

Have you ever for once woken up from a dream with the sensation you've missed something important, such as a new understanding of your life? Skeptics might say no; however, they would be missing the manner whereby dreams say something about our internal thought processes. Maybe a dream feels terrifying, commonplace, or basically mundane, it has a thing to say to us. However, what?

The father of psychoanalysis talked about his innovative ideas about what dreams actually signify in this his seminal work. Sigmund Freud tries to step away from an esoteric and spiritualist meaning of dreams as omens and rather links them to what lies waiting in the depths of our unconscious emotional lives.

Chapter 1 - Olden interpretations of dreams were unscientific. A far better method is to link dreams to actual psychic memories.

Dreams can be perplexing, usually making no obvious sense whatsoever. Although the eras, humans have tried to know about them and penetrate their mysteries.

In old antiquity, it was thought that dreams were prophecies from divine beginnings. In order to know about these predictions, our old ancestors would draw on two techniques of interpretation.

The first method was to interpret the dream in its entirety before connecting it to the future. A dream reader or an oracle would normally be in charge of this process.

In the second method, the dream reader would analyze the dream and interpret it piece by piece. For example, Alexander the Great dreamt during the time he was fighting a battle for the ancient Phoenician port city of Tyre. In Alexander's dream, he noticed a woodland god referred to as a satyr dancing on his shield. According to the dream reader's meaning, "satyr" was taken as "sa tyros," which signified "Tyre will be thine," therefore, the dream was assumed to mean that Alexander would win the fight.

The issue with this technique is that it was essentially unscientific speculation. A more refined method for reading dreams is linking the content of the dream to the actual psychic memories as well as the experiences of the dreamer herself.

One time, Freud had a dream that he was with three people: a friend referred to as Otto, an authoritative psychologist referred to as Dr. M and Irma, a family friend that Freud had treated. In Freud's dream, Dr. M mentions that Irma is sick due to an infection, probably as a result of the dirty needle Otto used to inject her with.

This dream correlated to an actual phone discussion that the author had with Otto a day before. During that phone call, Freud sensed that Otto was putting the blame of Irma's poor health condition on him. Still, in the dream, it's Otto, not Freud, who is really to blame for the sickness.

The dream was saying to Freud, "it's not your fault," hence satisfying his wish to not be accountable for Irma's illness.

Chapter 2 - Every dream fulfills wishes; however, the majority of them are disguised.

Therefore, Freud's dream about Irma was a kind of wish fulfillment. However, is that the case for every dream?

Well, in specific situations, it's really obvious that a dream fulfills a wish. Good illustrations are dreams of convenience or lethargy. For example, a colleague of Freud understood he needed to wake up early in the morning to go for an appointment at the hospital. When his landlady came to wake him up from sleep, he was already dreaming that he was in the hospital bed.

Dreaming about already being in the hospital entailed that he really conveniently didn't have to wake up; hence, fulfilling his lethargic wish to continue sleeping.

With that being said, most dreams are not that clear about wish fulfillment. As a matter of fact, some dreams are extremely painful.

Consider the story of a patient who had a dream that her youngest nephew, Charles, lay dead in an open coffin. How can that kind of terrible dream be fulfilling a wish?

In this case, the patient was extremely in love with a certain family friend, a professor who had lately had a disagreement with the family and stopped visiting. One rare situation when the professor had visited was to go for the burial of Otto, Charles' elder brother.

The logic was that if Charles were to die as well, the professor would come back. The wish that was fulfilled here was basically that of seeing the professor once again.

That's a really opaque circumstance; however, dreams usually disguise their actual meaning. In the above situation, the patient deliberately refused to love the professor since her desire was pointless. She bottled-up her wish of being together with the professor and, in this manner, kept it from herself as well.

Hence, it makes so much sense that in the dream her desire was as well concealed. Rather than being obviously laid out, it was distorted. It's kind of similar to reading the news in a nation that censors its media, where journalists have to distort their reporting to avoid censorship. In a related manner, dreams distort their message to avoid censorship by the psyche.

Chapter 3 - The subject matter for dreams can emanate from numerous sources.

Now you understand that dreams occur from the desire to fulfill wishes. However, that doesn't make their interpretation easy. Nevertheless, a wish can be conveyed in numerous manners, and the content of dreams differs wildly.

Therefore, where does the subject matter of dreams emanate from?

Well, you can usually depend on a dream to have specific memories from the day before. In some cases, these experiences go into a dream more or less as they were in actual life. If you encountered someone that is attractive that day, they could be a figure in your following dream.

But, usually, a real-life experience links to other thoughts and memories, which end up in the dream rather. Visualize you had a discussion with a man known as Mr. Gartner. “Gartner” sounds like “gardener,” and “gardener” might bring to mind your best flower, and therefore, your following dream could well contain lilacs.

Childhood memories are another source of dream content. As a matter of fact, in some situations, a childhood experience is really deep that it reappears, usually linked to more recent situations.

When Freud was about seven or eight years, he overheard his father shouting that he would never become anything in life.

Due to that, each success he encountered reminded him of that childhood memory. When he got an award, the experience with his father was prone to come in a dream in one manner or the other. For instance, he had a dream of tying his tie wrongly the night before an awards ceremony.

Also, eventually, the content of dreams can as well be created by bodily stimuli during sleep. If a person gently shakes you as you dream, you might feel a sensation of dizziness in your dream state.

Any stimulus to your body will freely show itself in the dream. Therefore, if you have to run to the bathroom while you dream about traveling, you might dream that you’re rafting down a river, as moving water has a tendency to represent urination.

In these three sources, that’s lots of content for one dream. In the next chapter, you’ll learn how everything gets synthesized.

Chapter 4 - Dream components are displaced, condensed, and it is made coherent by the psyche.

You've read that dream content emanates from numerous places; however, how does a dream take its last form?

For beginners, the subject matter of a dream is extremely condensed. It goes through a lot of compressions that only half a page of dream content can need about six to eight pages of interpretation.

On one occasion, Freud found a thorough study in the window of a bookshop. Formerly, he had conducted research on the medicinal potential of cocaine as well.

These two details mixed in the author's following dream, where he was going through a botanical study that he wrote himself.

Also, dreams as well take form through displacement. This is known as the act of changing something vital toward something unimportant. Assuming you don't care a lot for Ms. X. You get a letter from her and read animosity into her signing off with "best," in place of "all the best." This manner, you displace the true animosity you feel toward Ms. X herself into the letter you read.

This is exactly what occurs in dreams. In Freud's situation, he had been accused of spending a lot of time on his hobbies. Due to this, he was inspired to show that he worked really hard to validate his hobbies.

Therefore, in the dream about the botanical study, his wish for validation is displaced in the study, which works as an indication of his hard work.

Eventually, as soon as the entire material of a dream has been displaced and condensed, your psyche creates a logical sequence from it.

This is how:

In waking life, people have a tendency to mend inconsistencies they met. You might ignore mistakes in a text by visualizing the right words instead. The exact same thing happens in dreams.

If you have a dream about a horse and then you dream about a man, you'll fill in the story gap by assuming the animal is for the man. With this process, you end up with a dream that, though maybe strange, progresses in a quite logically plausible way.

Chapter 5 - Dreams indirectly signify thoughts or via symbols.

At times, occurrences from your life can appear directly in your dreams. For example, a lake you passed through before or a book you saw might appear in a dream as a lake or a book.

But, in other circumstances, this process can be very vague. This is particularly correct for abstract thoughts and ideas, which are indirectly symbolized in dreams.

Assume you bumped into Mr. X during the day. After seeing him, you imagined to yourself, "wasn't he on his high horse?"

That kind of thought can only be shown indirectly in a dream, which signifies you might dream of Mr. X just sitting on a horse.

Or, for instance, during the day at some point, you lost your train of thought. In your dream, this might appear as a typed text that's missing the last lines.

Dreams as well have numerous symbols. Specific objects frequently, even though not all the time, represent the same thing. Consider "king" and "queen," which have a tendency to represent a father and a mother. Or right and left, which usually represent what's morally right and morally wrong.

A lot of these symbols may contain sexual connotations as well. Any long objects, stick or weapon, can be an indication for the male sex. A ship, oven, small box, or vessel of any type can also represent female genitalia. Lastly, climbing a steep hill or climbing a ladder can be a symbol of sex.

Those kinds of symbols are significant since they let you better interpret the meaning of your dreams. Consider the female patient of Freud's who had a dream that she was confidently walking down a public street with a lopsided straw hat. In this situation, the hat represented her

husband's genitals, and the dream was made by a fear that they were distorted. This reality came about when she asked the author a question if it was weird for a man to have one testicle hang lower than the other testicle.

Chapter 6 - Some dreams are shared by everybody; they even come from the same sources.

Have you ever observed that there are some dreams that everybody appears to have? What is the wish these shared dreams fulfill?

Well, an example of that kind of dream is of being naked in public; it fulfills a wish for exhibitionism. As children, people usually relish being naked in front of other people without thinking about it for a second. However, as kids grow older, adults start to reprimand them for that kind of act.

Therefore, people remember their exhibitionist desires; however, they suppress them. Due to that, we dream of being naked in public, hence fulfilling this suppressed exhibitionist wish.

Having said that, those kinds of dreams are as well extremely embarrassing, a feeling that works as a distortion, which conceals the actual underlying wish.

Another dream that is popular is one of flying or falling, both of which might stem from childhood games. Nevertheless, kids relish being thrown up in the air or bounced on a relative's knee, being dropped all of a sudden and caught. Dreams about flying or falling may essentially originate from a wish to re-experience that excitement.

Lastly, dreams that involve the death of someone you love correspond to childhood fantasies. A lot of individuals have had that kind of dream. In specific situations, those kinds of dreams are the outcome of essentially wishing death upon that particular person.

Therefore, where does that kind of a sadistic wish emanate from?

As kids, people can be overly covetous of their parents' attention. Say for instance, when a three-year-old child gets a new baby brother, she might react by wishing he didn't exist in the first place.

Not only that; however, children as well don't have the same knowledge of death as adults. According to a three-year-old, dying is only another term for being far away for life. In this manner, a child can easily wish for her the death of her brother in order for her to get all of the attention of her parents once again.

Chapter 7 - In order for children to get closer to the parent of the opposite sex, they may wish for the death of a parent.

We've learned about how individuals might wish for the death of their siblings; however, that's really not the most sinister of our persisting childhood desires. Also, we may wish for the death of our parents in order to get closer to the other parent, and this desire is as well shown in our dreams.

However, where does it emanate from?

Everything started with the awakening of sexual desire in childhood. This early sexual desire is not about sex, which children don't even have knowledge about; however, it can be noticed in the manner boys have a special liking for their mothers and girls for their fathers.

Usually, parents react back to this affection and have a tendency to be strict with children of the same gender as well, while spoiling a child of the other gender.

Children love this kind of loving relationship and will do completely anything to keep it that way. Think of a case whereby, each time a boy's father goes away, he has the chance to sleep in his mother's bed. Then, the boy needs to go to his room when the father gets back

He realizes that if the father were gone for life, he could be close to his mother every night. Also, he is aware, from discussions about his grandparents, that "being dead" signifies going away for life. Due to this, the boy wishes his father would die.

That kind of a childhood wish is shown in excellent detail in Sophocles' Oedipus Rex, an olden Greek tragedy. In Sophocles, the protagonist Oedipus murders a man whom he doesn't know is his father and gets married to his mother who gives birth to four of his children. When he finds about truth, he blinds himself and goes into exile.

We can relate to Oedipus because somehow, we can visualize going through his fate ourselves. But, as adults, the majority of the people have suppressed any wish to follow in Oedipus' paths and shudder at the thought of it.

Chapter 8 - Interpreting dreams is vital for knowing the psyche as well as treating its problems.

Now that you understand where dreams emanate from and how they're created. However, interpreting dreams brings a lot of the psyche to light as well.

Through analyzing dreams, you can know about the inner workings of that most mysterious entity known as the human psyche. We understand that dreams can show repressed wishes that usually stem from childhood.

These bottled-up wishes are active, even though you're not conscious of them in waking life. They're concealed in the unconscious.

Analyzing dreams can assist individuals to treat and know about psychosis, a state whereby a patient loses touch with reality. Psychotic episodes happen when the suppressed wishes of the unconscious are inadequately censored, bringing about their expression during waking life.

Dreams can as well assist treat neuroses, in which suppressed wishes lead to observable symptoms such as phobias.

However, can we actually depend on this technique of analysis? Nevertheless, some associations look random.

According to Freud's world, there's nothing like a random connection, just surprising and glaring ones.

Consider the previous illustration, where the word "Gartner" sounds like a "gardener." A garden in a dream might remind a patient of an allegation made by Mr. Gartner, asserting that the patient doesn't work really hard.

That kind of apparent randomness makes it vital to dig deep for deeper connections.

In the "gardener-Gartner" illustration, the first word sounds like the second word; however, more deeply, gardening might as well be the patient's favorite hobby.

Also, if you require more evidence that analysis works, consider the outcomes. Surprising associations between dreams and waking experiences are steadily revealed through this type of interpretation, and these associations give helpful detail about the manner in which the human psyche actually works.

The Interpretation of Dreams by Sigmund Freud Book Review

Dreams aren't the outcome of divine inspirations, neither are they random pictures. They're revelations of the dreamer's psychic inner world, and they can be read as well analyzed. In the process, we can discover about ourselves as persons and lessen problems of the psyche as they occur.

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