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## Epitome of Current Literature.

### 1. Physiological Psychology.

*Freud and the Problem of Dreaming* [*Freud et le Problème des Rêves*].  
(*Rev. Phil.*, Nov., 1911). Kostyleff.

Some who view with more or less sympathy Freud's elaborate efforts to unravel the obscure threads of various morbid neuro-psychic states have been unable to accept his conclusions in the normal psychological field of dreams. Kostyleff, who has elsewhere shown himself a highly competent exponent, sympathetic and yet critical, of the Freudian school (as in a study of psycho-analysis in the same review for April, 1912), here inquires how far the doubts concerning Freud's dream psychology are justified. Throughout he analyses afresh many of the dreams brought forward by Freud, being in many cases unable to accept Freud's analysis.

Freud's material is very interesting, and his interpretations very suggestive, but he allows himself to be carried away too far, and frequently repels by the arbitrary character of his conclusions. At the same time he makes an excellent attempt to synthesise the phenomena. Observation alone, indeed, will not suffice to explain such complex phenomena. It is not enough to note a condensation here, a change of value there. Some general law of the organism must be brought into play. The mechanism of dreaming, according to Freud, consists in the return of the psychic current towards the mechanism of actual perception. In this return towards the initial process of perception, though rather variously and crudely schematised, Kostyleff finds Freud's great and unquestionable merit. At the same time Kostyleff holds that, rightly considered, this formula takes on a different character. Freud maintains that all dreams are constituted out of wishes, which, to become dreams, need an organic re-inforcement, and that this can only be provided by infantile desires of the same nature, preserved in the unconscious. Not so, says Kostyleff. Previous reactions are motor dispositions not limited to affective phenomena. Every reflex consolidates the channels it passes through, and facilitates the return of similar reactions. This applies to altogether neuter imagery as well as to imagery determining a volitional complex. The neuter imagery may even, under some conditions, have the advantage over the wish.

Any consolidated memory may thus furnish the necessary reinforcements. Sometimes the memory may be a wish dating from childhood, but to say that this is the case in every dream is an exaggeration. Far from always presenting the realisation of a wish, dreams often present an impression reinforced by memories with which it is simply associated.

Further, Kostyleff considers that Freud's conception of "censure" must be understood in the more precise sense of a dissociation of cerebral reflexes. Certain images are found incompatible with the momentary complex of the ego, and an arrest of the associative process occurs.

In analysing anew some of the dreams brought forward by Freud, the author argues that Freud's interpretation of them is often artificial, and that it would sometimes be simpler to see in them, instead of an infantile wish, an actual pre-occupation reinforced by more or less remote memories. Again, in regard to fantastic dreams, having no apparent relation to real life, the author finds that Freud's symbolic interpretation is altogether subjective. Freud's final conclusion that an unconscious wish plays the motor part in all dreams he regards as quite unproved, and not the result of legitimate analysis. It may even be regarded as the exact opposite of the truth. Dreams are remarkable by the richness of their content, and cannot be fitted into Freud's narrow frame. It is necessary to recognise the most varied forms of sensorial regression, not only the regression of desire, as commonly observed in children, but the regression of the most fugitive images under the chance influence of functional reinforcement, independently of any affective factor. The search for a disguised wish then loses nearly all its significance. Even when evoked, its appearance is often the consequence of preceding evocations and not the efficient cause of the dream. The dream is a series of sensorial regressions due to psychic reinforcements and merely tinged by the revival of a wish.

The author finally records his conviction that the irregularities in Freud's psychology of dreaming, and the modifications which are demanded in its formula, must not disguise from us the substantial merits of his work in this field. It may, he believes, serve to open the way to the experimental study of dreaming. HAVELOCK ELLIS.

*The Alleged Contagion of Mania and Melancholia [La Contagion des Manies et des Melancholies]. (Rev. Phil., Dec., 1911). Dumas, G.*

Pursuing his studies of contagion in mental disease, the author here takes up mania and melancholia, leaving open, for the purposes of his discussion, the question of the unitary nature of manic-depressive insanity. He points out at the outset (with Halberstadt) that there is a pronounced distinction to be made between the contagion of a delusional state—such as is often observed clinically, and is usually episodic, temporary, and influenced by isolation of the patient—and the contagion of a definite psychosis with its own ætiology and regular course. Can we speak of contagion in the latter case? As regards mania and melancholia there is a marked opposition of opinion. Thus, in Germany, it has been commonly accepted (though denied by Meyer and others), while in France it has been commonly denied (though accepted by Marandon de Montyel and others). Such divergences of