

OBSERVATIONS AND EXAMPLES FROM ANALYTIC PRACTICE - (1913)

The collection of short contributions, of which we here present a first instalment, calls for a few introductory words. The cases of illness which come under a psycho-analyst's observation are of course of unequal value in adding to his knowledge. There are some on which he has to bring to bear all that he knows and from which he learns nothing; and there are others which show him what he already knows in a particularly clearly marked manner and in exceptionally revealing isolation, so that he is indebted to them not only for a confirmation but for an extension of his knowledge. We are justified in supposing that the psychical processes which we wish to study are no different in the first class of cases from what they are in the second, but we shall choose to describe them as they occur in the favourable and clear examples afforded by the latter. Similarly, the theory of evolution assumes that in the animal kingdom the segmentation of the egg proceeds in the same manner in those cases where a high degree of pigmentation is present and which are unfavourable for observation, as it does in those cases where the object of study is transparent and poorly pigmented and which are on that account selected for observation.

But the numerous apt examples, which, in the course of an analyst's daily work, bring him a confirmation of what he already knows, are for the most part lost to view, since their collection into a larger whole often involves long delays. There is therefore some advantage in the provision of a framework within which observations and examples of this kind can be published and made generally known without waiting to be worked over from a more generalized point of view.⁰

Under the heading which is here introduced space will be offered for material of this kind. Communications should be kept as concise as possible. The different items are arranged in no particular order.

(1) DREAM WITH AN UNRECOGNIZED PRECIPITATING CAUSE

A good sleeper awoke one morning at a summer resort in the Tyrol, knowing that he had had a dream that the Pope was dead. He could think of no explanation of it. During the morning of the same day his wife said to him: 'Did you hear the dreadful noise the bells made early this morning?' He had not heard it but had evidently dreamt about it. The interpretation which his dream gave of the bells was his revenge on the pious Tyrolese. According to the newspapers the Pope was slightly indisposed at that time.

(2) THE TIME OF DAY IN DREAMS

This very often stands for the age of the dreamer at some particular period in his childhood. In one dream a quarter past five in the morning meant the age of five years and three months, which was significant, since that was the dreamer's age at the time of the birth of his younger brother. - Many similar examples.¹

(3) REPRESENTATION OF AGES IN DREAMS

A woman dreamt that she was walking with two little girls whose ages differed by fifteen months. She was unable to recall any family of her acquaintance to whom this would apply. It occurred to her that both the children represented herself and that the dream was reminding her that the two traumatic events of her childhood were separated from each other by fifteen months ($3\frac{1}{2}$ and $4\frac{3}{4}$).

(4) POSITION WHEN WAKING FROM A DREAM

A woman dreamt that she was lying on her back and pressing the soles of her feet against those of another woman. The analysis made it seem probable that she was thinking of scenes of romping which she had substituted for the memory of an observation of sexual intercourse. When she woke up she noticed that, on the contrary, she had been lying on her stomach with her arms crossed, and had thus been imitating the position of a man and his embrace.

(9) TWO ROOMS AND ONE ROOM

He had a dream in which he saw two familiar rooms which had been made into one.

Nothing factual. The dream pointed to the female genitals and the anus, which, as a child, he had regarded as one area, the 'bottom' (in accordance with the infantile 'cloaca theory'), while he now knows that there are two separate cavities and orifices. A reversed representation.

(10) OVERCOAT AS A SYMBOL

In women's dreams an overcoat [German 'Mantel'] is unquestionably shown to be a symbol for a man. Linguistic assonance may perhaps play some part in this.

(13) DISGRACED FEET (SHOES)

After several days of resistance the patient reported that she had felt very much snubbed because a young man whom she met regularly near the doctor's house, and who used as a rule to look at her admiringly, had on the last occasion looked contemptuously at her feet. In fact she had no reason to be ashamed of her feet. She produced the explanation herself after admitting that she had regarded the young man as the doctor's son, who thus (by way of the transference) stood for her elder brother. There now followed a memory of having been in the habit of accompanying her brother to the lavatory when she was about five years old and of watching him micturate. She was overcome with envy at not being able to do it in the same way as he did and one day tried to copy him (envy for the penis). But in doing so she wetted her shoes and got very angry when her brother teased her about it. For a long time afterwards her anger recurred whenever her brother looked contemptuously at her shoes with the object of reminding her of her misfortune. She added that this experience had determined her later behaviour at school. If she was unsuccessful in anything at the first attempt she could never bring herself to try again, so that in many subjects she failed completely. This is a

good example of the way in which sexual life acts as a model and influences character.

(15)SELF-CRITICISM BY NEUROTICS

It is always a striking thing and deserves special notice when a neurotic is in the habit of speaking ill of himself, expressing a low opinion of himself, and so on. As in the case of self-reproaches, it is often possible to explain it by supposing that he is identifying himself with someone else. But in one patient the attendant circumstances during the session necessitated another explanation of behaviour of this kind. A young lady, who was never tired of declaring that she had very little intelligence, was without gifts, etc., was only trying to indicate by this that she had great physical beauty, and was concealing this boast behind her self-criticism. Nor was a reference to the harmful effects of masturbation - a reference which is to be expected in all such cases - absent in this one.

(19)CONSIDERATIONS OF REPRESENTABILITY

A man dreamt that he was pulling a woman out from behind a bed: i.e. he was giving her preference.¹ - He (an officer) was sitting at a table opposite the Emperor: i.e. he was putting himself in opposition to the Emperor (his father). In both these cases the dreamer himself gave the translation.

(20)DREAMS ABOUT DEAD PEOPLE

If someone dreams of talking to dead people or associating with them, and so on, this often has the meaning of his own death. But if he remembers in his dream that the person in question is dead, the dreamer is repudiating the fact that it signifies his own death.

(21)FRAGMENTARY DREAMS

These often contain only the symbols relating to the subject of the dream. For instance, here is a dream that occurred in a context of homosexual impulses: he was going for a walk somewhere with a friend . . . (indistinct) . . . balloons.

(22)APPEARANCE IN THE DREAM OF THE SYMPTOMS OF THE ILLNESS

The symptoms of the illness (anxiety, etc.), when they appear in a dream, seem generally speaking to mean: 'I fell ill because of this (i.e. in connection with the earlier elements of the dream).' Such dreams, accordingly, correspond to a continuation of the analysis in the dream.

¹ [The point depends on a similarity between the German word for 'pulling out' ('hervorziehen') and 'giving preference' ('vorziehen').]