
Students taking introductory courses in psychology were experimentally investigated in order to throw light on the question—Do emotionally unstable individuals recall more dreams than their relatively stable associates? It was concluded that something besides emotional instability was operative in determining the frequency of dreams. The evidence here set forth gives no foundation for the Freudian concept of dreams and must be looked upon as putting the analysts on the defensive when they begin talking about the relationship between dreams and emotional instability. On the contrary, no evidence appears here to question the assumption of H. J. Watt, who says the chief difference between the thinking of daily life and of dreams must surely lie in the initial source of each. In sleep we start usually, or after the slightest reflection from within or without the body, with favored but unsatisfied or unrealized attitudes of mental action. These are the parts of our mind that have the most latent energy and are least asleep.

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The neurotic symptoms of childhood are by no means due solely to wrong behaviour on the part of the parents; they occur also under excellent environmental conditions. They are caused by conflicts which are at work in every child. These can be increased or diminished through environmental influence but can in no case be avoided completely. Such symptoms sometimes appear in the first weeks of life. Some infants from the very beginning show anxiety and sometimes as early as the second or third month of life this anxiety takes on the form of a definite phobia. There are others who from the earliest age suffer from conversion symptoms, vomiting, constipation, or fits. Many children develop anxiety in the second or third year, often of psychotic character. ‘Naughtiness,’ lying and stealing as well are mostly related to neurotic conflicts. Asocial behaviour and abnormal character development often start in early childhood. Frequently enough such symptoms disappear in later life, but this often merely indicates that the conflict is finding no outlet—a psychic situation which may be unfavourable for the child’s development. Disappearance or diminution of neurotic symptoms in the latency period is caused by strengthening of the ego and