
Dreaming



- Related to the question of sleep is why do we dream, we will look at two explanations:
 - **Neurobiological-** Activation synthesis model suggests that during sleep a story is built up to make sense of what is happening in the surroundings (Hobson & McCarley,1977)
 - **Psychological.-** Dreams are a meaningful way of considering worries or problems from conscious everyday life (Cartwright & Webb,1778)
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Dreaming- Neurobiological Theory.

- In REM sleep the brain is aroused and ready to make sense of external stimuli, but there isn't much happening externally. So the brain starts to use memories and makes sense of them.
 - EG If you dream about floating/flying- the idea could have come from movement of your body in some way. In REM sleep you might dream about wanting to move but being unable to- This would be explained by your muscles being paralysed in REM sleep.
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Dreaming- Neurobiological Theory.

- Hobbs demonstrated the activation/and firing of neurons in the brains of cats which involve the activation of cells responsible for vision and walking. However movement is restricted in REM sleep so the body interprets the information by other means...Dreaming.
 - One reason for the firing of these cells is that the neurotransmitter acetylcholine still remains and brain activity continues, when the neurotransmitter stops REM sleep continues.
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Dreaming- Neurobiological Theory

An evaluation.

- It has been said that the activation synthesis model is too vague...why might this be the case (PYA3- think about the way the information was obtained.)
 - There is conflicting evidence too...if we dream about what is happening externally, and we dream, we are unable to move- Reason being paralysis in REM sleep, what about dreaming we are flying..how would this model explain this?
 - There is a great deal of biological evidence.
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Dreaming- Psychological theory.

- Freud suggested that dreams contain wish fulfilment
- (a) **Manifest content**- Actually what the dream is about.
- (b) **Latent content**- The underlying message within the dream.

Anxiety provoking thoughts are repressed into the unconscious and manifest themselves in dreams.

He suggested 'Dreams are the royal road to the unconscious mind'

Evidence

Hajek & Belcher (1991) showed dreams are related to current concerns. People on a course to give up smoking had dreams about smoking and anxiety regarding smoking again. The dreams helped as those who had most dreams and most guilt about smoking were less likely to start smoking again.

How easy is it to test Freud's theory. Is this a strength or weakness of the theory?



Dreaming- Psychological theory.

- An important part of dream analysis involves symbolism. Symbols may be universal such as guns, swords and poles which represent the penis and horse riding and dancing representing sexual intercourse.
- Freud believed that the symbols were more likely to be personal and did not support the idea of dream dictionaries based on universal symbols. ‘Sometimes a cigar is only a cigar’.
- What do you think this statement made by Freud means?



Dreaming- Psychological theory.

An evaluation.

- ☺ Freud should be credited with being bold enough to put forward a theory in a repressed 19th century society. Some of his patients were probably experiencing wish fulfilment.
 - ☺ Dreams do tell us a great deal about the way the dreamer is feeling.
 - ☹ There is little empirical evidence to support Freud's claims about dreams.
 - ☹ Hayes pointed out that if dreams function as wish fulfilment people should dream more about food.
 - ☹ Some dreams are nightmares and not wish fulfilment.
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