



The Prisoner's Dream

Sigmund Freud



INTRODUCTORY
LECTURES ON
PSYCHO-ANALYSIS

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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. 183] 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. 186] touching 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?

LECTURE XI

*The Dream-Work*¹

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. 147 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

¹[The whole of Chapter VI of *I. of D.* (over a third of the entire book) is devoted to the dream-work.]

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 some amount of dream-work—they have been transformed from a wish into an actual experience and also, as a rule, from thoughts into visual images. In their case there is no need for interpretation but only for undoing these two transformations. The additional dream-work that occurs in other dreams is called 'dream-distortion', and this has to be undone by our work of interpretation.

Having compared the interpretations of numerous dreams, I am in a position to give you a summary description of what the dream-work does with the material of the latent dream-thoughts. I beg you, however, not to try to understand too much of what I tell you. It will be a piece of description which should be listened to with quiet attention.

The first achievement of the dream-work is *condensation*.² By that we understand the fact that the manifest dream has a smaller content than the latent one, and is thus an abbreviated translation of it. Condensation can on occa-

²[Condensation is discussed, with numerous examples, in Section A of Chapter VI of *I of D.*]

sion be absent; as a rule it is present, and very often it is enormous. It is never changed into the reverse; that is to say, we never find that the manifest dream is greater in extent or content than the latent one. Condensation is brought about (1) by the total omission of certain latent elements, (2) by only a fragment of some complexes in the latent dream passing over into the manifest one and (3) by latent elements which have something in common being combined and fused into a single unity in the manifest dream.

If you prefer it, we can reserve the term 'condensation' for the last only of these processes. Its results are particularly easy to demonstrate. You will have no difficulty in recalling instances from your own dreams of different people being condensed into a single one. A composite figure of this kind may look like A perhaps, but may be dressed like B, may do something that we remember C doing, and at the same time we may know that he is D. This composite structure is of course emphasizing something that the four people have in common. It is possible, naturally, to make a composite structure out of things or places in the same way as out of people, provided that the various things and places have in common something which is emphasized by the latent dream. The process is like constructing a new and transitory concept which has this common element as its nucleus. The outcome of this superimposing of the separate elements that have been condensed together is as a rule a blurred and vague image, like what happens if you take several photographs on the same plate.³

The production of composite structures like these must be of great importance to the dream-work, since we can show that, where in the first instance the common elements

³[Freud more than once compared the result of condensation with Francis Galton's 'composite photographs', e.g. Chapter IV of *I of D.*]

necessary for them were missing, they are deliberately introduced—for instance, through the choice of the words by which a thought is expressed. We have already come across condensations and composite structures of this sort. They played a part in the production of some slips of the tongue. You will recall the young man who offered to 'begleitdigen' [*begleiten* (accompany) + *beleidigen* (insult)], p. 39] a lady. Moreover, there are jokes of which the technique is based on a condensation like this.⁴ But apart from these cases, it may be said that the process is something quite unusual and strange. It is true that counterparts to the construction of these composite figures are to be found in some creations of our imagination, which is ready to combine into a unity components of things that do not belong together in our experience—in the centaurs, for instance, and the fabulous beasts which appear in ancient mythology or in Böcklin's pictures. The 'creative' imagination, indeed, is quite incapable of *inventing* anything; it can only combine components that are strange to one another. But the remarkable thing about the procedure of the dream-work lies in what follows. The material offered to the dream work consists of thoughts—a few of which may be objectionable and unacceptable, but which are correctly constructed and expressed. The dream-work puts these thoughts into another form, and it is a strange and incomprehensible fact that in making this translation (this rendering, as it were, into another script or language) these methods of merging or combining are brought into use. After all, a translation normally endeavours to preserve the distinctions made in the text and particularly to keep things that are similar separate. The dream-work, quite the contrary, tries to condense two diffe-

⁴[This technique is discussed, with many examples, in the first section of Chapter II of Freud's book on jokes (1905c), (Norton, 1960).]

rent thoughts by seeking out (like a joke) an ambiguous word in which the two thoughts may come together. We need not try to understand this feature all at once, but it may become important for our appreciation of the dream-work.

But although condensation makes dreams obscure, it does not give one the impression of being an effect of the dream-censorship. It seems traceable rather to some mechanical or economic factor, but in any case the censorship profits by it.

The achievements of condensation can be quite extraordinary. It is sometimes possible by its help to combine two quite different latent trains of thought into one manifest dream, so that one can arrive at what appears to be a sufficient interpretation of a dream and yet in doing so can fail to notice a possible 'over-interpretation'.⁵

In regard to the connection between the latent and the manifest dream, condensation results also in no simple relation being left between the elements in the one and the other. A manifest element may correspond simultaneously to several latent ones, and, contrariwise, a latent element may play a part in several manifest ones—there is, as it were, a criss-cross relationship [cf. p. 153]. In interpreting a dream, moreover, we find that the associations to a single manifest element need not emerge in succession: we must often wait till the whole dream has been interpreted.

Thus the dream-work carries out a very unusual kind of transcription of the dream-thoughts: it is not a word-for-word or a sign-for-sign translation; nor is it a selection made according to fixed rules—as though one were to reproduce only the consonants in a word and to leave out the vowels; nor is it what might be described as a representative selec-

⁵[This is commented on at several points in *I. of D.*, e.g., near the end of Chapter VII, Section A. An example of such a second interpretation will be found in Chapter IV in *I. of D.*]

tion—one element being invariably chosen to take the place of several; it is something different and far more complicated.

The second achievement of the dream-work is *displacement*.⁶ Fortunately we have made some preliminary examination of this: for we know that it is entirely the work of the dream-censorship. It manifests itself in two ways: in the first, a latent element is replaced not by a component part of itself but by something more remote—that is, by an allusion; and in the second, the psychical accent is shifted from an important element on to another which is unimportant, so that the dream appears differently centred and strange.

Replacing something by an allusion to it is a process familiar in our waking thought as well, but there is a difference. In waking thought the allusion must be easily intelligible, and the substitute must be related in its subject-matter to the genuine thing it stands for. Jokes, too, often make use of allusion. They drop the precondition of there being an association in subject-matter, and replace it by unusual external⁷ associations such as similarity of sound, verbal ambiguity, and so on. But they retain the precondition of intelligibility: a joke would lose all its efficiency if the path back from the allusion to the genuine thing could not be followed easily.⁸ The allusions employed for displacement in dreams have set themselves free from both of these restrictions.

⁶[Displacement is the subject of Section B of Chapter VI of *I. of D.*, but it comes up for discussion at a great many other places in the book.]

⁷[An 'external' association is one that is based not on the *meaning* of the two associated words, but on superficial connections (such as similarity of sound) or purely accidental ones.]

⁸[An account of the 'allusion' technique of jokes with a number of examples appears in Section II of Chapter II of the book on jokes (1905c), (Norton, 1960). The necessity for their being easily intelligible is discussed *ibid.*, 190.]

They are connected with the element they replace by the most external and remote relations and are therefore unintelligible; and when they are undone, their interpretation gives the impression of being a bad joke⁹ or of an arbitrary and forced explanation dragged in by the hair of its head. For the dream-censorship only gains its end if it succeeds in making it impossible to find the path back from the allusion to the genuine thing.

Displacement of accent is unheard-of as a method of expressing thoughts. We sometimes make use of it in waking thought in order to produce a comic effect. I can perhaps call up the impression it produces of going astray if I recall an anecdote. There was a blacksmith in a village, who had committed a capital offence. The Court decided that the crime must be punished; but as the blacksmith was the only one in the village and was indispensable, and as on the other hand there were three tailors living there, one of *them* was hanged instead.¹⁰

The third achievement of the dream-work is psychologically the most interesting. It consists in transforming thoughts into visual images.¹¹ Let us keep it clear that this transformation does not affect *everything* in the dream-thoughts; some of them retain their form and appear as thoughts or knowledge in the manifest dream as well; nor are visual images the only form into which thoughts are transformed. Nevertheless they comprise the essence of the formation of dreams; this part of the dream-work is, as we already know, the second most regular one [p. 158], and we

⁹[This is further discussed on p. 292 f. below.]

¹⁰[This was a favourite anecdote of Freud's. He told it ten years earlier than this in his book on jokes (1905c), p. 206, and again eight years later in *The Ego and the Id* (1923b), (Norton, 1960), p. 45.]

¹¹[The main discussion of this is in Section C of Chapter VI of *I. of D.*]

have already made the acquaintance of the 'plastic' representation of words in the case of individual dream-elements [p. 143].

It is clear that this achievement is not an easy one. To form some idea of its difficulties, let us suppose that you have undertaken the task of replacing a political leading article in a newspaper by a series of illustrations. You will thus have been thrown back from alphabetic writing to picture writing. In so far as the article mentioned people and concrete objects you will replace them easily and perhaps even advantageously by pictures; but your difficulties will begin when you come to the representation of abstract words and of all those parts of speech which indicate relations between thoughts—such as particles, conjunctions and so on. In the case of abstract words you will be able to help yourselves out by means of a variety of devices. For instance, you will endeavour to give the text of the article a different wording, which may perhaps sound less usual but which will contain more components that are concrete and capable of being represented. You will then recall that most abstract words are 'watered-down' concrete ones, and you will for that reason hark back as often as possible to the original concrete meaning of such words. Thus you will be pleased to find that you can represent the 'possession' of an object by a real, physical sitting down on it.¹² And the dream-work does just the same thing. In such circumstances you will scarcely be able to expect very great accuracy from your representation: similarly, you will forgive the dream-work for replacing an

¹²[The German word 'besitzen' ('to possess') is more obviously connected with sitting than its English equivalent ('sitzen' = 'to sit'). An example of 'sitting down on' in a dream with the meaning of 'possession' occurred in one of the dreams of 'Little Hans'. See Section II of his case history (1909b), *Standard Ed.*, 10, 37 and 39.]

element so hard to put into pictures as, for example, 'adultery' [*Ehebruch*], literally, 'breach of marriage'], by another breach—a broken leg [*Beinbruch*].¹³ And in this way you will succeed to some extent in compensating for the clumsi-

¹³While I am correcting the proofs of these pages chance has put into my hands a newspaper cutting which offers an unexpected confirmation of what I have written above:—

'DIVINE PUNISHMENT

'A Broken Arm for a Broken Marriage.

'Frau Anna M., wife of a militiaman, sued Frau Klementine K. for adultery. According to the statement of claim, Frau K. had carried on an illicit relationship with Karl M., while her own husband was at the front and was actually making her an allowance of 70 Kronen [about £3.10 or \$17] a month. Frau K. had already received a considerable amount of money from the plaintiff's husband, while she and her child had to live in hunger and poverty. Fellow-soldiers of her husband had informed her that Frau K. had visited taverns with M. and had sat there drinking till far into the night. On one occasion the defendant had asked the plaintiff's husband in the presence of several other soldiers whether he would not get a divorce soon from "his old woman" and set up with her. Frau K.'s caretaker also reported that she had repeatedly seen the plaintiff's husband in the house most incompletely dressed.

'Before a court in the Leopoldstadt [district of Vienna] Frau K. yesterday denied knowing M., so that there could be no question of her having intimate relations with him.

'A witness, Albertine M., stated, however, that she had surprised Frau K. kissing the plaintiff's husband.

'At a previous hearing, M., under examination as a witness, had denied having intimate relations with the defendant. Yesterday the Judge received a letter in which the witness withdrew the statements he had made on the earlier occasion and admitted that he had had a love-affair with Frau K. up till the previous June. He had only denied his relations with the defendant at the former hearing because she had come to him before the hearing and begged him on her knees to save her and say nothing. "Today", the witness wrote, "I feel compelled to make a full confession to the Court, for I have broken my left arm and this seems to me to be a divine punishment for my wrong-doing."

'The Judge stated that the penal offence had lapsed under the statute of limitations. The plaintiff then withdrew her claim and the defendant was discharged.'

ness of the picture writing that is supposed to take the place of the alphabetic script.

For representing the parts of speech which indicate relations between thoughts—'because', 'therefore', 'however', etc.—you will have no similar aids at your disposal; those constituents of the text will be lost so far as translation into pictures goes. In the same way, the dream-work reduces the content of the dream-thoughts to its raw material of objects and activities. You will feel pleased if there is a possibility of in some way hinting, through the subtler details of the pictures, at certain relations not in themselves capable of being represented. And just so does the dream-work succeed in expressing some of the content of the latent dream-thoughts by peculiarities in the *form* of the manifest dream—by its clarity or obscurity, by its division into several pieces, and so on. The number of part-dreams into which a dream is divided usually corresponds to the number of main topics or groups of thoughts in the latent dream. A short introductory dream will often stand in the relation of a prelude to a following, more detailed, main dream or may give the motive for it¹⁴; a subordinate clause in the dream-thoughts will be replaced by the interpolation of a change of scene into the manifest dream, and so on. Thus the form of dreams is far from being without significance and itself calls for interpretation. When several dreams occur during the same night, they often have the same meaning and indicate that an attempt is being made to deal more and more efficiently with a stimulus of increasing insistence. In individual dreams a particularly difficult element may be represented by several symbols—by 'doublets'.¹⁵

¹⁴[This is discussed, with an example, in Section C of Chapter VI of *I. of D.*]

¹⁵[In philology the term is used of two different words with the same etymology: e.g. 'fashion' and 'faction', both from the Latin 'factio'.]

If we make a series of comparisons between the dream-thoughts and the manifest dreams which replace them, we shall come upon all kinds of things for which we are unprepared: for instance, that nonsense and absurdity in dreams have their meaning. At this point, indeed, the contrast between the medical and the psycho-analytic view of dreams reaches a pitch of acuteness not met with elsewhere. According to the former, dreams are senseless because mental activity in dreams has abandoned all its powers of criticism; according to our view, on the contrary, dreams become senseless when a piece of criticism included in the dream-thoughts—a judgement that 'this is absurd'—has to be represented. The dream you are familiar with of the visit to the theatre ('three tickets for 1 florin 50') [p. 149] is a good example of this. The judgement it expressed was: 'it was absurd to marry so early.'¹⁶

Similarly, in the course of our work of interpretation we learn what it is that corresponds to the doubts and uncertainties which the dreamer so often expresses as to whether a particular element occurred in a dream, whether it was this or whether, on the contrary, it was something else. There is as a rule nothing in the latent dream-thoughts corresponding to these doubts and uncertainties; they are entirely due to the activity of the dream-censorship and are to be equated with an attempt at elimination which has not quite succeeded.¹⁷

Among the most surprising findings is the way in which the dream-work treats contraries that occur in the latent dream. We know already [p. 210] that conformities in the

¹⁶[Absurdity in dreams is discussed in Section G of Chapter VI of *I. of D.*]

¹⁷[Cf. Section A of Chapter VII in *I. of D.* Doubt as a symptom of obsessional neurosis is discussed in Lecture XVII (p. 320 f. below).]

latent material are replaced by condensations in the manifest dream. Well, contraries are treated in the same way as conformities, and there is a special preference for expressing them by the same manifest element. Thus an element in the manifest dream which is capable of having a contrary may equally well be expressing either itself or its contrary or both together: only the sense can decide which translation is to be chosen. This connects with the further fact that a representation of 'no'—or at any rate an unambiguous one—is not to be found in dreams.

A welcome analogy to this strange behaviour of the dream-work is provided for us in the development of language. Some philologists have maintained that in the most ancient languages contraries such as 'strong—weak', 'light—dark', 'big—small' are expressed by the same verbal roots. (What we term 'the antithetical meaning of primal words.') Thus in Ancient Egyptian *ken* originally meant 'strong' and 'weak'. In speaking, misunderstanding from the use of such ambivalent words was avoided by differences of intonation and by the accompanying gesture, and in writing, by the addition of what is termed a 'determinative'—a picture which is not itself intended to be spoken. For instance, *ken* meaning 'strong' was written with a picture of a little upright man after the alphabetic signs; when *ken* stood for 'weak', what followed was the picture of a man squatting down limply. It was only later, by means of slight modifications of the original homologous word, that two distinct representations were arrived at of the contraries included in it. Thus from *ken* 'strong—weak' were derived *ken* 'strong' and *kan* 'weak'. The remains of this ancient antithetical meaning seem to have been preserved not only in the latest developments of the oldest languages but also in far younger ones and even in some that are still living. Here

is some evidence of this, derived from K. Abel (1884).¹⁸

In Latin, words that remained ambivalent in this way are '*altus*' ('high' and 'deep') and '*sacer*' ('sacred' and 'accursed').

As instances of modifications of the same root I may mention '*clamare*' ('to cry'), '*clam*' ('softly', 'quietly', 'secretly'); '*siccus*' ('dry'), '*succus*' ('juice'). And in German: '*Stimme*' ['voice'], '*stumm*' ['dumb'].

If we compare related languages, there are numerous examples. In English, 'to lock'; in German, '*Loch*' ['hole'] and '*Lücke*' ['gap']. In English, 'to cleave'; in German, '*kleben*' ['to stick'].

The English word 'without' (which is really 'with—without') is used to-day for 'without' alone. 'With', in addition to its combining sense, originally had a removing one; this is still to be seen in the compounds 'withdraw' and 'withhold'. Similarly with the German '*wieder*' ['together with'] and '*wider*' 'against'].

Another characteristic of the dream-work also has its counterpart in the development of language. In Ancient Egyptian, as well as in other, later languages, the order of the sounds in a word can be reversed, while keeping the same meaning. Examples of this in English and German are: '*Topf*' ['pot']—'pot'; 'boat'—'tub'; 'hurry'—'*Ruhe*' ['rest']; '*Balken*' ['beam']—'*Kloben*' ['log'] and 'club'; 'wait'—'*täuwen*' ['tarry']. Similarly in Latin and German: '*capere*'—'*packen*' ['to seize']; '*ren*'—'*Niere*' ['kidney'].

Reversals like this, which occur here with individual words, take place in various ways in the dream-work. We

¹⁸LBFreud wrote a long review of Abel's monograph (1910e), from which much of what he says here is quoted in a condensed form. He returns to the subject in Lecture XV, p. 284. below.]

already know reversal of meaning, replacement of something by its opposite [p. 219]. Besides this we find in dreams reversals of situation, of the relation between two people—a 'topsy-turvy' world. Quite often in dreams it is the hare that shoots the sportsman. Or again we find a reversal in the order of events, so that what precedes an event casually comes after it in the dream—like a theatrical production by a third-rate touring company, in which the hero falls down dead and the shot that killed him is not fired in the wings till afterwards. Or there are dreams where the whole order of the elements is reversed, so that to make sense in interpreting it we must take the last one first and the first one last. You will remember too from our study of dream-symbolism that going or falling into the water means the same as coming out of it—that is, giving birth or being born [p. 188], and that climbing up a staircase or a ladder is the same thing as coming down it [p. 194]. It is not hard to see the advantage that dream-distortion can derive from this freedom of representation.

These features of the dream-work may be described as *archaic*. They are equally characteristic of ancient systems of expression by speech and writing and they involve the same difficulties, which we shall have to discuss again later in a critical sense.¹⁹

And now a few more considerations. In the case of the dream-work it is clearly a matter of transforming the latent thoughts which are expressed in words into sensory images, mostly of a visual sort. Now our thoughts originally arose from sensory images of that kind: their first material and their preliminary stages were sense impressions, or, more properly, mnemonic images of such impressions. Only later were words attached to them and the words in turn linked

¹⁹[See Lecture XIII below.]

up into thoughts. The dream-work thus submits thoughts to a *regressive* treatment²⁰ and undoes their development; and in the course of the regression everything has to be dropped that had been added as a new acquisition in the course of the development of the mnemonic images into thoughts.

Such then, it seems, is the dream-work. As compared with the processes we have come to know in it, interest in the manifest dream must pale into insignificance. But I will devote a few more remarks to the latter, since it is of it alone that we have immediate knowledge.

It is natural that we should lose some of our interest in the manifest dream. It is bound to be a matter of indifference to us whether it is well put together, or is broken up into a series of disconnected separate pictures. Even if it has an apparently sensible exterior, we know that this has only come about through dream-distortion and can have as little organic relation to the internal content of the dream as the façade of an Italian church has to its structure and plan. There are other occasions when this façade of the dream *has* its meaning, and reproduces an important component of the latent dream-thoughts with little or no distortion. But we cannot know this before we have submitted the dream to interpretation and have been able to form a judgement from it as to the amount of distortion that has taken place. A similar doubt arises when two elements in a dream appear to have been brought into a close relation to each other. This may give us a valuable hint that we may bring together what corresponds to these elements in the latent dream as well; but on other occasions we can convince ourselves that what belongs together in the dream-thoughts has been torn apart in the dream.

²⁰[The subject of 'regression' is discussed at length in Lecture XXII.]

In general one must avoid seeking to explain one part of the manifest dream by another, as though the dream had been coherently conceived and was a logically arranged narrative. On the contrary, it is as a rule like a piece of breccia, composed of various fragments of rock held together by a binding medium, so that the designs that appear on it do not belong to the original rocks imbedded in it. And there is in fact one part of the dream-work, known as 'secondary revision',²¹ whose business it is to make something whole and more or less coherent out of the first products of the dream-work. In the course of this, the material is arranged in what is often a completely misleading sense and, where it seems necessary, interpolations are made in it.

On the other hand, we must not over-estimate the dream-work and attribute too much to it. The achievements I have enumerated exhaust its activity; it can do no more than condense, displace, represent in plastic form and subject the whole to a secondary revision.²² What appear in the dream as expressions of judgement, of criticism, of astonishment or of inference—none of these are achievements of the dream-work and they are very rarely expressions of afterthoughts about the dream; they are for the most part portions of the latent dream-thoughts which have passed over into the manifest dream with a greater or less amount of modification and adaptation to the context. Nor can the dream-work compose speeches. With a few assignable exceptions, speeches in dreams are copies and combinations of speeches which one has heard or spoken oneself on the day before the dream and which have been included in the latent thoughts either as material or as the instigator of the dream.²³ The dream-

²¹[This is the subject of Section I of Chapter VI of *I. of D.*]

²²[Elsewhere Freud excluded secondary revision from the dream-work, cf. 'An Evidential Dream' (1913a).]

²³[Cf. *I. of D.*, Last part of Section F of Chapter VI.]

work is equally unable to carry out calculations. Such of them as appear in the manifest dream are mostly combinations of numbers, sham calculations which are quite senseless *quod* calculations and are once again only copies of calculations in the latent dream-thoughts.²⁴ In these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that the interest which had turned to the dream-work soon tends to move away from it to the latent dream-thoughts, which are revealed, distorted to a greater or less degree, by the manifest dream. But there is no justification for carrying this shift of interest so far that, in looking at the matter theoretically, one replaces the dream entirely by the latent dream-thoughts and makes some assertion about the former which only applies to the latter. It is strange that the findings of psycho-analysis could be misused to bring about this confusion. One cannot give the name of 'dream' to anything other than the product of the dream-work—that is to say, the *form* into which the latent thoughts have been transmuted by the dream-work. [Cf. p. 275 ff.]

The dream-work is a process of quite a singular kind, of which the like has not yet become known in mental life. Condensations, displacements, regressive transformations of thoughts into images—such things are novelties whose discovery has already richly rewarded the labours of psycho-analysis. And you can see once more, from the parallels to the dream-work, the connections which have been revealed between psycho-analytic studies and other fields—especially those concerned in the development of speech and thought.²⁵ You will only be able to form an idea of the further significance of these discoveries when you learn that the mechanism of dream-construction is the

²⁴[Cf. *I. of D.*, the discussion of calculations in dreams in Chapter VI(F).]

²⁵[See also some remarks on the construction of jokes on p. 292 f. below.]

model of the manner in which neurotic symptoms arise.

I am also aware that we are not yet able to make a survey of the whole of the new acquisitions which these studies have brought to psychology. I will only point out the fresh proofs they have provided of the existence of unconscious mental acts—for this is what the latent dream-thoughts are—and what an unimaginably broad access to a knowledge of unconscious mental life we are promised by the interpretation of dreams.

But now the time has no doubt come for me to demonstrate to you from a variety of small examples of dreams what I have been preparing you for in the course of these remarks.

LECTURE XII

Some Analyses of Sample Dreams

Ladies and Gentlemen,—You must not be disappointed if I once again put before you fragments of dream-interpretations instead of inviting you to take part in the interpretation of a nice big dream. You will argue that after so many preparations you have a right to it, and you will express your conviction that after so many thousands of dreams have been successfully interpreted, it should have been possible long since to have brought together a collection of excellent sample dreams on which all our assertions about the dream-work and the dream-thoughts could be demonstrated. Just so. But the difficulties that stand in the way of the fulfilment of your wish are too many.

In the first place I must admit that no one carries on the interpretation of dreams as his main occupation. How does it come about, then, that people do interpret them? Occasionally, with no particular end in view, one may interest oneself in the dreams of an acquaintance, or one may work through one's own dreams for a time in order to train oneself in psycho-analytic work; but for the most part what one has to deal with are the dreams of neurotic patients who are under psycho-analytic treatment. These latter dreams are