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PAPERS ON METAPSYCHOLOGY

SIGMUND FREUD

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PHILIP RIEFF

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The Unconscious¹ (1915)

PSYCHOANALYSIS has taught us that the essence of the process of repression lies, not in abrogating or annihilating the ideational presentation of an instinct, but in withholding it from becoming conscious. We then say of the idea that it is in a state of "unconsciousness," of being not apprehended by the conscious mind, and we can produce convincing proofs to show that unconsciously it can also produce effects, even of a kind that finally penetrate to consciousness. Everything that is repressed must remain unconscious, but at the very outset let us state that the repressed does not comprise the whole unconscious. The unconscious has the greater compass: the repressed is a part of the unconscious.

How are we to arrive at a knowledge of the unconscious? It is of course only as something conscious that we know anything of it, after it has undergone transformation or translation into something conscious. The possibility of such translation is a matter of everyday experience in psychoanalytic work. In order to achieve this, it is necessary that the person analysed should overcome certain resistances, the very same as those which at some earlier time placed the material in question under repression by rejecting it from consciousness.

1. Justification for the Conception of the Unconscious

In many quarters our justification is disputed for assuming the existence of an unconscious system in the mind and for employing such an assumption for purposes of scientific work. To this we can reply that our assumption of the existence of the unconscious is *necessary* and *legitimate*, and that we possess manifold *proofs* of the existence of the unconscious. It is necessary because the data of consciousness are exceedingly

¹ First published in *Zeitschrift*, Bd. III., 1915; reprinted in *Sammlung*, Vierte Folge. [Translated by Cecil M. Baines.]

defective; both in healthy and in sick persons mental acts are often in process which can be explained only by presupposing other acts, of which consciousness yields no evidence. These include not only the *parapraxes*² and dreams of healthy persons, and everything designated a mental symptom or an obsession in the sick; our most intimate daily experience introduces us to sudden ideas of the source of which we are ignorant, and to results of mentation arrived at we know not how. All these conscious acts remain disconnected and unintelligible if we are determined to hold fast to the claim that every single mental act performed within us must be consciously experienced; on the other hand, they fall into a demonstrable connection if we interpolate the unconscious acts that we infer. A gain in meaning and connection, however, is a perfectly justifiable motive, one which may well carry us beyond the limitations of direct experience. When, after this, it appears that the assumption of the unconscious helps us to construct a highly successful practical method, by which we are enabled to exert a useful influence upon the course of conscious processes, this success will have won us an incontrovertible proof of the existence of that which we assumed. We become obliged then to take up the position that it is both untenable and presumptuous to claim that whatever goes on in the mind must be known to consciousness.

We can go further and in support of an unconscious mental state allege that only a small content is embraced by consciousness at any given moment, so that the greater part of what we call conscious knowledge must in any case exist for very considerable periods of time in a condition of latency, that is to say, of unconsciousness, of not being apprehended by the mind. When all our latent memories are taken into consideration it becomes totally incomprehensible how the existence of the unconscious can be gainsaid. We then encounter the objection that these latent recollections can no longer be described as mental processes, but that they correspond to residues of somatic processes from which something mental can once more proceed. The obvious answer to this should be that a latent memory is, on the contrary, in-

² [E.g. slips of the tongue, mislaying of objects, etc.—*Trans.*]

dubitably a residuum of a mental process. But it is more important to make clear to our own minds that this objection is based on the identification—not, it is true, explicitly stated but regarded as axiomatic—of conscious and mental. This identification is either a *petitio principii* and begs the question whether all that is mental is also necessarily conscious, or else it is a matter of convention, of nomenclature. In this latter case it is of course no more open to refutation than any other convention. The only question that remains is whether it proves so useful that we must needs adopt it. To this we may reply that the conventional identification of the mental with the conscious is thoroughly unpractical. It breaks up all mental continuity, plunges us into the insoluble difficulties of psychophysical parallelism, is open to the reproach that without any manifest grounds it overestimates the part played by consciousness, and finally it forces us prematurely to retire from the territory of psychological research without being able to offer us any compensation elsewhere.

At any rate it is clear that the question—whether the latent states of mental life, whose existence is undeniable, are to be conceived of as unconscious mental states or as physical ones—threatens to resolve itself into a war of words. We shall therefore be better advised to give prominence to what we know with certainty of the nature of these debatable states. Now, as far as their physical characteristics are concerned, they are totally inaccessible to us: no physiological conception nor chemical process can give us any notion of their nature. On the other hand, we know for certain that they have abundant points of contact with conscious mental processes; on being submitted to a certain method of operation they may be transformed into or replaced by conscious processes, and all the categories which we employ to describe conscious mental acts, such as ideas, purposes, resolutions and so forth, can be applied to them. Indeed, of many of these latent states we have to assert that the only point in which they differ from states which are conscious is just in the lack of consciousness of them. So we shall not hesitate to treat them as objects of psychological research, and that in the most intimate connection with conscious mental acts.

The stubborn denial of a mental quality to latent mental processes may be accounted for by the circumstance that most of the phenomena in question have not been objects of study outside psychoanalysis. Anyone who is ignorant of the facts of pathology, who regards the blunders of normal persons as accidental, and who is content with the old saw that dreams are froth³ need only ignore a few more problems of the psychology of consciousness in order to dispense with the assumption of an unconscious mental activity. As it happens, hypnotic experiments, and especially post-hypnotic suggestion, had demonstrated tangibly even before the time of psychoanalysis the existence and mode of operation of the unconscious in the mind.

The assumption of an unconscious is, moreover, in a further respect a perfectly *legitimate* one, inasmuch as in postulating it we do not depart a single step from our customary and accepted mode of thinking. By the medium of consciousness each one of us becomes aware only of his own states of mind; that another man possesses consciousness is a conclusion drawn by analogy from the utterances and actions we perceive him to make, and it is drawn in order that this behaviour of his may become intelligible to us. (It would probably be psychologically more correct to put it thus: that without any special reflection we impute to everyone else our own constitution and therefore also our consciousness, and that this identification is a necessary condition of understanding in us.) This conclusion—or identification—was formerly extended by the ego to other human beings, to animals, plants, inanimate matter and to the world at large, and proved useful as long as the correspondence with the individual ego was overwhelmingly great; but it became more untrustworthy in proportion as the gulf between the ego and the non-ego widened. To-day, our judgement is already in doubt on the question of consciousness in animals; we refuse to admit it in plants and we relegate to mysticism the assumption of its existence in inanimate matter. But even where the original tendency to identification has withstood criticism—that is,

³ ["Träume sind Schäume."]

when the non-ego is our fellow-man—the assumption of a consciousness in him rests upon an inference and cannot share the direct certainty we have of our own consciousness.

Now psychoanalysis demands nothing more than that we should apply this method of inference to ourselves also—a proceeding to which, it is true, we are not constitutionally disposed. If we do this, we must say that all the acts and manifestations which I notice in myself and do not know how to link up with the rest of my mental life must be judged as if they belonged to someone else and are to be explained by the mental life ascribed to that person. Further, experience shows that we understand very well how to interpret in others (*i.e.* how to fit into their mental context) those same acts which we refuse to acknowledge as mentally conditioned in ourselves. Some special hindrance evidently deflects our investigations from ourselves and interferes with our obtaining true knowledge of ourselves.

Now this method of inference, applied to oneself in spite of inner opposition, does not lead to the discovery of an unconscious, but leads logically to the assumption of another, second consciousness which is united in myself with the consciousness I know. But at this point criticism may fairly make certain comments. In the first place, a consciousness of which its own possessor knows nothing is something very different from that of another person and it is questionable whether such a consciousness, lacking, as it does, its most important characteristic, is worthy of any further discussion at all. Those who have contested the assumption of an unconscious system in the mind will not be content to accept in its place an unconscious consciousness. Secondly, analysis shows that the individual latent mental processes inferred by us enjoy a high degree of independence, as though each had no connection with another, and knew nothing about any other. We must be prepared, it would appear, to assume the existence not only of a second consciousness in us, but of a third and fourth also, perhaps of an infinite series of states of consciousness, each and all unknown to us and to one another. In the third place—and this is the most weighty argument of all—we have to take into account that analytic investigation reveals some of these latent processes as having characteristics and peculiari-

ties which seem alien to us, or even incredible, and running directly counter to the well-known attributes of consciousness. This justifies us in modifying our inference about ourselves and saying that what is proved is not a second consciousness in us, but the existence of certain mental operations lacking in the quality of consciousness. We shall also, moreover, be right in rejecting the term "subconsciousness" as incorrect and misleading. The known cases of "*double conscience*" (splitting of consciousness) prove nothing against our view. They may most accurately be described as cases of a splitting of the mental activities into two groups, whereby a single consciousness takes up its position alternately with either the one or the other of these groups.

In psychoanalysis there is no choice for us but to declare mental processes to be in themselves unconscious, and to compare the perception of them by consciousness with the perception of the outside world through the sense-organs; we even hope to extract some fresh knowledge from the comparison. The psychoanalytic assumption of unconscious mental activity appears to us, on the one hand, a further development of that primitive animism which caused our own consciousness to be reflected in all around us, and, on the other hand, it seems to be an extension of the corrections begun by Kant in regard to our views on external perception. Just as Kant warned us not to overlook the fact that our perception is subjectively conditioned and must not be regarded as identical with the phenomena perceived but never really discerned, so psychoanalysis bids us not to set conscious perception in the place of the unconscious mental process which is its object. The mental, like the physical, is not necessarily in reality just what it appears to us to be. It is, however, satisfactory to find that the correction of inner perception does not present difficulties so great as that of outer perception—that the inner object is less hard to discern truly than is the outside world.

2. *Different Significations of the Term "Unconscious"; the Topographical Aspect*

Before going any further, let us note the important, though inconvenient, fact that unconsciousness is only one attribute of the mental and by no means suffices to describe its char-

acter. There are mental acts of very varying values which yet have in common the characteristic of being unconscious. The unconscious comprises, on the one hand, processes which are merely latent, temporarily unconscious, but which differ in no other respect from conscious ones and, on the other hand, processes such as those which have undergone repression, which if they came into consciousness must stand out in the crudest contrast to the rest of the conscious mind. It would put an end to all misunderstandings if, from now on, in describing the various kinds of mental acts we were to pay no attention to whether they were conscious or unconscious, but, when classifying and correlating them, inquired only to which instincts and aims they were related, how they were composed and to which of the systems in the mind that are superimposed one upon another they belonged. This, however, is for various reasons impracticable, and it follows that we cannot escape the imputation of ambiguity in that we use the words conscious and unconscious sometimes in a descriptive and sometimes in a systematic sense, in which latter they signify inclusion in some particular system and possession of certain characteristics. We might still attempt to avoid confusion by employing for the recognized mental systems certain arbitrarily chosen names which have no reference to consciousness. Only we should first have to justify the principles on which we distinguish the systems and we should not be able to ignore the question of consciousness, seeing that it forms the point of departure for all our investigations. Perhaps we may look for some assistance from the proposal to employ, at any rate in writing, the abbreviation Cs for consciousness and the Ucs for the unconscious when we are using the two words in the systematic sense.

To deal with the positive aspects, we now assert on the findings of psychoanalysis that a mental act commonly goes through two phases, between which is interposed a kind of testing process (censorship). In the first phase the mental act is unconscious and belongs to the system Ucs; if upon the scrutiny of the censorship it is rejected, it is not allowed to pass into the second phase; it is then said to be "repressed" and must remain unconscious. If, however, it passes this scrutiny, it enters upon the second phase and thenceforth be-

longs to the second system, which we will call the Cs. But the fact that it so belongs does not unequivocally determine its relation to consciousness. It is not yet conscious, but it is certainly *capable of entering consciousness*, according to J. Breuer's expression, that is, it can now, without any special resistance and given certain conditions, become the object of consciousness. In consideration of this capacity to become conscious we also call the system Cs the "*preconscious*." If it should turn out that a certain censorship also determines whether the preconscious becomes conscious, we shall discriminate more sharply between the systems Pcs and Cs. For the present let it suffice us to bear in mind that the system Pcs shares the characteristics of the Cs and that the rigorous censorship exercises its office at the point of transition from the Ucs to the Pcs (or Cs).

By accepting the existence of these (two or three) mental systems, psychoanalysis has departed a step further from the descriptive psychology of consciousness and has taken to itself a new problem and a new content. Up till now, it differed from academic (descriptive) psychology mainly by reason of its dynamic conception of mental processes; now we have to add that it professes to consider mental topography also, and to indicate in respect of any given mental operation within what system or between what systems it runs its course. This attempt, too, has won it the name of "depth-psychology." We shall hear that it may be further amplified by yet another aspect of the subject.

If we wish to treat seriously the notion of a topography of mental acts, we must direct our interest to a doubt which arises at this point. When a mental act (let us confine ourselves here to an act of ideation) is transferred from the system Ucs into the system Cs (or Pcs), are we to suppose that this transposition involves a fresh registration comparable to a second record of the idea in question, situated, moreover, in a fresh locality in the mind and side by side with which the original unconscious record continues to exist? Or are we rather to believe that the transformation consists in a change in the state of the idea, involving the same material and occurring in the same locality? This question may appear abstruse, but it must be put if we wish to form a more definite

conception of mental topography, of the depth-dimension in the mind. It is a difficult one because it goes beyond pure psychology and touches on the relations of the mental apparatus to anatomy. We know that a rough correlation of this sort exists. Research has afforded irrefutable proof that mental activity is bound up with the function of the brain as with that of no other organ. The discovery of the unequal importance of the different parts of the brain and their individual relations to particular parts of the body and to intellectual activities takes us a step further—we do not know how big a step. But every attempt to deduce from these facts a localization of mental processes, every endeavour to think of ideas as stored up in nerve-cells and of excitations as passing along nerve-fibres, has completely miscarried. The same fate would await any doctrine which attempted to recognize, let us say, the anatomical position of the system Cs—conscious mental activity—in the cortex and to localize the unconscious processes in the subcortical parts of the brain. Here there is an hiatus which at present cannot be filled, nor is it one of the tasks of psychology to fill it. Our mental topography has for the present nothing to do with anatomy; it is concerned not with anatomical locations, but with regions in the mental apparatus, irrespective of their possible situation in the body.

In this respect then our work is untrammelled and may proceed according to its own requirements. It will, moreover, be useful for us to remind ourselves that our hypotheses can in the first instance lay claim only to the value of illustrations. The former of the two possibilities which we considered—namely, that the conscious phase of an idea implies a fresh record of it, which must be localized elsewhere—is doubtless the cruder but also the more convenient. The second assumption—that of a merely functional change of state—is *a priori* more probable, but it is less plastic, less easy to handle. With the first, or topographical, assumption is bound up that of a topographical separation of the systems Cs and Ucs and also the possibility that an idea may exist simultaneously in two parts of the mental apparatus—indeed, that if it is not inhibited by the censorship, it regularly advances from the one position to the other, possibly without its first location or record being

abandoned. This may seem odd, but it can be supported by observations from psychoanalytic practice.

If we communicate to a patient some idea which he has at one time repressed but which we have discovered in him, our telling him makes at first no change in his mental condition. Above all, it does not remove the repression nor undo its effects, as might perhaps be expected from the fact that the previously unconscious idea has now become conscious. On the contrary, all that we shall achieve at first will be a fresh rejection of the repressed idea. At this point, however, the patient has in actual fact the same idea in two forms in two separate localities in his mental apparatus: first, he has the conscious memory of the auditory impression of the idea conveyed in what we told him, and, secondly and side by side with this, he has—as we know for certain—the unconscious memory of his actual experience existing in him in its earlier form. Now in reality there is no lifting of the repression until the conscious idea, after overcoming the resistances, has united with the unconscious memory-trace. Only through bringing the latter itself into consciousness is the effect achieved. On superficial consideration this would seem to show that conscious and unconscious ideas are different and topographically separated records of the same content. But a moment's reflection shows that the identity of the information given to the patient with his own repressed memory is only apparent. To have listened to something and to have experienced something are psychologically two different things, even though the content of each be the same.

So for the moment we are not able to decide between the two possibilities that we have discussed. Perhaps later on we shall come upon certain factors which may turn the balance in favour of one or the other. Perhaps we shall discover that our question, as we formulated it, was not sufficiently comprehensive and that the difference between a conscious and an unconscious idea has to be defined quite otherwise.

3. *Unconscious Emotions*

We limited the foregoing discussion to ideas and may now raise a new question, the answer to which must contribute to

the elucidation of our theoretical position. We said that there were conscious and unconscious ideas; but are there also unconscious instinctual impulses, emotions and feelings, or are such constructions in this instance devoid of any meaning?

I am indeed of opinion that the antithesis of conscious and unconscious does not hold for instincts. An instinct can never be an object of consciousness—only the idea that represents the instinct. Even in the unconscious, moreover, it can only be represented by the idea. If the instinct did not attach itself to an idea or manifest itself as an affective state, we could know nothing about it. Though we do speak of an unconscious or a repressed instinctual impulse, this is a looseness of phraseology which is quite harmless. We can only mean an instinctual impulse the ideational presentation of which is unconscious, for nothing else comes into consideration.

We should expect the answer to the question about unconscious feelings, emotions and affects to be just as easily given. It is surely of the essence of an emotion that we should feel it, *i.e.* that it should enter consciousness. So for emotions, feelings and affects to be unconscious would be quite out of the question. But in psychoanalytic practice we are accustomed to speak of unconscious love, hate, anger, etc., and find it impossible to avoid even the strange conjunction, "unconscious consciousness of guilt," or a paradoxical "unconscious anxiety." Is there more meaning in the use of these terms than there is in speaking of "unconscious instincts"?

The two cases are really not on all fours. To begin with it may happen that an affect or an emotion is perceived, but misconstrued. By the repression of its proper presentation it is forced to become connected with another idea, and is now interpreted by consciousness as the expression of this other idea. If we restore the true connection, we call the original affect "unconscious," although the affect was never unconscious but its ideational presentation had undergone repression. In any event, the use of such terms as "unconscious affect and emotion" has reference to the fate undergone, in consequence of repression, by the quantitative factor in the instinctual impulse.⁴ We know that an affect may be sub-

jected to three different vicissitudes: either it remains, wholly or in part, as it is; or it is transformed into a qualitatively different charge of affect, above all into anxiety; or it is suppressed, *i.e.* its development is hindered altogether. (These possibilities may perhaps be studied even more easily in the technique of the dream-work than in the neuroses.) We know, too, that to suppress the development of affect is the true aim of repression and that its work does not terminate if this aim is not achieved. In every instance where repression has succeeded in inhibiting the development of an affect we apply the term "unconscious" to those affects that are restored when we undo the work of repression. So it cannot be denied that the use of the terms in question is logical; but a comparison of the unconscious affect with the unconscious idea reveals the significant difference that the unconscious idea continues, after repression, as an actual formation in the system Ucs, whilst to the unconscious affect there corresponds in the same system only a potential disposition which is prevented from developing further. So that, strictly speaking, although no fault be found with the mode of expression in question, there are no unconscious affects in the sense in which there are unconscious ideas. But there may very well be in the system Ucs affect-formations which, like others, come into consciousness. The whole difference arises from the fact that ideas are cathexes—ultimately of memory-traces—whilst affects and emotions correspond with processes of discharge, the final expression of which is perceived as feeling. In the present state of our knowledge of affects and emotions we cannot express this difference more clearly.

It is of especial interest to us to have established the fact that repression can succeed in inhibiting the transformation of an instinctual impulse into affective expression. This shows us that the system Cs normally controls affectivity as well as access to motility; and this enhances the importance of repression, since it shows us that the latter is responsible, not merely when something is withheld from consciousness, but also when affective development and the inauguration of muscular activity is prevented. Conversely, too, we may say that as long as the system Cs controls activity and motility, the mental condition of the person in question may be called

⁴ Cf. the preceding paper on "Repression."

normal. Nevertheless, there is an unmistakable difference in the relation of the controlling system to the two allied processes of discharge.⁵ Whereas the control of the system Cs over voluntary motility is firmly rooted, regularly withstands the onslaught of neurosis and only breaks down in psychosis, the control of the Cs over affective development is less firmly established. Even in normal life we can recognize that a constant struggle for primacy over affectivity goes on between the two systems Cs and Pcs, that certain spheres of influence are marked off one from another and that the forces at work tend to mingle.

The importance of the system Cs (Pcs) for the avenues of affective and motor discharge enables us to understand also the rôle which falls to substitutive ideas in determining the form of a disease. It is possible for affective development to proceed directly from the system Ucs; in this case it always has the character of anxiety, the substitute for all "repressed" affects. Often, however, the instinctual impulse has to wait until it has found a substitutive idea in the system Cs. Affective development can then proceed from this conscious substitute, the nature of which determines the qualitative character of the affect. We have asserted that, under repression, a severance takes place between the affect and the idea to which it belongs, and that each then fulfils its separate destiny. For purposes of description this is incontrovertible; in actuality, however, the affect does not as a rule arise until it has succeeded in penetrating into the Cs in attachment to some new substitutive idea.

4. Topography and Dynamics of Repression

So far we have gathered from our discussion that repression is essentially a process affecting ideas, on the border between the systems Ucs and Pcs (Cs), and we can now make a fresh attempt to describe this process more minutely. It must be a matter of withdrawal of cathexis; but the question is, in what

⁵ Affectivity manifests itself essentially in motor (*i.e.* secretory and circulatory) discharge resulting in an (internal) alteration of the subject's own body without reference to the outer world; motility, in actions designed to effect changes in the outer world.

system does the withdrawal take place and to which system does the cathexis withdrawn belong?

In the Ucs the repressed idea remains capable of action and must therefore have retained its cathexis. So it must be something else which has been withdrawn. Let us take the case of repression proper ("after-expulsion") as it affects an idea which is preconscious or even has already entered consciousness. Repression can consist here only in the withdrawal from the idea of the (pre)conscious cathexis which belongs to the system Pcs. The idea then remains without cathexis, or receives cathexis from the Ucs, or retains the unconscious cathexis which it previously had. We have, therefore, withdrawal of the preconscious, retention of the unconscious, or substitution of an unconscious for a preconscious, cathexis. We notice, moreover, that we have unintentionally, as it were, based these reflections upon the assumption that the transition from the system Ucs to the system nearest to it is not effected through the making of a new record but through a change in its state, an alteration in its cathexis. The functional hypothesis has here easily routed the topographical.

But this process of withdrawal of libido does not suffice to make comprehensible to us another characteristic of repression. It is not clear why the idea which has retained its cathexis or has received cathexis from the Ucs should not, in virtue of its cathexis, renew the attempt to penetrate into the system Pcs. The withdrawal of libido would then have to be repeated, and the same performance would recur interminably, but the result would not be repression. In the same way the mechanism just discussed of withdrawal of preconscious cathexis would fail to explain the process of primal repression; for here we have to consider an unconscious idea which as yet has received no cathexis from the Pcs and therefore cannot be deprived of it.

What we are looking for, therefore, is another process which maintains the repression in the first case and, in the second, ensures its being established and continued; and this other process we can only find in the assumption of an *anti-cathexis*, by means of which the system Pcs guards itself against the intrusion of the unconscious idea. We shall see from clinical examples how such an anti-cathexis established

in the system Pcs manifests itself. This it is which represents the continuous effort demanded by a primal repression but also guarantees its persistence. The anti-cathexis is the sole mechanism of primal repression; in the case of repression proper ("after-expulsion") there is in addition withdrawal of the preconscious cathexis. It is quite possible that the cathexis withdrawn from the idea is the very one used for anti-cathexis.

We see how we have gradually been led to introduce a third point of view into the scheme of mental phenomena—beside the dynamic and the topographical, we take the *economic* standpoint, one from which we try to follow out the fate of given volumes of excitation and to achieve, at least relatively, some assessment of it. It will be only right to give a special name to the way of regarding things which is the final result of psychoanalytic research. I propose that, when we succeed in describing a mental process in all its aspects, dynamic, topographic and economic, we shall call this a *metapsychological* presentation. We must say beforehand that in the present state of our knowledge we shall succeed in this only at isolated points.

Let us make a tentative effort to give a metapsychological description of the process of repression in the three transference neuroses, which are familiar to us. Here we may substitute for the term "cathexis" that of "libido," because, as we know, in this case it is the fates of sexual impulses with which we are dealing.

In anxiety-hysteria a preliminary phase of the process is frequently overlooked, perhaps indeed is really omitted; on careful observation, however, it can be clearly discerned. It consists in anxiety appearing without the subject knowing what he is afraid of. We must suppose that there was present in the Ucs some love-impulse which demanded to be translated into the system Pcs; the preconscious cathexis, however, recoiled from it in the manner of an attempt at flight, and the unconscious libidinal cathexis of the rejected idea was discharged in the form of anxiety. Then at some repetition of this process a first step was taken in the direction of mastering this distressing development of anxiety. The fugitive cathexis attached itself to a substitutive idea which, on the one hand, was connected by association with the rejected idea, and, on

the other, escaped repression by reason of its remoteness from that idea (displacement-substitute), and which permitted of a rationalization of the still uncontrollable outbreak of anxiety. The substitutive idea now plays the part of an anti-cathexis for the system Cs (Pcs) by securing that system against an emergence into consciousness of the repressed idea; on the other hand, it is, or acts as if it were, the point at which the anxiety-affect, which is now all the more uncontrollable, may break out and be discharged. Clinical observation shows, for instance, that when a child suffers from an animal-phobia he experiences anxiety under two kinds of conditions: in the first place, when the repressed love-impulse becomes intensified, and, in the second, when the child perceives the animal it is afraid of. The substitutive idea acts in the one instance as a conductor from the system Ucs to the system Cs; in the other instance, as an independent source for the release of anxiety. The extending control on the part of the system Cs usually manifests itself by a tendency for the substitutive idea to be aroused more easily as time goes on in the second rather than the first way. Perhaps the child ends by behaving as though he had no liking at all for his father but had become quite free from him, and as though the fear of the animal were the real fear. Only that this fear of the animal, fed as such a fear is from the springs of unconscious instinct, proves obdurate and extravagant in the face of all influences brought to bear from the system Cs, and thereby betrays its origin in the system Ucs.

In the second phase of anxiety-hysteria, therefore, the anti-cathexis from the system Cs has led to substitute-formation. Soon the same mechanism is applied in a fresh direction. The process of repression, as we know, is not yet terminated, and finds a further aim in the task of inhibiting the outbreak of anxiety started by the substitute. This happens in the following manner: all the associations in the neighbourhood of the substitutive idea become endowed with a peculiar intensity of cathexis, so that they may display a high degree of sensibility to excitation. Excitation at any point of this protective structure must, on account of its connection with the substitutive idea, give rise to a slight degree of development of anxiety, which is then used as a signal to inhibit, by means of a fresh

flight on the part of the cathexis, any further development of anxiety. The further the sensitive and vigilant anti-cathexis becomes extended round the substitute which is feared, the more exactly can the mechanism function which is designed to isolate the substitutive idea and to protect it from fresh excitation. Naturally these precautions guard only against excitations approaching the substitutive idea from without through perception, never against instinctual excitation which encounters the substitutive idea from the direction of its connection with the repressed idea. So they begin to operate only when the substitute has successfully taken over representation of what has been repressed, and they can never operate with complete security. With each increase of instinctual excitation the protecting rampart round the substitutive idea must be shifted a little further outwards. The whole construction, which is produced in analogous fashion in the other neuroses, is termed a phobia. The avoidances, renunciations and prohibitions by which we recognize anxiety-hysteria are the manifestations of flight from conscious cathexis of the substitutive idea. Surveying the whole process, we may say that the third phase has repeated and amplified the work of the second. The system Cs now protects itself by an anti-cathexis of its surrounding associations against the activation of the substitutive idea, just as previously that system secured itself by cathexis of the substitutive idea against the emergence of the repressed idea. Substitute-formation by the way of displacement has thus proceeded in its course. We must also add that the system Cs had formerly only one little point at which the repressed instinctual impulse could break through, namely, the substitutive idea; but that ultimately the whole protective structure of the phobia corresponds to a "salient" of unconscious influence of this kind. Further, we may lay stress on the interesting point of view that by the whole defence-mechanism thus set in action a projection outwards of the menace from the instinct has been achieved. The ego behaves as if the danger of an outbreak of anxiety threatened it not from the direction of an instinct but from the direction of perception: this enables the ego to react against this external danger with the attempts at flight consisting of the avoidances characteristic of a phobia. In this process repression succeeds in

one particular: the discharge of anxiety may be to some extent dammed up, but only at a heavy sacrifice of personal freedom. Attempts at flight from the claims of instinct are, however, in general useless, and the result of the flight by means of a phobia remains still unsatisfactory.

A great deal of what we have recognized as true of anxiety-hysteria holds good for the two other neuroses also, so that we can confine our discussion to the points of difference and the part played by the anti-cathexis. In conversion-hysteria the instinctual cathexis of the repressed idea is transformed into the innervation necessary for the symptom. How far and in what circumstances the unconscious idea discharges its cathexis through this outlet towards innervation, so that it can relinquish its pressure towards the system Cs—these and similar questions had better be reserved for a special investigation of hysteria. In conversion-hysteria the part played by the anti-cathexis proceeding from the system Cs (Pcs) is clear and becomes manifest in the symptom-formation. It is the anti-cathexis that decides upon what part of the instinct-presentation the whole cathexis may be concentrated. The part thus selected to form a symptom fulfils the condition of expressing the aim of the instinctual impulse no less than the defensive or punishing endeavour of the system Cs; so it achieves hyper-cathexis and is maintained from both directions like the substitutive idea in anxiety-hysteria. From this circumstance we may conclude without much more ado that the degree of expenditure in repression put forth by the system Cs need not be commensurate with the energetic cathexis of the symptom; for the strength of the repression is measured by the anti-cathexis put forth, and the symptom is supported not only by this anti-cathexis but also by the instinctual cathexis from the system Ucs which is interwoven with it.

With reference to the obsessional neurosis, we need only add to the observations brought forward in the preceding paper⁶ that here the anti-cathexis of the system Cs comes most noticeably into the foreground. It is this that brings about the first repression, in the shape of a reaction-formation, and later it is the point at which the repressed idea breaks

⁶ P. 114.

through. We may find room for the supposition that, if the work of repression seems far less successful in anxiety-hysteria and in the obsessional neurosis than in conversion-hysteria, it is because the anti-cathexis is so prominent and all outlet is lacking.

5. *Special Characteristics of the System Ucs*

The differentiation we have drawn between the two systems within the mind receives fresh significance when we observe that processes in the one system, Ucs, show characteristics which are not again met with in the system immediately above it.

The kernel of the system Ucs consists of instinct-presentations whose aim is to discharge their cathexis; that is to say, they are wish-impulses. These instinctual impulses are coordinate with one another, exist independently side by side, and are exempt from mutual contradiction. When two wishes whose aims must appear to us incompatible become simultaneously active, the two impulses do not detract one from the other or cancel each other, but combine to form an intermediate aim, a compromise.

There is in this system no negation, no dubiety, no varying degree of certainty: all this is only imported by the work of the censorship which exists between the Ucs and the Pcs. Negation is, at a higher level, a substitute for repression. In the Ucs there are only contents more or less strongly cathected.

Intensity of cathexis is mobile in a far greater degree in this than in the other systems. By the process of displacement one idea may surrender to another the whole volume of its cathexis; by that of condensation it may appropriate the whole cathexis of several other ideas. I have proposed to regard these two processes as distinguishing marks of the so-called *primary process* in the mind. In the system Pcs the *secondary process*[†] holds sway; where a primary process is allowed to take its course in connection with elements belonging to the system Pcs, it appears "comic" and excites laughter.

[†] Cf. Section VII. of *Die Traumdeutung*, which is based upon ideas developed by J. Breuer in *Studien über Hysterie*.

The processes of the system Ucs are timeless; *i.e.* they are not ordered temporally, are not altered by the passage of time, in fact bear no relation to time at all. The time-relation also is bound up with the work of the system Cs.

The processes of the Ucs are just as little related to reality. They are subject to the pleasure-principle; their fate depends only upon the degree of their strength and upon their conformity to regulation by pleasure and pain.

Let us sum up: *exemption from mutual contradiction, primary process* (motility of cathexis), *timelessness*, and *substitution of psychic for external reality*—these are the characteristics which we may expect to find in processes belonging to the system Ucs.[‡]

Unconscious processes can only be observed by us under the conditions of dreaming and of neurosis; that is to say, when the processes of the higher system Pcs revert to an earlier level by a certain process of degradation (regression). Independently they are unrecognizable, indeed cannot exist, for the system Ucs is at a very early stage overlaid by the system Pcs which has captured the means of access to consciousness and to motility. The means of discharge for the system Ucs is by means of physical innervation leading to development of affect, but even this outlet is, as we have seen, contested by the system Pcs. Left to itself, the system Ucs would not in normal conditions be able to bring about any purposive-muscular acts, with the exception of those already organized as reflexes.

In order to grasp the full significance of the characteristics of the system Ucs described above, we should have to contrast and compare them with those of the system Pcs. But this would take us so far afield that I propose that we should once more call a halt and not undertake the comparison of the two till we can do so in connection with our discussion of the higher system: only the most pressing points of all shall be mentioned at this stage.

The processes of the system Pcs display, no matter whether they are already conscious or only capable of becoming con-

[‡] We are reserving for a different context the mention of another notable privilege of the system Ucs.

scious, an inhibition of the tendency of cathected ideas towards discharge. When a process moves over from one idea to another, the first retains a part of its cathexis and only a small part undergoes displacement. Displacement and condensation after the mode of the primary process are excluded or very much restricted. This circumstance caused Breuer to assume the existence of two different stages of cathectic energy in mental life: one in which that energy is tonically "bound" and the other in which it moves freely and presses towards discharge. I think that this discrimination represents the deepest insight we have gained up to the present into the nature of nervous energy, and I do not see how we are to evade such a conclusion. A metapsychological presentation most urgently calls for further discussion at this point, though perhaps that would still be too daring an undertaking.

Further, it devolves upon the system Pcs to make communication possible between the different ideational contents so that they can influence one another, to give them a relation to time, to set up the censorship or censorships, and to establish the institution of "testing reality" and the reality-principle. Conscious memory, too, seems to depend wholly on the Pcs and should be clearly distinguished from the memory-traces in which the experiences of the Ucs become fixed; it probably corresponds with the making of a special record—a conception which we tried to employ as explaining the relation of conscious to unconscious ideas, but which we have already discarded. In this connection also we shall find the means to put an end to our uncertainty regarding the name of the higher system which at present we vaguely call sometimes the Pcs and sometimes the Cs.

Here, too, it will be as well to utter a warning against over-hasty generalizations about what we have brought to light in regard to apportioning the various mental activities to one or other of the two systems. We are describing the state of affairs as it appears in the adult human being, in whom the system Ucs in the strict sense functions only as a stage preliminary to the higher organization. The content and connections of this system as the individual develops, the significance it possesses in the case of animals—these are points on which no conclusion can be deduced from our description: they must

be investigated independently. Moreover, in the human being we must be prepared to find possible pathological conditions under which the two systems alter, or even exchange, both their content and their characteristics.

6. *Communication between the Two Systems*

It would certainly be wrong to imagine that the Ucs remains at rest while the whole work of the mind is performed by the Pcs, that the Ucs is something finished with, a vestigial organ, a residuum from the process of evolution; wrong also to assume that communication between the two systems is confined to the act of repression, the Pcs casting everything which disturbs it into the abyss of the Ucs. On the contrary, the Ucs is living and capable of development and maintains a number of other relations to the Pcs, amongst them that of co-operation. To sum up, we must say that the Ucs is continued into its so-called derivatives, is accessible to the influence of life, perpetually acts upon the Pcs, and even is, on its part, capable of influence by the latter system.

Study of the derivatives of the Ucs will altogether disappoint our expectations of a schematically clear division of the one mental system from the other. This circumstance will certainly give rise to dissatisfaction with our results and will probably be used to cast doubts upon the value of our way of distinguishing the two groups of mental processes. Our answer is, however, that we have no other aim but that of translating into theory the results of observation, and we shall deny that there is any obligation on us to achieve at our very first attempt a theory that commends itself by its simplicity, in which all is plain sailing. We defend its complexities so long as we find that they fit in with the results of observation, and we do not abandon our expectation of being guided in the end by those very complexities to recognition of a state of affairs that is at once simple in itself and at the same time answers to all the complications of reality.

Amongst the derivatives of the unconscious instinctual impulses, the character of which we have just described, there are some which unite in themselves opposite features. On the one hand, they are highly organized, exempt from self-contradictoriness, have made use of every acquisition of the

system Cs, and would hardly be distinguished by our ordinary judgement from the formations of that system. On the other hand, they are unconscious and are incapable of becoming conscious. Thus they belong according to their qualities to the system Pcs, but in actual fact to the Ucs. Their origin remains decisive for the fate they will undergo. We may compare them with those human half-breeds who, taken all round, resemble white men, but betray their coloured descent by some striking feature or other, on account of which they are excluded from society and enjoy none of the privileges of white people. Of such a nature are the *phantasy-formations* of normal persons as well as of neurotics, which we have recognized as preliminary phases in the formation both of dreams and of symptoms, and which, in spite of their high degree of organization, remain repressed and therefore cannot become conscious. They draw near to consciousness and remain undisturbed so long as they do not become strongly cathected, but as soon as a certain degree of this is exceeded they are thrust back. Substitute-formations are similar, more highly organized derivatives of the Ucs; but these succeed in breaking through into consciousness, thanks to some favourable relation, as, for example, when they coincide with a preconscious anti-cathexis.

When, on another occasion, we examine more closely the way in which entry into consciousness is conditioned, we shall be able to find a solution for some of the difficulties arising here. At this point it seems a good plan to contrast with the foregoing points of view, which take their rise in consideration of the Ucs, one which presents itself from the direction of consciousness. Consciousness regards the whole sum of mental processes as belonging to the realm of the preconscious. A very great part of this preconscious material originates in the unconscious, has the characteristics of derivatives of the unconscious, and is subject to a censorship before it can pass into consciousness. Another part of the Pcs can become conscious without any censorship. Here we light upon a contradiction of an earlier assumption: from the point of view of repression we were obliged to place the censorship which is decisive for consciousness between the

systems Ucs and Pcs. Now it becomes probable to us that there is a censorship between the Pcs and the Cs. But we shall do well not to regard this complication as a difficulty, but to assume that to every transition from one system to that immediately above it (that is, every advance to a higher stage of mental organization) there corresponds a new censorship. As a corollary, we shall have, it is true, to discard the assumption of a continuous laying down of new records.

The reason for all these difficulties is that consciousness, the only characteristic of mental processes directly available to us, is in no wise suited to serve as a criterion for the erection of systems. Apart from the circumstance that what belongs to consciousness is not always in consciousness but can also be temporarily latent, observation has shown that much which shares the attributes of the system Pcs does not become conscious; and, further, we shall find that the entry into consciousness is circumscribed by certain dispositions of attention. Hence consciousness stands in no simple relation either to the different systems or to the process of repression. The truth is that it is not only what is repressed that remains alien to consciousness, but also some of the impulses which dominate our ego and which therefore form the strongest functional antithesis to what is repressed. In proportion as we try to win our way to a metapsychological view of mental life, we must learn to emancipate ourselves from our sense of the importance of that symptom which consists in "being conscious."

So long as we still cling to this we see our generalizations regularly invaded by exceptions. We see that derivatives of the Pcs enter consciousness as substitute-formations and as symptoms, generally after undergoing great distortion in contrast to the Ucs, although often many characteristics inviting repression have been retained. We find that many preconscious formations remain unconscious, though, to judge by their nature, we should suppose that they might very well become conscious. Probably in their case the stronger attraction of the Ucs asserts itself. We are led to look for the more important difference, not between the conscious and the preconscious, but between the preconscious and the unconscious. On the

border of the Pcs the censorship thrusts back the Ucs, but its derivatives can circumvent this censorship, achieve a high degree of organization, and in the Pcs reach a certain intensity of cathexis; when, however, this is exceeded and they try to force themselves into consciousness, they are recognized as derivatives of the Ucs, and are repressed afresh at the new frontier by the censorship between the Cs and the Pcs. Thus the former censorship is exercised against the Ucs itself, and the latter against its preconscious derivatives. We might suppose that in the course of individual development the censorship had been advanced a step.

In psychoanalytic treatment the existence of the second censorship, located between the systems Pcs and Cs, is proved beyond question. We require the patient to produce freely derivatives of the Ucs, we pledge him to overcome the objections of the censorship against these preconscious formations becoming conscious, and, by overthrowing this censorship, we open up the way to abrogating the repression accomplished by the earlier one. To this let us add that the existence of the censorship between the Pcs and the Cs teaches us that becoming conscious is no mere act of perception, but is probably also a *hyper-cathexis*, a further advance in the mental organization.

Let us turn our attention to the communications existing between the unconscious and the other systems, not so much with a view to establishing any fresh fact as in order to avoid omitting the most prominent features. At the roots of instinctual activity the systems communicate with one another in the freest possible way: some of the processes here set in motion pass through the Ucs, as through a preparatory stage, and reach the highest mental development in the Cs, whilst some are retained as the Ucs. But the Ucs is also affected by experiences originating in outer perception. Normally all the paths from perception to the Ucs remain open; only those leading out from the Ucs are barred by repression.

It is very remarkable that the Ucs of one human being can react upon that of another, without the Cs being implicated at all. This deserves closer investigation, especially with a view to finding out whether preconscious activity can be excluded

as a factor in bringing this about; but for purposes of description the fact is incontestable.

The content of the system Pcs (or Cs) is derived partly from the instinctual life (through the medium of the Ucs), and partly from perception. It is doubtful how far the processes of this system can exert a direct influence on the Ucs; examination of pathological cases often reveals an almost incredible independence and lack of susceptibility to influence on the part of the Ucs. A complete divergence of their tendencies, a total dissociation of the two systems, is a general characteristic of disease. Yet psychoanalytic treatment is based upon influence by the Cs on the Ucs, and shows at any rate that, though laborious, this is not impossible. The derivatives of the Ucs which act as intermediaries between the two systems open the way, as we have already said, towards accomplishing this. But we may well suppose that a spontaneously effected alteration in the Ucs from the side of the Cs is a difficult and slow process.

Co-operation between a preconscious and an unconscious impulse, even when the latter is subject to very strong repression, may be established if the situation permits of the unconscious impulse operating in harmony with one of the controlling tendencies. The repression is removed for the occasion, the repressed activity being admitted as a reinforcement of the one intended by the ego. In respect of this single constellation the unconscious becomes ego-syntonic, falls into line with the ego, without any change taking place in the repression otherwise. The effect of the Ucs in this co-operation is unmistakable; the reinforced tendencies reveal themselves as, in spite of all, different from the normal—they make possible achievements of special perfection, and they manifest a resistance in the face of opposition similar to that of obsessional symptoms.

The content of the Ucs may be compared with a primitive population in the mental kingdom. If inherited mental formations exist in the human being—something analogous to instinct in animals—these constitute the nucleus of the Ucs. Later there is added all that is discarded as useless during childhood development, and this need not differ in its nature

from what is inherited. A sharp and final division between the content of the two systems, as a rule, takes place only at puberty.

7. Recognition of the Unconscious

So long as we derive our ideas of the Ucs only from our knowledge of dream-life and the transference neuroses, all that we can predicate of that system is probably represented in the foregoing remarks. It is certainly not much, and at some points it gives an impression of obscurity and confusion; especially do we look in vain for the possibility of bringing the Ucs into any connection, or classifying it under any heading, with which we are already familiar. Analysis of one of those affections called narcissistic psychoneuroses alone promises to furnish us with conceptions through which the enigmatic Ucs will be brought within our reach in a tangible fashion.

Since the publication of a work by Abraham (1908)—attributed by its conscientious author to my instigation—we have been trying to define Kraepelin's dementia praecox (Bleuler's schizophrenia) on the basis of its relation to that pair of opposites consisting of the ego and its object. In the transference neuroses (anxiety- and conversion-hysteria and the obsessional neurosis) there was nothing to give special prominence to these opposites. We knew, indeed, that frustration from the side of the object occasioned the outbreak of neurosis and that neurosis involved abandonment of the real object; also that the libido withdrawn from the real object reverted first to an object in phantasy and then to one that had been repressed (introversion). But object-cathexis in general is in such cases retained with great energy, and more minute examination of the processes of repression has forced us to assume that object-cathexis persists in the system Ucs in spite of—or rather in consequence of—the repression. Indeed the capacity for transference, of which we make use for therapeutic purposes in these affections, presupposes unimpaired object-cathexis.

In schizophrenia, on the other hand, we have been obliged to assume that after the process of repression the withdrawn libido does not seek a new object, but retreats into the ego; that is to say, that here the object-cathexes are given up and

a primitive objectless condition of narcissism is re-established. The incapacity of these patients for transference—so far as the process of disease extends—their consequent inaccessibility to therapeutic efforts, the repudiation of the outer world characteristic of them, the manifestations of hypercathexis of their ego, the final outcome in complete apathy—all these clinical features seem to accord excellently with the assumption that object-cathexes are relinquished. As regards the relation of the two psychical systems to each other, all observers have been struck by the fact that in schizophrenia a great deal is consciously expressed which in the transference neuroses can be demonstrated to exist in the Ucs only by means of psychoanalysis. But at the beginning we were not able to establish any intelligible connection between the ego-object relation and the relationships of consciousness.

In the following unexpected way we seem to arrive at what we are seeking. In schizophrenics we observe—especially in the earlier stages which are so instructive—a number of changes in *speech*, some of which deserve to be regarded from a particular point of view. The patient often devotes peculiar care to his way of expressing himself, which becomes “precious” and “elaborate.” The construction of the sentences undergoes a peculiar disorganization, making them so incomprehensible to us that the patient's remarks seem nonsensical. Often some relation to bodily organs or innervations is prominent in the content of these utterances. This may be correlated with another observation, namely, that, in such symptoms of schizophrenia as are comparable with the substitute-formations of hysteria or the obsessional neurosis, the relation between the substitute and the repressed material nevertheless displays peculiarities which would surprise us in these two forms of neurosis.

Dr. Viktor Tausk of Vienna has placed at my disposal some observations that he has made in the initial stages of schizophrenia, which are particularly valuable in that the patient herself was anxious to explain her utterances further. I will take two of his examples to illustrate the thesis I wish to defend, and I have no doubt that every observer could easily produce plenty of such material.

One of Tausk's patients, a girl who was brought to the

clinic after a quarrel with her lover, complained that *her eyes were not right, they were twisted*. This she herself explained by uttering in properly constructed sentences a series of reproaches against her lover. "She could not understand him at all, he looked different every time; he was a shammer, an eye-twister,⁹ he had twisted her eyes; now they were not her eyes any more; now she saw the world with different eyes."

The patient's remarks about her first incomprehensible utterance have the value of an analysis, for they contain the equivalent of the original words expressed in a generally comprehensible form; at the same time they explain the meaning and the genesis of speech-formation in schizophrenia. In agreement with Tausk, I would here lay stress on the point that the relation to the bodily organ (the eye) has usurped the place of the whole content of the thought. The schizophrenic speech displays a hypochondriac trait: it has become "organ-speech."

A second remark of the same patient's runs: "She was standing in church, suddenly she felt a jerk, she had to *change her position*, as though somebody put her into a position, as though she were *placed in a certain position*."

There follows the analysis by means of a fresh series of reproaches against her lover: "he was common, he had made her common, too, though she was naturally refined; he had made her like himself by leading her to think that he was superior to her; now she had become like him, because she thought she would be better if she were like him; he had *given a false impression of his own position*,¹⁰ now she was just like him (identification!), he had *changed her position*."¹¹

The movement by which she "changed her position," Tausk remarks, stood for the idea of "misrepresenting her position" and for the identification with the lover. Again I would call attention to the manner in which the whole train of thought is dominated by that element which has for its content a bodily

⁹ [*Augenverdreher*, used in German to mean a *deceiver*.—*Trans.*]

¹⁰ *Sich verstellen* = to feign, disguise oneself.

¹¹ *Verstellen* = to change the place of. [As with *Augenverdreher*, there is again a play on words, the concrete meaning of the word replacing its metaphorical sense.—*Trans.*]

innervation (or, rather, the sensation of it). An hysteric would, in the first case, have convulsively rolled her eyes, and, in the second, have given actual jerks, instead of having the impulse to jerk or the sensation of being jerked; and in neither case would this have been accompanied by any conscious thoughts, nor would she afterwards have been able to express any such thoughts.

So far these two observations illustrate what we have called hypochondriac language or "organ-speech." But they also point to something which seems to us more important, namely, to another state of things of which we have innumerable instances (for example, in the cases quoted in Bleuler's monograph) and which may be reduced to a definite formula. In schizophrenia *words* are subject to the same process as that which makes dream-images out of dream-thoughts, the one we have called the primary mental process. They undergo condensation, and by means of displacement transfer their cathexes to one another without remainder; the process may extend so far that a single word, which on account of its manifold relations is specially suitable, can come to represent a whole train of thought. The works of Bleuler, Jung and their pupils have yielded abundant material precisely in support of this very proposition.¹²

Before we draw any conclusion from impressions such as these, let us consider further the distinctions between the substitutive idea in schizophrenia and in hysteria and the obsessional neurosis—nice distinctions, it is true, yet producing a very strange effect. A patient whom I have at present under observation has let himself withdraw from all the interests of life on account of the unhealthy condition of the skin of his face. He declares that he has blackheads and that there are deep holes in his face which everyone notices. Analysis shows that he is working out his castration complex upon his skin. At first he busied himself with these blackheads without any misgivings; and it gave him great pleasure to squeeze them out, because, as he said, something spurted out when he did so. Then he began to think that there was a deep cavity

¹² The dream-work, too, occasionally treats words like things, and then creates very similar "schizophrenic" utterances or neologisms.

wherever he had got rid of a blackhead and he reproached himself most vehemently with having ruined his skin for ever by "constantly fiddling at it with his hand." Pressing out the content of the blackheads is clearly to him a substitute for onanism. The cavity which then appears in consequence of his guilty act is the female genital, *i.e.* stands for the fulfilment of the threat of castration (or the phantasy representing it) called forth by onanism. This substitute-formation has, in spite of its hypochondriacal character, considerable resemblance to an hysterical conversion; and yet we have the feeling that there must be something different in it, that we cannot believe such a substitute-formation possible in a case of hysteria, even before we can say in what the difference consists. A tiny little hole such as a pore of the skin will hardly be used by an hysteric as a symbol for the vagina, which otherwise he will compare with every imaginable object capable of enclosing a space. Besides, we should think that the multiplicity of these little cavities would prevent him from using them as a substitute for the female genital. The same applies to the case of a young patient reported by Tausk some years ago to the Vienna Psycho-Analytical Society. This patient behaved in other respects exactly as though suffering from an obsessional neurosis; he took hours to dress, and so on. The striking feature of the case, however, was that he was able to tell the meaning of his inhibitions without any resistance. For example, in pulling on his stockings he was disturbed by the idea that he must draw apart the knitted stitches, *i.e.* the holes, and every hole was for him a symbol of the female genital aperture. This again is a thing with which we cannot credit a patient suffering from obsessional neurosis; a patient of this kind observed by R. Reitler (one who suffered from the same lingering over putting on his stockings), after overcoming the resistances, found the explanation that his foot symbolised the penis, putting on the stocking stood for an onanistic act, and that he had constantly to pull the stocking off and on, partly in order to complete the representation of onanism, and partly in order to undo the act.

If we ask ourselves what it is that gives the character of strangeness to the substitute-formation and the symptom in

schizophrenia, we come at last to understand that it is the predominance of the word-relation over that of the thing. There is only a very slight similarity between the squeezing out of a blackhead and an ejaculation from the penis, still less similarity between the countless little pores of the skin and the vagina; but in the former case there *is*, in both instances, a spurting out, while in the latter the cynical saying, "a hole is a hole," is *literally* true. The identity of the two when expressed in *words*, not the resemblance of the objects designated, has dictated the substitution. Where the two—word and thing—do not coincide, the substitute-formation in schizophrenia deviates from that in the transference neuroses.

Let us bring these considerations into connection with the conclusion that in schizophrenia the object-cathexes are relinquished. We must then modify this assumption and say: the cathexis of the ideas of the words corresponding to the objects is retained. What we could permissibly call the conscious idea of the object can now be split up into the *idea of the word* (verbal idea) and the *idea of the thing* (concrete idea); the latter consists in the cathexis, if not of the direct memory-images of the thing, at least of remoter memory-traces derived from these. It strikes us all at once that now we know what is the difference between a conscious and an unconscious idea. The two are not, as we supposed, different records of the same content situate in different parts of the mind, nor yet different functional states of cathexis in the same part; but the conscious idea comprises the concrete idea plus the verbal-idea corresponding to it, whilst the unconscious idea is that of the thing alone. The system Ucs contains the thing-cathexes of the objects, the first and true object-cathexes; the system Pcs originates in a hyper-cathexis of this concrete idea by a linking up of it with the verbal ideas of the words corresponding to it. It is such hyper-cathexes, we may suppose, that bring about higher organization in the mind and make it possible for the primary process to be succeeded by the secondary process which dominates Pcs. Now, too, we are in a position to state precisely what it is that repression denies to the rejected idea in the transference neuroses—namely, translation of the idea into words which are to remain at-

tached to the object. The idea which is not put into words or the mental act which has not received hyper-cathexis then remains in the unconscious in a state of repression.

I may call attention to the fact that already very early we possessed the insight which to-day enables us to understand one of the most striking characteristics of schizophrenia. The last pages of *Die Traumdeutung*, published in 1900, expound the thesis that thought-processes, i.e. those cathected mental acts which are more remote from perception, are in themselves devoid of quality and are unconscious, deriving their capacity to enter consciousness only from association with the residues of word-perceptions. The verbal ideas, for their part, are derived from sense-perceptions in the same way as concrete ideas are; so that the question might be raised why ideas of objects cannot become conscious through the agency of their own residues of perceptions. But possibly thought proceeds in systems that are so far remote from the original residues of perception that they have no longer retained anything of the qualities of these residues, so that in order to become conscious the content of the thought-systems needs to be reinforced by new qualities. Besides, linking them up with words may impart quality even to cathexes to which, representing as they do only relations between the ideas of objects, no quality could accrue from the perceptions themselves. Such relations, comprehensible only through words, form one of the most important parts of our thought-processes. We understand that linking them up with verbal ideas is still not identical with actually becoming conscious, but only with the potentiality of this; it is therefore characteristic of the system Pcs and of that only. Now, however, we note that with these discussions we have departed from our real theme and find ourselves in the midst of problems concerning the preconscious and the conscious, which for good reasons we are reserving for separate treatment.

In considering schizophrenia, which, to be sure, we only touch on here so far as seems indispensable for general knowledge of the Ucs, the doubt must occur to us whether the process here termed repression has anything at all in common with the repression which takes place in the transference

neuroses. The formula that repression is a process which occurs between the systems Ucs and Pcs (or Cs), and results in withholding the repressed material from consciousness, must in any event be modified, in order to embrace the case of dementia praecox and other narcissistic affections. But the ego's attempt at flight, expressing itself in withdrawal of conscious cathexis, nevertheless remains a common factor. The most superficial reflection shows us how much more radically and thoroughly this attempt at flight, this flight of the ego, is carried out in the narcissistic neuroses.

If, in schizophrenia, this flight consists in withdrawal of instinctual cathexis from those points which represent the unconscious idea of the object, it may seem strange that that part of the same idea which belongs to the system Pcs—the verbal ideas corresponding to it—should, on the contrary, undergo a more intense cathexis. We might rather expect that the verbal idea, being the preconscious part, would have to sustain the first impact of the repression and that it would be wholly unsusceptible of cathexis after the repression had proceeded as far as the unconscious concrete ideas. This is certainly difficult to understand. The solution suggests itself that the cathexis of the verbal idea is not part of the act of repression, but represents the first of the attempts at recovery or cure which so conspicuously dominate the clinical picture of schizophrenia. These endeavours are directed towards regaining the lost objects, and it may well be that to achieve this purpose their path to the object must be by way of the word belonging to it; they then have, however, to content themselves with words in the place of things. Our mental activity moves, generally speaking, in one of two opposite directions: either it starts from the instincts and passes through the system Ucs to conscious mentation, or, on excitation from without, it passes through the systems Cs and Pcs till it reaches the unconscious cathexes of the ego and of its objects. This second way must, in spite of the repression which has taken place, have remained clear, and for some distance there is nothing to block the endeavours of the neurosis to regain its objects. When we think in abstractions there is a danger that we may neglect the relations of words to unconscious

concrete ideas, and it must be confessed that the expression and content of our philosophizing begins to acquire an unwelcome resemblance to the schizophrenic's way of thinking. We may, on the other hand, attempt a characterization of the schizophrenic's mode of thought by saying that he treats concrete things as though they were abstract.

If we have really recognized the nature of the Ucs and have correctly defined the difference between an unconscious and a preconscious idea, then researches starting from many other points may be expected to bring us back to the same conclusions.

VII

Metapsychological Supplement to the Theory of Dreams¹ (1916)

WE ARE ABLE to learn in various ways how advantageous it is for our researches to institute comparisons with certain states and phenomena which may be conceived of as *normal prototypes* of morbid affections. Among these we may include such affective conditions as grief or mourning and the state of being in love, but also the state of sleep and the phenomenon of dreaming.

We are not accustomed to expend much thought on the fact that every night human beings lay aside the garments they pull over their skin, and even also other objects which they use to supplement their bodily organs (so far as they have succeeded in making good their deficiencies by substitutes)—for instance, their spectacles, false hair or teeth, and so on. In addition to this, when they go to sleep they perform a perfectly analogous dismantling of their minds—they lay aside most of their mental acquisitions; thus both physically and mentally approaching remarkably close to the situation in which they began life. Somatically, sleep is an act which reproduces intra-uterine existence, fulfilling the conditions of repose, warmth and absence of stimulus; indeed, in sleeping, many people resume the foetal position. The feature characterizing the mind of a sleeping person is an almost complete withdrawal from the surrounding world and the cessation of all interest in it.

¹ First published in *Zeitschrift*, Bd. IV., 1916–1918; reprinted in *Sammlung*, Vierte Folge. [Translated by Cecil M. Baines.]

This and the following paper are taken from a collection which I originally intended to publish in book form, under the title "Preliminary Material for a Metapsychological Theory." They follow on certain papers which appeared in *Zeitschrift*, Bd. III.: "Instincts and their Vicissitudes," "Repression," and "The Unconscious." The series is designed to clarify and subject to a more profound study the theoretical assumptions upon which a psychoanalytic system could be based.