

### (C) The Means of Representation in Dreams

In the process of transforming the latent thoughts into the manifest content of a dream we have found two factors at work: dream-condensation and dream-displacement. As we continue our investigation we shall, in addition to these, come across two further determinants which exercise an undoubted influence on the choice of the material which is to find access to the dream.

But first, even at the risk of appearing to bring our progress to a halt, I should like to take a preliminary glance at the processes involved in carrying out the interpretation of a dream. I cannot disguise from myself that the easiest way of making those processes clear and of defending their trustworthiness against criticism would be to take some particular dream as a sample, go through its interpretation (just as I have done with the dream of Irma's injection in my second chapter), and then collect the dream-thoughts which I have discovered and go on to reconstruct from them the process by which the dream was formed—in other words, to complete a dream-analysis by a dream-synthesis. I have in fact carried out that task for my own instruction on several specimens; but I cannot reproduce them here, since I am forbidden to do so for reasons connected with the nature of the psychical material involved—reasons which are of many kinds and which will be accepted as valid by any reasonable person. Such considerations interfered less in the *analysis* of dreams, since an analysis could be incomplete and nevertheless retain its value, even though it penetrated only a small way into the texture of the dream. But in the case of the *synthesis* of a dream I do not see how it can be convincing unless it is complete. I could only give a complete synthesis of dreams dreamt by people unknown to the reading public. Since, however, this condition is fulfilled only by my patients, who are neurotics, I must postpone this part of my exposition of the subject till I am able—in another volume—to carry the psychological elucidation of neuroses to a point at which it can make contact with our present topic.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Footnote added 1909:] Since writing the above words, I have published a complete analysis and synthesis of two dreams in my 'Fragment of the Analysis of a Case of Hysteria' [Freud, 1905e (Sections II and III)]. See also the synthesis of the 'Wolf Man's dream in Section IV of Freud (1918b).—Added 1914:] Otto Rank's analysis, 'Ein Traum, der sich selbst deutet' ['A Dream which Interprets Itself', 1910], deserves mention as the most complete interpretation that has been published of a dream of considerable length.

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My attempts at building up dreams by synthesis from the dream-thoughts have taught me that the material which emerges in the course of interpretation is not all of the same value. One part of it is made up of the essential dream-thoughts—those, that is, which completely replace the dream, and which, if there were no censorship of dreams, would be sufficient in themselves to replace it. The other part of the material is usually to be regarded as of less importance. Nor is it possible to support the view that all the thoughts of this second kind had a share in the formation of the dream. [See pp. [280](#) and [532](#).] On the contrary, there may be associations among them which relate to events that occurred *after* the dream, between the times of dreaming and interpreting. This part of the material includes all the connecting paths that led from the manifest dream-content to the latent dream-thoughts, as well as the intermediate and linking associations by means of which, in the course of the process of interpretation, we came to discover these connecting paths.<sup>1</sup>

We are here interested only in the essential dream-thoughts. These usually emerge as a complex of thoughts and memories

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<sup>1</sup> [The last four sentences (beginning with 'the other part of the material?') date in their present form from 1919. In editions earlier than that, this passage ran as follows: 'The other part of the material may be brought together under the term "collaterals". As a whole, they constitute the paths over which the true wish, which arises from the dream-thoughts, passes before becoming the dream-wish. The first set of these "collaterals" consist in derivatives from

the dream-thoughts proper; they are, schematically regarded, displacements from what is essential to what is inessential. A second set of them comprise the thoughts that connect these inessential elements (which have become important owing to displacement) with one another, and extend from them to the dream-content. Finally, a third set consist in the associations and trains of thought by means of which the work of interpretation leads us from the dream-content to the second group of collaterals. It need not be supposed that the whole of this third set were necessarily also concerned in the formation of the dream.' With reference to this passage Freud remarks in *Get. Schr.*, 3 (1925), 55 that he has dropped the term 'collaterals'. In fact, however, the term has survived below on p. 532.]

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of the most intricate possible structure, with all the attributes of the trains of thought familiar to us in waking life. They are not infrequently trains of thought starting out from more than one centre, though having points of contact. Each train of thought is almost invariably accompanied by its contradictory counterpart, linked with it by antithetical association.

The different portions of this complicated structure stand, of course, in the most manifold logical relations to one another. They can represent foreground and background, digressions and illustrations, conditions, chains of evidence and counterarguments. When the whole mass of these dream-thoughts is brought under the pressure of the dream-work, and its elements are turned about, broken into fragments and jammed together—almost like pack-ice—the question arises of what happens to the logical connections which have hitherto formed its framework. What representation do dreams provide for 'if', 'because', 'just as', 'although', 'either—or', and all the other conjunctions without which we cannot understand sentences or speeches?

In the first resort our answer must be that dreams have no means at their disposal for representing these logical relations between the dream-thoughts. For the most part dreams disregard all these conjunctions, and it is only the substantive content of the dream-thoughts that they take over and manipulate.<sup>1</sup> The restoration of the connections which the dream-work has destroyed is a task which has to be performed by the interpretative process.

The incapacity of dreams to express these things must lie in the nature of the psychological material out of which dreams are made. The plastic arts of painting and sculpture labour, indeed, under a similar limitation as compared with poetry, which can make use of speech; and here once again the reason for their incapacity lies in the nature of the material which these two forms of art manipulate in their effort to express something. Before painting became acquainted with the laws of expression by which it is governed, it made attempts to get over this handicap. In ancient paintings small labels were hung from the mouths of the persons represented, containing in written characters the speeches which the artist despaired of representing pictorially.

At this point an objection may perhaps be raised in dispute

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<sup>1</sup> [A qualification of this statement will be found below, p. 450 n.]

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of the idea that dreams are unable to represent logical relations. For there are dreams in which the most complicated intellectual operations take place, statements are contradicted or confirmed, ridiculed or compared, just as they are in waking thought. But here again appearances are deceitful. If we go into the interpretation of dreams such as these, we find that the whole of this *is part of the material of the dream-thoughts and is not a representation of intellectual work performed during the dream itself*. What is reproduced by the ostensible thinking in the dream is the *subject-matter* of the dream-thoughts and not the *mutual relations between them*, the assertion of which constitutes thinking. I shall bring forward some instances of this. [See p. 441 ff.] But the easiest point to establish in this connection is that all spoken sentences which occur in dreams and are specifically described as such are unmodified or slightly modified reproductions of speeches which are also to be found among the recollections in the material of the dream-thoughts. A speech of this kind is often no more than an allusion to some event included among the dream-thoughts, and the meaning of the dream may be a totally different one. [See p. 418 ff.]

Nevertheless, I will not deny that critical thought-activity which is not a mere repetition of material in the dream-thoughts *does* have a share in the formation of dreams. I shall have to elucidate the part played by this factor at the end of the present discussion. It will then become

apparent that this thought-activity is not produced by the dream-thoughts but by the dream itself after it has already, in a certain sense, been completed. [See the last Section of this Chapter (p. 488).]

Provisionally, then, it may be said that the logical relations between the dream-thoughts are not given any separate representation in dreams. For instance, if a contradiction occurs in a dream, it is either a contradiction of the dream itself or a contradiction derived from the subject-matter of one of the dream-thoughts. A contradiction in a dream can only correspond in an exceedingly indirect manner to a contradiction *between* the dream-thoughts. But just as the art of painting eventually found a way of expressing, by means other than the floating labels, at least the *intention* of the words of the personages represented—affection, threats, warnings, and so on— so too there is a possible means by which dreams can take account of some of the logical relations between their dream-thoughts,

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by making an appropriate modification in the method of representation characteristic of dreams. Experience shows that different dreams vary greatly in this respect. While some dreams completely disregard the logical sequence of their material, others attempt to give as full an indication of it as possible. In doing so dreams depart sometimes more and sometimes less widely from the text that is at their disposal for manipulation. Incidentally dreams vary similarly in their treatment of the *chronological* sequence of the dream-thoughts, if such a sequence has been established in the unconscious (as, for instance, in the dream of Irma's injection. [P. 106ff.]).

What means does the dream-work possess for indicating these relations in the dream-thoughts which it is so hard to represent? I will attempt to enumerate them one by one.

In the first place, dreams take into account in a general way the connection which undeniably exists between all the portions of the dream-thoughts by combining the whole material into a single situation or event. They reproduce *logical connection* by *simultaneity in time*. Here they are acting like the painter who, in a picture of the School of Athens or of Parnassus, represents in one group all the philosophers or all the poets<sup>2</sup>. It is true that they were never in fact assembled in a single hall or on a single mountain-top; but they certainly form a group in the conceptual sense.

Dreams carry this method of reproduction down to details. Whenever they show us two elements close together, this guarantees that there is some specially intimate connection between what correspond to them among the dream-thoughts. In the same way, in our system of writing, 'ab' means that the two letters are to be pronounced in a single syllable. If a gap is left between the 'a' and the 'b' it means that the 'a' is the last letter of one word and the 'b' is the first of the next one.<sup>1</sup> So, too, collocations in dreams do not consist of any chance, disconnected portions of the dream-material, but of portions which are fairly closely connected in the dream-thoughts as well.

For representing *causal relations* dreams have two procedures

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<sup>1</sup> [This simile is a favourite one of Freud's. He uses it above on p. 247 and again in the middle of Section I of the case history of Dora (1905e). It is possibly derived from a lyric of Goethe's ('Schwer in Waldes Busch') in which the same image occurs.]

<sup>2</sup> [Raphael's frescoes in the Vatican. Freud referred to them again in 'On Dreams', p. 661 below and in his paper 'Thoughts for the Times on War and Death' (1915b), *Standard Ed.*, 14, 277.]

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which are in essence the same. Suppose the dream-thoughts run like this: 'Since this was so and so, such and such was bound to happen.' Then the commoner method of representation would be to introduce the dependent clause as an introductory dream and to add the principal clause as the main dream. If I have interpreted aright, the temporal sequence may be reversed. But the more extensive part of the dream always corresponds to the principal clause.

One of my women patients once produced an excellent instance of this way of representing causality in a dream which I shall later record fully. [See p. 347 ff.; also discussed on pp. 319 and 325.] It consisted of a short prelude and a very diffuse piece of dream which was centred to a marked degree on a single theme and might be entitled 'The Language of Flowers'.

The introductory dream was as follows: *She went into the kitchen, where her two maids were, and found fault with them for not having got her 'bite of food' ready. At the same time she saw a very large quantity of common kitchen crockery standing upside down in the kitchen to drain; it was piled up in heaps. The two maids went to fetch some water and had to step into a kind of river which came right up to the house or into the yard.* The main dream then followed, beginning thus: *She was descending from a height over some strangely constructed palisades, and felt glad that her dress was not caught in them .... etc.*

The introductory dream related to the dreamer's parents' home. No doubt she had often heard her mother using the words that occurred in the dream. The heaps of common crockery were derived from a modest hardware shop which was located in the same building. The other part of the dream contained a reference to her father, who used always to run after the maids and who eventually contracted a fatal illness during a flood. (The house stood near a river-bank.) Thus the thought concealed behind the introductory dream ran as follows: 'Because I was born in this house, in such mean and depressing circumstances ...' The main dream took up the same thought and presented it in a form modified by wish-fulfilment: 'I am of high descent.' Thus the actual underlying thought was: 'Because I am of such low descent, the course of my life has been so and so.'

The division of a dream into two unequal parts does not

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invariably, so far as I can see, signify that there is a causal relation between the thoughts behind the two parts. It often seems as though the same material were being represented in the two dreams from different points of view. (This is certainly the case where a series of dreams during one night end in an emission or orgasm—a series in which the somatic need finds its way to progressively clearer expression.)<sup>1</sup> Or the two dreams may have sprung from separate centres in the dream-material, and their content may overlap, so that what is the centre in one dream is present as a mere hint in the other, and *vice versa*. But in a certain number of dreams a division into a shorter preliminary dream and a longer sequel does in fact signify that there is a causal relation between the two pieces.

The other method of representing a causal relation is adapted to less extensive material and consists in one image in the dream, whether of a person or thing, being transformed into another. The existence of a causal relation is only to be taken seriously if the transformation actually occurs before our eyes and not if we merely notice that one thing has appeared in the place of another.

I have said that the two methods of representing a causal relation were in essence the same. In both cases causation is represented by temporal sequence: in one instance by a sequence of dreams and in the other by the direct transformation of one image into another. In the great majority of cases, it must be confessed, the causal relation is not represented at all but is lost in the confusion of elements which inevitably occurs in the process of dreaming.

The alternative 'either—or' cannot be expressed in dreams in any way whatever. Both of the alternatives are usually inserted in the text of the dream as though they were equally valid. The dream of Irma's injection contains a classic instance of this. Its latent thoughts clearly ran [see p. [119](#)]: 'I am not responsible for the persistence of Irma's pains; the responsibility lies *either* in her recalcitrance to accepting my solution, *or* in the unfavourable sexual conditions under which she lives and which I cannot alter, *or* in the fact that her pains are not hysterical at

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<sup>1</sup> [This sentence was added in 1914. The point is further mentioned on p. [335](#) and discussed at greater length on pp. [402-3](#). The whole subject of dreams occurring on the same night is dealt with on p. [333](#) ff.]

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all but of an organic nature.' The dream, on the other hand, fulfilled *all* of these possibilities (which were almost mutually exclusive), and did not hesitate to add a fourth solution, based on the dream-wish. After interpreting the dream, I proceeded to insert the 'either—or' into the context of the dream-thoughts.

If, however, in reproducing a dream, its narrator feels inclined to make use of an 'either—or'—e.g. 'it was either a garden or a sitting-room'—what was present in the dream-thoughts was not an

alternative but an ‘and’, a simple addition. An ‘either—or’ is mostly used to describe a dream-element that has a quality of vagueness—which, however, is capable of being resolved. In such cases the rule for interpretation is: treat the two apparent alternatives as of equal validity and link them together with an ‘and’.

For instance, on one occasion a friend of mine was stopping in Italy and I had been without his address for a considerable time. I then had a dream of receiving a telegram containing this address. I saw it printed in blue on the telegraph form. The first word was vague:

‘Via perhaps  
or ‘Villa’  
or possible even (‘Casa’); the second was clear: ‘Secerno’.

The second word sounded like some Italian name and reminded me of discussions I had had with my friend on the subject of etymology. It also expressed my anger with him for having kept his address *secret* from me for so long. On the other hand, each of the three alternatives for the first word turned out on analysis to be an independent and equally valid starting-point for a chain of thoughts.<sup>1</sup>

During the night before my father's funeral I had a dream of a printed notice, placard or poster—rather like the notices forbidding one to smoke in railway waiting-rooms—on which appeared either

‘You are requested to close the eyes’  
or, ‘You are requested to close an eye’.

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<sup>1</sup> [This dream will be found described in greater detail in Freud's letter to Fliess (the friend in question) of April 28, 1897. See [Freud, 1950a](#), Letter 60.]

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I usually write this in the form:

‘You are requested to close an the eye(s).’

Each of these two versions had a meaning of its own and led in a different direction when the dream was interpreted. I had chosen the simplest possible ritual for the funeral, for I knew my father's own views on such ceremonies. But some other members of the family were not sympathetic to such puritanical simplicity and thought we should be disgraced in the eyes of those who attended the funeral. Hence one of the versions: ‘You are requested to close an eye’, i.e. to ‘wink at’ or ‘overlook’. Here it is particularly easy to see the meaning of the vagueness expressed by the ‘either—or’. The dream-work failed to establish a unified wording for the dream-thoughts which could at the same time be ambiguous, and the two main lines of thought consequently began to diverge even in the manifest content of the dream.<sup>1</sup>

In a few instances the difficulty of representing an alternative is got over by dividing the dream into two pieces of equal length.

The way in which dreams treat the category of contraries and contradictories is highly remarkable. It is simply disregarded. ‘No’ seems not to exist so far as dreams are concerned.<sup>2</sup> They show a particular preference for combining contraries into a unity or for representing them as one and the same thing. Dreams feel themselves at liberty, moreover, to represent any element by its wishful contrary; so that there is no way of deciding at a first glance whether any element that admits of a contrary is present in the dream-thoughts as a positive or as a negative.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [This dream is reported by Freud in a letter to Fliess of November 2, 1896. (See [Freud, 1950a](#), Letter 50.) It is there stated to have occurred during the night *after* the funeral.—In its first wording the dream referred to closing the dead man's eyes as a filial duty.]

<sup>2</sup> [Qualifications of this assertion occur on pp. [326](#), [337](#) and [434](#).]

<sup>3</sup> [Footnote added 1911:] I was astonished to learn from a pamphlet by K. Abel, *The Antithetical Meaning of Primal Words* (1884) (cf. my review of it, 1910e)—and the fact has been confirmed by other philologists—that the most ancient languages behave exactly like dreams in this respect. In the first instance they have only a single word to describe the two contraries at the extreme ends of a series of qualities or activities (e.g. ‘strong-weak’, ‘old-young’, ‘far-near’, ‘bind-sever’); they only form distinct terms for the two contraries by a secondary process of making small modifications in the common word. Abel demonstrates this particularly from Ancient

Egyptian; but he shows that there are distinct traces of the same course of development in the Semitic and Indo-Germanic languages as well. [See also p. [471](#).]

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In one of the dreams recorded just above, the first clause of which has already been interpreted ('because my descent was such and such' [see p. [315](#)]), the dreamer saw herself climbing down over some palisades holding a blossoming branch in her hand. In connection with this image she thought of the angel holding a spray of lilies in pictures of the Annunciation—her own name was Maria—and of girls in white robes walking in Corpus Christi processions, when the streets are decorated with green branches. Thus the blossoming branch in the dream without any doubt alluded to sexual innocence. However, the branch was covered with *red* flowers, each of which was like a camellia. By the end of her walk—so the dream went on—the blossoms were already a good deal faded. There then followed some unmistakable allusions to menstruation. Accordingly, the same branch which was carried like a lily and as though by an innocent girl was at the same time an allusion to the *Dame aux camélias* who, as we know, usually wore a white camellia, except during her periods, when she wore a red one. The same blossoming branch (cf. 'des Mädchens Blüten' ['the maiden's blossoms'] in Goethe's poem 'Der Müllerin Verrat') represented both sexual innocence and its contrary. And the same dream which expressed her joy at having succeeded in passing through life immaculately gave one glimpses at certain points (e.g. in the fading of the blossoms) of the contrary train of ideas—of her having been guilty of various sins against sexual purity (in her childhood, that is). In analysing the dream it was possible clearly to distinguish the two trains of thought, of which the consoling one seemed the more superficial and the self-reproachful one the deeper-lying—trains of thought which were diametrically opposed to each other but whose similar though contrary elements were represented by the same elements in the manifest dream.<sup>1</sup>

One and one only of these logical relations is very highly favoured by the mechanism of dream-formation; namely, the

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<sup>1</sup> [The dream is fully reported on p. [347](#) below.]

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relation of similarity, consonance or approximation—the relation of 'just as'. This relation, unlike any other, is capable of being represented in dreams in a variety of ways.<sup>1</sup> Parallels or instances of 'just as' inherent in the material of the dream-thoughts constitute the first foundations for the construction of a dream; and no inconsiderable part of the dream-work consists in creating fresh parallels where those which are already present cannot find their way into the dream owing to the censorship imposed by resistance. The representation of the relation of similarity is assisted by the tendency of the dream-work towards condensation.

Similarity, consonance, the possession of common attributes—all these are represented in dreams by unification, which may either be present already in the material of the dream-thoughts or may be freshly constructed. The first of these possibilities may be described as 'identification' and the second as 'composition'. Identification is employed where *persons* are concerned; composition where *things* are the material of the unification. Nevertheless composition may also be applied to persons. Localities are often treated like persons.

In identification, only one of the persons who are linked by a common element succeeds in being represented in the manifest content of the dream, while the second or remaining persons seem to be suppressed in it. But this single covering figure appears in the dream in all the relations and situations which apply either to him or to the figures which he covers. In composition, where this is extended to persons, the dream-image contains features which are peculiar to one or other of the persons concerned but not common to them; so that the combination of these features leads to the appearance of a new unity, a composite figure. The actual process of composition can be carried out in various ways. On the one hand, the dream-figure may bear the name of one of the persons related to it—in which case we simply know directly, in a manner analogous to our waking knowledge, that this or that person is intended—while its visual features may belong to the other person. Or, on the other hand, the dream-image itself may be composed of visual features belonging in reality partly to the one person and partly to the other. Or again the second person's share in the

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1 [Footnote added 1914:] Cf. Aristotle's remark on the qualifications of a dream-interpreter quoted above on p. [97](#) n. 2.

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dream-image may lie, not in its visual features, but in the gestures that we attribute to it, the words that we make it speak, or the situation in which we place it. In this last case the distinction between identification and the construction of a composite figure begins to lose its sharpness.<sup>1</sup> But it may also happen that the formation of a composite figure of this kind is unsuccessful. If so, the scene in the dream is attributed to *one* of the persons concerned, while the other (and usually the more important one) appears as an attendant figure without any other function. The dreamer may describe the position in such a phrase as: 'My mother was there as well.' (Stekel.) An element of this kind in the dream-content may be compared to the 'determinatives' used in hieroglyphic script, which are not meant to be pronounced but serve merely to elucidate other signs.

The common element which justifies, or rather causes, the combination of the two persons may be represented in the dream or may be omitted from it. As a rule the identification or construction of a composite person takes place for the very purpose of avoiding the representation of the common element. Instead of saying: 'A has hostile feelings towards me and so has B', I make a composite figure out of A and B in the dream, or I imagine A performing an act of some other kind which is characteristic of B. The dream-figure thus constructed appears in the dream in some quite new connection, and the circumstance that it represents both A and B justifies me in inserting at the appropriate point in the dream the element which is common to both of them, namely a hostile attitude towards me. It is often possible in this way to achieve quite a remarkable amount of condensation in the content of a dream; I can save myself the need for giving a direct representation of very complicated circumstances relating to one person, if I can find another person to whom some of these circumstances apply equally. It is easy to see, too, how well this method of representation by means of identification can serve to evade the censorship due to resistance, which imposes such severe conditions upon the dream-work. What the censorship objects to

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1 [On the subject of composite figures cf. also p. [293](#) ff. The next three sentences were added in 1911. The final sentence of the paragraph was added in 1914.—'Identification' in this passage is evidently being used in a sense different from that discussed on p. [149](#) ff.]

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may lie precisely in certain ideas which, in the material of the dream-thoughts, are attached to a particular person; so I proceed to find a second person, who is also connected with the objectionable material, but only with part of it. The contact between the two persons upon this censorable point now justifies me in constructing a composite figure characterized by indifferent features derived from both. This figure, arrived at by identification or composition, is then admissible to the dream-content without censorship, and thus, by making use of dream-condensation, I have satisfied the claims of the dream-censorship.

When a common element between two persons is represented in a dream, it is usually a hint for us to look for another, concealed common element whose representation has been made impossible by the censorship. A displacement in regard to the common element has been made in order, as it were, to facilitate its representation. The fact that the composite figure appears in the dream with an indifferent common element leads us to conclude that there is another far from indifferent common element present in the dream-thoughts.

Accordingly, identification or the construction of composite figures serves various purposes in dreams: firstly to represent an element common to two persons, secondly to represent a *displaced* common element, and thirdly, too, to express a merely *wishful* common element. Since wishing that two persons had a common element frequently coincides with exchanging one for the other, this latter relation is also expressed in dreams by means of identification. In the dream of Irma's injection, I wished to exchange her for another patient: I wished, that is, that the other woman might be my patient just as Irma was. The dream took this wish into account by showing me a person who was called Irma, but who was examined in a position in which I had only had occasion to see the other woman [p. [109](#) f.]. In the dream about my uncle an exchange of this kind became the central point of

the dream: I identified myself with the Minister by treating and judging my colleagues no better than he did. [P. [193](#).]

It is my experience, and one to which I have found no exception, that every dream deals with the dreamer himself. Dreams are completely egoistical.<sup>1</sup> Whenever my own ego does

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<sup>1</sup> [Footnote added [1925](#):] Cf. the footnote on pp. [270-1](#).

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not appear in the content of the dream, but only some extraneous person, I may safely assume that my own ego lies concealed, by identification, behind this other person; I can insert my ego into the context. On other occasions, when my own ego *does* appear in the dream, the situation in which it occurs may teach me that some other person lies concealed, by identification, behind my ego. In that case the dream should warn me to transfer on to myself, when I am interpreting the dream, the concealed common element attached to this other person. There are also dreams in which my ego appears along with other people who, when the identification is resolved, are revealed once again as my ego. These identifications should then make it possible for me to bring into contact with my ego certain ideas whose acceptance has been forbidden by the censorship. Thus my ego may be represented in a dream several times over, now directly and now through identification with extraneous persons. By means of a number of such identifications it becomes possible to condense an extraordinary amount of thought-material.<sup>1</sup> The fact that the dreamer's own *ego* appears several times, or in several forms, in a dream is at bottom no more remarkable than that the ego should be contained in a conscious thought several times or in different places or connections—e.g. in the sentence ‘when *I* think what a healthy child *I* was’.<sup>2</sup>

Identifications in the case of proper names of *localities* are resolved even more easily than in the case of persons, since here there is no interference by the ego, which occupies such a dominating place in dreams. In one of my dreams about Rome (see p. [195](#) f.), the place in which I found myself was called Rome, but I was astonished at the quantity of German posters at a street-corner. This latter point was a wish-fulfilment, which at once made me think of Prague; and the wish itself may perhaps have dated from a German-nationalist phase which I passed through during my youth, but have since got over.<sup>3</sup> At the time at which I had the dream there was a prospect of my

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<sup>1</sup> When I am in doubt behind which of the figures appearing in the dream my ego is to be looked for, I observe the following rule: the person who in the dream feels an emotion which I myself experience in my sleep is the one who conceals my ego.

<sup>2</sup> [This sentence was added in 1925. The point is dealt with further in Freud, [1923c](#), Section X.]

<sup>3</sup> [Cf. the ‘Revolutionary’ dream, pp. [210](#) and [213](#).]

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meeting my friend [Fliess] in Prague; so that the identification of Rome and Prague can be explained as a wishful common element: I would rather have met my friend in Rome than in Prague and would have liked to exchange Prague for Rome for the purpose of this meeting.

The possibility of creating composite structures stands foremost among the characteristics which so often lend dreams a fantastic appearance, for it introduces into the content of dreams elements which could never have been objects of actual perception.<sup>1</sup> The psychological process of constructing composite images in dreams is evidently the same as when we imagine or portray a centaur or a dragon in waking life. The only difference is that what determines the production of the imaginary figure in waking life is the impression which the new structure itself is intended to make; whereas the formation of the composite structure in a dream is determined by a factor extraneous to its actual shape—namely the common element in the dream-thoughts. Composite structures in dreams can be formed in a great variety of ways. The most naïve of these procedures merely represents the attributes of one thing to the accompaniment of a knowledge that they also belong to something else. A more painstaking technique combines the features of both objects into a new image and in so doing makes clever use of any similarities that the two objects may happen to possess in reality. The new structure may seem entirely absurd or may strike us as an imaginative success, according to



the material and to the ingenuity with which it is put together. If the objects which are to be condensed into a single unity are much too incongruous, the dream-work is often content with creating a composite structure with a comparatively distinct nucleus, accompanied by a number of less distinct features. In that case the process of unification into a single image may be said to have failed. The two representations are superimposed and produce something in the nature of a contest between the two visual images. One might arrive at similar representations in a drawing, if one tried to illustrate the way in which a general concept is formed from a number of individual perceptual images.

Dreams are, of course, a mass of these composite structures.

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[PEP] This page can be read in German in GESAMMELTE WERKE Vol 2, Page [329](#)

1 [Some amusing instances are given at the end of Section IV of Freud's short essay on dreams ([1901a](#)); *Standard Ed.*, **5**, [651](#).]

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I have given some examples of them in dreams that I have already analysed; and I will now add a few more. In the dream reported below on p. [347](#) ff. [also above, p. [319](#)], which describes the course of the patient's life 'in the language of flowers', the dream-ego held a blossoming branch in her hand which, as we have seen, stood both for innocence and for sexual sinfulness. The branch, owing to the way in which the blossoms were placed on it, also reminded the dreamer of *cherry-blossom*; the blossoms themselves, regarded individually, were *camellias*, and moreover the general impression was of an *exotic* growth. The common factor among the elements of this composite structure was shown by the dream-thoughts. The blossoming branch was composed of allusions to gifts made to her in order to win, or attempt to win, her favour. Thus she had been given *cherries* in her childhood and, later in life, a *camellia-plant*; while '*exotic*' was an allusion to a much-travelled naturalist who had tried to win her favour with a flower-drawing.—Another of my women patients produced in one of her dreams a thing that was intermediate between a bathing-hut at the seaside, an outside closet in the country and an attic in a town house. The first two elements have in common a connection with people naked and undressed; and their combination with the third element leads to the conclusion that (in her childhood) an attic had also been a scene of undressing.—Another dreamer,<sup>1</sup> a man, produced a composite locality out of two places where 'treatments' are carried out: one of them being my consulting-room and the other the place of entertainment where he had first made his wife's acquaintance.—A girl dreamt, after her elder brother had promised to give her a feast of caviare, that this same brother's legs were *covered all over with black grains of caviare*. The element of '*contagion*' (in the moral sense) and a recollection of a *rash* in her childhood, which had covered her legs all over with *red spots*, instead of black ones, had been combined with the *grains of caviare* into a new concept—namely the concept of '*what she had got from her brother*'. In this dream, as in others, parts of the human body were treated like objects.—In a dream recorded by Ferenczi [[1910](#)],<sup>2</sup> a composite image occurred which was made up from the figure of a *doctor* and of a *horse* and was also dressed in a *night-shirt*. The element common to these

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[PEP] This page can be read in German in GESAMMELTE WERKE Vol 2, Page [330](#)

1 [This sentence was added in 1909.]

2 [The remainder of this paragraph was added in 1911.]

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three components was arrived at in the analysis after the woman-patient had recognized that the night-shirt was an allusion to her father in a scene from her childhood. In all three cases it was a question of an object of her sexual curiosity. When she was a child she had often been taken by her nurse to a military stud-farm where she had ample opportunities of gratifying what was at that time her still uninhibited curiosity.

I have asserted above [p. [318](#)] that dreams have no means of expressing the relation of a contradiction, a contrary or a 'no'. I shall now proceed to give a first denial of this assertion.<sup>1</sup> One class of cases which can be comprised under the heading of 'contraries' are, as we have seen [p. [322](#)], simply represented by identification—cases, that is, in which the idea of an exchange or substitution can be brought into connection with the contrast. I have given a number of instances of this. Another class of contraries in the dream-thoughts, falling into a category which may be described as 'contrariwise' or

'just the reverse', find their way into dreams in the following remarkable fashion, which almost deserves to be described as a joke. The 'just the reverse' is not itself represented in the dream-content, but reveals its presence in the material through the fact that some piece of the dream-content, which has already been constructed and happens (for some other reason) to be adjacent to it, is— as it were by an afterthought—turned round the other way. The process is more easily illustrated than described. In the interesting 'Up and Down'dream (p. 285 ff.) the representation of the climbing in the dream was the reverse of what it was in its prototype in the dream-thoughts—that is, in the introductory scene from Daudet's *Sappho*: in the dream the climbing was difficult at first but easier later, while in the Daudet scene it was easy at first but more and more difficult later. Further, the 'up above' and 'down below' in the dreamer's relation to his brother were represented the other way round in the dream. This pointed to the presence of a reversed or contrary relation between two pieces of the material in the dream-thoughts; and we found it in the dreamer's childhood phantasy of being carried by his wet-nurse, which was the reverse of the situation in the novel, where the hero was carrying his mistress. So too in my dream of Goethe's attack on Herr M. (see below, p. 439 ff.)

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1 [Others will be found below on pp. 337 and 434.]

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there is a similar 'just the reverse' which has to be put straight before the dream can be successfully interpreted. In the dream Goethe made an attack on a young man, Herr M.; in the real situation contained in the dream-thoughts a man of importance, my friend [Fliess], had been attacked by an unknown young writer. In the dream I based a calculation on the date of Goethe's death; in reality the calculation had been made from the year of the paralytic patient's birth. The thought which turned out to be the decisive one in the dream-thoughts was a contradiction of the idea that Goethe should be treated as though he were a lunatic. 'Just the reverse', said [the underlying meaning of] the dream, 'if you don't understand the book, it's *you* [the critic] that are feeble-minded, and not the author.' I think, moreover, that all these dreams of turning things round the other way include a reference to the contemptuous implications of the idea of 'turning one's back on something'.<sup>1</sup> (E.g. the dreamer's turning round in relation to his brother in the *Sappho* dream [p. 287 f.].) It is remarkable to observe, moreover,<sup>2</sup> how frequently reversal is employed precisely in dreams arising from repressed homosexual impulses.

Incidentally,<sup>3</sup> reversal, or turning a thing into its opposite, is one of the means of representation most favoured by the dream-work and one which is capable of employment in the most diverse directions. It serves in the first place to give expression to the fulfilment of a wish in reference to some particular element of the dream-thoughts. 'If only it had been the other way round!' This is often the best way of expressing the ego's reaction to a disagreeable fragment of memory. Again, reversal is of quite special use as a help to the censorship, for it produces a mass of distortion in the material which is to be represented, and this has a positively paralysing effect, to begin with, on any attempt at understanding the dream. For that reason, if a dream obstinately declines to reveal its meaning, it is always worth while to see the effect of reversing some particular elements in its manifest content, after which the whole situation often becomes immediately clear.

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[PEP] This page can be read in German in GESAMMELTE WERKE Vol 2, Page 332

1 [The German '*Kehrseite*' can mean both 'reverse' and 'backside'. Cf. the vulgar English phrase 'arse upwards' for 'upside down', 'the wrong way round'.]

2 [This sentence was added in 1911.]

3 [This and the next paragraph were added in 1909.]

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And, apart from the reversal of subject-matter, *chronological* reversal must not be overlooked. Quite a common technique of dream-distortion consists in representing the outcome of an event or the conclusion of a train of thought at the beginning of a dream and of placing at its end the premises on which the conclusion was based or the causes which led to the event. Anyone who fails to bear in mind this technical method adopted by dream-distortion will be quite at a loss when confronted with the task of interpreting a dream.<sup>1</sup>

In some instances, indeed,<sup>2</sup> it is only possible to arrive at the meaning of a dream after one has carried out quite a number of reversals of its content in various respects. For instance, in the case of a young obsessional neurotic, there lay concealed behind one of his dreams the memory of a death-wish dating from his childhood and directed against his father, of whom he had been afraid. Here is the text of the dream: *His father was scolding him for coming home so late.* The context in which the dream occurred in the psycho-analytic treatment and the dreamer's associations showed, however, that the original wording must have been that *he* was angry with his *father*, and that in his view his father always came home too *early* (i.e. too soon). He would have preferred it if his father had not come home *at all*, and this was the same thing as a death-wish against his father. (See p. [254](#) f.) For as a small boy, during his father's temporary absence, he

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<sup>1</sup> [Footnote added 1909:] Hysterical attacks sometimes make use of the same kind of chronological reversal in order to disguise their meaning from observers. For instance, a hysterical girl needed to represent some thing in the nature of a brief romance in one of her attacks—a romance of which she had had a phantasy in her unconscious after an encounter with someone on the suburban railway. She imagined how the man had been attracted by the beauty of her foot and had spoken to her while she was reading; whereupon she had gone off with him and had had a passionate love-scene. Her attack *began* with a representation of this love-scene by convulsive twitching of her body, accompanied by movements of her lips to represent kissing and tightening of her arms to represent embracing. She then hurried into the next room, sat down on a chair, raised her skirt so as to show her foot, pretended to be reading a book and spoke to me (that is, answered me). [This case is also described by Freud in his paper on hysterical attacks (1909a), *Standard Ed.*, 9, 230-1.]—[Added 1914:] Cf. in this connection what Artemidorus says: 'In interpreting the images seen in dreams one must sometimes follow them from the beginning to the end and sometimes from the end to the beginning...' [Book I, Chapter XI, Krauss's translation (1881), [20](#).]

<sup>2</sup> [This paragraph was added in 1911.]

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had been guilty of an act of sexual aggression against someone, and as a punishment had been threatened in these words: 'Just you wait till your father comes back!'

If we wish to pursue our study of the relations between dream-content and dream-thoughts further, the best plan will be to take dreams themselves as our point of departure and consider what certain *formal* characteristics of the method of representation in dreams signify in relation to the thoughts underlying them. Most prominent among these formal characteristics, which cannot fail to impress us in dreams, are the differences in sensory intensity between particular dream-images and in the distinctness of particular parts of dreams or of whole dreams as compared with one another.

The differences in intensity between particular dream-images cover the whole range extending between a sharpness of definition which we feel inclined, no doubt unjustifiably, to regard as greater than that of reality and an irritating vagueness which we declare characteristic of dreams because it is not completely comparable to any degree of indistinctness which we ever perceive in real objects. Furthermore we usually describe an impression which we have of an indistinct object in a dream as 'fleeting', while we feel that those dream-images which are more distinct have been perceived for a considerable length of time. The question now arises what it is in the material of the dream-thoughts that determines these differences in the vividness of particular pieces of the content of a dream.

We must begin by countering certain expectations which almost inevitably present themselves. Since the material of a dream may include real sensations experienced during sleep, it will probably be presumed that these, or the elements in the dream derived from them, are given prominence in the dream-content by appearing with special intensity; or, conversely, that whatever is very specially vivid in a dream can be traced back to real sensations during sleep. In my experience, however, this has never been confirmed. It is not the case that the elements of a dream which are derivatives of real impressions during sleep (i.e. of nervous stimuli) are distinguished by their vividness from other elements which arise from memories. The factor of reality counts for nothing in determining the intensity of dream-images.

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Again, it might be expected that the *sensory* intensity (that is, the vividness) of particular dream-images would be related to the *psychical* intensity of the elements in the dream-thoughts corresponding to them. In the latter, psychical intensity coincides with psychical *value*: the most intense elements are also the most important ones—those which form the centre-point of the dream-thoughts. We know, it is true, that these are precisely elements which, on account of the censorship, cannot as a rule make their way into the content of the dream; nevertheless, it might well be that their immediate derivatives which represent them in the dream might bear a higher degree of intensity, without necessarily on that account forming the centre of the dream. But this expectation too is disappointed by a comparative study of dreams and the material from which they are derived. The intensity of the elements in the one has no relation to the intensity of the elements in the other: the fact is that a complete ‘transvaluation of all psychical values’ [in Nietzsche's phrase<sup>1</sup>] takes place between the material of the dream-thoughts and the dream. A direct derivative of what occupies a dominating position in the dream-thoughts can often only be discovered precisely in some transitory element of the dream which is quite overshadowed by more powerful images.

The intensity of the elements of a dream turns out to be determined otherwise—and by two independent factors. In the first place, it is easy to see that the elements by which the wish-fulfilment is expressed are represented with special intensity. [See p. [561](#) f.] And in the second place, analysis shows that the most vivid elements of a dream are the starting-point of the most numerous trains of thought—that the most vivid elements are also those with the most numerous determinants. We shall not be altering the sense of this empirically based assertion if we put it in these terms: the greatest intensity is shown by those elements of a dream on whose formation the greatest amount of condensation has been expended. [Cf. p. [595](#) f.] We may expect that it will eventually turn out to be possible to express this determinant and the other (namely relation to the wish-fulfilment) in a single formula.

The problem with which I have just dealt—the causes of the greater or less intensity or clarity of particular elements of a dream—is not to be confounded with another problem, which

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<sup>1</sup> [An illusion to the famous ‘Leitmotiv’ of Nietzsche's attack on Christianity.]

relates to the varying clarity of whole dreams or sections of dreams. In the former case clarity is contrasted with vagueness, but in the latter case it is contrasted with confusion. Nevertheless it cannot be doubted that the increase and decrease of the qualities in the two scales run parallel. A section of a dream which strikes us as perspicuous usually contains intense elements; a dream which is obscure, on the other hand, is composed of elements of small intensity. Yet the problem presented by the scale which runs from what is apparently clear to what is obscure and confused is far more complicated than that of the varying degrees of vividness of dream-elements. Indeed, for reasons which will appear later, the former problem cannot yet be discussed. [See p. [500](#) f.]

In a few cases we find to our surprise that the impression of clarity or indistinctness given by a dream has no connection at all with the make-up of the dream itself but arises from the material of the dream-thoughts and is a constituent of it. Thus I remember a dream of mine which struck me when I woke up as being so particularly well-constructed, flawless and clear that, while I was still half-dazed with sleep, I thought of introducing a new category of dreams which were not subject to the mechanisms of condensation and displacement but were to be described as ‘phantasies during sleep’. Closer examination proved that this rarity among dreams showed the same gaps and flaws in its structure as any other; and for that reason I dropped the category of ‘dream-phantasies’.<sup>1</sup> The content of the dream, when it was arrived at, represented me as laying before my friend [Fliess] a difficult and long-sought theory of bisexuality; and the wish-fulfilling power of the dream was responsible for our regarding this theory (which, incidentally, was not given in the dream) as clear and flawless. Thus what I had taken to be a judgement on the completed dream was actually a part, and indeed the essential part, of the dream-content. The dream-work had in this case encroached, as it were, upon my first waking thoughts and had conveyed to me as a *judgement* upon the dream the part of the material of the dream-thoughts which it had not succeeded in representing accurately

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1 [Footnote added 1930:] Whether rightly I am now uncertain. [Freud argues in favour of there being such a category in some remarks at the end of the discussion of his first example in his paper on 'Dreams and Telepathy' (1922a).]

in the dream.<sup>1</sup> I once came across a precise counterpart to this in a woman-patient's dream during analysis. To begin with she refused altogether to tell it me, 'because it was so indistinct and muddled'. At length, protesting repeatedly that she felt no certainty that her account was correct, she informed me that several people had come into the dream—she herself, her husband and her father—and that it was as though she had not known whether her husband was her father, or who her father was, or something of that sort. This dream, taken in conjunction with her associations during the analytic session, showed beyond a doubt that it was a question of the somewhat commonplace story of a servant-girl who was obliged to confess that she was expecting a baby but was in doubts as to 'who the (baby's) father really was'.<sup>2</sup> Thus here again the lack of clarity shown by the dream was a part of the material which instigated the dream: part of this material, that is, was represented in the *form* of the dream. *The form of a dream or the form in which it is dreamt is used with quite surprising frequency for representing its concealed subject-matter.*<sup>3</sup>

Glosses on a dream, or apparently innocent comments on it, often serve to disguise a portion of what has been dreamt in the subtlest fashion, though in fact betraying it. For instance, a dreamer remarked that at one point 'the dream had been wiped away'; and the analysis led to an infantile recollection of his listening to someone wiping himself after defaecating. Or here is another example which deserves to be recorded in detail. A young man had a very clear dream which reminded him of some phantasies of his boyhood that had remained conscions. He dreamt that it was evening and that he was in a hotel at a summer resort. He mistook the number of his room and went into one in which an elderly lady and her two daughters were undressing and going to bed. He proceeded: 'Here there are some gaps in the dream; there's something missing. Finally there was a man in the room who tried to throw me out, and I had to have a struggle with him.' He made vain endeavours to

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1 [This subject is discussed much more fully below, on p. [445](#) ff.]

2 Her accompanying hysterical symptoms were amenorrhoea and great depression (which was this patient's chief symptom), [This dream is discussed on p. [445](#) f.]

3 [The last sentence was added in 1909, and from 1914 onwards was printed in spaced type. The next paragraph was added in 1911.]

recall the gist and drift of the boyish phantasy to which the dream was evidently alluding; until at last the truth emerged that what he was in search of was already in his possession in his remark about the obscure part of the dream. The 'gaps' were the genital apertures of the women who were going to bed; and 'there's something missing' described the principal feature of the female genitalia. When he was young he had had a consuming curiosity to see a woman's genitals and had been inclined to hold to the infantile sexual theory according to which women have male organs.

An analogous recollection of another dreamer assumed a very similar shape.<sup>1</sup> He dreamt as follows: '*I was going into the Volks-garten Restaurant with Fräulein K...., then came an obscure patch, an interruption ...., then I found myself in the salon of a brothel, where I saw two or three women, one of them in her chemise and drawers.*'

ANALYSIS.—Fräulein K. was the daughter of his former chief, and, as he himself admitted, a substitute sister of his own. He had seldom had an opportunity of talking to her, but they once had a conversation in which 'it was just as though we had become aware of our sex, it was as though I were to say: "I'm a man and you're a woman."' He had only once been inside the restaurant in question, with his brother-in-law's sister, a girl who meant nothing at all to him. Another time he had gone with a group of three ladies as far as the entrance of the same restaurant. These ladies were his sister, his sister-in-law and the brother-in-law's sister who has just been mentioned. All of them were highly indifferent to him, but all three fell into the class of 'sister'. He had only seldom visited a brothel—only two or three times in his life.

The interpretation was based on the 'obscure patch' and the 'interruption' in the dream, and put forward the view that in his boyish curiosity he had occasionally, though only seldom, inspected the

genitals of a sister who was a few years his junior. Some days later he had a conscious recollection of the misdeed alluded to by the dream.

The content of all dreams that occur during the same night forms part of the same whole; the fact of their being divided into several sections, as well as the grouping and number of those

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1 [This and the two following paragraphs were added in 1914.]

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sections—all of this has a meaning and may be regarded as a piece of information arising from the latent dream-thoughts.<sup>1</sup> In interpreting dreams consisting of several main sections or, in general, dreams occurring during the same night, the possibility should not be overlooked that separate and successive dreams of this kind may have the same meaning, and may be giving expression to the same impulses in different material. If so, the first of these homologous dreams to occur is often the more distorted and timid, while the succeeding one will be more confident and distinct.

Pharaoh's dreams in the Bible of the kine and the ears of corn, which were interpreted by Joseph, were of this kind. They are reported more fully by Josephus (*Ancient History of the Jews*, Book 2, Chapter 5) than in the Bible. After the King had related his first dream, he said: 'After I had seen this vision, I awaked out of my sleep; and, being in disorder, and considering with myself what this appearance should be, I fell asleep again, and saw another dream, more wonderful than the foregoing, which did more affright and disturb me ...' After hearing the King's account of the dream, Joseph replied: 'This dream, O King, although seen under two forms, signifies one and the same event ...' [Whiston's translation, 1874, 1, 127-8.]

In his 'Contribution to the Psychology of Rumour', Jung ([1910b](#)), describes how the disguised erotic dream of a school-girl was understood by her school-friends without any interpreting and how it was further elaborated and modified. He remarks in connection with one of these dream stories: 'The final thought in a long series of dream-images contains precisely what the first image in the series had attempted to portray. The censorship keeps the complex at a distance as long as possible by a succession of fresh symbolic screens, displacements, innocent disguises, etc' (*Standard Ed.*, [87](#).) Schemer ([1861](#), [166](#)) was well acquainted with this peculiarity of the method of representation in dreams and describes it, in connection with his theory of organic stimuli [see p. [85](#) f.], as a special law: 'Lastly, however, in allsymbolic dream-structures which arise from particular

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1 [This sentence was added in 1909. The remainder of this paragraph, and the three following ones, were added in 1911. Freud deals with the subject again towards the end of Lecture XXIX of his *New Introductory Lectures* ([1933a](#)). It has already been touched upon on p. [314](#) ff., and is mentioned again on p. [403](#), p. [444](#) n. and p. [525](#).]

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nervous stimuli, the imagination observes a general law: at the beginning of a dream it depicts the object from which the stimulus arises only by the remotest and most inexact allusions, but at the end, when the pictorial effusion has exhausted itself, it nakedly presents the stimulus itself, or, as the case may be, the organ concerned or the function of that organ, and therewith the dream, having designated its actual organic cause, achieves its end....'

Otto Rank ([1910](#)) has produced a neat confirmation of this law of Schemer's. A girl's dream reported by him was composed of two separate dreams dreamt, with an interval between them, during the same night, the second of which ended with an orgasm. It was possible to carry out a detailed interpretation of this second dream even without many contributions from the dreamer; and the number of connections between the contents of the two dreams made it possible to see that the first dream represented in a more timid fashion the same thing as the second. So that the second, the dream with the orgasm, helped towards the complete explanation of the first. Rank rightly bases upon this example a discussion of the general significance of dreams of orgasm or emission for the theory of dreaming. [See p. [402](#) ff.]

Nevertheless in my experience it is only rarely that one is in a position to interpret the clarity or confusion of a dream by the presence of certainty or doubt in its material. Later on I shall have to

disclose a factor in dream-formation which I have not yet mentioned and which exercises the determining influence upon the scale of these qualities in any particular dream. [See p. 500 f.]

Sometimes, in a dream in which the same situation and setting have persisted for some time, an interruption will occur which is described in these words: 'But then it was as though at the same time it was another place, and there such and such a thing happened.' After a while the main thread of the dream may be resumed, and what interrupted it turns out to be a subordinate clause in the dream-material—an interpolated thought. A conditional in the dream-thoughts has been represented in the dream by simultaneity: 'if' has become 'when'.

What is the meaning of the sensation of inhibited movement

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which appears so commonly in dreams and verges so closely upon anxiety? One tries to move forward but finds oneself glued to the spot, or one tries to reach something but is held up by a series of obstacles. A train is on the point of departure but one is unable to catch it. One raises one's hand to avenge an insult but finds it powerless. And so forth. We have already met with this sensation in dreams of exhibiting [p. 242 ff.; cf. also p. 285], but have not as yet made any serious attempt to interpret it. An easy but insufficient answer would be to say that motor paralysis prevails in sleep and that we become aware of it in the sensation we are discussing. But it may be asked why in that case we are not perpetually dreaming of these inhibited movements; and it is reasonable to suppose that this sensation, though one which can be summoned up at any moment during sleep, serves to facilitate some particular kind of representation, and is only aroused when the material of the dream-thoughts needs to be represented in that way.

This 'not being able to do anything' does not always appear in dreams as a sensation but is sometimes simply a part of the content of the dream. A case of this sort seems to me particularly well qualified to throw light on the meaning of this feature of dreaming. Here is an abridged version of a dream in which I was apparently charged with dishonesty. *The place was a mixture of a private sanatorium and several other institutions. A manservant appeared to summon me to an examination. I knew in the dream that something had been missed and that the examination was due to a suspicion that I had appropriated the missing article.* (The analysis showed that the examination was to be taken in two senses and included a medical examination.) *Conscious of my innocence and of the fact that I held the position of a consultant in the establishment, I accompanied the servant quietly. At the door we were met by another servant, who said, pointing to me: 'Why have you brought him? He's a respectable person.'* I then went, unattended, into a large hall, with machines standing in it, which reminded me of an Inferno with its hellish instruments of punishment. *Stretched out on one apparatus I saw one of my colleagues, who had every reason to take some notice of me; but he paid no attention. I was then told I could go. But I could not find my hat and could not go after all.*

The wish-fulfilment of the dream evidently lay in my being recognized as an honest man and told I could go. There must therefore have been all kinds of material in the dream-thoughts

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containing a contradiction of this. That I could go was a sign of my absolution. If therefore something happened at the end of the dream which prevented my going, it seems plausible to suppose that the suppressed material containing the contradiction was making itself felt at that point. My not being able to find my hat meant accordingly: 'After all you're *not* an honest man.' Thus the 'not being able to do something' in this dream was a way of expressing a contradiction—a 'no'—; so that my earlier statement [p. 318] that dreams cannot express a 'no' requires correction.<sup>1</sup>

In other dreams, in which the 'not carrying out' of a movement occurs as a *sensation* and not simply as a *situation*, the sensation of the inhibition of a movement gives a more forcible expression to the same contradiction—it expresses a volition which is opposed by a counter-volition. Thus the sensation of the inhibition of a movement represents a *conflict of will*. [Cf. p. 246.] We shall learn later [p. 567 f.] that the motor paralysis accompanying sleep is precisely one of the fundamental determinants of the psychical process during dreaming. Now an impulse transmitted along the motor

paths is nothing other than a volition, and the fact of our being so certain that we shall feel that impulse inhibited during sleep is what makes the whole process so admirably suited for representing an act of volition and a 'no' which opposes it. It is also easy to see, on my explanation of anxiety, why the sensation of an inhibition of will approximates so closely to anxiety and is so often linked with it in dreams. Anxiety is a

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1 In the complete analysis there was a reference to an event in my childhood, reached by the following chain of association. 'Der Mohr hat seine Schuldigkeit getan, der Mohr *kann gehen*.' ['The Moor has done his duty, the Moor *can go*.'] (Schiller, *Fiesco*, III, 4.) '*Schuldigkeit*' ('duty') is actually a misquotation for '*Arbeit*' ('work').] Then came a facetious conundrum: 'How old was the Moor when he had done his duty?'— 'One year old, because then he could go [*gehen*— both 'to go' and 'to walk'.'] (It appeals that I came into the world with such a tangle of black hair that my young mother declared I was a little Moor.)—My not being able to find my hat was an occurrence from waking life which was used in more than one sense. Our housemaid, who was a genius at putting things away, had hidden it.—The end of this dream also concealed a rejection of some melancholy thoughts about death: 'I am far from having done my duty, so I must not go yet.'—Birth and death were dealt with in it, just as they had been in the dream of Goethe and the paralytic patient, which I had dreamt a short time before. (See pp. [327](#), [439](#) ff. [and [448](#) ff.] )

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libidinal impulse which has its origin in the unconscious and is inhibited by the preconscious.<sup>1</sup> When, therefore, the sensation of inhibition is linked with anxiety in adream, it must be a question of an act of volition which was at one time capable of generating libido—that is, it must be a question of a sexual impulse.

I shall deal elsewhere (see below [p. [488](#) f.]) with the meaning and psychical significance of the judgement which often turns up in dreams expressed in the phrase 'after all this is only a dream'.<sup>2</sup> Here I will merely say in anticipation that it is intended to detract from the importance of what is being dreamt. The interesting and allied problem, as to what is meant when some of the content of a dream is described in the dream itself as 'dreamt'—the enigma of the 'dream within adream'—has been solved in a similar sense by Stckel [[1909](#), [459](#) ff.], who has analysed some convincing examples. The intention is, once again, to detract from the importance of what is 'dreamt' in the dream, to rob it of its reality. What is dreamt in a dream after waking from the 'dream within a dream' is what the dream-wish seeks to put in the place of an obliterated reality. It is safe to suppose, therefore, that what has been 'dreamt' in the dream is a representation of the reality, the true recollection, while the continuation of the dream, on the contrary, merely represents what the dreamer wishes. To include something in a 'dream within a dream' is thus equivalent to wishing that the thing described as a dream had never happened. In other words,<sup>3</sup> if a particular event is inserted into a dream as a dream by the dream-work itself, this implies the most decided confirmation of the reality of the event—the strongest *affirmation* of it. The dream-work makes use of dreaming as a form of repudiation, and so confirms the discovery that dreams are wish-fulfilments.<sup>4</sup>

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1 [*Footnote added 1930:*] In the light of later knowledge this statement can no longer stand. [Cf. p. [161](#), n. 2. See also p. [499](#) n.]

2 [This paragraph (except for its penultimate sentence and part of its last sentence) was added in 1911.]

3 [This sentence was added in 1919.]

4 [The last clause was added in 1919.]

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