

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary methods of dream interpretation have changed a great deal in the last few decades. Most effective therapists and dream specialists no longer rigidly follow the seminal, but often limiting, doctrines of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, or Fritz Perls. Today's leading dreamworkers have taken the best from Freud, Jung, Medard Boss, and recent sleep and dream research to synthesize new and fresh approaches. These methods de-emphasize theoretical purity and focus more attention on finding approaches that promote the greatest practical application of insights gained from dream interpretation.

This book is designed as a basic text on modern methods of interpretation for mental health students and professionals, as well as the general public. It presents seven hands-on approaches as they are actually practiced by highly skilled psychologists and psychiatrists today, each of whom have worked with dreamers for at least two decades. Each chapter serves both as an introduction to a given method as well as an example of an evolution of classical approaches. Thus the reader who is new to dream study will be able to follow each author's description of his or her work and note its evolution from classical perspectives to contemporary practice. Meanwhile, the professional who may have extraordinary expertise in a particular method will find easy access to unfamiliar approaches that may complement and strengthen his or her current dreamwork. As the founding president of the Association for the Study of Dreams, an international forum for the interdisciplinary study of dreaming, and as a director of the Delaney and Flowers Dream and Consultation Center, a dream-skills training center, I have been consistently and disappointingly impressed by the fact that it is a rare professional in dreamwork who has anything more than a very superficial and usually prejudiced knowledge of more than one method of dream interpretation. This situation has been fostered by the fact that it is extraordinarily difficult for the professional or the student to make his

or her way through the relevant and most useful literature describing alternative methods of dream interpretation. This book is intended to serve as a handy and informative resource and is aimed at encouraging both amateurs and professionals to explore and experiment with a variety of new interpretive perspectives and techniques.

This collection is not a superficial summary. Our publisher has provided us the rare, if not unique, opportunity to bring together in one volume rich descriptions of seven different approaches to dreams. Instead of the usual practice of limiting the authors to ten or fifteen pages, each was invited to take the space needed to give the reader a tangible, practical description and demonstration of his or her approach that could be put to use to enrich the reader's study and work with dreamers. Thus the reader can take a close look at how eight masters in the field really work as they present practical advice and procedures rather than rehash war-weary dream theories. The reader can sample radically different approaches from different schools of interpretation and gain the tools by which he or she can make meaningful comparisons. In these pages several authors also had enough space to answer questions and give suggestions for dealing with a variety of situations which arise as one progresses and matures in more advanced levels of dream interpretation.

Several contributors have provided edited nearly "verbatim" examples of their work with dreamers. I think the reader will find such examples to be extremely useful in understanding and experimenting with a given approach. In describing their theoretical roots and how they have departed from them when confronted with the real world of real dreamers, our contributors show the reader in very practical terms what to do and say when trying to understand a dream. Our authors take the reader behind the curtain of theory into the consultation room where the work of interpretation and of generating specific insights takes place.

Most modern interpretive methods can be easily understood once one has grasped the basic principles of interpretation described by Freud, Jung, and the existentialists such as Medard Boss. Freud was able to convince us that dreams relate to the conflicts of our personal lives, and that they reflect aspects of our development from childhood. Freud was the first one in the long history of dream interpretation to ask dreamers for their associations to the dream imagery and for the feelings the imagery and the associations evoked. In the preceding five thousand years, priests and other professional dream interpreters had relied on traditional or superstitiously fixed symbolic meanings, at

worst, and, at best (as in the case of the second-century Greek Artemidorus), on the insight, associations, and projections of the interpreter. Freud believed that dreams disguise their real or latent meaning in benign details called "day residue," and that a specialized knowledge of dream symbolism was necessary so that the therapist could give interpretations to the dreamer whether or not the dreamer's associations led to the same conclusion. Freud's symbolic substitution, which he used to complement his association method, was based not on ancient traditions but upon his metapsychology, i.e., his beliefs about the structure and function of the male and the female psyche. Contemporary dreamwork owes much to Freud. Many have insufficiently appreciated his many contributions, which include showing how dreams can reveal not only unresolved childhood issues but also how they can elucidate the dreamer's resistances and transferences when personal associations are elicited in a safe, nonjudgmental atmosphere.

Carl Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist and one-time student of Freud's, took issue with many aspects of classical psychoanalytic dreamwork as developed by Freud and some of his followers. While Jung agreed that dreams expressed the individual's psychological development and blocks to that development, he emphasized that dreams offer to help the dreamer transcend the conflicts of childhood and develop a fuller psychological growth process within the dreamer. He insisted that dreams reveal rather than conceal, and that the symbolic language of dreaming called not for a decoding of an internal unconscious censor's effort to hide latent meaning, but for an appreciation of the revelatory and expressive power of symbols. Rather than gathering what he found to be too lengthy and often tangential lists of associations to dream images, he would ask the dreamer to elaborate on the images but keep close to thoughts directly related to them. He would also suggest possible parallels and interpretations to the dreamer, drawing from his specialized knowledge based upon his own metapsychology and his reading of the history of mythology, religion, and alchemy, among other subjects. Jung aimed at being less authoritarian than Freud. He insisted that any interpretation he offered could only be a working hypothesis until such time as the dreamer was able to confirm its emotional fit or appropriateness.

Medard Boss, a Swiss psychiatrist who studied for a time with both Freud and Jung, went on to develop an existential-phenomenological perspective and added yet another vocabulary to the study of dreams. Freud was a good writer and is easy to read. Jung is not easy to read, and Boss is almost impossible to understand unless one has a

predilection for Germanic philosophical writing styles. Thus, Boss is not well known in the United States. His influence, which is much greater in Europe, has come to us more subtly in the spirit of the times. For example, there are elements of the existential perspective in the work of Freud and Fritz Perls, among others.

Briefly, Boss argued that all metapsychologies and their attendant conceptualizations of how the unconscious works are as unnecessary as they are contradictory and unprovable. He insisted that if the dreamer were only assisted in fully reexperiencing the dream and in reflecting upon the realities of being an experience to which the dream (in the mind of the dreamer or the analyst) seems to allude, the individual would become open to states of being and awareness to which he or she had previously been closed. Thus a greater openness and perhaps insight could be gained.

Boss eschewed Freud's and Jung's associative phase of exploration and entirely rejected both versions of symbol substitution. Instead, he asked the dreamer to "explicate" the dream, or to retell the dream or various parts of it several times in greater and greater detail. The dreamer was to describe the qualities of feeling and experiencing in the dream as well as in the retelling of the dream.

From this stage of explication, one moves into the elucidation phase. Here the analyst, who may or may not invite the dreamer to participate, searches for an intuitive grasping of the meaning in the manifest content. Neither the bases of this intuitive grasping nor the procedural method for achieving it are clearly described. We are told, however, that the searchers formally reject both the symbol substitution and metapsychologies of Freud and Jung. The analyst and the dreamer seek to apprehend both the dream as dream and as allusion to what Craig calls "the fundamental meaning structure of the manifest dream" as well as to some aspect of the dreamer's waking existence. It has been argued that any intuitive search for meaning related to a dream experience must draw upon one's metapsychology or belief about how the psyche operates. Certain aspects of Boss's metapsychology can be deduced by the patterns of his interpretations.

Erik Craig and Stephen Walsh's chapter on the existential-phenomenological approach derived from Boss's work provides some interpretive dialogues that demonstrate both the emphasis on staying closer to the actual dream imagery and the way meanings are derived from the dream. This classical tripod from which we can view all modern dreamwork will assist the reader in recognizing the three tremendously important influences on the theory and practice of contemporary dreamwork.

Our first chapter, "Dreams, the Dreamer, and Society," by Montague Ullman demonstrates how very far some psychoanalysts have come from early psychoanalytic procedures and theory. Ullman has developed a method for working with dreams in group settings. Instead of having the dreamer associate to the dream imagery, each group member is asked to describe his or her projections of meaning by answering the question, "What would this dream mean if it were mine?" The dreamer then comments to the degree he or she wishes on which projections from the group struck a responsive cord and seem to have shed light on the meaning of the dream.

After further clarification and discussion, and after the dream has been read back to the dreamer, one or more members of the group offer their "orchestrating projections." In this phase, members try to pull together what has been said and organize it according to the dramatic structure of the dream while relating the whole or parts of the dream to their metaphorical references. Thus Ullman proposes neither an authoritative symbolic substitution system nor a lengthy associative or descriptive procedure. While the dreamer is free to associate to the dream imagery after having heard the group's projections of meaning, the associative-descriptive material tends to be briefer than that found in other methods. Perhaps this is due to the tantalizing allure of responding to the projected meanings presented by the group. Although Ullman describes his as an atheoretical approach, the metapsychologies underlying the group's projected or orchestrated meanings are likely to be many and may or may not be consciously formulated, depending upon the makeup of the group.

A major safety factor of this approach is the clearly stated rule that the dreamer always has authority over the dream and the degree of self-revelation with which he or she chooses to participate. Group members are told to minimize intrusiveness especially in the form of telling the dreamer what his or her dream means. Although the orchestrating projections may sound like declarative interpretations, the dreamer is reminded that they are meant more as questions or hypotheses, which may well carry an overload of projections. Ullman greatly values the stimulation and social support which group work offers the dreamer, and he underlines the usually ignored social realities that dreams present to individuals. He argues that by reflecting our social beliefs and prejudices, dreams challenge "not only our personal but our social myths as well."

Ramon Greenberg and Chester Pearlman challenge a few Freudian and scientific myths about dreaming in, "An Integrated Approach to Dream Theory and Clinical Practice." Citing recent laboratory research

on REM deprivation, the REM responsiveness to various waking/learning situations and the study of dream content of analytic patients collected in sleep labs, Greenberg and Pearlman reject the old Freudian notions that dreams use benign day residue to disguise meaning. Instead, they argue that dreams serve an information processing function which helps the dreamer deal with recently aroused emotional material and to promote new learning, creative thinking, and problem-solving.

Their method of interpretation makes liberal use of the dreamer's associations but is far more collaborative than Freud's. They comment and focus upon the central problem presented in the manifest dream scenario. They encourage the dreamer to look for parallels both to the problem and to ways of coping in childhood and in current waking life.

This growing respect for the revelatory power of the manifest dream, triggered by Jung and much more emphatically proclaimed by Boss, is also expressed in the work of Joseph Natterson. In his chapter, "Dreams: The Gateway to Consciousness," Natterson describes his contemporary psychoanalytic style and discusses both the effects of dreamwork in therapy and the changes in dream type and quality over the course of time in therapy.

John Beebe, in "A Jungian Approach to Working with Dreams," provides us with a rare glimpse of the actual dialogue that takes place between a dreamer and a Jungian analyst. While adhering to the classical Jungian metapsychology and to the belief that analysts must learn and give the dreamer special knowledge of dream symbolism (at appropriate times), he warns of the dangers therein. Beebe encourages the analyst to keep Jungian jargon to a minimum and to avoid letting the metapsychological ideas of Jung overshadow the dream itself as the topic of concern.

In "Phenomenological Challenges for the Clinical Use of Dreams" by Erik Craig and Stephen Walsh, we see a modern modification and organization of Medard Boss's approach. Craig and Walsh are more careful than Boss was in monitoring their comments on the manifest dream, avoiding Boss's sometimes limiting and rather authoritative statements. Craig and Walsh, like most modern dreamworkers owe a debt to psychoanalyst Walter Bonime in calling for a more collaborative stance with the dreamer.

After demonstrating how the analyst works through the explication, elucidation, and allusion phases of exploring a dream, Craig and Walsh discuss the influences of Irvin Yalom's work in using dreams to explore the existential givens of death, freedom/responsibility, isolation, and meaninglessness. The chapter closes with a description of how

phenomenological dream work, with its emphases on the here and now of the dream experience, can evoke a greater sense of immediacy and of presence in both the dreamer and the therapist leading to viscerally experienced insights which have enhanced impact on the dreamer.

In "The Dream Interview" I present a systematized method of interpretation which is based on a minimalist metapsychology and aims at minimizing the expression and influence of the analyst-turned-interviewer's associations, projections, and conceptualizations. Like Bonime, Natterson, Ullman and Kramer, I focus on approaching the dream as a metaphoric statement about the dreamer's subjective life.

The dream interviewer is very active in asking the dreamer to describe the images, actions, and feelings in the dream as if he or she were describing them to someone from another planet who has little knowledge of earthly realities. This description phase is a very concrete and highly focused combination of explication and association. It is followed by the interviewer's recapitulation of the dreamer's responses.

Next, the dreamer is asked to bridge from the dream to waking experience with specific questions like, "Does the shoemaker in your dream whom you describe as _____ remind you of any part of yourself or of anyone or anything in your life?" If the dreamer's response is yes, the interviewer asks, "How so?" and thereby invites the dreamer to confirm or reject the bridge with greater specificity. These bridging steps are aimed at achieving both the elucidation and allusion goals described by Craig and Walsh.

As the dreamer progresses through the various scenes of the dream, as well as at the end of the dream, the interviewer or the dreamer makes summaries of the dream as told, including the descriptions and bridges made so far. The retelling of the dream which Ullman, Beebe, and Craig and Walsh encourage emphasizes the shared belief that "the dream says it best." Including the descriptions and bridges in the retelling is peculiar to the dream interview approach.

Throughout the interview, the interviewer is to use the dreamer's descriptions and bridges to discover the metaphors of the dream imagery. The interviewer is to keep his or her own projections and formulations out of the way to the greatest extent possible. This is much the same attitude of the phenomenologists and differs markedly from Ullman's and Beebe's approaches.

Loma Flowers in her chapter, "The Dream Interview Method in a Private Outpatient Psychotherapy Practice," describes her application of this method to a variety of therapeutic situations, including individual psychotherapy, consultation liaison, brief psychotherapy, and cou-

ples and group therapy. She also examines the various uses of dreams in the different stages of long-term psychotherapy as well as applications to psychosomatic symptoms, depression, anxiety, borderline traits, addictions, and decision-making. Flowers also considers the indications for and contradictions of using dream interviews in psychotherapy.

In "Dream Translation: An Approach to Understanding Dreams," Milton Kramer suggests a method that, at first glance, may seem to be the exact opposite of the Delaney and Flowers's dream interview, which so highly prizes the dreamer's very personal associations and concrete descriptions. Kramer presents a method of interpretation that can be practiced without any explicit associations from the dreamer—in fact, without any knowledge of the dreamer beyond age and sex. While Kramer acknowledges that collaborative dreamwork which employs the associations of the dreamer encourages engagement of the patient in the therapeutic process and lends specificity to interpretations, he demonstrates that there is much to be learned from the dream text itself.

Kramer looks at the structure of the dream report and relates it to his past experience in the analysis of dreams using the methods of various depth psychological approaches. He also compares the dream imagery to scientific studies of dream content and its relation to personality variables, and of the relation between dreamers' waking and sleeping personality traits and moods.

The dream translation method is based on the hypotheses that the manifest dream report is strictly determined, that the order of elements in the dream is also strictly determined, and that the sequence of these elements are causally related. Dream "translators" approach the dream as a metaphorical statement of the dreamer's inner life and use their own associations in attempting to discover its metaphoric meaning. Translators are encouraged to make their best guess as to what the dream is about. Kramer emphasizes that much can be learned about the dreamer in this fashion and that the diagnostic value of the dream report itself can be very useful.

The respect given the meaning inherent in the structure of the dream, the three working hypotheses used, and the search for metaphoric expression of Kramer's method are important elements of the dream interview as well. The differing goals of the two methods explain the more obvious methodological differences. Kramer seeks understanding of a more general nature from a dream report which can be used in studies or consultations without the presence of the dreamer, or in therapeutic situations in which there is an impasse or the need for early diagnostic hypotheses. Delaney and Flowers, whether using the

dream in or out of a therapeutic or diagnostic setting, always work with the dreamer and seek the most specific metaphoric parallels possible. Both methods place particular emphasis on the metaphorical meaningfulness of the structure of the dream as a whole.

As you read the following chapters you may find it interesting to explore how different approaches address such basic questions as : How is depth defined? How active and how suggestive should the analyst be? Who best determines the subjective or objective level of interpretation? How does one know when a dream has been understood? How best does one encourage the integration of dream-generated insight?

The various approaches to the understanding of dreams presented in the following pages offer the reader new and synthetic perspectives on, and methods of entering into the world of dream interpretation which has too long been oppressed by parochial thinking. It is my hope that this collection will assist in furthering the establishment of more thorough, integrative, and practical education in this fascinating field.