



A CENTURY OF DREAM INTERPRETATION

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Antiquity

- **Supernatural and external explanations** \leftrightarrow natural and internal explanations
- The dream
 - A visitation
 - Predicts the future
 - Transmits messages
 - Has a prophetic function
 - Is sent from the deity: indications of divine intentions

Dreams in the Bible



The dream in the Middle Ages and early modern times



- ▶ A communication from God or from the Devil.
- ▶ A dream always necessitates an interpretation
- ▶ Dreams are symbolic

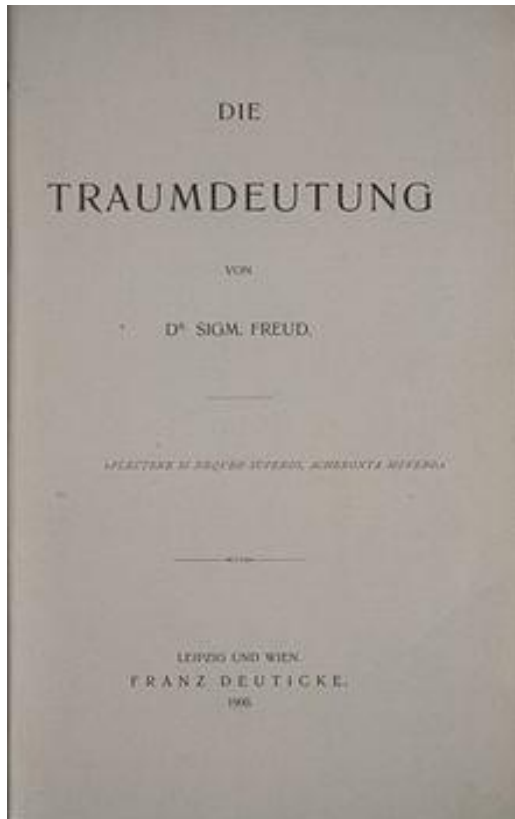
Dreams in the 18th century

- Dreams have physical causes: indigestion
- A dream adds insight into one's life
- Dreams have a healing function
- The social function of dreams
 - Told to family members
 - A way to pass a pedagogical message to the children
 - A form of catharsis
 - They help to understand one's own desires and impulses
 - A way to get the attention of others
 - Contributes to closeness

Dreams in the 19th century

- Empirical dream research starts around 1860
- The origin of dreams is sought in the inner world and in one's body
- The notion of the unconscious develops.

Sigmund Freud, 1900



Sigmund Freud, 1900

- The royal road to the discovery of the unconscious
- Dreams have a meaning
- The wish fulfilment theory
- Mechanisms of dream work
- Recurrent nightmares are the result of trauma

Contemporary dream interpretation

Regardless of the culture, people are interested in their dreams and want to obtain insight into underlying motives.

- An **empirical** approach to dreams (psychology)
- A **psychoanalytical** approach to dreams (Freud, Jung, Bion)
- Dreams and **neuroscience** (neuropsychanalysis dr. Mark Solms)

The movies, our collective dreams

- Beginning of the movies coincides with the great interest in the scientific investigation of dreams.
- The film medium as an analogy of dreaming (Méliès, Lumière).

Luis Bunuel: *Un chien andalou*, (1929)

- Fragment of the film

The dream as a transformation

- The experienced dream→
- The remembered dream→
- The dream told to an psychoanalyst→
- The dream as understood in a psychoanalysis→
- The dream as described in a lecture

Un chien andalou as a dream

■ Phenomenology:

- A complex hallucinatory episode
- Of a predominantly visual nature
- Unfolding in time during sleep
- Volatile and changeable
- One image changes into another
- Absence of logic
- Incoherent, reconciles contradictions
- Absurd content
- Disorientation, uncertainty about the space
- Composite figures
- Takes place in a 3 dimensional space not on a flat screen
- Seems to occur in the present time
- An affective occurrence
- Change of one's reflective consciousness
- Easily forgotten

The dreams in *Wild Strawberries*, Ingmar Bergman (1957)

- The whole film can be compared with a psychoanalytic session of a neurotic patient.
- A good dream

***Wild Strawberries*, Ingmar Bergman (1957)**


- Fragment of film 2

What is the meaning of this dream?

- Does the dream have a meaning?
- What is the meaning for the film character?
- What is the meaning for the movie maker?
- What is the effect of the spectator?

There are several meanings of a dream

- The fulfilment of an unconscious wish
- A picture of the state of the self
- A representation of relations among internal objects in the inner world
- A portrait of the subjective state of the dreamer
- A thinking process
- A source of wisdom: the revelation of a deep truth about one's self
- The aesthetic dimension of the dream



***Wild Strawberries*, Ingmar Bergman (1957)**

- Fragment of film 3

***Wild Strawberries*, Ingmar Bergman (1957)**

- We are able to live in two worlds
- Movement towards the depressive position

Inception, Christopher Nolan (2010)

- The content of the film: the complexity of dreams, multiple layers in dreams
- The dream as a work in progress
- The manifest dream is an interpretation of an emotional experience.
- The polyphony of dreams (Kaës)
- The intersubjective approach of dreams (Bion, Brown)
 - The dream space is open to others (mutual, shared with others)
 - Intergenerational transmission of dreams
- Every dream needs further processing: the dream as an invitation for further thinking and dreaming (Ogden, Schneider).
- Not all dreams may be understood!
- The dream as an aesthetic experience (Meltzer)

Inception, Christopher Nolan (2010)

- Fragment of film 4