

DREAM INTERPRETATION

Exploring the Meaning and Purpose of
Sleep and Dreams

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Historical & Cultural Perspectives

- ▶ Babylonians: Epic of Gilgamesh
- ▶ Egyptians: Dream incubation in temples
- ▶ Greeks: Shrines for healing oracles
- ▶ China: Divine Guidance and Omens
- ▶ India: Maya, karmic patterns
- ▶ Islamic world: Spiritual perception
- ▶ Christian world: New and Old testament

Historical & Cultural Perspectives (cont.)

- ▶ Tribal and Indigenous practices-Communal sharing
 - ▶ African tribes-Bayaka and Hadza-threat coping
 - ▶ Acuhuar of South America: vital source of knowledge and insights about daily activities
 - ▶ Iroquois: Sophisticated theory of hidden desires

Modern Era

Dreams as Source of Creativity

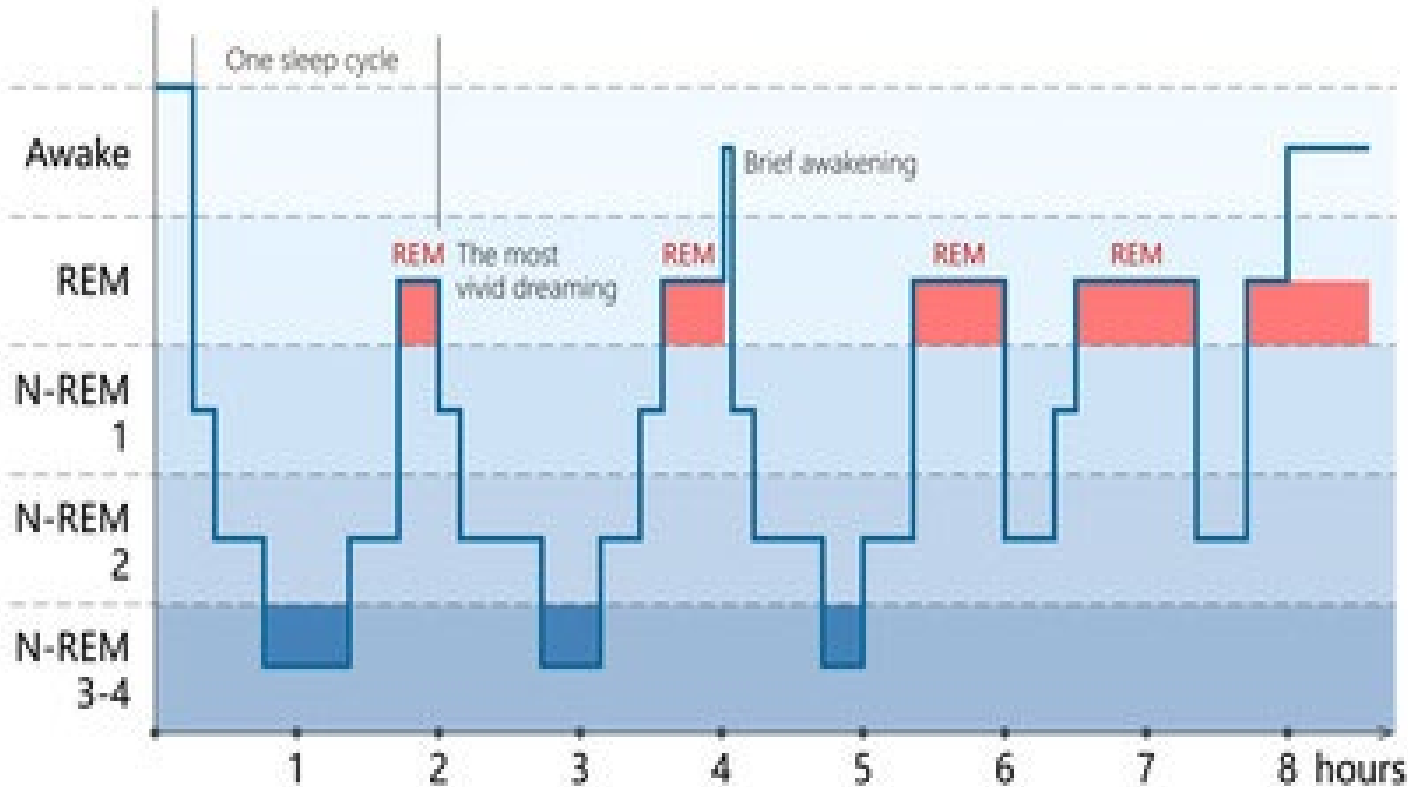
- ▶ Elias Howe - Sewing machine (spear with holes)
- ▶ August Kekulé - Benzene ring (snake biting its tail)
- ▶ Albert Einstein - Theory of relativity (going down hill on sled)
- ▶ Mary Shelley - Frankenstein
- ▶ Paul McCartney - “Yesterday”

The Discovery of REM

- ▶ Eugene Aserinsky 1951
- ▶ Nathaniel Kleitman and William Dement
- ▶ Characteristics of REM
- ▶ 2 kinds of sleep - REM, or paradoxical sleep, and NREM or slow wave sleep.
- ▶ Later REM findings

Sleep and REM patterns

Sleep Cycles



REM and Dream Findings

- ▶ Everyone dreams every night. Most dreams never brought into awareness.
- ▶ Forgetting of dreams is extremely rapid.
- ▶ More unusual dreams occur later at night.
- ▶ Infants spend majority of time in REM which decreases steadily with age.
- ▶ REM is found in all but the most primitive animals.

REM and NREM Deprivation

- ▶ REM deprivation
- ▶ NREM deprivation
- ▶ Drug and alcohol use causes REM deprivation.
- ▶ REM deprivation has a positive effect on depressed individuals.

Recent Biological and Neurological Research

- ▶ Sleep
 - ▶ Serves multiple biological roles including cellular repair.
 - ▶ Clears brain waste via cerebrospinal fluid, reducing risk of neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's.
 - ▶ Affects hundreds of genes related to metabolism, immunity, and stress response.

Dream Content

- ▶ People from all over the world report dreams of being chased, falling, flying, and nudity.
- ▶ 1950s Hall analyzed content of 10,000 adults.
- ▶ Dream content showed twice as many negative emotions as positive.
- ▶ Characters usually with whom the dreamer was emotionally or conflictually involved
- ▶ Men have more dreams of aggression and competition. Women have more of social interactions and relationships.

Freud and the Modern Understanding of Dreams

- ▶ Dreams are the royal road to unconscious
- ▶ They reveal repressed impulses that the conscious mind cannot handle.
- ▶ Examination of repressed wishes leads to understanding of unresolved conflicts
- ▶ Freud's method was free association
- ▶ Dream-Racquetball

Jung

- ▶ Dreams are direct expression of the personal and collective unconscious
- ▶ Dreams reflect insight and attempts to achieve wholeness.
- ▶ Personal unconscious often uses “compensation” to help individuation.
- ▶ The collective unconscious contains archetypes and the wisdom of mankind.
- ▶ Dream-Morally Rigid Clergyman

A Modern View

Lillie Weiss

- ▶ Many urges, feelings, and meanings occurring during the day are unresolved.
- ▶ Dreams are a mechanism to try to process this information and our emotions.
- ▶ They weave together a story that integrates waking events in order to make sense of our experience.
- ▶ Dream- Cliff

The Nature and Language of Dreams

- ▶ Free from limitations of time & space
- ▶ May lack logical reasoning and logic
- ▶ Microscopic quality -Dreams may exaggerate feelings.
- ▶ Dream language is composed of symbols which are personal by necessity concrete images.

A Method of Dream Interpretation

- ▶ Retell the dream in the 3rd person, as if it is happening to someone else.
- ▶ Identify the feelings or general themes of the dream and reflect on their connections to your waking life
- ▶ To begin symbolic analysis, focus on the most interesting or confusing aspects of the dream

Dream Interpretation (cont.)

- ▶ Define the symbols, if it is a person what are they like?
- ▶ Explore your associations to the symbols and people
- ▶ Ask yourself, “What am I reminded of in my life when I think of something that is (symbol definition/meaningful association, dream details)?”

Dream

- ▶ I am cold and starved. I go into a restaurant hoping to get some warmth, but it is freezing in there. The waiter serves three other people before me even though I was there first, and he gives me the leftovers. I am hurt and angry, but I eat the crumbs anyway.
- ▶ I think maybe I should leave but I am afraid that there may not be any other restaurants open. Crumbs are better than nothing. I notice that I am wearing diapers, and I think to myself that if it weren't for diapers, I would get better service.