

Selected Dreams

choice: Joseph - to represent dreamers, "Behold the dreamer"

Dreams of children often involve animals, & are short

Walt's dream w/i past 2 weeks: BR in house with same floor plan as when I was growing up in Myls, black calf & small dog... How can I get to sleep with that in the room?

Song #1, Puff the Magic Dragon

① Psychology

(a) Some people don't recall dreams, e.g. Jack Tilling & Lois Hazstrom. In some societies, dreaming is such a valued activity they would have to fake it. In many societies dreaming is an important part of religion?

e.g. American Indians

Zuni - dangerous omens (Tealock pp 105f) - one must tell dreams

Ojibwa "dream fast," part of a boy's initiation ceremony - one must not talk about it (von Gruneborn, Hollowell, pp 282, 288)

e.g. OT Jews (not only Joseph, ... Gen 37:5-9, 41:1ff, 41:25-36 (Pharaoh))

e.g. Islam, Hinduism...

... but not so much Christianity, or the modern Western world more generally. In general, dreams are held to be worthless illusions, not to be remembered or discussed.

Today: is this neglect a loss?

(b) Psychologists tend to believe that everyone dreams — people like Jack + Lois just don't recall dreams.

Some evidence from REM sleep:

Tedlock p. 12 (non-REM dreams p. 13)

An REM e.g., Tedlock p. 90 * kinetic dreams → ^{walt running}
skiing cycling

C That's not sufficient evidence — fetuses, cats, decorticate cats have REM

(c) More recently, "void dreaming," where the dreamer knows she's dreaming
(leads to conclusion that we dream in "real time" vs
recall approach, quid pro quo)

The Experience Itself

(2)

Variable Valueless

Variable

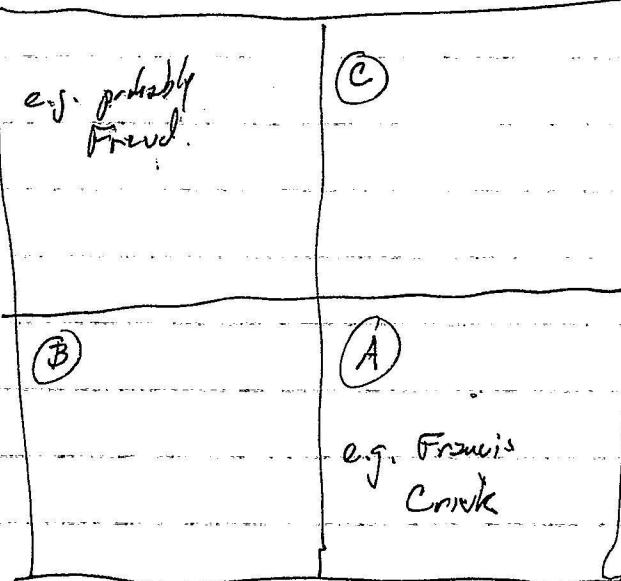
e.g. probably
Freud.

(C)

Valueless

e.g. Francis
Crick

Interpretations



(d) The Crick theory, Tedlock p. 13

(B) The position: the experiences can be, often are, valuable in themselves even if they can't be interpreted, don't make sense, e.g. esp. interpretation of musical or autistic experiences.

quote Conrad, Tedlock p. 36
e.g. the calf in the BR



Still, one should try to talk about them, share them, otherwise one very quickly forgets about them ... they cannot be saved.

Dreams can be a distinctly different kind of experience, perhaps somewhat like meditation — perhaps the meditation of the non-virtuoso.
~~— My limited experience with meditation~~

e.g. in our usual waking consciousness, we are usually attending to something, even if absent-minded — physical sensations, projects & schemes, memories good & bad, etc — we never listen to our spontaneous selves.

~~— My limited experience with meditation (verbal)~~
(God speaks when everything is quiet....)

Dreams are similar in the spontaneity, vividness, unpredictability of what our minds can produce (visual not verbal)

② The position: The content of dreams can be interpreted — they can be "decoded," as it were, and used to tell us something about the world or ourselves. The experience itself might be rather unpleasant, not necessarily valuable.

e.g. dream interpreters in Jerusalem, & Rabbi Elazar, Cullis p26

- Most often people have felt that dreams could be interpreted outside → omens, ways to predict the future — dreams could tell us something about the world. However, not necessarily → deterministic future — the omens can be offset by work or ritual, e.g. the Zuni,

Joseph & the famine:

— we don't take this seriously any more. But note: dream images might give intelligent people "raw material" to work with. An intelligent man might predict prolonged drought in the Middle East.

But Joseph could use the anxiety produced by the Pharaoh's dream to get → policy of storing grain

- Today, people who take dreams seriously do so because they think their dreams can tell them something about themselves. This is clear in the work of Sigmund Freud & other psychologists. I find Freud's particular interpretations a bit incredible — his claims to have discovered the real unconscious meaning of particular dream symbols seem purely arbitrary.

(Although I had a dream before I ever heard of psychoanalysis that really fits the theory — the bear in → picnic!)

But even if one rejects the specific claims of psychoanalysts one might recognize that the method might be useful. We can use our intelligence to reflect upon our characters & our personal problems. But the intelligence can do its job better if it has raw materials to work with. And dreams can provide such raw materials. Precisely because they are ambiguous, bizarre, abstract, they make it possible for us to reflect in imaginative ways, more so than when we reflect on images presented from written reality.

Other kinds of stimuli can also be useful in
astrology & Johannes Kepler, (his board & Hugh Rawlinson)

-3- One last example of how dreams can be used to interpret the outside world by presenting images that can be used as raw material by our intelligence. Back there around 1870 the German chemist August Kekulé had puzzled unsuccessfully over the elusive structure of the benzene molecule. He knew the formula, C_6H_6 , but no structure could be found that fit the facts of its behavior...

C Skura in Doedals, pp 129, 132 ff