

DREAMS

The study of dreams occupies a particular place in psychoanalysis. *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Freud, 1900) was as revolutionary and as monumental a contribution to psychology as the *Origin of Species* was to biology a half century earlier. As late as 1931 Freud himself wrote, in a foreword to the third edition of Brill's translation of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, "It contains, even according to my present-day judgment, the most valuable of all the discoveries it has been my good fortune to make. Insight such as this falls to one's lot but once in a lifetime." Moreover, his success in understanding dreams was of immense help to him during the early years of this century, at a time when his professional work was of necessity carried on in complete isolation from his medical colleagues. In that difficult time he was struggling to understand and to learn how to treat successfully the neuroses from which his patients suffered. As we know from his letters (Freud, 1954) he was often discouraged and sometimes even in despair. Yet however discouraged he might be, he was able to take courage from the discoveries which he had made about dreams. There he knew that he was on firm ground and this knowledge gave him the confidence that he needed in order to go forward (Freud, 1933).

Freud was certainly right in valuing his work on dreams so highly. In no other phenomenon of normal psychic life are so many of the unconscious processes of the mind revealed so clearly and made so accessible to study. Dreams are indeed a

royal road to the unconscious reaches of the mind. Yet even this does not exhaust the reasons for their importance and value to the psychoanalyst. The fact is that the study of dreams does not simply lead to an understanding of unconscious mental processes and contents in general. It leads particularly to those mental contents which have been repressed, or otherwise excluded from consciousness and discharge by the defensive activities of the ego. Since it is precisely the part of the id which has been barred from consciousness that is involved in the pathogenic processes which give rise to neuroses and perhaps to psychoses as well, one can readily understand that this characteristic of dreams is still another, very important reason for the special place that the study of dreams occupies in psychoanalysis.

The psychoanalytic theory of dreams may be formulated as follows. The subjective experience which appears in consciousness during sleep and which, after waking, is referred to by the sleeper as a dream is only the end result of unconscious mental activity during sleep which, by its nature or its intensity, threatens to interfere with sleep itself. Instead of waking, the sleeper dreams. We call the conscious experience during sleep, which the sleeper may or may not recall after waking, the *manifest dream*. Its various elements are referred to as the *manifest dream content*. The unconscious thoughts and wishes which threaten to waken the sleeper we call the *latent dream content*. The unconscious mental operations by which the latent dream content is transformed into the manifest dream we call the *dream work*.

It is of the utmost importance to keep these distinctions clearly in mind. A failure to do so constitutes the greatest source of the frequent confusion and misunderstandings that arise concerning the psychoanalytic theory of dreams. Strictly speaking, the word "dream" (in psychoanalytic terminology) should only be used to designate the total phenomenon of which the latent dream content, the dream work, and the

manifest dream are the several, component parts. In practice, in the psychoanalytic literature, "dream" is very often used to designate "manifest dream." Usually when this is done it leads to no confusion if the reader is well acquainted with the psychoanalytic theory of dreams already. For example, the statement, "The patient had the following dream," when followed by the verbal text of the manifest dream, leaves no doubt in the mind of the informed reader that the word "dream" is intended to mean "manifest dream." However, it is essential for the reader who is not yet fully at home in the field of dream theory to ask himself what the author meant by the unqualified word "dream" whenever he encounters it in the psychoanalytic literature. There is another term which in practice appears in the literature and in discussion and which it is convenient to define here. This is the phrase, "the meaning of a dream," or, "a dream means." Properly speaking the meaning of a dream can signify only the latent dream content. In our present discussion we shall try to keep our terminology precise in order to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding.

Having defined the three component parts of a dream, let us proceed to a discussion of that part which we believe initiates the process of dreaming, namely of the latent dream content. This content is divisible into three major categories. The first category is an obvious one. It comprises nocturnal sensory impressions. Such impressions are continually impinging on the sleeper's sense organs and at times some of them take part in initiating a dream, in which case they form part of the latent content of that dream. Examples of such sensations are familiar to all of us. The sound of an alarm clock, thirst, hunger, urinary or fecal urgency, pain from an injury or disease process, or from the cramped position of some part of the body, uncomfortable heat or cold, all can be a part of the latent dream content. In this connection it is important to bear two facts in mind. The first is that most nocturnal sensory stimuli do not

disturb sleep, even to the extent of participating in the formation of a dream. On the contrary, the vast majority of the impulses from our sensory apparatus are without discernible effect upon our minds during sleep. This is true even of sensations which in our waking state we should evaluate as rather intense. There are persons who can sleep through a violent thunderstorm without either waking or dreaming, despite the fact that their hearing is quite normally acute. The second fact is that a disturbing sensory impression during sleep can have the effect of waking the sleeper directly, without any dream, at least as far as we can tell. This is particularly obvious in those situations in which we are sleeping "with one ear cocked," or "with one eye open," as happens for example with parents when a child in the family is sick. In such a case the parent will often waken immediately at the first disturbing sound from the child, however slight its intensity.

The second category of the latent dream content comprises thoughts and ideas which are connected with the activities and the preoccupations of the dreamer's current, waking life and which remain unconsciously active in his mind during sleep. Because of their continued activity they tend toward waking the sleeper, in the same way as impinging sensory stimuli during sleep tend to do. If the sleeper dreams instead of waking, these thoughts and ideas act as part of the latent dream content. Examples are innumerable. They include the whole variety of interests and memories which are ordinarily accessible to the ego, with whatever feelings of hope or fear, pride or humiliation, interest or repugnance which may accompany them. They may be thoughts about an entertainment of the night before, concern about an unfinished task, the anticipation of a happy event in the future, or whatever else one might care to imagine that is of *current* interest in the sleeper's life.

The third category comprises one or several id impulses which, at least in their original, infantile form, are barred by the ego's defenses from consciousness or direct gratification

in waking life. This is the part of the id which Freud called "the repressed" in his monograph on the structural hypothesis of the psychic apparatus (Freud, 1923), although he later favored the view, now generally accepted by psychoanalysts, that repression is not the only defense which the ego employs against id impulses which are inadmissible to consciousness. Nevertheless, the original term, "the repressed," continues in current usage to designate this part of the id. With this understanding, therefore, we may say that the third category of the latent dream content in any particular dream is an impulse, or impulses, from the repressed part of the id. Since the most important and far-reaching of the ego's defenses against the id are those which are instituted during the preoedipal and oedipal phases of the child's life, it follows that id impulses from those early years are the chief content of the repressed. Accordingly, that part of the latent dream content which derives from the repressed is generally childish or infantile, that is to say, it consists of a wish appropriate to and stemming from early childhood.

As we can see, this is in contrast to the first two categories of the latent dream content, which comprise, respectively, *current* sensations and *current* concerns. Naturally in childhood the current and the childish may coincide. However, as far as dreams of later childhood and adult life are concerned, the latent content has two sources, the one in the present and the other in the past.

We naturally wish to know what is the relative importance of the three parts of the latent content and whether all three are to be found in the latent content of every dream. As to the first question, Freud (1933) declared unequivocally that the *essential* part of the latent content is that which comes from the repressed. He believed that it is this part which contributes the major share of the psychic energy necessary for dreaming and that without its participation there can be no dream. A nocturnal sensory stimulus, however intense it may

be, must, as Freud expressed it, enlist the aid of one or more wishes from the repressed before it can give rise to a dream and the same thing is true of the concerns of waking life, however compelling may be their claim on the sleeper's attention and interest.

As to the second question, it follows from our answer to the first one that one or more wishes or impulses from the repressed are an essential part of the latent content of every dream. It also appears to be the case that at least some concerns from current, waking life are a part of every latent dream content. Nocturnal sensations, on the other hand, are not demonstrable in the latent content of every dream, although they play a conspicuous role in some dreams.

We wish now to consider the relationship between the latent dream content and the manifest dream, or, to be more specific, the elements or content of the manifest dream. Depending on the dream, this relationship may be very simple or very complex, but there is one element that is constant. The latent content is unconscious, while the manifest content is conscious. The simplest possible relationship between the two, therefore, would be that the latent content become conscious.

It is possible that this does happen occasionally in the case of sensory stimuli during sleep. For example, a person may be told in the morning, after waking, that fire engines passed the house during the night while he was asleep and he may then recall that he heard a fire siren in his sleep. However, we should probably be inclined to look on such an experience as a borderline or transitional experience between ordinary, waking perception and a typical dream rather than to classify it as a true dream. We might even suspect that the sleeper awoke momentarily when he heard the sirens, although we must admit that this cannot be more than an assumption on our part.

In any case, for our present purposes we shall do better to confine ourselves to a consideration of phenomena which are

unquestionably dreams. Of these, it is the dreams of early childhood in which we find the simplest relationship between latent and manifest content. For one thing, in such dreams we need not distinguish between infantile and current concerns. They are one and the same. For another thing, there is not as yet any clear distinction to be made between the repressed and the rest of the id, since the very little child's ego has not yet developed to the point of having erected permanent defenses against any of the impulses of the id.

Let us take as an example the dream of a two-year-old whose mother had just returned from the hospital with a new baby. On the morning after his mother's return he reported a dream with the following manifest content: "See baby go away." What was the latent content of this dream? Ordinarily this is something that we can determine only from the dreamer's associations, that is by the use of the psychoanalytic method. Naturally, a two-year-old child cannot understand or consciously cooperate in such an undertaking. However, in this case we can justifiably take the child's known behavior and attitude toward the new baby, which were hostile and rejecting, as the equivalents of associations to the manifest content of the dream. If we do so, we can conclude that the latent content of the dream was a hostile impulse toward the new baby and a wish to destroy or get rid of it.

Now what is the relationship between the latent and the manifest content of the dream in our example? The answer seems to be that the manifest content differs from the latent one in the following respects. First, as we have already said, the former is conscious and the latter, unconscious. Second, the manifest content is a visual image, while the latent content is something like a wish or impulse. Finally, the manifest content is a fantasy which represents the latent wish or impulse as gratified, that is, it is a fantasy which consists essentially of the gratification of the latent wish or impulse. We may say then that in the case we have chosen as an example, the rela-

tion between the latent and the manifest dream content is that the manifest dream is a conscious fantasy that the latent wish has been or is being gratified, expressed in the form of a visual image or experience. Consequently, the dream work in this example consisted of the formation or selection of a wish-fulfilling fantasy and its representation in visual form.

This is the relationship that obtains between the latent and the manifest dream content in all of the dreams of early childhood, as far as we know. Moreover, it is the basic pattern for this relationship which is followed in the dreams of later childhood and of adult life as well, even though in these more complex dreams the pattern is elaborated and complicated by factors which we shall discuss shortly.

First, however, we note that the process of dreaming is in essence a process of gratifying an id impulse in fantasy. We can better understand now how it happens that a dream makes it possible for a sleeper to keep on sleeping instead of being wakened by a disturbing, unconscious mental activity. It is because the disturbing wish or impulse from the id, which regularly forms a part of the latent content of the dream, is gratified in fantasy and in that way loses at least some of its urgency and hence some of its power to waken the sleeper.

Conversely, we understand that the fact that the manifest dream is regularly a wish fulfillment is due to the nature of the latent content, which after all is the initiator of the dream as well as its principal source of psychic energy. The id element which plays this role in the latent content can only press constantly for gratification, since this is the very nature of the instinctual drives of which it is a derivative. What happens in a dream is that a partial gratification is achieved by means of fantasy, since full gratification through appropriate action is rendered impossible by the state of sleep. Since motility is blocked, fantasy is used as a substitute. If we express the same idea in terms of psychic energy, we shall say that the cathexis which is attached to the id element in the latent content

activates the psychic apparatus to carry out the dream work and achieves partial discharge via the wish-fulfilling, fantasy image which constitutes the manifest dream.

At this point we must take account of the obvious fact that the manifest content of most of the dreams of later childhood and of adult life is not at all recognizable as a wish fulfillment on first, or even on second glance. Some dreams, indeed, have as their manifest content images which are sad or even frightening, and this fact has been cited repeatedly in the past fifty years as an argument to disprove Freud's assertion that every manifest dream is a fantasied wish fulfillment. How can we understand this apparent discrepancy between our theory and the obvious facts?

The answer to our question is a very simple one. As we have said, in the case of the dreams of early childhood the latent dream content gives rise, via the dream work, to a manifest dream which is a fantasy of the satisfaction of the impulse or wish which constitutes the latent content. This fantasy is experienced by the dreamer in the form of sensory impressions. The same obvious relationship between the latent and the manifest dream content is sometimes found in a dream of later life. These dreams closely resemble the simple ones of early childhood. However, it is more often the case that the manifest content of a dream of later life is the *disguised* and *distorted* version of a wish-fulfilling fantasy, experienced predominantly as a visual image, or a series of visual images. The disguise and distortion are often so extensive that the wish-fulfilling aspect of the manifest dream is quite unrecognizable. Indeed, as we all know, the manifest dream is sometimes a mere hodgepodge of apparently unrelated fragments and seems to make no sense whatever, much less to represent the fulfillment of a wish. At other times the disguise and distortion are present in such high degree that the manifest dream is actually experienced as frightening and unwelcome, rather than retain-

ing the pleasurable character that we should expect a wish-fulfilling fantasy to have.

It is the dream work which creates the disguise and distortion which are such prominent features of the manifest dreams of later childhood and of adult life. We are interested to know what processes are involved in the dream work and how each of them contributes to disguising the latent content so that it is no longer recognizable in the manifest dream.

Freud was able to show that there are two principal factors to be considered in connection with the dream work and one subsidiary one. The first principal factor, which is, indeed, the very essence of the dream work, is that it is a translation into the language of the primary process of those parts of the latent content which are not already expressed in that language, followed by a condensation of all of the elements of the latent content into a wish-fulfilling fantasy. The second principal factor consists of the defensive operations of the ego, which exercise a profound influence on the process of translation and fantasy formation, an influence which Freud likened to that of a news censor with wide powers to suppress objectionable items. The third, subsidiary factor is what Freud called secondary elaboration.

Let us consider each of these factors in turn. In the first place, as we have said, the dream work consists of the translation into primary process thinking of that part of the latent dream content which is originally expressed according to the secondary process. This would ordinarily include what we have called the concerns and interests of current life. Moreover, as Freud pointed out, this translation occurs in a certain way. As he put it, there is a regard for the possibility of expressing the result of the translation in the form of a plastic, visual image. This regard for plastic representability, of course, corresponds to the fact that the manifest dream content consists principally of such images. A similar regard for plastic representability is exercised consciously in some activities of

normal, waking life, as for example in charades and in composing cartoons and rebuses.

Another consideration that doubtless affects this process of translation in the dream work is the nature of the latent dream elements which are already in primary process language, that is, essentially, the memories, images, and fantasies associated with the wish or impulse from the repressed. In other words, the dream work will tend to translate the current concerns of waking life into terms or images that stand in as close a relationship as possible to the material which is connected or associated with the repressed. At the same time, of the several, or even, perhaps, of the many fantasies of gratification which are associated with the repressed impulse, the dream work chooses that one which can most easily be brought into connection with the translated current concerns of waking life. All of this is a necessarily clumsy way of saying that the dream work effects as close an approximation as possible among the various latent dream elements in the course of translating into primary process language those parts of the latent content that need translating, while at the same time creating or selecting a fantasy which represents the gratification of the impulse from the repressed that is also a part of the latent content. As we said in the previous paragraph, all of this is done with regard to visual representability. In addition, the process of approximation which we have just described makes it possible for a single image to represent several latent dream elements simultaneously. This results in a high degree of what Freud called "condensation," which is to say that, at least in the vast majority of cases, the manifest dream is a highly condensed version of the thoughts, sensations and wishes which make up the latent dream content.

Before we proceed to a discussion of the part played in the dream work by the ego's defenses, we may pause to ask whether that part of the dream work which we have already discussed is responsible for any part of the disguise and dis-

tortion which we have said characterizes most manifest dreams and, if so, how great a role it plays in this direction.

It is understandable that expressing concerns of waking life in the language of the primary process should result in a considerable degree of distortion of their meaning and content. However, the reader may well ask why this psychic operation should have the effect of rendering its end result unintelligible to the dreamer. After all, the person who *composes* a cartoon, a charade, or a rebus can understand the meaning of its images, despite the fact that the meaning has been expressed in the language of the primary process. In fact, the meaning of these creations is grasped by many persons other than the composer himself. Moreover, ideas which are expressed in the language of the primary process are intelligible to us in other situations, as for example in the case of witticisms, as we saw in Chapter VI. Why then should a manifest dream be unintelligible, simply because it contains ideas which are expressed via the primary process?

One part of the answer to this question would appear to be the following. Wit, cartoons, rebuses, and even charades, are all composed with a special requirement, namely that they be intelligible. They must communicate a meaning to an actual or potential audience if they are to be "good." A manifest dream, on the other hand, is subject to no such restriction. It is merely the end result of a process which aims at the fantasied gratification of a wish, or, alternatively expressed, at the discharge of enough of the psychic energy associated with the latent dream content to prevent this content from awakening the sleeper. It is not surprising, therefore, that the manifest dream is not generally immediately comprehensible even to the sleeper himself.

However, the second of the principal factors which we have mentioned as participating in the dream work plays much the more important role in disguising the latent dream content and making the manifest dream unintelligible. This second

factor, as the reader will remember, is the operation of the defenses of the ego. We may note in passing that Freud's first description of this factor long preceded his formulation of the structural hypothesis concerning the psychic apparatus, of which the terms "ego" and "defenses" are a part. For that reason he had to devise a name for the factor in question and the one that he chose, as we said above, was "the dream censor," a most apt and evocative term.

In order to understand clearly the operation of the ego's defenses in the process of the formation of the manifest dream, we must first recognize that it affects the different parts of the latent dream content to different degrees. The part of the latent content consisting of nocturnal sensations is ordinarily subject to no defensive operations of the ego, unless, perhaps, we should consider that the ego attempts to deny all such sensations in consequence of its wish to sleep. However, we are really not certain whether this attitude of the sleeper toward nocturnal sensations is an ego defense in the usual meaning of the term and we may safely leave it out of consideration for the purposes of our present discussion.

In marked contrast to nocturnal sensations, the part of the latent dream content which consists of wishes or impulses from the repressed is directly opposed by the defenses of the ego. We know indeed that this opposition is a long-standing and essentially permanent one and that its presence is the reason for our speaking of "the repressed." We have no difficulty, therefore, in understanding that the ego's defenses tend to oppose the appearance of this part of the latent dream content in the conscious, manifest dream, since they are permanently opposed to its appearance in consciousness in waking life as well. It is the opposition of the defenses of the ego to this part of the latent content of the dream which is principally responsible for the fact that the manifest dream is so often incomprehensible as such and quite unrecognizable as a wish-fulfilling, fantasy image.

The remaining part of the latent dream content, that is, the current concerns of waking life, occupies a position with respect to the ego's defenses which is intermediary between those of the two parts which we have just discussed. Many of the concerns of waking life are unobjectionable to the ego except, perhaps, as potential disturbers of sleep. Some are even considered by the ego to be pleasurable and desirable. However, there are other current concerns which are directly unpleasurable to the ego as sources of either anxiety or guilt. During sleep, therefore, the ego's defense mechanisms attempt to bar from consciousness these sources of unpleasure. The reader will remember from our discussion in Chapter IV that it is unpleasure, or the prospect of unpleasure, that calls into action the ego's defenses in general. In the case of such latent dream elements as we are presently discussing, we believe that the strength of the ego's unconscious opposition to them is proportional to the intensity of the anxiety or guilt, that is, of unpleasure, which is associated with them.

We see then that the ego's defenses strongly oppose the entry into consciousness of the part of the latent dream content which derives from the repressed and oppose more or less strongly, as the case may be, various of the concerns of waking life which are also a part of the latent content. However, by definition, the unconscious thoughts, strivings and sensations which we call the latent content of the dream do in fact succeed in forcing their way into consciousness, where they appear as a manifest dream. The ego cannot prevent this, but it can and does influence the dream work so that the manifest dream is unrecognizably distorted and consequently unintelligible. Thus the incomprehensibility of most manifest dreams is not due simply to the fact that they are expressed in the language of the primary process with no regard for intelligibility. The major reason for their incomprehensibility is that the ego's defenses *make* them that way.

Freud (1933) called the manifest dream a "compromise

formation," by which he meant that its various elements could be thought of as compromises between the opposing forces of the latent dream content, on the one hand, and those of the defenses of the ego, on the other. As we shall see in Chapter VIII, a neurotic symptom is likewise a compromise formation between an element of the repressed and the defenses of the ego.

Perhaps a simple example might be helpful at this point. Let us assume that the dreamer is a woman and that the part of the latent dream content deriving from the repressed is a wish, originating in the dreamer's oedipal phase, for a sexual relationship with her father. This might be represented in the manifest dream, in accordance with an appropriate fantasy from that period of life, by an image of the dreamer and her father fighting together with an accompanying feeling of sexual excitement. However, if the ego's defenses oppose such an undisguised expression of this oedipal wish, the sexual excitement may be barred from consciousness, with the result that the manifest dream element becomes merely an image of fighting with father, with no attendant sexual excitement. If this is still too close to the original fantasy to be tolerated by the ego without anxiety or guilt, the image of the father may fail to appear, and instead an image may appear in which the dreamer is fighting with someone else, for example, with her own son. If the image of fighting is still too close to the original fantasy, it may be replaced by some other physical activity, as, for example, dancing, so that the manifest dream element is that of the dreamer dancing with her son. Even this may be objectionable to the ego, however, and instead of the manifest dream element just described there may appear in the dream an image of a strange woman with a boy who is her son, in a room with a polished floor.

We should really end this series of examples with the words "and so on," since the possibilities for disguising the true nature of any element of the latent dream content are, for

practical purposes, infinite in number. In fact, of course, it is the balance between the strength of the defenses and that of the latent dream element which will determine how closely or how distantly related is the manifest to the latent dream, that is, how much disguise has been imposed on the latent dream element during the dream work. Incidentally, in the example given in the previous paragraph, the reader should understand that each of the manifest dream images which were described is a separate possibility which might appear in a particular dream under the proper circumstances. The example is *not* intended to imply that, in a particular dream, manifest content "A" is tried first, then, if the ego will not tolerate "A," "B" is substituted, if not "B," then "C," and so forth. On the contrary, depending on the balance of forces between the defenses and the latent dream element, either "A" or "B" or "C," etc., will appear in the manifest dream.

As might be expected, our example did not exhaust, or even suggest, the variety of "compromise formations" that are possible between defense and latent content. Anything approaching a complete list of such possibilities would be quite beyond the scope of the present chapter, but there are a few important or typical ones that we should mention. For one thing, things that belong together in the latent content may appear in widely separated parts of the manifest content. Thus, the dreamer of the example which we gave above might have seen herself fighting with someone in one part of the manifest dream, while her father was present in quite a different part. Such disruptions of connections are common results of the dream work.

Another common "compromise" phenomenon is that a part, or even all, of the manifest dream is very vague. As Freud pointed out, this invariably indicates that the opposition of the defenses to the corresponding element or elements of the latent dream is very great. True, the defenses were not quite strong enough to prevent the part of the manifest dream

in question from appearing in consciousness altogether, but they were strong enough to keep it from being more than half or vaguely conscious.

The affects or emotions which belong to the latent dream content are also subjected to a variety of vicissitudes by the dream work. We have already illustrated the possibility that such an emotion, which in the case of our example was sexual excitement, might not appear in the manifest content at all. Another possibility is that the emotion may appear with greatly diminished intensity or somewhat altered in form. Thus, for instance, what was rage in the latent content may appear as annoyance, or as a mild dislike in the manifest content, or may even be represented by an awareness of *not* being annoyed. Closely related to the last of these alternatives is the possibility that an affect belonging to the latent dream content may be represented in the manifest dream by its opposite. A latent longing may therefore appear as a manifest repugnance, or vice versa, hate may appear as love, sadness as joy, and so on. Such changes, of course, represent a "compromise," in Freud's sense of the word, between the ego and latent content and introduce an enormous element of disguise into the manifest dream.

No discussion of affects in dreams would be complete without including the particular affect of anxiety. As we mentioned earlier in the course of this chapter, some of Freud's critics have attempted to disprove his statement that every manifest dream is a wish fulfillment on the basis that there exists a whole class of dreams in which anxiety is a prominent feature of the manifest content. In the psychoanalytic literature these dreams are usually called anxiety dreams. In nonanalytic literature the most severe of them are referred to as nightmares. The most extensive psychoanalytic study of the latter is that by Jones (1931). In general we may say of anxiety dreams that they signal a failure in the defensive operations of the ego. What has happened is that an element of the latent

dream content has succeeded, despite the efforts of the ego's defenses, in forcing its way into consciousness, that is, into the manifest dream content, in a form which is too direct or too recognizable for the ego to tolerate. The consequence is that the ego reacts with anxiety. On this basis we can understand, as Jones pointed out, that oedipal fantasies appear in the manifest content of the classical nightmare with relatively little disguise and that, indeed, sexual gratification and terror are not infrequently present together in the conscious or manifest portion of such dreams.

There is another class of dreams which is closely related to anxiety dreams and which are often referred to as punishment dreams. In these dreams, as in so many others, the ego anticipates guilt, that is, superego condemnation, if the part of the latent content which derives from the repressed should find too direct an expression in the manifest dream. Consequently the ego's defenses oppose the emergence of this part of the latent content, which is again no different from what goes on in most other dreams. However, the result in the so-called punishment dreams is that the manifest dream, instead of expressing a more or less disguised fantasy of the fulfillment of a repressed wish, expresses a more or less disguised fantasy of punishment for the wish in question, certainly a most extraordinary "compromise" among ego, id, and superego.

At this point we must pose a question which may already have occurred to the reader. We have said that in dreams an unconscious wish or impulse from the repressed appears in consciousness, though more or less disguised, as the wish-fulfilling fantasy image which constitutes a manifest dream. Now, by definition, this is precisely what an impulse belonging to the repressed cannot do. That is to say, we have defined "the repressed" as comprising those id impulses, with their directly associated fantasies, memories, and so forth, which the ego's defenses permanently bar from direct access to con-

sciousness. How then can the repressed appear in consciousness in a dream?

The answer to this question lies in the psychology of sleep (Freud, 1916b). During sleep, perhaps because the path to motility is effectively barred, the strength of the ego's defenses is considerably diminished. It is as though the ego said, "I don't have to worry about these objectionable impulses. They can't do anything as long as I'm asleep and stay in bed." On the other hand, Freud assumed that the drive cathexes at the disposal of the repressed, that is, the strength with which they push toward becoming conscious, is not significantly reduced during sleep. Thus sleep tends to produce a relative weakening of the defenses vis-à-vis the repressed, with the result that the latter has a better chance of becoming conscious during sleep than during waking life.

We should realize that this difference between sleep and waking life is one of degree rather than one of kind. It is true that during sleep an element of the repressed has a *better chance* of becoming conscious than it has during waking life, but, as we have seen, in many dreams the ego's defenses introduce or compel such a high degree of distortion and disguise during the dream work that the access of the repressed to consciousness is hardly a very direct one in those cases. Conversely, under certain circumstances, elements of the repressed may gain fairly direct access to consciousness during waking life. For example, in Chapter VI, the case of the patient who "accidentally" knocked down an old man with his car at a busy intersection illustrates how an oedipal impulse from the repressed may momentarily control behavior and thus achieve rather direct expression even during waking life. Since other phenomena which illustrate the same point are by no means rare, it is clear that we cannot directly contrast sleep and waking life in this respect. However, the fact remains that by and large the repressed will appear in a manifest dream

more directly than it is apt to do in the conscious thought or behavior of waking life.

As we have said there is still another process, much less important than the two which we have discussed so far, which contributes to the final form of the manifest dream and which may add to its lack of intelligibility. This process might well be considered to be the final phase of the dream work, although Freud (1933) preferred to separate the two. He called this final process secondary elaboration. By it he meant the attempts on the part of the ego to mold the manifest dream content into a semblance of logic and coherence. The ego attempts, as it were, to make the manifest dream "sensible" in just the same way as it tries to "make sense" of whatever impressions come within its domain.

We wish now to say a few words about a characteristic of the manifest dream to which we have already referred several times and which, on a purely descriptive level, is its most typical feature. This is the fact that a manifest dream nearly always consists chiefly of visual impressions. Indeed, it not infrequently consists exclusively of such impressions. However, other sensations may be perceived as part of the manifest dream as well.¹ Next in frequency to visual sensory experiences in the manifest dream come auditory ones and occasionally any of the other modalities of sensation may appear in the manifest dream. It is also by no means rare for thoughts, or fragments of thoughts to appear as parts of the manifest dream in later life, as, for example, when a dreamer reports, "I saw a man with a beard and I knew he was going to visit a friend of mine." Nevertheless, when such thoughts do appear in a manifest dream they nearly always occupy a position in it which is distinctly subordinate to that of the sensory impressions.

¹ The reader will note that we are referring here to sensory experiences which are consciously perceived by the dreamer as a part of the manifest dream and *not* to whatever nocturnal sensations may be a part of the latent dream content.

As we all know from our own experience, the sensory impressions of a manifest dream command full credence while we are asleep. They are just as real to us as our waking sensory perceptions. In this respect these elements of the manifest dream are comparable to the hallucinations which are often present as symptoms in cases of severe mental illness. Indeed, Freud (1916b) referred to dreams as transient psychoses, though there is no doubt that dreams are not in themselves pathological phenomena. The problem therefore arises of accounting for the fact that the end result of the dream work, that is, the manifest dream, is essentially a hallucination, albeit a normal, sleeping one.

In his first formulation of the psychology of the dream, Freud (1900) explained this characteristic of the manifest dream in terms of what we suggested in Chapter III might be called the telescopic theory of the psychic apparatus. According to that theory the normal course of psychic discharge was from the perceptual end of the apparatus to the motor end, where the psychic energy involved was discharged in action. This formulation was undoubtedly based on the model of the reflex arc, where the course of the nerve impulse is from sense organ, through central neurones, and out along the motor pathway. Freud proposed that, since motor discharge is blocked in sleep, the path taken through the psychic apparatus by the psychic energy of the dream is necessarily *reversed*, with the result that the *perceptual* end of the apparatus is activated in the process of psychic discharge and consequently a sensory image appears in consciousness, just as it does when the perceptual system is activated by an external stimulus. It is for this reason that a sensory image in a manifest dream appears to be real to the dreamer.

In terms of the present-day psychoanalytic theory of the psychic apparatus, the so-called structural hypothesis, we should formulate our explanation of the fact that the manifest dream is essentially a hallucination about as follows. During

sleep many of the ego's functions are more or less suspended. As examples, we have already mentioned the diminution in the ego's defenses during sleep and the nearly complete cessation of voluntary motor activity. What is important for our present argument is that during sleep there is also a marked impairment in the ego's function of reality testing, that is, in its ability to differentiate between stimuli of internal and of external origin. In addition to this, there also occurs in sleep a profound regression in ego functioning to a level characteristic of very early life. For example, thinking is in the mode of the primary rather than of the secondary process and is even largely preverbal, that is, it consists largely of sensory images which are primarily visual ones. Perhaps the loss of reality testing is also merely a consequence of the far-reaching ego regression that occurs during sleep. In any case, during sleep there is both a tendency for thinking to be in preverbal, largely visual images and inability on the part of the ego to recognize that these images arise from inner rather than from outer stimuli. It is as a result of these factors, we believe, that the manifest dream is essentially a visual hallucination.

One easily observable fact that speaks in favor of the explanation which is based on the structural hypothesis as opposed to the simpler explanation based on the telescopic hypothesis is the following. During many dreams, the capacity to test reality is not entirely lost. The dreamer is aware to some extent even while he is dreaming that what he is experiencing is not real, or is "only a dream." Such a partial preservation of the function of reality testing is difficult to reconcile with the explanation based on the telescopic hypothesis. It is, however, perfectly compatible with the one based on the structural hypothesis.

This concludes what we have to say about the psychoanalytic theory of the nature of dreams. We have discussed the three parts of a dream, that is, the latent content, the dream work, and the manifest content, and have tried to indi-

cate how the dream work operates and what factors influence it. In practice, of course, when one attempts to study an individual dream, one is confronted by a manifest content and has then the task of ascertaining in some way what the latent content might be. When it is successful and we are able to discover the latent content of a dream, we say that we have interpreted the dream or discovered its meaning.

The task of interpreting dreams is pretty well limited to psychoanalytic therapy, since it generally requires the application of the psychoanalytic technique. We shall not discuss dream interpretation here because it is, in fact, a technical procedure and is properly a part of psychoanalytic practice rather than of psychoanalytic theory.

SUGGESTED READING

- FREUD, S. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. London: Hogarth Press, 1953.
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