

**NERVOUS AND MENTAL  
DISEASE  
MONOGRAPH SERIES NO.  
22. THE DREAM PROBLEM**

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**A. E. MAEDER**

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NERVOUS AND MENTAL DISEASE MONOGRAPH SERIES No. 22

# THE DREAM PROBLEM

BY

DR. A. E. MAEDER  
OF ZURICH

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION BY

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## THE DREAM PROBLEM<sup>1</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

The reason for the choice of this theme as the principal subject of discussion at to-day's meeting is a publication of mine on the same subject, which has called forth opposition, especially in the circle of our Vienna colleagues. As I had the distinct impression that I was misunderstood, I gladly seized the opportunity to speak on the question to-day. There were in my opinion two principal reasons for the misunderstanding. The first reason is, presumably, that I did not succeed in expressing myself clearly in what I had to say on the subject. The work which appeared a year ago in the "Jahrbuch" had been written two and a half years ago, at a time when the problem was not very familiar to me. The second important reason for my being misunderstood lies in the fact that the point of view therein given discovers a new field of thought in psychoanalysis, with which we must become acquainted. This new field is not an individual discovery, for it is also to be found in the works of the last few years, especially in those by Jung, Riklin, Silberer and, in some respects, in those by Adler and others. I consider it extremely important for us all that we should have opportunity to debate together, and publicly, these questions that so greatly occupy us; the more so as I have the conviction that no real or necessary differences exist between us, for what we of the Zürich school have accomplished is a natural outcome of what Freud gave us. The new field of which I spoke just now is analogous to the new view which opens before the wanderer when he reaches a turning of his road. Before I touch my theme, let me remark that the ex-

<sup>1</sup> A paper read at the Congress of the Psychoanalytical Society at Munich, September, 1913. *Jahrbuch für Psychoanalyse und psychoanalytische Forschungen*, 1914.

planations I give to-day are not an official presentation of the Zürich point of view, but only expressions of personal conviction and point of view. Still, they are suited, I hope, to show existing differences in opinion.

In this paper, here offered for discussion, I have assumed two chief functions of the dream: the cathartic and the preparing function. In my talk to-day, I shall confine myself to the second function, as the most important and the most disputed. My erstwhile formula must be changed, since I have recognized that the functions mentioned hold good, not only for the dream, but for almost all products of unconscious activity (such as day phantasies, works of art, play, visions, etc.). They are functions of the unconscious itself, which in these phenomena arrive at expression. It will be the task of later workers to furnish the reason for the connection between these phenomena. Furthermore, you will recall that Freud has seen ahead here as in all other fields, in that he has put on record the axiom that neurotic symptoms must be regarded as "unsuccessful attempts at cure." Among these different elaborations of the unconscious functions, the dream assumes a peculiar place, in that it is at work every night. It is a modest servant who performs his task in silence. It seeks for a satisfying formula for the unconscious condition, and strives for its expression. This dream work can exercise a really liberating action which betrays a close relationship to work of art. Various authors have already drawn attention to this, Rank among others. But in the formulæ to date, the chief stress has been laid upon the cathartic action, on the unloading of the emotion, whilst, in my opinion, the overcoming of the conflict, the real freeing by means of sublimation, is the chief function of the work of art. Mensendieck, to whom we owe valuable, but unfortunately not yet published researches in this field, will illuminate this problem for you in detail in his lecture on Wagner—"The Prospective Tendency of the Unconscious in Wagner's first Drama and in Parsifal."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> This lecture was given at the same Congress in Munich.

The artist seeks in his work the solution of his actual conflict or, rather, he realizes in it the solution of his personal life problem. There is at stake a long attempt, which stretches over all his work, and in which only the fewest succeed even approximately. On a more modest scale, and in quite different proportions the dream seeks to do the same for every man. A work of art carries out a social function in that it serves as a model, by virtue of its high spiritual elaboration, whilst the dream has to content itself with the rôle of a purely individual means of expression, which, nevertheless, is yet a very important rôle. The use made of dreams in the ancient religions is for us a premonition of the connections in which it is now really recognized.

The following sentence, taken from Horneffer's work "The Priest," will clearly illustrate this point: "The sick Greeks, who made pilgrimages to the temple of Æsculapius, in order to undergo the temple sleep, did not want to know what had caused their sickness, but hoped to come in contact with the holy Æsculapius in the dream and to receive from him directions for the treatment to be followed in order to effect a cure."

The liberating function of the dream is here expressed as a hint from God in the so-called mythical phase of realization; the dream itself is considered by me as a part of the curative process. You will permit me to remind you of the keen saying of Hebbel on this same point. It is: "This I know; such dreams one should not despise. I fancy it to be this way: when man lies asleep, relaxed, no longer held together by self-consciousness, a feeling of the future crowds out all thoughts and pictures of the present, and those things which are to come glide like shadows through the soul, preparing, warning, comforting. This is why so seldom, or not at all, anything really surprises us, and why we have long and confidently hoped for the good, and trembled involuntarily before every evil."

From our special point of view there exist two categories of artists: those who reflect a sort of mirrored image and expression