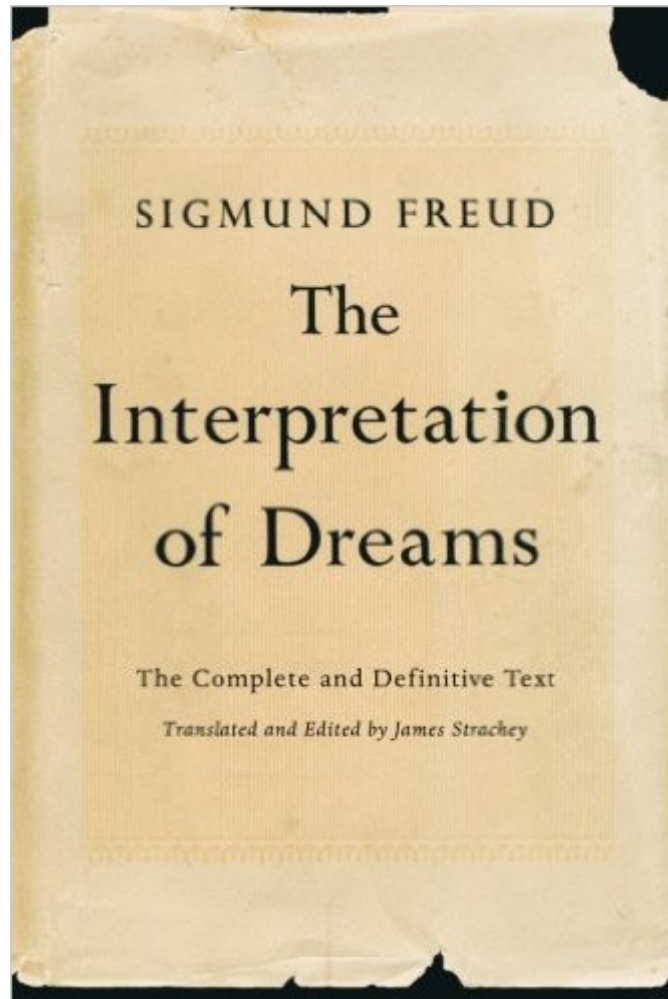


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The Interpretation Of Dreams: The Complete And Definitive Text



Synopsis

What are the most common dreams and why do we have them? What does a dream about death mean? What do dreams of swimming, failing, or flying symbolize? First published by Sigmund Freud in 1899, *The Interpretation of Dreams* considers why we dream and what it means in the larger picture of our psychological lives. Delving into theories of manifest and latent dream content, the special language of dreams, dreams as wish fulfillments, the significance of childhood experiences, and much more, Freud, widely considered the "father of psychoanalysis," thoroughly and thoughtfully examines dream psychology. Encompassing dozens of case histories and detailed analyses of actual dreams, this landmark text presents Freud's legendary work as a tool for comprehending our sleeping experiences. Renowned for translating Freud's German writings into English, James Strachey, with the assistance of Anna Freud, first published this edition in 1953. Incorporating all textual alterations made by Freud over a period of thirty years, it remains the most complete translation of the work in print. Completely redesigned and available for the first time in trade paperback

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Customer Reviews

Make up your own mind about Freud, but in the meantime, this is one of his great works that anyone can read without having technical knowledge about psychology. Freud included much about his own dreams, and the reader will suspect that he didn't "tell all" about his own introspection--nor would most of us! But this work, along with "The Psychopathology of Everyday Life" and "Wit and Its

Relation to the Unconscious" are for all readers. It is worth your while to peruse one of the most influential books in human history. As for the violence of the controversy that Freud inspires--well, that vehemence must mean something: a hundred years later, we are still at it. Decide for yourself.

As a psychotherapist I recognize that dreams are not the doorway to the unconscious but rather the window to the unconscious mind, its desires, impulses, and motivations. People like to give their egos and conscious minds too much credit for the decisions and actions in their daily lives. One must take into consideration that the average person has about 80,000 thoughts per day and according to most psychologists about 95% of those are repetitive thoughts that also occurred in their conscious mind yesterday or the day before. This helps to illustrate that we are, for the most part, driving on auto pilot in our daily lives. This begs the question of who is in charge, or as biologist Bruce Lipton has phrased it, "who is the wizard behind the curtain" in our choices and actions in our lives? The answer to this question is that our unconscious minds are the real driver and pilot navigating our lives and not our conscious mind that is thinking redundant thoughts, like a broken record, throughout most of our day. In order to gain a better understanding of the "wizard behind the curtain"--the pilot of our lives-- we must be willing to take an honest and uncensored examination and assessment of our dreams. It is in our dreams, when our conscious mind is unable to censor our true desires and motivations, that the "wizard" is revealed to us. Strachey's translation of Freud's "The Interpretation of Dreams: The Complete and Definitive Text" provides an excellent and comprehensive foundation to the topic of understanding, deciphering, and interpreting and understanding how our unconscious reveals itself to us via our dreams. While some reviewers have stated that Strachey's translation is hard to read and has too many "archaic words" and lengthy sentences, I would have to disagree. I have found this text to be an extremely accessible translation of Freud's work and feel that Strachey helps to bridge the communication gap that exists between Freud and the twenty-first century reader. Freud's work doesn't get any more accessible than this. Like all of Freud's writings he is very much present in this text with his own biases clearly showing throughout the book. Freud was a big bold thinker; after all, that's in part why he is an iconic figure. He was also a man of his time and one must take that in consideration when reading this text. During his time Freud was the leader, and father, of the psychoanalysis movement and his rather misogynistic views must be placed in the historical and cultural context of his own personal life and the time in which he lived. Yes, like most of Freud's writings there is a lot to get past, however, when you are able to remove Freud's biases from the work you are left with a comprehensive overview of the subject of dreams and their interpretation. Is this the only book that

one should read if they have an interest in the topic and want to gain a better understanding of the dreams and the unconscious? Of course, the answer is "no." The fields of psychology and dream research have grown and changed immensely over the last one hundred years and most (not to say all) theorists have gone as far away from Freud's views as one possibly can. However, no psychologist or dream researcher can ever completely get away from Freud's work as he did provide the groundwork for understanding this topic. Is this a book that one needs to read if they wanted to gain a thorough and comprehensive understanding of dreams and their interpretation? Absolutely. This work is the foundation to the field and if one wants to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic they need to start here. Strachey's translation of this text is a must have for the serious student of psychology, dream researcher, or lay person who desires a better understanding of their dreams and what they mean.

Most reviewers see the value of this great work, which lays out the dynamics of the unconscious mind. Others have a variety of misconceptions: first, he was not a cocaine addict. He misunderstood cocaine [as most people did] and, briefly, recommended it to others, including his fiancée. When his close friend died of it, Freud realized his error. Second, one reader states that you can't find "measurements" to prove anything about dreams. As one who has practiced in the field, I can say that the reader can measure the truth of Freud's theory by using it to understand him or herself, by analyzing one's own dreams. The dynamics of dreams are: first, dreams are phylogenetic, i.e., inherited as a species; they are not ontogenetic, i.e., created by environmental factors. R.E.M. studies have shown for fifty years that our eyes move rapidly while dreaming as if we were watching a film. However, all of the people in a dream are different fragments of ourselves, of our wishes, of our interests. Second: this phylogenetic inheritance includes an innate propensity to think in pictures. Moving up the scale of consciousness, in Ucs. [unconsciousness, thinking is mostly pictorial but sometimes verbal]; in Pcs. [preconsciousness, i.e., in daydreaming, thinking is pictorial and verbal and partly in our control]; in Cs. [consciousness, thinking is mostly verbal but partly pictorial]. Dreams have two main dynamics: one, displacement [in which the mind protects itself by displacing the troubling thought with a symbol]; two, condensation [in which the mind places symbols on top of one another in layers in order to make the troubling thought hard to find]. Schizophrenics are hard to understand because much of their thinking is dominated by displacement and condensation while they are awake. Their speech has numerous layers of symbols - condensation. In displacement, there is a manifest meaning [that which appears evident] and a latent meaning [that which one has to dig for by piercing the condensation of the

displacements. Any thinker, who chooses to simply understand, should avoid preconceptions or anger or a need to disdain or to repress. He or she should merely use the dynamics of dreaming to unravel his or her own dreams and daydreams [which can be analyzed with the same dynamics, except it is much easier because condensation is not as severe]. Freud was originally sceptical of his own insights and, as a result, he sat on this work for about a year, being reluctant to believe himself. He finally realized he was being defensive, that he was trying to repress disturbing truths about himself that were also true of us as a species. In analysis, the analyst doesn't speak much because the best person in a position to understand himself is the patient . . . just as the best person in a position to understand his/her dream is the dreamer. Further, an analyst doesn't talk because he wants the patient to speak until he/she finally understands him/herself. That takes time. It takes time for a person to crack the layers of condensation in his/her own thinking and to see all of the displacements. After 100 years, Freud's book remains one of the great gifts anyone ever gave men and women to understand themselves.

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