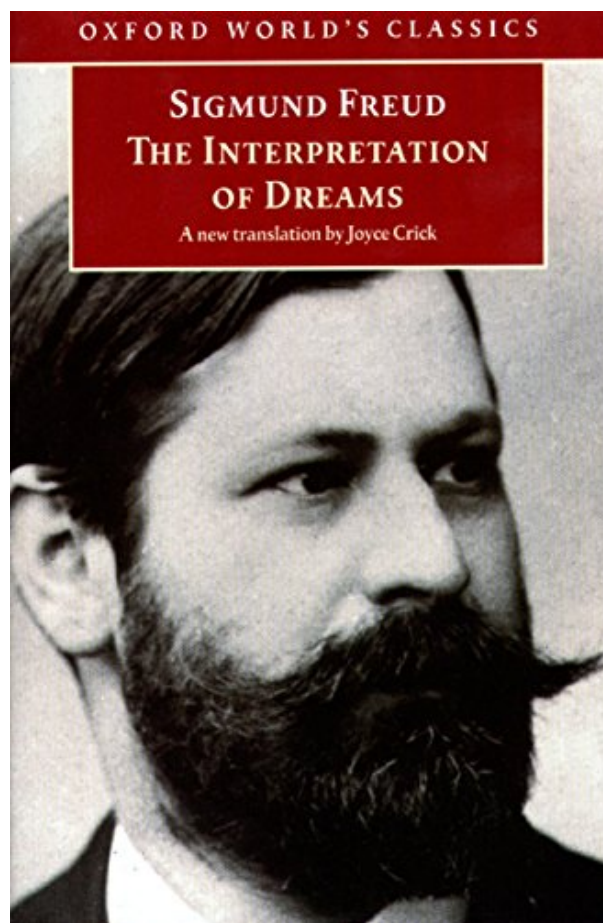


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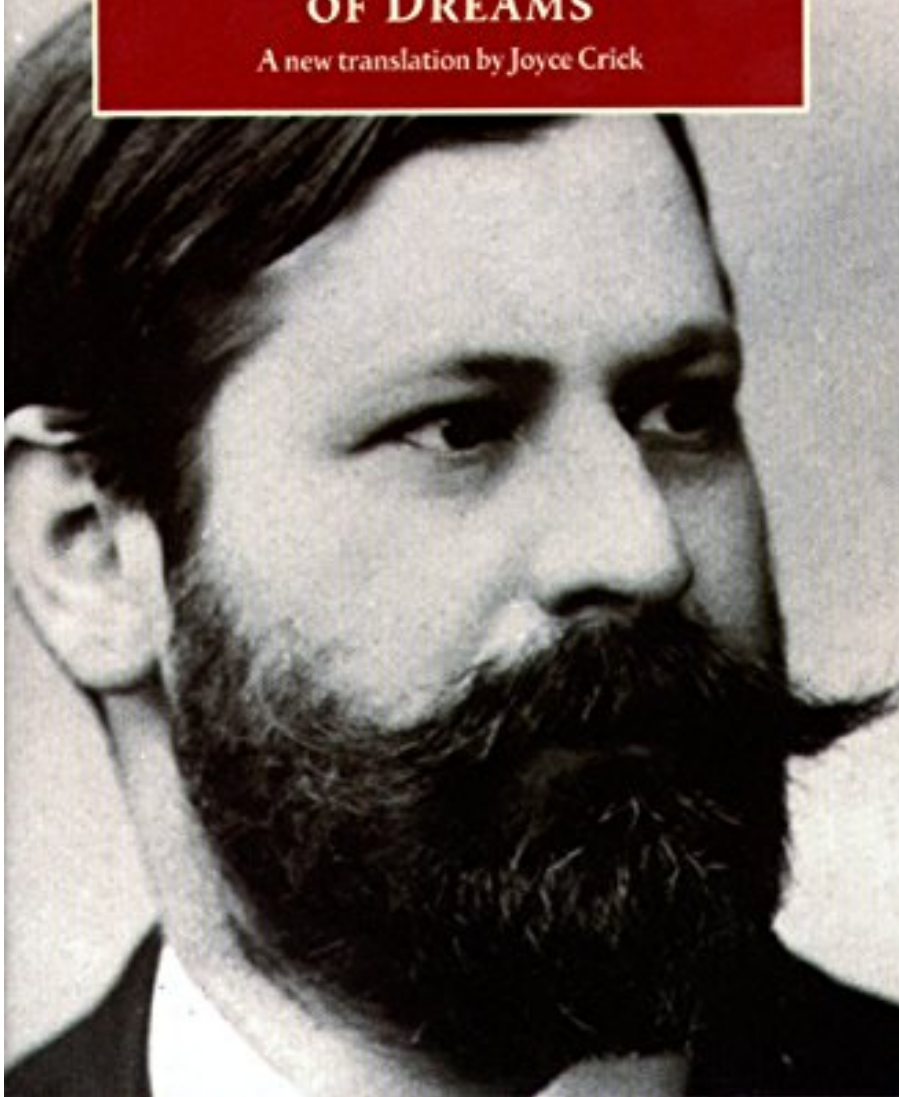
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All in all, Freud's theory of dreams can probably best be described as 50 percent right and 100 percent wrong. Many of his observations about dreams (not their interpretation) are insightful. If viewed as a historical work, perhaps metaphorically, *The Interpretation of Dreams* can be enjoyable and thought-provoking. But those looking for a scientific explanation of dreaming had best look elsewhere. Even those seeking to use dream interpretation as a clinical tool deserve a more useful model, one more consonant with modern scientific theory. A hundred years after Freud, we seem to be back where he started.

In *Dreaming Souls*, Flanagan seeks to answer philosophical questions about dreaming in the light of what we know about neurobiology. Still, when he talks about dreaming, he is referring specifically to the conscious experience of dreaming, with or without subsequent recall on waking, and not to the underlying physiology of the dreaming state. Although this minimal and somewhat naive attention to physiology is disappointing, it does not make his book uninteresting. Consciousness, he proposes, evolved to solve specific problems, such as how to permit the selective allocation of limited brain resources to just one of many competing sensory inputs -- what we call "attention." What, one might ask, does consciousness offer that the underlying neurophysiology could not handle equally well? Perhaps, Flanagan seems to suggest, consciousness just happened to appear before a "mindless" physiologic alternative did, and it worked well enough. Maybe consciousness and emotions represent just one of many solutions that could have evolved to deal with these problems. Perhaps (and it is a terrifying thought) consciousness could just as easily not have evolved.

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Still, Flanagan provides a fascinating view of dreaming from the perspective of a modern philosopher. He presents an elegant explication of how dreams, constructed through a chaotic process without intent on the part of the dreamer, can not only still have meaning, but also be self-revealing and useful as well. Even if the experience of dreaming (as opposed to its underlying physiology) arose without evolutionary selection, he argues, it does not follow that dreams are meaningless or that dreaming is useless. Much of what we are was never selected for -- the abilities to solve partial differential equations and to write sonnets and soliloquies were not selected by evolutionary pressures. What we are and what we have evolved to be are not the same. Destiny is not biology, and dreams are not just noise produced by the sleeping brain. Flanagan's provocative commentary would make quick and enjoyable reading for anyone interested in the thoughtful study of dreaming and may yet provide the basis for a new framework for understanding what dreams mean and how they can be used: the goal of dream interpretation. But the big scientific questions remain unanswered. What is the role of sleep in cognitive and emotional processing? How do we integrate these physiologic processes with the phenomenology of dreaming? The time is ripe to address these questions.

What might answers to these questions look like? Over the past 10 to 15 years, cognitive neuroscience has proved the existence of multiple, physically distinct memory systems, including working-memory, episodic-memory, and semantic-memory systems. As a consequence, the old idea of consolidating short-term memories into long-term memories has expanded to include concepts of transferring memories from one system to another and then integrating them into complex associative networks. New research suggests that these activities may depend on sleep and might even be the main function of sleep.

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By HJimH

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No, those are not links, it looks exactly like that, and is every bit as silly as it looks here. This public-domain hackwork should be free, not even 99 cents; in 5 minutes a competent secretary could have added the chapter links, and probably in another half hour do the footnotes. I don't think anybody spent even 15 minutes "preparing" this "edition", and every sale is 100% profit. Caveat emptor.

Note that there is ANOTHER Kindle edition that appears to be the real thing, but for some reason did not appear in my original search, leading me to purchase this infuriating book. Don't; go here instead: [The Interpretation of Dreams: The Complete and Definitive Text](#)

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Very Informative...

By Nikki

This book is very interesting. I've always enjoyed trying to understand what my dreams are about. They are actually meant to tell you about your present or past life. I have also been very interested by Sigmund Freud and his points. I thought it was a really interesting book and I think you will to. I did get this product for a free or discounted price in return for my review. You have to be in to certain things and the mind to be able to enjoy this, but I do highly recommend that you give it a chance, you could get lost in the interesting

information and learn new things about yourself.

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DREAM ON

By Catherine Roche

This is an academic book for the the lay person or those with a professional interest in the unconcious. It's challenging but fascinating and there's stacks of information if writing a psychological thriller.

Highly recommended and something all serious people should have on their shelf. Freud is after all one of the great minds of the 20th century. .

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Freud's own review of the scientific literature of the time suggests that he has not contributed as much as we might think. The content of dreams was already seen by pre-Freudians as determined by previous experiences and as arising in what Ludwig Strumpell referred to as "almost memory-less isolation" from those experiences. Dreams were already seen as bizarre and chaotic, driven, as Freud described the theories of Wilhelm Wundt, by "internal... excitations of the sensory organs." The views of this pre-Freudian scientific community were remarkably similar to those held by neurobiologists and cognitive neuroscientists today.

What, then, did Freud add to the study of dreams? Beautiful literature, but mostly bad theory and methodology. Dreams serve to discharge pent-up energy associated with unsatisfied infantile wishes. Dream construction follows a tortured path, with the condensation of many ideas into one and the displacement of their "energies" to unrelated images, all to keep the forbidden wishes from reaching consciousness. Freud's interpretations are stunning: a woman's dream about going to Italy (gen Italien -- to Italy) reflects a hidden wish concerning genitals (Genitalien). Why? Because it is obvious. One is reminded of Plato's "proof" in the Republic that the philosopher-king leads a life that is 729 times more pleasant than that of a tyrant.

All in all, Freud's theory of dreams can probably best be described as 50 percent right and 100 percent wrong. Many of his observations about dreams (not their interpretation) are insightful. If viewed as a historical work, perhaps metaphorically, *The Interpretation of Dreams* can be enjoyable and thought-provoking. But those looking for a scientific explanation of dreaming had best look elsewhere. Even those seeking to use dream interpretation as a clinical tool deserve a more useful model, one more consonant with modern scientific theory. A hundred years after Freud, we seem to be back where he started.

In *Dreaming Souls*, Flanagan seeks to answer philosophical questions about dreaming in the light of what we know about neurobiology. Still, when he talks about dreaming, he is referring specifically to the conscious experience of dreaming, with or without subsequent recall on waking, and not to the underlying physiology of the dreaming state. Although this minimal and somewhat naive attention to physiology is disappointing, it does not make his book uninteresting. Consciousness, he proposes, evolved to solve specific problems, such as how to permit the selective allocation of limited brain resources to just one of many competing sensory inputs -- what we call "attention." What, one might ask, does consciousness offer that the underlying neurophysiology could not handle equally well? Perhaps, Flanagan seems to suggest, consciousness just happened to appear before a "mindless" physiologic alternative did, and it worked well enough. Maybe consciousness and emotions represent just one of many solutions that could have evolved to deal with these problems. Perhaps (and it is a terrifying thought) consciousness could just as easily not have evolved.

What about dreaming? This, Flanagan argues, is merely an unintended side effect of waking consciousness; evolution forgot to turn the conscious mind off at night, resulting in dreams that "neither help nor hinder fitness." For Flanagan, the neurobiologic processes underlying consciousness in both waking and sleeping states are of only passing interest and may be, in the end, unimportant. He clearly feels that cognitive processing during sleep serves no evolutionary value, a position that flies in the face of most recent research (for example, on sleep and consolidation of memory). What, then, is sleep for? Flanagan seems to fall back on an old suggestion of Allan Hobson's, that sleep merely serves to allow stockpiles of neurotransmitters in the brain to be replenished. Such an explanation woefully underestimates both the cost and the value of

sleep.

Still, Flanagan provides a fascinating view of dreaming from the perspective of a modern philosopher. He presents an elegant explication of how dreams, constructed through a chaotic process without intent on the part of the dreamer, can not only still have meaning, but also be self-revealing and useful as well. Even if the experience of dreaming (as opposed to its underlying physiology) arose without evolutionary selection, he argues, it does not follow that dreams are meaningless or that dreaming is useless. Much of what we are was never selected for -- the abilities to solve partial differential equations and to write sonnets and soliloquies were not selected by evolutionary pressures. What we are and what we have evolved to be are not the same. Destiny is not biology, and dreams are not just noise produced by the sleeping brain. Flanagan's provocative commentary would make quick and enjoyable reading for anyone interested in the thoughtful study of dreaming and may yet provide the basis for a new framework for understanding what dreams mean and how they can be used: the goal of dream interpretation. But the big scientific questions remain unanswered. What is the role of sleep in cognitive and emotional processing? How do we integrate these physiologic processes with the phenomenology of dreaming? The time is ripe to address these questions.

What might answers to these questions look like? Over the past 10 to 15 years, cognitive neuroscience has proved the existence of multiple, physically distinct memory systems, including working-memory, episodic-memory, and semantic-memory systems. As a consequence, the old idea of consolidating short-term memories into long-term memories has expanded to include concepts of transferring memories from one system to another and then integrating them into complex associative networks. New research suggests that these activities may depend on sleep and might even be the main function of sleep.

Processes of memory transfer and integration occur both intentionally (through the frontal cortex) and automatically (through "self-organizing" bottom-up processes). These processes are more complex and more time-consuming than simpler forms of memory consolidation, and they appear to use the same brain regions required for sensory processing. Taken together, they beg for a state in which sensory input is blocked and conscious control of cognitive and affective processing is turned off. Although such a state would be optimal for the automatic reactivation and reprocessing of ensembles of preexisting memories, it would leave the organism dissociated from its environment and unable to interact with it safely. By adding immobility to these other conditions, sleep makes this state of "off-line" memory reprocessing both safe and effective; herein lies the evolutionary pressure for sleep.

This, perhaps, is the beginning of a theory worth consideration by neurobiologists, cognitive scientists, and philosophers alike, and the questions it raises are both important and exciting. How would the reliable changes in chemical neuromodulation that are dependent on the stage of sleep, sensory-input gating, generation of electroencephalographic waves, and regional brain activation facilitate off-line memory reprocessing? Which component parts of such a memory-reprocessing system would each sleep stage support? For example, during rapid-eye-movement (REM) sleep, distant and unpredictable cortical associations, but not episodic memories, appear to be preferentially activated, leading to the bizarre, symbolic, and hyperemotional narratives found in classic dreams. In contrast, during non-REM sleep, mentation is generally more linear and thoughtlike. How and why would the brain modulate memory-reprocessing systems in these ways? And, finally, what function, if any, might our conscious awareness of this reprocessing -- what we call dreaming -- serve? I hope that the answers to these questions are not too far away.

Reviewed by Robert Stickgold, Ph.D.

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