

Why do we dream



The paper "The Significance of Dreams in our Daily Life" is a good example of an essay on medical science. In 1959, William Dement quoted in Newsweek that "Dreaming permits each and every one of us to be quietly and safely insane every night of our lives". Indeed, in the harsh reality of daily living, people seek different forms of escape in different forms of entertainment, addictions, and spirituality. Among the most natural form of solace would be dreaming which is considered as universal experience; however, even the act of dreaming is perceived differently by many groups. If one would consider the scientific standpoint, dreams are classified as mental activities during sleep that has a lot to do with rapid-eye-movement (REM). Studies conducted revealed that children dream more often than adults. It was also revealed that blood pressure elevates and heartbeat quickens while one is dreaming despite the fact that the body is in a resting state. A research conducted by Solms reveals very interesting scientific literature on the occurrence of dreams. For one, Solms established that certain parts of the human brain are involved in the dream process, among them: the limbic system, the medial occipitotemporal cortex, the inferior parietal convexity, and the connections between mediobasal frontal cortex and brainstem and diencephalic-limbic structures. Some parts of the brain such as the spinal and peripheral sensory-motor systems, primary (idiotypic) sensory-motor cortex, unimodal (homotypical) isocortex outside the visual sphere, and dorsolateral prefrontal cortex does not affect the dreaming process even if these are sustained injury or damage ( Solms, 237 ). Thus, was concluded that certain external injury or damage in important parts of the brain responsible in the so-called " dream process" can cause cessation of dreams. Of course, this is from a very empirical study that views the brain

as an organ.

There is another field of science which is psychology, that counteracts this argument that the dreams are process or products of the brains system. In usual experience, components of dreams are visual images, pictures, vivid scenery, situations, and even ideas that have not been expressed. People usually dream of relationships that carry a lot of emotions, some traumatic experience, fleeting sentimental moments, and even situations that can possibly happen in the future. For this reason, people are often interested in the meaning of dreams. Many psychoanalysts influenced by Freud believe that there is hidden meaning in dreams. Aside from being a normal nocturnal activity, Freud argues that dreams when interpreted, can lead us to a deeper understanding of the unconscious ( Nagera 15 ). Much of Freud's ideas have been published in his book *The Interpretation of Dreams*; thus, practitioners of Freudian psychology often try to unravel the imagery and symbolism in a person's dream.

Another prominent person who got interested in the study of dreams, as well as its functions, is the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung. Jung held that dreams are keys to many mysteries in an individual. It could mean the inner workings of his unconscious mind that may lead to the revelation of events in the future that one hopes for. More specifically, Samuels in his analysis of Jung's works believed that the function of dreams in individuals is to regulate the psyche (Samuels 28 ). According to Samuels, Jung believed that dreams are attempts by an organism to maintain balance. A specific example would be Jung's observations that independent people dreamt of being cared for. However, we do need moments of a sense of integration even if this is unattainable as a whole ( Samuels 29). Thus, from a Jungian viewpoint,

dreams are self-regulating mechanisms that are beneficial to the development of the personality.

Aside from the two schools of thought mentioned, there is also a sociological aspect in recognizing the significance of dreams. Flanagan in his studies argued that dreams are influenced by culture; moreover, it was asserted that dreams do not have a special function for the organism. In his book, the author stated that dreams are “ephinomenal” or side-effects of the brain in its adaptation to modern living (Flanagan 103). Even Aldous Huxley stated that it (dreams) itself is caused but does not, indeed, cannot produce any effects (qt. In Flanagan 103). This sociological theory on dreams downplays the function it offers in the development of the individual. Dreams were views as an artifact, a part of the thought process similar to the argument of science that dreams are products of electrical impulses.

Looking back at the different theories about dreams, one may be confused about what dreams are made up of. Moreover, dreams can be taken as it is or further dissected to reveal many nuances in one's personality as suggested by Jung. However, the most important thing for the rest of humanity is that dreams bring comfort and hope. Even when presented as an omen, it is still welcomed so dangers in the future can be avoided.

Perhaps, for the common people, the only thing that matters is that good dreams protect them from the brutal reality of daily living.