holds that it is because these impressions have not been dealt with that they are capable of producing dreams, not because they are trivial. It is true in a certain sense that trivial impressions, too, have not been dealt with completely; being in the nature of fresh impressions, they are 'autant de ressorts tendus'[3] which are released during sleep. A powerful impression which happens to have met with some check in the process of being worked over or which has been purposely held under restraint has more claim to play a part in dreams than an impression which is weak and almost unnoticed. The psychical energy which has been stored up during

---

[1] ['If they were deeply in love, they almost never dreamt of each other before marriage or during their honeymoon; and if they had erotic dreams they were unfaithful in them with some indifferent or repellent person.']

[2] ['Unconscious memory.']

[3] ['They are so many springs under tension.']

WARNING! This text is printed for the personal use of the subscriber to PEP Web and is copyright to the Journal in which it originally appeared. It is illegal to copy, distribute or circulate it in any form whatsoever.

the daytime by being inhibited and suppressed becomes the motive force for dreams at night. Psychical material that has been suppressed comes to light in dreams. [*Standard Et.*, **1891**, 43.][1]

At this point, unluckily, Delage interrupts his train of thought. He can attribute only the smallest share in dreams to any independent psychical activity; and thus he brings his theory into line with the ruling theory of the partial awakening of the brain: 'En somme le rêve est le produit dc la pensée errante, sans but et sans direction, se fixant successivement sur les souvenirs, qui ont gardé assez d'intensité pour se placer sur sa route et l'arrêter au passage, établissant entre eux un lien tantôt faible et indécis, tantôt plus fort et plus serré, sclon que l'activité actuelle du cerveau est plus ou moins abolie par le sommeil.' [*Standard Ed.*, **46**.][2]

We may place in a third group those theories which ascribe to the dreaming mind a capacity and inclination for carrying out special psychical activities of which it is largely or totally incapable in waking life. The putting of these faculties into force usually provides dreaming with a utilitarian function. Most of the estimates formed of dreaming by earlier writers on psychology fall into this class. It will be enough, however, for me to quote a sentence from Burdach (**1838**, 512). Dreaming, he writes, 'is a natural activity of the mind which is not limited by the power of individuality, which is not interrupted by self-consciousness and which is not directed by self-determination, but which is the freely operating vitality of the sensory centres.'

This revelling of the mind in the free use of its own forces is evidently regarded by Burdach and the rest as a condition in

---

[1] [*Footnote added* 1909:] Anatole France expresses exactly the same idea in *Le lys rouge*: 'Ce que nous voyons la nuit, ce sont les restes malheurcux de ce que nous avons négligé dans la veille. Le rêve est souvent la revanche des choses qu'on méprise ou le reproche des êlres abandonés.' ['What we see during the night are the miserable remnants of what we have neglected during the previous day. A dream is often a retaliation on the part of what we despise or a reproach on the part of those we have deserted.']

[2] ['In short, dreams are the product of thought wandering without purpose or direction, attaching itself in turn to memories which have retained enough intensity to stand in its way and interrupt its course, and linking them together by a bond which is sometimes weak and vague and sometimes stronger and closer, according as the brain's activity at the moment is abolished by sleep to a greater or less extent.']

WARNING! This text is printed for the personal use of the subscriber to PEP Web and is copyright to the Journal in which it originally appeared. It is illegal to copy, distribute or circulate it in any form whatsoever.

which the mind is refreshed and collects new strength for the day's work—in which, in fact, it enjoys a sort of holiday. Thus Burdach [*Standard Ed.*, **514**] quotes with approval the charming words in which the poet Novalis praises the reign of dreams: 'Dreams are a shield against the humdrum monotony of life; they set imagination free from its chains so that it may throw into confusion all the pictures of everyday existence and break into the unceasing gravity of grown men with the joyful play of a child. Without dreams we should surely grow sooner old; so we may look on them—not, perhaps as a gift from on high—but as a precious recreation, as friendly companions on our pilgrimage to the grave.' [*Heinrich von Ofterdingen* **(1802)**, Part I, Chap. 1]

The reviving and healing function of dreams is described with still more insistence by Purkinje (**1846**, 456): 'These functions are performed especially by productive dreams. They are the easy play of the imagination and have no connection with the affairs of daytime. The mind has no wish to prolong the tensions of waking life; it seeks to relax them and to recover from them. It produces above all conditions contrary to the waking ones. It cures sorrow by joy, cares by hopes and pictures of happy distraction, hatred by love and friendliness, fear by courage and foresight; it allays doubt by conviction and firm faith, and vain expectation by fulfilment. Many of the spirit's wounds which are being constantly re-opened during the day are healed by sleep, which covers them and shields them from fresh injury. The healing action of time is based partly on this.' We all have a feeling that sleep has a beneficial effect upon mental activities, and the obscure working of the popular mind refuses to let itself be robbed of its belief that dreaming is one of the ways in which sleep dispenses its benefits.

The most original and far-reaching attempt to explain dreaming as a special activity of the mind, capable of free expansion only during the state of sleep, was that undertaken by Schemer in 1861. His book is written in a turgid and high-flown style and is inspired by an almost intoxicated enthusiasm for his subject which is bound to repel anyone who cannot share in his fervour. It puts such difficulties in the way of an analysis of its contents that we turn with relief to the clearer and briefer exposition of Schemer's doctrines given by the philosopher Volkelt. 'Suggestive gleams of meaning proceed like lightning-flashes

WARNING! This text is printed for the personal use of the subscriber to PEP Web and is copyright to the Journal in which it originally appeared. It is illegal to copy, distribute or circulate it in any form whatsoever.

out of these mystical agglomerations, these clouds of glory and splendour—but they do not illuminate a philosopher's path.' It is in these terms that Scherner's writings are judged even by his disciple. [Volkelt, **1875**, 29.]

Schemer is not one of those who believe that the capacities of the mind continue undiminished in dream-life. He himself [in Volkelt's words (*Standard Ed.*, **30**)] shows how the centralized core of the ego—its spontaneous energy—is deprived of its nervous force in dreams, how as a result of this decentralization the processes of cognition, feeling, willing and ideation are modified, and how the remnants of these psychical functions no longer possess a truly mental character but become nothing more than mechanisms. But by way of contrast, the mental activity which may be described as 'imagination', liberated from the domination of reason and from any moderating control, leaps into a position of unlimited sovereignty. Though dream-imagination makes use of recent waking memories for its building material, it erects them into structures bearing not the remotest resemblance to those of waking life; it reveals itself in dreams as possessing not merely reproductive *but productive* powers. [*Standard Ed.*, **31**.] Its characteristics are what lend their peculiar features to dreams. It shows a preference for what is immoderate, exaggerated and monstrous. But at the same time, being freed from the hindrances of the categories of thought, it gains in pliancy, agility and versatility. It is susceptible in the subtlest manner to the shades of the tender feelings and to passionate emotions, and promptly incorporates our inner life into external plastic pictures. Imagination in dreams is without the power of conceptual speech. It is obliged to paint what it has to say pictorially, and, since there are no concepts to exercise an attenuating influence, it makes full and powerful use of the pictorial form. Thus, however clear its speech may be, it is diffuse, clumsy and awkward. The clarity of its speech suffers particularly from the fact that it has a dislike of representing an object by its proper image, and prefers some extraneous image which will express only that particular one of the object's attributes which it is seeking to represent. Here we have the 'symbolizing activity' of the imagination. … [*Standard Ed.*, **32**.] Another very important point is that dream-imagination never depicts things completely, but only in outline and even so only in the roughest fashion. For this reason its paintings seem like inspired sketches. It does not

WARNING! This text is printed for the personal use of the subscriber to PEP Web and is copyright to the Journal in which it originally appeared. It is illegal to copy, distribute or circulate it in any form whatsoever.

halt, however, at the mere representation of an object; it is under an internal necessity to involve the dream-ego to a greater or less extent with the object and thus produce an *event*. For instance, a dream caused by a visual stimulus may represent gold coins in the street; the dreamer will pick them up delightedly and carry them off. [*Standard Ed.*, **33**.]

The material with which dream-imagination accomplishes its artistic work is principally, according to Schemer, provided by the organic somatic stimuli which are so obscure during the daytime. (See above, p. **33** ff.) Thus the excessively fantastic hypothesis put forward by Scherner and the perhaps unduly sober doctrines of Wundt and other physiologists, which are poles asunder in other respects, are entirely at one in regard to their theory of the sources and instigators of dreams. According to the physiological view, however, the mental

reaction to the internal somatic stimuli is exhausted with the provoking of certain ideas appropriate to the stimuli; these ideas give rise to others along associative lines and at this point the course of psychical events in dreams seems to be at an end. According to Schemer, on the other hand, the somatic stimuli do no more than provide the mind with material of which it can make use for its imaginative purposes. The formation of dreams only begins, in Schemer's eyes, at the point which the other writers regard as its end.

What dream-imagination does to the somatic stimuli cannot, of course, be regarded as serving any useful purpose. It plays about with them, and pictures the organic sources, from which the stimuli of the dream in question have arisen, in some kind of plastic symbolism. Scherner is of the opinion—though here Volkelt [**1875**, 37] and others refuse to follow him—that dream-imagination has one particular favourite way of representing the organism as a whole: namely as a house. Fortunately, however, it does not seem to be restricted to this one method of representation. On the other hand, it may make use of a whole row of houses to indicate a single organ; for instance, a very long street of houses may represent a stimulus from the intestines. Again, separate portions of a house may stand for separate portions of the body; thus, in a dream caused by a headache, the head may be represented by the ceiling of a room covered with disgusting, toad-like spiders. [*Standard Ed.*, **33** f.]

Leaving this house-symbolism on one side, any number of

WARNING! This text is printed for the personal use of the subscriber to PEP Web and is copyright to the Journal in which it originally appeared. It is illegal to copy, distribute or circulate it in any form whatsoever.

other kinds of things may be used to represent the parts of the body from which the stimulus to the dream has arisen. 'Thus the breathing lung will be symbolically represented by a blazing furnace, with flames roaring with a sound like the passage of air; the heart will be represented by hollow boxes or baskets, the bladder by round, bag-shaped objects or, more generally, by hollow ones. A dream caused by stimuli arising from the male sexual organs may cause the dreamer to find the top part of a clarinet in the street or the mouth-piece of a tobacco-pipe, or again, a piece of fur. Here the clarinet and the tobacco-pipe represent the approximate shape of the male organ, while the fur stands for the pubic hair. In the case of a sexual dream in a woman, the narrow space where the thighs come together may be represented by a narrow courtyard surrounded by houses, while the vagina may be symbolized by a soft, slippery and very narrow foot-path leading across the yard, along which the dreamer has to pass, in order, perhaps, to take a gentleman a letter.' (*Standard Et.*, **34**.) It is of special importance that, at the end of dreams with a somatic stimulus, such as these, the dream-imagination often throws aside its veil, as it were, by openly revealing the organ concerned or its function. Thus a dream 'with a dental stimulus' usually ends by the dreamer picturing himself pulling a tooth out of his mouth. [*Standard Ed.*, **35**.]

Dream-imagination may, however, not merely direct its attention to the *form* of the stimulating organ; it may equally well symbolize the substance contained in that organ. In this way, a dream with an intestinal stimulus may lead the dreamer along muddy streets, or one with a urinary stimulus may lead him to a foaming stream. Or the stimulus as such, the nature of the excitement it produces, or the object it desires, may be symbolically represented. Or the dream-ego may enter into concrete relations with the symbols of its own state; for instance, in the case of painful stimuli the dreamer may engage in a desperate struggle with fierce dogs or savage bulls, or a woman in a sexual dream may find herself pursued by a naked man. [*Standard Ed.*, **35** f.] Quite apart from the wealth of the means that it employs, the symbolizing activity of the imagination remains the central force in every dream. [*Standard Ed.*, **36**.] The task of penetrating more deeply into the nature of this imagination and of finding a place for it in a system of philosophical thought is attempted by Volkelt in the pages of his book. But, though

WARNING! This text is printed for the personal use of the subscriber to PEP Web and is copyright to the Journal in which it originally appeared. It is illegal to copy, distribute or circulate it in any form whatsoever.

it is well and feelingly written, it remains excessively hard, to understand for anyone whose early education has not prepared him for a sympathetic grasp of the conceptual constructions of philosophy.

There is no utilitarian function attached to Scherner's symbolizing imagination. The mind plays in its sleep with the stimuli that impinge upon it. One might almost suspect that it plays with them mischievously. But I might also be asked whether my detailed examination of Scherner's theory of dreams can serve any utilitarian purpose, since its arbitrary character and its disobedience to all the rules of research seem only too obvious. By way of rejoinder, I might register a protest against the arrogance which would dismiss Scherner's theory unexamined. His theory is built upon the impression made by his dreams upon a man who considered them with the greatest attention and seems to have had a great personal gift for investigating the obscure things of the

mind. Moreover it deals with a subject that for thousands of years has been regarded by mankind as enigmatic, no doubt, but also as important in itself and its implications—a subject to the elucidation of which exact science, on its own admission, has contributed little apart from an attempt (in direct opposition to popular feeling) to deny it any meaning or significance. And finally it may honestly be said that in attempting to explain dreams it is not easy to avoid being fantastic. Ganglion cells can be fantastic too. The passage which I quoted on p. 77 from a sober and exact investigator like Binz, and which describes the way in which the dawn of awakening steals over the mass of sleeping cells in the cerebral cortex, is no less fantastic—and no less improbable—than Schemer's attempts at interpretation. I hope to be able to show that behind the latter there is an element of reality, though it has only been vaguely perceived and lacks the attribute of universality which should characterize a theory of dreams. Meanwhile the contrast between Schemer's theory and the medical one will show us the extremes between which explanations of dream-life doubtfully oscillate to this very day.[1]

---

[1] [Scherner's theories are further discussed on pp. 224 ff. and 346.]

WARNING! This text is printed for the personal use of the subscriber to PEP Web and is copyright to the Journal in which it originally appeared. It is illegal to copy, distribute or circulate it in any form whatsoever.

(H) The Realtions between Dreams and Mental Diseases

When we speak of the relation of dreams to mental disorders we may have three things in mind: (1) aetiological and clinical connections, as when a dream represents a psychotic state, or introduces it, or is left over from it; (2) modifications to which dream-life is subject in cases of mental disease; and (3) intrinsic connections between dreams and psychoses, analogies pointing to their being essentially akin. These numerous relations between the two groups of phenomena were a favourite topic among medical writers in earlier times and have become so once again to-day, as is shown by the bibliographies of the subject collected by Spitta [1882, 196 f. and 319 f.], Radestock [1879, 217], Maury [1878, 124 f.] and Tissié [1898, 77 f.]. Quite recently Sante de Sanctis has turned his attention to this subject.[1] It will be enough for the purpose of my thesis if I do no more than touch upon this important question.

As regards the clinical and aetiological connections between dreams and psychoses, the following observations may be given as samples. Hohnbaum [1830, 124], quoted by Krauss [1858, 619], reports that a first outbreak of delusional insanity often originates in an anxious or terrifying dream, and that the dominant idea is connected with the dream. Sante de Sanctis brings forward similar observations in cases of paranoia and declares that in some of these the dream was the 'vraie cause déterminante de la folie'.[2] The psychosis, says de Sanctis, may come to life at a single blow with the appearance of the operative dream which brings the delusional material to light; or it may develop slowly in a series of further dreams, which have still to overcome a certain amount of doubt. In one of his cases

---

[1] [*Footnote added* 1914:] Among later writers who deal with these relations are Féré [1887], Ideler [1862], Lasègue [1881], Pichon [1896], Régis [1894], Vespa [1897], Giessler [1888, etc.], Kazowsky [1901], Pachantoni [1909], etc.

[2] ['The true determining cause of insanity.']

WARNING! This text is printed for the personal use of the subscriber to PEP Web and is copyright to the Journal in which it originally appeared. It is illegal to copy, distribute or circulate it in any form whatsoever.

the significant dream was followed by mild hysterical attacks and later by a condition of anxious melancholia. Féré [1886] (quoted by Tissié, 1898 [78]) reports a dream which resulted in a hysterical paralysis. In these instances the dreams are represented as the aetiology of the mental disorder; but we should be doing equal justice to the facts if we said that the mental disorder made its first appearance in dream-life, that it first broke through in a dream. In some further examples the pathological symptoms are contained in dream-life, or the psychosis is limited to dream-life. Thus Thomayer (1897) draws attention to certain anxiety-dreams which he thinks should be regarded as equivalents of epileptic fits. Allison [1868] (quoted by Radestock, 1879 [225]) has described a 'nocturnal insanity', in which the patient appears completely healthy during the day but is regularly subject at night to hallucinations, fits of frenzy, etc. Similar observations are reported by de Sanctis [1899, 226] (a dream in an alcoholic patient which was equivalent to a paranoia, and which represented voices accusing his wife of unfaithfulness) and Tissié. The latter (1898, [147 ff.]) gives copious recent examples in which acts of a

pathological nature, such as conduct based on delusional premises and obsessive impulses, were derived from dreams. Guislain [1833] describes a case in which sleep was replaced by an intermittent insanity.

There can be no doubt that alongside of the psychology of dreams physicians will some day have to turn their attention to a *psychopathology* of dreams.

In cases of recovery from mental diseases it can often be quite clearly observed that, while functioning is normal during the day, dream-life is still under the influence of the psychosis. According to Krauss (1859, 270), Gregory first drew attention to this fact. Macario [1847], quoted by Tissié [1898, 89], describes how a manic patient, a week after his complete recovery was still subject in his dreams to the flight of ideas and the violent passions which were characteristic of his illness.

Very little research has hitherto been carried out into the modifications occurring in dream-life during chronic psychoses.[1] On the other hand, attention was long ago directed to the

---

[1] [This question was later examined by Freud himself (1922b, end of Section B).]

WARNING! This text is printed for the personal use of the subscriber to PEP Web and is copyright to the Journal in which it originally appeared. It is illegal to copy, distribute or circulate it in any form whatsoever.

underlying kinship between dreams and mental disorders, exhibited in the wide measure of agreement between their manifestations. Maury (1878, 124) tells us that Cabanis (1802) was the first to remark on them, and after him Lélut [1852], J. Moreau (1855) and, in particular, Maine de Biran [1834, 111 ff.] the philosopher. No doubt the comparison goes back still earlier. Radestock (1879, 217) introduces the chapter in which he deals with it by a number of quotations drawing an analogy between dreams and madness. Kant writes somewhere [1764]: 'The madman is a waking dreamer.' Krauss (1859, 270) declares that 'insanity is a dream dreamt while the senses are awake'. Schopenhauer [1862, **1**, 246] calls dreams a brief madness and madness a long dream. Hagen [1846, 812] describes delirium as dream-life induced not by sleep but by illness. Wundt [1874, 662] writes: 'We ourselves, in fact, can experience in dreams almost all the phenomena to be met with in insane asylums.'

Spitta (1882, 199), in much the same way as Maury (1878), enumerates as follows the different points of agreement which constitute the basis for this comparison: '(1) Self-consciousness is suspended or at least retarded, which results in a lack of insight into the nature of the condition, with consequent inability to feel surprise and loss of moral consciousness. (2) Perception by the sense organs is modified: being diminished in dreams but as a rule greatly increased in insanity. (3) Interconnection of ideas occurs exclusively according to the laws of association and reproduction; ideas thus fall into sequences automatically and there is a consequent lack of proportion in the relation between ideas (exaggerations and illusions). All this leads to (4) an alteration or in some cases a reversal of personality and occasionally of character traits (perverse conduct).'

Radestock (1879, 219) adds a few more features—analogies between the *material* in the two cases: 'The majority of hallucinations and illusions occur in the region of the senses of sight and hearing and of coenaesthesia. As in the case of dreams, the senses of smell and taste provide the fewest elements.—Both in patients suffering from fever and in dreamers memories arise from the remote past; both sleeping and sick men recollect things which waking and healthy men seem to have forgotten.' The analogy between dreams and psychoses is only fully appreciated

WARNING! This text is printed for the personal use of the subscriber to PEP Web and is copyright to the Journal in which it originally appeared. It is illegal to copy, distribute or circulate it in any form whatsoever.

when it is seen to extend to the details of expressive movement and to particular characteristics of facial expression.

'A man tormented by physical and mental suffering obtains from dreams what reality denies him: health and happiness. So too in mental disease there are bright pictures of happiness, grandeur, eminence and wealth. The supposed possession of property and the imaginary fulfilment of wishes—the withholding or destruction of which actually affords a psychological basis for insanity—often constitute the chief content of a delirium. A woman who has lost a loved child experiences the joys of motherhood in her delirium; a man who has lost his money believes himself immensely rich; a girl who has been deceived feels that she is tenderly loved.'

(This passage from Radestock is actually a summary of an acute observation made by Griesinger (1861, 106), who shows quite clearly that ideas in dreams and in psychoses have in common the characteristic of being *fulfilments of wishes*. My own researches have taught me that in this fact lies the key to a psychological theory of