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The Journal of Mind and Behavior
Winter 1989, Volume 10, Number 1
Pages 123–126
ISSN 0271-0137

Dreams and the Search for Meaning. Peter O'Connor. New York and Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1986, 247 pages, $8.95 paper.

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As with his two previous books, Peter O'Connor expects *Dreams and the Search for Meaning* to draw fire for its lack of an empirical, scientific foundation. But as he says in his Preface, he has not set out to prove anything, and in fact finds the concern of logical positivists with proof irrelevant to the analysis of dreams: because he believes dreams must be approached like works of art, O'Connor aims not only "to engage the reader in an imaginative act" but also to combat the disease of literality. Ultimately, O'Connor maintains that by considering dreams as open-ended symbols, dreamers can turn empty events into experiences charged with significance and thereby can heal their psychic wounds. Although O'Connor does not attempt a comprehensive, authoritative study, he nevertheless cogently summarizes the key concepts of Jung's model of the unconscious, as well as the seminal ideas about dreams of such figures as Artemidorus and Freud. But O'Connor goes beyond merely rehashing received opinion. What makes *Dreams* especially interesting and valuable is that O'Connor modifies and amplifies Jung by partly reconciling Freud's ideas to Jung's and by supporting his theories with vivid dreams well-chosen from his clinical practice.

Though an avowed Jungian, O'Connor deals fairly with Freud and stresses his connections to Jung rather than his differences—though, to be sure, these receive commentary too. Significantly, O'Connor begins his chapter on Freud and Jung by crediting Freud with the "heroic act of" rehabilitating "the dream after nearly nineteen centuries of almost total neglect." Next, O'Connor continues his treatment of Freud by lucidly explaining Freud's ideas about the conflict between the reality principle and the pleasure principle and about wish-fulfillment. However, O'Connor then identifies what he believes is the chief weakness of Freud's theory: viewing the dream as a cover-up of the true or latent meaning, which involves repressed instincts from childhood. To O'Connor, the problem here is that "symbolic language for Freud, unlike [for] Jung, is not a language that is the best possible expression of something we have not fully understood, but rather symbolic language symbols are expressions of certain unacceptable, specific, primitive, and instinctual desires." While admitting the validity of Freud's thought, O'Connor cites the common charge that Freud's method is reductive: first, because it concentrates on childhood; and second—what is more important—because it shrinks the meaning of symbols instead of amplifying them, as Jung tries to do. Rather than distinguish between the manifest and the latent content of a dream, as Freud would do, Jung sees the dream as "a metaphorical statement from the dreamer to himself or herself." In other words, rather than treating a knife, for example, as simply a sign for penis, O'Connor advocates "allowing an expansion of the actual

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symbol of a knife for the dreamer and exploring the symbolic meaning of the knife for that particular individual"—an approach Jung calls "amplification." Consequently, whereas Freud feels that dreams serve to provide wish-fulfillment, Jung thinks dreams serve to present images about parts of ourselves that we ignore and suppress and that we need to assimilate into consciousness if we want to achieve psychic wholeness ("individuation").

Despite their disagreement about the purpose of dreams, O'Connor contrives intriguing, though perhaps somewhat shallow, links between Freud and Jung. First he reinterprets what Freud means by "wish-fulfillment" by placing the term into a broader context. To draw a likeness between Jung's idea of compensation (the process by which the psyche strives to balance conscious feelings and thoughts with the opposite in the unconscious) and Freud's notion of wish-fulfillment, O'Connor cites the following definition of *wish:* according to the *Encyclopaedic World Dictionary*, a wish is a "distinct mental inclination towards the doing, obtaining, attaining, etc., of some thing, a desire felt or expressed." Therefore, O'Connor speculates that if for Freud dreams contain irrational material that needs to come into consciousness and if the dreams present wishes that motivate necessary actions, then one can merge Freud's view of dreams as wish-fulfillment with Jung's notion of compensation—"the wish to fulfill ourselves, to complete ourselves, to move towards individuation." If this synthesis strikes readers as too easy, the psychoanalysts' corresponding use of *soul* forms not only a more substantial link, but also one closer to the heart of O'Connor's focus. A running motif in *Dreams* is that the subject of psychology is psyche—or soul—and not mind or spirit, and that soul is an undefinable symbol, "a way in which we connect to events, turn them into experience, and thus construct a sense of meaning." Not surprisingly, then, O'Connor makes capital out of Bruno Bettelheim's *Freud and Man's Soul,* a book arguing that English-language translations of Freud inaccurately use "mind" whenever Freud writes "soul" [*seele*]. Accordingly, Bettelheim asserts that if Freud had meant "mind" he would have said so. Hence, O'Connor can effectively contend that just as Jung saw dreaming as soul-making, so Freud saw dreaming as the activity of the soul. As O'Connor says, Freud may well have meant that dreamers enact the wish for self-fulfillment whenever they experience soul.

While O'Connor's discussion of Freud and Jung contributes much to the liveliness of his book, it really just supplies context for his application of Jung's "map" for interpreting specific dreams. The second half of the book explains such archetypes as persona and shadow, anima and animus, and the four psychological types—thinking, feeling, intuition, and sensation; what is more fascinating in this part, however, is how O'Connor integrates all these dream symbols into his intelligent and tactful interpretations, and so deftly avoids reductive answers, a result that weakens far too many Jungian studies. For example, to illustrate the role of an animus figure in underscoring a woman's repression of her feeling function, O'Connor quotes and then analyzes the dream of a forty-year-old nursing sister. Through her work she had strongly developed her functions of sensation and thinking, but at the expense of feeling. Her neglect of feeling was further entrenched by her strict fundamentalist upbringing, which the dream graphically embodies through an emaciated political dissident just released from jail—in "real life" Father Brian Gore, who had recently been acquitted of murder charges trumped up to punish him for subversive protests. As O'Connor astutely explains, the nun unconsciously fixed on Gore as a symbolic animus because the outer event of his release supplied an image capable of conveying into her consciousness an awareness of her repressed feeling function. Unlike many Jungians who conventionally depict animus figures as sensation and thinking types, O'Connor reasons that the nun's unconscious chose Gore not only because his identity as priest squared with

her own Christian character, but also because she consciously thought of him as exhibiting compassion and warmth—qualities undeveloped in her psyche. O'Connor's explication of this animus figure wonderfully shows how dreams employ metaphor for meaning: since the priest represents feeling and is imprisoned for his dissident activities, O'Connor cleverly equates these dream images to the nun's imprisoned, emaciated feelings, which her Christian fundamentalism had repressed as subversive. Finally, O'Connor's flexible approach to this dream allows him to reinforce his Jungian interpretation by following the nun's personal associations to the image of horses in the dream, which reminded her of a time in puberty when she got chastised for touching a horse's flank—a scolding that confirms the repression of her instincts and feelings.

If the major strengths of *Dreams* are its well-chosen examples from actual dreamers—as well as its occasional illuminating references to standard myths and metaphors—the book nonetheless suffers from unnecessary, though minor, flaws. For instance, throughout the book O'Connor could have explained more concretely how to incorporate the wisdom of dreams into everyday life. Clearly, he is convincing when he insists that sometimes all that is called for is awareness of one's dream world. But in the many dreams that lead to clear diagnoses of psychic problems, it would have seemed natural for O'Connor to report on how the dreamers consciously changed their daily behavior and attitudes—especially since all dreams he analyzes come from people in his clinical practice and dream group. Similarly, when describing the most common types of misinterpretation of dreams, O'Connor could have bolstered his case by including explanatory examples. A further problem lies with O'Connor's prose: too frequently the reader stumbles across typos, fragments, comma splices, awkward phrasing, and faulty parallelism. Yet the author's engaging tone makes up for these stylistic lapses, and in general *Dreams* proves both clear and readable as O'Connor succeeds in writing direct sentences free of jargon. Altogether, then, *Dreams* represents a genuine contribution to the growing body of Jungian perspectives on dream analysis.