air; it turns into a desire to get rid of the father and take his place *vis-à-vis* the mother. From this point onwards, the relationship to the father is ambivalent; it seems as if the ambivalence inherent in the identification from the beginning has now become manifest. In the case of boys, the ambivalent attitude to the father and the purely affectionate impulse towards the mother as object are the defining features of the simple and positive form of the Oedipus complex.

Once the Oedipus complex is demolished, the object-cathexis in respect of the mother has to be given up. Its place can be taken by one of two things: either an identification with the mother, or an intensification of the already existing identification with the father. We generally regard the latter outcome as the more normal one; it allows the affectionate relationship to the mother to be retained to some degree. The masculine element in the boy may thus be said to have gained in strength as a result of the dissolution of the Oedipus complex. In an altogether analogous way, the outcome of the Oedipus attitude in a little girl may be an intensification of her identification with the mother (or the creation of such an identification), which firmly establishes the feminine character of the child.

These identifications do not accord with our expectations,⁵⁰ in that they do not convey the surrendered object into the ego – but this outcome *does* also occur, and is more readily observed in girls

than in boys. We very often find in psychoanalysis that a little girl who has had to relinquish the father as love-object proceeds to emphasize her maleness, and instead of identifying with the mother identifies with the father, i.e. with the object that she has lost. What decides the issue here is evidently whether the male elements in her make-up – whatever these may be – are sufficiently strong.

Whether the final outcome of the Oedipus situation is a father-identification or a mother-identification thus seems to depend in both sexes on the relative strength of the male and female elements in the individual's make-up. This is one of the two ways in which bisexuality interferes in the fate of the Oedipus complex. The other is even more significant. For we get the impression that the simple form of the Oedipus complex is by no means the one that actually occurs most commonly, but amounts to a simplification or schematization – though one that quite often proves justifiable in practical terms.⁵¹ As a rule a more detailed investigation reveals the more *complete* form of the Oedipus complex, which is twofold in nature, comprising both a positive complex and a negative one, due to the child's original bisexuality; i.e. the boy not only exhibits an ambivalent attitude towards the father and an affectionate object-choice in respect of the mother, but at the same time also behaves like a girl, displaying an affectionate feminine attitude towards the father and a correspondingly jealous and hostile one towards the mother. This extra complication brought about by bisexuality makes it very difficult to discern the circumstances that obtain in primal object-choices and identifications, and even *more* difficult to describe these in an intelligible way. It may even be the case that the ambivalence that we noted in the child's relationship to its parents is wholly ascribable to bisexuality, and does not – as I argued earlier – derive from the relevant identification as a result of an attitude of rivalry.

It seems to me to be a sensible policy to assume that the complete Oedipus complex will prove to exist in the generality of cases, and most particularly in the case of neurotics. Psychoanalytical experience shows us, however, that in a number of instances one or other element disappears almost without trace, and as a result we find a whole spectrum, having the normal, positive Oedipus complex

at one end and the inverted, negative one at the other, while the middle sections reveal variants of the complete form with unequal proportions of the two components. On the dissolution of the Oedipus complex, the four tendencies contained within it will combine in such a way that they give rise to a father-identification and a mother-identification. The father-identification will retain the mother-object of the positive complex, and at the same time replace the father-object of the inverted complex;⁵² the same – in reverse – will be true of the mother-identification. One of the two identifications will be more marked than the other, and this will reflect the unequal distribution of the two sexual elements in the individual's make-up.

We can thus postulate that the most pervasive result of the sexual phase dominated by the Oedipus complex is that it leaves its imprint on the ego, manifest in the creation of these two identifications that are in some way harmonized with one another. This ego-alteration retains its special status and actively opposes the rest of the ego as the 'ego-ideal' or 'super-ego'.

The super-ego is not purely and simply the residuum of the id's earliest object-choices, however, but also signifies a vigorous reaction-formation directed against those same object-choices. Its relationship to the ego does not reside solely in the injunction 'You *shall* behave thus (like your father)', but also includes the prohibition 'You *must not* behave thus (like your father) – that is, you must not do *all* that he does, for some things remain his sole preserve.' This dual visage of the ego-ideal derives from the fact that the latter was brought into play in order to repress the Oedipus complex, indeed owes its very existence to this critical turn of events. The repression of the Oedipus complex was clearly no easy task. Since it was the parents, particularly the father, who were identified as the obstacle preventing the child's Oedipus wishes from being realized, his infantile ego gained the strength to accomplish the repression by erecting that same obstacle within itself. It borrowed the requisite strength from the father, so to speak – and to incur this loan is to incur the most momentous consequences: the super-ego retains the character of the father; and the stronger the Oedipus complex was, and the

faster it was repressed (by dint of authority, religious doctrine, schooling, reading) – the more strictly the super-ego subsequently rules the ego as its conscience, and perhaps as an unconscious sense of guilt. The question arises as to where it gets the power so to rule that power of compulsion which manifests itself as a categorical imperative; and I shall propose a possible answer to this question at a later stage.

Looking once again at the genesis of the super-ego as described above, we can see that it is the result of two extremely important biological factors: the long duration of the childhood period of helplessness and dependence in human beings, and the fact of their Oedipus complex, which we have of course attributed to the interruption of libido development caused by the latency period, and hence to the *diphasic onset* of human sexual life.⁵³ According to one psychoanalytical hypothesis, this latter phenomenon, which appears to be specific to humans, is a heritage of the enforced process of cultural development brought about by the ice age.⁵⁴ That being so, the super-ego's differentiation from the ego was by no means a chance event: it reflects the most significant developmental features of both the individual and the species; indeed, by giving lasting expression to the influence of the parents, it perpetuates the existence of the factors to which it owes its origins.

Psychoanalysis has been accused on countless occasions of failing to concern itself with man's higher, moral, suprapersonal side. This accusation is doubly unjust: unjust in *historical* terms because we argued from the very beginning that the ego's moral and aesthetic tendencies are the driving force behind repression; unjust with regard to *method* because our accusers refused to recognize that – unlike some tidy philosophical system – psychoanalytical research could not come bounding onto the stage with a complete and fully fashioned set of doctrines, but had to forge its way step by step towards an understanding of the complexities of the psyche by means of painstaking analysis of both normal and abnormal phenomena. We had no need to share the tremulous anxiety of others as to the precise location of the 'higher element' in human beings so long as we were busily studying the workings of the repressed in their inner souls.⁵⁵

But now that we are venturing to analyse the ego, we can say to all those who, shaken to the very core of their moral consciousness, have pleaded that there must surely be a higher presence in man: 'There is indeed, and this higher presence is the ego-ideal or super-ego, the representamen⁵⁶ of our relationship to our parents. As little children we knew, admired and feared these higher presences, and later assimilated them into our own selves.'

The ego-ideal is thus heir to the Oedipus complex, and as such an expression of the id's most powerful impulses and most important libidinal experiences. By erecting the ego-ideal, the ego asserted control over the Oedipus complex – and simultaneously subordinated itself to the id. Whereas the ego is essentially a representative of the world without, of reality, the super-ego is contraposed to it as advocate of the world within, of the id. As of course we have meanwhile come to expect, conflicts between the ego and the ideal are ultimately going to reflect the antithesis of 'the objective' and 'the psychical' – the world without, and the world within.

By forming an ideal, the ego takes unto itself everything in the id that has been created by biology or left behind by the travails of the human race, and re-experiences it on an individual level. As a result of the way it is formed, the ego-ideal has the most abundant links to the phylogenetic acquest, the archaic inheritance, that is intrinsic to everyone. Thanks to the forming of an ideal, those elements within the individual psyche that once belonged to the deepest depths become – in terms of our scheme of values – the very loftiest aspects of the human soul. It would be a futile undertaking, however, to seek to *localize* the ego-ideal in anything like the way that we have done in respect of the ego, or to make it fit any of the metaphors and images that we have used in our efforts to delineate the relationship between the ego and the id.

It is easy to demonstrate that the ego-ideal meets all the expectations that we tend to have of the 'higher presence' in man. As a surrogate for the individual's longing for the father, it contains the germ from which all religions have evolved. The sense of inadequacy we feel when comparing our ego with our ideal gives rise to that religious feeling of humility that the yearning believer depends on.

As each child grows up, the role of the father is taken over by teachers and other authority figures, whose commandments and prohibitions remain powerfully alive in the ego-ideal – and in due course exercise moral censorship in the guise of *conscience*. The tension between what our conscience demands and what our ego actually does is experienced as *guilt feeling*. Our social feelings rest on identifications with other people on the basis of the same ego-ideal.

Religion, morality and a social sense – these chief constituents of man's higher nature⁵⁷ – were originally one and the same. According to the hypothesis I set forth in *Totem and Taboo*, they were acquired phylogenetically as a result of the father-complex – religion and moral restraint deriving from the process of overcoming⁵⁸ the Oedipus' complex itself, and social feelings arising from the need to overcome the rivalry still remaining amongst the members of the younger generation. The male sex appears to have led the way in the acquisition of all these moral attributes, cross inheritance then transmitting them to females as well. Even today, social feelings develop within individuals as a construct serving to overbuild their jealous feelings of rivalry *vis-à-vis* their siblings.⁵⁹ Since their hostile impulses cannot be gratified, an identification with their erstwhile rival comes into being. Evidence gained from observing mild cases of homosexuality lends support to the supposition that this identification, too, is a surrogate for an affectionate object-choice, and has taken the place of the earlier stance of aggression and hostility.⁶⁰

The mention of phylogenesis, however, raises new problems so challenging that one is tempted to choose discretion over valour and avoid them altogether. But we don't really have any choice: we must venture to resolve them, even though we fear that in the process the inadequacy of our entire enterprise may stand revealed. The question is this: was it the *ego* of primitive man that at some point acquired religion and morality as a consequence of the father-complex, or was it his *id*? If it was the ego, then why not simply describe the hereditary process as operating *within* the ego itself? If it was the *id*, how does that accord with the character of the *id*? Or are we wrong to suppose that the ego, super-ego and *id* became

differentiated at such an early stage? Or shouldn't we admit in all honesty that our whole conception of the ego and its processes contributes nothing to our understanding of phylogenesis, and is altogether irrelevant to it?

Let us attempt the easiest answers first. We are obliged to attribute the differentiation of ego and id not merely to primitive man, but to organisms that are far simpler still, since it is a necessary manifestation of the influence exerted by the external world. As for the super-ego, we described it as having its very origins in the experiences that led to totemism; the question whether it was the ego or the id that underwent those experiences and acquired moral attributes quickly proves to be pointless. The next consideration that presents itself to our mind is that the id cannot experience or undergo any external pattern of events except via the *ego*, the sole representative of the external world that it possesses. None the less, we cannot in fact claim that there is a hereditary process operating directly within the *ego*. What we encounter here is the yawning gulf between actual individuals, and our notion of the species. Furthermore, we must not view the difference between the ego and the id in unduly rigid terms; we must not forget that the ego is part of the id, albeit differentiated from it in a special way.⁶¹ The ego's experiences seem to be lost to heredity to begin with; however, if they recur often and strongly enough in numerous successive generations of individuals, they transform themselves so to speak into id experiences, and their impact is then preserved through heredity. The heritable id accordingly harbours within it remnants of countless numbers of previous egos, and when an individual ego evolves its super-ego from the id it is perhaps merely bringing older ego forms back to light, and back to life.

The manner in which the super-ego comes into being makes it readily comprehensible that early conflicts of the ego with the object-cathexes of the id can be continued later on in conflicts with their successor, the super-ego. If the ego has botched the task of overcoming the Oedipus complex, then its⁶² energy-cathexis, which derives from the id, will reassert itself in the reaction-formation of the ego-ideal. The abundant communication between the ego-ideal

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and these *Ucs* drive-impulses serves to explain the puzzling fact that the ideal itself can remain largely unconscious, and inaccessible to the ego. The battle that had previously raged in the nether depths, but had never come to any final resolution through a rapid process of sublimation and identification, is now carried on at a higher level, rather as in Kaulbach's painting of the Battle of Châlons.⁶³

IV

The Two Types of Drives

We have already made the point that our proposed division of the psyche into an id, an ego and a super-ego can only signify a real advance in our knowledge if it also proves to be the means to a deeper understanding and more accurate description of the dynamic relations at work in the life of the psyche. We have also come to appreciate that the ego is particularly subject to the influence of perception, and that in broad terms one can say that perceptions have the same significance for the ego that drives have for the id. At the same time, however, the ego is also susceptible to the influence of drives, just like the id – of which, of course, it is but part, albeit a specially modified one.

On the subject of drives, I have recently (in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*) elaborated a view that I shall first recapitulate, and then use as the basis for the next stages of the argument. On this view, we need to distinguish two types of drives, one of which – the *sexual drives*, or *Eros* – is far more conspicuous, and far more accessible to our knowledge and understanding. It includes not only the uninhibited sexual drive itself and the goal-inhibited and hence sublimated drive-impulses deriving from it, but also the self-preservation drive that we perforce ascribe to the ego, and that at the very outset of our psychoanalytical work we had good reason to regard as contrasting sharply with the sexual object-drives. Demonstrating this second type of drive caused us considerable difficulty; our solution in the end was to regard sadism as representative of it. On the basis of theoretical considerations underpinned by biology, we posited a *death drive* charged with the task of causing animate organisms to revert to an inanimate state, whereas Eros pursues the

goal of maximizing the complexity of life – and thereby of course preserving it – by an ever more catholic combination of the particles into which living matter had been fragmented. In pursuing their respective goals both drives behave in a strictly conservative manner, in that they seek the restoration of a state that was disrupted by the emergence of life. According to this view, the emergence of life is therefore the cause both of the urge to carry on living and, simultaneously, of the urge for death, while life itself is a battle and constant compromise between these two urges. Considered thus, the question as to the origin of life remains a cosmological one, while the question as to the purpose and intention of life is answered in *dualistic* terms.⁶⁴

A particular physiological process is attributable – so the argument goes – to each of the two types of drive (anabolism and catabolism⁶⁵); both drives are active in each and every piece of living substance, albeit in varying proportions, with the result that any such substance is capable of taking on the role of Eros.

Precisely *how* drives of the two types connect, combine and blend with each other remains entirely unimaginable – but *that* such a thing happens, routinely and on a very large scale, is a postulate crucial to our whole framework of ideas. We can hypothesize that as a consequence of the fusion of unicellular elementary organisms into multicellular organisms, the death drive in the individual cell was successfully neutralized, and its destructive impulses diverted to the external world through the mediation of a special organ, to wit the musculature; the death drive accordingly now finds expression – though in all probability only in part – as a *destruction drive* directed against the external world and other organisms.

Once we have accepted the notion of a merging of the two types of drives, we are then also confronted by the possibility of a – more or less complete – *de-mergence* of them. I would suggest that in the sadistic component of the sexual drive we see a classic example of a purposive *merging* of drives, while in sadism *qua* autonomous perversion we see an exemplary instance of *de-mergence*, albeit not one where the process has been taken to extremes.⁶⁶ This in its turn affords us fresh insight into a large mass of facts that have not

previously been considered in this light. We can readily see that, in order to effect release, the *destruction drive* is routinely put at the service of Eros; we suspect that epileptic fits are produced by, and indicative of, a de-mergence of drives; and we are beginning to realize that amongst the effects achieved by certain serious neuroses, e.g. the obsessional neuroses, the de-mergence of drives and the appearance of the death drive deserve special consideration. By way of a rapid generalization: we are inclined to think that libidinal regressions, for instance regression from the genital to the sadistic-anal phase, are rooted essentially in a de-mergence of drives, and that, inversely, progression from the early to the definitive genital phase is dependent on an accession of erotic components. The question also arises whether ordinary *ambivalence* – which we so often find to be particularly marked in those who are constitutionally disposed to neurosis – should not be regarded as the result of a de-mergence; this latter process is so primal, however, that it must rate instead as a merging of drives that remained incomplete.

Our interest quite naturally turns to two particular questions: first, whether we shall not perhaps discover revealing connections between the structures we have postulated – the ego, super-ego and id – on the one hand, and the two types of drives on the other; second, whether we shall be able to show that the pleasure principle, the mechanism that controls psychic processes, stands in a firm and clear relationship to the two types of drives, and to the forms into which the psyche has differentiated. Before we enter upon this discussion, however, we need to deal with a doubt that challenges the very formulation of the question itself. While there can be no doubt about the pleasure principle, and whilst our division of the ego is soundly based on clinical evidence, yet our grounds for distinguishing between the two types of drives seem not altogether strong enough, and it seems quite possible that facts evinced by clinical analysis might rob them of all credibility.

There does appear to be just such a fact. We might reasonably substitute the polarity of love and hate for the antithesis constituted by the two types of drives. Whereas of course we have no problem showing how Eros is represented, it comes as quite a relief that we

are now able to identify the destruction drive – which takes its lead from hate – as representing the highly elusive death drive. Clinical observation, however, clearly shows us not only that hate is an unexpectedly regular accompaniment of love (ambivalence), and is very often its precursor in human relationships, but also that in certain circumstances hate changes into love, and love into hate. If this transformation involves anything more than just temporal succession, that is, one thing simply taking the place of the other, then clearly we are left with no basis for making such a fundamental distinction as that between erotic drives and death drives – a distinction premised on the notion of physiological processes that run directly counter to one another.

Now cases where we first love someone and then hate them (or *vice versa*) because they themselves have occasioned the change, clearly have no bearing on our problem; nor do those cases where love that has not yet become manifest reveals itself first through hostility and a tendency to aggression, for here the destructive component may simply have run on ahead during the process of object-cathexis, before being joined in due course by the erotic component. But a number of cases are known to us from the psychology of neuroses in which there are much stronger grounds for supposing that a transformation does indeed take place. In *paranoia persecutoria* the patient resists an excessive homosexual attachment to a particular individual in such a way that this most deeply loved individual turns into a persecutor against whom the often dangerous aggression of the patient is directed. We can legitimately interject that a previous phase had served to convert the love into hate. Regarding the genesis of homosexuality, indeed also of desexualized social feelings, psychoanalytical study has only recently revealed to us the existence of intense feelings of rivalry leading to aggressive tendencies, feelings that have to be overcome before the hated object can become the loved object, or become the object of an identification.⁶⁷ The question arises whether we can assume that in these cases the hate is converted directly into love. After all, it is a matter here of purely internal changes, precipitated in no way by any change in behaviour on the part of the object.

However, another possible mechanism is familiar to us from our psychoanalytical study of the change that occurs in paranoia. Here, an ambivalent attitude is present from the outset, and the transformation is brought about through a reactive displacement of cathexis, whereby energy is withdrawn from the erotic impulse, and added to the hostile one.

Something very similar, albeit not quite the same, happens in the process that leads to homosexuality, namely the overcoming of hostile feelings of rivalry.⁶⁹ Hostility is an attitude with no prospect of gratification, and in consequence – for economic reasons, in other words – it is replaced by the attitude of love, which offers better prospects of gratification, that is, the possibility of release. In neither of these cases, therefore, do we need to assume a direct transformation of hate into love, which would be incompatible with the notion of a qualitative difference between the two types of drives.

It has not escaped our notice, however, that in drawing on this other mechanism whereby love changes into hate, we have tacitly made a further assumption – one that deserves to be made fully explicit. We have based our argument on the supposition that there exists within the psyche – whether in the ego or the id is still uncertain – a displaceable energy which, though indifferent in itself, can join forces with a qualitatively differentiated erotic or destructive impulse and increase its overall cathexis. We simply cannot get anywhere without positing a displaceable energy of this kind. But we are still left wondering where it comes from, who⁶⁹ it belongs to, and what it signifies.

The problem of the *quality* of drive-impulses, and how that quality is maintained throughout the sundry vicissitudes that drives are prone to, remains decidedly obscure, and to date barely any attempt has been made to tackle it. In the case of the sexual partial drives, which lend themselves particularly well to observation, one can see a number of processes that follow a similar pattern. Thus, for instance, the partial drives to some extent communicate with each other; a drive originating from one erogenous source is capable of surrendering its intensity in order to reinforce a partial drive originating from another; the gratification of one drive can serve

another in place of the latter's own. Further similarities could be cited – all of which inevitably encourages us to venture certain kinds of hypotheses.

In this present discussion, too, I can offer not proof but only a hypothesis. It seems plausible to suppose that this displaceable and indifferent energy, active very probably in both the ego and the id, derives from the store of narcissistic libido, and is thus desexualized Eros; indeed, the erotic drives in general seem to us to be more plastic, more divertible, more displaceable than the destruction drives. That being so, we can quite logically go on to suggest that this displaceable libido operates on behalf of the pleasure principle, by preventing any undue build-up and facilitating release.⁷⁰ In so doing it clearly displays considerable indifference as to which particular pathway is adopted by the release process, provided that the actual process itself takes place. We know this trait to be typical of the cathexis processes in the id. It is evident in erotic cathexes, where a marked indifference is displayed with regard to the object; and it is very marked indeed in the transferences that occur in analysis – transferences that *have* to be effected, regardless of who happens to be their object. Rank has recently produced some splendid examples demonstrating that neurotic acts of revenge tend to be directed against the wrong people. This type of behaviour on the part of the unconscious inevitably reminds us of that comic little story of the three village tailors, one of whom is due to be strung up because the village's sole blacksmith has done a dastardly deed that calls for a hanging.⁷¹ *Someone* has to be punished, even if it's not the guilty party. This same disregard first came to our attention in the displacements characteristic of the primary process in dream-work.⁷² Whereas in that instance it was the *objects* that were apparently deemed to be of only secondary importance, in this present context it is the *pathways* utilized by the release process. If the ego were involved, we would expect to find an insistence on greater precision in the choice of both object and pathway.

If this displaceable energy is desexualized libido, then it may also be termed *sublimated*, for it would still be firmly adhering to Eros's central objective of being a unifying and binding force, by serving

to bring about that unity which – or at least the striving for which – is the ego's most distinctive feature. If we include thought processes in the broader sense amongst these displacements, then of course thinking, too, may be seen to be covered by the sublimation of erotic energy.

This brings us back to a possibility that we touched on earlier, namely that sublimation routinely takes place via the medium of the ego.⁷³ Another circumstance that we might recall here is that this same ego deals with the initial object-cathexes of the id – and no doubt later ones as well – by taking their libido into itself and annexing it to the ego-alteration brought about by identification. Needless to say, this conversion [of object-libido] into ego-libido entails a desexualization, an abandonment of sexual goals. At all events this affords us clear insight into an important function of the ego in its relationship to Eros. By thus commandeering the libido of the various object-cathexes, setting itself up as sole love-object, and desexualizing or sublimating the libido of the id, it operates directly counter to the designs of Eros; it puts itself at the service of the opposing drive-impulses. In respect of certain other object-cathexes pertaining to the id, it simply has to put up with them – to tag along, so to speak. We shall return later to a further possible consequence of this activity on the part of the ego.⁷⁴

At this point we probably need to make an important addition to the narcissism theory. At the very beginning the entire libido is massed in the id, during the period when the ego is in the process of formation, or formed but still weak. The id sends forth part of this libido for the purpose of erotic object-cathexes, whereupon the ego, having meanwhile gained in strength, seeks to commandeer this object-libido and force itself on the id as a love-object. The ego's form of narcissism is thus a *secondary* one – one that has been withdrawn from objects.⁷⁵

Again and again, we find that the drive-impulses that we are capable of monitoring turn out to derive from Eros. If it were not for the arguments set forth in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, and ultimately also the sadistic admixtures encountered in Eros, we would have difficulty in holding firm to our fundamental dualist

position. But since we have no alternative, we are driven to the supposition that the death drives very largely remain silent, and that the clamour of life comes mostly from Eros.⁷⁶

And also from the battle *against* Eros! There can be no denying the notion that the pleasure principle serves the id as a compass in its battle against the libido, which habitually disrupts the smooth process of life. If the constancy principle in Fechner's sense⁷⁷ does indeed govern life, which on that view is supposed to be a steady slide into death, then it is the demands made by Eros, that is by the sexual drives, which – manifesting themselves as the *needs* that drives give rise to – interrupt the downward slide and create new tensions. Guided by the pleasure principle or, to be precise, by the awareness of unpleasure, the id defends itself against them by a variety of means. It does so in the first instance by meeting the demands of the non-desexualized libido as rapidly as possible, that is to say by striving to give gratification to the directly sexual urges. But it does so on a far larger scale by using one particular form of such gratification in which all the constituent demands coincide, in order to rid itself of those sexual substances that are the supersaturated vehicle, so to speak, of the erotic tensions. The shedding of the sexual substances in the sex act corresponds in a sense to the separating-out of soma and germ-plasm.⁷⁸ This explains why the state that ensues upon full sexual gratification is similar to dying, while in certain lower animals death coincides with the act of procreation. Reproduction is the cause of these creatures' death in the sense that the death drive can effect its aims without let or hindrance once Eros has been removed from the picture through the act of gratification. And finally, as we have seen, the ego makes it easier for the id to assert control by sublimating parts of the libido for itself and its own purposes.