

Title

***GROUP PSYCHOLOGY
AND
THE ANALYSIS
OF
THE EGO***

BY

SIGMUND FREUD

PeBook, 2013

About this eBook

“Group Psychology and The Analysis of The Ego”; Sigmund Freud, 1922;

© PeBook, 2013

ISBN 978-961-6935-69-2 (ePub)

ISBN 978-961-6935-70-8 (mobi)

ISBN 978-961-6935-71-5 (pdf)

PeBook

Popular eBooks Publishing Co.

Menges, Slovenia

Email

Website: ***PeBook***

Published in electronic format, June 2013 by PeBook - Popular eBooks Publishing Co.

Available electronically at: ***eBookstore Bird***

Copyright and license

All rights reserved

Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise) without the prior written permission of the above publisher of this book.

License Notes

This eBook is licensed for your personal enjoyment only. This eBook may not be re-sold or given away to other people. If you would like to share this book with another person, please purchase an additional copy for each person you share it with. If you're reading this book and did not purchase it, or it was not purchased for your use only, then you should purchase your own copy. Thank you for respecting the author's work.

Contents

Title 2

About this eBook 3

Copyright and license 3

Contents 4

GROUP PSYCHOLOGY AND THE ANALYSIS OF THE EGO 5

I. Introduction 5

II. LE Bon`s description of the group mind 6

III. Other accounts of collective mental life 12

IV. Suggestion and libido 15

V. Two artificial groups: the church and the army 18

VI. Further problems and lines of work 22

VII. Identification 24

VIII. Being in love and hyphosis 28

IX. The herd instinct 31

X. The group and the primal horde 34

XI. A differentiating grade in the ego 37

XII. Postscript 40

GROUP PSYCHOLOGY AND THE ANALYSIS OF THE EGO

I. Introduction

The contrast between Individual Psychology and Social or Group¹ Psychology, which at a first glance may seem to be full of significance, loses a great deal of its sharpness when it is examined more closely. It is true that Individual Psychology is concerned with the individual man and explores the paths by which he seeks to find satisfaction for his instincts; but only rarely and under certain exceptional conditions is Individual Psychology in a position to disregard the relations of this individual to others. In the individual's mental life someone else is invariably involved, as a model, as an object, as a helper, as an opponent, and so from the very first Individual Psychology is at the same time Social Psychology as well - in this extended but entirely justifiable sense of the words.

The relations of an individual to his parents and to his brothers and sisters, to the object of his love, and to his physician - in fact all the relations which have hitherto been the chief subject of psycho-analytic research - may claim to be considered as social phenomena; and in this respect they may be contrasted with certain other processes, described by us as 'narcissistic', in which the satisfaction of the instincts is partially or totally withdrawn from the influence of other people. The contrast between social and narcissistic - Bleuler would perhaps call them 'autistic' - mental acts therefore falls wholly within the domain of Individual Psychology, and is not well calculated to differentiate it from a Social or Group Psychology.

The individual in the relations which have already been mentioned - to his parents and to his brothers and sisters, to the person he is in love with, to his friend, and to his physician - comes under the influence of only a single person, or of a very small number of persons, each one of whom has become enormously important to him. Now in speaking of Social or Group Psychology it has become usual to leave these relations on one side and to isolate as the subject of inquiry the influencing of an individual by a large number of people simultaneously, people with whom he is connected by something, though otherwise they may in many respects be strangers to him. Group Psychology is therefore concerned with the individual man as a member of a race, of a nation, of a caste, of a profession, of an institution, or as a component part of a crowd of people who have been organised into a group at some particular time for some definite purpose. When once natural continuity has been severed in this way, it is easy to regard the phenomena that appear under these special conditions as being expressions of a special instinct that is not further reducible, the social instinct ('herd instinct', 'group mind'), which does not come to light in any other situations. But we may perhaps venture to object that it seems difficult to attribute to the factor of number a significance so great as to make it capable by itself or arousing in our mental life a new instinct that is otherwise not brought into play. Our expectation is therefore directed towards two other possibilities: that the social instinct may not be a primitive one and unsusceptible of dissection, and that it may be possible to discover the beginnings of its development in a narrower circle, such as that of the family.

¹ ['Group' is used throughout this translation as equivalent to the rather more comprehensive German 'Masse'. The author uses this latter word to render both McDougall's 'group', and also Le Bon's 'foule', which would more naturally be translated 'crowd' in English. For the sake of uniformity, however, 'group' has been preferred in this case as well, and has been substituted for 'crowd' even in the extracts from the English translation of Le Bon.— Translator..]

Although Group Psychology is only in its infancy, it embraces an immense number of separate issues and offers to investigators countless problems which have hitherto not even been properly distinguished from one another. The mere classification of the different forms of group formation and the description of the mental phenomena produced by them require a great expenditure of observation and exposition, and have already given rise to a copious literature. Anyone who compares the narrow dimensions of this little book with the extent of Group Psychology will at once be able to guess that only a few points chosen from the whole material are to be dealt with here. And they will in fact only be a few questions with which the depth-psychology of psycho-analysis is specially concerned.

II. LE Bon's description of the group mind

Instead of starting from a definition, it seems more useful to begin with some indication of the range of the phenomena under review, and to select from among them a few specially striking and characteristic facts to which our inquiry can be attached. We can achieve both of these aims by means of quotation from Le Bon's deservedly famous work *Psychologie des foules*.²

Let us make the matter clear once again. If a Psychology, concerned with exploring the predispositions, the instincts, the motives and the aims of an individual man down to his actions and his relations with those who are nearest to him, had completely achieved its task, and had cleared up the whole of these matters with their inter-connections, it would then suddenly find itself confronted by a new task which would lie before it unachieved. It would be obliged to explain the surprising fact that under a certain condition this individual whom it had come to understand thought, felt, and acted in quite a different way from what would have been expected. And this condition is his insertion into a collection of people which has acquired the characteristic of a 'psychological group'. What, then, is a 'group'? How does it acquire the capacity for exercising such a decisive influence over the mental life of the individual? And what is the nature of the mental change which it forces upon the individual?

It is the task of a theoretical Group Psychology to answer these three questions. The best way of approaching them is evidently to start with the third. Observation of the changes in the individual's reactions is what provides Group Psychology with its material; for every attempt at an explanation must be preceded by a description of the thing that is to be explained.

I will now let Le Bon speak for himself. He says: 'The most striking peculiarity presented by a psychological group³ is the following. Whoever be the individuals that compose it, however like or unlike be their mode of life, their occupations, their character, or their intelligence, the fact that they have been transformed into a group puts them in possession of a sort of collective mind which makes them feel, think, and act in a manner quite different from that in which each individual of them would feel, think, and act were he in a state of isolation. There are certain ideas and feelings which do not come into being, or do not transform themselves into acts except in the case of individuals forming a group. The psychological group is a provisional being formed of heterogeneous elements, which for a moment are combined, exactly as the cells which constitute a living body form by their reunion a new being which displays characteristics very different from those possessed by each of the cells singly.' (p. 29.)

² *The Crowd: a Study of the Popular Mind*. Fisher Unwin 12th. Impression, 1920.

³ (See footnote 1.)