

# The Concept of "The Unconscious"

MARK ANTON BRUCK  
*Los Angeles, California*

## "THE UNCONSCIOUS" BEFORE FREUD

The authors who, before Freud, wrote about unconsciousness, were chiefly philosophers. In regard to them, however, Freud makes a declaration of independence:

I have carefully avoided any contact with philosophy proper. This avoidance has been greatly facilitated by constitutional incapacity. . . . The large extent to which psychoanalysis coincides with the philosophy of Schopenhauer—not only did he assert the dominance of the emotions and the supreme importance of sexuality, but he was even aware of the mechanism of repression—is not to be traced to my acquaintance with his teaching. I read Schopenhauer very late in my life. Nietzsche, another philosopher whose guesses and intuitions often agree in the most astonishing way with the laborious findings of psychoanalysis, was, for a long time, avoided by me on that very account; I was less concerned with the question of priority than with keeping my mind unembarrassed. (5b., pp. 294-295)

Notwithstanding this declaration, it seems well worth while to look into the "pre-Freudian" authors who have given us ideas which today most people would call "Freudian." Freud, though born in Moravia, lived in Vienna ever since he was four years old and had gone through the Gymnasium there. He could not have been at the top of his class for seven years (5b., p. 191) without contact with the great German thinkers of the last hundred years. Five of these thinkers were dead by the time Freud was brought to Vienna in 1860:

Leibnitz, Gottfried W., Baron v.	:	1646-1716
Kant, Immanuel	:	1724-1804
Schelling, Friedrich W. J. von	:	1775-1854
Herbart, Johann Friedrich	:	1776-1841
Schopenhauer, Arthur	:	1788-1860

but their influence upon the second half of the nineteenth century was considerable in German-speaking Austria. Freud admits an acquaintance with Nietzsche's (1844-1900) ideas when he says that he avoided reading this philosopher because of their agreement on several counts. Hartmann (Eduard v., 1842-1906) published his *Philosophie des Unbewussten* in 1869, when Freud was a "Gymnasiast" of thirteen.

It is also interesting to learn (Hartmann, 7, p. 16) that Kant was the first to look for the essence of sexual love in the Unconscious.

John Locke (1632-1704) stated:

to have representations and to be conscious is the same thing; an extended body without parts is just as thinkable as thinking without consciousness (11, Book II, paragraphs 9 and 19),

but Leibnitz came to the conclusion that:

the fact that the soul is not conscious of having a thought does not mean that it stops thinking (10, Book II, chap. 1, p. 10).

This, as far as the author of this paper could ascertain, is the oldest assumption of "unconscious thinking."

Leibnitz's thoughts about unconscious, i.e., "dark" ideas (*Vorstellungen*) have been elaborated on by Kant in his *Anthropology* (Par. 5.: "About ideas which we have without being conscious of them"):

To have ideas and not to be conscious of them nevertheless, there seems to be a contradiction in this, because how can we know that we have them if we are not conscious of them? Yet we can be indirectly conscious of them. We may get to marvel about ourselves if we consider that the field of our sense impressions and sensations, of which we are not conscious although we may conclude without doubt that we have them, i.e., of the dark ideas in man (and also in animals), is immeasurable, while the clear ideas contain of the former only infinitely few points as accessible to consciousness: that, so to say, there are only few illuminated places on the big map of our soul.

We find here, in the beautifully involved sentence structure of Kant, an "immeasurable field of sense impressions and sensations of which we are not conscious" very similar to Freud's "the Unconscious" and the idea that only "infinitely few points" of those not conscious impressions and sensations are accessible to consciousness.

Schelling tells us:

Nothing has, however, prevented me from returning with this I, now conscious of itself in me, to a moment when *it was not yet conscious of itself*, from assuming a region beyond the consciousness *now present*, as well as an activity which no longer enters consciousness itself but only through its results. (13, Abth. I, Band 10, pp. 92-93).

This eternal Unconscious (*dieses ewig Unbewusste*) . . . although it never is objectified, nevertheless impresses its identity upon all free actions; it is the same for all intellects and is the invisible root of which all intellects are only powers. (*Potenzen*). (13, Abth. I, Band 111, p. 600).

This seems "pure Freud": "a region beyond the consciousness now present," "an activity which enters consciousness only through its results," "impresses its identity upon all free actions," and is "the invisible root of all intellects." This may also be the oldest instance of a substantivized "*das Unbewusste*."

Herbart, of course, is well known as having had concepts very similar to those of Freud, about the dynamics of suppressed ideas that fight in order to enter consciousness. Hollingworth, who quotes extensively from Herbart, assumes that Freud was acquainted with the latter, and says:

The modern "psychoanalytic" movement, and what is often referred to as "the Freudian psychology" consists chiefly in an elaboration and application of Herbart's doctrines, and their amplification with a wealth of clinical detail.

There is a striking similarity between the following excerpts from Herbart (8) and the teachings of Freud:

Concepts become forces when they resist one another.

This resistance occurs when two or more opposed concepts encounter one another.

The concept . . . must yield without being destroyed, i.e., the real concept is changed into an effort to present itself.

As soon as the hindrance yields, the concept by its own effort will again make its appearance in consciousness.

A concept is in consciousness in so far as it is not suppressed. . . . When it rises out of a condition of complete suppression, it enters into consciousness. Here then it is on the threshold of consciousness.

The striving of the suppressed concept is not to be considered wholly ineffective; . . . it works with all its might against the concepts in consciousness. These concepts are removed from consciousness and yet are effective therein.

Concepts combine . . . form a complex.

Rereading these quotations, we find such very "Freudian" ideas as that of opposed concepts resisting each other; concepts being changed into efforts to present themselves which finally lead to their reappearance in consciousness as soon as the "hindrance" (Freud's censor) yields; suppression of concepts and a re-arising from suppression; work of the suppressed concepts against those in consciousness; and even the word "complex."

While Herbart repeatedly speaks of suppressed concepts re-entering consciousness, as far as the writer could ascertain he has never

used the terms "*unbewusst*" or "*das Unbewusste*." He comes closest to the former when he says (*Werke*, V., page 342) that "*bewusstlose Vorstellungen*" are "*im Bewusstsein ohne dass man sich ihrer bewusst ist.*" In translation, we would say: "Non-conscious concepts are in consciousness without our being conscious of them," yet we should distinguish between "*bewusstlos*" (without consciousness) and "*unbewusst*" (unconscious). The first of these two adjectives is derived from the concept "*bewusstsein*" (consciousness), which is much older than the concept "*unbewusst*" which we first meet extensively in Hartmann.

Schopenhauer, whose influence upon himself Freud expressly denies, had popularized the concept of an "unconscious will" that incessantly created "individuations" before the birth of Freud; but "the Unconscious" as an entity appears extensively only in the book of Hartmann: *Philosophie des Unbewussten* (7), of which it will be well worth our while to examine a number of excerpts:

unconscious idea . . . an unknown cause of certain processes which is outside of consciousness. (p. 3)

I use the collective concept "*das Unbewusste*" (the Unconscious) not to designate the negative predicate "to be unconscious" but to designate the unknown positive subject to which this predicate corresponds, meaning very especially the unit "unconscious will and unconscious idea." (p. 3.)

I believe that the principle of the Unconscious, which constitutes the focus of this investigation and unites in itself all its rays, may well be considered a new standpoint, in such a general formulation as the present one. (p. 4)

How simple and clear is the assumption of an unknown aim, which is necessary for the willing of the fitting means, of a process of which only the final link enters consciousness, as the will which immediately precedes action. (p. 62)

Instinct is the conscious willing of the means for an unconsciously willed purpose. (p. 66)

Only the unconscious can make us have the right ideas at the right time. (p. 234)

Every entrance of a sought-for recollection into consciousness requires the assistance of the Unconscious. (p. 247) If an inappropriate idea appears, Consciousness immediately recognizes it as unsuitable and rejects it. . . . Only the Unconscious can make the suitable choice. (p. 247)

Consciousness can only be born out of the Unconscious, through inspiration. (p. 297)

The ideas ("*Ahnungen*") in which the clairvoyance of the Unconscious

manifests itself to consciousness, are often dark, incomprehensible and symbolic. (p. 83)

If we reexamine these quotations, we find several "Freudian" concepts:

an unknown cause outside of consciousness (p. 3)

a substantivized "Unconscious" ("the unknown positive subject") that wills and ideates. (p. 3) [Hartmann here (p. 4) expressly vindicated for himself the authorship of this substantivization.]

an unconsciously willed purpose. (p. 66)

consciousness as a product of the Unconscious [like Freud's "Ego" that was born out of the "id"]. (p. 297)

the darkness, incomprehensibility and symbolic nature of the products of the Unconscious. (p. 83)

Hartmann's *Philosophie des Unbewussten* was widely bought and discussed in Freud's youth; even if he had not read the book, echoes of it probably had reached him. Uniting the concepts of Herbart and Hartmann, we come very close to Freud's "the Unconscious" and its dynamics.

There is also a possibility that Freud had read the books of Karl Gustav Carus (1789-1869), a physician and psychologist from Schelling's school of natural philosophy and psychology. Carus, who had deeply influenced Hartmann, published his *Lectures on Psychology* (3) three years before Herbart's *Lehrbuch* (8). In the preface to the 11th edition of his *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, Hartmann says of Carus:

The Dresden physician Carus is very close to Schelling and his *Psyche* is justly considered a predecessor of the *Philosophie des Unbewussten*. The concept of the Unconscious has only slightly penetrated into modern natural science and psychology. The well-known physiologist Carus is a praiseworthy exception: his *Psyche* and *Physis* contain, in essence, an investigation of the Unconscious in its relations with somatic and intellectual life. How far he succeeded in his attempt and how much I may have borrowed from him for mine, may the reader decide for himself. I wish to add, however, that the concept of the Unconscious is clearly presented here as free from any infinitely small consciousness.

Carus has, furthermore, distinguished between a "relative Unconscious," which is very much like the Preconscious of Freud, and an "absolute Unconscious" as a region into which "no ray of consciousness" penetrates. According to Carus, this "absolute Unconscious" causes nutrition, growth, procreation, etc., and also decisively influences conscious psychic life.

While, as we have seen, we have no proof that Freud has been influenced by Leibnitz, Kant, Schelling, Herbart, Hartmann or Carus and he has expressly denied having been influenced by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, it seems clear from this study that "Freudian" ideas were afloat before Freud.

### "THE UNCONSCIOUS" OF FREUD

The following listing of Freudian concepts does not pretend to be complete; it has been made only to illustrate the point and to facilitate the discussion of our basic subject, "the Concept of the Unconscious":

#### *Freudian Concepts*

##### I.

*Concepts necessary for the assumed division*

the Conscious  
the Pre-Conscious  
the Unconscious  
the Super-Ego  
the Ego  
the Id

##### II.

*Concepts about the mechanics of "the Unconscious" and its products*

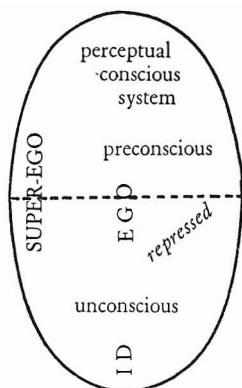
the censor  
the pain-pleasure principle  
functioning as a censor  
condensation  
compromise formation  
dream work  
displacement  
distortion  
erroneous acts  
forgetting  
introjection of external  
restrictions  
neurotic symptoms  
reaction formation  
repression  
resistance  
slips of the tongue and pen  
symbolic behavior  
wish fulfillment in dreams  
isolation  
undoing  
projection  
turning against the self  
reversal

Concentrating our study on column I of our table, we first must consider the difference between Freud's *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* published in 1917, and his *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* published in 1933 (6). Much of what is different between these "lectures" (the latter were never delivered, just written in lecture form) has appeared as far back as 1923, in Freud's *Das Ich und das Es* (The Ego and the Id) and also in his *The Problem of Lay Analysis*, 1927 (5); but it seems advisable to use the *New Introductory Lectures* as our chief source material about the change, since this is Freud's last book on general aspects of his theory.

In the *New Introductory Lectures* we find a complete "desubstantivization" of the term "unconscious"; it is now again used only as an adjective. The place of "the Unconscious" is taken by the "Id" and that of "the Conscious" by the "Ego," though Freud is careful to point out that "ego and conscious, repressed and unconscious do not coincide." (6, p. 99) By 1921 (6, p. 96), Freud had "posited a special function within the ego to represent the demand for restriction and rejection, i.e., the super-ego" (6, p. 98) and he had come to the conclusion that "large portions of the ego and super-ego can remain unconscious; are, in fact, normally unconscious." (6, p. 99) As a consequence he tells us:

We evidently have no right to call that region of the mind which is neither ego nor super-ego the Ucs (unconscious) system, since the character of unconsciousness is not exclusive to it. Very well, we shall no longer use the word "unconscious" in the sense of a system, and to what we have hitherto called by that name we will give a better one, which will not give rise to misunderstandings. Borrowing, at G. Groddeck's suggestion, a term used by Nietzsche, we will call it henceforward the "id." This impersonal pronoun seems particularly suited to express the essential character of this province of the mind—the character of being foreign to the ego. Super-ego, ego, and id, then, are the three realms, regions or provinces into which we divide the mental apparatus of the individual. (6, p. 102)

The best way to show the difference—and similarity—between the "new" and the old Freudian terminology, is to copy here a drawing from Freud's *New Introductory Lectures* (6, p. 111):



In this drawing\* of Freud's the old division into three entities ("systems, realms, regions or provinces") (6, p. 102) is further complicated. Consciousness is now called the "perceptual conscious system" and is described by Freud as follows:

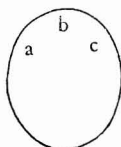
The "I" is the outer, peripheral layer of the "It." We now assume that on this outermost surface of the "I" there is a peculiar device, a system, an organ if you wish, by whose exclusive actuation that phenomenon is created which we call Consciousness. (5a, p. 63; the translator here still uses "I" and "It" instead of the now usual "Ego" and "Id." —Bruck)

The preconscious has remained unchanged in interpretation:

We call the Unconscious which is only latent, and so can easily become conscious, the "preconscious." (12, p. 101) (Freud here means "unconscious material"—not a "system."—Bruck)

---

\* There is a great resemblance between the general form of this drawing and those that are now used to represent Herbart's theory on how ideas appear and disappear in consciousness. These drawings are, more or less, as follows:



where "b" is the idea prevailing in consciousness, "a" is the idea that strives to enter consciousness, and "c" the idea that had left consciousness to give room to "b." Whether this drawing has ever been made by Herbart or one of his followers of the Nineteenth century, so that Freud could have seen it, the writer has not yet been able to ascertain.



As to the "id," Freud candidly says:

You must not expect me to tell you much that is new about the id, except its name (6, p. 103),

and, in effect, when he describes the id, he reiterates what he used to say about "the Unconscious":

It is the obscure inaccessible part of our personality; the little we know about it we have learned from the study of dream-work and the formation of neurotic symptoms, and most of that is of a negative character, and can only be described as being all that the ego is not. . . . We can come nearer to the id with images, and call it a chaos, a cauldron of seething excitement. (6, p. 105)

Our last quotations give us very fine samples for an analysis of the real character of Freud's contribution to psychology. (6, p. 248) Freud, who has declared himself constitutionally incapable of understanding philosophy proper (see our first quotation from 5b, p. 81 above), actually uses the rational technique of speculative philosophy, attempting to arrive at truth by reasoning from a broad assumption: "We now assume . . . there is a peculiar device, a system, an organ if you wish" or, "We can come nearer to the id with images," i.e., when we cannot explain in accordance with truly scientific observation, let us use images. Even where Freud seems scientific, as when he says that we have learned about the id "from the study of dream-work and the formation of neurotic symptoms," he only builds upon his own assumptions, because both the nature of dream-work and the causes for the formation of neurotic symptoms (repression, dream-censorship) as well as the process of their birth are Freud's own assumptions. Freud never has treated his assumptions as hypotheses, i.e., as tentative questions still to be tested; he assumed his assumptions to be correct and adapted his explanations of what he saw (we might say: he "procrustesized" his facts) to fit his assumptions.

Without any regard for the fact that scientific research had, during his time, abandoned all such localizations as Semon's "engrams" or Gall's phrenological ideas and modestly began to talk about "traces" of experiences without trying to localize them, Freud for forty years talked about shoving experiences from one entity of the mind into another and of an auto-propulsion of these "repressed" ideas that would make them strive to become conscious, i.e., to enter another entity, "system, realm, region, province" (see quotation on p. 87

above). Notwithstanding the general scientific tendency of the times not to allot definite localizations to ideas or desires in the mind, Freud cautions us, in connection with his drawing:

The space taken up by the unconscious id ought to be incomparably greater than that given to the ego or to the preconscious. You must, if you please, correct that in your imagination. (6, p. 110)

### THE SUPER-EGO

This creation of Freud merits a section of its own, though, as we shall see, it gives us nothing fundamentally new and may well be much less an original idea of Freud than is commonly supposed. About it Freud tells us:

a special criticizing and forbidding function. (6, p. 43)

we have allocated to it the activities of self-observation, conscience, and the holding up of ideals. (6, p. 94)

for us the super-ego is the representative of all moral restrictions, the advocate of the impulse toward perfection . . . what people call the "higher" things in human life. (6, p. 95)

it itself can be traced back to the influence of parents, teachers, and so on. (6, p. 95)

The super-ego has been hailed as a "deviation from the exclusivity of the sex theory" (e.g. in *Der Grosse Brockhaus*, 1933 edition) and it was considered a great character feat of Freud to have "revised himself."

Actually, however, there is big change between the "new" and the old Freudian thinking even at this point. Previously it was "the conscious" (i.e. something similar to the new "ego") that did the repressing. Now it is "the super-ego" which had been split off from the ego and "posited as a special function within the ego" (6, p. 98) who forces the ego to do it:

Repression is the work of the super-ego. (6, p. 98)

When he first mentions the super-ego in the *New Introductory Lectures*, Freud expresses himself as follows:

We have been forced to assume the existence in the mind of a special criticizing and forbidding function which we call the super-ego. (6, p. 43)

Shall we give importance to this "forced to assume," or would that

be “over-psychologizing”? At any rate, among people who knew both Freud and his general attitude towards ideas brought up in the discussions by other members of the group,\* there is a strong suspicion that it was Adler who “forced” the super-ego upon Freud, “par distance.”

In the spring of 1917, when Freud read his *Introductory Lectures* at the University of Vienna, there was no super-ego; yet, by 1921, after Adler’s public lectures on his new concept “*das Gemeinschaftsgefühl*” (the feeling of community that controls man’s striving towards “*Geltung*”—significance) in Vienna (2, p. 48) and at the very successful Adlerian Congress† in Berlin (2, p. 140), there it was, in 1921. (6, p. 96)

---

\* Mannes Sperber (14) reports that, whenever one of his discussion partners—the so-called “pupils”—presented a new idea, Freud used to say: “*Habe Ich das nicht schon auch mal gesacht?*” (Haven’t I too said that some time in the past?)

† After the split in 1911, Freud had forbidden his followers to assist at the meetings of the Adlerians, but there was always enough contact between the two groups for each of them to know at any time what trends of thought prevailed in the other group.

In 1916, Adler, who had been directing a hospital for nervous disorders of soldiers, came back to Vienna with the conviction that what the world chiefly needed was “*Gemeinschaftsgefühl*” (2, p. 112f). From then on, he stressed the importance of this feeling as a controlling factor in man’s striving for significance. His lectures at the Adlerian Congress in Berlin, which are the foundation of his book *Der Sinn des Lebens* (published in English in 1937 under the title *Social Interest, A Challenge to Mankind*), shows us how much importance he gave to the concept.

It would not be surprising if Freud had felt that in his own theory there was need for a separate controlling factor, and then had incorporated the controlling “feeling of community” as the “super-ego.”

There seem to be other instances of such incorporation of the ideas of the “pupils.” According to Bottome (2, p. 64) Adler was fond of relating:

The Oedipus complex was Jung’s contribution and received by Freud at first with marked distaste, until he saw what support it gave to his central idea of the domination of the sexual instinct. “I enriched psychoanalysis,” Adler told his friends with a grim smile, “by the aggressive drive; I gladly make them a present of it; and Jung is responsible for the Oedipus complex.”

Also Freud’s “penis envy” had appeared as a concept, after Adler started to talk about the “masculine protest,” i.e., the protest of women against masculine privileges. This is another instance where Freud has twisted a new fact to fit

It cannot be our task in this paper to follow Freud into every nook and cranny of "The House that Freud built" (Jastrow), but it seems necessary to give some consideration to the formation of neurotic symptoms which, if Freud was right, would be of great practical consequence in psychotherapy.

The wide acceptance of the Freudian idea that we sow (repress) a wish and reap a symptom, seems to the writer the best proof for the fact that our human thinking is still too free from intellectual controls. While it has not yet been possible to trace the formation of neurotic symptoms in the brain, the Freudian assumption that they are born out of repression is not at all an absolutely necessary assumption. The law of parsimony in explanations demands, today, a complete rethinking of the phenomena by Freud and their explanation without the assumption of an Unconscious (Id) and of repression.

The Freudian theory of repression can, it seems to the writer, best be compared to a mechanism he saw, some forty years ago, in the shop window of an Austrian butcher:

This mechanism presented the passage of many pigs into a sausage factory and out of it . . . in the form of sausages. The pigs were brought to the factory door on a cart and the farmer drove them in with a stick, while on the other side of the factory, sausages were tumbling into containers on another cart.

If we liken the super-ego to the farmer, we can say that it is driving the ideas it dislikes into the factory of "the Unconscious" (Id) where they are "converted" into symptoms (not only the so-called "conversion symptoms" but also dreams, erroneous acts, slips of the tongue and pen, symbolic behavior), or cause displacement, distortion, forgetting, repression, resistance, etc.

#### WITHOUT "THE UNCONSCIOUS"

It has been much too little realized that the unconsciousness of a part of our thinking is something very different from "the uncon-

---

his basic theory: while the concept was not at all "sexual" with Adler, it became so with Freud.

It would be quite understandable that Jung, after the relative desexualization of his ideas, had abandoned the Oedipus complex to Freud and the Freudians, just like Adler abandoned the "aggressive drive" to them, after he had discovered that man strove not for "power"—as he had assumed with Nietzsche—but for *Geltung* (significance).

scious" of the Freudians, which Harriman (19, p. 324) aptly describes as follows:

A troublesome and controversial term, used metaphorically by psychoanalysts to subsume the basic drives, repressed ideas, and unwelcome impulses; it is the part of the psyche in which the id reigns supreme and which is dominated by the pleasure principle.

Miller (12, p. 248) aptly explains the neglect of this all too necessary study of unconsciousness when he points out that the common rise to fame of the Freudians and unconsciousness has caused a great setback in the exploration of this phenomenon, because it made the opponents of the Freudians into opponents of unconsciousness as well:

It is not to be wondered that scientists who wish to be hard-headed would eschew the underground wonderland of psychoanalytic instincts with its sex, aggression, death desires, and secret complexes with Greek names which have become playthings of the arts. In this field, myth and allegory have made their greatest inroads into psychology. (12, p. 248)

The unfortunate tendency to throw Adler (and Jung) into the psychoanalytical (Freudian) melting-pot as "upshots" or "deviants," and the superficial assumption so frequently found (e.g., in 16, pp. 18-20) that Adler had done nothing else than substitute "the drive for power, for mastery over others" for the libido of Freud, have further prevented progress in the study of unconsciousness. As we shall see later on, there was, in Adler, both a strong criticism of Freud's ideas and material to demonstrate the errors contained in them.

Experimental research such as that of Koch (17) and Sharp (18)—also reported by Miller (12, p. 254f)—does not seem to the writer to prove the existence of repression.

If Koch's students remembered more of their pleasant than of their unpleasant grades (out of 10 grades received by each of them) several weeks after they had seen them, this only proves that most of us are likely to remember facts that increase our self-esteem better than those that reduce it.

It is "unparsimonious" to assume that for the "forgetting" of the inferior (unpleasant) grades "repression" was necessary; the difference between recall and forgetting may here well be due to the fact that, at the moment of seeing the grades, the better grades—because they were pleasurable to the students—caused more durable traces in their minds (by awakening a deeper interest in and attention to them)

than the bad grades. Such group experiments also generally neglect individual differences; it may well be that a number of individuals who worried about their final grades because of possible failure, or such individuals as were particularly self-demanding as to grades, perfectly or almost perfectly recalled their bad grades.

Sharp's experiment with acceptable, unacceptable and neutral phrases, in which the unacceptable phrases were more poorly recalled and more difficult to relearn, only proves that learning and recall of acceptable phrases is easier. This may well be due to greater attention to these upon learning and relearning than to the neutral or the unacceptable phrases. Particularly negative attitudes to unacceptable phrases would be in complete accordance with our cultural conditioning and these could well explain difficulties in learning and relearning without any need for assuming "repression." The phenomenon occurring in this case could well be considered "insufficient attention," i.e., insufficient advance to meet the new material, instead of the Freudian assumption of grabbing the material and shoving it into a dark recess of the mind. In this case too, however, some students may well have been exceptions, remembering especially well the unacceptable phrases, perhaps due to a desire to irritate someone later on by using them. Besides, the assumption of a "repression" of the unacceptable phrases into "the unconscious" (by the pleasure-pain principle) would also force us to assume a "suppression" into "the Preconscious" of the neutral phrases (by the "utility principle"); an assumptionism which at least the writer will not share.

In connection with these experiments, it seems to the writer that the nomothetic approach very definitely has less chances to give us valuable information about unconscious (unnoticed, understood) mental work than the idiographic approach. Attention and apperception are both so personal that scientific generalizations will have to be made on the basis of a great many similar single cases that have been collected and grouped, rather than based on cases that have been intentionally made similar for experimental purposes.

If more attention had been paid in the last twenty-five years to the work of the Adlerian school, Freud's "the unconscious" and its "dynamics" would not now occupy such an important place in American psychological thinking.

It is much too little known, for instance, that the main cause of the rupture between Adler and Freud was not, as Freud (5b, p. 281)

and his followers would have it, "a repudiation of the importance of sexuality,\* but the conviction that Freud's subdivision of the mind into warring entities was wrong.

In 1911, Adler and nine others left the old discussion group that was dominated by Freud and in which Freud and his close followers allowed no freedom of deviation from their basic convictions. The ten first formed a Society for Free Psychoanalysis and, in 1912, having accepted Adler's ideas on the teleological nature and unity of the human mind, they called themselves "*Individualpsychologische Gesellschaft*." The adjective "individual" appears in this name as an equivalent of the Latin "*individuus*," i.e., as "indivisible." This meaning of the word is little known, but we can find it in English dictionaries too, e.g., in Funk & Wagnalls' *The Desk Standard Dictionary* (1927 edition), even though it may be given as an obsolete meaning.

The following quotation from Adler's writings will show where American scientific psychology could long have found clinical material as well as a well-founded criticism of the Freudian approach with which to build up a scientific study of unconsciousness.

In the foreword specially written for the American edition of his *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology* (15) and dated October 23, 1923, Adler says:

The Unconscious of the text-book, in which current attempts to elucidate its meaning have already distinguished several levels, each able to serve as an *asylum ignorantiae*, resolves itself into the patient's failure to understand his impulses in relation to his social environment. (15, Foreword);

and in one of his last books (1931) he has gone into detail in the criticism of Freudian thinking:

In several points, . . . the Freudian interpretation has taken the dream out of the region of science. It supposes, for example, a gap between the work of the mind during the day and its work during the night. "Conscious" and "unconscious" are placed in contradiction to each other, and the dream is given its own special laws contradictory to the laws of everyday thinking. Wherever we see such contradictions, we must conclude an unscientific attitude of mind. In the thinking of primitive peoples and of

---

\* Adler never "repudiated the importance of sexuality," he just gave it the position in his system which it actually holds in life. In Adler's division of life into three sectors (society, work, the co-existence of two sexes) sexuality is a part of the third sector. Adler always held that the division of humanity into two sexes could and should mean more to men and women than just sexual gratification.

ancient philosophers, we always meet this desire to put concepts in strong antithesis. . . . Any theory which treats sleep and waking, dream thoughts and day thoughts, as contradictions is bound to be unscientific. (1, p. 95f.)

In the same volume, Adler criticizes another assumption of Freud which runs counter to the Adlerian theory of the unity of the mind:

Another point of difficulty in the original Freudian view is that dreams were referred to a sexual background. This, too, separated them from the ordinary strivings and activities of men. If it were true, dreams would have a meaning as an expression not of the whole personality but only of a part of the personality. . . . What is missing from psychoanalysis is the very first requisite for a science of psychology: a recognition of the coherence of the personality and of the unity of the individual in all his expressions. (1, pp. 96-97)

Outsiders to the two schools are eternally dreaming of a unification of the Freudian and Adlerian theories and often believe that there is between them only a difference in the description of the same phenomena, a "semantic" difference of terminology. How wrong this belief is will become apparent in the very fundamental difference between "the unconscious" and "unconsciousness."

While the Freudian first assumes the existence of "the unconscious" and with it certain definite contents like the inevitable Oedipus complex that had been repressed, for the Adlerian there is no "the unconscious," no "repression" in the Freudian sense, and no Oedipus complex. If, therefore, both the Freudian and the Adlerian will say that they are endeavoring to produce self understanding in their consultees, the true meaning of this statement is different for each of them, nevertheless.

To the Freudian, producing self-understanding means: making repressed complexes conscious, in order to free the individual from them in this way; to the Adlerian, self-understanding is not dependent on the degree to which the individual's motives have or have not "become conscious" in regard to some past attitude or action, either then or now during the consultation. If he and his consultee get to an agreement as to what those motives probably were, the Adlerian looks upon the result not as a "*Bewusstwerdung*" (becoming conscious of an unconscious motivation) but as a new understanding of a detail within the whole personality. Since the individual is looked upon as a teleological unit, the detail cannot be considered correctly understood if not in accordance with the "style of life" of the individ-



ual, unless the reason for a deviation from this central pattern of behavior has also been found.

If the consultee does "remember" during a consultation what he has thought before a certain attitude or action in the past (i.e., if he "becomes conscious" of past motivation), this is considered as a help in self-understanding, but the impression of the consultee that he probably was motivated as now conjectured on the basis of general knowledge of his style of life, is just as valuable. It has also been found all too often that consultees interpret rather than "remember" when they state motives that they "had"; very often the motives that they state they had are not those they have really had.

Since the Adlerian believes in the unity of the personality, whether the individual is or is not conscious of what he does, whether he thinks awake or thinks while he dreams, unconsciousness becomes for him a technical detail instead of a foundation for mysterious phenomena.

For Freudian assumptionism and mythology, the Adlerian has no more sympathy than has the experimental psychologist. He rejoices in the fact that Pratt (20, p. 248) seems to have been wrong when he said, in 1939, that it will be a long time before Freudian imaginative poetry is translated into the prose of science. The developments of the last few years point in the direction that it is Dunlap who was right when he said, in 1927:

There is hope that before long the psychoanalysts will learn enough psychology to abandon even their chief divinity, the Unconscious Mind. (21, p. 486-7)

#### REFERENCES

- (1) Adler, Alfred: *What Life Should Mean to You*, New York, Little Brown & Co., 1931, quotations from Grosset & Dunlap's reprint edition.
- (2) Bottome, Phyllis: *Alfred Adler, a Biography*, New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1939.
- (3) Carus, Karl Gustav: *Vorlesungen über Psychologie*, Leipzig, 1813.
- (4) Carus, Karl Gustav: *Psyche, Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Seele*, Pforzheim, 1846.

- (5) Freud, Sigmund: *The Problem of Lay-Analysis*, New York, Brentano's, 1927. In this volume: 5a. *The Problem of Lay-Analysis*. 5b. *An Autobiographical Study*.
- (6) Freud, Sigmund: *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 1933.
- (7) Hartmann, Eduard v., Dr. phil.: *Philosophie des Unbewussten*, Berlin, Karl Duncker's Verlag, 1870, second edition.
- (8) Herbart, Johann Friedrich: *Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, 1816.
- (9) Hollingworth, H. L.: *Abnormal Psychology*, New York, The Ronald Press, 1930.
- (10) Leibnitz, Gottfried W., Baron v.,: *New Essays on Human Understanding*.
- (11) Locke, John: *Essays on Human Understanding*.
- (12) Miller, James Grier: *Unconsciousness*, New York, John Wiley & Sons, 1942.
- (13) Schelling, Friedrich W. J.: *Werke*.
- (14) Sperber, Mannes: *Alfred Adler, der Mensch und seine Lehre*.
- (15) Adler, Alfred: *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology* (translated by P. Radin, Ph.D.), New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1924.
- (16) Thorpe, Louis P.: *Personality and Life*, New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1941.
- (17) Koch, H. L.: "The influence of some affective factors upon recall," *J. Gen. Psychology*, 4, 1930, 171-90.
- (18) Sharp, A. A.: "An experimental test of Freud's doctrine of the relation of hedonic tone to memory revival," *J. Exper. Psychol.*, 22, 1938, 395-418.
- (19) Harriman, Philip Lawrence: *The New Dictionary of Psychology*, Philosophical Library, New York, 1947.
- (20) Pratt, C. C.: *The Logic of Modern Psychology*, New York, Macmillan, 1939.
- (21) Dunlap, K.: "The use and abuse of abstractions in psychology," *Philos. Rev.*, 36, 1927.