

## DREAMS IN FOLKLORE (FREUD AND OPPENHEIM) - (1957 [1911])

DREAMS IN FOLKLORE By Sigm. Freud and Prof. Ernst Oppenheim (Vienna)

'Celsi praetereunt austera poemata Ramnes.'<sup>1</sup>

Persius, Satirae.

One of us (O.) in his studies of folklore has made two observations with regard to the dreams narrated there which seem to him worth communicating. Firstly, that the symbolism employed in these dreams coincides completely with that accepted by psycho-analysis, and secondly, that a number of these dreams are understood by the common people in the same way as they would be interpreted by psycho-analysis - that is, not as premonitions about a still unrevealed future, but as the fulfilment of wishes, the satisfaction of needs which arise during the state of sleep. Certain peculiarities of these, usually indecent, dreams, which are told as comic anecdotes, have encouraged the second of us (Fr.) to attempt an interpretation of them which has made them seem more serious and more deserving of attention. IPENIS-SYMBOLISM IN DREAMS OCCURRING IN FOLKLORE

The dream which we introduce first, although it contains no symbolic representations, sounds almost like ridicule of the prophetic and a plea in favour of the psychological interpretation of dreams.

### A DREAM-INTERPRETATION<sup>2</sup>

A girl got up from her bed and told her mother that she had had a most strange dream.

'Well, what did you dream, then?' asked her mother.

'How shall I tell you? I don't know myself what it was - some sort of long and red and blunted thing.'

'Long means a road,' said her mother reflectively, 'a long road; red means joy, but I don't know what blunted can mean.'

The girl's father, who was getting dressed meanwhile, and was listening to everything that the mother and daughter were saying, muttered at this, more or less to himself: 'It sounds rather like my cock.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ['Haughty persons in authority disdain poems that are lacking in charm.']

<sup>2</sup> 'Sudslavische Volksüberlieferungen, die sich auf den Geschlechtsverkehr beziehen [Southern Slav Folk Traditions concerning Sexual Intercourse]', collected and elucidated by F. S. Krauss, *Anthropophyteia*, 7, 450, No. 820.

<sup>3</sup> [Addition by F. S. Krauss:] See *Anthropophyteia*, 1, 4, No. 5. Cf. further the German Jewish proverb: 'The goose dreams of maize and the betrothed girl of a prick.'

4 It is very much more convenient to study dream-symbolism in folklore than in actual dreams. Dreams are obliged to conceal things and only surrender their secrets to interpretation; these comic anecdotes, however, which are disguised as dreams, are intended as communications, meant to give pleasure to the person who tells them as well as to the listener, and therefore the interpretation is added quite unashamedly to the symbol. These stories delight in stripping off the veiling symbols.

In the following quatrain the penis appears as a sceptre:

Last night I dreamt  
I was King of the land,  
And how jolly I was  
With a prick in my hand.<sup>1</sup>

Now compare with this the following examples in which the same symbolism is employed outside a dream.

I love a little lass  
The prettiest I've seen,  
I'll put a sceptre in your hand  
And you shall be a queen.<sup>2</sup>  
'Remember, my boy', said Napoleon,  
The Emperor of renown,  
'So long as the prick is the sceptre  
The will be the crown.'<sup>3</sup>

A different variant of this symbolic exaltation of the genitals is favoured in the imagination of artists. A fine etching by Félicien Rops,<sup>4</sup> bearing the title 'Tout est grand chez les rois' ['Everything about kings is great'], shows the naked figure of a king with the features of the Roi Soleil, whose gigantic penis, which rises to arm level, itself wears a crown. The right hand balances a sceptre, while the left clasps a large orb, which by reason of a central cleft achieves an unmistakable resemblance to another part of the body which is the object of erotic desires.<sup>5</sup> The index finger of the left hand is inserted into this groove.

<sup>1</sup> 'Niederösterreichische Schnadahüpfeln', collected by Dr. H. Rollett. *Anthropophyteia*, 5, 151, No. 2.

<sup>2</sup> From the Austrian Alps, *Kryptadia*, 4, 111, No. 160.

<sup>3</sup> From Gaming in Lower Austria, *Anthropophyteia*, 3, 190, No. 85, 4.

4 Rops, 1905, Plate 20.

5 [Marginal Note by Oppenheim:] Like the orb in Rops's picture, a Roman relief in the Amphitheatre at Nîmes shows an egg transformed into a symbol of the female sexual organs by means of a similar groove. Here, too, the male counterpart is not absent. It appears as a phallus strangely furbished up as a bird which sits on four eggs of the kind described - one might say brooding them.

5 In the Silesian folksong that follows, the dream is only invented in order to hide a different occurrence. The penis appears here as a worm ('fat earthworm'), which has crawled into the girl, and at the right time crawls out again as a little worm (baby).<sup>1</sup>

### SONG OF THE EARTHWORMS<sup>2</sup>

Asleep on the grass one day a young lass  
Susanna of passion was dreaming;  
A soft smile did play round her nose as she lay  
While she thought of her swain and his scheming.  
Then - dream full of fear! - it swift did appear  
That her lover so handsome and charming  
Had become as she slept a fat earthworm which crept  
Right inside. What could be more alarming?  
Full of dread in her heart she awoke with a start  
And swift to the village she hied her  
And tearfully told all the folk young and old  
That an earthworm had crawled up inside her.  
Her wailing and tears came at last to the ears  
Of her mother who cursed and swore roundly;  
With bodings of gloom she repaired to her room  
And examined the maiden most soundly.  
For the earthworm she sought, but alas! could find nought -  
An unfortunate thing which dismayed her.  
So she hurried away without further delay  
To ask the wise woman to aid her.

With cunning she laid out the cards for the maid  
 And said: 'We must wait a while longer.  
 'I have questioned the Knave, but no answer he gave;  
 'Perhaps the Red King will prove stronger.  
 "Tis the news that you fear which the Red King<sup>3</sup> speaks clear:  
 'The worm really crawled in the girlie;  
 'But as everything bides its due times and its tides  
 'To catch it 'tis yet much too early.'  
 When Susanna had heard the lugubrious word  
 She went to her chamber full sadly;  
 Till at last there appeared the dread hour that she feared  
 And out crept the little worm gladly.  
 So be warned, every lass: do not dream on the grass,  
 But let poor Susanna's fate guide you,  
 Or - as you too may know, to your grief and your woe -  
 A fat earthworm will creep up inside you.<sup>4</sup>

The same symbolization of the penis by a worm is familiar from numerous obscene jokes.

<sup>1</sup> ['Würmchen' ('little worm') is a common German expression for 'baby'.]

<sup>2</sup> 'Schlesische Volkslieder [Silesian Folksongs]', transcribed by Dr. von Waldheim, *Anthropophyteia*, 7, 369.

<sup>3</sup> ['Röter König' ('Red King') is an Austrian slang term for 'menstruation'.]

<sup>4</sup> [Footnote by F. S. Krauss:] Cf. p. 359 and the Southern Slav version in Krauss, 'Die Zeugung in Sitte, Brauch und Glauben der Südslaven [Procreation in the Customs, Usages and Beliefs of the Southern Slavs]', *Kryptadia*, 6

, 259-269 and 375 f.6 The dream which now follows symbolizes the penis by a dagger: the woman who dreams it is pulling at a dagger in order to stab herself, when she is awakened by her husband and exhorted not to tear his member off.

#### A BAD DREAM

A woman dreamt that things had got to such a pitch that they had nothing to eat before the holiday and could not buy anything either. Her husband had drunk up all

the money. There was only a lottery ticket left and even this they really ought to pawn. But the man was still keeping it back, for the draw was to be on the second of January. He said: 'Wife, now tomorrow is the draw, let the ticket wait a while longer. If we don't win, then we must sell the ticket or pawn it.' - 'Well, the devil take it, all you've bought is worry, and you've got about as much out of it as there is milk in a billy-goat.' So the next day arrived. See, along came the newspaper man. He stopped him, took a copy and began to look down the list. He ran his eyes over the figures, he looked through every column, his number was not among them. He did not trust his eyes, looked through once again and this time sure enough he came upon the number of his ticket. The number was the same, but the number of the series did not fit. Once again he did not trust himself and thought to himself: 'This must be a mistake. Wait a bit, I will go to the bank and make certain one way or the other.' So he went there with his head hanging. On the way he met a second newspaper man. He bought another copy of a second paper, scanned the list and found the number of his ticket straight away. The number of the series, too, was the same as the one which included his ticket. The prize of 5,000 roubles fell to his lot. He burst into the bank, rushed up and asked them to pay out on the winning ticket at once. The banker said that they could not pay out yet, only in a week or two. He began to beg and pray: 'Please be kind, give me one thousand at least, I can get the rest later!' The banker refused, but advised him to apply to the private individual who had procured the winning lottery ticket for him. What was to be done now? Just then a little Jew appeared as though he had sprung up from the ground. He smelt a bargain and made him an offer to pay over the money at once, though instead of 5,000 only 4,000. The fifth thousand would be his own share. The man was delighted at this good fortune and decided to give the Jew the thousand, just so that he could get the money on the spot. He took the money from the Jew and handed over the ticket to him. Then he went home. On the way he went into an inn, swallowed a quick glass and from there went straight home. He walked along grinning and humming a little song. His wife saw him through the window and thought: 'Now he's certainly sold the lottery ticket; you can see he's cheerful, he's probably paid a visit to the inn and got himself drunk because he was feeling miserable.' Then he came indoors, put the money on the kitchen table and went to his wife to bring her the good news that he had won and had got the money. While they were hugging and kissing one another to their heart's content because they were so happy, their little three-year-old daughter grabbed the money and threw it into the stove. Then they came along to count the money and it was no longer there. The last bundle of notes was already on fire. In a rage the man seized hold of the little girl by the legs and dashed her against the stove. She dropped dead. Disaster stared him in the face, there was no escaping Siberia now. He seized his revolver and bang! he shot himself in the chest and dropped dead. Horrified by such a disaster, the woman snatched up a dagger and was going to stab herself. She tried to pull it out of the sheath but could not manage it however she tried. Then she heard a voice as though from Heaven: 'Enough, let go! What are you doing?' She woke up and saw that she was not pulling at a dagger but at her husband's tool, and he was saying: 'Enough, let go or you'll tear it off!'

The representation of the penis as a weapon, cutting knife,<sup>1</sup> dagger, etc., is familiar to us from the anxiety dreams of abstinent women in particular and also lies at the root of numerous phobias in neurotic people. The complicated disguise of this present dream, however, demands that we should make an attempt to clarify our understanding of it by a psycho-analytic interpretation based on interpretations already carried out. In doing so we are not overlooking the fact that we shall be going beyond the material presented in the folk tale itself and that consequently our conclusions will lose in certainty.

Since this dream ends in an act of sexual aggression carried out by the woman as a dream-action, this suggests that we should take the state of material need in the content of the dream as a substitute for a state of sexual need. Only the most extreme libidinal compulsion can at all justify such aggressiveness on the part of a woman. Other pieces of the dream-content point in a quite definite and different direction. The blame for the state of need is ascribed to the man. (He had drunk up all the money.)<sup>2</sup> The dream goes on to get rid of the man and the child and skilfully evades the sense of guilt attached to these wishes by causing the child to be killed by the man who then commits suicide out of remorse. Since this is the content of the dream we are led to conclude from many analogous instances that here is a woman who is not satisfied by her husband and who in her phantasies is longing for another marriage. It is all one for the interpretation whether we like to regard this dissatisfaction of the dreamer's as a permanent state of want or merely as the expression of a temporary one. The lottery, which in the dream brought about a short-lived state of happiness, could perhaps be understood as a symbolic reference to marriage. This symbol has not yet been identified with certainty in psycho-analytic work, but people are in the habit of saying that marriage is a game of chance, that in marriage one either draws the winning lot or a blank.<sup>3</sup> The numbers, which have been enormously magnified<sup>4</sup> by the dream-work, could well correspond in that case to the number of repetitions of the satisfying act that are wished for. We are thus made aware that the act of pulling the man's member not only has the meaning of libidinal provocation but also the additional meaning of contemptuous criticism, as though the woman wanted to pull the member off - as the man correctly assumed - because it was no good, did not fulfil its obligations.

We should not have lingered over the interpretation of this dream and exploited it beyond its overt symbolism were it not that other dreams which likewise end in a dream-action demonstrate that the common people have recognized here a typical situation which, wherever it occurs, is susceptible to the same explanation. (Cf. below p. 2538.)

<sup>1</sup> [Footnote by Oppenheim:] A knife is habitually carried by a burglar ['Einbrecher', literally, 'someone who breaks in']. The kind of breaking-in intended is shown by a proverbial phrase from Solingen, reported in *Anthropophyteia*, 5, 182: 'After marriage comes a burglary [breaking-in].' Cf. the Berlin slang term 'Brecheisen' ['jemmy', literally, 'breaking-iron'] for 'a powerful penis' (*Anthropophyteia*, 7, 3).

<sup>2</sup> [Marginal Note by Oppenheim:] Cf. further below our remarks on 'marriage portion' as a term for 'penis' and 'purse' for 'testes' and also I comparisons between virility and wealth and between the thirst for gold and libido.

<sup>3</sup> Another dream about a lottery in this little collection confirms this suggestion.

4 Psycho-analytic experience shows that noughts appended to numbers in dreams can be ignored in interpretation.<sup>8</sup>

## II FAECES-SYMBOLISM AND RELATED DREAM-ACTIONS

Psycho-analysis has taught us that in the very earliest period of childhood faeces is a highly prized substance, in relation to which coprophilic instincts find satisfaction. With the repression of these instincts, which is accelerated as much as possible by up-bringing, this substance falls into contempt and then serves conscious purposes as a means of expressing disdain and scorn. Certain forms of mental activity such as joking are still able to make the obstructed source of pleasure accessible for a brief moment, and thus show how much of the esteem in which human beings once held their faeces still remains preserved in the unconscious. The most important residue of this former esteem is, however, that all the interest which the child has had in faeces is transferred in the adult on to another material which he learns in life to set above almost everything else - gold.<sup>1</sup> How old this connection between excrement and gold is can be seen from an observation by Jeremias:<sup>2</sup> gold, according to ancient oriental mythology, is the excrement of hell.<sup>3</sup>

In dreams in folklore gold is seen in the most unambiguous way to be a symbol of faeces. If the sleeper feels a need to defaecate, he dreams of gold, of treasure. The disguise in the dream, which is designed to mislead him into satisfying his need in bed, usually makes the pile of faeces serve as a sign to mark the place where the treasure is to be found; that is to say, the dream - as though by means of endopsychic perception - states outright, even if in a reversed form, that gold is a sign or a symbol for faeces.

A simple treasure- or defaecation-dream of this kind is the following one, related in the *Facetiae* of Poggio.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 'Character and Anal Erotism' (1908b),

<sup>2</sup> Jeremias (1904, 115 n.).

<sup>3</sup> [Marginal Note by Oppenheim:] Similarly in Mexico.<sup>9</sup>DREAM-GOLD<sup>1</sup>

A certain man related in company that he had dreamt he had found gold. Thereupon another man capped it with this story. (What follows is quoted verbatim.)

'My neighbour once dreamt that the Devil had led him to a field to dig for gold; but he found none. Then the Devil said: "It is there for sure, only you cannot dig it up now; but take note of the place so that you may recognize it again by yourself."

'When the man asked that the place should be made recognizable by some sign, the Devil suggested: "Just shit on it, then it will not occur to anybody that there is gold lying hidden here and you will be able to recognize the exact place." The man did so and then immediately awoke and felt that he had done a great heap in his bed.'

(We give the conclusion in summary.) As he was fleeing from the house, he put on a cap in which a cat had done its business during the same night. He had to wash his head and his hair. 'Thus his dream-gold was turned to filth.'

Tarasevsky (1909, 194, No. 232) reports a similar dream from the Ukraine in which a peasant receives some treasure from the Devil, to whom he has lit a candle, and puts a pile of faeces to mark the place.<sup>2</sup>

We need not be surprised if the Devil appears in these two dreams as a bestower of treasure and a seducer, for the Devil - himself an angel expelled from Paradise - is certainly nothing else than the personification of the repressed unconscious instinctual life.<sup>3</sup>

The motives behind these simple comic anecdotes about dreams appear to be exhausted in a cynical delight in dirt and a malicious satisfaction over the dreamer's embarrassment. But in other dreams about treasure the form taken by the dream is confused in all sorts of ways and includes various constituents the origin and significance of which we may well investigate. For we shall not regard even these dream-contents, which are intended to provide a rationalistic justification for obtaining the satisfaction, as entirely arbitrary and meaningless.

In the two next examples, the dream is not ascribed to a person sleeping alone but to one of two sleepers - two men - who share a bed. As a result of the dream, the dreamer dirties his bedfellow.

<sup>1</sup> Poggio (1905, No. 130).

<sup>2</sup> [Addition by Oppenheim:] Attention is there drawn to parallels in *Anthropophyteia*, 4, 342-345, Nos. 580-581.

<sup>3</sup> 'Character and Anal Erotism' (1908b).0

#### A LIVELY DREAM<sup>1</sup>

Two travelling journeymen arrived weary at an inn and asked for a night's lodging. 'Yes,' said the host, 'if you are not afraid, you can have a bedroom, but it's a haunted one. If you want to stay, that's all right, and the night will cost you nothing as far as sleeping goes.' The lads asked one another: 'Are you frightened?' 'No.' Very well, so they seized another litre of wine and went to the room assigned to them.

They had hardly been lying down any time when the door opened and a white figure glided through the room. One fellow said to the other: 'Didn't you see something?' 'Yes.' 'Well, why didn't you say anything?' 'Just wait, it's going to

come through the room again.' Sure enough, the figure glided in again. One of the lads jumped up swiftly, but swifter still the ghost glided out through the crack in the door. The lad, by no means slow, pulled open the door and saw the figure, a beautiful woman, already half way down the stairs. 'What are you doing there?' the lad shouted out. The figure stood still, turned round and spoke: 'Now I am released. I have long had to wander. As a reward take the treasure which lies just at the spot where you are standing.' The lad was as much frightened as delighted, and in order to mark the place he lifted up his shirt and planted a fine pile, for he thought that no one would wipe out that mark. But just as he was at his happiest, he felt someone suddenly seize hold of him. 'You dirty swine,' someone bellowed in his ear, 'you're shitting on my shirt.' At these coarse words the happy dreamer awoke from his fairy-tale good fortune to find himself; roughly hurled out of bed.

### HE SHAT ON THE GRAVE

Two gentlemen arrived at a hotel, ate their evening meal and drank and at last wanted to go to bed. They asked the host if he would show them to a room. As the rooms were all occupied the host gave up his own bed to them, which they were both to sleep in, and he would soon find a place for himself to sleep somewhere else. The two men lay down in the same bed. A spirit appeared to one of them in a dream, lit a candle and led him to the churchyard. The lychgate opened and the spirit with the candle in its hand and the man behind walked up to the grave of a maiden. When they had reached the grave, the candle suddenly went out. 'What shall I do now? How shall I tell which is the maiden's grave to-morrow, when it is day?' he asked in the dream. Then an idea came to his rescue, he pulled down his drawers and shat on the grave. When he had finished shitting, his comrade, who was sleeping beside him, struck him first on one cheek and then on the other: 'What! You'd shit right in my face?'

<sup>1</sup> F. Wernert, 'Deutsche Bauernerzählungen gesammelt im Ober- und Unterelsass [German Peasant-Tales, Collected in Upper and Lower Alsace]', *Anthropophyteia*, 3, 72, No. 15.1

In these two dreams, in place of the Devil other super, natural figures appear, namely ghosts - that is, spirits of dead people. 'the spirit in the second dream actually leads the dreamer to the churchyard, where he is to mark a particular grave by defaecating on it. A part of this situation is very easy to understand. The sleeper knows that the bed is not the proper place for satisfying his need; hence in the dream he causes himself to be led away from it and procures a person who shows his hidden urge the right way to another place where he is permitted to satisfy his need, indeed is required by the circumstances to do so. The spirit in the second dream actually makes use of a candle when leading him, as a servant would do if he was conducting a stranger to the W.C. at night when it was dark. But why are these representatives of the demand for a change of scene, which the lazy sleeper wants to avoid at all costs, such uncanny individuals as ghosts and spirits of dead people? Why does the spirit in the second dream lead the way to a churchyard as if to desecrate a grave? After all, these: elements seem to have nothing to do with the urge to defaecate and the symbolization of faeces by gold.

There is an indication; in them of an anxiety which could perhaps be traced back to an effort to suppress the achievement of satisfaction in bed; but that anxiety would not explain the specific nature of the dream-content - its reference to death. We will refrain from making an interpretation at this point and will stress further, as being in need of explanation, the fact that in both these situations, where two men are sleeping together, the uncanny element of the ghostly guide is associated with a woman. The spirit in the first dream is early on revealed as a beautiful woman who feels she is now released, and the spirit in the second dream leads the way to the grave of a girl, on which the distinguishing mark is to be placed.

2 Let us turn for further enlightenment to some other defaecation-dreams of this kind, in which the bedfellows are no longer two men but a man and a woman, a married couple. The satisfying action accomplished in sleep as a result of the dream seems here particularly repellent, but perhaps for that very reason conceals a special meaning.

First, however, we will introduce a dream (on account of its connection in content with those that follow) which does not strictly speaking fit in with the plan we have just put forward. It is incomplete, inasmuch as the element of the dreamer's dirtying his bedfellow, his wife, is absent. On the other hand, the connection between the urge to defaecate and the fear of death is extremely plain. The peasant, who is described as married, dreams that he is struck by lightning and that his soul flies up to Heaven. Up there he begs to be allowed to return once more to the earth in order to see his wife and children, obtains permission to transform himself into a spider and to let himself down on the thread spun by himself. The thread is too short and the effort to express still more thread out of his body results in defaecation.

#### DREAM AND REALITY<sup>1</sup>

A peasant lay in bed and had a dream. He saw himself in the field with his oxen, ploughing. Then suddenly down came a flash of lightning and struck him dead. Then he felt quite clearly his soul floating upwards until at last it reached Heaven. Peter stood by the entrance gates and was going to send the peasant in without more ado. But he begged to be allowed down to earth once more, so that he could at least take leave of his wife and his children. But Peter said that would not do, and once a man was in Heaven he was not allowed to return to the world. At this the peasant wept and begged pitifully, until at last Peter gave way. Now there was only one possible way for the peasant to see his family again and that was for Peter to change him into an animal and send him down. So the peasant was turned into a spider and span a long thread on which he let himself down. When he had arrived just over his homestead, at about the level of the chimneys, and could already see his children playing in the meadow, he noticed to his horror that he could not spin any further. Naturally his fear was great, for of course he wanted to get right down to the earth. So he squeezed and he squeezed to make the thread longer. He squeezed with all his might and main - there was a loud noise - and the peasant awoke. Something very human had happened to him while he slept.

Here we encounter spun thread as a new symbol for evacuated faeces, although psycho-analysis furnishes us with no counterpart to this symbolization but on the contrary attributes another symbolic meaning to thread. This contradiction will be settled later on.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. von Waldheim, 'Skatologische Erzählungen aus Preussisch-Schlesien [Scatologic Tales from Prussian Silesia]', *Anthropophyteia*, 6, 431, No. 9.3

The next dream, richly elaborated and pungently told, might be described as a 'sociable' one; it ends with the wife's being dirtied. Its points of agreement with the previous dream are, however, quite striking. The peasant is, it is true, not dead, but he finds himself in Heaven, wants to return to the earth and experiences the same difficulty over 'spinning' a sufficiently long thread to let himself down on. However, he does not make this thread for himself as a spider out of his own body, but in a less fantastic way out of everything that he can fasten together, and as the thread is still not long enough to reach, the little angels actually advise him to shit and to lengthen the rope with the turds.

#### THE PEASANT'S ASSUMPTION TO HEAVEN<sup>1</sup>

A peasant had the following dream. He had heard that wheat in Heaven was standing at a high price. So he thought he would like to take his wheat there. He loaded his cart, harnessed the horse and set out. He journeyed a long way till he saw the road to Heaven and followed it. Thus he came to the gates of Heaven, and look! they stood open. He charged straight forward so as to drive right inside, but he had scarcely headed the cart towards them when - crash! the gates banged shut. Then he began to beg: 'Let me in, please be kind!' But the angels did not let him in and said he had come late. Then he saw that there was no business to be done here; there was just nothing for him, and so he turned round. But look! the road he had travelled on had vanished. What was he to do? He addressed himself to the angels again. 'Little dears, please be kind and take me back to the earth, if it's possible! give me a road so that I can get home with my horse and cart!' But the angels said: 'No, child of man, your horse and cart stay here and you can go down how you please.' 'But how shall I let myself down then, I haven't any rope?' 'Just look for something to let yourself down with.' So he took the reins, the bridle and the bit, fastened them all together and began to let himself down. He crawled and he crawled and he looked down - it was still a long way to the earth. He crawled back again and lengthened the rope he had joined together by adding the girth and the traces. Then he began to climb down again and it still did not reach the earth. So he fastened on the shafts and the body of the cart. It was still too short. What was he to do next? He racked his brains and then he thought: 'Ah, I'll lengthen it with my coat and my breeches and my shirt and then with my belt.' And that is what he did, joined everything together and climbed on. When he had reached the end of the belt it was still a long way to the earth. Then he did not know what to do; he had nothing more to fasten on and it was dangerous to jump down: he might break his neck. He begged the angels again: 'Be kind, take me down to the earth!' The angels said: 'Shit, and the muck will make a rope.' So he shat and he shat almost half an hour until he had nothing left to shit with. It made a long rope and he

climbed down it. He climbed and he climbed and reached the end of the rope, but it was still a long way to the earth. Then he began once more to beg the angels to take him down to the earth. But the angels said: 'Now, child of man, piss and it will make a silken thread.' The peasant pissed and he pissed, on and on, till he could do no more. He saw that it really had turned into a silken thread and he climbed on. He climbed and he climbed and he reached the end of it, and look, it did not reach to the earth, it still needed one and a half or two fathoms. He begged the angels again to take him down. But the angels said: 'No, brother, there is no help for you now; just jump down!' The peasant dangled undecided; he could not find the courage to jump down. But then he saw that there was no other way left to him, and bump! instead of jumping down from Heaven he came flying down from the stove and only came to his senses in the middle of the room. Then he woke up and shouted: 'Wife, wife, where are you?' His wife woke up, she heard the din and said: 'The Devil take you, have you gone mad?' She felt round about her and saw the mess: her husband had shat and pissed all over her. She began to rate and to scold him roundly. The peasant said: 'What are you screaming about? There's vexation enough anyway. The horse is lost, stayed behind in Heaven, and I was almost done for. God be thanked that I am alive at least!' 'What rubbish you're talking. You've had much too much to drink. The horse is in the stable and you were on the stove, and dirtied me all over and then jumped down.' Then the man collected himself. Only then did it dawn on him that he had merely dreamt it all; and then he told his wife the dream, how he had journeyed up to Heaven and how from there he came down to the earth again.

<sup>1</sup> Tarasevsky (1909, 196).4

At this point, however, psycho-analysis forces on our attention an interpretation which changes our whole view of this class of dreams. Extensible objects, so the experience of interpreting dreams tells us, are ordinarily symbols of erection.<sup>1</sup> In both these anecdotes of dreams the emphasis lies on the element of the thread's refusing to get long enough, and the anxiety in the dream is also attached to this same element. Thread moreover, like all things analogous to it (cord, rope, twine etc.), is a symbol of semen.<sup>2</sup> The peasant, then, is striving to produce an erection and only when this is unsuccessful does he resort to defaecation. All at once a sexual need comes to view in these dreams behind the excremental one.

This sexual need is, however, much better adapted to explain the remaining constituents of the dream's content. We are bound to admit, if we are ready to assume that these fictitious dreams are essentially correctly constructed, that the dream-action with which they end must have a meaning and must be one intended by the latent thoughts of the dreamer. If the dreamer defaecates over his wife at the end of it, then the whole dream must have this as its aim and provide the reason for this outcome. It can signify nothing else but an insult to the wife, or, strictly speaking, a rejection of her. It is then easy to establish a connection between this and the deeper significance of the anxiety expressed in the dream.

The situation from which this last dream grows can be construed according to these suggestions as follows. The sleeper is overcome by a strong erotic need

which is indicated in fairly clear symbols at the beginning of the dream. (He had heard that wheat - probably equivalent to semen - was standing at a high price. He charged forward in order to drive with his horse and cart - genital symbols - through the open gates of Heaven.) But this libidinal impulse probably applies to an unattainable object. The gates close, he gives up his intention and wants to return to the earth. But his wife, who lies by him, does not attract him; he exerts himself in vain to get an erection for her. The wish to discard her in order to replace her by another and better woman is in the infantile sense a death-wish. When someone cherishes such wishes in his unconscious against a person who is nevertheless really loved, they are transformed for him into fear of death, fear for his own life. Hence the presence in these dreams of the state of being dead, the assumption to Heaven, the hypocritical longing to see wife and children again. But the disappointed sexual libido finds release along the path of regression in the excremental wishful impulse, which abuses and soils the unserviceable sexual object.

<sup>1</sup> [Marginal Note by Oppenheim:] In a story which comes from Picardy, pushing a ring down on a finger serves as a symbolic way of depicting an erection. The lower the ring goes, the longer the penis becomes - the analogy naturally has a magical force. (Kryptadia, 1, No. 32.)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Stekel, 1911a.5

If this particular dream makes an interpretation of this kind plausible, then, in view of the peculiarities of the material which the dream-contains, we can only succeed in proving the interpretation by applying the same one to a whole succession of dreams with an allied content. With this aim in view, let us turn back to the dreams mentioned earlier, where we find the situation of a sleeper who has a man as his bedfellow. The connection in which the woman appears in these dreams now acquires an added significance in retrospect. The sleeper, overcome by a libidinal impulse, rejects the man; he wishes him far away and a woman in his place. A death-wish directed against the dreamer's unwanted male bedfellow is naturally not so severely punished by the moral censorship as one directed against his wife, but the reaction is sufficiently far-reaching to turn the wish against himself or against the female object he desires. The dreamer himself is carried off by death; not the man, but the woman the dreamer longs for, is dead. In the end, however, the rejection of the male sexual object finds an outlet in defiling him, and this is felt and avenged by the other as an affront.

Our interpretation thus fits this group of dreams. If we now turn back to the dreams accompanied by defilement of the woman, we shall be prepared to find that elements missing or only hinted at in the dream we have taken as the type are expressed unmistakably in other similar dreams.

In the following defaecation-dream the dirtying of the woman is not emphasized, but we are told quite clearly, as far as can be in the realm of symbolism, that the libidinal impulse is directed towards another woman. The dreamer does not want to dirty his own field, but intends to defaecate on his neighbour's land.

## MUTTON-HEAD!<sup>1</sup>

A peasant dreamt that he was at work in his clover field. He was overtaken by an urgent need and, since he did not want to foul his own clover, he hurried off to the tree standing in his neighbour's field, pulled down his breeches and slapped down a pat of number two on to the ground. At last, when he had happily come to an end, he wanted to clean himself and began to tear up grass with a will. But what was that? Our little peasant woke up from his sleep with a jerk, and clutched at his painfully smarting cheek which someone had just slapped. 'You deaf old mutton-head!' - the peasant, coming to himself, heard his wife in bed beside him scolding. 'So you'd go on pulling the hair right off my body would you!'

<sup>1</sup> F. Wernert, 'Deutsche Bauernerzählungen gesammelt im Ober- und Unterelsass [German Peasant-Tales, Collected in Upper and Lower Alsace]', *Anthropophyteia*, 4, 138, No. 173.6

Tearing out hair (grass), which here takes the place of defiling, is found mentioned alongside it in the next dream. Psycho-analytic experience shows that it originates from the group of symbols concerning masturbation (ausreissen, abreißen [to pull out, to pull off]).

The dreamer's death-wish directed against his wife would seem to be what most requires confirming in our interpretation. But in the dream which follows next, the dreamer actually buries his wife (hypocritically designated as a treasure) by digging the vessel which contains the gold into the earth and, as is familiar to us in dreams about treasure, planting a heap of faeces on the top to mark the place. During the digging he is working his hands in his wife's vagina.<sup>1</sup>

## THE DREAM OF THE TREASURE<sup>2</sup>

Once upon a time a peasant had a terrible dream. It seemed to him just like it was war-time and the whole district was being plundered by the enemy soldiers. But he had a treasure that he was so scared about that he didn't rightly know what to do with it and where he should really hide it. At last he thought he would bury it in his garden, where he knew of a proper fine place. Now he dreams on further how he goes right out and comes to the place where he wants to dig up the earth so he can put the big pot in the hole. But when he looks for a tool to dig with he finds nix round about, and at last he has to take his hands to it. So he makes the hole with his bare hands, puts the crock with the money into it and covers the whole lot over again with earth. Now he wants to go, but he stops a while standing there and thinks to himself: 'But when the soldiers have gone away again, how'll I find my treasure then if I don't put a sign there?' And straight away he begins to hunt about; he hunts up and down and to and fro, wherever he can. No, in the end he finds nix nowhere that would show him again straight away where he has buried his money. But just then he feels a need. 'Ah,' he says to himself, 'now that'll be fine, I can shit on it.' So of course he pulls his breeches down right away and does a fine heap on the place where he has put the crock in. Then he sees nearby a bit of grass and is going to pull it out, so he can wipe himself with it. But that moment he gets such a fine clout that for a second he is quite silly and looks round all

dazed. And straight after he hears his wife, who is quite beside herself with rage, yelling at him: 'You cheeky bastard, you good-for-nothing! D'you think I've got to put up with everything from you? First you mess about with both hands in my cunt, then you shit on it and now you even want to pull all the hair off it!'

<sup>1</sup> [Marginal Note by Oppenheim:] Significance?

<sup>2</sup> A Riedl, 'Schwänke und Schnurren niederösterreichischer Landleute [Comic and Curious Anecdotes from Lower-Austrian Country People]', *Anthropophyteia*, 5, 10, No. 19.7

With this example of a dream we have returned to the treasure-dreams from which we started out, and we observe that those defaecation-dreams which are concerned with treasure contain little or no fear of death, whereas the others, in which the relation to death is expressed directly (dreams of an assumption to Heaven), disregard treasure and motivate the defaecation in other ways. It is almost as though the hypocritical transformation of the wife into a treasure had obviated punishment for the death-wish.<sup>1</sup>

A death-wish directed against the woman is most clearly admitted to in another dream of an assumption to Heaven, which, however, ends not in defaecating on the woman's body but in sexual activity involving her genitals, as already happened in the previous dream. The dreamer actually shortens his wife's life in order to lengthen his own, by putting oil from her lamp of life into his own. As a kind of compensation for this undisguised hostility there appears at the end of the dream something like an attempt at a caress.

#### THE LIGHT OF LIFE<sup>2</sup>

Saint Peter appeared to a man when he was fast asleep and led him away to Paradise. The man agreed to go with all his heart and went with Saint Peter. They wandered about in Paradise for a long time and came to a copse, which was large and spacious but kept in beautiful order, and where hanging lamps were burning on every tree. The man asked Saint Peter what this could mean. Saint Peter answered that they were hanging lamps which only burned as long as a man lived. But as soon as the oil vanished and the lamp went out, the man had to die at once too. This interested the man very much and he asked Saint Peter if he would lead him to his own hanging lamp. Saint Peter granted his request and led him to his wife's lamp, and just by it was the man's own lamp. The man saw that his wife's lamp still had a lot of oil in it, but there was very little in his own and this made him very sorry because he would have to die soon, and he asked Saint Peter if he would pour a little more oil into his lamp. Saint Peter said that God put the oil in at the moment when a man was born and determined for each the length of his life. This made the man very downcast and he wept and wailed beside his lamp. Saint Peter said to him: 'You stay there, but I must go on - I have more to do.' The man rejoiced at this and hardly was Saint Peter out of sight when he began to dip his finger in his wife's hanging lamp and to drip the oil into his own. He did this several times and when Saint Peter approached he started up terrified, and awoke from his

dream, and saw that he had been dipping his finger in his wife's cunt and then dribbling it into his mouth and licking his finger.

Note. According to a version told by a journeyman in Sarajevo, the man awoke after getting a box on the ears from his wife, whom he had awakened by fumbling around in her pudenda. Here Saint Peter is missing and instead of hanging lamps there are glasses with oil burning in them. According to a third version, which I heard from a student in Mostar, a venerable greybeard shows the man various burning candles. His own is very thin, his wife's enormously thick. In order to lengthen his life, the man then begins with burning zeal to lick the thick candle. But then he gets a tremendous clout. 'I knew that you were an ox, but I honestly didn't know that you were a swine as well,' his wife said to him, for he was licking her cunt in his sleep.

The story is extraordinarily widespread in Europe.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [Marginal Note by Oppenheim:] What about the treasure in the dreams of one of two male bedfellows?

<sup>2</sup> Narrated by a Secondary School teacher in Belgrade, based on a version told by a peasant woman from the region of Kragujevac. *Anthropophyteia*, 4, 255, No. 10.

<sup>3</sup> [Marginal Note by Oppenheim:] Cf. a very similar story from the Ukraine, *Kryptadia*, 5, 15.

This is the moment to recall the 'bad dream' of the woman who ended by pulling at her husband's organ as if she wanted to tear it out. The interpretation which we found; reason to make in that instance agrees completely with the interpretation of the defaecation-dreams dreamt by men which is expounded here. In the dream of the unsatisfied wife, she, as well, shamelessly gets rid of her husband (and the child) as obstacles in the way of satisfaction.

Another defaecation-dream, about whose interpretation we cannot perhaps be completely certain, suggests, however, that we should concede that there are certain differences in the purpose of these dreams, and throws new light on dreams like the ones we have just mentioned and on some that are still to follow, in which the dream-action consists in a manipulation of the woman's genitals.

'FROM FRIGHT'<sup>1</sup>

The Pasha passed the night with the Bey. When the next day came, the Bey lay on in bed and did not want to get up. The Bey asked the Pasha: 'What did you dream?' 'I dreamt that on the minaret there was another minaret.' 'Could that really be?' wondered the Bey. 'And what else did you dream?' 'I dreamt,' he said, 'that on the minaret there stood a copper jug, and there was water in the jug. The wind blew and the copper jug rocked. Now what would you have done if you had dreamt that?' 'I should have pissed myself and shat myself as well, from fright.' 'And, you see, I only pissed myself.'

This dream calls for a symbolic interpretation, because its manifest content is quite incomprehensible whereas the symbols are unmistakably clear. Why should the dreamer really feel frightened at the sight of a water-jug rocking on the tip of a minaret? But a minaret is excellently suited to be a symbol for the penis, and the rhythmically moving water-vessel seems a good symbol of the female genitals in the act of copulation. The Pasha, then, has had a copulation-dream, and if his host suggests defaecation in connection with it this makes it likely that the interpretation is to be sought in the circumstance that both of them are old and impotent men, in whom old age has occasioned the same proverbial replacement of sexual by excremental pleasure which, as we have seen, came about in the other dreams owing to the lack of an appropriate sexual object. For a man who can no longer copulate, so say the common people with their crude love of truth, there still remains the pleasure of shitting; we can say of such a man there is a recurrence of anal erotism, which was there before genital erotism and

was repressed and replaced by this later impulse. Defaecation-dreams can thus also be impotence-dreams.

<sup>1</sup> F. S. Krauss, 'Südslavische Volksüberlieferungen, die sich auf den Geschlechtsverkehr beziehen [Southern Slav Folk Traditions concerning Sexual Intercourse]', *Anthropophyteia*, 5, 293, No. 697.9

The difference between the interpretations is not so pronounced as might appear at first sight. The defaecation-dreams too, in which the victim is a woman, deal with impotence - relative impotence, at least, towards the particular person who no longer has any attraction for the dreamer. A defaecation-dream thus becomes the dream of a man who can no longer satisfy a woman, as well as of a man whom a woman no longer satisfies.

The same interpretation (as an impotence-dream) can also be applied to a dream in the *Facetiae* of Poggio, which manifestly, it is true, poses as the dream of a jealous man - that is, in fact, of a man who does not think he can satisfy his wife. THE RING OF FIDELITY<sup>1</sup>

Franciscus Philelphus was jealous of his wife and became tormented by the greatest fear that she had to do with another man, and day and night he lay on the watch. Since what occupies us in waking is wont to return to us in dreams, there appeared to him during his sleep a demon, who said to him that if he would act according to his bidding his wife would always remain faithful to him. Franciscus said to him in the dream that he would be very indebted to him and promised him a reward.

'Take this ring,' replied the demon, 'and wear it on your finger with care. As long as you wear it, your wife cannot lie with any other man without your knowledge.'

As he awoke, excited with joy, he felt that he was pushing his finger into the vulva of his wife.

The jealous have no better expedient; in this way their wives can never let themselves be taken by another man without the knowledge of their husbands.

<sup>1</sup> Poggio (1905, No. 133).0

This anecdote of Poggio is considered to be the source of a tale by Rabelais, which, in other respects very similar, is clearer inasmuch as it actually describes the husband bringing home a young wife in his old age, who then gives him grounds for jealous fears.<sup>1</sup>

Hans Carvel was a learned, experienced, industrious man, a man of honour, of good understanding and judgement, benevolent, charitable to the poor and a cheerful philosopher. Withal a good companion, who was fond of a jest, somewhat corpulent and unsteady, but otherwise well set up in every way. In his old age he married the daughter of Concordat the bailiff, a young, comely, good, gay, lively and pleasing woman, merely perchance a little too friendly towards the gentlemen neighbours and menservants. So it befell that in the course of some weeks he became as jealous as a tiger and was suspicious that she might be getting her buttocks drummed upon elsewhere. To guard against this, he related to her a whole stock of pleasing histories of the punishments for adultery, often read aloud to her lovely legends of virtuous women, preached her the gospel of chastity, wrote her a small volume of songs of praise to matrimonial fidelity, inveighed in sharp and caustic words against the wantonness of undisciplined wives and in addition to all bestowed on her a magnificent necklace set round with oriental sapphires.

But regardless of this, he saw her going about with the neighbours in such a friendly and sociable fashion that his jealousy mounted yet higher. One night at that time, as he was lying with her in bed, in the midst of these painful thoughts, he dreamt he spoke with the Fiend Incarnate and bewailed his grief to him. But the Devil comforted him, put a ring on his finger and said: 'Take this ring; as long as you carry it on your finger no other man can have carnal knowledge of your wife without your knowledge and against your will.' 'A thousand thanks, Sir Devil!' said Hans Carvel, 'I will deny Mahomet before ever I take this ring from my finger.' The Devil disappeared. But Hans Carvel awoke with a joyful heart and found that he had his finger in his wife's what-d'you-call-it.

I forgot to relate how the young woman, when she felt this, jerked her buttocks backwards as if to say: 'Stop! No, no! That's not what ought to be put in there!' - which made Hans Carvel imagine that someone wanted to pull off his ring.

Is that not an infallible measure? Believe me! act after this example and take care at all times to have your wife's ring on your finger!<sup>2</sup>

The Devil, who appears here as counsellor, as he does in the treasure-dreams, gives us a clue to something of the dreamer's latent thoughts. Originally at least, he was supposed to 'take' the unfaithful wife who is hard to keep a watch on. He then shows in the manifest dream an infallible means of keeping her permanently. In this too we recognize an analogy with the wish to get rid of someone (death-

wish) in the defaecation-dreams. <sup>1</sup> Rabelais, Pantagruel, Chapter 28 of Le Tiers Livre.

<sup>2</sup> [Footnote by Freud:] Goethe is concerned with this symbolism of the ring and the finger in a Venetian Epigram (Paralipomena, No. 65, Sophienausgabe, Abt. II, Bd. 5, 381).

Costly rings I possess! Excellent stones, engraved  
In lofty style and conception, held by the purest of gold;  
Dearly men pay for these rings, adorned with fiery stones,  
Oft have you seen them sparkle over the gaming-table.  
But one little ring I know, whose virtue is not the same,  
Which Hans Carvel once possessed, sadly, when he was old.  
Foolish he pushed in the ring the smallest of all his ten fingers,

The eleventh, the biggest, alone is worthy and fit to be there.<sup>1</sup> We will conclude this small collection of dreams by adding a lottery-dream, whose connection with the others is rather slight, but which serves to confirm the suggestion which we put forward earlier that a lottery symbolizes a marriage contract. IT'S NO USE CRYING OVER SPILT MILK!<sup>1</sup>

A merchant had a strange dream. He dreamt that he saw a woman's arse with everything that belonged to it. On one half was a figure 1 and on the other a 3. Before this, the merchant had had the idea of buying a lottery ticket. It seemed to him that this picture in his dream was a lucky omen. Without waiting till the ninth hour, he ran to the bank first thing in the morning, in order to buy his ticket. He arrived there and without pausing to think he demanded ticket Number Thirteen, the same figures that he had seen in his dream. After he had bought his ticket, not a day passed on which he did not look in all the newspapers to see if his number had won. After a week, or at the most after ten days, the list of the draw came out. When he looked through, he saw that his number had not been drawn but the number 103, Series 8, and that number had won 200,000 roubles. The merchant nearly tore his hair out. 'I must have made a mistake! there is something wrong!' He was beside himself, he was almost inconsolable and could not conceive what his having had such a dream could mean. Then he resolved to discuss the matter with his friend to see if he could not account for his misfortune. He met his friend and told him everything in minute detail. Then his friend said: 'Oh you simpleton! Didn't you see the nought between the number 1 and the 3 on the arse?' 'A-a-ah, the Devil take it, it never occurred to me that the arse had a nought.' 'But it was there plain and clear, only you didn't work out the lottery number right. And the number 8 belonging to the series - the cunt shows you that - it's like a number 8.' - It's no use crying over spilt milk!

<sup>1</sup> Tarasevsky (1909, 40).<sup>2</sup> Our intention in putting together this short paper was twofold. On the one hand we wanted to suggest that one should not be deterred by the often repulsively dirty and indecent nature of this popular material from seeking in it valuable confirmation of psycho-analytic views. Thus on this occasion we have been able to establish the fact that folklore interprets dream-symbols in the same way as psycho-analysis, and that, contrary to loudly proclaimed popular opinion, it derives a group of dreams from needs and wishes which have become immediate. On the other hand, we should like to express the view that it is doing the common people an injustice to assume that they employ this form of entertainment merely to satisfy the coarsest desires. It seems rather that behind these ugly façades are concealed mental reactions to impressions of life which are to be taken seriously, which even strike a sad note - reactions to which common people are ready to surrender, but only if they are accompanied by a yield of coarse pleasure.