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Memories and dreams : a Freudian look at Proust

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MEMORIES AND DREAMS: A FREUDIAN LOOK AT PROUST

BY

BARBARA ALEXANDER BAROODY

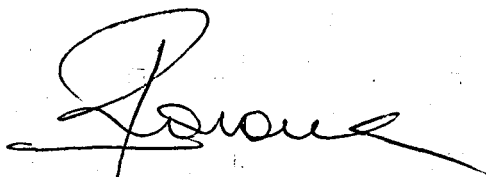
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Neil M. Farber.

A stylized, cursive handwritten signature, likely reading "Neil M. Farber", written in dark ink.

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I. Mind and Memory: In Pursuit of the Past

The activities of the unconscious mind, that is to say the sleeping mind or the mind at rest, has long fascinated man. In Biblical times those capable of interpreting dreams were looked upon as prophets or possessors of divine wisdom. Even today in various uncivilized areas tribal leaders go into trances in which all conscious activity is suspended. The words they express at these times are taken as absolute truth. Indeed, they feel that their minds have been freed from their bodies and that their utterances are produced not by their own minds but by something far greater which exists outside of this world. In certain American Indian tribes dreams were accepted as the only Divinity and they were executed precisely and as soon as possible.¹ Thus among primitive or superstitious groups the belief in the superiority of the unconscious mind has always been accepted.

Civilized, educated man rejected the idea of there being a part of his mind more powerful than his own rational intellect. Scientific technology made him even more sure of his ability to solve his problems through the use of reason. He accepted the fact that the human being consisted of a physical body and an intangible mind, but for many years prior to the

nineteenth century the man of science looked upon the workings of the unconscious mind with suspicion and condescension. He did not want to liken himself to his uncivilized counterpart who lived in the bushes and believed that at night his "soul" went out on a hunting trip.

During the last years of the nineteenth century a physician, Sigmund Freud proposed a rather revolutionary theory which caught the attention of his contemporaries. Not only is the human being made up of two parts; the mind and the body, but the mind itself is made up of two parts; the conscious and the unconscious. Even more radical was his assumption that the unconscious part plays the greater role in the total life of man.

The first of these displeasing propositions of psychoanalysis is this: that mental processes are essentially unconscious, and that those which are conscious are merely isolated acts and parts of the whole psychic entity.²

Freud's studies of the processes and characteristics of the unconscious area of the mind lend themselves to a broader interpretation of the great work of Marcel Proust, A la Recherche du Temps Perdu. Freud proposed the manner in which a memory is formed and how it is able to bring the past into the present. He elaborated on the power of the memory to overcome the natural processes of change which time imposes on the physical world. He recognized the power of

the dream to reproduce the past with even more force than the memory. He saw, however, that the dream, unlike the memory often distorts the past, taking an actual experience and disguising it as something else. The sensations that accompanied the real experience, however, are reproduced accurately in the dream. He theorized that stored away in man's subconscious (the Unconscious) are memories which influence his waking actions. Some of these memories are "undesirable" or "shameful" and that is why they are disguised. Nevertheless, they continue to influence his actions. The creative ability of the unconscious mind has gone to work on its repressed or hidden contents and replaced them with symbols. After examining thousands of dreams, Freud found that more often than not the symbols were consistent from individual to individual and that they held the key to the real subject of his past experience.

Proust, born some fifteen years after Freud, was equally fascinated with the potential of the unconscious mind. He was obsessed by the desire to overcome the destructive force of Time and assure for himself a place in eternity. He wanted to project himself into the future by creating a work of art, for he believed that Art, alone surpassed Time. His work of art would be a novel, but rather than simply recounting past experiences, he sought to actually bring them

to life again by evoking in the reader the same sensations he experienced. Dreams and those memories which rise spontaneously from the unconscious (Involuntary Memories) would allow him to recover the past, complete with all its sensations. He would tap his unconscious mind and bring forth impressions exactly as they were originally perceived. His life, his past would be recaptured and revived with every reading of his book.

Freud asserts that beginning in childhood the senses perceive the physical world and form sense-impressions. The conscious mind records them and the memory retains them. Subsequent impressions and intellectual activity distort the original meaning. Proust was equally aware of the accuracy of the memory and its distortion by the intellect. In sleep the conscious intellect is suspended and is therefore not free to repress those impressions which it has rejected. Accumulated impressions are stripped away and the dreamer is left with his original, most primitive feelings. If the feelings are of such a nature that they must be disguised in symbols, then the symbols must be interpreted in order to arrive at the true meaning of the dream. Unconscious processes provide Freud with a direct route to the concealed contents of his patients' minds. Unconscious processes provide Proust with a direct route to his past. The works of these two men parallel one another and make for a significant comparison

in that they are both concerned with;

1. obtaining the truth that lies buried in the unconscious mind, (the conscious mind being simply a prejudiced recorder of isolated experiences.)
2. the role of the memory to recover the past.
3. the power of the unconscious to suspend Time and so put death in a new perspective.
4. the purely creative power of the unconscious mind.
5. the symbolic manner in which the dream expresses the truths that the conscious mind has rejected.

The difference in their work is that while Freud was seeking merely a scientific truth, Proust was seeking absolute, transcendent Truth. In his pursuit of the past through memories and dreams, Proust came to realize that just as the dream hides the true impression behind a symbol, so the external world hides the essence of its objects in symbolic "cases". Within each physical object there lies an abstract Idea of that object. The extraction of the Idea from The Object is an entirely mental process. The Object is physical and is subject to change. The Idea is mental and hence permanent. Naturally, Proust preferred the internal world of Ideas to the external world of transitory objects. Freud was the physician while Proust was the metaphysician.

In A la Recherche du Temps Perdu Marcel finds that the impressions that he has built up over the years about people and places are constantly deceiving him. Time changes everything. An individual observes an object or takes part in an event. He looks with pleasure at a beautiful young girl or sips a cup of tea in the happy, secure surroundings of childhood. Even within moments the physical chemistry of the girl is changing. Within months or even hours she may die. Within a matter of years she will become a wrinkled, old woman. The cup of tea is consumed and disappears. There may be other young girls and other cups of tea much like the original, but they are not, in fact, the original. The carefree child who drank the first cup of tea changes into a man, and as he does so his mind accumulates more experiences. Is that first young girl actually doomed to oblivion? Can the wonderful world of the first cup of tea never be recaptured? If we accept the theories of both Freud and Proust, then the answer is yes. What the mind has perceived at any given moment makes an impression which is absolutely unchangeable. The mind may allow the impression to slip from the conscious into the unconscious, but it remains there, nevertheless, and is capable of bringing the complete original experience back into the present.

. . . la mémoire en introduisant le passé dans le présent sans le modifier, tel qu'il était au moment où il était le présent, supprime précisément cette grande dimension du Temps suivant laquelle la vie se réalise.³

Sigmund Freud insisted in the last year of the [nineteenth] century that the unconscious processes . . . are indestructible. In the unconscious nothing can be brought to an end, nothing past and forgotten.⁴

Freud declared that an individual has, in addition to a motor system and a sensory system, a perceptual system and a memory system. The perceptual system receives excitations from the sense organs and forms a mental picture or representation of the object that is being presented to the sense organs. These mental pictures are preserved as memory traces in the memory system. When the memory traces are activated the person is said to have a memory image of the object he originally perceived. The past is brought into the present by means of these memory images.⁵

Freud's theory of what goes into the unconscious, how it is stored, and how it can be "brought back to life again" in its original form provides a scientific foundation for Proust's theory of recapturing the past through remembrance. Proust, however, makes a distinction in kinds of memories that Freud does not. Freud says that when the memory traces are activated, the person has a memory image of the object

he originally perceived. Proust experienced two types of memories; the Voluntary and the Involuntary. The Voluntary Memory is able to call at will events and images in their precise order. But, it is incapable of conveying the true essence. It cannot evoke the sensations of the past. The Involuntary Memory, on the other hand, is the accidental recovery of the total sensory experience.

Our past, continues to live on in an object, a taste, a smell, --a sensation. If that sensation can be revived, the memory [the past] will come to life again. The sensation is the raw material for the artist's calling. That which has been trapped in the unconscious is brought to the surface, the conscious. Not the recollection of the event or experience but all the emotions which accompanied it. Time has been regained and conquered because one whole segment of the past has become a section of the present. The artist has gained eternity. Actual life is not to be found in a fixed point in time but rather within the artist, within oneself. . . .

The cup of tea which Marcel assumed had disappeared with his childhood provides his first experience with Involuntary Memory. As an adult he sips another cup of tea and eats a tea cake just as he had done many years before. For no apparent reason and without any effort on his part, the world of his childhood comes flooding back in its entirety. Feelings and emotions that he had thought lost forever return with such

force and so completely that he realizes that the past does remain alive and unchanged in the Unconscious. It can only rise to the surface, however, when the Conscious mind is inactive and the external stimulus needed to evoke the memory is present. In this instance the sensation is the taste of tea. He had not sought out the sensation in order to retrieve the memory, rather the memory took him by surprise.

Those for whom the life of the spirit is more important than the life of the external world, live with their memories. Those memories, even when Time seems to have erased them, live on in Dreams. When that happens, those who think they have forgotten are invaded by the full force of their passions. Memory rises to the surface.⁷

Souvent c'était tout simplement pendant mon sommeil que, par ces da capo du rêve qui tournent d'un seul coup plusieurs pages de la mémoire, plusieurs feuillets du calendrier me ramenaient, me faisait rétrograder à une impression douloureuse mais ancienne, qui depuis longtemps avait cédé la place à d'autres et qui redevenait présente. (III, 538)

At the end of Du Côté de Chez Swann Marcel cries out in despair that the reality with which our conscious mind must deal (i.e. the physical world) is fugitive and deceitful. He has mistakenly tried to recreate the past for himself. It is a splendid autumn day and he goes for a walk in the Bois de Boulogne. He is aware that he has consciously sought out these physical surroundings in order to reproduce a pleasurable experience from his past. As a youth he would

come to watch Odette stroll through the park. How beautiful and elegant she was. How happy he was at that time. And yet, he knows that the beauty of the past is not fixed within the object. He is aware that the idea of perfection resides within himself. Still, he immerses himself in the beauty of the trees in the park in an effort to recapture a moment of the past.

L'exaltation que j'éprouvais n'était pas causée que par l'admiration de l'automne, mais par un désir. Grande source d'une joie que l'âme ressent d'abord sans en reconnaître la cause, sans comprendre que rien au dehors ne la motive. . . (I, 423)

Proust floods the mind with those sensations which would arouse in Marcel the memory of the happy times of his youth. Each of the senses is stimulated to produce a "sense-impression"; sunlight on the branches of the trees, a hot reflexion, a bouquet of flowers, sparkling humidity, green velvet fur. The trees in the park seem to have been endowed with a personality. The reader feels Marcel voluntarily seeking the sensations which will retrieve the past. Suddenly he is faced with the fact that the elegant carriages have been replaced by loud autos and the graceful ladies are now horrible creatures and the lovely Madame Swann is not going to appear. Memory at this point is painful because it only reinforces the fact that those aspects of the physical world

which give us so much pleasure are transitory and cannot be brought back voluntarily. The "reality" of the memory is what makes the "reality" of the moment so cruel and Marcel cries out in despair:

La réalité que j'avais connue n'existait plus. . .
 Les lieux que nous avons connus n'appartiennent pas qu'au monde de l'espace où nous les situons pour plus de facilité. Ils n'étaient qu'une mince tranche au milieu d'impressions contiguës qui formaient notre vie d'alors; le souvenir d'une image n'est que le regret d'un instant; et les maisons, les routes, les avenues, sont fugitives, hélas! comme les années. (I, 427)

He acknowledges with grief that we must situate events, objects, places in Space in order to reckon with them intellectually. The fact is that these places and experiences (the physical world at the moment of perception) make up only a thin slice in the midst of a stream of elusive impressions. ". . . those mental processes which are conscious are merely isolated acts and parts of the whole psychic entity."⁶ If that fleeting moment of conscious perception makes up only a thin slice, what makes up the rest? It is, of course, the Unconscious where the natural boundaries of Time and Space are erased. Marcel has just proved what he comes to understand fully only at the end of the book. There are two kinds of realities; that which exists in the external world and is perceived by the

conscious, and that which exists in the mind which is not engaged in active perception, i.e., the unconscious. The external world is made up of impressions which vary according to the preconceptions of the individual. They are unreliable and subject to change, not only from individual to individual but from day to day as Time and new impressions go to work on them. Nevertheless, behind the external appearance of the object being perceived, there lies an Absolute, unchanging Idea of that object.

From the medley of relative worlds, an absolute world emerges . . . Man is the victor over Time, Proust set forth to find the happiness in absolutes. He finds the absolutes that lie outside Time itself.⁹

It is this Truth, this Essence which Proust is to abstract from the physical object and preserve in his Unconscious. The process of penetrating the physical reality to extract the essence is totally mental. Once established in the Unconscious, it does not change and it never leaves. It can be revived by Involuntary Memory but not by conscious mental effort.

Proust was obsessed by the flight of the passing moment, by the perpetual state of flux of everything that makes up our environment, by the changes wrought by time in our bodies and in our minds . . . All human beings, whether they accept it or not, are plunged into the dimension of Time, are carried away by the current of the moving days. Their whole life is a battle with Time . . . Time destroys not only individuals, but societies, worlds, empires . . . Proust shows us that the

individual, plunged in Time disintegrates . . . This is Proust the realist, the man of science who notes the destruction by Time on human beings. But among the various philosophers who, together, make up his personality, there is an "Idealist", and unwilling metaphysician, who refuses to accept this notion of the total death of his successive selves, of the discontinuity of the individual; because at certain privileged moments, he has had an intuition of himself as an absolute entity . . . Proust felt that there was something permanent, even eternal in his nature when suddenly an insight of the past became real to him and he discovered sights and feelings which he had thought of as gone forever . . . [they] must, obviously, have been preserved somewhere within him, since otherwise, how could they reappear?¹⁰

Je m'étais rendu compte que seule la perception grossière et erronée place tout dans l'objet quand, tout est dans l'esprit . . . (III, 912)

Freud, also, insisted that there are two separate parts to the mind describing "an actual barrier between the two which suggests a specific topography of the mind".¹¹ He declares that there are processes of the nature of thinking, wishing, and feeling that are both conscious and unconscious.¹² He compares the Unconscious system to a large ante-room crowded with mental excitations (Proust's memories), and the conscious system to a small reception room (Proust's thin slice). Between these two rooms is a doorkeeper (Proust's intellectual reasoning) who allows only those mental excitations of which he approves to pass into the conscious area. Even those that are allowed through

the door do not necessarily become recognized by the Conscious.¹³ This concept is the one with which Proust struggles until he finds a way to by-pass the doorkeeper and retrieve from his Unconscious those precious memories which assure him that the past is not gone forever.

It is clear that for Proust there exist not only two kinds of realities, but also two specific areas within the total mind, one for each reality. The Conscious deals with the physical world which is subject to the ravages of Time. It is thus unable to perceive the true nature of external objects. The Unconscious deals with the abstract Idea or the essence of the physical world. It holds the key to infinity because it is free of the natural boundaries of Time and Space. Having penetrated the external object and extracted its essence, the Unconscious preserves it in the form of a memory which is now able to enjoy an existence independent of the original object. The unconscious area, then, is the world in which Proust chooses to work for it is here that he will recapture the past through dreams and memories and recreate it in a work of art which will assure his own salvation from Time.

Et c'était peut-être aussi par le jeu
formidable qu'il fait avec le Temps que
le Rêve m'avait fasciné. N'avais-je pas
vu souvent en une nuit, en une minute
d'une nuit, des temps bien lointain,

relégués à ces distances énormes où nous ne pouvons plus rien distinguer des sentiments que nous y éprouvions, fondre à toute vitesse sur nous, nous aveuglant de leur clarté, . . . nous faire revoir tout ce qu'ils avaient contenu pour nous, nous donnons l'émotion, le choc, la clarté de leur voisinage immédiat, -- qui ont repris, une fois qu'on est réveillé, la distance qu'ils avaient miraculeusement franchie, jusqu'à nous faire croire, à tort d'ailleurs, qu'ils étaient un des modes pour retrouver le Temps perdu? (III, 912)

Just as Proust came to rely on the fact that the impressions fed to him by his senses could be called forth from the Unconscious and relived again, so also does Freud insist on a mind that is made up of a small conscious part which is constantly receiving impressions and a larger part which is storing them up as memories. He makes the interesting comparison of the Conscious to the tip of an iceberg with the larger part (the Unconscious) existing below the surface forming the foundation for the whole. It is this "seething subterranean world" of the Unconscious that holds so much potential for both men and so fascinates them. For Freud its contents will re-create experiences in order to better understand and ultimately alter personality development. For Proust its contents will re-create experiences so as to form a novel.

A scientific principal involving the motor, the sensory, the perceptual, and the memory systems is an integral part

of Proust's quest for eternal realities. The memory image can and does exist totally independent of the external object which caused it to be in the first place. If the mind pushes the external object from the Conscious into the Unconscious, it may seem to be gone but once the sensations that originally surrounded it are evoked, the image is brought back to life again in the conscious mind.

Freud's concepts of the mind, how it functions, and its potential to reveal important truths provide a deeper interpretation of Proust's philosophies as expressed in A la Recherche du Temps Perdu.

1. The mind consists of two separate parts in which ". . . mental processes are essentially unconscious, and . . . those which are conscious are merely isolated acts."¹⁴
2. The unconscious is a vast repository for all past experiences. Included with the experiences are the accompanying emotions.
3. These experiences may be brought into the present by the memory, thus erasing the natural boundaries of Time and Space, the medium in which they exist.
4. The unconscious mind is, therefore, immune to the destructive forces of Time.

II. Memories, Metaphors, and Daydreams:

Artistic Creation

Proust probes his unconscious to produce memory images which he will record in his book. His object is to stimulate the sensory system of the reader and reproduce in the reader his own original sense-impressions. In this way he will keep alive the realities that exist in his mind, for as long as there is someone to read them. Marcel, the protagonist, is the vehicle Proust uses to reproduce his own mental excitations in the reader. Marcel protests that Time changes everything but Proust affirms the fact that within the unconscious mind nothing changes by re-creating his own life complete with all its sensations.

He reveals through Marcel the power of the novel to create in the mind of the reader experiences which seem more real than those of the external world. The problem facing the author, however, is how to abstract from the external world the essence of the experience or the object and transfer it to the reader. Through Marcel, Proust explains the difficulty that his thoughts have in penetrating the external object.

Et ma pensée n'était-elle pas aussi comme une autre oreche au fond de laquelle je sentais que je restais enfoncé, même pour regarder ce qui se passait dehors? Quand je voyais un objet extérieur la conscience que je le voyais restait entre moi et lui, le bordait d'une mince liséré spirituel qui m'empêchait de jamais toucher directement sa matière . . . (I, 84)

And yet Marcel knows that the power of the thought is great because when he reads a book, his mind is so overtaken by the mental experiences created by the author that he feels that he has actually experienced the events which have taken place in his mind. So deeply do his thoughts become immersed in the thoughts of the author that the external world seems to disappear.

C'était les événements dramatiques qui survenaient dans le livre que je lisais; il est vrai que les personnages qu'ils affectaient n'étaient pas "réels", comme disait Françoise. Mais tous les sentiments que nous font éprouver la joie ou l'infortune d'un personnage réel ne se produisent en nous que par l'intermédiaire d'une image de cette joie ou de cette infortune; l'ingéniosité du premier romancier consista à comprendre que dans l'appareil de nos émotions, l'image étant le seul élément essentiel, la simplification qui consisterait à supprimer purement et simplement les personnages réels serait un perfectionnement décisif. Un être réel, si profondément que nous sympathisons avec lui, pour une grande part est perçu par nos sens, c'est-à-dire nous reste opaque, offre un poids mort que notre sensibilité ne peut soulever. Qu'un malheur le frappe, ce n'est qu'en une petite partie de la notion

totale que nous avons de lui que nous pourrons en être émus; bien, plus, ce n'est qu'en une petite partie de la notion totale qu'il a de soi qu'il pourra l'être lui-même. La trouvaille du romancier a été d'avoir l'idée de remplacer ces parties impénétrables à l'âme par une quantité égale de parties immatérielles, c'est-à-dire que notre âme peut s'assimiler. (I, 85)

The artistic creation of Proust will be the novel and in his novel he will pass on the contents of his mind by re-creating people as well as experiences through memories, metaphors, and daydreams.

Keenly sensitive in nature, his Unconscious is filled with richly sensual memory images. If he can tap this source, his task will be to translate these images into words that will evoke the same sensations in the reader. He will make permanent those sense-impressions which exist in his mind. He will distill the experience and extract the essence in such a way that it will be transmitted from his soul or mind to another. What matters to Proust is not what becomes of his body but what becomes of the contents of his mind. His novel represents the process of becoming an artist through the revelations of Marcel. Marcel is aware that the physical world is less precious than the mental world but he feels incapable of becoming a writer.

Car en ce temps-là tout ce qui n'était pas moi, la terre et les êtres, me paraissait plus précieux, plus important, doué d'une existence plus réelle que cela ne paraît aux hommes faits. Et la terre et les êtres, je ne les séparais pas. (I, 157)

Je cessais de croire partagés par d'autres êtres, de croire vrais en dehors de moi, les désirs que je formais pendant ces promenades et qui ne se réalisaient pas. Ils m'apparaissaient plus que comme les créations purement subjectives, impuissantes, illusoire de mon tempérament. Ils n'avaient plus de lien avec la nature, avec la réalité qui dès lors perdait tout charme et toute signification et n'était plus à ma vie qu'un cadre conventionnel, comme l'est à la fiction d'un roman le wagon sur la banquette duquel le voyageur le lit pour tuer le temps. (I, 159)

During his long walks along the paths to Méségise, or the even longer more stimulating walks toward the Guermantes', Marcel is keenly aware of the beauty and the strength of the emotions that nature arouses in him. They stimulate his imagination and he fantasizes about the lovely peasant girl who is surely waiting for him behind a tree and about Madame de Guermantes who has (in his daydream) taken a sudden fancy to him, goes fishing with him, and asks him to read his poetry! Unfortunately he has not yet discovered how to write or what to write about. "Et ces rêves m'avertissaient que, puisque je voulais un jour être un écrivain, il était temps de savoir ce que je comptais écrire." (I, 172)

While he grieves that he hasn't the disposition to be a writer, he is piling up in his head richly sensual experiences during his walks.

Alors, bien en dehors de toutes ces préoccupations littéraires et ne s'y rattachant en rien, tout un coup un toit, un reflet de soleil sur une pierre, l'odeur d'un chemin me faisait arrêter par un plaisir particulier qu'ils me donnaient, et aussi parce qu'ils avaient l'air de cacher, au delà de ce que je voyais, quelque chose qu'ils invitaient à venir prendre et que malgré mes efforts je n'arrivais pas à découvrir. Comme je sentais que cela se trouvait en eux, je restais là, immobile, à regarder, à respirer, à tâcher d'aller avec ma pensée au delà de l'image ou de l'odeur . . . je cherchais à les retrouver en fermant les yeux; je m'attachais à me rappeler exactement la ligne du toit, la nuance de la pierre, qui sans que je pusse comprendre pourquoi, m'avaient semblé pleines, prêtes à s'entre'ouvrir, à me livrer ce dont elles n'étaient qu'un couvercle. (I, 178, 179)

Once back at home from his walk, Marcel discovers to his amazement that what he thought he was unable to do, he was doing without effort. Thinking about something else he finds that each sensation that he had collected in his mind during his walk comes rising to the surface--long after its physical reality is gone (Involuntary Memory). And finally one day he does unlock the cover and extract the secret hidden behind the object. He is riding in a carriage one evening to Martinville when he notices that the two church steeples in that village seem to be right beside the one in a village quite some distance away.

En constatant, en notant la forme de leur flèche, le déplacement de leurs lignes, l'ensoleillement de leur surface, je sentais que je n'allais pas au bout de mon impression; que quelque chose était derrière ce mouvement, derrière cette clarté, quelque chose qu'ils semblaient contenir et dérober à la fois . . . Sans me dire que ce qui était caché derrière les clochets de Martinville devait être quelque chose d'analogue à une jolie phrase, puisque c'était sous la forme de mots qui me faisaient plaisir que cela m'était apparu . . . je composai malgré les cahots de la voiture, pour soulager ma conscience et obéir à mon enthousiasme, . . . (I, 180-181)

Truth begins only at the moment when the writer takes two distinct objects, establishes between them that relation which in the world of art is analogous to a causal relation in the world of science, . . . extracts their essence by merely bringing them into close association through the medium of a metaphor, and thus rescues them from the contingencies of time . . .¹⁵

At this point Marcel is still a youth and has many more experiences to gather but he knows that he can discover the essential elements of the physical world, extract their essence, and re-create them in such a form that they can be experienced by another mind.

In addition to his memories and the metaphors he will use to reproduce his sense-impressions. Proust takes advantage of the "day-dream".

No experience or hallucination takes place in them, we simply imagine something; we recognize that they are the work of fantasy,

that we are not seeing but thinking . . . The content of these phantasies is dictated by a very transparent motivation. They are scenes and events which gratify either the egoistic cravings of ambition or thirst for power, or the erotic desires of the subject. In young men ambitious phantasies predominate; . . . all heroic deeds and successes are really only intended to win the admiration and favor of women. . . . They march with the times; and they receive as it were "date-stamps" upon them which show the influence of new situations. They form the raw material of poetic production: for the writer by transforming, disguising, or curtailing them creates out of his day-dreams the situations which he embodies in his stories, novels, and dramas. The hero of the day-dream is, however, always the subject himself, either directly imagined in the part or transparently identified with someone else.¹⁶

Thus the young Marcel's thoughts of the erotic pleasures that he might experience with a peasant girl or of the heroic deeds that he might perform for a princess are pure fantasy. He would stammer in embarrassment should a peasant girl really appear! He has transformed Madame de Guermantes into a fair maiden from out of the medieval past where knights in shining armor are supposed to woo fair ladies by reading poetry to them.

In a similar manner Marcel Proust fantasizes about himself, transforming and only faintly disguising himself as Marcel, who does indeed, break into Parisian society, indulge in only heterosexual affairs, and relates to people in the normal way that Proust, himself, was never able to.

III. Sleeping and Reawakening: Death and Rebirth

It is always daybreak. Suspended between first and second coming; . . . between sleeping and waking. The authentic psychoanalytical epiphany - do I wake or sleep?

---N.O. Brown

If the waking mind is able to receive impressions and then revive them through Involuntary Memory, what possibilities can the sleeping mind hold? What is the nature of the sleeping mind where mental life continues in the form of dreams? Both Freud and Proust place great emphasis on the potential of sleep, Freud from a physiological point of view (the condition necessary to refresh and restore both mind and body as well as to produce a dream) and Proust from a metaphysical point of view. Freud examines the nature of sleep in order to help his patients overcome neuroses. Proust has something more far-reaching in mind. His obsession with the passage of Time (which promises his death) finds an outlet in the possibilities which he sees in the suspended state of sleep. If the conscious mind is capable of capturing the essence of a physical object and providing it with an existence independent of the "case" which holds it

and further, if the Unconscious stores up these abstract impressions, what happens when the body (and with it the mind) dies? The author is able to overcome the loss of all his accumulated impressions by recording them on paper.

But what about the rest of humanity? If the mind has such great potential could there not be some way for it to survive eternally? Proust has already suggested that in the unconscious mind the natural boundaries of Time and Space are erased. What is sleep if not a state of unconsciousness?

Freud suggests in his book, A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis that sleep is actually a sort of return to the womb from which we are re-born upon awakening.

Sleep is a condition in which I refuse to have anything to do with the outer world and have withdrawn my interest from it. I go to sleep by retreating from the outside world and warding off the stimuli proceeding from it. Again when I am tired of that world I go to sleep . . . Thus the biological object of sleep seems to be recuperation, its psychological characteristic the suspension of interest in the outer world. Our relationship with the world which we entered so unwillingly seems to be endurable only with intermission; hence we withdraw again periodically into the condition prior to our entrance into the world: that is to say into intra-uterine existence. At any rate we try to bring about quite similar conditions--warmth, darkness, and absence of stimulus--characteristic of that state . . . Every time we wake in the morning it is as if we were newly born. . . Again in speaking of birth we speak of "seeing the light of day."17

Since Proust felt the external world hopelessly transitory, then escape into a state where Time is suspended would be very desirable. While Freud says that the sleeping man attempts to surround himself physically with the secure conditions of the womb, Proust says that the sleeping man surrounds himself with Time. Sleep encompasses man who encompasses Time. If Freud's man is protected from the physical world and the medium in which it exists (Time and Space) Proust's man has gained control of that medium and it is no longer free to do its damage to him. He is free to move within that medium unhindered by physical boundaries. Sleep, therefore, represents the ultimate freedom for Proust's man. What is finite in the waking state is infinite in the sleeping state.

Un homme qui dort tient en cercle autour
de lui le fil des heures, l'ordre des
années et des mondes. Il les consulte
d'instinct en s'éveillant et y lit en
une seconde le point de la terre qu'il
occupe, le temps qui s'est écoulé jusqu'à
son réveil . . . (I, 5)

Sleep is capable of completely erasing whole hours from a man's life. He may wake up without being aware that he has fallen asleep yet. On other occasions he flies through Time and Space and upon awakening, believes himself in another country. Time and Space become meaningless in sleep.

The indifference of the unconscious to death is explained as soon as we recall its nature. The unconscious is not only the nocturnal residue of waking life, but also the reservoir of inherited, ancestral and collective factors . . . In short the unconscious is characterized by a relativity which, as physics teaches us, is a dimension of the universe; to the unconscious, death is only a periphery in the flow of transformations whose phenomena it is constantly recording. To the unconscious, the notion of "end" can have no more meaning than "beginning", for it knows only a constant flow in which there is never an absolute beginning or an absolute end, but an uninterrupted succession of births and deaths. Then the individual is a peripheral and fleeting projection of its transcendent reality.¹⁸

The transcendent reality which Proust seeks is found behind the fleeting projection of the individual, the experience, the object. And, it is found in the state of sleep. By offering the possibility of overcoming Time, sleep offers the possibility of overcoming everlasting death.

Proust and the two psychologists, Freud and de Becker, all conceive of sleep as a withdrawal from the physical world. Certainly this is what occurs in death. Freud declares that it is a physical necessity for man to simulate this death-like condition periodically and that each time he reawakens, he experiences a sort of rebirth. De Becker also puts death in a different perspective in relation to

the finality of death. The unconscious mind, having achieved the ultimate freedom, becomes part of infinity and what the conscious mind conceives of as birth and death or beginning and end is nullified. What appears to the conscious mind to be the beginning and ending of the physical object is, to the unconscious mind, merely a succession of beginnings and endings of the transcendent reality of the physical object.

Over and over Proust makes the comparison of sleep to a sort of death and awakening to rebirth. Is he inferring that there is life after death or possibly a rebirth after physical death? In the opening pages there is a passage on the activities of the mind as it regains consciousness. He seems to emerge from a sort of limbo in which he retained some notion of his previous physical existence, but sleep has, at least momentarily, erased all precise knowledge. It is his memory of the fact that he did exist somewhere in the universe that leads him from this nothingness of the unconscious state into awareness of the physical world.

Mais alors, le souvenir--non encore du lieu où j'étais, mais de quelques-uns de ceux que j'avais habités et où j'aurais pu être--venait à moi comme un secours d'en haut pour me tirer du néant d'où je n'aurais pu sortir tout seul. (I, 5)

Objects, countries, years swirl around him in the darkness as his mind seeks to reorient itself. It is not his

conscious intellect that re-establishes him as a physical entity but the bodily instinct which recalls various "rooms" that it has inhabited. (The word "room" will take on new significance when dream interpretation is explored.) Sleep, like death sets the mind free from the physical room, body, or world. Memory of past rooms, bodies, worlds, or lives recalls the wandering mind back to the body. Without such memories, the mind would be helpless to regain the physical world. Memory is said to come from on high and raise him up from le néant.

His body, too numb to move (a cadavre), has to establish the position of its own parts in order to establish its position in the room and in fact, to determine which body (chambre) it is inhabiting. Finally the body identifies itself by recalling the thought that the mind was entertaining before it lost consciousness. The mind is restored to the body (the dark, invisible walls of the womb) and rebirth is taking place.

Toujours est-il que, quand je me réveillais ainsi, mon esprit s'agitait pour chercher, sans y réussir, à savoir où j'étais, tout tournait autour de moi dans l'obscurité, les choses, les pays, les années. Mon corps, trop engourdi pour remuer, cherchait, d'après la forme de sa fatigue, à repérer la position de ses membres. . . pour reconstruire et pour nommer la demeure où il se trouvait. Sa mémoire, la mémoire de ses côtes, de ses genoux, de ses épaules,

lui présentait successivement plusieurs de ses chambres où il avait dormi, tandis qu'autour de lui, les murs invisibles, changeant de place selon la forme de la pièce imaginée, tourbillonnaient dans les ténèbres . . . (I, 6)

In another passage Proust alludes to the possibility of rebirth and again demonstrates the role that the memory plays in retrieving a "wandering" mind and its potential to resurrect the dead. In this passage he also attributes to sleep the restorative power that Freud ascribes to it. This particular sleep is so deep that he feels rather overstuffed, as if he has feasted too well at a banquet.

On appelle cela un sommeil de plomb; . . . On n'est plus personne. Comment, alors, cherchant sa pensée, sa personnalité comme on cherche un objet perdu, finit-on par retrouver son propre "moi" plutôt que tout autre? Pourquoi, quand on se remet à penser, n'est-ce pas alors une autre personnalité que l'antérieure qui s'incarne en nous? On ne voit pas ce qui dicte le choix et pourquoi, entre les millions d'êtres humains qu'on pourrait être, c'est sur celui qu'on était la veille qu'on met juste la main. Qu'est-ce qui nous guide, quand il y a eu vraiment interruption (soit que le sommeil ait été complet, ou les rêves entièrement différents de nous)? Il y a eu vraiment mort, comme quand le coeur a cessé de battre et que des tractions rythmées de la langue nous raniment . . . La résurrection au réveil--après ce bienfaisant accès d'aliénation mentale qu'est le sommeil--doit ressembler au fond à ce qui se passe quand on retrouve un nom, un vers, un refrain oubliés. Et peut-être la résurrection de l'âme après la mort est-elle concevable comme un phénomène de mémoire. (II, 88)

Both Freud and Proust agree on the restorative power of sleep for the physical body and both make it quite clear that sleep represents a return to the womb (la chambre) and a subsequent rebirth. Proust, however, pursues the meta-physical aspect of sleep by suggesting that the sleeping mind is an autonomous entity which voluntarily wanders away from its body. It would seem that the mind, freed from its "case", now browses among all the millions of other sleeping bodies and somehow, when the body begins to reactivate, hurries to put itself back in the right one. What is it that guides the mind when this real interruption in life has occurred? The last sentence of the above passage provides the answer. A memory draws the wandering mind back to its original home. And if awakening from sleep resembles in any way what happens when a memory is revived, then perhaps a memory will awaken a soul after actual physical death has taken place. Since only that which has been experienced can provide a memory, a previous existence in which sensory experiences occurred must have taken place. De Becker states concisely what Proust suggests: the sleeping mind experiences a succession of births and deaths, the sleeping mind transcends the physical world, without physical limits, the mind is infinite. Proust adds the important footnote that there is the possibility that one will be resurrected

from death by the memory of a previous existence just as one is resurrected from sleep by the memory of the present existence.

To reinforce the concept that following physical death, new life is sure to come, Marcel describes the death of his grandmother. Her death comes at the end of a particularly painful and long illness. As he looks at the remains of what had been an old woman whose face was drawn from suffering, he finds that her face seems to have become young again. The wrinkles of old age and the contractions of pain have been somehow erased and her face has reassumed the look of carefree, innocent youth, full of hopes and dreams that only years of disillusionment can destroy.

La vie en se retirant venait d'emporter
les désillusions de la vie. Un sourire
semblait posé sur les lèvres de grand-mère.
Sur ce lit funèbre, la mort, comme le
sculpteur du Moyen Age, l'avait couchée
sous l'apparence d'une jeune fille. (III, 345)

And so the cycle of life begins again when death takes place, just as dawn follows darkness. Death and sleep erase the cares of life and bring the opportunity for a fresh beginning with every new awakening.

Proust is suggesting that there is continuity and permanence for each individual even after physical death has taken place. Within the world of the unconscious mind there exists a reality that goes beyond the limits of the universe. And who is to say that the conscious world is

more "real" than the unconscious one. Since he himself has experienced feelings of rebirth after a sleep which has left him paralyzed, "Il faut retrouver l'usage de ses membres, rapprendre à parler". (III, 123), and since he has observed the reversed transformation of his grandmother from old to young, why is it not possible that life be no more than a brief moment of wakefulness in the eternity where Time cannot be measured and rebirths cannot be numbered? If death is no more than a deep sleep from which we may be resurrected just as memory resurrects a name or a refrain, then there is nothing for any individual to fear from death. Time has no meaning in infinity and is rendered impotent when the conscious mind is removed from the physical condition.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.
 The infantile amnesia is the birth of the
 soul, the dreamer; and we are obliged to
 repeat what we cannot remember. This world
 is repetition-compulsion, is karma. . . .
 This world is dreams, the present trans-
 formed into the past, the shadow of the
 past falling on the present. The awakening
 explodes the cave of shadows; it is the end
 of the world.¹⁹

Proust's desire to control the destructive forces of Time have caused him to turn to the unconscious mind, the realm of both memory and sleep. He has found that both phenomena contain the potential to overcome oblivion. The memory is useful in two ways. First of all the physical world is made up of sensory stimuli which produce memory

images which the sensitive artist may transfer to future readers. In the second place, memory may be similar to the phenomenon which resurrects the soul after death has taken place just as it may call the unconscious mind back to the correct sleeping body. Sleep, however, offers to every man the possibility of the infinite continuation of life through a series of births and deaths.

IV. Dreams and Symbols: The Secret Wish

It is impossible to discuss sleep without considering dreams which are an integral part of sleep. Freud states that there is a constant connection between the dream and some detail of the sleeper's life. By examining a patient's dreams, he was able to determine that particular detail of his life which was troubling him. In a similar fashion the reader may interpret the dreams presented in A la Recherche du Temps Perdu and discover certain aspects of the dreamer's personality which would otherwise go unnoticed.

Proust and Freud were working at perfecting their skills and developing their theories at about the same time in the first part of the twentieth century. Because there are so many striking similarities between their attitudes toward the mind; the creative power of the Unconscious, the ability of the memory to bring back the past, the freedom of the sleeping mind, and man's instinctive desire to return to the womb in order to be born again, it is natural to apply Freud's techniques for dream interpretation to Proust's work.

First of all Freud explains why dreams take place at all. Since they are an interruption to sleep and disturb

a condition which serves to refresh and restore the mind and the body, why cannot the mind do away with them? Freud theorized that "the unconscious mind has desires that the individual is unaware of but which are expressed in dreams, and that often these wishes are expressed in symbols or in a cryptic language with two possible levels of meaning."²⁰ These desires may be known to the unconscious mind but suppressed by the conscious mind during the waking state. They emerge in the form of dreams whose symbols the dreamer may or may not be able to interpret. These symbols are the visual images of the dream and represent the unconscious dream-thought. If the symbols can be correctly interpreted, hidden wishes as well as open ones can be discovered and new insight into the unconscious mind will be gained. This new insight can offer guidance as to the waking action that a dreamer ought to take, a clearer understanding of his disturbing feelings or the solution to a problem that he is unable to deal with. "It [the dream] may be a warning, a resolve, a preparation, but it is always a wish fulfillment, translated into an archaic form and metamorphosed."²¹

Freud lists several qualities of dreams which are present in the dreams in A la Recherche du Temps Perdu. He explains the process of the dream-work, that is, how the dream goes about distorting the actual latent thought of the dreamer or

his suppressed wish and he categorizes the symbols that the dream offers as a substitute for that wish. He also explains how the dream-work may be "undone" by the interpreter through a process which he calls Free Association. By applying these scientific theories and taking advantage of Freud's psychoanalytical studies, the reader of Proust is able to achieve a broader interpretation of his work as a whole which is not only filled with dreams and descriptions of sleep but indeed, seems to possess a dream-like quality throughout.

The dream characteristics suggested by Freud in chapter 5 of A General Introduction to Psychology which seem most applicable to Proust's work are:

1. In dreams we go through many experiences which we fully believe in . . .

Car quoi qu'on dise, nous pouvons parfaitement en rêve l'impression que ce qui s'y passe est réel. Cela ne serait impossible que pour des raisons tirées de notre expérience de la veille, expérience qui à ce moment-là nous est cachée. De sorte que cette vie invraisemblable nous semble vraie. (III, 539)

2. The stage whereon the drama of the dream is played out is other than that of the life of waking ideas. That is a saying which we really do not understand, nor do we know what it is meant to convey to us, but it does actually reproduce the impression of strangeness which most dreams make upon us.

D'habitude elle (une impression) s'accompagnait de toute une mise en scène maladroite mais saisissante, qui, me faisait illusion, mettant sous mes yeux,

faisait entendre à mes oreilles ce qui désormais datait de cette nuit. (III, 538)

3. There are dreams as distinct as actual waking experiences, so distinct that for some time after waking we do not realize that they were dreams at all; others which are ineffable faint, shadowy, blurred; . . .

Le rêve était encore un de ces faits de ma vie, qui m'avait toujours le plus frappé, qui avait dû le plus servir à me convaincre du caractère purement mental de la réalité, et dont je ne dédaignerais pas l'aide dans la composition de mon oeuvre. Quand je vivais d'une façon un peu moins désintéressée, pour un amour, un rêve venait rapprocher singulièrement de moi, lui faisait parcourir de grands distances de temps perdu . . . (III, 914)

4. Dreams may be quite consistent or at any rate coherent . . . : others are confused, apparently imbecile, absurd, or often completely mad.
5. There are dreams which leave us quite cold, others which every effect makes itself felt--pain to the point of tears, terror so intense as to wake us . . .
6. Most dreams are forgotten soon after waking; or they persist throughout the day . . . ; others remain so vivid (as for example the dreams of childhood) that thirty years later we remember them as clearly as though they were part of a recent experience.

Et longtemps après mon rêve fini, je restais tourmenté de ce baiser qu'Albertine m'avait dit avoir donné en des paroles que je croyais entendre encore . . . Toute la journée je continuais à causer avec Albertine . . . (III, 540)

7. Dreams, like people, may make their appearance once and never come back; or the same person may dream the same thing repeatedly, either in the same form or with slight alterations.
8. These scraps of mental activity at nighttime have at command an immense repertory, can in fact create

everything that by day the mind is capable of-- only, it is never the same.

Magnifique erreur d'une multiplication par seize qui donne tant de beauté au réveil et introduit dans la vie une véritable novation . . . Il semble bien que le rêve soit fait, pourtant, avec la matière parfois la plus grossière de la vie, mais cette matière y est "traitée", malaxée de telle sorte--avec un étirement dû à ce qu'aucune des limites horaires de l'état de veille ne l'empêche de s'effiler à des hauteurs inouïes--qu'on ne la reconnaît pas. (III, 121)

9. The (external) stimulus which disturbs sleep is interpreted, but differently in each instance.
10. The dream does not merely reproduce the stimulus (the mental situation), but elaborates on it, plays fits upon it, fits it into a context, or replaces it by something else.

De ce que le monde du rêve n'est pas le monde de la veille, il ne s'ensuit pas que le monde de la veille soit moins vrai; Au contraire. Dans le monde du sommeil, nos perceptions sont tellement surchargées, chacune épaissie par une superposée qui la double, l'aveugle inutilement, que nous ne savons pas même distinguer ce qui se passe dans l'étourdissement du réveil. (III, 122)

Le rêve, ne tient-il pas une place plus grande même que la veille, lui qui ne tient pas compte des divisions infinitésimales du temps, supprime les transitions, oppose les grands contrastes, défait en un instant le travail de consolation si lentement tissé pendant le jour et nous ménage, la nuit, une rencontre avec celle que nous aurions fini par oublier à condition toutefois de ne pas la revoir? (III, 538)

Before interpreting any dreams based on Freudian principles, the reader must understand certain theories. First it must

be assumed that something is bothering the dreamer. He may have a problem that he cannot solve. He may have an obsessive need to achieve something. He may want something but someone or something (society) has forbidden him his wish and made him ashamed of it. His shame causes him to put the thought out of the conscious part of his mind, but it reappears, in a disguised form (the symbol) in the dream at night. Occasionally the desire is so strong and the repression so complete that the wish is distorted in the waking life and produces a neurotic symptom. Freud's plan is to find the meaning of the symptom by probing the product of the unconscious processes of the mind (the dream).

In the dream, the stimulus word is replaced by something derived from the mental life of the dreamer, from sources unknown to him, and hence very probably may be a "derivative of a complex". Starting from the substitute [the distorted dream-element], we must be able to arrive at the real object of our search by means of a train of associations; and further, . . . we may assume that the associations to the dream-element will have been determined not only by that element but also by the real thought which is not in consciousness.²²

Free from the inhibitions which the conscious mind imposes on unwanted memories, the sleeping mind goes to work on the repressed experience and produces a visual, imaginative "scene". So shameful or repulsive may this stimulus subject be that even the unconscious mind needs to disguise

or distort it. This process is called the "dream-work". The dream-work distorts by means of omission, modification, or re-grouping of material. The dream-element itself is a symbol of the unconscious dream-thought. If the dream-work can be unraveled and the disguise removed, the need which stimulated the sleeping mind to create a dream will be revealed.

The job of dream interpretation as it concerns the dreams in A la Recherche du Temps Perdu will be to discover the unconscious thoughts of the dreamer which will in turn explain the neurotic behavior that he either exhibits or suppresses. Since the reader is already aware of Proust's obsessive desire to perpetuate himself beyond the limits of this life, there will be little difficulty in interpreting those dreams which express the desire to overcome the boundaries of Time and Space. Proust, however, has other needs and desires which have been censored by society and so he allows them to be examined through the dreams of Marcel, who indulges in some of those unnatural desires in the waking state, but represses others which emerge in the unconscious state. By using Freud's technique of reversing the process of the dream-work which has carefully disguised the real meaning of the dream, the reader can arrive at the latent thoughts of the dreamer. In so doing, the reader

achieves deeper insight into the characters in the novel, a greater understanding of Proust, himself, as well as a broader interpretation of the entire work.

The dream-work transforms the latent thoughts, as expressed in words, into perceptual forms; most commonly visual images.²³ This metamorphosis is accomplished through one of these three processes:

1. Condensation; several persons, events, objects are combined into a blurred image. Condensation makes possible the union of two completely different latent trains of thought into a single manifest dream.
2. Displacement; one element is replaced by another or the accent is shifted from the important to the unimportant one.
3. Transformation; the transforming of thoughts and ideas into visual images, or perceptual forms.

Dream interpretation, then, consists of separating and defining that which has been condensed; of determining which is the really important element in the dream; and of discovering the thought which produced the visual image in the dream. The dream-work being a regressive process, dream interpretation must look for the earliest memories which emerge in dreams free from subsequently acquired impressions.

From the oblivion in which the first years of childhood are shrouded certain clearly retained recollections emerge, mostly in the form of plastic images . . . Memory deals with the mass of impressions received in later life by a process of selection, co-

retaining what is important and omitting what is not; but with the recollections retained from childhood this is not so Sometimes it happens that the impressions buried in oblivion of infantile memories emerge spontaneously from the unconscious and it is in connection with dreams that this happens . . . the material of the forgotten childish experiences is exposable to the dream and the child's mental life with all its peculiarities persists in it and therefore in the unconscious and that our dreams take us back every night to this infantile stage. This corroborates the belief that the Unconscious is the infantile mental life.²⁴

A la Recherche du Temps Perdu opens with the words, "Longtemps je me suis couché de bonne heure", and the narrator embarks on his journey of memories beginning with his earliest childhood impressions of Combray. Within the first few pages Proust presents three highly symbolic dreams and a dissertation on the regressive nature of the dream. Each of the three dreams reveals a wish; either one that Marcel has never considered even in the Unconscious or one that his Unconscious has censored and therefore distorted. Considered collectively, they bear out Freud's assertion that dreams are primitive in a two-fold sense: "in the first place it means the childhood of the individual and secondly, since each individual repeats the whole course of the development of the human race, the reference is phylogenetic."²⁵

Having studied thousands of dreams, Freud concluded that certain symbols nearly always represent the same latent

thought. The lists of symbols presented here have been taken from Freud's book, A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis, chapter 10, and Dream Psychology. Several are included which do not appear in the dreams interpreted in this study, but they are important to Proust's work as a whole. The category titles represent that which the dreamer is disguising, those aspects of life with which he is unable to cope, even in the Unconscious. The symbols listed under each category are what the dream-work has transformed the real stimuli into. "The relation between the symbol and the idea symbolized is an invariable one, the latter being as it were a translation of the former . . ."26 Freud is insistent about the fact that the vast majority of symbols are sexual symbols. There can be no doubt that human sexuality plays a great part in Proust's book and that the sexual perversion that society would repress is both described explicitly and disguised symbolically.

Freud dismisses the first 6 categories very quickly. Their symbols are few.

<u>the human body</u>	<u>parents</u>	<u>self</u>	<u>siblings</u>
a house a room	(ruling figures) kings, queens emperors empresses	prince princess	little animals vermin
<u>birth</u>	<u>death</u>		
water (plunging into or emerging from)	going on a journey traveling by train (a last journey)		

The symbols for sexual life are numerous and quite varied.

the sexuality of the male

the number Three
sticks, poles, trees,
upright objects, umbrellas
knives, daggers, sabers
guns, pistols
water taps, water mains,
springs
balloons, airplanes, flying.
(overcoming gravity)
reptiles, fishes, serpents
hands, feet, socks, gloves
rocks, mountains
machinery (especially that
which works upon some-
thing else such as a
plough)
keys (to open gates, doors,
etc.)
cravates
hats, cloaks
flame

the sexual act

climbing	} walls or
descending	
mounting	
riding a horse	
dancing	ladders
	or steep
	places

nakedness

uniforms
special clothes

castration

falling or
cutting of
hair or teeth

sexual self-gratification

playing at anything or
specifically playing the
piano

the sexuality of the female

objects which contain such as:
caves, hollows, pits, jars
chests, pockets, coffers
shoes, slippers, jewel cases
ships, vessels
cupboards, stoves, rooms
objects which lead into the
containers such as:
doors, gates, mouths, windows
underclothes, nightgowns
snails, mussels
objects to be worked on such
as:
wood, paper, tables
objects to be opened such as:
books
objects in nature such as:
landscapes of rocks, woods,
or water, gardens
fruit (apples, peaches)
flowers, blossoms
buildings such as:
chapels, churches
fireplace

passion, energy, power

fire

onanism

gliding, sliding, pulling
off a branch

These symbols may be applied to the four dream sequences which are presented so quickly in the opening pages. In the first dream account, Marcel reveals the fact that as he falls off to sleep, he assumes the identity of the subject of the book he was reading when he fell asleep. This is a reasonable example of Transformation, or the transforming of thoughts or ideas into visual forms.

Il me semblait que j'étais moi-même ce
dont parlait l'ouvrage: une église, un
quatuor, la rivalité de François Ier et
de Charles-Quint. Cette croyance survivait
pendant quelques secondes à mon réveil . . .
Puis elle commençait à me devenir in-
telligible, comme après la métempsychose
les pensées d'une existence antérieure;
le sujet du livre se détachait de moi . . . (I, 3)

The first level of interpretation is simple and obvious according to Freudian symbolism. Marcel has attached himself to a church (female), a piece of music specifically for four (one more than three which represents the male), and a rivalry--not a war with typically male weapons, but a rivalry which usually represents a struggle between two forces. Marcel fully believes in the reality of his dream and that he is the subject of his book, for he continues to believe in the reality of the dream for some time after he has awakened and it is very slowly that he detaches himself from it. The immediate stimulus which produced the dream (the book) has been elaborated on and fit into a

wholly acceptable context as far as the Unconscious mind is concerned.

There is, however, a second level of interpretation that goes beyond the superficial qualities of the dream. The Freudian interpretation of Marcel's struggle for sexual identity does not take into account Proust's personal desire to attach himself to a work of art, the only thing that to his mind survives the limits of the physical world. Nor does it explain why his separation from a dream should be compared to the transferral of a soul from a previous existence. Beginning with the substitute objects and employing all the knowledge already gathered about the personality of Proust, the reader is able to arrive at the real thought which is not in the consciousness of the dreamer. Architecture is obviously an art form and the splendor of gothic churches fascinates Marcel throughout the book and forms one of the major themes. The piece of music also represents an artistic creation and "la petite phrase", the repetition of a simple musical refrain, proves to be an important means to revive a memory. The rivalry between François Ier and Charles-Quint can be interpreted as France's means to bring alive within herself the glory of the Italian Renaissance. It is Botticelli's paintings which Swann so much admires and he must mentally reshape Odette's face so that it assumes

the look of a Botticelli face before he can find her altogether adorable.

The first dream sequence provides the reader with the opportunity to interpret a Proustian dream using Freudian techniques. The results reveal the peculiar qualities of dreams, the repressed wish of Marcel (sexual identity), and the open and expressed wish of Proust, which is to make himself a part of a work of art. It also establishes Proust's theory of the transferral of sense-impressions from one soul to another and further, hints at his belief in reincarnation.

The second dream emphasizes the fact that sexual identity and the role of the male vis-a-vis the female constitutes a major theme within the novel. This dream of a childhood event that he recalls in sleep as an adult establishes another perverted sexual theme: that which is female is subject to torment and punishment while that which is male is cruel and sadistic. The choice of rejecting that which is female because of the pain it must suffer leaves him only the alternative of being that which is male and therefore sadistic. The alternative is not a happy one for a gentle person whose life is made safe and pleasant by the women who surround him (his mother, his grandmother, his aunts).

The dream itself is simple enough. Marcel has regressed in his sleep to his early childhood and he experiences, once again, one of its terrors: his uncle pulling his curls. Even though the day came when the curls were cut off, his dream life is unaware of this and the humiliating experience of having them pulled is vividly re-created by his unconscious mind. He awakens and recalls that the curls are now gone having been cut off as he grew older. Nevertheless, he wraps his pillow around his head and returns to sleep with his head symbolically protected from the offending curls and the tormenting uncle. The curls are, of course, a female attribute and he reacts violently against them since they arouse his uncle to acts of a sadistic nature. Symbolically, the cutting off of the curls represents castration which in this case would certainly make the little boy's life happier. Undertones of incest are also present in this sequence but most important of all are the sadistic-masochistic implications of which his conscious intellect is unaware.

Why would Marcel, the adult, return to such an unhappy experience in his dreams? If Freud is to be believed, all dreams represent wish fulfillments. Certainly Marcel should not choose to fulfill a terror, or would he? "En dormant j'avais rejoint sans effort un age à jamais revolu de ma vie primitive, retrouvé telle de mes terreurs enfantines . . ."

Freud explains that a wish fulfillment need not bring pleasure to the dreamer.

Anxiety dreams often have a content in which there is no distortion . . . This type of dream is frequently an undisguised wish fulfillment, the wish being, of course, not one which the dreamer would accept but one which he has rejected; . . . the ordinary distorted dream is the disguised fulfillment of a repressed wish, the formula for the anxiety-dream is that it is the open fulfillment of a repressed wish. For those who would prefer to censor this wish, painful emotions are experienced and the dreamer usually awakens . . . we usually break off our sleep before the repressed wish behind the dream overcomes the censorship and reaches complete fulfillment.²⁷

If Marcel were enlightened about his dream, he would certainly see in it a warning as well as an understanding of his disturbing feelings. His anxiety dream of the curl pulling uncle shows no distortion and the conclusion is that the dream is broken off because the repressed wish to be hurt (because of a female attribute) is successfully censored and the adult Marcel physically rejects such a possibility by covering his entire head. This dream is coherent, vivid, and terrible. It has appeared more than once but the dreamer has made no attempt to understand it. Thus the reader is once again left to trace the source of the latent thought from the visual image and once again he finds that Freud's theories indicate that the dreamer is unaware of the hidden wishes which lie buried in his unconscious mind.

Likewise he is unaware of all the ramifications of his unknown or repressed wishes.

Further proof of Marcel's struggle for sexual identity, his ambivalent feelings toward his own masculinity, and his repressed desire to suffer the torments that the male inflicts on the female are provided in the third dream which appears in the paragraph immediately following the "curl" dream. It is primitive in the phylogenetic sense. Comparing himself to Adam who gives life to Eve, he dreams that a woman emerges from his thigh. She is literally born from a mental experience. "Formée du plaisir que j'étais sur le point de goûter, je m'imaginais que c'était elle qui me l'offrait." (I, 4) Having created her with his unconscious mind, he seeks to join himself to her, but the warmth that he feels is that of his own body and he awakens just prior to the sexual union that he claims to desire. As he lies there he fancies that this woman who has just left him is something set apart from the rest of humanity. His body is still warm from her kiss and he feels the contours of his body conforming to hers. Because this is a recurrent dream and the woman appears occasionally in the dream as someone he knows in waking life, he determines to find her but he is aware that the charm of a dream is never to be found in reality, and gradually even the memory of the girl disappears.

This dream follows remarkably closely the qualities of dreams enumerated on page 37-39. "The stage whereon the drama of life is played is other than that of the life of waking ideas. . . ." Marcel is very much aware of this even though the dream itself is so vivid that "every effect makes itself felt". This is a dream which occurs repeatedly, "either in the same form or with slight alterations" (the features of the woman). This is also a dream which causes the dreamer to wake up before the wish has been fulfilled. This being the case, the possibility that this is an anxiety dream cannot be ruled out and the fact is that perhaps Marcel would find the fulfillment of his wish a shameful one which his conscious intellect has censored.

Once again Marcel makes no attempt to analyze his dream but Proust has given the reader a great deal of insight into his personality in the two preceding dreams. Basing this knowledge on Freudian principles, the reader is free to assume that there is a reason for this sort of dream and that something in Marcel's past may have provoked the dream of a woman who is created by the thought of the pleasure that she is supposed to produce, who emerges from his thigh, disappears before completing her natural sexual role, and yet gives to him the shape of her body and the warmth of her passion. She is at once desirable and fearful, otherwise

why would he break off the dream? The symbols or dream-elements reinforce the theory of Marcel's sex-identity conflict. "Because the dreamer does not wish to express a shameful feeling even in a dream, he will substitute an acceptable visual image." Could Marcel have substituted a woman for a man and then been unable to fulfill his repressed desire? The fact that the rest of humanity appears to be far away from her might indicate that she is either non-human or superior to the rest of the world, superhuman. If she has replaced the real object of his desire, a male, then her remoteness from the rest of the world might indicate Marcel's subconscious knowledge that such a lover must be isolated, hidden away, or removed from contact with normal human beings. If, on the other hand, it can be accepted that she is something that he alone has created through the power of his unconscious mind and that she is elusive, superior, recurrent, sensual, tantalizing, and capable of causing him to give chase after her, then she could represent his work of art. She could be his book, his mental creation. First of all there is the interesting comparison of himself to Adam, the first of all men and the progenitor of the human race. This would indicate his desire to beget or create not just an heir for now but heirs for eternity. If the Freudian point of view is assumed and

the possibility that within Marcel there lies an ambivalent attitude toward sexual roles is accepted, then it is reasonable to assume that this dream indicates Marcel's potential to assume both the male role to engender and the female role to give birth. He has formed an entity from within his body, endowed it with warmth and substance to the extent that he feels his own body conforming to its shape. He remains a male, has created a female to reproduce his own species, and has never gone outside of his mind. His dream has rendered him hermaphroditic in the sense that he is capable of complete reproduction within himself and thus his repressed attitudes toward normal sexual relationships are resolved. Marcel was unaware, if Proust was not, of his need to create something of permanence, conceived within himself, totally independent of others.

These three dreams, then, represent unfulfilled wishes; either repressed or merely latent. They have been allowed to rise to the surface of the conscious by means of the dream. Presented as they are at the beginning of the novel, they set the tone for the entire novel, creating a dream-world mood filled with sensuality and anormality.

The discourse on the nature of the sleeping man is pertinent to the preceding dreams in that it emphasizes Freud's theory on the "primitive" aspect of the dream-work.

If the dream in which Marcel compares himself to Adam may be considered primitive in the Biblical or phylogenetic sense, then the feelings he claims to experience during a deep sleep are primitive in the scientific or historical sense.

Mon sommeil fût profond et détendît
entièrement mon esprit; . . . quand je
m'éveillais au milieu de la nuit . . .
je ne savais pas même pas au premier
instant qui j'étais; j'avais seulement
dans sa simplicité première le sentiment
de l'existence comme il peut frémir au
fond d'un animal; j'étais plus dénué que
l'homme des cavernes. (I, 5)

A deep sleep not only strips man of his physical identity, but clears his mind of all intellectual impressions. His conscious thoughts are erased and there exists a blank slate on which his unconscious mind is free to go to work to retrieve those infantile visual images which represent his most basic wishes.

At this point it is interesting to follow through on the third dream to see in what way Marcel proves it to be a wish and how he fulfills it. In La Prisonnière he has literally captured the woman he needs to fulfill his sadist-masochistic tendencies. Albertine is herself bi-sexual but Marcel refuses to accept this fact and very nearly makes a prisoner of her in his home to prevent her from having relationships with anyone other than himself. He feels himself at the

height of his power over her when she is asleep and one of his greatest pleasures is watching her unconscious, sleeping form.

Quand elle dormait, je n'avais plus à parler, je savais que je n'étais plus regardé par elle, je n'avais plus besoin de vivre à la surface de moi-même. . . . En fermant les yeux, en perdant la conscience, Albertine avait dépouillé, l'un après l'autre, ces différents caractères d'humanité qui m'avaient déçu depuis le jour où j'avais fait sa connaissance. Elle n'était plus animée que la vie inconsciente des végétaux, des arbres, vie plus indifférente de la mienne, plus étrange, et qui cependant m'appartenait davantage. Son moi ne s'échappait pas à tous moments, comme quand nous causions. . . . Elle avait rappelé à soi tout ce qui d'elle était au dehors; elle s'était réfugiée, enclose, résumée, dans son corps. En le tenant sous mon regard dans mes mains, j'avais cette impression de la posséder tout entière. . . . Sa vie m'était soumise, exhalait vers moi son léger souffle. (III, 70)

The sleeping Albertine is stripped of all the masks that she wears during the day. The art of deceit which she has mastered over the years provides her with the ability to be many things to many people. In sleep she regresses before Marcel's eyes to her original state of innocence and he is able to recognize the essence behind the physical object. What is more important, he is able to possess it entirely. Sleep has gathered together all her component parts and the various images she projects are enclosed within her. Sleep

has reduced her to little more than a vegetable. Only the sound of her occasionally irregular breath distinguishes her seemingly lifeless form from that of a corpse or an embryo. And even that light trickle of air flows toward Marcel, making his possession of her complete. It is as if her very existence depends on his conscious awareness of her.

If all the various deceitful Albertines have been erased, the sleeping Albertine possesses an infinite number of new personalities.

Des races, des atavismes, des vices reposaient sur son visage. Chaque fois qu'elle déplaçait sa tête, elle créait une femme nouvelle, souvent insoupçonnée de moi. Il me semblait posséder non pas une, mais d'innombrables jeunes filles. (III, 72)

Her hands folded on her chest (as if laid out for burial), her breathing lighter and lighter, she falls more and more deeply asleep as Marcel watches in a sort of trance. When he is sure that sleep has completely overtaken her, he stretches out beside her and embarks on her sleep. "Je m'étais embarqué sur le sommeil d'Albertine." (III, 72)

He assumes a position similar to the one in his dream on the opening pages in which the woman emerges from his thigh. Now, however, he is stretched out beside Albertine, his leg pressing against hers. This time, instead of waking up

before the union is completed, the conscious Marcel is able to experience sexual pleasure, but his partner is asleep. It is on these occasions that he enjoys himself the most for he is in complete control of an unconscious, unresisting body which he can endow with any qualities he chooses. He has joined himself to an inanimate object and the pleasure that he experiences is in the knowledge that she is completely his.

Continuant à entendre, à recueillir,
d'instant en instant le murmure, apaisant
comme une imperceptible brise, de sa pure
haleine, c'était toute une existence
physiologique qui était devant moi, à
moi; (III, 73)

It is only her breath that distinguishes Albertine from a corpse and Marcel makes frequent mention of the sound or the feel of her breath. At one point he enjoys having her breath pass into his own mouth in a common respiration. A sort of artificial respiration takes place, but who is being revived? If she is breathing new life into him, it is he who is about to give birth to her.

Quelquefois on eût dit que la mer devenait
grosse, que la tempête se faisait sentir
jusque dans la baie, et je me mettais contre
elle à entendre le grondement de son souffle
qui ronflait. (III, 73)

In Freudian terms the sea represents woman. It is significant that in this passage the sea has been made pregnant by the

storm for this is the link to the original dream, the creation of a new being without actual impregnation. It is as though, having been wrapped in the womb of sleep, Albertine comes into consciousness in a sort of rebirth in which Marcel has been an active participant. When he feels her rising out of her sleep, the exhilaration and pleasure he experiences is similar to that of a parent participating in the mystery of the birth of a child.

Mais ce plaisir de la voir dormir, et qui était aussi doux que la sentir vivre, un autre y mettait fin, et qui était celui de la voir s'éveiller. Il était, à un degré plus profond et plus mystérieux, le plaisir même qu'elle habitât chez moi. . . . Il me l'était plus encore que, quand du fond du sommeil elle remontait les derniers degrés de l'escalier des songes, ce fût dans ma chambre qu'elle renaquit à la conscience et à la vie. . . . Dans ce premier moment délicieux d'incertitude, il me semblait que je prenais à nouveau plus complètement possession d'elle. . . (III, 74)

Marcel has fulfilled his dream wish during Albertine's sleep and has given to the reader proof of the latent homosexual tendencies which he has managed to repress in the conscious world but realize in the unconscious world. The obvious Freudian symbolism includes: his allusions to two women entwined, "Mais combien il est plus étrange qu'une femme soit accolée, comme Rosita a Doodica, à une autre femme dont la beauté différente fait induire un autre caractère, . . .";

the sea's being made pregnant after he has experienced sexual satisfaction; the secret that she carries in her pocket (her letters that she keeps in the inside pocket of a kimono); and finally her rebirth in his room.

After the physical death of his grandmother, Marcel has remained curiously unmoved. Unable to deal with so painful an experience in the conscious state, he has simply put her memory aside. The fact is that guilt feelings are devouring him because of his indifference toward her love for him. These guilt feelings that he has been able to put aside rise to the surface in the unconscious state and he is forced to deal with them. Freud declares that dreams may serve to aid the individual in coping with a problem or dealing with a disturbing feeling. Marcel's memory of his grandmother is slipping away from him and he has not yet resolved his anxiety feelings toward her. "Car aux troubles de la mémoire sont liées les intermittences du coeur." (II, 756) Freud explains his memory lapses as ". . . the aversion on the part of the memory against recalling anything connected with painful feelings that would revive the pain if it were recalled."²⁸ His dream brings him face to face with the truth about himself and provides him with the opportunity to bring her back to life just long enough to fulfill his wish and rid himself of his guilt.

One night before falling asleep in the hotel at the beach which he and his grandmother used to visit, Marcel lies there thinking about her and her devotion to him. He is aware that he has been unfeeling toward her memory. Now, on the verge of sleep he feels the need to recall the grief that will make her memory come alive for him.

Ces douleurs, si cruelles qu'elles fussent, je m'y attachais de toute mes forces, car je sentais bien qu'elles étaient l'effet du souvenir que j'avais de ma grand-mère, la preuve que ce souvenir était bien présent en moi. (II, 759)

As he lies there, he inflicts upon himself the painful memories of the grief that he caused her. Finally his eyes close on the outside world and sleep overtakes him, and he embarks on a strange journey. His sensory perceptions are active as he is aware of the growing darkness and of the wind. He finds himself looking desperately for his grandmother. He realizes even in sleep that her existence has been diminished by death to the point of its being no more than a pale memory. He is suddenly overwhelmed by the sensation that he cannot breathe and that his heart has become hard. The knowledge that he has neglected his grandmother in life forces him to admit his guilt. He pictures her in a tiny, bare room, paralyzed and alone. Frantically he seeks to find her, to comfort her, but he does not even know her address.

He is afraid that his absence from her has been so long that she will not recognize him. The darkness and the wind prevent him from taking any steps forward. Suddenly, his father appears and he tries to relieve Marcel's mind about his grandmother. He declares that she is being provided for but that she does occasionally ask about him. She is pleased with the information that he plans to write a book but wishes he would visit her. His grief overwhelms him and sobbing, he begs to be taken to her. His father, however, refuses saying that it would be better that he not go. He says that he will provide Marcel with the address and the directions but his going would do no good at all and besides the guard probably would not let him enter. At this point his father begins to speak non-sensically and Marcel feels himself surfacing from his dream.

Whereas the dream produces the impression of strangeness, the experience is quite real to Marcel and provokes emotions that carry over into his consciousness. The raw material for the dream is provided by people from his real life and they are recognizable as such. There is no distortion in that sense and the dream is recognized as being an anxiety type. Marcel's undisguised wish fulfillment is the search for his grandmother. His conscious mind has rejected the pursuit of her memory and she and her love fade away. When he returns

to the place where he experienced such a close and happy relationship with his grandmother and is suddenly overwhelmed by her memory, he forces himself to remember, and as he falls asleep, his unconscious takes over from there.

This particular dream is not rich in Freudian symbolism. Father in the dream is father of the unconscious world, the dominating figure who knows all and makes all the decisions. The world of sleep represents the world of death but the symbols used are basically mythological. As he sinks into sleep Marcel describes the world he is entering and his reference to the black waves of the river Lethe in the subterranean city leaves no doubt that he is pursuing his grandmother into death itself. The winds of the world of spirits and the darkness of the world of shades adds to the ghostly, shadowy quality of the underworld. His grandmother's room which is so small is probably her shrunken cadavre. She is paralyzed but she does not want to get up. Her needs are attended to by a paid guard (perhaps a cemetery-keeper, or mythologically, Pluto) but she is alone and Father feels that it is best that way, for a visit to her only causes her to think and thinking causes pain. And the book that she's happy to hear about? This would reinforce the idea of the woman as his mental creation, the book.

By re-experiencing the end of his grandmother's life again, he is able to properly react to it with the devastating

feelings of grief and guilt that had been absent at the time of her actual death. It is the dream, then, that enlarges the meaning of death for Marcel and provides him with a compassionate understanding of the grief of his mother.

On peut dire que la mort n'est pas inutile, que le mort continue à agir sur nous. Il agit même plus qu'un vivant parce que, la véritable réalité n'étant dégagée que par l'esprit, étant l'objet d'une opération spirituelle, nous ne connaissons vraiment que ce que nous sommes obligés de recréer par la pensée, ce que nous cache la vie de tous les jours . . . (II, 770)

His dream has relieved his guilt feelings and his wish to understand and appreciate the meaning of his grandmother's death has been fulfilled.

One other dream that is interesting to examine from a Freudian point of view is the one that Swann experiences as he approaches a break in his affair with Odette. The dream is rich in Freudian symbols, reveals the suppressed wish of Swann's unconscious mind, and contains many of the characteristics common to Freudian dreams. This dream provides examples of condensation, displacement, and transformation. There is even mention of the process of Free Association when Swann tries to interpret the dream himself, while he is still asleep!

Car, d'images incomplètes et changeants, Swann endormi tirait des déductions fausses, ayant d'ailleurs momentanément un tel pouvoir créateur qu'il se reproduisait

par simple division comme certains organismes inférieurs; avec la chaleur sentie de sa propre paume il modelait le creux d'une main étrangère qu'il croyait serrer, et de sentiments et d'impressions dont il n'avait pas conscience encore faisait naître comme des péripéties qui, par leur enchaînement logique, amèneraient à point nommé dans le sommeil de Swann le personnage nécessaire pour recevoir son amour ou provoquer son réveil. (I, 380)

In the dream there is a group of people strolling along a constantly rising and falling cliff near the sea. Swann is able to feel the icy sea spray from time to time but he is unable to wipe it away. He is embarrassed at having his nightgown on but he hopes that the darkness will conceal this fact. As Mme. Verdurin stares at him, her nose becomes hideously long and she sprouts a mustache. Suddenly Odette looks at her watch and announces that she has to leave. Swann is stunned and filled with hate, but he smilingly responds to Mme. Verdurin's question and continues to climb (monter) with her in the opposite direction (sens inverse) from Odette, who is descending. He notices that at the end of one second several hours have passed since her departure from the group. Someone in the group announces that Napoleon III, a member of the party, disappeared shortly after Odette and that it was understood between them that they were to meet (se rejoindre) at the bottom of the coast. A young man in a fez, who is a stranger to the group, begins to weep

and Swann tries to console him. He removes his fez in order for him to be more comfortable and explains that Odette was right to go with the man, that he had advised her to do so ten times, and that he was a man who could understand her.

At this point Swann begins to interpret the dream while he is still sleeping. He identifies the young man as himself. This division of his personality enables him to both participate in and observe himself in the dream. He declares that Napoleon III is Forcheville because of "some vague association of ideas", a "certain modification of his physiognomy", and the X-shaped cord of the uniform of the Legion of Honor. Here, Proust remarks that the sleeping Swann draws some false conclusions about the images he sees in his dream because the sleeping mind has such creative power that it incorporates any image necessary to fill the need of the dreamer.

Abruptly the setting of the dream changes. Twilight has become black night and Swann is alone. An alarm sounds and people come running past him, fleeing from their burning houses. Swann hears the sound of the pounding waves and feels his heart beating within him with the same violence. Suddenly, he feels grief and inexplicable nausea. A peasant covered with burns runs by him advising him to ask Charlus where Odette went with her friend to spend the evening for

she tells him everything. The peasant further declares that it is they who started the fire.

It is difficult for the logic of the conscious mind to unravel the dream-work. Some things that become apparent to Swann in his sleep are quite accurate. The young man weeping over Odette's departure is Swann who is at the same time declaring that he told her to go. This duality of character permits Swann to indulge in his ambivalent feelings toward Odette. He is filled with hatred for her and yet the thought of losing her causes him grief. Napoleon III represents masculinity whether it is Forcheville or not. Further interpretation will be based on Freudian symbolism.

The cliff with many curves, the landscape, and the sea are all representative of a female. The icy sea touches Swann who apparently wants to get rid of it but cannot. Freud sees in the nightshirt female attributes but there is something strangely reminiscent about a man in a nightshirt telling a woman to go to another man's bed. What is the relationship between Swann's telling Odette to go with Forcheville, his rival, and Marcel's father (a strongly masculine figure) telling his mother to go to Marcel's room for the night? Swann, himself, is ashamed of appearing in this attire. Mme. Verdurin's "hideously" long nose and hairy moustache obviously represent the male genitals, but why

would a woman assume masculine attributes unless Proust is hinting strongly that such metamorphoses are not impossible. A nightshirt clad Swann climbing a hill with a male-woman suggests once more the homosexual undertones of the novel. The word "inversion" which translates "perversion" is used to describe the opposite, or normal route that Odette is taking. Her action of descending also refers to the sexual act. The name Napoleon normally brings to mind a masculine, dominant figure. The addition of the number Three after it makes it clear that this individual who is to join Odette is definitely a masculine one. When Swann plays the double role of himself and the young man, Freudian symbolism adds yet another interpretation. On the first level there is Swann the participant in a dream and Swann watching himself. On the second level there is Swann being allowed to experience both of his attitudes toward Odette at the same time. On the Freudian level there is the possibility of Swann comforting a young man as a woman would comfort a child or lover. On the other hand Swann could be the masculine figure and the young man the tender female in distress. In any event Swann removes the young man's hat which would indicate a demasculating process. This division of personality allows Swann to indulge in two opposite roles at once, no matter how interpreted.

Forcheville or Napoleon is wearing a uniform which Freud says represents nakedness. This would heighten the sexuality of his "rendez-vous" with Odette. At this point an outside stimulus (Swann's valet ringing) penetrates the dream in the form of the fire alarm. The house that is on fire is a person consumed with passion. Everywhere there are people running from "burning houses" lest they, too, be consumed. His heart pounding as violently as the sea, Swann receives a warning which should warn the reader as well. It is Charlus and Odette who have set the fire.

Swann makes no further attempt to interpret his dream, but the reader has learned a great deal about his indecisiveness and the weakness of his character. Later that morning when he thinks about the dream he wonders how he could possibly have wasted so much time on someone like Odette. Then he marries her.

Conclusion

Proust was searching for absolutes, for a transcendent reality. His search led him to a study of the world within himself, the world of his mind. He realized that the objects that he perceived in the physical world were merely "cases" which were subject to the ravages of Time. He also realized that these "cases" contained the Essence or the transcendent reality of the object itself. In other words, physical objects are symbols of the Idea which exists only in the mind. In the unconscious mind Time is meaningless for memories and dreams can bring the past into the present complete with all the sensations that accompanied it. The creative power of the Unconscious is unlimited. Proust created a work of art, a book, in which he carefully put back into "cases" all the Ideas he had extracted and retained in his memory. But in so doing, he disguised them.

Freud was also searching for the idea behind the symbol. He found that the Unconscious mind is filled with all the impressions it has accumulated over the years. Even though the conscious mind would do away with some of them, they remain there and emerge during sleep in the form of dreams.

The dream is made up of symbols which represent impressions or latent thoughts. The original thought or idea that provoked the symbol can be uncovered if that symbol is correctly interpreted.

Both men were looking for something that hid in a symbol. Both men found that the unconscious mind was the place to find the abstract idea that was enclosed in the symbol. Freud sought the original stimulus (impression) which produced the symbol or the dream. Proust sought to create a dream world and to fill it with symbols which would evoke in someone else his own original sensations and impressions. It is impossible to dismiss the usefulness of Freud's work in the interpretation of Proust's.

Footnotes

¹ Edwin Diamond, The Science of Dreams (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1962), p. 37.

² Sigmund Freud, A General Introduction to Psychology, trans. and rev. by Joan Riviere (New York: Washington Square Press, 1960), pp. 25-26.

³ Marcel Proust, A la Recherche du Temps Perdu (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1954), III, 1031. (Henceforth all references to this work will be noted in the basic text by volume and page number immediately following the quote.)

⁴ Asa Briggs, ed., The Nineteenth Century (London: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1970), p. 321.

⁵ Calvin S. Hall, A Primer of Freudian Psychology (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Co., 1954), p. 18.

⁶ André Maurois, Proust: Portrait of a Genius (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), pp. 160-161.

⁷ Ibid., p. 207.

⁸ Freud, A General Introduction to Psychology, p. 25.

⁹ Maurois, Proust: Portrait of a Genius, p. 171.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy: an Essay on Interpretation, trans. by Denis Savage (New York and London: Yale University Press, 1970), pp. 117-121.

Footnotes (Cont'd.)

- 12 Freud, A General Introduction to Psychology, p. 26.
- 13 Ibid., pp. 305-306.
- 14 Ibid., p. 25.
- 15 Maurois, Proust: Portrait of a Genius, p. 174.
- 16 Freud, A General Introduction, p. 103.
- 17 Ibid., pp. 92, 93.
- 18 Raymond de Becker, The Understanding of Dreams and Their Influence on the History of Man, trans. by Michael Heron (New York: Bell Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 401-402.
- 19 Norman O. Brown, Love's Body (New York: Random House, 1966), p. 218.
- 20 Diamond, The Science of Dreams, p. 35.
- 21 Freud, A General Introduction, p. 235.
- 22 Ibid., pp. 115-118.
- 23 Ibid., p. 189.
- 24 Ibid., pp. 209-211.
- 25 Ibid., p. 209.
- 26 Ibid., p. 158.
- 27 Ibid., p. 228.
- 28 Ibid., p. 78.

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