

Sigmund Freud



DREAMS
AND TELEPATHY

1922

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At the present time, when such great interest is felt in what are called 'occult' phenomena, very definite anticipations will doubtless be aroused by the announcement of a paper with this title. I will therefore hasten to explain that there is no ground for any such anticipations. You will learn nothing from this paper of mine about the enigma of telepathy; indeed, you will not even gather whether I believe in the existence of 'telepathy' or not. On this occasion I have set myself the very modest task of examining the relation of the telepathic occurrences in question, whatever their origin may be, to dreams, or more exactly, to our theory of dreams. You will know that the connection between dreams and telepathy is commonly held to be a very intimate one; I shall put forward the view that the two have little to do with each other, and that if the existence of telepathic dreams were to be established there would be no need to alter our conception of dreams in any way.

The material on which the present communication is based is very slight. In the first place, I must express my regret that I could make no use of my own dreams, as I did when I wrote my *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900a). But I have never had a 'telepathic' dream. Not that I have been without dreams of the kind that convey an impression that a certain definite event is happening at some distant place, leaving it to the dreamer to decide whether the event is happening at that moment or will do so at some later time. In waking life, too, I have often become aware of presentiments of distant events. But these hints, foretellings and premonitions have none of them 'come true', as we say; there proved to be no external reality corresponding to them, and they had therefore to be regarded as purely subjective anticipations.

For example, I once dreamt during the war that one of my sons then serving at the front had been killed. This was not directly stated in the dream, but was expressed in an unmistakable manner, by means of the well-known death-symbolism of which an account was first given by Stekel. (We must not omit to fulfil the duty, often felt to be inconvenient, of making literary acknowledgements.) I saw the young soldier standing on a landing-stage, between land and water, as it were; he looked to me very pale. I spoke to him but he did not answer. There were other unmistakable indications. He was not wearing military uniform, but a ski-ing costume that he had worn when a serious ski-ing accident had happened to him several years before the war. He stood on something like a footstool with a cupboard in front of him; a situation always closely associated in my mind with the idea of 'falling', through a memory of my own childhood. As a child of little more than two years old I had myself climbed on a footstool like this to get something off the top of a cupboard - probably something good to eat - and I fell down and gave myself an injury, of which I can even now show the scar. My son, however, whom the dream pronounced to be dead, came home from the war unscathed.

Only a short time ago, I had another dream bearing ill-tidings; it was, I think, just before I decided to put together these few remarks. This time there was not much attempt at disguise. I saw my two nieces who live in England. They were dressed in black and said to me, 'We buried her on Thursday.' I knew the reference was to the death of their mother, now eighty-seven years of age, the widow of my eldest brother. A time of disagreeable anticipation followed; there would of course be nothing surprising in such an old lady suddenly passing away, yet it would be very unpleasant for the dream to coincide exactly with the occurrence. The next letter from England, however, dissipated this fear. For the benefit of those who are concerned for the wish-fulfilment theory of dreams I may interpolate a reassurance by saying that there was no difficulty in detecting by analysis the unconscious motives that might be presumed to exist in these death-dreams just as in others.

I hope you will not object that what I have just related is valueless because negative experiences prove as little here as they do in less occult matters. I am well aware of that and have not adduced these instances with any intention whatever of proving anything or of surreptitiously influencing you in any particular direction. My sole purpose was to explain the paucity of my material.

Another fact certainly seems to me of more significance, namely, that during some twenty-seven years of work as an analyst I have never been in a position to observe a truly telepathic dream in any of my patients. And yet those patients made up a fair collection of severely neuropathic and 'highly sensitive' natures. Many of them have related to me most remarkable incidents in their earlier life on which they based a belief in mysterious occult influences. Events such as accidents or illnesses of near relatives, in particular the death of a parent, have often enough happened during the treatment and interrupted it; but not on one single occasion did these occurrences, eminently suitable as they were in character, afford me the opportunity of registering a single telepathic dream, although treatment extended over several months or even years. Anyone who cares to may look for an explanation of this fact, which still further restricts the material at my disposal. In any case it will be seen that such an explanation would not affect the subject of this paper.

Nor does it embarrass me to be asked why I have made no use of the abundant store of telepathic dreams that have appeared in the literature of the subject. I should not have had far to seek, since the publications of the English as well as of the American Society for Psychical Research are accessible to me as a member of both societies. In none of these communications is any attempt ever made to subject such dreams to analytic investigation, which would be our first interest in such cases.¹ Moreover, you will soon perceive that for the purposes of this paper one single dream will serve well enough.

My material thus consists simply and solely of two communications which have reached me from correspondents in Germany. The writers are not personally known to me, but they give their names and addresses: I have not the least ground for presuming any intention to mislead on their part.

¹In two publications by W. Stekel, the author mentioned above (*Der telepathische Traum*, no date, and *Die Sprache des Traumes*, Second Edition, 1922), there are at least attempts to apply the analytic technique to alleged telepathic dreams. The author expresses his belief in the reality of telepathy.

I

With the first of the two I had already been in correspondence; he had been good enough to send me, as many of my readers do, observations of everyday occurrences and the like. He is obviously an educated and highly intelligent man; this time he expressly places his material at my disposal if I care to turn it 'to literary account'. His letter runs as follows:

'I consider the following dream of sufficient interest for me to hand it on to you as material for your researches.

'I must first state the following facts. My daughter, who is married and lives in Berlin, was expecting her first confinement in the middle of December of this year. I intended to go to Berlin about that time with my (second) wife, my daughter's stepmother. During the night of November 16-17 I dreamt, with a vividness and clearness I have never before experienced, that *my wife, had given birth to twins. I saw the two healthy infants quite plainly with their chubby faces lying in their cot side by side. I did not observe their sex; one with fair hair had distinctly my features and something of my wife's, the other with chestnut-brown hair clearly resembled her with a look of me. I said to my wife, who has red-gold hair, "Probably 'your' child's chestnut hair will also go red later on." My wife gave them the breast. In the dream she had also made some jam in a wash-basin and the two children crawled about on all fours in the basin and licked up the contents.*

'So much for the dream. Four or five times I had half woken from it, asked myself if it were true that we had twins, but did not come to the conclusion with any certainty that it was only a dream. The dream lasted till I woke, and after that it was some little time before I felt quite clear about the true state of affairs. At breakfast I told my wife the dream, which much amused her. She said, "Surely Ilse (my daughter) won't have twins?" I answered, "I should hardly think so, as twins are not the usual thing either in my family or in G.'s" (her husband). On November 18, at ten o'clock in the morning, I received a telegram from my son-in-law, handed in the afternoon before, telling me of the birth of twins, a boy and a girl. The birth thus took place at the time when I was dreaming that my wife had twins. The confinement occurred four weeks earlier than any of us had expected on the basis of my daughter and son in-law's calculations.

'But there is a further circumstance: the next night I dreamt *that my deceased wife, my daughter's own mother, had undertaken the care of forty-eight new-born infants. When the first dozen were being brought in, I protested.* At that point the dream ended.

'My late wife was very fond of children. She often talked about it, saying she would like a whole troop round her, the more the better, and that she would do very well if she had charge of a Kindergarten and would be quite happy so. The noise children make was music to her. From time to time she would invite in a whole troop of children from the streets and regale them with chocolate and cakes in the courtyard of our villa. My daughter must have thought at once of her mother after her confinement, especially because of the surprise of its coming on prematurely, the arrival of twins, and their difference in sex. She knew her mother would have greeted the event with the liveliest joy and sympathy. "Only think what mother would say, if she were with me now!" This thought must undoubtedly have gone through her mind. And then I dream of my dead wife, of whom I very seldom dream, and had neither spoken of nor thought of after the first dream.

'Do you think that the coincidence between dream and event was accidental in both cases? My daughter is much attached to me and was most certainly thinking of me during her labour, particularly because we had often exchanged letters about her mode of living during her pregnancy and I had constantly given her advice.'

It is easy to guess what my answer to this letter was. I was sorry to find that my correspondent's interest in analysis had been so completely killed by his interest in telepathy. I therefore avoided his direct question, and, remarking that the dream contained a good deal besides its connection with the birth of the twins, I asked him to give me any information or ideas that occurred to him which could give me a clue to the meaning of the dream.

Thereupon I received the following second letter which, it must be admitted, did not give me quite all I wanted:

'I have not been able to answer your kind letter of the 24th until to-day. I shall be only too pleased to tell you "without omission or reserve" all the associations that occur to me. Unfortunately there is not much; more would come out in talking.

'Well then - my wife and I do not wish for any more children. We almost never have sexual intercourse; at any rate at the time of the dream there was certainly no "danger". My daughter's confinement, which was expected about the middle of December, was naturally a frequent subject of conversation between us. My daughter had been examined and X-rayed in the summer, and the doctor making the examination was certain that the child would be a boy. My wife said at the time, "I should laugh if it was a girl after all." At the time she also remarked that it would be better if it were an H. rather than a G. (my son-in-law's family name); my daughter is handsomer and has a better figure than my son-in-law, although he has been a naval officer. I have made some study of the question of heredity and am in the habit of looking at babies to see whom they resemble. One more thing. We have a small dog which sits with us at table in the evening to have his food and licks the plates and dishes. All this material appears in the dream.

'I am fond of small children and have often said that I should like to have the bringing up of a child once more, now that I should have so much more understanding, interest and time to devote to it; but with my wife I should not wish it, as she does not possess the necessary qualities for rearing a child judiciously. The dream makes me a present of two children - I did not observe their sex. I see them even at this moment lying in the bed and I recognize the features, the one more "me", the other more my wife, but each with minor traits from the other side. My wife has red-gold hair, but the one child had chestnut (reddish) brown hair. I said, "Oh well, it will go red, too, later on." Both the children crawl round a large wash basin in which my wife has been stirring jam and lick its bottom and sides (dream). The origin of this detail is easily explicable, just as is the dream as a whole. The dream would not be difficult to understand or interpret if it had not coincided with the unexpectedly early arrival of my grandchildren (three weeks too soon), a coincidence of time almost to the hour. (I cannot exactly say when the dream began; my grandchildren were born at nine p. m. and a quarter past; I went to bed at about eleven and had my dream during the course of the night.) Our knowledge too that the child would be a boy adds to the difficulty, though possibly the doubt whether this had been fully established might account for the appearance of twins in the dream. All the same, there remains the coincidence of the dream with the unexpected and premature appearance of my daughter's twins.

'It is not the first time that distant events have become known to me before I received the actual news. To give one instance among many. In October I had a visit from my three brothers. We had not all been together for thirty years, except for quite a short time, once at my father's funeral and once at my mother's. Both deaths were expected, and I had had no 'presentiments' in either case. But about twenty-five years ago my youngest brother died quite suddenly and unexpectedly when he was ten. As the postman handed me the postcard with the news of his death, before I had glanced at it, the thought came to me at once, "It is to say that your brother is dead." He was the only one left at home, a strong healthy lad, while we four elder brothers were already fully fledged and had left our parents' house. At the time of my brothers' visit the talk by chance came round to this experience of mine, and, as if at the word of command, all three brothers came out with the declaration that exactly the same thing had happened to them. Whether it happened in exactly the same manner I cannot say; at all events each one said that he had felt perfectly certain of the death just before the quite unexpected news had arrived. We are all from the mother's side of a sensitive disposition, though tall, strong men, but not one of us is in the least inclined towards spiritualism or occultism; on the contrary, we disclaim adherence to either. My brothers are all three University men, two are schoolmasters, one a surveyor, all rather pedants than visionaries. - That is all I can tell you in regard to the dream. If you can turn it to literary account, I am delighted to place it at your disposal.'

I am afraid that you may behave like the writer of these two letters. You, too, will be primarily interested in the question whether this dream can really be regarded as a telepathic notification of the unexpected birth of the twin children, and you will not be disposed to submit this dream to analysis like any other. I foresee that it will always be so when psycho-analysis and occultism encounter each other. The former has, so to speak, all our mental instincts against it; the latter is met half-way by powerful and mysterious sympathies. I am not, however, going to take up the position that I am nothing but a psycho-analyst, that the problems of occultism do not concern me: you would rightly judge that to be only an evasion of a problem. On the contrary, I may say that it would be a great satisfaction to me if I could convince myself and others on unimpeachable evidence of the existence of telepathic processes, but I also consider that the information provided about this dream is altogether inadequate to justify any such pronouncement. You will observe that it does not once occur to this intelligent man, deeply interested as he is in the problem of his dream, to tell us when he had last seen his daughter or what news he had lately had from her. He writes in the first letter that the birth was a month too soon; in the second, however, the month has become three weeks only, and in neither are we told whether the birth was really premature, or whether, as so often happens, those concerned were out in their reckoning. But we should have to consider these and other details of the occurrence if we are to weigh the probability of the dreamer having made unconscious estimates and guesses. I felt too that it would be of no use even if I succeeded in getting answers to such questions. In the course of arriving at the information new doubts would constantly arise, which could only be set at rest if one had the man in front of one and could revive all the relevant memories which he had perhaps dismissed as unessential. He is certainly right in what he says at the beginning of his second letter that more would have come out in talking.

Consider another and similar case, in which the disturbing interest of occultism has no part. You must often have been in a position to compare the anamnesis and the information about the illness given during the first session by any neurotic with what you have gained from him after some months of psycho-analysis. Apart from inevitable abbreviations, how many essentials were left out or suppressed, how many connections were displaced - in fact, how much that was incorrect or untrue was told you on that first occasion! You will not call me hyper-critical if I refuse in the circumstances to make any pronouncement whether the dream in question is a telepathic event or a particularly subtle achievement on the part of the dreamer's unconscious or whether it is simply to be taken as a striking coincidence. Our curiosity must be satisfied with the hope of some later occasion on which it may be possible to make a detailed oral examination of the dreamer. But you cannot say that this outcome of our investigation has disappointed you, for I prepared you for it; I said you would hear nothing which would throw any light on the problem of telepathy.

If we now pass on to the analytic treatment of this dream, we are obliged once more to express dissatisfaction. The thoughts that the dreamer associates with the manifest content of the dream are again insufficient; they do not enable us to make any analysis of the dream. For instance, the dream goes into great detail over the likeness of the children to the parents, discusses the colour of their hair and the probable change of colour at a later age, and as an explanation of these elaborate details we only have the dry piece of information from the dreamer that he has always been interested in questions of likeness and heredity. We are accustomed to expect rather more material than this! But at *one* point the dream does admit of an analytic interpretation, and precisely at this point analysis, which has otherwise no connection with occultism, comes to the aid of telepathy in a remarkable way. It is only on account of this single point that I am asking for your attention to this dream at all.

Correctly speaking, this dream has no right whatever to be called 'telepathic'. It did not inform the dreamer of anything which (outside his normal knowledge) was taking place elsewhere. What the dream did relate was something quite different from the event reported in the telegram received on the second day after the night of the dream. The dream and the actual occurrence diverge at a particularly important point; but they agree, apart from the coincidence of time, in another very interesting element. In the dream the dreamer's *wife* had twins. The occurrence, however, was that his *daughter* had given birth to twins in her distant home. The dreamer did not overlook this difference; he did not seem to know any way of getting over it and, as according to his own account he had no leaning towards the occult, he only asked quite tentatively whether the coincidence between dream and occurrence on the point of the twin-birth could be more than an accident. The psycho-analytic interpretation of dreams, however, does away with this difference between the dream and the event, and gives both the same content. If we consult the associative material to this dream, it shows, in spite of its sparseness, that an intimate bond of feeling existed between the father and daughter, a bond of feeling which is so usual and so natural that we ought to cease to be ashamed of it, one that in daily life merely finds expression as a tender interest and is only pushed to its logical conclusion in dreams. The father knew that his daughter clung to him, he was convinced that she often thought of him during her labour. In his heart I think he grudged her to his son-in-law, to whom in one letter he makes a few disparaging references. On the occasion of her confinement (whether expected or communicated by telepathy) the unconscious wish became active in the repressed part of his mind: 'she ought to be my (second) wife instead'; it was this wish that had distorted the dream-thoughts and was the cause of the difference between the manifest content of the dream and the event. We are entitled to replace the second wife in the dream by the daughter. If we possessed more associations to the dream, we could undoubtedly verify and deepen this interpretation.

And now I have reached the point I wish to put before you. We have endeavoured to maintain the strictest impartiality and have allowed two conceptions of the dream to rank as equally probable and equally unproved. According to the first the dream is a reaction to a telepathic message: 'your daughter has just brought twins into the world.' According to the second an unconscious process of thought underlies the dream, which may be reproduced somewhat as follows: 'To-day is the day the confinement should take place if the young people in Berlin are really out in their reckoning by a month, as I suspect. And if my (first) wife were still alive, she certainly would not be content with one grandchild. To please her there would have to be at least twins!' If this second view is right, no new problems arise. It is simply a dream like any other. The (preconscious)

dream-thoughts as outlined above are reinforced by the (unconscious) wish that no other than the daughter should be the dreamer's second wife, and thus the manifest dream as described to us arises.

If you prefer to assume that a telepathic message about the daughter's confinement reached the sleeper, further questions arise of the relation of a message such as this to a dream and of its influence on the formation of dreams. The answer is not far to seek and is quite unambiguous. A telepathic message will be treated as a portion of the material that goes to the formation of a dream, like any other external or internal stimulus, like a disturbing noise in the street or an insistent organic sensation in the sleeper's own body. In our example it is evident how the message, with the help of a lurking repressed wish, became remodelled into a wish-fulfilment; it is unfortunately less easy to show that it combined with other material that had become active at the same time and was blended into a dream. Telepathic messages - if we are justified in recognizing their existence - can thus make no alteration in the process of forming a dream; telepathy has nothing to do with the nature of dreams. And in order to avoid the impression that I am trying to conceal a vague notion behind abstract and fine-sounding words, I am willing to repeat: the essential nature of dreams consists in the peculiar process of 'dream-work' which, with the help of an unconscious wish, carries the preconscious thoughts (day's residues) over into the manifest content of the dream. The problem of telepathy concerns dreams as little as does the problem of anxiety. I am hoping that you will grant this, but that you will raise the objection that there are, nevertheless, other telepathic dreams in which there is no difference between the event and the dream, and in which there is nothing else to be found but an undistorted reproduction of the event. I have no knowledge of such dreams from my own experience, but I know they have often been reported. If we assume that we have such an undisguised and unadulterated telepathic dream to deal with, another question arises. Ought we to call such a telepathic experience a 'dream' at all? You will certainly do so as long as you keep to popular usage, in which everything that takes place in mental life during sleep is called a dream. You, too, perhaps say, 'I tossed about in my dream', and still less are you conscious of anything incorrect when you say, 'I shed tears in my dream' or 'I felt apprehensive in my dream'. But you will no doubt notice that in all these cases you are using 'dream' and 'sleep' and 'state of being asleep' interchangeably, as if there were no distinction between them. I think it would be in the interests of scientific accuracy to keep 'dream' and 'state of sleep' more distinctly separate. Why should we provide a counterpart to the confusion evoked by Maeder who, by refusing to distinguish between the dream-work and the latent dream-thoughts, has discovered a new function for dreams? Supposing, then, that we are brought face to face with a pure telepathic 'dream', let us rather call it instead a telepathic experience in a state of sleep. A dream without condensation, distortion, dramatization, above all, without wish-fulfilment, surely does not deserve the name. You will remind me that, if so, there are *other* mental products in sleep to which the right to be called 'dreams' would have to be refused. Actual experiences of the day are sometimes simply repeated in sleep; reproductions of traumatic scenes in 'dreams' have led us only lately to revise the theory of dreams. There are dreams which are to be distinguished from the usual type by certain special qualities, which are, properly speaking, nothing but night-phantasies, not having undergone additions or alterations of any kind and being in all other ways similar to the familiar day-dreams. It would be awkward, no doubt, to exclude these structures from the domain of 'dreams'. But still they all come from within, are products of our mental life, whereas the very conception of the purely 'telepathic dream' lies in its being a perception of something external, in relation to which the mind remains passive and receptive.

II

The second case which I shall bring before your notice in fact follows along other lines. This is not a telepathic dream, but a dream that has recurred from childhood onwards, in a person who has had many telepathic experiences. Her letter, which I reproduce here, contains some remarkable things, about which we cannot form any judgement. A part of it is of interest in connection with the problem of the relation of telepathy to dreams.

(1) ' . . . My doctor, Herr Dr. N., advises me to give you an account of a dream that has pursued me for some thirty or thirty-two years. I am following his advice, and perhaps the dream may possess interest for you in some scientific respect. Since, in your opinion, such dreams are to be traced to an experience of a sexual nature in the first years of my childhood, I relate some reminiscences of childhood. They are experiences whose impression on me still persists and which were of so marked a character as to have determined my religion for me.

'May I beg of you to send me word in what way you explain this dream and whether it is not possible to banish it from my life, for it haunts me like a ghost, and the circumstances that always accompany it - I always fall out of bed, and have inflicted on myself not inconsiderable injuries - make it particularly disagreeable and distressing.'

(2) 'I am thirty-seven years old, very strong and in good physical health, but in childhood I had, besides measles and scarlet fever, an attack of nephritis. Furthermore, in my fifth year I had a very severe inflammation of the eyes, which left double vision. The images are at an angle to each other and their outline is blurred, as the scars from the ulcers affect clearness of vision. In the specialist's opinion there is nothing more to be done to the eyes and no chance of improvement. The left side of my face is drawn up from having screwed up my left eye to see better. By dint of practice and determination I can do the finest needlework; and, similarly, when a six-year old child, I broke myself of squinting by practising in front of a looking-glass, so that now there is no external sign of the defect in vision.

'From my very earliest years I was always solitary. I kept apart from other children, and had visions (clairvoyance and clairaudience). I was not able to distinguish these from reality, and in consequence often found myself in conflict with other people in embarrassing positions, with the result that I have become a very reserved and shy person. Since as a quite small child I already knew far more than I could have learnt, I simply did not understand children of my own age. I am myself the eldest of a family of twelve.

'From six to ten years old I attended the parish school and up to sixteen the high-school of the Ursuline Nuns in B-- . At ten I had taken in as much French in four weeks, in eight lessons, as other children learn in two years. I had only to say it over. It was just as if I had already learnt it and only forgotten it. I have never had any need to learn French, in contradistinction to English, which gave me no trouble, certainly, but which was not known to me beforehand. The same thing happened to me with Latin as with French and I have never properly learnt it, only knowing it from Church Latin, which is, however, quite familiar to me. If I read a French book to-day, then I immediately begin thinking in French, whereas this never happens to me with English, although I have more command of English. My parents are peasant people (who for generations have never spoken any languages except German and Polish.

'*Visions*. - Sometimes reality vanishes for some moments and I see something quite different. In my house, for example, I often see an old married couple and a child; and the house is then differently furnished. In the sanatorium a friend once came into my room at about four in the morning; I was awake, had the lamp burning, and was sitting at my table reading, as I suffer much from sleeplessness. This apparition of her always means a trying time for me - as it did on this occasion.

'In 1914 my brother was on active service; I was not with my parents in B-- but in Ch-- . It was ten a. m. on August 22 when I heard my brother's voice calling, "Mother! Mother!" It came again ten minutes later, but I saw nothing. On August 24 I came home, found my mother greatly depressed, and in answer to my questions she said that she had had a message from the boy on August 22. She had been in the garden in the morning, when she had heard him call, "Mother! Mother!" I comforted her and said nothing about myself. Three weeks after there came a card from my brother, written on August 22 between nine and ten in the morning; shortly after that he died.

'On September 27, 1921, while in the sanatorium, I received a message of some kind. There were violent knockings two or three times repeated on the bed of the patient who shared my room. We were both awake; I asked if she had knocked; she had not even heard anything. Eight weeks later I heard that one of my friends had died in the night of September 26-7.

'Now something which is regarded as a hallucination - a matter of opinion! I have a friend who married a widower with five children; I got to know the husband only through my friend. Nearly every time that I have been to see her, I have seen a lady going in and out of the house. It was natural to suppose that this was the husband's first wife. I asked at some convenient opportunity for a portrait of her, but could not identify the apparition with the photograph. Seven years later I saw a picture with the features of the lady, belonging to one of the children. It was the first wife after all. In the picture she looked in much better health: she had just been through a feeding-up treatment and that alters the appearance of a consumptive patient. These are only a few examples out of many.

'The dream. - I saw a tongue of land surrounded by water. The waves were being driven forward and then back by the breakers. On this piece of land stood a palm-tree, bent somewhat towards the water. A woman had her arm wound round the stem of the palm and was bending low towards the water, where a man was trying to reach the shore. At last she lay down on the ground, held tightly to the palm-tree with her left hand and stretched out her right hand as far as she could towards the man in the water, but without reaching him. At that point I would fall out of bed and wake. I was about fifteen or sixteen years old when I realized that this woman was myself, and from that time I not only experienced all the woman's apprehensions on behalf of the man but sometimes stood there as a third person looking on at the scene without taking part in it. I dreamed this dream too in separate scenes. As an interest in men awoke in me (at eighteen to twenty years old), I tried to see the man's face; but this was never possible. The foam hid everything but his neck and the back of his head. I have twice been engaged to be married, but judging by his head and build he was neither of the two men I was engaged to. - Once, when I was lying in the sanatorium under the influence of paraldehyde, I saw the man's face, which I now always see in this dream. It was that of the doctor under whose care I was. I liked him as a doctor, but I was not drawn to him in any other way.

'Memories. Six to nine months old. - I was in a perambulator. On my right were two horses; one, a brown, was looking at me very intently and expressively. This was my most vivid experience; I had the feeling that it was a human being.

'*One year old.* - Father and I in the town-park, where a park-keeper was putting a little bird into my hand. Its eyes looked back into mine. I felt "That is a creature like yourself".

'*Animals being slaughtered.* - When I heard the pigs squealing I always called for help and cried out "You are killing a person" (four years old). I always refused to eat meat. Pork always makes me vomit. It was not till the war that I came to eat meat, and only unwillingly; now I am learning to do without it again.

'*Five years old.* - My mother was confined and I heard her cry out. I had the feeling, "There is a human being or an animal in the greatest distress", just as I had over the pig-killing.

'I was quite indifferent as a child to sexual matters; at ten years old I had as yet no conception of offences against chastity. Menstruation came on at the age of twelve. The woman first awakened in me at six-and-twenty, after I had given life to a child; up to that time (six months) I constantly had violent vomiting after intercourse. This also came on whenever I was at all oppressed in mood.

'I have extraordinarily keen powers of observation, and quite exceptionally sharp hearing, also a very keen sense of smell. With my eyes bandaged I can pick out by smell people I know from among a number of others.

'I do not regard my abnormal powers of sight and hearing as pathological, but ascribe them to finer perceptions and greater quickness of thought; but I have only spoken of it to my pastor and to Dr.-- (very unwillingly to the latter, as I was afraid he would tell me that what I regarded as *plus*-qualities were *minus*-qualities, and also because from being misunderstood in childhood I am very reserved and shy).'

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The dream which the writer of the letter asks us to interpret is not hard to understand. It is a dream of rescuing from water, a typical birth-dream. The language of symbolism, as you are aware, knows no grammar; it is an extreme case of a language of infinitives, and even the active and passive are represented by one and the same image. If in a dream a woman pulls (or tries to pull) a man out of the water, that may mean that she wants to be his mother (takes him for her son as Pharaoh's daughter did with Moses). Or it may mean that she wants him to make her into a mother: she wants to have a son by him, who, as a likeness of him, can be his equivalent. The tree-trunk to which the woman was clinging is easily recognized as a phallic symbol, even though it is not standing straight up, but inclined towards the surface of the water - in the dream the word is 'bent'. The onrush and recoil of the breakers brought to the mind of another dreamer who was relating a similar dream a comparison with the intermittent pains of labour; and when, knowing that she had not yet borne a child, I asked her how she knew of this characteristic of labour, she said that she imagined labour as a kind of colic - a quite unimpeachable description physiologically. She gave the association '*The Waves of the Sea and of Love*'. How our present dreamer at so early an age can have arrived at the finer details of symbolism - tongue of land, palm-tree - I am naturally unable to say. We must not, moreover, overlook the fact that, when people assert that they have for years been pursued by the same dream, it often turns out that the manifest content is not quite the same. Only the kernel of the dream has recurred each time; the details of the content are changed or additions are made to them. At the end of this dream, which is clearly charged with anxiety, the dreamer falls out of bed. This is a fresh representation of childbirth. Analytic investigation of the fear of heights, of the dread of an impulse to throw oneself out of the window, has doubtless led you all to the same conclusion.

Who then is the man, by whom the dreamer wishes to have a child, or of whose likeness she would like to be the mother? She often tried to see his face, but the dream never allowed her to; the man had to remain *incognito*. We know from countless analyses what this concealment means, and the conclusion we should base on analogy is verified by another statement of the dreamer's. Under the influence of paraldehyde she once recognized the face of the man in the dream as that of the hospital physician who was treating her, and who meant nothing more to her conscious emotional life. The original thus never divulged its identity, but this impression of it in 'transference' establishes the conclusion that earlier it must always have been her father. Ferenczi is perfectly right in pointing out that these 'dreams of the unsuspecting' are valuable sources of information, as confirming the conjectures of analysis. Our dreamer was the eldest of twelve children; how often must she have suffered the pangs of jealousy and disappointment when it was not she but her mother who obtained from her father the child she longed for!

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Our dreamer quite correctly supposed that her first memories of childhood would be of value in the interpretation of her early and recurrent dream. In the first scene, before she was one year old, as she was sitting in her perambulator she saw two horses beside her, one looking at her. This she described as her most vivid experience; she had the feeling that it was a human being. This was a feeling which we can understand only if we assume that the two horses represented, in this case as so often, a married couple, father and mother. It was, as it were, a flash of infantile totemism. If we could, we should ask the writer whether the *brown* horse who looked at her so humanly could not be recognized by its colouring as her father. The second recollection was associatively connected with the first through the same 'understanding' gaze. Taking the little bird in her hand, however, reminds the analyst, who has prejudices of his own, of a feature in the dream in which the woman's hand was in contact with another phallic symbol. The next two memories belong together; they make still slighter demands on the interpreter. The mother crying out during her confinement reminded the daughter directly of the pigs squealing when they were being killed and put her into the same frenzy of pity. But we may also conjecture that this was a violent reaction against an angry death-wish directed at the mother.

With these indications of tenderness for her father, of contact with his genitals, and of death-wishes against her mother, the outline of the female Oedipus complex is sketched in. Her long retention of her ignorance of sexual matters, and her frigidity at a later period bear out these suppositions. The writer of the letter became potentially - and at times no doubt actually - a hysterical neurotic. The forces of life have, for her own happiness, carried her along with them. They have awakened in her the sexual feelings of a woman and brought her the joys of motherhood, and the capacity to work. But a portion of her libido still clings to its points of fixation in childhood; she still dreams the dream that throws her out of bed and punishes her for her incestuous object-choice by 'not inconsiderable injuries'.

And now an explanation, given in writing by a doctor who was a stranger to her, was expected to effect what all the most important experiences of her later life had failed to do! Probably a regular analysis continued for a considerable time would have succeeded in this. As things were, I was obliged to content myself with writing to her that I was convinced she was suffering from the after-effects of a strong emotional tie binding her to her father and from a corresponding identification with her mother, but that I did not myself expect that this explanation would help her. Spontaneous cures of neurosis usually leave scars behind, and these become painful again from time to time. We are very proud of our art if we achieve a cure through psycho-analysis, yet here too we cannot always prevent the formation of a painful scar as an outcome.

The little series of reminiscences must engage our attention for a while longer. I have stated elsewhere that such scenes of childhood are 'screen memories' selected at a later period, put together, and not infrequently falsified in the process. This subsequent remodelling serves a purpose that is sometimes easy to guess. In our case one can almost hear the writer's ego glorifying or soothing itself by means of this series of recollections. 'I was from infancy a particularly noble and compassionate creature. I learnt quite early that animals have souls as we have, and could not endure cruelty to animals. The sins of the flesh were far from me and I preserved my chastity till late in life.' With declarations such as these she was loudly contradicting the inferences that we have to make about her early childhood on the basis of our analytical experience, namely, that she had an abundance of premature sexual impulses and violent feelings of hatred for her mother and her younger brothers and sisters. (Besides the genital significance I have just assigned to it, the little bird may also be a symbol of a child, like all small animals; her recollection thus accentuated very insistently the fact that this small creature had the same right to exist as she herself.) Hence the short series of recollections furnishes a very nice example of a mental structure with a twofold aspect. Viewed superficially, we may find in it the expression of an abstract idea, here, as usually, with an ethical reference. In Silberer's nomenclature the structure has an *anagogic* content. On deeper investigation it reveals itself as a chain of phenomena belonging to the region of the repressed life of the instincts - it displays its *psycho-analytic* content. As you know, Silberer, who was among the first to issue a warning to us not to lose sight of the nobler side of the human soul, has put forward the view that all or nearly all dreams permit such a twofold interpretation, a purer, anagogic one beside the ignoble, psycho-analytic one. This is, however, unfortunately not so. On the contrary, an over-interpretation of this kind is rarely possible. To my knowledge no valid example of such a dream-analysis with a double meaning has been published up to the present time. But observations of this kind can often be made upon the series of associations that our patients produce during analytic treatment. On the one hand the successive ideas are linked by a line of association which is plain to the eye, while on the other hand you become aware of an underlying theme which is kept secret but which at the same time plays a part in all these ideas. The contrast between the two themes that dominate the same series of ideas is not always one between the lofty anagogic and the low psycho-analytic, but one rather between offensive and respectable or indifferent ideas - a fact that easily explains why such a chain of associations with a twofold determination arises. In our present example it is of course not accidental that the anagogic and the psycho-analytic interpretations stood in such a sharp contrast to each other; both related to the same material, and the later trend was no other than that of the reaction-formations which had been erected against the disowned instinctual impulses.

But why do we look for a psycho-analytic interpretation at all instead of contenting ourselves with the more accessible anagogic one? The answer to this is linked up with many other problems - with the existence in general of neurosis and the explanations it inevitably demands - with the fact that virtue does not reward a man with as much joy and strength in life as one would expect, as though it brought with it too much of its origin (our dreamer, too, had not been well rewarded for her virtue), and with other things which I need not discuss before this audience.

So far, however, we have completely neglected the question of telepathy, the other point of interest for us in this case; it is time to return to it. In a sense we have here an easier task than in the case of Herr H. With a person who so easily and so early in life lost touch with reality and replaced it by the world of phantasy, the temptation is irresistible to connect her telepathic experiences and 'visions' with her neurosis and to derive them from it, although here too we should not allow ourselves to be deceived as to the cogency of our own arguments. We shall merely be replacing what is unknown and unintelligible by possibilities that are at least comprehensible.

On August 22, 1914, at ten o'clock in the morning, our correspondent experienced a telepathic impression that her brother, who was at the time on active service, was calling, 'Mother! Mother!'; the phenomenon was purely acoustic, it was repeated shortly after, but nothing was seen. Two days later she saw her mother and found her much depressed because the boy had announced himself to her with a repeated call of 'Mother! Mother!' She immediately remembered the same telepathic message, which she had experienced at the same time, and as a matter of fact some weeks later it was established that the young soldier had died on that day at the hour in question.

It cannot be proved, but also cannot be disproved, that instead of this, what happened was the following. Her mother told her one day that her son had sent a telepathic message; whereupon the conviction at once arose in her mind that she had had the same experience at the same time. Such illusions of memory arise in the mind with a compelling force which they draw from real sources; but they turn psychical reality into material reality. The strength of the illusion lies in its being an excellent way of expressing the sister's proneness to identify herself with her mother. 'You are anxious about the boy, but I am really his mother, and his cry was meant for me; *I* had this telepathic message.' The sister would naturally firmly reject our attempt at explanation and would hold to her belief in the authenticity of her experience. But she could not do otherwise. She would be bound to believe in the reality of the pathological effect so long as the reality of its unconscious premises were unknown to her. Every such delusion derives its strength and its unassailable character from having a source in unconscious psychical reality. I note in passing that it is not incumbent on us here to explain the mother's experience or to investigate its authenticity.

The dead brother, however, was not only our correspondent's imaginary child; he also represented a rival whom she had regarded with hatred from the time of his birth. By far the greater number of all telepathic intimations relate to death or the possibility of death; when patients under analysis keep telling us of the frequency and infallibility of their gloomy forebodings, we can with equal regularity show them that they are fostering particularly strong death-wishes in their unconscious against their nearest relations and have long been thus suppressing them. The patient whose history I related in 1909¹ was an example to the point; he was called a 'carrion crow' by his relations. But when this kindly and highly intelligent man - who has since himself perished in the war - began to make progress towards recovery, he himself gave me considerable assistance in clearing up his own psychological conjuring tricks. In the same way, the account given in our first correspondent's letter, of how he and his three brothers had received the news of their youngest brother's death as a thing they had long been inwardly aware of, appears to need no other explanation. The elder brothers would all have been equally convinced of the superfluousness of the youngest arrival. Here is another of our dreamer's 'visions' which will probably become more intelligible in the light of analytic knowledge. Women friends obviously had a great significance in her emotional life. Only recently the death of one of them was conveyed to her by a knocking at night on the bed of a room-mate in the sanatorium. Another friend had many years before married a widower with several (five) children. On the occasion of her visits to their house she regularly saw the apparition of a lady, who she could not help supposing was the husband's first wife; this did not at first permit of confirmation, and only became a matter of certainty with her seven years later, on the discovery of a fresh photograph of the dead woman. This achievement in the way of a vision on the part of our correspondent had the same intimate dependence on the family complexes familiar to us as had her presentiment of her brother's death. By identifying herself with her friend she could in the person of the latter find the fulfilment of her own wishes; for every eldest daughter of a numerous family builds up in her unconscious the phantasy of becoming her father's second wife by the death of her mother. If the mother is ill or dies, the eldest daughter takes her place as a matter of course in relation to her younger brothers and sisters, and may even take over some part of the functions of the wife in respect to the father. The unconscious wish fills in the other part.

¹ 'Notes upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis'

I am now almost at the end of what I wish to say. I might, however, add the observation that the instances of telepathic messages or productions which have been discussed here are clearly connected with emotions belonging to the sphere of the Oedipus complex. This may sound startling; I do not intend to give it out as a great discovery, however. I would rather revert to the result we arrived at through investigating the dream I considered first. Telepathy has no relation to the essential nature of dreams; it cannot deepen in any way what we already understand of them through analysis. On the other hand, psycho-analysis may do something to advance the study of telepathy, in so far as, by the help of its interpretations, many of the puzzling characteristics of telepathic phenomena may be rendered more intelligible to us; or other, still doubtful, phenomena may for the first time definitely be ascertained to be of a telepathic nature.

There remains one element of the apparently intimate connection between telepathy and dreams which is not affected by any of these considerations: namely, the incontestable fact that sleep creates favourable conditions for telepathy. Sleep is not, it is true, indispensable to the occurrence of telepathic processes - whether they originate in messages or in unconscious activity. If you are not already aware of this, you will learn it from the instance given by our second correspondent, of the young man's message which came between nine and ten in the morning. We must add, however, that no one has a right to take exception to telepathic occurrences if the event and the intimation (or message) do not exactly coincide in astronomical time. It is perfectly conceivable that a telepathic message might arrive contemporaneously with the event and yet only penetrate to consciousness the following night during sleep (or even in waking life only after a while, during some pause in the activity of the mind). We are, as you know, of opinion that dream-formation itself does not necessarily wait for the onset of sleep before it begins. Often the latent dream-thoughts may have been being got ready during the whole day, till at night they find the contact with the unconscious wish that shapes them into a dream. But if the phenomenon of telepathy is only an activity of the unconscious mind, then, of course, no fresh problem lies before us. The laws of unconscious mental life may then be taken for granted as applying to telepathy. Have I given you the impression that I am secretly inclined to support the reality of telepathy in the occult sense? If so, I should very much regret that it is so difficult to avoid giving such an impression. For in reality I have been anxious to be strictly impartial. I have every reason to be so, since I have no opinion on the matter and know nothing about it.