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THE STANDARD EDITION
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here offering us an extreme case; but we must admit that childhood experiences, too, are of a traumatic nature, and we need not be surprised if comparatively trivial interferences with the function of dreams may arise under other conditions as well.¹

¹ [The topic of the last three paragraphs was first raised by Freud in Chapters II and III of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920g). Further allusions to it will be found in Lecture XXXII, p. 106 below.]

LECTURE XXX

DREAMS AND OCCULTISM¹

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—To-day we will proceed along a narrow path, but one which may lead us to a wide prospect.

You will scarcely be surprised by the news that I am going to speak to you on the relation of dreams to occultism. Dreams have, indeed, often been regarded as the gateway into the world of mysticism, and even to-day are themselves looked on by many people as an occult phenomenon. Even we, who have made them into a subject for scientific study, do not dispute that one or more threads link them to those obscure matters.

Mysticism, occultism—what is meant by these words? You must not expect me to make any attempt at embracing this ill-circumscribed region with definitions. We all know in a general and indefinite manner what the words imply to us. They refer to some sort of ‘other world’, lying beyond the bright world governed by relentless laws which has been constructed for us by science.

Occultism asserts that there are in fact ‘more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy’. Well, we need not feel bound by the narrow-mindedness of academic philosophy; we are ready to believe what is shown to us to deserve belief.

We propose to proceed with these things as we do with any other scientific material: first of all to establish whether such events can really be shown to occur, and then and only then, when their factual nature cannot be doubted, to concern ourselves with their explanation. It cannot be denied, however, that even the putting of this decision into action is made hard for us by intellectual, psychological and historical factors. The case is not the same as when we approach other investigations.

² [A list of Freud’s writings touching on this subject will be found in the Editor’s Note to the paper on ‘Psycho-Analysis and Telepathy’ (1941d [1921]), *Standard Ed.*, 18, 176. Ernest Jones has given a comprehensive survey of Freud’s attitude to occultism in Chapter XIV of the third volume of his biography (1957).]
First, the intellectual difficulty. Let me give you a crude and obvious explanation of what I have in mind. Let us suppose that the question at issue is the constitution of the interior of the earth. We have, as you are aware, no certain knowledge about it. We suspect that it consists of heavy metals in an incandescent state. Then let us imagine that someone puts forward an assertion that the interior of the earth consists of water saturated with carbonic acid—that is to say, with a kind of soda-water. We shall no doubt say that this is most improbable, that it contradicts all our expectations and pays no attention to the known facts which have led us to adopt the metal hypothesis. Nevertheless it is not inconceivable; if someone were to show us a way of testing the soda-water hypothesis we should follow it without objecting. But suppose now that someone else comes along and seriously asserts that the core of the earth consists of jam. Our reaction to this will be quite different. We shall tell ourselves that jam does not occur in nature, that it is a product of human cooking, that, moreover, the existence of this material presupposes the presence of fruit-trees and their fruit, and that we cannot see how we can locate vegetation and human cookery in the interior of the earth. The result of these intellectual objections will be a switching of our interest: instead of starting upon an investigation of whether the core of the earth really consists of jam, we shall ask ourselves what sort of person this must be who can arrive at such a notion, or at most we shall ask him where he got it from. The unlucky inventor of the jam theory will be very much insulted and will complain that we are refusing to make an objective investigation of his assertion on the ground of a pretendedly scientific prejudice. But this will be of no help to him. We perceive that prejudices are not always to be reprobated, but that they are sometimes justified and expedient because they save us useless labour. In fact they are only conclusions based on an analogy with other well-founded judgements.

A whole number of occultist assertions have the same sort of effect on us as the jam hypothesis; so that we consider ourselves justified in rejecting them at sight, without further investigation. But all the same, the position is not so simple. A comparison like the one I have chosen proves nothing, or proves as little as comparisons in general. It remains doubtful whether it fits the case, and it is clear that its choice was already determined by our attitude of contemptuous rejection. Prejudices are sometimes expedient and justified; but sometimes they are erroneous and detrimental, and one can never tell when they are the one and when the other. The history of science itself abounds in instances which are a warning against premature condemnation. For a long time it was regarded as a senseless hypothesis to suppose that the stones, which we now call meteorites, could have reached the earth from outer space or that the rocks forming mountains, in which the remains of shells are imbedded, could have once formed the bed of the sea. Incidentally, much the same thing happened to our psychoanalysis when it brought forward its inference of there being an unconscious. Thus we analysts have special reason to be careful in using intellectual considerations for rejecting new hypotheses and must admit that they do not relieve us from feelings of antipathy, doubt and uncertainty.

I have spoken of the second factor [that complicates our approach to the subject] as the psychological one. By that I mean the general tendency of mankind to credulity and a belief in the miraculous. From the very beginning, when life takes us under its strict discipline, a resistance stirs within us against the relentless and monotony of the laws of thought and against the demands of reality-testing. Reason becomes the enemy which withholds from us so many possibilities of pleasure. We discover how much pleasure it gives us to withdraw from it, temporarily at least, and to surrender to the allurements of nonsense. Schoolboys delight in the twisting of words; when a scientific congress is over, the specialists make fun of their own activities; even earnest-minded men enjoy a joke. More serious hostility to "Reason and Science, the highest strength possessed by man," awaits its opportunity; it hastens to prefer the miracle-doctor or the practitioner of nature-cures to the 'qualified' physician; it is favourable to the assertions of occultism so
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long as those alleged facts can be taken as breaches of laws and rules; it lulls criticism to sleep, falsifies perceptions and enforces confirmations and agreements which cannot be justified. If this human tendency is taken into account, there is every reason to discount much of the information put forward in occultist literature.

I have called the third doubt the historical one; and by it I mean to point out that there is in fact nothing new in the world of occultism. There emerge in it once more all the signs, miracles, prophecies and apparitions which have been reported to us from ancient times and in ancient books and which we thought had long since been disposed of as the offspring of unbridled imagination or of tendentious fraud, as the product of an age in which man’s ignorance was very great and the scientific spirit was still in its cradle. If we accept the truth of what, according to the occultists’ information, still occurs to-day, we must also believe in the authenticity of the reports which have come down to us from ancient times. And we must then reflect that the tradition and sacred books of all peoples are brimful of similar marvellous tales and that the religions base their claim to credibility on precisely such miraculous events and find proof in them of the operation of superhuman powers. That being so, it will be hard for us to avoid a suspicion that the interest in occultism is in fact a religious one and that one of the secret motives of the occultist movement is to come to the help of religion, threatened as it is by the advance of scientific thought. And with the discovery of this motive our distrust must increase and our disinclination to embark on the examination of these supposedly occult phenomena.

Sooner or later, however, this disinclination must be overcome. We are faced by a question of fact: is what the occultists tell us true or not? It must, after all, be possible to decide this by observation. At bottom we have cause for gratitude to the occultists. The miraculous stories from ancient times are beyond the reach of our testing. If in our opinion they cannot be substantiated, we must admit that they cannot, strictly speaking, be disproved. But about contemporary happenings, at which we are able to be present, it must be possible for us to reach a definite judgement. If we arrive at a conviction that such miracles do not occur to-day, we need not fear the counter-argument that they may nevertheless have taken place in ancient times; in that case other explanations will be much more plausible. Thus we have settled our doubts and are ready to take part in an investigation of occult phenomena.

But here unluckily we are met by circumstances which are exceedingly unfavourable to our honest intentions. The observations on which our judgement is supposed to depend take place under conditions which make our sensory perceptions uncertain and which blunt our power of attention; they occur in darkness or in dim red light after long periods of blank expectation. We are told that in fact our unbelieving—that is to say, critical—attitude may prevent the expected phenomena from happening. The situation thus brought about is nothing less than a caricature of the circumstances in which we are usually accustomed to carry out scientific enquiries. The observations are made upon what are called ‘mediums’—individuals to whom peculiarly ‘sensitive’ faculties are ascribed, but who are by no means distinguished by outstanding qualities of intellect or character, and who are not, like the miracle-workers of the past, inspired by any great idea or serious purpose. On the contrary, they are looked upon, even by those who believe in their secret powers, as particularly untrustworthy; most of them have already been detected as cheats and we may reasonably expect that the same fate awaits the remainder. Their performances give one the impression of children’s mischievous pranks or of conjuring tricks. 1 Never has anything of importance yet emerged from sittings with these mediums—the revelation of a new source of power, for instance. We do not, it is true, expect to receive hints on pigeon-breeding from the conjurer who produces pigeons by magic from his empty top-hat. I can easily put myself in the place of a person who tries to fulfil the demands of an objective attitude and so takes part in occult sittings, but who grows tired after a while and turns away in disgust from what is expected of him and goes back unenlightened to his former prejudices. The reproach may be made against such a person that this is not the right way of behaving; that one ought not to lay down in advance what the phenomena one is seeking to study shall be like and in what

1 [Of the similar remarks in The Future of an Illusion (1927c), Standard Ed., 21, 27-8.]
circumstances they shall appear. One should, on the contrary, persevere, and give weight to the precautionary and supervisory measures by which efforts have recently been made to provide against the untrustworthiness of mediums. Unfortunately this modern protective technique makes an end of the easy accessibility of occult observations. The study of occultism becomes a specialized and difficult profession—an activity one cannot pursue alongside of one's other interests. And until those concerned in these investigations have reached their conclusions, we are left to our doubts and our own conjectures.

Of these conjectures no doubt the most probable is that there is a real core of yet unrecognized facts in occultism round which cheating and phantasy have spun a veil which it is hard to pierce. But how can we even approach this core? at what point can we attack the problem? It is here, I think, that dreams come to our help, by giving us a hint that from out of this chaos we should pick the subject of telepathy.

What we call 'telepathy' is, as you know, the alleged fact that an event which occurs at a particular time comes at about the same moment to the consciousness of someone distant in space, without the paths of communication that are familiar to us coming into question. It is implicitly presupposed that this event concerns a person in whom the other one (the receiver of the intelligence) has a strong emotional interest. For instance, Person A may be the victim of an accident or may die, and Person B, someone nearly attached to him—his mother or daughter or fiancée—learns the fact at about the same time through a visual or auditory perception. In this latter case, then, it is as if she had been informed by telephone, though such was not the case; it is a kind of psychical counterpart to wireless telegraphy. I need not insist to you on the improbability of such events, and there is good reason for dismissing the majority of such reports. A few are left over which cannot be so easily disposed of in this way. Permit me now, for the purpose of what I have to tell you, to omit the cautious little word 'alleged' and to proceed as though I believed in the objective reality of the phenomenon of telepathy. But bear firmly in mind that that is not the case and that I have committed myself to no conviction.

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Actually I have little to tell you—only a modest fact. I will also at once reduce your expectations still further by saying that at bottom dreams have little to do with telepathy. Telepathy does not throw any fresh light on the nature of dreams nor do dreams give any direct evidence of the reality of telepathy. Moreover the phenomenon of telepathy is by no means bound up with dreams; it can occur as well during the waking state. The only reason for discussing the relation between dreams and telepathy is that the state of sleep seems particularly suited for receiving telepathic messages. In such cases one has what is called a telepathic dream and, when it is analysed, one forms a conviction that the telepathic news has played the same part as any other portion of the day's residues and that it has been changed in the same way by the dream-work and made to serve its purpose.

During the analysis of one such telepathic dream, something occurred which seems to me of sufficient interest in spite of its triviality to serve as the starting-point of this lecture. When in 1922 I gave my first account of this matter I had only a single observation at my disposal. Since then I have made a number of similar ones, but I will keep to the first example, because it is easiest to describe, and I will take you straight away in medias res.\footnote{This was first published in very much greater detail in 'Dreams and Telepathy' (1922a), Standard Ed., 18, 200 ff.}

An obviously intelligent man, who from his own account was not in the least 'inclined towards occultism', wrote to me about a dream he had had which seemed to him remarkable. He began by informing me that his married daughter, who lived at a distance from him, was expecting her first confinement in the middle of December. This daughter meant a great deal to him and he knew too that she was very much attached to him. During the night of November 16-17, then, he dreamt that his wife gave birth to twins. A number of details followed, which I may here pass over, and all of which were never in fact explained. The wife who in the dream had become the mother of twins was his second wife, his daughter's stepmother. He did not wish to have a child by his present wife who, he said, had no aptitude for bringing up children sensibly; moreover,
at the time of the dream he had long ceased to have sexual relations with her. What led him to write to me was not doubt about the theory of dreams, though the manifest content of his dream would have justified it, for why did the dream, in complete contradiction to his wishes, make his wife give birth to children? Nor, according to him, was there any reason to fear that this unwished-for event might occur. What induced him to report this dream to me was the circumstance that on the morning of November 18 he received a telegram announcing that his daughter had given birth to twins. The telegram had been handed in the day before and the birth had taken place during the night of November 16-17, at about the same time at which he had had the dream of his wife’s twin birth. The dreamer asked me whether I thought the coincidence between dream and event was accidental. He did not venture to call the dream a telepathic one, since the difference between its content and the event affected precisely what seemed to him essential in it—the identity of the person who gave birth to the children. But one of his comments shows that he would not have been astonished at an actual telepathic dream: he believed his daughter would have thought particularly of him during her labour.

I feel sure, Ladies and Gentlemen, that you have been able to explain this dream already and understand why I have told it you. Here was a man who was dissatisfied with his second wife and who would prefer his wife to be like the daughter of his first marriage. This ‘like’ dropped out, of course, so far as the unconscious was concerned. And now the telepathic message arrived during the night to say that his daughter had given birth to twins. The dream-work took control of the news, allowed the unconscious wish to operate on it—the wish that he could put his daughter in the place of his second wife—and thus arose the puzzling manifest dream, which disguised the wish and distorted the message. We must admit that it is only the interpretation of the dream that has shown us that it was a telepathic one: psycho-analysis has revealed a telepathic event which we should not otherwise have discovered.

But pray do not let yourselves be misled! In spite of all this, dream-interpretation has told us nothing about the objective reality of the telepathic event. It may equally be an illusion which can be explained in another way. The man’s latent dream-thoughts may have run: ‘To-day is the day the confinement should take place if my daughter is really out in her reckoning by a month, as I suspect. And when I saw her last she looked just as though she was going to have twins. How my dead wife who was so fond of children would have rejoiced over twins!’ (I base this last factor on some associations of the dreamer’s which I have not mentioned.) In that case the instigation to the dream would have been well-grounded suspicions on the dreamer’s part and not a telepathic message; but the outcome would remain the same. You see then that even the interpretation of this dream has told us nothing on the question of whether we are to allow objective reality to telepathy. That could only be decided by a thorough-going investigation of all the circumstances of the case—which was unfortunately no more possible in this instance than in any of the others in my experience. Granted that the telepathy hypothesis offers by far the simplest explanation, yet that does not help us much. The simplest explanation is not always the correct one; the truth is often no simple matter, and before deciding in favour of such a far-reaching hypothesis we should like to have taken every precaution.

We may now leave the subject of dreams and telepathy: I have nothing more to say to you on it. But kindly observe that what seemed to us to teach us something about telepathy was not the dream but the interpretation of the dream, its psycho-analytic working-over. Accordingly, in what follows we may leave dreams entirely on one side and may follow an expectation that the employment of psycho-analysis may throw a little light on other events described as occult. There is, for instance, the phenomenon of thought-transference, which is so close to telepathy and can indeed without much violence be regarded as the same thing. It claims that mental processes in one person—ideas, emotional states, conative impulses—can be transferred to another person through empty space without employing the familiar methods of communication by means of words and signs. You will realize how remarkable, and perhaps even of what great practical importance, it would be if something of the kind really happened. It may be noted,
incidentally, that strangely enough precisely this phenomenon is referred to least frequently in the miraculous stories of the past.

I have formed an impression in the course of the psychoanalytic treatment of patients that the activities of professional fortune-tellers conceal an opportunity for making particularly unobjectionable observations on thought-transference. These are insignificant and even inferior people, who immerse themselves in some sort of performance—lay out cards, study writing or lines upon the palm of the hand, or make astrological calculations—and at the same time, after having shown themselves familiar with portions of their visitor’s past or present circumstances, go on to prophesy their future. As a rule their clients exhibit great satisfaction over these achievements and feel no resentment if later on these prophecies are not fulfilled. I have come across several such cases and have been able to study them analytically, and in a moment I will tell you the most remarkable of these instances. Their convincingness is unfortunately impaired by the numerous reticences to which I am compelled by the obligation of medical discretion. I have, however, of set purpose avoided distortions. So listen now to the story of one of my women patients, who had an experience of this kind with a fortune-teller. 2

She had been the eldest of a numerous family and had grown

1 [In his earlier, posthumously published paper, ‘Psycho-Analysis and Telepathy’ (1914d [1921]), Freud had elaborated on the significance of the fortune-teller’s distracting his attention by some meaningless activity as a means of releasing an unconscious mental process (Standard Ed., 18, 184). He there compared the use of a similar ‘distracting contrivance’ in the making of some kinds of jokes; see for this his book on jokes (1905c), ibid., 8, 151–3. Much earlier, in his technical contribution to Studies on Hysteria (1895d), he had brought forward the same explanation for certain techniques for producing hypnosis, and in particular for his own early method of eliciting forgotten facts by pressure on the patient’s forehead, ibid., 2, 271; and this he afterwards developed in a discussion of hypnosis in his Group Psychology (1921c), ibid., 18, 125–6. Compare also some remarks in The Psychopathology of Everyday Life (1901b) on the fact that attention directed to an automatic action interferes with its performance, ibid., 6, 132.]

2 [This case is reported at greater length, with some slight variations, in ‘Psycho-Analysis and Telepathy’, Standard Ed., 18, 185–90, and much more briefly in Section C of 1925c, ibid., 19, 137–8.]
thirty, and in the family they had often dwelt on the fact of the success with which she had hastened to make up for lost time. Her two first children (with our patient the elder) had been born with the shortest possible interval between them, in a single calendar year; and she had in fact two children by the time she was 32. What Monsieur le Professeur had said to my patient meant therefore: 'Take comfort from the fact of being so young. You'll have the same destiny as your mother, who also had to wait a long time for children, and you'll have two children by the time you're 32.' But to have the same destiny as her mother, to put herself in her mother's place, to take her place with her father—that had been the strongest wish of her youth, the wish on account of whose non-fulfilment she was just beginning to fall ill. The prophecy promised her that the wish would still be fulfilled in spite of everything; how could she fail to feel friendly to the prophet? Do you regard it as possible, however, that Monsieur le Professeur was familiar with the facts of the intimate family history of his chance client? Out of the question! How, then, did he arrive at the knowledge which enabled him to give expression to my patient's strongest and most secret wish by including the two numbers in his prophecy? I can see only two possible explanations. Either the story as it was told me is untrue and the events occurred otherwise, or thought-transference exists as a real phenomenon. One can suppose, no doubt, that after an interval of 16 years the patient had introduced the two numbers concerned into her recollection from her unconscious. I have no basis for this suspicion, but I cannot exclude it, and I imagine that you will be readier to believe in a way out of that kind than in the reality of thought-transference. If you do decide on the latter course, do not forget that it was only analysis that created the occult fact—uncovered it when it lay distorted to the point of being unrecognizable.

If it were a question of one case only like that of my patient, one would shrug it aside. No one would dream of erecting upon a single observation a belief which implies taking such a decisive line. But you must believe me when I assure you that this is not the only case in my experience. I have collected a whole number of such prophecies and from all of them I gained the impression that the fortune-teller had merely brought to expression the thoughts, and more especially the secret wishes, of those who were questioning him, and that we were therefore justified in analysing these prophecies as though they were subjective products, phantasies or dreams of the people concerned. Not every case, of course, is equally convincing and in not every case is it equally possible to exclude more rational explanations; but, taking them as a whole, there remains a strong balance of probability in favour of thought-transference as a fact. The importance of the subject would justify me in producing all my cases to you; but that I cannot do, owing to the prolixity of description that would be involved and to the inevitable breach of the obligations of discretion. I will try so far as possible to appease my conscience in giving you a few more examples.

One day I was visited by a highly intelligent young man, a student preparing for his final examinations for a doctorate, but unable to take them since, as he complained, he had lost all interest and power of concentration and even any faculty for orderly memory. The previous history of this condition of quasi-paralysis was soon revealed: he had fallen ill after carrying out a great act of self-discipline. He had a sister, to whom he was attached by an intense but always restrained devotion, just as she was to him. 'What a pity we can't get married!' they would often say to each other. A respectable man fell in love with the sister; she responded to his affection, but her parents did not assent to the union. In their difficulty the young couple turned to her brother, nor did he refuse his help. He made it possible for them to correspond with each other, and his influence eventually persuaded the parents to consent. In the course of the engagement, however, an occurrence took place whose meaning it was easy to guess. He went with his future brother-in-law on a difficult mountain-climb without a guide; they lost their way and were in danger of not returning safe and sound. Shortly after his sister's marriage he fell into this condition of mental exhaustion.

The influence of psycho-analysis restored his ability to work

[This case too appears in rather greater detail in 'Psycho-Analysis and Telepathy', ibid., 18, 181-5.]

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and he left me in order to go in for his examinations; but after he had passed them successfully he came back to me for a short time in the autumn of the same year. It was then that he related a remarkable experience to me which he had had before the summer. In his University town there lived a fortune-teller who enjoyed great popularity. Even the Princes of the Royal House used to consult her before important undertakings. Her mode of operation was very simple. She asked to be given the date of the relevant person's birth; she required to know nothing else about him, not even his name. She then proceeded to consult her astrological books, made long calculations and finally uttered a prophecy relating to the person in question. My patient decided to call upon her mystical arts in connection with his brother-in-law. He visited her and told her the relevant date. After carrying out her calculations she made her prophecy: 'The person in question will die in July or August of this year of crayfish- or oyster-poisoning.' My patient finished his story with the words: 'It was quite marvellous!'

From the first I had listened with irritation. After this exclamation of his I went so far as to ask: 'What do you see that's so marvellous in this prophecy? Here we are in late autumn and your brother-in-law isn't dead or you'd have told me long ago. So the prophecy hasn't come true.' 'No doubt that's so,' he replied, 'but here is what's marvellous. My brother-in-law is passionately devoted to crayfish and oysters and in the previous summer—that's to say, before my visit to the fortune-teller—he had an attack of oyster-poisoning1 of which he nearly died.'

What was I to say to this? I could only feel annoyed that this highly-educated man (who had moreover been through a successful analysis) should not have a clearer view of the position. I for my part, rather than believe that it is possible to calculate the onset of an attack of crayfish- or oyster-poisoning from astrological tables, prefer to suppose that my patient had not yet overcome his hatred for his rival, the repression of which had earlier led to his falling ill, and that the fortune-teller was simply giving expression to his own expectation: 'a taste of that kind isn't to be given up, and one day, all the same, it will be the end of him.' I must admit that I cannot think of any other explanation for this case, unless, perhaps, that my patient was having a joke with me. But neither then nor at a later time did he give me grounds for such a suspicion, and he seemed to be meaning what he said seriously.

Here is another case.1 A young man in a position of consequence was involved in a liaison with a demi-mondaine which was characterized by a curious compulsion. He was obliged from time to time to provoke her with derisive and insulting remarks till she was driven to complete desperation. When he had brought her to that point, he was relieved, became reconciled with her and made her a present. But now he wanted to be free of her: the compulsion seemed to him uncanny. He noticed that this liaison was damaging his reputation; he wanted to have a wife of his own and to raise a family. But since he could not get free from this demi-mondaine by his own strength, he called analysis to his help. After one of these abusive scenes, when the analysis had already started, he got her to write something on a piece of paper, so as to show it to a graphologist. The report that he received from him was that the writing was that of someone in extreme despair, who would certainly commit suicide in the next few days. This did not, it is true, occur and the lady remained alive; but the analysis succeeded in loosening his bonds. He left the lady and turned to a young girl who he expected would be able to make him a good wife. Soon afterwards a dream appeared which could only hint at a dawning doubt as to the girl's worthiness. He obtained a specimen of her writing too, took it to the same authority, and was given a verdict on her writing which confirmed his apprehensions. He therefore abandoned the idea of making her his wife.

In order to form an opinion of the graphologist's reports, especially the first one, we must know something of our subject's secret history. In his early youth he had (in accordance with his passionate nature) fallen in love to the pitch of frenzy with a married woman who was still young but nevertheless older than he was. When she rejected him, he made an attempt at suicide which, there can be no doubt, was seriously intended.

1 ['Crayfish-poisoning' in the 'Psycho-Analysis and Telepathy' version.]
It was only by a hair's breadth that he escaped death and he was only restored after a long period of nursing. But this wild action made a deep impression on the woman he loved; she granted him her favours, he became her lover and thenceforward remained secretly attached to her and served her with a truly chivalrous devotion. More than twenty years later, when they had both grown older—but the woman, naturally, more than he—the need was awakened in him to detach himself from her, to make himself free, to lead a life of his own, to set up a house and raise a family. And along with this feeling of satiety there arose in him his long-suppressed craving for vengeance on his mistress. As he had once tried to kill himself because she had spurned him, so he wished now to have the satisfaction of her seeking death because he left her. But his love was still too strong for it to be possible for this wish to become conscious in him; nor was he in a position to do her enough harm to drive her into death. In this frame of mind he took on the demi-mondaine as a sort of whipping-boy, to satisfy his thirst for revenge in corpore viti; and he allowed himself to practise upon her all the torments which he might expect would bring about with her the result he wished to produce on his mistress. The fact that the vengeance applied to the latter was betrayed by his making her into a confidante and adviser in his liaison instead of concealing his defection from her. The wretched woman, who had long fallen from giving to receiving favours, probably suffered more from his confidences than the demi-mondaine did from his brutalities. The compulsion of which he complained in regard to this substitutive figure, and which drove him to analysis, had of course been transferred on to her from his old mistress; it was from her that he wanted to free himself but could not. I am not an authority on handwriting and have no high opinion of the art of divining character from it; still less do I believe in the possibility of foretelling the writer's future in this way. You can see, however, whatever one may think of the value of graphology, that there is no mistaking the fact that the expert, when he promised that the writer of the specimen presented to him would commit suicide in the next few days, had once again only brought to light a powerful secret wish of the person who was questioning him. Something of the same kind happened afterwards in the case of the second report. What was
10.45 a.m., Dr. David Forsyth, who had just arrived from London, sent in his card to me while I was working with a patient. (My respected colleague from London University will not, I feel sure, regard it as an indiscretion if in this way I betray the fact that he spent some months being initiated by me into the arts of psycho-analytic technique.) I only had time to greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...greet him and to make an appointment to see him later. Dr. Forsyth had a claim to my particular interest; he was the first foreigner to come to me after I had been cut off by the war...
definitely that I did not tell him the name of the person I visited in the pension. And now, shortly after mentioning 'Herr von Vorsicht' he asked me whether perhaps the Freud-Ottorego who was giving a course of lectures on English at the Volksuniversität1 was my daughter. And for the first time during our long period of intercourse he gave my name the distorted form to which I have indeed become habituated by functionaries, officials and compositors: instead of 'Freud' he said 'Freund'.

Secondly: At the end of the same session he told me a dream, from which he had woken in a fright—a regular 'Alptraum', he said. He added that not long ago he had forgotten the English word for that, and when someone had asked him said that the English for 'Alptraum' was 'a mare's nest'. This was nonsense, of course, he went on; 'a mare's nest' meant something incredible, a cock-and-bull story: the translation of 'Alptraum' was 'nightmare'. The only element in common between this association and the previous one seemed to be the element 'English'. I was however reminded of a small incident which had occurred about a month earlier. P. was sitting with me in the room when another visitor, a dear friend from London, Dr. Ernest Jones, unexpectedly came in after a long separation. I signed to him to go into the next room while I finished with P. The latter, however, had at once recognized him from his photograph hanging in the waiting-room, and even expressed a wish to be introduced to him. Now Jones is the author of a monograph on the Alptraum—the nightmare. I did not know whether P. was acquainted with it; he avoided reading analytic literature.

I should like to begin by putting before you an investigation of what analytic understanding can be arrived at of the background of P.'s associations and of the motives for them. P. was placed similarly to me in relation to the name 'Forsyte' or 'Forsyth'; it meant the same to him, and it was entirely to him that owed my acquaintance with the name. The remarkable fact was that he brought the name into the analysis unheralded, only the briefest time after it had become significant to me in another sense owing to a new event—the London doctor's arrival. But the manner in which the name emerged in his analytic session is perhaps not less interesting than the fact itself. He did not say, for instance: 'The name 'Forsyte', out of the novels you are familiar with, has just occurred to me.' He was able, without any conscious relation to that source, to weave the name into his own experiences and to produce it thence—a thing that might have happened long before but had not happened till then. What he did say now was: 'I'm a Forsyth too: that's what the girl calls me.' It is hard to mistake the mixture of jealous demand and melancholy self-depreciation which finds its expression in this remark. We shall not be going astray if we complete it in some such way as this: 'It's mortifying to me that your thoughts should be so intensely occupied with this new arrival. Do come back to me; after all I'm a Forsyth too—though it's true I'm only a Herr von Vorsicht [gentleman of foresight], as the girl says.' And thereupon his train of thought, passing along the associative threads of the element 'English' went back to two earlier events, which were able to stir up the same feelings of jealousy. 'A few days ago you paid a visit to my house—not, alas, to me but to a Herr von Freund.' This thought caused him to distort the name 'Freud' into 'Freund'. The Freud-Ottorego from the lecture-syllabus must come in here because as a teacher of English she provided the manifest association. And now came the recollection of another visitor a few weeks before, of whom he was no doubt equally jealous, but for whom he also felt he was no match, for Dr. Jones was able to write a monograph on the nightmare whereas he was at best only able to produce such dreams himself. His mention of his mistake about the meaning of 'a mare's nest' comes into this connection, for it can only mean to say: 'After all I'm not a genuine Englishman any more than I'm a genuine Forsyth.'

Now I cannot describe his feelings of jealousy as either out of place or unintelligible. He had been warned that his analysis, and at the same time our contact, would come to an end as soon as foreign pupils and patients returned to Vienna; and that was in fact what happened shortly afterwards. What we have so far achieved, however, has been a piece of analytic work—the explanation of three associations brought up by him in the same session and nourished by the same motive: and this has not much to do with the other question of whether these associations could or could not have been made without thought-transference.

1 ['People's University', providing what is known in England as 'Adult Education'.]
This question arises in the case of each of the three associations and thus falls into three separate questions: Could P. have known that Dr. Forsyth had just paid me his first visit? Could he know the name of the person I had visited in his house? Did he know that Dr. Jones had written a monograph on the nightmare? Or was it only my knowledge about these things that was revealed in his associations? It will depend on the reply to these separate questions whether my observation allows of a conclusion favourable to thought-transference.

Let us leave the first question aside for a while; the other two can be dealt with more easily. The case of my visit to his pension makes a particularly convincing impression at first sight. I am certain that in my short, joking reference to my visit to his house I mentioned no name. I think it is most unlikely that P. made enquiries at the pension as to the name of the person concerned; I believe rather that the existence of that person remained entirely unknown to him. But the evidential value of this case is totally destroyed by a chance circumstance. The man whom I had visited at the pension was not only called 'Freund'; he was a true friend to us all. He was Dr. Anton von Freund whose donation had made the foundation of our publishing house possible. His early death, together with that of our colleague Karl Abraham a few years later, are the gravest misfortunes which have befallen the growth of psycho-analysis. It is possible, therefore, that I had said to Herr P.: 'I visited a friend in your house' and with this possibility the occult interest of his second association vanishes.

The impression made by the third association evaporates equally quickly. Could P. know that Jones had published a monograph on the nightmare if he never read any analytic literature? Yes, he could. He possessed books from our publishing house and could in any case have seen the titles of the new publications advertised on the wrappers. This cannot be proved, but neither can it be disproved. We can reach no decision, therefore, along this path. To my regret, this observation of mine suffers from the same weakness as so many similar ones: it was written down too late and was discussed at a time when I was no longer seeing Herr P. and could not question him further.

1 ['Freund' is, of course, the German word for 'friend'. Freud had written a moving obituary of him (1920c).]
being in a permanent state of jealous expectation, thought: 'Ah, so that's Dr. Forsyth with whose arrival my analysis is to come to an end! And he's probably just come straight from the Professor.' I cannot carry these rationalistic speculations any further. We are once again left with a non liquet; but I must confess that I have a feeling that here too the scales weigh in favour of thought-transference. Moreover, I am certainly not alone in having been in the position of experiencing 'occult' events like this in the analytic situation. Helene Deutsch published some similar observations in 1926 and studied the question of their being determined by the transference relations between patient and analyst.

I am sure you will not feel very well satisfied with my attitude to this problem—with my not being entirely convinced but prepared to be convinced. You may perhaps say to yourselves: 'Here's another case of a man who has done honest work as a scientist all through his life and has grown feeble-minded, pious and credulous in his old age.' I am aware that a few great names must be included in this class, but you should not reckon me among them. At least I have not become pious, and I hope not credulous. It is only that, if one has gone about all one's life bending in order to avoid a painful collision with the facts, so too in one's old age one still keeps one's back ready to bow before new realities. No doubt you would like me to hold fast to a moderate theism and show myself relentless in my rejection of everything occult. But I am incapable of currying favour and I must urge you to have kindlier thoughts on the objective possibility of thought-transference and at the same time of telepathy as well.

You will not forget that here I am only treating these problems in so far as it is possible to approach them from the direction of psycho-analysis. When they first came into my range of vision more than ten years ago, I too felt a dread of a threat against our scientific Weltanschauung, which, I feared, was bound to give place to spiritualism or mysticism if portions of occultism were proved true.¹ To-day I think otherwise. In my opinion it shows no great confidence in science if one does not think it capable of assimilating and working over whatever may perhaps turn out to be true in the assertions of occultists. And particularly so far as thought-transference is concerned, it seems actually to favour the extension of the scientific—or, as our opponents say, the mechanistic—mode of thought to the mental phenomena which are so hard to lay hold of. The telepathic process is supposed to consist in a mental act in one person instigating the same mental act in another person. What lies between these two mental acts may easily be a physical process into which the mental one is transformed at one end and which is transformed back once more into the same mental one at the other end. The analogy with other transformations, such as occur in speaking and hearing by telephone, would then be unmistakable. And only think if one could get hold of this physical equivalent of the psychical act! It would seem to me that psycho-analysis, by inserting the unconscious between what is physical and what was previously called 'psychical', has paved the way for the assumption of such processes as telepathy. If only one accustoms oneself to the idea of telepathy, one can accomplish a great deal with it—for the time being, it is true, only in imagination. It is a familiar fact that we do not know how the common purpose comes about in the great insect communities: possibly it is done by means of a direct psychical transference of this kind. One is led to a suspicion that this is the original, archaic method of communication between individuals and that in the course of phylogenetic evolution it has been replaced by the better method of giving information with the help of signals which are picked up by the sense organs. But the older method might have persisted in the background and still be able to put itself into effect under certain conditions—for instance, in passionately excited mobs. All this is still uncertain and full of unsolved riddles; but there is no reason to be frightened by it.

If there is such a thing as telepathy as a real process, we may suspect that, in spite of its being so hard to demonstrate, it is quite a common phenomenon. It would tally with our expectations if we were able to point to it particularly in the mental life of children. Here we are reminded of the frequent anxiety felt by children over the idea that their parents know all their thoughts.

¹ [These thoughts were expressed by Freud at considerable length in the introductory portion of his posthumously published paper on 'Psycho-Analysis and Telepathy' (1941d), Standard Ed., 18, 177-81.]
without having to be told them—an exact counterpart and perhaps the source of the belief of adults in the omniscience of God. A short time ago Dorothy Burlingham, a trustworthy witness, in a paper on child analysis and the mother [1932] published some observations which, if they can be confirmed, would be bound to put an end to the remaining doubts on the reality of thought-transference. She made use of the situation, no longer a rare one, in which a mother and child are simultaneously in analysis, and reported some remarkable events such as the following. One day the mother spoke during her analytic session of a gold coin that had played a particular part in one of the scenes of her childhood. Immediately afterwards, after she had returned home, her little boy, about ten years old, came to her room and brought her a gold coin which he asked her to keep for him. She asked him in astonishment where he had got it from. He had been given it on his birthday; but his birthday had been several months earlier and there was no reason why the child should have remembered the gold coin precisely then. The mother reported the occurrence to the child’s analyst and asked her to find out from the child the reason for his action. But the child’s analysis threw no light on the matter; the action had forced its way that day into the child’s life like a foreign body. A few weeks later the mother was sitting at her writing-desk to write down, as she had been told to do, an account of the experience, when in came the boy and asked for the gold coin back, as he wanted to take it with him to show in his analytic session. Once again the child’s analysis could discover no explanation of his wish.

And this brings us back to psycho-analysis, which was what we started out from.

LECTURE XXXI

THE DISSECTION OF THE PSYCHICAL PERSONALITY

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I know you are aware in regard to your own relations, whether with people or things, of the importance of your starting-point. This was also the case with psycho-analysis. It has not been a matter of indifference for the course of its development or for the reception it met with that it began its work on what is, of all the contents of the mind, most foreign to the ego—on symptoms. Symptoms are derived from the repressed, they are, as it were, its representatives before the ego; but the repressed is foreign territory to the ego—just as reality (if you will forgive the unusual expression) is external foreign territory. The path led from symptoms to the unconscious, to the life of the instincts, to sexuality; and it was then that psycho-analysis was met by the brilliant objection that human beings are not merely sexual creatures but have nobler and higher impulses as well. It might have been added that, exalted by their consciousness of these higher impulses, they often assume the right to think nonsense and to neglect facts.

You know better. From the very first we have said that human beings fall ill of a conflict between the claims of instinctual life and the resistance which arises within them against it; and not for a moment have we forgotten this resisting, repelling, repressing agency, which we thought of as equipped with its special forces, the ego-instincts, and which coincides with the ego of popular psychology. The truth was merely that, in view of the laborious nature of the progress made by scientific work, even psycho-analysis was not able to study every field simultaneously and to express its views on every problem in a single breath. But at last the point was reached when it was possible...

1 [The greater part of the material in this lecture is derived (with some amplifications) from Chapters I, II, III and V of The Ego and the Id (1923b).]