

FEELING ID

Impulse

The unconscious.

Instinctual drives which the conscious mind must control.

The dark places of the mind.

The bear in the playroom cupboard.

The bogey under the bed.

Pan.

The Maenads.

The very devil.

Is that id? Are any of these id?

The link between them is a prevailing suspicion about unknown, dark, and perhaps very terrible forces. The child may choose to locate them in the cupboard. Ancient writers isolated them into less or more than human figures. Freudian psychologists have brought them home to roost inside ourselves.

None of which was much in my awareness, until I had this strange experience. I have tried to tell two or three people, at different times, the understandings I came to through it. I have seen them nod a little too quickly, and express interest in such a way that the conversation took to its heels and fled away from the discomfort I seem to have caused. Perhaps that is the experience madmen grow to recognise, as they try to convey their realities to us, the unconfined. I am left frustrated, wanting acceptance. Try again. Tell it all, this time.

It happened towards the end of a week-long COGS group, a leaderless encounter or personal growth group. A factor, as they say, was Ken; black-bearded, raging, storming. The id of the group, someone said. Towards the end of the week, when we had changed from our rational home-and-office personae, into open-eyed, sparkling, streaming, powerful Selves, another man dreamt that Ken got out at night, and all the cows in the neighbourhood gave birth to two-headed calves.

So there was that sort of input about the id.

On the fifth day the word *It* detached itself from every sentence I heard or uttered, and hung rocking in the air above me. *It*. Why did we, as expressed by our ancestors, have to make that word? As a pronoun for a neuter object, sure. But as an impersonal verbal construction? It began to sound more and more weird and unnecessary.

It's late.
It'll be all right.
What is it?
What is it?



The group was good. Which means that I functioned by now in it like one possessed, so completely in each piece of experience that I hardly noticed my-self.

I woke suddenly at four the next morning, after two hours' sleep. Three or four had been the nightly average on the week. Which is another factor. My heart was thudding heavily. I seemed to have gone into slow motion, into a long-drawn out perception of what perhaps happens as a rule subliminally, in the fraction of a second. A dentist's waiting room of the soul. Word-thoughts pushed at me, then rolled back like the Red Sea. What I wrote just afterwards was *flooding like thunder of the gap words had filled, came through my heart all in my*

belly my face my arms. But even the flooding was slow, mesmeric, inevitable. And through it, in the worst of the terror, I became triumphant, as the words *I Want* came into my awareness, detaching themselves from the blackness of my non-conscious self. Each word was enormous, magical, heavy with meaning.

I. Totality of the organism.

Want. Joyfully seize on my next activity.

Through this hard-to-convey slow motion of a process inside myself, I felt aware of an awe-ful decision-making mechanism usually outside my consciousness. *Id* always knows what I want. I felt delighted sureness of that. And awe at the body

of inputs *id* must deal with. All the information and sensation I had just received from the other dozen people on the week? the stomach's hunger? the bladder's distension? the clutch on the vagina? the blood's anxiety to nourish and protect? the vast array of all that has happened through every moment of my life, to be reviewed, sorted, made available as appropriate; the as-yet uncharted pulsing of in-built wishes for which we have few or no symbols in this culture.

Id suddenly seemed huge and powerful and totally trustworthy. If I trusted id, id would not father two-headed calves. Rather, if I let id, id would surely fashion my next second, hour, day, in response to the sum of myself until now. So I could say, id is the creation of this moment from every experience super-ego has allowed id. Id is a communication system. Id is the energy. Id is the totality, the right function of the whole organism.

But there is too the demon-id threat, the revelation of me of the next moment, of me I have not yet lived. Rightly perceived, I maintain, the terror is not of id, but of that translation of energy from id to consciousness, in the form of I Want. Terror of the unknown, the future, that is the id-terror. As we transfer epithets in the grammar books, we have transferred the terror of that oracular moment, the moment when the door is opening but we have not yet seen what is behind it, on to id itself.

I salute the early map-makers of our energy-sources, who isolated and named anything they could descry in the way of natural features or civilised adaptations. Unconscious, sub-conscious, id, ego, super-ego, ego-ideal; the mountains and oceans of our inner geography, and 'the conurbations and gaping mines and railways too.

But I feel that I am nearer an understanding of my functioning with a different analogy, this one.

My experience of living is through an osmotic membrane, a pig's bladder stretched between what is outside me and what is inside me. It is an elastic tissue, which will withstand powerful thrusts from either side. It is osmotic, forever allowing a flow between what is without and what is within, which means constant change of what is outside me through what is in me, and of what is in me through what is outside me. It is a muscular membrane, which I can hold taut to repel or negate, or leave flexible and permeable, to reverberate to the ever-larger world it allows into me.

The membrane is the boundary of id. Id is the centre, the drawer-in, putter-forth, balance-maker, informed life-force. By that curious revelation, that body experience, I experienced it as the trustworthy integrator of the whole organism.

*Let the bear out of the cupboard.
Trust Id.*