

1926. *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety*. Revised views on the problem of anxiety.
1927. *The Future of an Illusion*. A discussion of religion: the first of a number of sociological works to which Freud devoted most of his remaining years.
1930. *Civilization and Its Discontents*. This includes Freud's first extensive study of the destructive instinct (regarded as a manifestation of the 'death instinct').  
Freud awarded the Goethe Prize by the City of Frankfurt.  
Death of mother (aged 95).
1933. Hitler seizes power in Germany: Freud's books publicly burned in Berlin.
- 1934-8. *Moses and Monotheism*: the last of Freud's works to appear during his lifetime.
1936. Eightieth birthday. Election as Corresponding Member of Royal Society.
1938. Hitler's invasion of Austria. Freud leaves Vienna for London.  
*An Outline of Psycho-Analysis*. A final, unfinished, but profound exposition of psychoanalysis.
1939. 23 September. Death in London.

JAMES STRACHEY

## THE INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS

(1900)

Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

### DIE TRAUMDEUTUNG

#### (I) BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

##### (A) GERMAN EDITIONS:

- 1900 First German edition (issued 1899): Leipzig and Vienna  
Pp. iv + 375.
- 1909 2nd ed. (Enlarged and revised.) Pp. vi + 389.
- 1911 3rd ed. (Enlarged and revised.) Pp. x + 418.
- 1914 4th ed. (Enlarged and revised.) Pp. x + 498.
- 1919 5th ed. (Enlarged and revised.) Pp. ix + 474.
- 1921 6th ed. (Reprint of 5th ed. except for new preface and  
revised bibliography.) Pp. vii + 478.
- 1922 7th ed. (Reprint of 6th ed.)
- 1925 *Gesammelte Schriften*, 2 and part of 3. (Enlarged and  
revised.) Pp. 543 and 1-185.
- 1930 8th ed. (Enlarged and revised.) Pp. x + 435.
- 1942 *Gesammelte Werke*, Double volume 2/3. (Reprint of 8th  
ed.) Pp. xv + 1-642.

##### (B) ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS:

- 1913 First English translation (by A. A. Brill), London and  
New York. Pp. xiii + 510.
- 1915 2nd ed. (Reprint of 1913.)
- 1932 3rd ed. (Completely revised and largely rewritten by  
various unspecified hands.) London and New York.  
Pp. 600.

- 1938 In *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, 181-549, New York. (Incomplete reprint of 3rd ed., lacking almost all of Chapter I.)
- 1953 *Standard Edition*, 4 and part of 5. Pp. xxxii + 1-338 and 339-627.

*Die Traumdeutung* was actually first published early in November, 1899, though its title-page was post-dated into the new century. It was one of the two books - the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905d) was the other - which Freud kept more or less systematically 'up to date' as they passed through their series of editions. After the third edition of the present work, the changes in it were not indicated in any way; and this produced a somewhat confusing effect on the reader of the later editions, since the new material sometimes implied a knowledge of modifications in Freud's views dating from times long subsequent to the period at which the book was originally written. In an attempt to get over this difficulty, the editors of the first collected edition of Freud's works (the *Gesammelte Schriften*) reprinted the first edition of *The Interpretation of Dreams* in its original form in one volume, and put into a second volume all the material that had been added subsequently. Unfortunately, however, the work was not carried out very systematically, for the additions themselves were not dated and thereby much of the advantage of the plan was sacrificed. In subsequent editions a return was made to the old, undifferentiated single volume.

By far the greater number of additions dealing with any single subject are those concerned with symbolism in dreams. Freud explains at the beginning of Chapter VI, Section E (p. 466) of the present work, that he arrived late at a full realization of the importance of this side of the subject. In the first edition, the discussion of symbolism was limited to a few pages at the end of the Section on 'Consideration of Repre-

sentability' in Chapter VI. In the second edition (1909), nothing was added to this Section; but, on the other hand, several pages on sexual symbolism were inserted at the end of the Section on 'Typical Dreams' in Chapter V. These were very considerably expanded in the third edition (1911), while the original passage in Chapter VI still remained unaltered. A reorganization was evidently overdue, and in the fourth edition (1914) an entirely new Section on symbolism was introduced into Chapter VI, and into this the material on the subject that had accumulated in Chapter V was now transplanted, together with a quantity of entirely fresh material. No changes in the *structure* of the book were made in later editions, though much further matter was added. After the two-volume version (1925) - that is, in the eighth edition (1930) - some passages in the Section on 'Typical Dreams' in Chapter V, which had been altogether dropped at an earlier stage, were re-inserted.

In the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh editions (that is from 1914 to 1922), two essays by Otto Rank ('Dreams and Creative Writing' and 'Dreams and Myths') were printed at the end of Chapter VI, but were subsequently omitted.

There remain the bibliographies. The first edition contained a list of some eighty books, to the great majority of which Freud refers in the text. This was left unchanged in the second and third editions, but in the third a second list was added, of some forty books written since 1900. Thereafter both lists began to increase rapidly, till in the eighth edition the first list contained some 260 works and the second over 200. At this stage only a minority of the titles in the first (pre-1900) list were of books actually mentioned in Freud's text; while, on the other hand, the second (post-1900) list (as may be gathered from Freud's own remarks in his various prefaces) could not really keep pace with the production of analytic or quasi-analytic writings on the subject. Furthermore, quite a number of works quoted by Freud in the text were not to be found in

either list. According to a letter from Freud to André Breton (1933e), from the fourth edition onwards Otto Rank was entirely responsible for these bibliographies.

## (2) THE PRESENT ENGLISH EDITION

The present translation is based on the double volume 2/3 of *Gesammelte Werke*, which is itself a reprint of the eighth (1930) edition – the last published during its author's life. It is reprinted, with corrections and some editorial modifications, from the *Standard Edition*, which differs from all previous editions (both German and English) in an important respect, for it is in the nature of a 'Variorum' edition. An effort has been made to indicate, with dates, every alteration of substance introduced into the book since its first issue. Throughout the succeeding editions, Freud was more concerned to add material, rather than to cut anything out. Cancelled passages and earlier versions of material later dropped or greatly modified by Freud have *not*, for the most part, been reproduced in the present edition<sup>1</sup>, though a few examples which seemed of particular interest have been included in the editorial footnotes. Rank's two appendices to Chapter VI have been omitted (they are also excluded from the *Standard Edition*): the essays are entirely self-contained and have no direct connections with Freud's book, and they would have filled another fifty pages or so.

The bibliographies have been entirely recast and have been reproduced here, with corrections and additions from Volume 5 of the English *Standard Edition* of Freud's works. The first bibliography contains a list of every work actually referred to in the text or footnotes or in the introductory sections of the present volume. The second contains all the works in the *Gesammelte Werke* pre-1900 list *not* actually quoted by Freud.

1. They will, however, be found in the footnotes to Volumes 4 and 5 of the *Standard Edition*.

It has seemed worth while to print this, since no other comparably full bibliography of the older literature on dreams is easily accessible. Writings *after* 1900, apart from those actually quoted and so in the first bibliography, have been disregarded. A warning must, however, be issued in regard to both these lists. Investigation revealed a very high proportion of errors in the previous German bibliographies. These were corrected wherever possible in the *Standard Edition*, and a certain number more have been eliminated in the present edition; but quite a number of the entries have proved so far untraceable, and these (which are distinguished by an asterisk) must be regarded as suspect.

Editorial additions, which include footnotes, references for quotations, and a large number of internal cross-references, are printed in square brackets.

A word must be added upon the translation itself. Great attention has had, of course, to be paid to the details of the wording of the text of dreams. Where the English rendering strikes the reader as unusually stiff, he may assume that the stiffness has been imposed by some verbal necessity determined by the interpretation that is to follow. Where there are inconsistencies between different versions of the text of the same dream, he may assume that there are parallel inconsistencies in the original. These verbal difficulties culminate in the fairly frequent instances in which an interpretation depends entirely upon a pun. There are three methods of dealing with such situations. The translator can omit the dream entirely, or he can replace it by another parallel dream, whether derived from his own experience or fabricated *ad hoc*. These two methods have been the ones adopted in the main in the earlier translations of the book. But there are serious objections to them. We must remember that we are dealing with a scientific classic. What we want to hear about are the examples chosen by Freud – not by someone else. Accordingly the present

translator has adopted the pedantic and tiresome third alternative of keeping the original German pun and laboriously explaining it in a square bracket or footnote. Any amusement that might be got out of it completely evaporates in the process. But that, unfortunately, is a sacrifice that has to be made.

### (3) HISTORICAL

As we learn from his letters to Fliess (1950a), Freud worked intermittently on the book from late in 1897 until September, 1899. The theories expressed in it, however, had been developing, and the material accumulating, for a considerable time before this.

Apart from a number of scattered references to the subject – which, in his correspondence, go back at least as early as 1882 – the first important published evidence of Freud's interest in dreams occurs in the course of a long footnote to the case of Frau Emmy von N., under the date of May 15, in Breuer and Freud's *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), *P.F.L.*, 3, 127 n. He is discussing the fact that neurotic patients seem to be under a necessity to bring into association with one another any ideas that happen to be simultaneously present in their minds. He goes on: 'Not long ago I was able to convince myself of the strength of a compulsion of this kind towards association from some observations made in a different field. For several weeks I found myself obliged to exchange my usual bed for a harder one, in which I had more numerous or more vivid dreams, or in which, it may be, I was unable to reach the normal depth of sleep. In the first quarter of an hour after waking I remembered all the dreams I had had during the night, and I took the trouble to write them down and try to solve them. I succeeded in tracing all these dreams back to two factors: (1) to the necessity for working out any ideas which I had only dwelt upon cursorily during the day – which had only been touched upon and not finally dealt with;

and (2) to the compulsion to link together any ideas that might be present in the same state of consciousness. The senseless and contradictory character of the dreams could be traced back to the uncontrolled ascendancy of this latter factor.'

In September of this same year (1895) Freud wrote the first part of his 'Project for a Scientific Psychology' (published as an Appendix to the Fliess correspondence) and Sections 19, 20 and 21 of this 'Project' constitute a first approach to a coherent theory of dreams. It already includes many important elements which re-appear in the present work, such as (1) the wish-fulfilling character of dreams, (2) their hallucinatory character, (3) the regressive functioning of the mind in hallucinations and dreams, (4) the fact that the state of sleep involves motor paralysis, (5) the nature of the mechanism of displacement in dreams and (6) the similarity between the mechanisms of dreams and of neurotic symptoms. More than all this, however, the 'Project' gives a clear indication of what is probably the most momentous of the discoveries given to the world in *The Interpretation of Dreams* – the distinction between the two different modes of mental functioning, the Primary and Secondary Processes.

This, however, is far from exhausting the importance of the 'Project' and of the letters to Fliess written in connection with it towards the end of 1895. It is no exaggeration to say that much of the seventh chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams* and, indeed, of Freud's later 'metapsychological' studies, has only become fully intelligible since the publication of the 'Project'.

Although it is not possible to enter here into any detailed discussion of the subject,<sup>1</sup> the crux of the position can, however, be indicated quite simply. The essence of Freud's 'Pro-

1. The reader will find further information in the volume itself (Freud, 1950a), and in Ernst Kris's illuminating introduction to it. Siegfried Bernfeld's paper on 'Freud's Earliest Theories' (1944) is also of great interest in this connection.

ject' lay in the notion of combining into a single whole two theories of different origin. The first of these was derived ultimately from the physiological school of Helmholtz, of which Freud's teacher, the physiologist Brücke, was a principal member. According to this theory, neurophysiology, and consequently psychology, was governed by purely chemico-physical laws. Such, for instance, was the 'principle of constancy', frequently mentioned by both Freud and Breuer and expressed in these terms in 1892 (in a posthumously published draft, Breuer and Freud, 1940): 'The nervous system endeavours to keep constant something in its functional relations that we may describe as the "sum of excitation".' The second main theory called into play by Freud in his 'Project' was the anatomical doctrine of the neurone, which was becoming accepted by neuro-anatomists at the end of the eighties. (The term 'neurone' was only introduced, by Waldeyer, in 1891.) This doctrine laid it down that the functional unit of the central nervous system was a distinct cell, having no direct anatomical continuity with adjacent cells. The opening sentences of the 'Project' show clearly how its basis lay in a combination of these two theories. Its aim, wrote Freud, was 'to represent psychical processes as quantitatively determinate states of specifiable material particles'. He went on to postulate that these 'material particles' were the neurones and that what distinguished their being in a state of activity from their being in a state of rest was a 'quantity' which was 'subject to the general laws of motion'. Thus a neurone might either be 'empty' or 'filled with a certain quantity', that is 'cathected'.<sup>1</sup> 'Nervous excitation' was to be interpreted as a 'quantity' flowing through a system of neurones, and such a current might either be resisted or facilitated according to the state

1. It must be emphasized that these speculations of Freud's date from a period many years before any systematic investigations had been made into the nature of nervous impulses and the conditions governing their transmission.

of the 'contact-barriers' between the neurones. (It was only later, in 1897, that the term 'synapse' was introduced by Foster and Sherrington.) The functioning of the whole nervous system was subject to a general principle of 'inertia', according to which neurones always tend to get rid of any 'quantity' with which they may be filled – a principle correlative with the principle of 'constancy'. Using these and similar concepts as his bricks, Freud constructed a highly complicated and extraordinarily ingenious working model of the mind as a piece of neurological machinery.

But obscurities and difficulties began to accumulate and, during the months after writing the 'Project', Freud was continually emending his theories. As time passed, his interest was gradually diverted from neurological and theoretical on to psychological and clinical problems, and he eventually abandoned the entire scheme. And when some years later, in the seventh chapter of the present book, he took the theoretical problem up once more – though he certainly never gave up his belief that ultimately a physical groundwork for psychology would be established<sup>1</sup> – the neurophysiological basis was ostensibly dropped. Nevertheless – and this is why the 'Project' is of importance to readers of *The Interpretation of Dreams* – much of the general pattern of the earlier scheme, and many of its elements, were carried over into the new one. The systems of neurones, which Freud had previously postulated, were replaced by *psychical* systems or agencies; a hypothetical 'calhexis' of psychical energy took the place of the physical 'quantity'; the principle of inertia became the basis of the pleasure (or, as Freud here called it, the unpleasure) principle. Moreover, some of the detailed accounts of psychi-

1. Cf. the remark below (p. 758 f.) in his discussion of the primary and secondary processes: 'The mechanics of these processes are quite unknown to me; anyone who wished to take these ideas seriously would have to look for physical analogies to them and find a means of picturing the movements that accompany excitation of neurones.'

cal processes given in the seventh chapter owe much to their physiological forerunners and can be more easily understood by reference to them. This applies, for instance, to the description of the laying down of memory-traces in the 'mnemonic systems', to the discussion of the nature of wishes and of the different ways of satisfying them, and to the stress laid upon the part played by verbal thought-processes in the making of adjustments to the demands of reality.

All of this is enough largely to justify Freud's assertion that *The Interpretation of Dreams* 'was finished in all essentials at the beginning of 1896' (Freud, 'On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement', 1914*d*, near the end of Section I). (Three points of theoretical importance, which Freud only established later, were the existence of the Oedipus complex – which led to the emphasis on the *infantile* roots of the unconscious wishes underlying dreams –, the omnipresence in dreams of the wish to sleep, and the part played by 'secondary revision'.)

Both the manuscript and the proofs were regularly submitted to Fliess by Freud for his criticism. He seems to have had considerable influence on the final shape of the book, and to have been responsible for the omission of certain passages, evidently on grounds of discretion. But the severest criticisms came from the author himself and these were directed principally against the style and literary form. 'I think', he wrote on 21 September, 1899 (1950*a*, Letter 119), when the book was finished, 'my self-criticism was not entirely unjustified. Somewhere hidden within me I too have some fragmentary sense of form, some appreciation of beauty as a species of perfection; and the involved sentences of my book on dreams, bolstered up on indirect phrases and with sidelong glances at their subject-matter, have gravely affronted some ideal within me. And I am scarcely wrong in regarding this lack of form as a sign of an incomplete mastery of the material.'

But in spite of these self-criticisms, and in spite of the depression which followed the almost total neglect of the book by the outside world – only 351 copies were sold in the first six years after publication – *The Interpretation of Dreams* was always regarded by Freud as his most important work: 'Insight such as this', as he wrote in his preface to the third English edition, 'falls to one's lot but once in a lifetime.'