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PSYCHOANALYSIS —
SLEEP and DREAMS

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND BEHAVIOR

BY ANDRÉ TRIDON

"Tridon applies the psychoanalytical doctrine to a number of everyday problems, a business that ought to be undertaken on a far more extensive scale. His chapters on the psychology of war hysteria and of comstockery are acute and constructive."

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PSYCHOANALYSIS SLEEP and DREAMS

BY

ANDRÉ TRIDON

Author of

"Psychoanalysis, its History, Theory and Practice"
and "Psychoanalysis and Behavior"

"Nothing is more genuinely
ourselves than our dreams."

Nietzsche.



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FOR
ADELE LEWISOHN

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PREFACE

St. Augustine was glad that God did not hold him responsible for his dreams. From which we may infer that his dreams must have been "human, all too human" and that he experienced a certain feeling of guilt on account of their nature.

His attitude is one assumed by many people, laymen and scientists, some of them concealing it under a general scepticism as to dream interpretation.

Few people are willing to concede as Nietzsche did, that "nothing is more genuinely ourselves than our dreams."

This is why the psychoanalytic pronouncement that dreams are the fulfilment of wishes meets with so much hostility.

The man who has a dream of gross sex or ego gratification dislikes to have others think that the desire for such gross pleasure is a part of his personality. He very much prefers to have others believe that some extraneous agent, some whimsical power, such as the devil, forced such thoughts

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upon him while the unconsciousness of sleep made him irresponsible and defenceless.

This is due in part to the absurd and barbarous idea that it is meet to inflict punishment for mere thoughts, an idea which is probably as deeply rooted in ignorant minds in our days as it was in the mind of the Roman emperor who had a man killed because the poor wretch dreamed of the ruler's death.

We must not disclaim the responsibility for our unconscious thoughts as they reveal themselves through dreams. They are truly a part of our personality. But our responsibility is merely psychological; we should not punish people for harbouring in their unconscious the lewd or murderous cravings which the caveman probably gratified in his daily life; nor should we be burdened with a sense of sin because we cannot drive out of our consciousness certain cravings, biologically natural, but socially unjustifiable.

The first prerequisite for a normal mental life is the acceptance of all biological facts. Biology is ignorant of all delicacy.

The possible presence of broken glass, coupled with the fact that man lacks hoofs, makes it imperative for man to wear shoes.

The man who is unconsolable over the fact that
[x]

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his feet are too tender in their bare state to tread roads, and the man who decides to ignore broken glass and to walk barefoot, are courting mental and physical suffering of the most useless type.

He who accepts the fact that his feet are tender and broken glass dangerous, and goes forth, shod in the proper footgear, will probably remain whole, mentally and physically.

When we realize that our unconscious is ours and ourselves, but not of our own making, we shall know our limitations and our potentialities and be free from many fears.

No better way has been devised for probing the unconscious than the honest and scientific study of dreams, a study which must be conducted with the care and the freedom from bias that characterize the chemist's or the physicist's laboratory experiments.

Furthermore, dream study and dream study alone, can help us solve a problem which scientists have generally disregarded or considered as solved, the tremendous problem of sleep.

Algebra and Latin, which are of no earthly use to 999/1000 of those studying them, are a part of the curriculum of almost every high school. Sleep, in which we spend one-third of our life, is not considered as of any importance.

Preface

How could we understand sleep unless we understood the phenomena which take place in sleep: dreams?

Even Freud, whose research work lifted dream study from the level of witchcraft to that of an accurate science, seems to have been little concerned with the enigma of sleep and sleeplessness.

This book is an attempt at correlating sleep and dreams and at explaining sleep through dreams.

Briefly stated, my thesis is that we sleep in order to dream and to be for a number of hours our simpler and unrepressed selves. Sleeplessness is due to the fact that, in our fear of incompletely repressed cravings, we do not dare to become, through the unconsciousness of sleep, our primitive selves. In nightmares, repressed cravings which seek gratification under a symbolic cloak, and are therefore unrecognizable, cause us to be tortured by fear.

The cure for sleeplessness and nightmares is, accordingly, the acceptance of biological facts observable in our unconscious and our willingness to grant, through the unconsciousness of sleep, dream gratification to conscious and unconscious cravings of a socially objectionable kind which we must, however, accept as a part of our personality.

121 Madison Avenue

February, 1921.

New York City

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