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# A Study of Dreams

by Frederik van Eeden

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Since 1896 I have studied my own dreams, writing down the most interesting in my diary. In 1898 I began to keep a separate account for a particular kind of dream which seemed to me the most important, and I have continued it up to this day. Altogether I collected about 500 dreams, of which 352 are the particular kind just mentioned. This material may form the basis of what I hope may become a scientific structure of some value, if leisure and strength to build it up carefully do not fail me.



In the meantime, with a pardonable anxiety lest the ideas should not find expression in time, I condensed them into a work of art--a novel called *The Bride of Dreams*. The fictitious form enabled me to deal freely with delicate matters, and had also the advantage that it expressed rather unusual ideas in a less aggressive way--esoterically, so to speak. Yet I want to express these ideas also in a form that will appeal more directly to the scientific mind, and I know I cannot find a better audience for this purpose than the members of the Society for Psychical Research, who are accustomed to treat investigations and ideas of an unusual sort in a broad-minded and yet critical spirit.

This paper is only a preliminary sketch, a short announcement of a greater work, which I hope to be able to complete in later years.

I will as much as possible avoid speculation, and limit myself to facts; yet these facts, as I have observed them, bring me in a general way to the firm conviction that the theories on dream-life, as brought forward up to today, within my knowledge, are unable to account for all the phenomena.

Let me now give you an attempt at classification of the different forms of dreams, which I myself personally experienced and observed during a period of sixteen years. I have been able to distinguish nine different kinds of dreams, each of which presents a well-defined type. There are of course intermediate forms and combinations, but the separate types can still be recognized in their intermingling.

The first type of dreams I call initial dreams. This kind of dream is very rare; I know of only half-a-dozen instances occurring to myself, and have found no clear indication of them in other authors. Yet it is very characteristic and easily distinguishable. It occurs only in the very beginning of sleep, when the body is in a normal healthy condition, but very tired. Then the

transition from waking to sleep takes place with hardly a moment of what is generally called unconsciousness, but what I would prefer to call discontinuity of memory. It is not what Maury calls a hypnagogic hallucination, which phenomenon I know well from my own experience, but which I do not consider to belong to the world of dreams. In hypnagogic hallucinations we have visions, but we have full bodily perception. In the initial dream type I see and feel as in any other dream. I have a nearly complete recollection of day-life, I know that I am asleep and where I am sleeping, but all perceptions of the physical body, inner and outer, visceral or peripheral, are entirely absent. Usually I have the sensation of floating or flying, and I observe with perfect clearness that the feeling of fatigue, the discomfort of bodily overstrain, has vanished. I feel fresh and vigorous; I can move and float in all directions; yet I know that my body is at the same time dead tired and fast asleep.

As the outcome of careful observations, I maintain my conviction that the bodily conditions of the sleeper have, as a rule, no influence on the character of dreams, with the exception of a few rare and abnormal cases, near the moment of waking up, or in those dreams of a second type which I have classified as pathological, in which fever, indigestion, or some poison, plays a role, and which form a small minority. For myself as the observer, I may state that I have been in good health all the time of observation. I had no important complaints of any nervous or visceral kind. My sleep and digestion both are usually good. Yet I have had the most terrible nightmares, while my body was as fresh and healthy as usual, and I have had delicious peaceful dreams on board ship in a heavy storm, or in a sleeping-car on the railway.

I wish, therefore, to define the true dream as that state wherein bodily sensations, be they visceral, internal, or peripheral, cannot penetrate to the mind directly, but only in the physical, nonspatial form of a symbol or an image.

I purposely avoid as much as possible the words "consciousness" and "unconsciousness." They may be convenient in colloquial language, but I am not able to attach any clear meaning to them. I have no idea what "unconsciousness," as a substantive, may stand for. And I found that I could do with the words memory and recollection and the word personality or person, in the primitive sense of persona (a mask, i.e., the mask worn by players). I do not think it accurate to call the body of a sleeper or a narcotized man unconscious. During my career as a psychotherapist, having by suggestion produced sleep in many people, I learned that the human body may act like a self-conscious person, without any participation of the recollecting mind. We know nowadays that a splitting-up of human personality is possible, not only into two, but into three or more. During my sittings with Mrs. Thompson, we observed that after a trance, in which Mrs. Thompson had been speaking as "Nelly," or as some other control, she herself remembered dreams, which had nothing whatever to do with the things of which she had been speaking to us. Her being could then be said to have been divided into three entities--the body in trance, apparently asleep; the "control," who spoke through her mouth; and Mrs. Thompson, who was dreaming in quite different spheres. All these persons or personalities were of course "conscious" in some way, as everything is probably conscious. The question is, where do the threads of recollection run that enable us to identify the persons?

I know that Mr. Havelock Ellis and many other authors will not accept my definition, because they deny the possibility of complete recollection and free volition in a dream. They would say

that what I call a dream is no dream, but a sort of trance, or hallucination, or ecstasy. The observations of the Marquis d'Hervey, which were very much like mine, as related in his book, *Les Reves et les moyens de les diriger*, were discarded in the same way. These dreams could not be dreams, said Maury.

Now this is simply a question of nomenclature. I can only say that I made my observations during normal deep and healthy sleep, and that in 352 cases I had a full recollection of my day-life, and could act voluntarily, though I was so fast asleep that no bodily sensations penetrated into my perception. If anybody refuses to call that state of mind a dream, he may suggest some other name. For my part, it was just this form of dream, which I call "lucid dreams," which aroused my keenest interest and which I noted down most carefully.

I quite agree with Mr. Havelock Ellis, that during sleep the psychical functions enter into a condition of dissociation. My contention, however, is that it is not dissociation, but, on the contrary, reintegration, after the dissociation of sleep, that is the essential feature of dreams. The dream is a more or less complete reintegration of the psyche, a reintegration in a different sphere, in a psychical, nonspatial mode of existence. This reintegration may go so far as to effect full recollection of day-life, reflection, and voluntary action on reflection.

The third type, ordinary dreaming, is the usual well-known type to which the large majority of dreams conform; probably, it is the only kind that occurs to many people. It is not particularly pleasant or unpleasant, though it may vary according to its contents. It may occur in any moment of sleep, in daytime or in the night, and it does not need any bodily disturbance to produce it.

These dreams show dissociation, with very imperfect reintegration, and, as several authors have pointed out, they have in many respects a close likeness to insanity. The true conditions of day-life are not remembered; false remembrance--paramnesia--is very common in them; they are absurd and confused, and leave very faint traces after waking up.

The fourth type, vivid dreaming, differs from ordinary dreaming principally in its vividness and the strong impression it makes, which lasts sometimes for hours and days after waking up, with a painfully clear remembrance of every detail. These dreams are generally considered to be the effect of some abnormal bodily condition. Yet I think they must undoubtedly be distinguished from the pathological dreams. I have had them during perfectly normal bodily conditions. I do not mean to say, however, that some nervous disturbance, some psychical unrest, or some unknown influence from the waking world may not have been present. It may have been, but it escaped my observation in most cases. These vivid dreams are generally extremely absurd, or untrue, though explicit and well-remembered. The mind is entirely dissociated and reintegration is very defective.

As a rule I find dreams of this kind unpleasant because of their absurdity, their insane character, and the strong lasting impression they make. Happily they are rare, at least with me. Sometimes they leave a strong conviction that they "mean something," that they have a premonitory, a prophetic character, and when we read of instances of prophetic dreams we find generally that they belong to this type. In my case I often found that they really could "mean" nothing; sometimes, however, I was not so certain. It depends in what direction we are looking for causes.

One night, when I was on a lecturing tour, I was the guest of a family in a provincial town, and slept in what I supposed to be the guest room. I had a night full of the most horrid dreams, one long confused nightmare, with a strong sentiment that it "meant something." Yet I felt in perfect health, cheerful and comfortable. I could not refrain from saying next morning at the breakfast table what an unpleasant night I had had. Then the family told me I had slept in the room of a daughter who was now in a sanatorium with a severe nervous disease, and who used to call that room her "den of torture."

It will be remarked that such vivid dreams are sometimes of a very pleasant character, filling whole days with an indescribable joy. This is true, but, according to my experience, my vividly pleasant dreams are now always of another and higher type. As a child I had these delicious vivid dreams. Now they have changed their character altogether and are of the lucid type.

In the fifth type, the symbolic or mocking dreams, the characteristic element is one which I call demoniacal. I am afraid this word will arouse some murmurs of disapproval, or at least some smiles or sneers. Yet I think I can successfully defend the use of the term. I will readily concede at once that the real existence of beings whom we may call "demons" is problematic, and yet men of science find the conception very useful and convenient.

I hope to satisfy even the most skeptical of my audience by defining the expression "demoniacal" thus:

I call demoniacal those phenomena which produce on us the impression of being invented or arranged by intelligent beings of a very low moral order.

To me it seems that the great majority of dreams reported by Freud and his adherents, and used for the building up of his elaborate theory, belong to this type.

It may indeed be called a bold deed to introduce the symbolism of dreams into the scientific world. This is Freud's great achievement.

But now let us consider what the word "symbol" implies. A symbol is an image or an imaginary event, standing for a real object or event whereto it has some distant resemblance. Now the invention of a symbol can only be an act of thought--the work of some intelligence. Symbols cannot invent themselves; they must be thought out. And the question arises: who performs this intelligent act; who thinks out the symbol? The answer given by the Freudian school is: the subconscious. But here we have one of those words which come in "wo die Begriffe fehlen." To me the word "subconscious," indicating a thinking entity, is just as mysterious, just as unscientific, just as "occult" as the word "demon." In my view it is accurate to say only that in our dreams we see images and experience events, for which our own mind--our "person" as we remember it--cannot be held responsible, and which must therefore come from some unknown source. About the general character of these sources, however, we may form some judgment and I feel justified in calling them in the dreams of this type "demoniacal"--that is of low moral order.

It is in this class also, that the erotic element, or rather the obscene element, plays such an important part. And it is no wonder that some adherents of Freud's school, studying only this kind of dream, come to the conclusion that all dreams have a sexual origin.

The sixth type, which I call general dream-sensations, is very remarkable but not easy to describe. It is not an ordinary dream; there is no vision, no image, no event, not even a word or a name. But during a long time of deep sleep, the mind is continually occupied with one person, one place, one remarkable event, or even one abstract thought. At least that is the recollection on waking up. One night I was constantly occupied by the personality of an American gentleman, in whom I am not particularly interested. I did not see him, nor hear his name, but on waking up I felt as if he had been there the whole night. In another instance it was a rather deep thought, occupying me in the deepest sleep, with a clear recollection of it after waking up. The question was: Why can a period of our life be felt as very sad, and yet be sweet and beautiful in remembrance? And the answer was: Because a human being knows only a very small part of what he is. Question and answer never left me; yet my sleep was very deep and unbroken. These dream-sensations are not unpleasant and not absurd, so long as the body is in good health.

They often have an elevating or consoling effect. In pathological dreams, however, they may be extremely strange and harassing. The sleeper may have a feeling as if he were a square or a circle, or other sensations of an utterly indescribable character.

The seventh type of dreams, which I call lucid dreams, seems to me the most interesting and worthy of the most careful observation and study. Of this type I experienced and wrote down 352 cases in the period between January 20, 1898, and December 26, 1912.

In these lucid dreams the reintegration of the psychic functions is so complete that the sleeper remembers day-life and his own condition, reaches a state of perfect awareness, and is able to direct his attention, and to attempt different acts of free volition. Yet the sleep, as I am able confidently to state, is undisturbed, deep and refreshing. I obtained my first glimpse of this lucidity during sleep in June, 1897, in the following way. I dreamt that I was floating through a landscape with bare trees, knowing that it was April, and I remarked that the perspective of the branches and twigs changed quite naturally. Then I made the reflection, during sleep, that my fancy would never be able to invent or to make an image as intricate as the perspective movement of little twigs seen in floating by.

Many years later, in 1907, I found a passage in a work by Prof. Ernst Mach in which the same observation is made with a little difference. Like me, Mach came to the conclusion that he was dreaming, but it was because he saw the movement of the twigs to be defective, while I had wondered at the naturalness which my fancy could never invent. Professor Mach has not pursued his observations in this direction, probably because he did not believe in their importance. I made up my mind to look out carefully for another opportunity. I prepared myself for careful observation, hoping to prolong and to intensify the lucidity.

In January 1898 I was able to repeat the observation. In the night of January 19-20, I dreamt that I was lying in the garden before the windows of my study, and saw the eyes of my dog through the glass pane. I was lying on my chest and observing the dog very keenly. At the same time,

however, I knew with perfect certainty that I was dreaming and lying on my back in my bed. And then I resolved to wake up slowly and carefully and observe how my sensation of lying on my chest would change into the sensation of lying on my back. And so I did, slowly and deliberately, and the transition--which I have since undergone many times--is most wonderful. It is like the feeling of slipping from one body into another, and there is distinctly a double recollection of the two bodies. I remembered what I felt in my dream, lying on my chest; but returning into the day-life, I remembered also that my physical body had been quietly lying on its back all the while. This observation of a double memory I have had many times since. It is so indubitable that it leads almost unavoidably to the conception of a dream-body.

Mr. Havelock Ellis says with something of a sneer that some people "who dabble in the occult" speak of an astral body. Yet if he had had only one of these experiences, he would feel that we can escape neither the dabbling nor the dream-body. In a lucid dream the sensation of having a body--having eyes, hands, a mouth that speaks, and so on--is perfectly distinct; yet I know at the same time that the physical body is sleeping and has quite a different position. In waking up the two sensations blend together, so to speak, and I remember as clearly the action of the dream-body as the restfulness of the physical body.

In February 1899 I had a lucid dream, in which I made the following experiment. I drew with my finger, moistened by saliva, a wet cross on the palm of my left hand, with the intention of seeing whether it would still be there after waking up. Then I dreamt that I woke up and felt the wet cross on my left hand by applying the palm to my cheek. And then a long time afterwards I woke up really and knew at once that the hand of my physical body had been lying in a closed position undisturbed on my chest all the while.

The sensation of the voice during a lucid dream is most marvellous, and after many repetitions still a source of amazement. I use my voice as loudly as I can, and though I know quite well that my physical body is lying in profound sleep, I can hardly believe that this loud voice is inaudible in the waking world. Yet, though I have sung, shouted, and spoken loudly in hundreds of dreams, my wife has never heard my voice, and in several cases was able to assure me that I had slept quite peacefully.

I cannot in this paper give even a short and superficial account of the many interesting details of these dreams. I must reserve that for my larger work. And I fear that only a repeated personal acquaintance with the facts can convince one of their significance. I will relate a few more instances in order to give some idea of their character.

On Sept. 9, 1904, I dreamt that I stood at a table before a window. On the table were different objects. I was perfectly well aware that I was dreaming and I considered what sorts of experiments I could make. I began by trying to break glass, by beating it with a stone. I put a small tablet of glass on two stones and struck it with another stone. Yet it would not break. Then I took a fine claret-glass from the table and struck it with my fist, with all my might, at the same time reflecting how dangerous it would be to do this in waking life; yet the glass remained whole. But lo! when I looked at it again after some time, it was broken.

It broke all right, but a little too late, like an actor who misses his cue. This gave me a very curious impression of being in a fake-world, cleverly imitated, but with small failures. I took the broken glass and threw it out of the window, in order to observe whether I could hear the tinkling. I heard the noise all right and I even saw two dogs run away from it quite naturally. I thought what a good imitation this comedy-world was. Then I saw a decanter with claret and tasted it, and noted with perfect clearness of mind: "Well, we can also have voluntary impressions of taste in this dream-world; this has quite the taste of wine."

There is a saying by the German poet, Novalis, that when we dream that we dream, we are near waking up. This view, shared as it is by the majority of observers, I must decidedly reject. Lucid dreams occur in deep sleep and do not as a rule end in waking up, unless I wish it and do it by an act of volition. I prefer, however, in most cases to continue dreaming as long as possible, and then the lucidity vanishes and gives place to other forms of dream, and--what seems remarkable--the form that follows is often the "demon- dream," of which I will speak presently.

Then it often happens that I dream that I wake up and tell my lucid dream to some other person. This latter is then a dream of the ordinary form. From this dream I wake up in the real waking world, very much amazed at the curious wanderings of my mind. The impression is as if I had been rising through spheres of different depths, of which the lucid dream was the deepest.

I may state that without exception all my lucid dreams occurred in the hours between five and eight in the morning. The particular significance of these hours for our dreams has often been brought forward--among others by Dante, *Purg. IX.*, where he speaks of the hour when the swallows begin to warble and our mind is least clogged by the material body.

Lucid dreams are also symbolic--yet in quite a different way, I never remarked anything sexual or erotic in them. Their symbolism takes the form of beautiful landscapes--different luminous phenomena, sunlight, clouds, and especially a deep blue sky. In a perfect instance of the lucid dream I float through immensely wide landscapes, with a clear blue, sunny sky, and a feeling of deep bliss and gratitude, which I feel impelled to express by eloquent words of thankfulness and piety. Sometimes these words seem to me a little rhetorical, but I cannot help it, as it is very difficult in dreams to control emotional impulses. Sometimes I conceive of what appears as a symbol, warning, consoling, approving. A cloud gathers or the light brightens. Only once could I see the disc of the sun.

Flying or floating may be observed in all forms of dreams, except perhaps the class of general dream sensations; yet it is generally an indication that lucid dreams are coming.

When I have been flying in my dreams for two or three nights, then I know that a lucid dream is at hand. And the lucid dream itself is often initiated and accompanied all the time by the sensation of flying. Sometimes I feel myself floating swiftly through wide space; once I flew backwards, and once, dreaming that I was inside a cathedral, I flew upwards, with the immense building and all in it, at great speed. I cannot believe that the rhythm of our breath has anything to do with this sensation, as Havelock Ellis supposes, because it is generally continuous and very swift.

Difficult, spasmodic floating belongs to dreaming of a lower class, and this may depend on morbid conditions of the body; but it may also be symbolic of some moral difficulty or distress.

On Christmas Day 1911 I had the following dream. It began with flying and floating. I felt wonderfully light and strong. I saw immense and beautiful prospects--first a town, then country-landscapes, fantastic and brightly colored. Then I saw my brother sitting--the same who died in 1906--and I went up to him saying: "Now we are dreaming, both of us." He answered: "No, I am not!" And then I remembered that he was dead. We had a long conversation about the conditions of existence after death, and I inquired especially after the awareness, the clear, bright insight. But that he could not answer; he seemed to lack it.

Then the lucid dream was interrupted by an ordinary dream in which I saw a lady standing on a bridge, who told me she had heard me talk in my sleep. And I supposed that my voice had been audible during the lucid dream.

Then a second period of lucidity followed in which I saw Prof. van't Hoff, the famous Dutch chemist, whom I had known as a student, standing in a sort of college-room, surrounded by a number of learned people. I went up to him, knowing very well that he was dead, and continued my inquiry about our condition after death. It was a long, quiet conversation, in which I was perfectly aware of the situation.

I asked first why we, lacking our organs of sense, could arrive at any certainty that the person to whom we were talking was really that person and not a subjective illusion. Then van't Hoff said: "Just as in common life; by a general impression."

"Yet," I said, "in common life there is stability of observation and there is consolidation by repeated observation."

"Here also," said van't Hoff. "And the sensation of certainty is the same." Then I had indeed a very strong feeling of certitude that it was really van't Hoff with whom I talked and no subjective illusion. Then I began to inquire again about the clearness, the lucidity, the stability of this life of shades and then I got the same hesitating, dubious, unsatisfactory answer as from my brother. The whole atmosphere of the dream was happy, bright, elevated, and the persons around van't Hoff seemed sympathetic, though I did not know them.

"It will be some time probably before I join you," I said. But I took myself then for younger than I was.

After that I had several ordinary dreams and I awoke quite refreshed, knowing my voice had not been audible in the waking world.

In May 1903 I dreamed that I was in a little provincial Dutch town and at once encountered my brother-in-law, who had died some time before. I was absolutely sure that it was he, and I knew that he was dead. He told me that he had much intercourse with my "controller," as he expressed it--my guiding spirit. I was glad, and our conversation was very cordial, more intimate than ever in common life. He told me that a financial catastrophe was impending for me. Somebody was

going to rob me of a sum of 10,000 guilders. I said that I understood him, though after waking up I was utterly puzzled by it and could make nothing of it. My brother-in-law said that my guiding spirit had told it to him. I told the story to somebody else in my dream. Then I asked my brother-in-law to tell me more of the after-life, and just as he was going to answer me I woke up--as if somebody cut off the communication. I was not then as much used to prolonging my dreams as I am now.

I wish to point out that this was the only prediction I ever received in a lucid dream in such an impressive way. And it came only too true, with this difference, that the sum I lost was twenty times greater. At the time of the dream there seemed not to be the slightest probability of such a catastrophe. I was not even in possession of the money I lost afterwards. Yet it was just the time when the first events took place--the railway strikes of 1903--that led up to my financial ruin.

There may be deceit in the lucid dream. In March 1912 I had a very complicated dream, in which I dreamt that Theodore Roosevelt was dead, then that I woke up and told the dream, saying: "I was not sure in my dream whether he was really dead or still alive; now I know that he is really dead; but I was so struck by the news that I lost my memory." And then came a false lucidity in which I said: "Now I know that I dream and where I am." But this was all wrong; I had no idea of my real condition, and only slowly, after waking up, I realized that it was all nonsense.

This sort of mockery I call demoniacal. And there is a connection, which I observed so frequently that it must have some significance--namely that a lucid dream is immediately followed by an eighth type of dream I call a demon-dream.

I hope you allow me, if only for convenience sake, to speak as if these intelligences of a low moral order exist. Let me call it also a working hypothesis. Then I wish to point out to you the difference between the symbolic or mocking dreams described earlier and the demon-dreams.

In the symbolic dreams the sleeper is teased or puzzled or harassed by various more or less weird, uncanny, obscene, lugubrious or diabolical inventions. He has to walk in slaughter-houses or among corpses; he finds everything besmeared with blood or excrement; he is drawn into obscene, erotic or horrible scenes, in which he even takes an active part. His moral condition is utterly depraved; he is a murderer, an adulterer, etc.; in a word, nothing is too low or too horrible for such dream.

After waking up the effect is, of course, unpleasant; he is more or less ashamed and shocked; he tries to shake off the memory as soon as possible.

Now in the demon-dreams--which are always very near, before or after, the lucid dreams--I undergo similar attacks; but I see the forms, the figures, the personalities of strange non-human beings, who are doing it. One night, for instance, I saw such a being, going before me and soiling everything he touched, such as door-handles and chairs. These beings are always obscene and lascivious, and try to draw me into their acts and doings. They have no sex and appear alternately as a man, or a woman. Their aspect is very various and variable, changing every moment, taking all the fantastic forms that the old painters of the Middle Ages tried to reproduce, but with a certain weird plasticity and variability, that no painting can express.

I will describe one instance of these dreams (March 30, 1907, in Berlin), following immediately after a lucid dream. The lucidity had not been very intense, and I had some doubts about my real condition. Then all at once I was in the middle of demons. Never before had I seen them so distinct, so impertinent, so aggressive. One was slippery, shining, limp and cold, like a living corpse. Another changed its face repeatedly and made the most incredible grimaces. One flew underneath me shouting an obscenity with a curious slang-word. I defended myself energetically, but principally with invectives, which I felt to be a weakness. I saw the words written.

The circle of demons was close to me and grinning like a mob of brutal street-boys. I was not afraid, however, and said: "Even if you conquer me, if God wills it I do not fear." Then they all cried together like a rabble, and one said: "Let God then speak first!" And then I thundered with all my might: "He HAS spoken long since!" And then I pointed at one of them, saying: "You I know for a long time!" and then pointing to another: "And you!"

Then I awoke at once, and I believe I made some audible sound in waking up in the middle of my apostrophe.

And then--this will astonish you most--after this dispute I felt thoroughly refreshed, cheered up and entirely serene and calm.

This is the principal difference from the symbolic dreams that in the demon-dreams when I see the demons and fight them, the effect is thoroughly pleasing, refreshing and uplifting.

This is the principal point in these demon-dreams--that, whether these beings have a real existence or whether they are only creations of my fancy, to see them and to fight them takes away all their terror, all the uncanniness, the weirdness, of their tricks and pranks.

I have not yet spoken about the ninth dream type, which I call wrong waking up, occurring always near awakening. Of this sort of dream I found an excellent instance described by Mach. He calls it "Phantasma." We have the sensation of waking up in our ordinary sleeping-room and then we begin to realize that there is something uncanny around us; we see inexplicable movements or hear strange noises, and then we know that we are still asleep. In my first experience of this dream I was rather afraid and wanted nervously to wake up really. I think this is the case with most people who have it. They become frightened and nervous and at last wake up with palpitations, a sweating brow and so on.

To me now these wrong-waking-up-dreams have lost their terror. I consider them as demon-pranks, and they amuse me; they do not tell on my nerves any more.

In July 1906 sleeping at Langen Schwalbach a deep sleep after a laborious day, I had two or three dreams of this type. I seemed to wake up and heard a big luggage-box being blown along the landing, with tremendous bumping. Then I realized that I had awakened in the demon-sphere. The second time I saw that my sleeping-room had three windows, though I knew there were only two. Wishing to make sure, I woke up for a moment voluntarily and realized that my room had two windows and that stillness had reigned in the house all night.

After that I had a succession of lucid dreams, very beautiful. At the end of them, while I was still singing loudly, I was suddenly surrounded by many demons, who joined in my singing, like a mob of vicious semi-savage creatures. Then I felt that I was losing my self-control. I began to act more and more extravagantly, to throw my bedclothes and my pillows about, and so on. I drew myself up and saw one demon who had a less vicious look than the others and he looked as if he were saying "you are going wrong." "Yes," I said, "but what shall I do?" Then he said, "Give them the whip, on their naked backs." And I thought of Dante's shades, who also feared the whip. I at once made--created --a whip of leathern strings, with leaden balls at the end. And I threatened them with it and also struck at them a few times. Then suddenly all grew perfectly quiet around me, and I saw the creatures sneaking away with hypocritical faces, as if they knew nothing about it at all.

I had many more adventures that night, lucid and ordinary dreams, and I awoke fresh and cheerful, better in spirits than I had been for a long time.

This wrong-waking-up type is not to be confused with the dreams in which I dreamt that I woke after a lucid dream and told that dream to some listener. Those dreams were of the ordinary sort. There was nothing uncanny about them. Dreams of the wrong-waking-up class are undoubtedly demoniacal, uncanny, and very vivid and bright, with a sort of ominous sharpness and clearness, a strong diabolical light. Moreover the mind of the sleeper is aware that it is a dream, and a bad one, and he struggles to wake up. As I said just now, however, the terror ends as soon as the demons are seen--as soon as the sleeper realizes he must be the dupe of intelligences of a low moral order. I am prepared to hear myself accused of superstition, of reviving the dark errors of the Middle Ages. Well, I only try to tell the facts as clearly as possible and I cannot do it without using these terms and ideas. If anybody will replace them by others, I am open to any suggestion. Only I would maintain that it is not my mind that is responsible for all the horrors and errors of dream-life. To say that nobody is responsible for them will not do, for there is absolute evidence in them of some thought and intention, however depraved and low. A trick, a deceit, a symbol, cannot be without some sort of thought and intention. To put it all down to "unconsciousness" is very convenient; but then I say that it is just as scientific to use the names Beelzebub, or Belial. I, for one, do not believe in "unconsciousness" any more than in Santa Claus.

The remark may be made that in introducing intelligent beings of a low order to explain these phenomena, an element of arbitrariness is brought in, which excludes the possibility of finding a scientific order. It is, for instance, convenient to ascribe all the phenomena of insanity and of pathological dreams to demons, who make use of the weakness of the body to play their tricks. This is, in fact, the opinion of no less a man than Alfred Russel Wallace, as he freely confessed to me in a personal conversation.

I do not think, however, that even this idea, taken as a working hypothesis, will prevent us from trying to find a scientific order even in these apparently demoniacal tricks; the fact, for instance, that certain drugs bring about hallucinations of a well-defined kind; that cocaine produces delicious expectations and pleasant dreams, and alcohol causes visions of small white animals. This suggests that there must be some order behind it, which is not purely arbitrary.

We are here, however, on the borders of a realm of mystery where we have to advance very carefully. To deny may be just as dangerous and misleading as to accept.

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