us over which we have no control. Yet they are an opportunity for expansion, awe, creative imagination: the night dream and the daydream are not so very different. The last section of **The White Hotel** exists in a timeless place, but is there **now**, on the page. To allow ourselves to enter into the timeless while staying in time is vital. Otherwise our concepts of 'society' and of social dreams and visions will remain on a pole between the limited, depressed, pessimistic and the over-optimistic, starry-eyed, evangelistic. The true polarity is between what is within human power and control and what is beyond human power and control: the place between is the crucial place where all our work is. The dream, like other symbols, exists in that place.

REFERENCES

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Robin Shohet

THE THIRD REICH OF DREAMS

I recently came across a book entitled The Third Reich of Dreams by Carlotte Beradt (Quadrangle 1968 now out of print). It contains dozens of dreams collected by the author in Germany from 1933-1939. Through these dreams she highlights the sorts of internal conflicts that are thrown up in an individual in his relationship to a society he consciously disapproves of but is at the same time frightened of or maybe, at some level, even attracted to. I think some of the issues raised in this book are still relevant fifty years later.

At the end of the book there is a short essay by Bruno Bettelheim in which he adds a psychoanalytic perspective to the author's commentaries and reflections. In it he says, "A much deeper and older danger abides, a darker knowledge is still missing. If all of us abhorred the Third Reich, why did it exist? Must there not have been feelings,

unknown to the conscious mind, that condoned it, accepted it, willed it? Even among those who lived in fear and trembling of the Nazis, might there not have been in them somewhere, deep down, a layer of soul closely kin to the regime of total domination?"

What Bettelheim is talking about is not new. It is the mechanism of projection, putting on to others a quality we do not wish to recognise as our own. I, and probably you, do it frequently. For example I am doing it now as I struggle to find the right words and imagine that you are as critical of others' writing as I am. I do it with my partner when I constantly accuse her of being angry because that is part of me I don't like, leaving her to carry the expressed anger for our relationship which I can then get indignant about. I see it operate in my work with couples and of course it is the bread and butter of politics. But before (or perhaps while) I take the easy swipe at politicians, I must recognise that I am more similar to them than I would ever care to believe. (One of the advantages of working with dreams in a Gestalt way is that by becoming every part of the dream, the dreamer can re-own his projections.) *

In the first part of the book, the rich catalogue of dream examples demonstrates how effective the propaganda was in penetrating people's defense mechanisms, making them afraid to disobey even in their unconscious. Thus one dreamer dreamt she was talking in her sleep in Russian so that not only would others not understand her, but she would not even understand herself. It had become so dangerous to think against the regime. In other dreams objects like ovens and table lamps would suddenly talk and denounce the dreamer for everything he or she had said or thought against the regime. In one startling dream a woman is watching the opera The Magic Flute. When it comes to the line "That is the devil certainly" a squad of policemen came stomping in and marched directly up to her. A machine had registered that she had thought of Hitler on hearing the word 'devil'.

The effectiveness of this propaganda machine, however, depended on people's ambivalence which weakened their internal resolve to resist. And it is the highlighting of this ambivalence through the dreams that makes this book such a disturbing one for me. Thus a doctor dreamt that Storm Troopers were putting up barbed wire at all hospital windows. He had sworn that he would not stand for them

*If you want to take this idea further try the exercise of writing five qualities you really like in others and five you really dislike. Then own them as your own (e.g. I am generous, dishonest etc)

bringing their barbed wire into his ward. But he did put up with it as they turned his ward into a concentration camp, and he lost his job anyway. However he was called back to treat Hitler because he was the only man in the world who could. He was ashamed for feeling proud and woke up crying. In another dream a man dreamt that Goering came to inspect his office and gave him a satisfied nod. This pleased him enormously even though he was thinking what a fat swine Goering was. Another doctor, Jewish, dreamt he was the only one in the Reich who could cure Hitler. A 15 year old Jewish boy dreamt he was marching with a group of Hitler Youth; at first he stood on the curb burning with envy, and then suddenly he found himself in their midst.

Again and again, through the dreams, the author demonstrates not only the acceptance of conditions, but the state of mind in which acceptance grows - namely the readiness to be deceived and construct alibis for oneself. Thus one man saw Hitler as a clown and saw through his carefully calculated manipulative gestures, but ended up in the dream thinking Hitler wasn't so bad after all and there was no need to oppose him. In another a woman laughs at people singing Nazi songs, but later finds herself aboard a train singing with them. A brown leather jerkin is an object of ridicule until the dreamer finds himself wearing one. Another person is ostracised for not saying 'Heil', and even while failing to understand how she could change her attitude so quickly, she climbs on to a bus whose destination is 'Heil Hitler'. Insidiously the whole show - songs, brown uniforms, and upraised arms change from objects of ridicule to acceptance. The imperceptible transition from suggestion to auto-suggestion is captured in a sentence *I dreamt I was saying "I don't have to say 'no' any more"* a perfect rationalisation for not making the tremendous effort it would cost to oppose the regime.

Charlotte Beradt's part of the book ends with a dream from a woman who was only a child in Hitler's Germany, and was dreamt in 1960. In this dream the woman is stopped by a man who demands her papers. She protests and the man grows taller, his black suit turns into an S.S. uniform and he slaps her. Amidst her protests he says, "It doesn't matter - we know who you are anyway". She is left saying softly, sadly to herself "And I had hoped to recognise your kind immediately when you returned. It's my fault". The author sees the dreams as dealing with the political realities of the moment and the dreamer's conflict with society (unlike Bettelheim who sees the conflicts as having their roots in inner conflicts evoked by social realities) and she ends with a warning of the dangers of failing to recognise threats to freedom before they loom too large like the man in black.

Bettelheim's concluding essay shows how unresolved authority issues created a need for approval even if the person consciously hated the regime and produced internal conflict which weakened the power to resist. Erich Fromm in **The Forgotten Language** makes a similar point. He quotes a dream from a man who left Germany after Hitler's rise and was an anti-Nazi not, as Fromm says, in the conventional sense of an anti-Nazi "opinion", but passionately and intelligently. His political conviction was perhaps freer from doubt than anything else he thought and felt. Nevertheless he had the following dream

> *I sat with Hitler, and we had a pleasant and interesting conversation. I found him charming and was very proud that he listened with great attention to what I had to say.*

As Fromm points out, this does not mean that the dreamer is **"really"** a pro-Nazi, but how pervasive the desire for approval from authority is.

Like dreams which operate on many different levels, Charlotte **Beradt's** book seems to cover both the intra-personal and the political. It has helped me understand how some of the forces of projection, ambivalence, rationalization, need for approval (the ones that operate in me in my day to day existence) served as building blocks for the Nazi regime in the same way as they seem to be contributing to the escalation of the arms race today.

Robin Shohet works part time as a therapist and part time as a lecturer in counselling. He is currently writing a book on dream groups which will be published early next year by Thorsons.

DREAM BOOKS

These five short reviews supplement those done in the last **Self and Society** special edition on dreams (May/June 1981), where I recommended Ann Faraday's **Dream Power** and **The Dream Game** as excellent starting points.

The Forgotten Language by Erich Fromm (Grove Press)
Although largely focussed on dreams, Fromm's scope is much wider. He looks at symbolic language - "the only universal language the human race has ever developed" - and the book therefore includes analysis of stories from the Bible, myth (particularly a reinterpretation of the Oedipus myth) and fairy stories. There are good sections on