

gains an increased importance in its bearing on the view we have taken. We are now prepared to assume that there are in the mind processes and purposes of which one knows nothing at all, has known nothing for a long time, and has even perhaps never known anything. With this the unconscious acquires a new sense for us; the characteristic of 'for the time being' or 'temporary' disappears from its essential nature. It can mean *permanently* unconscious and not merely 'latent at the time'. We shall of course have to hear more about this on some other occasion.

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Lecture X Symbolism in Dreams¹

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—We have found that the distortion in dreams, which interferes with our understanding of them, is the result of a censoring activity which is directed against unacceptable, unconscious wishful impulses. We have not, of course, maintained that the censorship is the sole factor responsible for the distortion in dreams, and in fact when we study them further we can discover that other factors play a part in producing this result. This amounts to our saying that even if the dream-censorship was out of action we should still not be in a position to understand dreams, the manifest dream would still not be identical with the latent dream-thoughts.

We come upon this other factor which prevents dreams from being lucid, this new contribution to dream-distortion, by noticing a gap in our technique. I have already admitted to you [p. 105] that it does sometimes really happen that nothing occurs to a person under analysis in response to particular elements of his dreams. It is true that this does not happen as often as he asserts; in a great many cases, with perseverance, an idea is extracted from him. But nevertheless there remain cases in which an association fails to emerge or, if it *is* extracted, does not give us what we expected from it. If this happens during a psycho-analytic treatment, it has a peculiar significance with which we are not here concerned.² But it also

¹ [As Freud tells us (*I. of D.*, 5, 350), it was relatively late before he realized the full importance of dream-symbolism, largely under the influence of Wilhelm Stekel (1911). It was not until the fourth (1914) edition of *The Interpretation of Dreams* that a special section was devoted to the subject. That section (Chapter VI, Section E) represents, apart from the present lecture, Freud's main discussion of symbolism. The topic appears, of course, in many other places both in *The Interpretation of Dreams* and in other works throughout Freud's life, and references to these will be found at a few points below. It may be added, however, that the present lecture has claims to being regarded as the most important of all Freud's writings on symbolism.]

² [The reference here is to the blocking of free associations by unconscious stirring-up of the transference. Cf. 'The Dynamics of Transference', 1912b, *Standard Ed.*, 12, 103 ff. See also Lecture XXVII below].

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happens in the interpretation of normal people's dreams or in that of our own. If we convince ourselves that in such cases no amount of pressure is of any use, we eventually discover that this unwished-for event regularly occurs in connection with particular dream-elements, and we begin to recognize that a fresh general principle is at work where we had begun by thinking we were only faced by an exceptional failure of technique.

In this way we are tempted to interpret these 'mute' dream-elements ourselves, to set about translating them with our own resources. We are then forced to recognize that whenever we venture on making a replacement of this sort we arrive at a satisfactory sense for the dream, whereas it remains senseless and the chain of thought is interrupted so long as we refrain from intervening in this way. An accumulation of many similar cases eventually gives the necessary certainty to what began as a timid experiment.

I am putting all this in a rather schematic way; but that is permissible, after all, for didactic purposes, nor has it been falsified, but merely simplified.

In this way we obtain constant translations for a number of dream-elements—just as popular 'dream-books' provide them for *everything* that appears in dreams. You will not have forgotten, of course, that when we use our *associative* technique constant replacements of dream-elements never come to light.

You will object at once that this method of interpretation strikes you as far more insecure and open to attack than the earlier one by means of free association. There is, however, something further. For when, with

experience, we have collected enough of these constant renderings, the time comes when we realize that we should in fact have been able to deal with these portions of dream-interpretation from our own knowledge, and that they could really be understood without the dreamer's associations. How it is that we must necessarily have known their meaning will become clear in the second half of our present discussion.

A constant relation of this kind between a dream-element and its translation is described by us as a 'symbolic' one, and the dream-element itself as a 'symbol' of the unconscious dream-thought. You will recall that earlier, when we were

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investigating the relations between dream-elements and the 'genuine' thing behind them, I distinguished three such relations—those of a part to a whole, of allusion and of plastic portrayal. I warned you at the time that there was a fourth, but I did not name it [p. 122]. This fourth relation is the symbolic one which I am now introducing. It gives occasion for some most interesting discussions, and I will turn to them before laying before you the detailed results of our observations of symbolism.

Symbolism is perhaps the most remarkable chapter of the theory of dreams. In the first place, since symbols are stable translations, they realize to some extent the ideal of the ancient as well as of the popular interpretation of dreams, from which, with our technique, we had departed widely. They allow us in certain circumstances to interpret a dream without questioning the dreamer, who indeed would in any case have nothing to tell us about the symbol. If we are acquainted with the ordinary dream-symbols, and in addition with the dreamer's personality, the circumstances in which he lives and the impressions which preceded the occurrence of the dream, we are often in a position to interpret a dream straightaway—to translate it at sight, as it were. A piece of virtuosity of this kind flatters the dream-interpreter and impresses the dreamer; it forms an agreeable contrast to the laborious work of questioning the dreamer. But do not allow yourselves to be led astray by this. It is not our business to perform acts of virtuosity. Interpretation based on a knowledge of symbols is not a technique which can replace or compete with the associative one. It forms a supplement to the latter and yields results which are only of use when introduced into it. And as regards acquaintance with the dreamer's psychical situation, you must bear in mind that the dreams of people you know well are not the only ones you have to analyse, that you are not as a rule familiar with the events of the previous day, which were the instigators of the dream, but that the associations of the person you are analysing will provide you precisely with a knowledge of what we call the psychical situation.

Moreover it is quite specially remarkable—having regard, too, to some considerations which we shall mention later

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[cf. p. 169]—that the most violent resistances have been expressed once again to the existence of a symbolic relation between dreams and the unconscious. Even people of judgement and reputation, who, apart from this, have gone a long way in agreeing with psycho-analysis, have at this point withheld their support. This behaviour is all the stranger in view, first, of the fact that symbolism is not peculiar to dreams alone and is not characteristic of them, and, secondly, that symbolism in dreams is by no means a discovery of psycho-analysis, however many other surprising discoveries it has made. The philosopher K. A. Scherner (1861) must be described as the discoverer of dream-symbolism, if its beginning is to be placed in modern times at all. Psycho-analysis has confirmed Scherner's findings, though it has made material modifications in them.

You will now want to hear something of the nature of dream-symbolism and to be given some examples of it. I will gladly tell you what I know, though I must confess that our understanding of it does not go as far as we should like.

The essence of this symbolic relation is that it is a comparison, though not a comparison of *any* sort. Special limitations seem to be attached to the comparison, but it is hard to say what these are. Not everything with which we can compare an object or a process appears in dreams as a symbol for it. And on the other hand a dream does not symbolize every possible element of the latent dream-thoughts but only certain definite ones. So there are restrictions here in both directions. We must admit, too, that the concept of a symbol cannot at present be sharply delimited: it shades off into such notions as those of a replacement or representation, and even approaches that of an allusion. With a number of symbols the comparison which underlies them is obvious. But again there are other symbols in regard to which we must ask ourselves where we are to look for the common

element, the *tertium comparationis*, of the supposed comparison. On further reflection we may afterwards discover it or it may definitely remain concealed. It is strange, moreover, that if a symbol is a comparison it should not be brought to light by an association, and that the dreamer should not be acquainted with it but should make use of it without knowing about it: more than that, indeed, that the dreamer feels no inclination to acknowledge the comparison even after

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it has been pointed out to him. You see, then, that a symbolic relation is a comparison of a quite special kind, of which we do not as yet clearly grasp the basis, though perhaps we may later arrive at some indication of it.

The range of things which are given symbolic representation in dreams is not wide: the human body as a whole, parents, children, brothers and sisters, birth, death, nakedness—and something else besides. The one typical—that is regular—representation of the human figure as a whole is a *house*, as was recognized by Scherner, who even wanted to give this symbol a transcendent importance which it does not possess. It may happen in a dream that one finds oneself climbing down the façade of a house, enjoying it at one moment, frightened at another. The houses with smooth walls are men, the ones with projections and balconies that one can hold on to are women [cf. p. 159 below]. One's parents appear in dreams as the *Emperor* and *Empress*, the *King* and *Queen* [loc. cit.] or other honoured personages; so here dreams are displaying much filial piety. They treat children and brothers and sisters less tenderly: these are symbolized as *small animals* or *vermin*. Birth is almost invariably represented by something which has a connection with *water*: one either falls into the water or climbs out of it, one rescues someone from the water or is rescued by someone—that is to say, the relation is one of mother to child [cf. p. 160]. Dying is replaced in dreams by *departure*, by a *train journey* [cf. p. 161], being dead by various obscure and, as it were, timid hints, nakedness by *clothes* and *uniforms*. You see how indistinct the boundaries are here between symbolic and allusive representation.

It is a striking fact that, compared with this scanty enumeration, there is another field in which the objects and topics are represented with an extraordinarily rich symbolism. This field is that of sexual life—the genitals, sexual processes, sexual intercourse. The very great majority of symbols in dreams are sexual symbols. And here a strange disproportion is revealed. The topics I have mentioned are few, but the symbols for them are extremely numerous, so that each of these things can be expressed by numbers of almost equivalent symbols. The outcome, when they are interpreted, gives rise to general objection.

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For, in contrast to the multiplicity of the representations in the dream, the interpretations of the symbols are very monotonous, and this displeases everyone who hears of it; but what is there that we can do about it?

Since this is the first time I have spoken of the subject-matter of sexual life in one of these lectures, I owe you some account of the way in which I propose to treat the topic. Psycho-analysis finds no occasion for concealments and hints, it does not think it necessary to be ashamed of dealing with this important material, it believes it is right and proper to call everything by its correct name, and it hopes that this will be the best way of keeping irrelevant thoughts of a disturbing kind at a distance. The fact that these lectures are being given before a mixed audience of both sexes can make no difference to this. Just as there can be no science *in usum Delphini*,¹ there can be none for schoolgirls; and the ladies among you have made it clear by their presence in this lecture-room that they wish to be treated on an equality with men.

The male genitals, then, are represented in dreams in a number of ways that must be called symbolic, where the common element in the comparison is mostly very obvious. To begin with, for the male genitals as a whole the sacred number 3 is of symbolic significance [cf. p. 163 f.]. The more striking and for both sexes the more interesting component of the genitals, the male organ, finds symbolic substitutes in the first instance in things that resemble it in shape—things, accordingly, that are long and up-standing, such as *sticks*, *umbrellas*, *posts*, *trees* and so on; further, in objects which share with the thing they represent the characteristic of penetrating into the body and injuring—thus, sharp *weapons* of every kind, *knives*, *daggers*, *spears*, *sabres*, but also fire-arms, *rifles*, *pistols* and *revolvers* (particularly suitable owing to their shape). In the anxiety dreams of girls, being followed by a man with a knife or a fire-arm plays a large part. This is perhaps the commonest instance of dream-symbolism and you will now be able to translate it easily. Nor is there any difficulty in understanding how it is that the male organ can be replaced by objects from which water flows—

¹ [Cf. footnote ², p. 102.]

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water-taps, watering-cans, or fountains—or again by other objects which are capable of being lengthened, such as *hanging-lamps, extensible pencils, etc.* A no less obvious aspect of the organ explains the fact that *pencils, pen-holders, nail-files, hammers, and other instruments* are undoubted male sexual symbols.

The remarkable characteristic of the male organ which enables it to rise up in defiance of the laws of gravity, one of the phenomena of erection, leads to its being represented symbolically by *balloons, flying-machines* and most recently by *Zeppelin airships*. But dreams can symbolize erection in yet another, far more expressive manner. They can treat the sexual organ as the essence of the dreamer's whole person and make him himself *fly*. Do not take it to heart if dreams of flying, so familiar and often so delightful, have to be interpreted as dreams of general sexual excitement, as erection-dreams. Among students of psycho-analysis, Paul Federn [1914] has placed this interpretation beyond any doubt; but the same conclusion was reached from his investigations by Mourly Vold [1910-12, 2, 791], who has been so much praised for his sobriety, who carried out the dream-experiments I have referred to [p. 87] with artificially arranged positions of the arms and legs and who was far removed from psycho-analysis and may have known nothing about it. And do not make an objection out of the fact that women can have the same flying dreams as men. Remember, rather, that our dreams aim at being the fulfilments of wishes and that the wish to be a man is found so frequently, consciously or unconsciously, in women. Nor will anyone with a knowledge of anatomy be bewildered by the fact that it is possible for women to realize this wish through the same sensations as men. Women possess as part of their genitals a small organ similar to the male one; and this small organ, the clitoris, actually plays the same part in childhood and during the years before sexual intercourse as the large organ in men.¹

Among the less easily understandable male sexual symbols are certain *reptiles and fishes*, and above all the famous symbol of the *snake*. It is certainly not easy to guess why *hats and overcoats or cloaks* are employed in the same way, but their symbolic significance is quite unquestionable [cf. p. 157]. And finally we can ask ourselves whether the replacement of the

¹ [This is further discussed on p. 318 below.]

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male limb by another limb, the foot or the hand, should be described as symbolic. We are, I think, compelled to do so by the context and by counterparts in the case of women.

The female genitals are symbolically represented by all such objects as share their characteristic of enclosing a hollow space which can take something into itself: by *pits, cavities and hollows*, for instance, by *vessels and bottles, by receptacles, boxes, trunks, cases, chests, pockets*, and so on. *Ships*, too, fall into this category. Some symbols have more connection with the uterus than with the female genitals: thus, *cupboards, stoves* and, more especially, *rooms*. Here room-symbolism touches on house-symbolism. *Doors and gates*, again, are symbols of the genital orifice. Materials, too, are symbols for women [cf. p. 160]: *wood, paper* and objects made of them, like *tables and books*. Among animals, *snails and mussels* at least are undeniably female symbols; among parts of the body, the *mouth* (as a substitute for the genital orifice); among buildings, *churches and chapels*. Not every symbol, as you will observe, is equally intelligible.

The breasts must be reckoned with the genitals, and these, like the larger hemispheres of the female body, are represented by *apples, peaches, and fruit* in general. The pubic hair of both sexes is depicted in dreams as *woods and bushes*. The complicated topography of the female genital parts makes one understand how it is that they are often represented as *landscapes*, with rocks, woods and water,¹ while the imposing mechanism of the male sexual apparatus explains why all kinds of complicated machinery which is hard to describe serve as symbols for it.

Another symbol of the female genitals which deserves mention is a *jewel-case*.² *Jewel and treasure* are used in dreams as well as in waking life to describe someone who is loved. *Sweets* frequently represent sexual enjoyment. Satisfaction obtained from a person's own genitals is indicated by all kinds of *playing*, including *piano-playing*. Symbolic representations *par excellence* of masturbation are *gliding or sliding and pulling off a*

branch [cf. p. 164]. The *falling out of a tooth* or the *pulling out of a tooth* is a particularly notable dream-symbol. Its first meaning is

¹ [A dream with a quantity of landscape symbolism is reported below, p. 193.]

² [This played a prominent part in the analysis of the first dream in the case history of 'Dora' (1905e), *Standard Ed.*, 7, 64 ff.]

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undoubtedly castration as a punishment for masturbating [loc. cit.]. We come across special representations of sexual intercourse less often than might be expected from what has been said so far. Rhythmical activities such as *dancing*, *riding* and *climbing* must be mentioned here, as well as violent experiences such as *being run over*; so, too, certain *manual crafts*, and, of course, *threatening with weapons*.

You must not picture the use or the translation of these symbols as something quite simple. In the course of them all kinds of things happen which are contrary to our expectations. It seems almost incredible, for instance, that in these symbolic representations the differences between the sexes are often not clearly observed. Some symbols signify genitals in general, irrespective of whether they are male or female: for instance, a *small child*, a *small son* or a *small daughter*.¹ Or again, a predominantly male symbol may be used for the female genitals or vice versa. We cannot understand this till we have obtained some insight into the development of sexual ideas in human beings. In some instances the ambiguity of the symbols may only be an apparent one; and the most marked symbols, such as *weapons*, *pockets* and *chests* are excluded from this bisexual use.

I will now go on to make a survey, starting not from the thing represented but from the symbol, of the fields from which sexual symbols are mostly derived, and I will make a few additional remarks, with special reference to the symbols where the common element in the comparison is not understood. The *hat* is an obscure symbol of this kind—perhaps, too, head-coverings in general—with a male significance as a rule, but also capable of a female one.² In the same way an *overcoat* or *cloak* means a man, perhaps not always with a genital reference; it is open to you to ask why.³ Neckties, which hang down and are not worn

¹ [That is, any one of these three may be used in a dream as a symbol for either the male or the female genitals.]

² [Hat-symbolism was discussed by Freud in his short paper 'A Connection between a Symbol and a Symptom' (1916c), *Standard Ed.*, 14, 339-40.]

³ [In *I. of D.*, 5, 356, Freud suggests that the explanation may be a verbal assonance between 'Mann' and 'Mantel' (the German for 'overcoat' or 'cloak'). A further discussion of this symbol occurs in Lecture XXIX of the *New Introductory Lectures* (1933a), *Standard Ed.*, 22, 24.]

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by women, are a definitely male symbol. *Underclothing* and *linen* in general are female. *Clothes* and *uniforms*, as we have already seen, are a substitute for nakedness or bodily shapes. *Shoes* and *slippers* are female genitals. *Tables* and *wood* have already been mentioned as puzzling but certainly female symbols. *Ladders*, *steps* and *staircases*, or, more precisely, walking on them, are clear symbols of sexual intercourse. On reflection, it will occur to us that the common element here is the rhythm of walking up them—perhaps, too, the increasing excitement and breathlessness the higher one climbs [cf. p. 164].

We have earlier referred to *landscapes* as representing the female genitals. *Hills* and *rocks* are symbols of the male organ. *Gardens* are common symbols of the female genitals. *Fruit* stands, not for children, but for the breasts. *Wild animals* mean people in an excited sensual state, and further, evil instincts or passions. *Blossoms* and *flowers* indicate women's genitals, or, in particular, virginity. Do not forget that blossoms are actually the genitals of plants.¹

We are acquainted already with *rooms* as a symbol. The representation can be carried further, for windows, and doors in and out of rooms, take over the meaning of orifices in the body. And the question of the room being *open* or *locked* fits in with this symbolism, and the *key* that opens it is a decidedly male symbol.

Here, then, is material used for symbolism in dreams. It is not complete and could be carried deeper as well as further. But I fancy it will seem to you more than enough and may even have exasperated you. 'Do I really live in the thick of sexual symbols?' you may ask. 'Are all the objects around me, all the clothes I put on, all the things I pick up, all of them sexual symbols and nothing else?' There is really ground enough for raising astonished questions, and, as a first one, we may enquire how we in fact come to know the meaning of these dream-symbols, upon which the dreamer himself gives us insufficient information or none at all.

My reply is that we learn it from very different sources—from fairy tales and myths, from buffoonery and jokes, from

¹ [A dream with a large amount of flower symbolism is reported in *J. of D.*, 4, 319 and 5, 347-8.]

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folklore (that is, from knowledge about popular manners and customs, sayings and songs) and from poetic and colloquial linguistic usage. In all these directions we come upon the same symbolism, and in some of them we can understand it without further instruction. If we go into these sources in detail, we shall find so many parallels to dream-symbolism that we cannot fail to be convinced of our interpretations.

According to Scherner, as we have said [p. 153], the human body is often represented in dreams by the symbol of a house. Carrying this representation further, we found that windows, doors and gates stood for openings in the body and that façades of houses were either smooth or provided with balconies and projections to hold on to. But the same symbolism is found in our linguistic usage—when we greet an acquaintance familiarly as an '*altes Haus*' ['old house'], when we speak of giving someone '*eins aufs Dach!*' [a knock on the head, literally, 'one on the roof'], or when we say of someone else that 'he's not quite right in the upper storey'. In anatomy the orifices of the body are in so many words termed '*Leibesportfen*' [literally, 'portals of the body'].

It seems surprising at first to find one's parents in dreams as an imperial or royal couple. But it has its parallel in fairy tales. It begins to dawn on us that the many fairy tales which begin 'Once upon a time there were a King and Queen' only mean to say that there were once a father and mother. In a family the children are jokingly called 'princes' and the eldest 'crown prince'. The King himself calls himself the father of his country. We speak of small children jokingly as '*Würmer*' ['worms'] and speak sympathetically of a child as '*der arme Wurm*' ['the poor worm'].

Let us go back to house-symbolism. When in a dream we make use of the projections on houses for catching hold of, we may be reminded of a common vulgar expression for well-developed breasts: 'She's got something to catch hold of.' There is another popular expression in such cases: 'She's got plenty of wood in front of the house', which seems to confirm our interpretation of wood as a female, maternal symbol.

And, speaking of wood, it is hard to understand how that material came to represent what is maternal and female. But here comparative philology may come to our help. Our German

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word '*Holz*' seems to come from the same root as the Greek



[*hulē*], meaning 'stuff' 'raw material'. This seems to be an instance of the not uncommon event of the general name of a material eventually coming to be reserved for some particular material. Now there is an island in the Atlantic named 'Madeira'. This name was given to it by the Portuguese when they discovered it, because at that time it was covered all over with woods. For in the Portuguese language '*madeira*' means 'wood'. You will notice, however, that '*madeira*' is only a slightly modified form of the Latin word '*materia*', which once more means 'material' in general. But '*materia*' is derived from '*mater*', 'mother': the material out of which anything is made is, as it were, a mother to it. This ancient view of the thing survives, therefore, in the symbolic use of wood for 'woman' or 'mother'.

Birth is regularly expressed in dreams by some connection with water: one falls into the water or one comes out of the water—one gives birth or one is born. We must not forget that this symbol is able to appeal in two

ways to evolutionary truth, Not only are all terrestrial mammals, including man's ancestors, descended from aquatic creatures (this is the more remote of the two facts), but every individual mammal, every human being, spent the first phase of its existence in water—namely as an embryo in the amniotic fluid in its mother's uterus, and came out of that water when it was born. I do not say that the dreamer knows this; on the other hand, I maintain that he need not know it. There is something else that the dreamer probably knows from having been told it in his childhood; and I even maintain of that too that his knowledge of it contributed nothing to the construction of the symbol. He was told in his nursery that the stork brings the babies. But where does it fetch them from? From the pond, or from the stream—once again, then, from the water. One of my patients after he had been given this information—he was a little Count at the time—disappeared for a whole afternoon. He was found at last lying by the edge of the castle pool, with his little face bending over the surface of the water eagerly peering down to try and see the babies at the bottom. [Cf. p. 318 below.]

In myths about the birth of heroes—to which Otto Rank [1909] has devoted a comparative study, the oldest being that

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of King Sargon of Agade (about 2800 B.C.)—a predominant part is played by exposure in the water and rescue from the water. Rank has perceived that these are representations of birth, analogous to those that are usual in dreams. If one rescues someone from the water in a dream, one is making oneself into his mother, or simply into a mother. In myths a person who rescues a baby from the water is admitting that she is the baby's true mother. There is a well-known comic anecdote according to which an intelligent Jewish boy was asked who the mother of Moses was. He replied without hesitation: 'The Princess.' 'No', he was told, 'she only took him out of the water.' 'That's what *she* says', he replied, and so proved that he had found the correct interpretation of the myth.¹

Departure in dreams means dying. So, too, if a child asks where someone is who has died and whom he misses, it is common nursery usage to reply that he has gone on a journey. Once more I should like to contradict the belief that the dream-symbol is derived from this evasion. The dramatist² is using the same symbolic connection when he speaks of the after-life as 'the undiscovered country from whose bourn no *traveller* returns'. Even in ordinary life it is common to speak of 'the last journey'. Every one acquainted with ancient rituals is aware of how seriously (in the religion of Ancient Egypt, for instance) the idea is taken of a journey to the land of the dead. Many copies have survived of *The Book of the Dead*, which was supplied to the mummy like a Baedeker to take with him on the journey. Ever since burial-places have been separated from dwelling-places the dead person's last journey has indeed become a reality.

It is just as little the case that genital symbolism is something that is found only in dreams. Every one of you has probably at one time or another spoken impolitely of a woman as an '*alte Schachtel*' ['old box'], perhaps without knowing that you were using a genital symbol. In the New Testament we find woman referred to as 'the weaker vessel'. The Hebrew scriptures, written in a style that comes close to poetry, are full of sexually symbolic expressions, which have not always been correctly understood and whose exegesis (for instance, in the case of the

¹ [Freud used this 'correct interpretation of the myth' as the basis of his last work, *Moses and Monotheism* (1939a).]

² Shakespeare, in *Hamlet*, Act III, Scene 1.

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Song of Solomon¹) has led to some misunderstandings. In later Hebrew literature it is very common to find a woman represented by a house, whose door stands for the sexual orifice. A man complains, for instance, in a case of lost virginity, that he has 'found the door open'. So, too, the symbol of a table for a woman in these writings. Thus, a woman says of her husband: 'I laid the table for him, but he turned it round.' Lame children are said to come about through the man's 'turning the table round'. I take these examples from a paper by Dr. L. Levy of BrÜnn [1914].

The fact that ships, too, in dreams stand for women is made credible by the etymologists, who tell us that '*Schiff* [ship] was originally the name of an earthenware vessel and is the same word as '*Schaff* [a dialect word

meaning 'tub']. That ovens represent women and the uterus is confirmed by the Greek legend of Periander of Corinth and his wife Melissa. The tyrant, according to Herodotus, conjured up the shade of his wife, whom he had loved passionately but had murdered out of jealousy, to obtain some information from her. The dead woman proved her identity by saying that he (Periander) had '*pushed his bread into a cold oven*', as a disguise for an event which no one else could know of. In the periodical *Anthropophyteia*, edited by F. S. Krauss, an invaluable source of knowledge of sexual anthropology,² we learn that in a particular part of Germany they say of a woman who has given birth to a child that '*her oven has come to pieces*'. Kindling fire, and everything to do with it, is intimately interwoven with sexual symbolism. Flame is always a male genital, and the fireplace, the hearth is its female counterpart.

If you may have felt surprised at the frequency with which landscapes are used in dreams to represent the female genitals, you can learn from mythology the part played by *Mother Earth* in the concepts and cults of the peoples of antiquity and how their view of agriculture was determined by this symbolism. You will perhaps be inclined to trace the fact that in dreams a room represents a woman to the common usage in our language by which '*Frau*' is replaced by '*Frauenzimmer*'³—the

¹ [Some examples are given in *I. of D.*, 5, 346.]

² [Cf. Freud's appreciative letter to Krauss (1910f).]

³ [Literally 'woman's apartment'. The word is very often used in German as a slightly derogatory synonym for 'woman'.]

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human being is replaced by the apartment allotted to her. Similarly we speak of the 'Sublime Porte'¹, meaning the Sultan and his government. So too the title of the Ancient Egyptian ruler, 'Pharaoh', means simply 'Great Courtyard'. (In the Ancient East the courts between the double gateways of a city were public meeting-places like the market-places of the classical world.) This derivation, however, appears to be too superficial. It seems to me more likely that a room became the symbol of a woman as being the space which encloses human beings. We have already found 'house' used in a similar sense; and mythology and poetical language enable us to add 'city', 'citadel', 'castle' and 'fortress' as further symbols for 'woman'. The question could be easily settled from the dreams of people who do not speak or understand German. During the last few years I have mainly treated foreign-speaking patients, and I seem to remember that in their dreams too '*Zimmer*' ['room'] meant '*Frauenzimmer*', though they had no similar usage in their languages. There are other indications that the symbolic relation can go beyond the limits of language—which, incidentally was asserted long ago by an old investigator of dreams, Schubert [1814]. However, none of my dreamers were completely ignorant of German, so the decision must be left to psychoanalysts who can collect data from unilingual people in other countries.

There is scarcely one of the symbolic representations of the male genitals which does not recur in joking, vulgar or poetic usage, especially in the ancient classical dramatists. But here we meet not only the symbols which appear in dreams, but others besides—for instance tools employed in various operations, and particularly the plough. Moreover, the symbolic representation of masculinity leads us to a very extensive and much disputed region, which, on grounds of economy, we shall avoid. I should like, however, to devote a few words to one symbol, which, as it were, falls outside this class—the number 3.² Whether this number owes its sacred character to this symbolic connection remains undecided. But what seems certain is that a number of tripartite things that occur in nature—the clover leaf, for

¹ [Literally, 'Gateway', the old diplomatic term for the Ottoman Court at Constantinople before 1923, derived *viâ* the French from the Turkish title.]

² [Cf. p. 220 below.]

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instance—owe their use for coats of arms and emblems to this symbolic meaning. Similarly, the tripartite lily—the so-called *fleur-de-lis*—and the remarkable heraldic device of two islands so far apart as Sicily and the Isle of

Man—the *triskeles* (three bent legs radiating from a centre)—seem to be stylized versions of the male genitals. Likenesses of the male organ were regarded in antiquity as the most powerful *apotropaic* (means of defence) against evil influences, and, in conformity with this, the lucky charms of our own day can all be easily recognized as genital or sexual symbols. Let us consider a collection of such things—as they are worn, for instance, in the form of small silver hanging trinkets: a four-leaved clover, a pig, a mushroom, a horse-shoe, a ladder, a chimney-sweep. The four-leaved clover has taken the place of the three-leaved one which is really suited to be a symbol. The pig is an ancient fertility symbol. The mushroom is an undoubted penis-symbol: there are mushrooms [fungi] which owe their systematic name (*Phallus impudicus*) to their unmistakable resemblance to the male organ. The horseshoe copies the outline of the female genital orifice, while the chimney-sweep, who carries the ladder, appears in this company on account of his activities, with which sexual intercourse is vulgarly compared. (Cf. *Anthropophyteia*.) We have made the acquaintance of his ladder in dreams as a sexual symbol; here German linguistic usage comes to our help and shows us how the word '*steigen*' ['to climb', or 'to mount'] is used in what is *par excellence* a sexual sense. We say '*den Frauen nachsteigen*' ['to run' (literally 'climb') 'after women'], and '*ein alter Steiger*' ['an old rake' (literally 'climber')]. In French, in which the word for steps on a staircase is '*marches*', we find a precisely analogous term '*un vieux marcheur*'. The fact that in many large animals climbing or 'mounting' on the female is a necessary preliminary to sexual intercourse probably fits into this context.¹

'Pulling off a branch' as a symbolic representation of masturbation is not merely in harmony with vulgar descriptions of the act² but has far-reaching mythological parallels. But that masturbation, or rather the punishment for it—castration—, should be represented by the falling out or pulling out of teeth

¹ [This is largely repeated from Freud's Nuremberg Congress paper (1910d), *Standard Ed.*, 11, 143.]

² [Cf. the English 'tossing off'.]

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is especially remarkable, since there is a counterpart to it in anthropology which can be known to only a very small number of dreamers. There seems to me no doubt that the circumcision practised by so many peoples is an equivalent and substitute for castration. And we now learn that certain primitive tribes in Australia carry out circumcision as a puberty rite (at the festival to celebrate a boy's attaining sexual maturity), while other tribes, their near neighbours, have replaced this act by the knocking out of a tooth.

Here I bring my account of these specimens to an end. They are only specimens. We know more on the subject; but you may imagine how much richer and more interesting a collection like this would be if it were brought together, not by amateurs like us, but by real professionals in mythology, anthropology, philology and folklore.

A few consequences force themselves on our notice; they cannot be exhaustive, but they offer us food for reflection.

In the first place we are faced by the fact that the dreamer has a symbolic mode of expression at his disposal which he does not know in waking life and does not recognize. This is as extraordinary as if you were to discover that your housemaid understood Sanskrit, though you know that she was born in a Bohemian village and never learnt it. It is not easy to account for this fact by the help of our psychological views. We can only say that the knowledge of symbolism is unconscious¹ to the dreamer, that it belongs to his unconscious mental life. But even with this assumption we do not meet the point. Hitherto it has only been necessary for us to assume the existence of unconscious endeavours—endeavours, that is, of which, temporarily or permanently, we know nothing. Now, however, it is a question of more than this, of unconscious pieces of knowledge, of connections of thought, of comparisons between different objects which result in its being possible for one of them to be regularly put in place of the other. These comparisons are not freshly made on each occasion; they lie ready to hand and are complete, once and for all. This is implied by the fact of their agreeing in the case of different individuals—possibly, indeed, agreeing in spite of differences of language. What can

¹ [Cf. footnote, p. 21.]

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be the origin of these symbolic relations? Linguistic usage covers only a small part of them. The multiplicity of parallels in other spheres of knowledge are mostly unknown to the dreamer; we ourselves have been obliged to collect them laboriously.

Secondly, these symbolic relations are not something peculiar to dreamers or to the dream-work through which they come to expression. This same symbolism, as we have seen, is employed by myths and fairy tales, by the people in their sayings and songs, by colloquial linguistic usage and by the poetic imagination. The field of symbolism is immensely wide, and dream-symbolism is only a small part of it: indeed, it serves no useful purpose to attack the whole problem from the direction of dreams. Many symbols which are commonly used elsewhere appear in dreams very seldom or not at all. Some dream-symbols are not to be found in all other fields but only, as you have seen, here and there. One gets an impression that what we are faced with here is an ancient but extinct mode of expression, of which different pieces have survived in different fields, one piece only here, another only there, a third, perhaps, in slightly modified forms in several fields. And here I recall the phantasy of an interesting psychotic patient, who imagined a 'basic language' of which all these symbolic relations would be residues.¹

Thirdly, it must strike you that the symbolism in the other fields I have mentioned is by no means solely sexual symbolism, whereas in dreams symbols are used almost exclusively for the expression of sexual objects and relations. This is not easily explained either. Are we to suppose that symbols which originally had a sexual significance later acquired another application and that, furthermore, the toning-down of representation by symbols into other kinds of representation may be connected with this? These questions can evidently not be answered so long as we have considered dream-symbolism alone. We can only hold firmly to the suspicion that there is a specially intimate relation between true symbols and sexuality.

In this connection we have been given an important hint

¹ [This was Senatspräsident Schreber, whose case history was analysed by Freud (1911c), *Standard Ed.*, 12, 23.]

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during the last few years. A philologist, Hans Sperber [1912], of Uppsala, who works independently of psycho-analysis, has put forward the argument that sexual needs have played the biggest part in the origin and development of speech. According to him, the original sounds of speech served for communication, and summoned the speaker's sexual partner; the further development of linguistic roots accompanied the working activities of primal man. These activities, he goes on, were performed in common and were accompanied by rhythmically repeated utterances. In this way a sexual interest became attached to work. Primal man made work acceptable, as it were, by treating it as an equivalent and substitute for sexual activity. The words enunciated during work in common thus had two meanings; they denoted sexual acts as well as the working activity equated with them. As time went on, the words became detached from the sexual meaning and fixed to the work. In later generations the same thing happened with new words, which had a sexual meaning and were applied to new forms of work. In this way a number of verbal roots would have been formed, all of which were of sexual origin and had subsequently lost their sexual meaning. If the hypothesis I have here sketched out is correct, it would give us a possibility of understanding dream-symbolism. We should understand why dreams, which preserve something of the earliest conditions, have such an extraordinarily large number of sexual symbols, and why, in general, weapons and tools always stand for what is male, while materials and things that are worked upon stand for what is female. The symbolic relation would be the residue of an ancient verbal identity; things which were once called by the same name as the genitals could now serve as symbols for them in dreams.

The parallels we have found to dream-symbolism also allow us to form an estimate of the characteristic of psycho-analysis which enables it to attract general interest in a way in which neither psychology nor psychiatry has succeeded in doing. In the work of psycho-analysis links are formed with numbers of other mental sciences, the investigation of which promises results of the greatest value: links with mythology and philology, with folklore, with social psychology and the theory of religion. You will not be surprised to hear that a periodical

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has grown up on psycho-analytic soil whose sole aim is to foster these links. This periodical is known as *Imago*, founded in 1912 and edited by Hanns Sachs and Otto Rank.¹ In all these links the share of psycho-analysis is in the first instance that of giver and only to a less extent that of receiver. It is true that this brings it an advantage in the fact that its strange findings become more familiar when they are met with again in other fields; but on the whole it is psycho-analysis which provides the technical methods and the points of view whose application in these other fields should prove fruitful. The mental life of human individuals, when subjected to psychoanalytic investigation, offers us the explanations with the help of which we are able to solve a number of riddles in the life of human communities or at least to set them in a true light.

Incidentally, I have said nothing at all to you yet as to the circumstances in which we can obtain our deepest insight into the hypothetical 'primal language' and as to the field in which most of it has survived. Until you know this you cannot form an opinion of its whole significance. For this field is that of the neuroses and its material is the symptoms and other manifestations of neurotic patients, for the explanation and treatment of which psycho-analysis was, indeed, created.

The fourth of my reflections takes us back to the beginning and directs us along our prescribed path. I have said [p. 149] that even if there were no dream-censorship dreams would still not be easily intelligible to us, for we should still be faced with the task of translating the symbolic language of dreams into that of our waking thought. Thus symbolism is a second and independent factor in the distortion of dreams, alongside of the dream-censorship. It is plausible to suppose, however, that the dream-censorship finds it convenient to make use of symbolism, since it leads towards the same end—the strangeness and incomprehensibility of dreams.

It will shortly become clear whether a further study of dreams may not bring us up against yet another factor that contributes to the distortion of dreams. But I should not like to leave the subject of dream-symbolism without once more [p. 152] touching

¹ [It ceased publication in 1941. A journal with a similar aim, *The American Imago*, was founded by Hanns Sachs in Boston in 1939.]

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on the problem of how it can meet with such violent resistance in educated people when the wide diffusion of symbolism in myths, religion, art and language is so unquestionable. May it not be that what is responsible is once again its connection with sexuality?

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Lecture XI The Dream-Work¹

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—When you have thoroughly grasped the dream-censorship and representation by symbols, you will not yet, it is true, have completely mastered the distortion in dreams, but you will nevertheless be in a position to understand most dreams. In doing so you will make use of both of the two complementary techniques: calling up ideas that occur to the dreamer till you have penetrated from the substitute to the genuine thing and, on the ground of your own knowledge, replacing the symbols by what they mean. Later on we shall discuss some uncertainties that arise in this connection.

We can now take up once more a task that we tried to carry out previously with inadequate means, when we were studying the relations between the elements of dreams and the genuine things they stood for. We laid down four main relations of the kind [p. 120 ff.]: the relation of a part to a whole, approximation or allusion, the symbolic relation and the plastic representation of words. We now propose to undertake the same thing on a larger scale, by comparing the manifest content of a dream *as a whole* with the latent dream as it is revealed by interpretation.

I hope you will never again confuse these two things with each other. If you reach that point, you will probably have gone further in understanding dreams than most readers of my *Interpretation of Dreams*. And let me remind you once again that the work which transforms the latent dream into the manifest one is called the *dream-work*. The work which proceeds in the contrary direction, which endeavours to arrive at the latent dream from the manifest one, is our *work of interpretation*. This work of interpretation seeks to undo the dream-work. The dreams of infantile type which we recognize as obvious fulfilments of wishes have nevertheless experienced