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Dream Reader: Contemporary Approaches to the Understanding of Dreams. Anthony Shafton. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995, 676 pages, paper.

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Dream Reader is an extensively documented, scholarly yet easily readable, veritable state-of-the-art encyclopedic compendium of laboratory research, clinical interpretation, and theories of dreams and dreaming. To preface this review, *Dream Reader* is a superb volume for anyone interested in dreams and dreaming. The title, however, is somewhat misleading. A "reader" is typically either an edited collection of papers on a subject, or a text with multiple brief inserts from other works. *Dream Reader* is neither; it is a standard single author text.

Shafton has accomplished an admirable job in a field that is fraught with schisms; schisms that are based on differences between laboratory research findings, methodologically informed dream analysis, the ethnology or anthropology of dreaming, on the one hand; and on the other hand, methodologically *un*informed clinical interpretation, popular books on dreaming, and New Age approaches to the subject. The schism reflects a wider — and contemporary — split within psychology concerning controlled research versus clinical speculation (see Haskell, 1986a, 1986b, 1992a).

This historical schism recently led to large numbers of the *American Psychological Association's* membership (including 23 of the past 24 Presidents of the Association) to break away and form the more scientifically oriented *American Psychological Society*. For readers of the dreams and dreaming literature it is important to be aware of this great divide, especially since much of the literature on dream interpretation belongs to speculation, if not to sheer fantasy. *Dream Reader* attempts to straddle this methodological rupture.

While each of these schisms often constitutes a different audience, there is a growing eclectic readership that *Dream Reader* will reach. The book covers nearly the entire spectrum of dreams and dreaming research, beginning with REM sleep laboratory findings, to schools of thought including Freud, Jung, existentialism, culturalism, and Gestalt; specific topics include dream imagery, dreams and physical illness, dream styles, lucid dreaming, gender differences, ethnicity, and dreams and dreaming of the blind.

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In terms of general format, nearly every page of the volume has substantive footnotes. While some find footnotes disconcerting, I found these most helpful and at times fascinating and informative. At the end of the book, each chapter has its "Notes" section. This section is in fact 34 pages of small print, single spaced abbreviated but complete bibliographic references. These I found inconvenient to read. Included appropriately in the text are many interesting examples of dreams and dream fragments. These are summarized at the back of the volume with a small print 16-page chart. This I also found useful.

The volume fairly evenly points out and comments on many of the theoretical and empirical issues in the field, though not as extensively as I would have liked. Nevertheless, this will be helpful to the reader who may only be casually informed about the field. For this reviewer, perhaps the most serious fault of the volume is in treating all data with equal import and validity; again, the work makes no distinction between controlled research versus clinical interpretation and pop psychology. Render under Caesar that which is based in rigorous research, and that which is not to philosophy, existential psychology, and religion. While each has its place, this non postmodern epistemologist/reviewer (though not a Vienna Circle empiricist) would like to see them kept relatively separate.

There were significant omissions in the volume, among them the cognitive function of numbers in dreams, prolucid dreaming, and issues of methodology. The first is perhaps "unforgivable," the second and third, less so. As for the first, as I have noted elsewhere (Haskell, 1990), despite otherwise serious methodological shortcomings, it was Freud's discovery that numbers in dreams function cognitively. Indeed, two of Freud's well-known discriptions demonstrating the cognitive function of numbers were omitted — *The 3 Florins, 65 Kreuzers Dream* (1900/1954, p. 414) and the *1 Florin, 50 Kreuzers Dream* (p. 415). The second omission is evident during the discussion of "dreaming" outside the sleep state (called waking dreams): there is no mention of prolucid dreaming, a form of waking "dream" identified by Ahsen (1992a, 1992b; Haskell, 1992b). Finally, there is no systematic discussion of methodological control by which to understand dream content (see, for example, the early methodology of Foulkes, 1978).

Scattered throughout the volume — admittedly at a minimum — is a New Age orientation. For example, in describing well-known REM research findings on penile erection during REM dreaming, Shafton cites more recent research that correctly suggests this phenomenon is linked to a more general 90 minute periodicity of the deep physiological arousal system underlying the sleep cycle. So far so good. But then we find: "In this light we might ponder Garfield's thought, that the phenomenon exhibits our Kundalini serpent power in readiness" (p. 18). Then, in discussing the work of a "Unitarian minister and Jungian" (why it was necessary to note the writer was a Unitarian minister is unclear, unless it is a necessary nod to the spiritual orientation of New Age ideology), who believes that because there are metabolic processes in animals and plants similar to REM in being cyclic, the author suggests that "all living things may participate in the dream state" (p. 40). "Personally," says Shafton, "I hold to a dual aspect theory, whereby what we call matter when regarding it from the outside, is mind when regarded from the inside. If one system, a human being, can have mentality, then perhaps every system (organic or inorganic) has mentality of a kind commensurate with complexity. Dreaming would be found only in very complex, organic systems" (p. 40). Such pantheistic thinking is not uncommon in the dream literature.

For example, as one dream researcher similarly suggests, " . . . we may theorize that basic awareness or consciousness operates at a constant level throughout the animal (and perhaps plant) kingdom . . . . A worm will react to pain and experience that pain to the same degree as a human creature. Of course, in western cultures we have been biased for centuries, by Christianity and philosophers like Descartes to a belief that animals are not as conscious as ourselves" (Hearne, 1992). Such transpersonal/New Age beliefs (I hesitate to call them positions), seem to run rampant in dream research, again a kind of postmodern perspectivism, where every idea is considered equally valid. One is left wondering how such dream interpreters know that worm consciousness has its own form of dreaming, and indeed, if flowers dream, or whether daffodils dream lucidly.

In light of the above it is interesting that Shafton takes every opportunity to discredit rigorous researchers and theoreticians like Crick and Mitchison (1986), Foulkes (1985), Hobson (1988), and others who maintain that dreams have no psychological message, i.e., deep meaning. While I agree with Shafton (see Haskell, 1986a) that there is sufficient evidence to believe that on some level many dreams have meaning, I am not ready to reject the rigorous work of researchers who do not believe that dreams have meaning, while at the same time accepting that plants may REM sleep.

Finally, one of the unique aspect of *Dream Reader* is its inclusion of ethnic data on dreams, particularly on African–Americans. Shafton points out the blatant racism of Jung (1938/1984). Jung maintained the black person has "probably a whole historical layer less (of collective unconsciousness) than you [the white reader]. The different state of mind corresponds to the history of the races." He continued to say that living with "barbaric races" exerts a "suggestive effect" on the "tamed instinct of the white race and tends to pull it down" (p. 80, cited in Young–Eisendrath, 1987, p. 49, quoting Jung's Tavistock lecture, Lecture II, CW 18, paragraph 93). Shafton cites his own work (in press) and the work of others (Young–Eisendrath, 1987), including my own early preliminary work (Haskell, 1985), and points out that the interpretation of the dreams of blacks may often be distored by prejudice.

Despite the above criticisms, *Dream Reader* is an excellent scholarly compendium of the significant and fascinating literature on dreams and dreaming. It is recommended not just for the eclectic reader but for the specialized reader who is looking to be more widely informed.

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