

[3] This idea has been borrowed from *The Theory of Sleep* by Liébault, who revived hypnotic investigation in our days. (*Du Sommeil provoqué*, etc.; Paris, 1889.)

VII

THE FUNCTION OF THE DREAM

Since we know that the foreconscious is suspended during the night by the wish to sleep, we can proceed to an intelligent investigation of the dream process. But let us first sum up the knowledge of this process already gained. We have shown that the waking activity leaves day remnants from which the sum of energy cannot be entirely removed; or the waking activity revives during the day one of the unconscious wishes; or both conditions occur simultaneously; we have already discovered the many variations that may take place. The unconscious wish has already made its way to the day remnants, either during the day or at any rate with the beginning of sleep, and has effected a transference to it. This produces a wish transferred to the recent material, or the suppressed recent wish comes to life again through a reinforcement from the unconscious. This wish now endeavors to make its way to consciousness on the normal path of the mental processes through the foreconscious, to which indeed it belongs through one of its constituent elements. It is confronted, however, by the censor, which is still active, and to the influence of which it now succumbs. It now takes on the distortion for which the way has already been paved by its transference to the recent material. Thus far it is in the way of becoming something resembling an obsession, delusion, or the like, *_i.e._* a thought reinforced by a transference and distorted in expression by the censor. But its further progress is now checked through the dormant state of the foreconscious; this system has apparently protected itself against invasion by diminishing its excitements. The dream process, therefore, takes the regressive course, which has just been opened by the peculiarity of the sleeping state, and thereby follows the attraction exerted on it by the memory groups, which themselves exist in part only as visual energy not yet translated into terms of the later systems. On its way to regression the dream takes on the form of dramatization. The subject of compression will be discussed later. The dream process has now terminated the second part of its repeatedly impeded course. The first part expended itself progressively from the unconscious scenes or phantasies to the foreconscious, while the second part gravitates from the advent of the censor back to the perceptions. But when the dream process becomes a content of perception it has, so to speak, eluded the obstacle set up in the Forec. by the censor and by the sleeping state. It succeeds in drawing attention to itself and in being noticed by consciousness. For consciousness, which means to us a sensory organ for the reception of psychic qualities, may receive stimuli from two sources--first, from the periphery of the entire apparatus, *viz.* from the perception system, and, secondly, from the pleasure and pain stimuli, which constitute the sole psychic quality produced in the transformation of energy within the apparatus. All other processes in the system, even those in the foreconscious, are devoid of any psychic quality, and are therefore not objects of consciousness inasmuch as they do not furnish pleasure or pain for perception. We shall have to assume that those liberations of pleasure and pain automatically regulate the outlet of the occupation processes. But in order to make possible more delicate functions, it was later found necessary to render the course of the presentations more independent of the manifestations of pain. To accomplish this the Forec. system needed some qualities of its own which could attract consciousness, and most probably received them through the connection of the foreconscious processes with the memory system of the signs of speech, which is not devoid of qualities. Through the qualities of this system, consciousness, which had hitherto been a sensory organ only for the perceptions, now becomes also a sensory organ for a part of our mental processes. Thus we have now, as it were, two sensory surfaces, one directed to perceptions and the other to the foreconscious mental processes.

I must assume that the sensory surface of consciousness devoted to the Forec. is rendered less excitable by sleep than that directed to the P-systems. The giving up of interest for the nocturnal mental processes is indeed purposeful. Nothing is to disturb the mind; the Forec. wants to sleep. But once the dream becomes a perception, it is then capable of exciting consciousness through the qualities thus gained. The sensory stimulus accomplishes what it was really destined for, namely, it directs a part of the energy at the disposal of the Forec. in the form of attention upon the stimulant. We must, therefore, admit that the dream invariably

awakens us, that is, it puts into activity a part of the dormant force of the Forec. This force imparts to the dream that influence which we have designated as secondary elaboration for the sake of connection and comprehensibility. This means that the dream is treated by it like any other content of perception; it is subjected to the same ideas of expectation, as far at least as the material admits. As far as the direction is concerned in this third part of the dream, it may be said that here again the movement is progressive.

To avoid misunderstanding, it will not be amiss to say a few words about the temporal peculiarities of these dream processes. In a very interesting discussion, apparently suggested by Maury's puzzling guillotine dream, Goblet tries to demonstrate that the dream requires no other time than the transition period between sleeping and awakening. The awakening requires time, as the dream takes place during that period. One is inclined to believe that the final picture of the dream is so strong that it forces the dreamer to awaken; but, as a matter of fact, this picture is strong only because the dreamer is already very near awakening when it appears. "Un rêve c'est un réveil qui commence."

It has already been emphasized by Dugas that Goblet was forced to repudiate many facts in order to generalize his theory. There are, moreover, dreams from which we do not awaken, *e.g.*, some dreams in which we dream that we dream. From our knowledge of the dream-work, we can by no means admit that it extends only over the period of awakening. On the contrary, we must consider it probable that the first part of the dream-work begins during the day when we are still under the domination of the foreconscious. The second phase of the dream-work, *viz.* the modification through the censor, the attraction by the unconscious scenes, and the penetration to perception must continue throughout the night. And we are probably always right when we assert that we feel as though we had been dreaming the whole night, although we cannot say what. I do not, however, think it necessary to assume that, up to the time of becoming conscious, the dream processes really follow the temporal sequence which we have described, *viz.* that there is first the transferred dream-wish, then the distortion of the censor, and consequently the change of direction to regression, and so on. We were forced to form such a succession for the sake of *description*; in reality, however, it is much rather a matter of simultaneously trying this path and that, and of emotions fluctuating to and fro, until finally, owing to the most expedient distribution, one particular grouping is secured which remains. From certain personal experiences, I am myself inclined to believe that the dream-work often requires more than one day and one night to produce its result; if this be true, the extraordinary art manifested in the construction of the dream loses all its marvels. In my opinion, even the regard for comprehensibility as an occurrence of perception may take effect before the dream attracts consciousness to itself. To be sure, from now on the process is accelerated, as the dream is henceforth subjected to the same treatment as any other perception. It is like fireworks, which require hours of preparation and only a moment for ignition.

Through the dream-work the dream process now gains either sufficient intensity to attract consciousness to itself and arouse the foreconscious, which is quite independent of the time or profundity of sleep, or, its intensity being insufficient it must wait until it meets the attention which is set in motion immediately before awakening. Most dreams seem to operate with relatively slight psychic intensities, for they wait for the awakening. This, however, explains the fact that we regularly perceive something dreamt on being suddenly aroused from a sound sleep. Here, as well as in spontaneous awakening, the first glance strikes the perception content created by the dream-work, while the next strikes the one produced from without.

But of greater theoretical interest are those dreams which are capable of waking us in the midst of sleep. We must bear in mind the expediency elsewhere universally demonstrated, and ask ourselves why the dream or the unconscious wish has the power to disturb sleep, *i.e.* the fulfillment of the foreconscious wish. This is probably due to certain relations of energy into which we have no insight. If we possessed such insight we should probably find that the freedom given to the dream and the expenditure of a certain amount of detached attention represent for the dream an economy in energy, keeping in view the fact that the unconscious must be held in check at night just as during the day. We know from experience that the dream, even if it interrupts sleep, repeatedly during the same night, still remains compatible with sleep. We wake up for an instant, and immediately resume our sleep. It is like driving off a fly during sleep, we awake *ad hoc*, and when we resume

our sleep we have removed the disturbance. As demonstrated by familiar examples from the sleep of wet nurses, &c., the fulfillment of the wish to sleep is quite compatible with the retention of a certain amount of attention in a given direction.

But we must here take cognizance of an objection that is based on a better knowledge of the unconscious processes. Although we have ourselves described the unconscious wishes as always active, we have, nevertheless, asserted that they are not sufficiently strong during the day to make themselves perceptible. But when we sleep, and the unconscious wish has shown its power to form a dream, and with it to awaken the foreconscious, why, then, does this power become exhausted after the dream has been taken cognizance of? Would it not seem more probable that the dream should continually renew itself, like the troublesome fly which, when driven away, takes pleasure in returning again and again? What justifies our assertion that the dream removes the disturbance of sleep?

That the unconscious wishes always remain active is quite true. They represent paths which are passable whenever a sum of excitement makes use of them. Moreover, a remarkable peculiarity of the unconscious processes is the fact that they remain indestructible. Nothing can be brought to an end in the unconscious; nothing can cease or be forgotten. This impression is most strongly gained in the study of the neuroses, especially of hysteria. The unconscious stream of thought which leads to the discharge through an attack becomes passable again as soon as there is an accumulation of a sufficient amount of excitement. The mortification brought on thirty years ago, after having gained access to the unconscious affective source, operates during all these thirty years like a recent one. Whenever its memory is touched, it is revived and shows itself to be supplied with the excitement which is discharged in a motor attack. It is just here that the office of psychotherapy begins, its task being to bring about adjustment and forgetfulness for the unconscious processes. Indeed, the fading of memories and the flagging of affects, which we are apt to take as self-evident and to explain as a primary influence of time on the psychic memories, are in reality secondary changes brought about by painstaking work. It is the foreconscious that accomplishes this work; and the only course to be pursued by psychotherapy is the subjugate the Unc, to the domination of the Forec.

There are, therefore, two exits for the individual unconscious emotional process. It is either left to itself, in which case it ultimately breaks through somewhere and secures for once a discharge for its excitation into motility; or it succumbs to the influence of the foreconscious, and its excitation becomes confined through this influence instead of being discharged. It is the latter process that occurs in the dream. Owing to the fact that it is directed by the conscious excitement, the energy from the Forec., which confronts the dream when grown to perception, restricts the unconscious excitement of the dream and renders it harmless as a disturbing factor. When the dreamer wakes up for a moment, he has actually chased away the fly that has threatened to disturb his sleep. We can now understand that it is really more expedient and economical to give full sway to the unconscious wish, and clear its way to regression so that it may form a dream, and then restrict and adjust this dream by means of a small expenditure of foreconscious labor, than to curb the unconscious throughout the entire period of sleep. We should, indeed, expect that the dream, even if it was not originally an expedient process, would have acquired some function in the play of forces of the psychic life. We now see what this function is. The dream has taken it upon itself to bring the liberated excitement of the Unc. back under the domination of the foreconscious; it thus affords relief for the excitement of the Unc. and acts as a safety-valve for the latter, and at the same time it insures the sleep of the foreconscious at a slight expenditure of the waking state. Like the other psychic formations of its group, the dream offers itself as a compromise serving simultaneously both systems by fulfilling both wishes in so far as they are compatible with each other. A glance at Robert's "elimination theory," will show that we must agree with this author in his main point, viz. in the determination of the function of the dream, though we differ from him in our hypotheses and in our treatment of the dream process.

The above qualification--in so far as the two wishes are compatible with each other--contains a suggestion that there may be cases in which the function of the dream suffers shipwreck. The dream process is in the first instance admitted as a wish-fulfillment of the unconscious, but if this tentative wish-fulfillment disturbs the

foreconscious to such an extent that the latter can no longer maintain its rest, the dream then breaks the compromise and fails to perform the second part of its task. It is then at once broken off, and replaced by complete wakefulness. Here, too, it is not really the fault of the dream, if, while ordinarily the guardian of sleep, it is here compelled to appear as the disturber of sleep, nor should this cause us to entertain any doubts as to its efficacy. This is not the only case in the organism in which an otherwise efficacious arrangement became inefficacious and disturbing as soon as some element is changed in the conditions of its origin; the disturbance then serves at least the new purpose of announcing the change, and calling into play against it the means of adjustment of the organism. In this connection, I naturally bear in mind the case of the anxiety dream, and in order not to have the appearance of trying to exclude this testimony against the theory of wish-fulfillment wherever I encounter it, I will attempt an explanation of the anxiety dream, at least offering some suggestions.

That a psychic process developing anxiety may still be a wish-fulfillment has long ceased to impress us as a contradiction. We may explain this occurrence by the fact that the wish belongs to one system (the Unc.), while by the other system (the Forec.), this wish has been rejected and suppressed. The subjection of the Unc. by the Forec. is not complete even in perfect psychic health; the amount of this suppression shows the degree of our psychic normality. Neurotic symptoms show that there is a conflict between the two systems; the symptoms are the results of a compromise of this conflict, and they temporarily put an end to it. On the one hand, they afford the Unc. an outlet for the discharge of its excitement, and serve it as a sally port, while, on the other hand, they give the Forec. the capability of dominating the Unc. to some extent. It is highly instructive to consider, _e.g._, the significance of any hysterical phobia or of an agoraphobia. Suppose a neurotic incapable of crossing the street alone, which we would justly call a "symptom." We attempt to remove this symptom by urging him to the action which he deems himself incapable of. The result will be an attack of anxiety, just as an attack of anxiety in the street has often been the cause of establishing an agoraphobia. We thus learn that the symptom has been constituted in order to guard against the outbreak of the anxiety. The phobia is thrown before the anxiety like a fortress on the frontier.

Unless we enter into the part played by the affects in these processes, which can be done here only imperfectly, we cannot continue our discussion. Let us therefore advance the proposition that the reason why the suppression of the unconscious becomes absolutely necessary is because, if the discharge of presentation should be left to itself, it would develop an affect in the Unc. which originally bore the character of pleasure, but which, since the appearance of the repression, bears the character of pain. The aim, as well as the result, of the suppression is to stop the development of this pain. The suppression extends over the unconscious ideation, because the liberation of pain might emanate from the ideation. The foundation is here laid for a very definite assumption concerning the nature of the affective development. It is regarded as a motor or secondary activity, the key to the innervation of which is located in the presentations of the Unc. Through the domination of the Forec. these presentations become, as it were, throttled and inhibited at the exit of the emotion-developing impulses. The danger, which is due to the fact that the Forec. ceases to occupy the energy, therefore consists in the fact that the unconscious excitations liberate such an affect as--in consequence of the repression that has previously taken place--can only be perceived as pain or anxiety.

This danger is released through the full sway of the dream process. The determinations for its realization consist in the fact that repressions have taken place, and that the suppressed emotional wishes shall become sufficiently strong. They thus stand entirely without the psychological realm of the dream structure. Were it not for the fact that our subject is connected through just one factor, namely, the freeing of the Unc. during sleep, with the subject of the development of anxiety, I could dispense with discussion of the anxiety dream, and thus avoid all obscurities connected with it.

As I have often repeated, the theory of the anxiety belongs to the psychology of the neuroses. I would say that the anxiety in the dream is an anxiety problem and not a dream problem. We have nothing further to do with it after having once demonstrated its point of contact with the subject of the dream process. There is only one thing left for me to do. As I have asserted that the neurotic anxiety originates from sexual sources, I can

subject anxiety dreams to analysis in order to demonstrate the sexual material in their dream thoughts.

For good reasons I refrain from citing here any of the numerous examples placed at my disposal by neurotic patients, but prefer to give anxiety dreams from young persons.

Personally, I have had no real anxiety dream for decades, but I recall one from my seventh or eighth year which I subjected to interpretation about thirty years later. The dream was very vivid, and showed me _my beloved mother, with peculiarly calm sleeping countenance, carried into the room and laid on the bed by two (or three) persons with birds' beaks_. I awoke crying and screaming, and disturbed my parents. The very tall figures--draped in a peculiar manner--with beaks, I had taken from the illustrations of Philipppson's bible; I believe they represented deities with heads of sparrowhawks from an Egyptian tomb relief. The analysis also introduced the reminiscence of a naughty janitor's boy, who used to play with us children on the meadow in front of the house; I would add that his name was Philip. I feel that I first heard from this boy the vulgar word signifying sexual intercourse, which is replaced among the educated by the Latin "coitus," but to which the dream distinctly alludes by the selection of the birds' heads. I must have suspected the sexual significance of the word from the facial expression of my worldly-wise teacher. My mother's features in the dream were copied from the countenance of my grandfather, whom I had seen a few days before his death snoring in the state of coma. The interpretation of the secondary elaboration in the dream must therefore have been that my mother was dying; the tomb relief, too, agrees with this. In this anxiety I awoke, and could not calm myself until I had awakened my parents. I remember that I suddenly became calm on coming face to face with my mother, as if I needed the assurance that my mother was not dead. But this secondary interpretation of the dream had been effected only under the influence of the developed anxiety. I was not frightened because I dreamed that my mother was dying, but I interpreted the dream in this manner in the foreconscious elaboration because I was already under the domination of the anxiety. The latter, however, could be traced by means of the repression to an obscure obviously sexual desire, which had found its satisfying expression in the visual content of the dream.

A man twenty-seven years old who had been severely ill for a year had had many terrifying dreams between the ages of eleven and thirteen. He thought that a man with an ax was running after him; he wished to run, but felt paralyzed and could not move from the spot. This may be taken as a good example of a very common, and apparently sexually indifferent, anxiety dream. In the analysis the dreamer first thought of a story told him by his uncle, which chronologically was later than the dream, viz. that he was attacked at night by a suspicious-looking individual. This occurrence led him to believe that he himself might have already heard of a similar episode at the time of the dream. In connection with the ax he recalled that during that period of his life he once hurt his hand with an ax while chopping wood. This immediately led to his relations with his younger brother, whom he used to maltreat and knock down. In particular, he recalled an occasion when he struck his brother on the head with his boot until he bled, whereupon his mother remarked: "I fear he will kill him some day." While he was seemingly thinking of the subject of violence, a reminiscence from his ninth year suddenly occurred to him. His parents came home late and went to bed while he was feigning sleep. He soon heard panting and other noises that appeared strange to him, and he could also make out the position of his parents in bed. His further associations showed that he had established an analogy between this relation between his parents and his own relation toward his younger brother. He subsumed what occurred between his parents under the conception "violence and wrestling," and thus reached a sadistic conception of the coitus act, as often happens among children. The fact that he often noticed blood on his mother's bed corroborated his conception.

That the sexual intercourse of adults appears strange to children who observe it, and arouses fear in them, I dare say is a fact of daily experience. I have explained this fear by the fact that sexual excitement is not mastered by their understanding, and is probably also unacceptable to them because their parents are involved in it. For the same son this excitement is converted into fear. At a still earlier period of life sexual emotion directed toward the parent of opposite sex does not meet with repression but finds free expression, as we have seen before.

For the night terrors with hallucinations (*pavor nocturnus*) frequently found in children, I would unhesitatingly give the same explanation. Here, too, we are certainly dealing with the incomprehensible and rejected sexual feelings, which, if noted, would probably show a temporal periodicity, for an enhancement of the sexual *libido* may just as well be produced accidentally through emotional impressions as through the spontaneous and gradual processes of development.

I lack the necessary material to sustain these explanations from observation. On the other hand, the pediatricists seem to lack the point of view which alone makes comprehensible the whole series of phenomena, on the somatic as well as on the psychic side. To illustrate by a comical example how one wearing the blinders of medical mythology may miss the understanding of such cases I will relate a case which I found in a thesis on *pavor nocturnus* by *Debacker*, 1881. A thirteen-year-old boy of delicate health began to become anxious and dreamy; his sleep became restless, and about once a week it was interrupted by an acute attack of anxiety with hallucinations. The memory of these dreams was invariably very distinct. Thus, he related that the *devil* shouted at him: "Now we have you, now we have you," and this was followed by an odor of sulphur; the fire burned his skin. This dream aroused him, terror-stricken. He was unable to scream at first; then his voice returned, and he was heard to say distinctly: "No, no, not me; why, I have done nothing," or, "Please don't, I shall never do it again." Occasionally, also, he said: "Albert has not done that." Later he avoided undressing, because, as he said, the fire attacked him only when he was undressed. From amid these evil dreams, which menaced his health, he was sent into the country, where he recovered within a year and a half, but at the age of fifteen he once confessed: "Je n'osais pas l'avouer, mais j'éprouvais continuellement des picotements et des surexcitations aux *parties*; à la fin, cela m'énervait tant que plusieurs fois, j'ai pensé me jeter par la fenêtre au dortoir."

It is certainly not difficult to suspect: 1, that the boy had practiced masturbation in former years, that he probably denied it, and was threatened with severe punishment for his wrongdoing (his confession: *Je ne le ferai plus*; his denial: *Albert n'a jamais fait ça*). 2, That under the pressure of puberty the temptation to self-abuse through the tickling of the genitals was reawakened. 3, That now, however, a struggle of repression arose in him, suppressing the *libido* and changing it into fear, which subsequently took the form of the punishments with which he was then threatened.

Let us, however, quote the conclusions drawn by our author. This observation shows: 1, That the influence of puberty may produce in a boy of delicate health a condition of extreme weakness, and that it may lead to a *very marked cerebral anæmia*.

2. This cerebral anæmia produces a transformation of character, demonomaniacal hallucinations, and very violent nocturnal, perhaps also diurnal, states of anxiety.

3. Demonomania and the self-reproaches of the day can be traced to the influences of religious education which the subject underwent as a child.

4. All manifestations disappeared as a result of a lengthy sojourn in the country, bodily exercise, and the return of physical strength after the termination of the period of puberty.

5. A predisposing influence for the origin of the cerebral condition of the boy may be attributed to heredity and to the father's chronic syphilitic state.

The concluding remarks of the author read: "Nous avons fait entrer cette observation dans le cadre des délires apyrétiques d'inanition, car c'est à l'ischémie cérébrale que nous rattachons cet état particulier."