

Dreams Tell of Maturity

College women dream more often of mammals; men, more of lower animals, and the number of animal dreams decreases with maturity—By Patricia McBroom

► DO YOU see horses and dogs or birds and crocodiles in your dreams? If it is birds and crocodiles, your maturity could be somewhat suspect.

The provocative hypothesis that the kinds of animals people dream about are a clue to their maturity has been revived by psychologist Robert L. Van de Castle of the University of North Carolina School of Medicine.

He found in studying 4,000 dreams of 801 college students, mainly from the University of Denver, that the women dreamed more often of mammals, while the men dreamed of lower animals.

The sexual difference was significant, Dr. Van de Castle said. After birds, the men seemed to prefer thick-skinned or hard-shelled animals, including crocodiles, crabs and turtles. Women, on the other hand, saw dogs and horses nearly twice as often as the men.

In number of animal dreams, the sexes were equal, each spending 7.5%

of their dreaming time in animal fantasies. But 48% of the animals that men dreamed of were non-mammals, while the figure for women was only 30%.

The animal most favored by men was the bird, with its obvious symbolism. "My off-hand impression," Dr. Van de Castle said, "was that these were people looking for freedom—or for ways of escaping."

The psychologist discovered a further sexual difference also fraught with implications: only women ever dreamed of vultures, and only men of hawks.

Does this mean college women are more mature than college men? Too little is known about animal dreams to draw any conclusions, Dr. Van de Castle said, but he pointed to some related studies that should "please the 'weaker sex.'"

Two separate Rorschach (ink blot) studies have linked perception of mammals with emotional maturity. In both,

those subjects who saw the higher animals in the ink blots had a greater degree of autonomy and independence. They were also less likely to yield to the pressures of group conformity.

Even more striking is the case of a male patient in therapy whose dreams, as he improved psychologically, evolved from dead plants to live plants, then to small animals, mammals, statues of people and finally to real people.

Dr. Van de Castle does not know of any other case like this one, which was reported by Dr. Medard Boss some 10 years ago in his book, "The Analysis of Dreams," but that may only indicate the paucity of information on the subject, he said.

The psychologist, however, did hold out some consolation to men. One thing is sure about animal dreams—they decrease in number each year of a child's life until he reaches adulthood. From a high of 60.7% of animal dreams in four-year-olds, the incidence decreases to 8.9% in a 16-year-old teenager.

This suggests, Dr. Van de Castle said, that the overall number of animal dreams may be a better index to mental maturity than the level of evolution people choose to dream about.

PHYSIOLOGY

Anxiety and Tension May Cause Over-Breathing

► HYPERVENTILATION, or over-breathing, not uncommon among college-aged students, is a manifestation of anxiety and tension. It is done unintentionally and with unawareness of the individual, Dr. John McMaster, director of the University of Wisconsin Health Center, said.

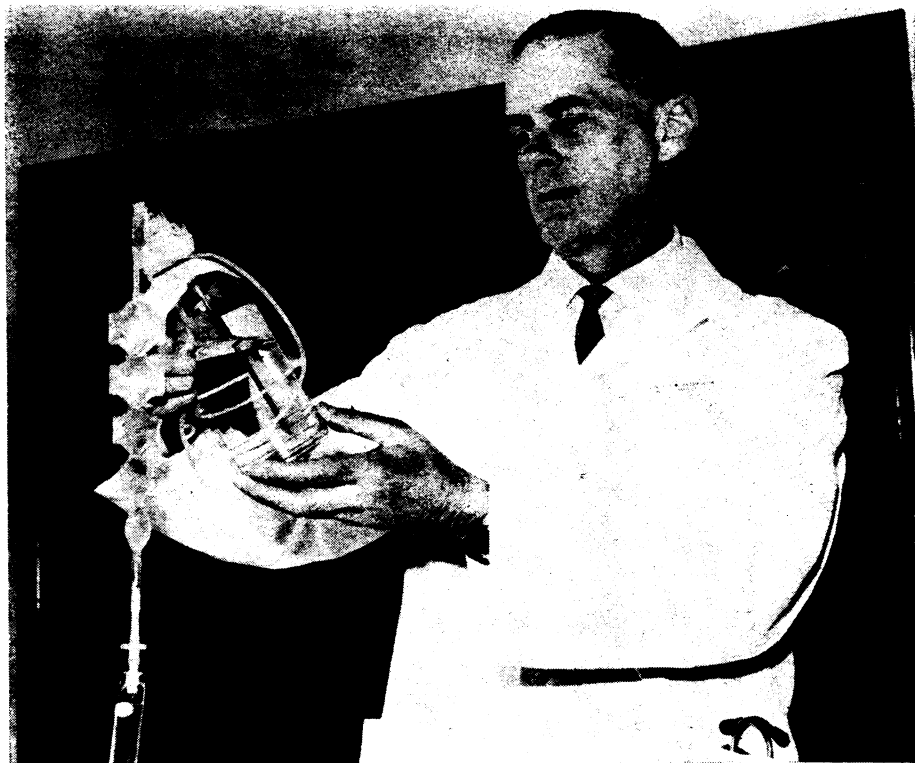
"As tensions and anxieties build, respirations increase in depth and rate. As a result there may be a feeling of shortness of breath and suffocation which often leads to even increased respirations.

"Tingling of the fingers and feet, numbness about the lips and pressure sensations in the chest lead to further apprehension and even panic. As respirations continue to increase, too much carbon dioxide is blown off and there is an associated fall in blood flow to the brain; therefore, fainting may occur.

"Rebreathing into a paper bag usually gives quick relief. In addition, reassurance and sedation often help."

During adolescence anxiety is often initiated by a combination of circumstances. Changes in bodily functions may give rise to feeling, awareness and sensations which are somewhat strange.

"To the college student who also has the additional burden and responsibility of his academic pursuits as well as the problem of adjusting to living away from home, these sensations may take on an increased magnitude leading to a feeling of insecurity, anxiety and sometimes fright," Dr. McMaster pointed out.



Australian News and Information Bureau

KIDNEY TRANSPLANT SUCCESS—An Australian team of kidney-grafters has achieved noteworthy successes with kidney transplants over the last few years, using kidneys from people who recently died. Dr. T. J. K. Jamieson, medical superintendent of the Royal Melbourne Hospital inspects a bottle of fluid connected to the artificial kidney. Five of 11 patients operated on in the last three years remain well.