

## Quadrant II – Transcript and Related Materials

**Programme : Bachelor of Arts(Third Year)**

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**Title of the Unit : Theories of Personality and Theories of Dreams**

**Module Name : Freud's Theory of Dreams**

**Name of the Presenter: Sendra Pereira, M.A**

**Assistant Professor,**

**DCT's, Dhempe College of Arts & Science,**

**Panaji– Goa**

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### Notes

#### **The theory of dreams– Freud**

When dealing with the cure for neurosis, Freud gradually gave up hypnosis in favour of free Association. The patient was made to recline on a couch and speak whatever thoughts or fantasies occurred. In the method of free Association, the patient took the initiative and made the psychoanalyst resume a more passive role. Patients have to use psycho analysis as a means to understand themselves better, helping them to be able to solve their own problems.

In the method of free Association, the patient was likely to tell the psychoanalyst about her dreams, since dreams are often impressive or disturbing mental phenomena.

Freud's book the interpretation of dreams, was first published in November 1899. He made dreams of legitimate object of scrutiny and created a theory of dreams with a technique for its interpreting them.

The analysis of dreams is not a separate method from that of free Association it is a natural consequence of the instruction to patients that they talk about everything that comes to their minds.

Freud's early patients spontaneously recalled their dreams and then proceeded to give free associations to them. Freud soon realised that these reported dreams and the accompanying free associations are rich sources of information about the dynamics of human personalities.

He then tested his own dreams and stated that the dream is an experience of the most primitive workings and content of the human mind. The primitive process that creates the dreams he called primary process. The primary process attempts to fulfill a wish or discharge attention by inducing an image of the desired goal. By having his patients free associate to their dreams, Freud was able to penetrate into the most inaccessible regions of the human mind and to discover the bedrock of personality.

In his work, he tried to show how the analysis of dreams enables one to fret out the hidden plus repressed parts of the human mind and to show that hysterical symptoms are motivated by sexual impulse. For Freud, everything that the person says or does is meaning full and fits into the total picture of the personality organization.

Freud a form that dreams word disguised hello sanitary fulfilments of recessed wishes. Dreams do not only represent current wishes but were also expansions of wish fulfilment dating from early childhood.

He regarded dreams as if they were neurotic symptoms. Since normal people dream his theory of dreams supported the view that neurotic and normal cannot be sharply distinguished and paved the way for establishing psycho analysis as a general theory of the mind which applied to everyone.

For Freud, nearly all neurotic problems originated in early childhood. He believed that dreams gave indirect Expressions to infantile sexual wishes which had been repressed and which, if expressed in undisguised form, would so disturb the dreamer that he would wake up.

The theory of dreams regards wishes originating in infancy as the indispensable motive force for the formation of dreams. Because these wishes are unacceptable and disturbing, The emergent dream, like a neurotic symptom, is a compromise between censorship and direct expression. The events of the previous day, which often enter into dreams, are important only because they activate the repressed infantile impulse.

Freud describes the mental process or dream work by which the dream was modified and made less disturbing. These processes included condensation- the fusing together of different ideas and images into a single image., displacement- when a potentially disturbing image or idea is replaced by something connected but less disturbing, representation- where thoughts are converted into visual images, and symbolisation- in which some neutral objects stand for, some aspect of sexual life for those persons connected with it which the dreamer would prefer not to recognize.

Freud also referred to secondary revision, a process which strives to make the dream intelligible by converting it into a coherent story and in doing so probably distorts it still further. This implies that the dream as recalled by the dreamer had previously been subjected to a complex process of disguise which concealed its real meaning. Freud introduced the term manifest content to describe what the dreamer recalled. Next time the latent content was the hidden, true meaning of the dream which would be known only when the dreamers Association to the images in the dream had been subjected to psychoanalytical scrutiny and interpretation. Freud's theory of dreams reflects both – his single mindedness and his tendency to generalization. He was sure that he was right in asserting that infantile sexual wishes were the root cause of neurosis. Therefore dreams for Freud are primitive irrational mental phenomena, which ignored logic and syntax. The interpretation of dreams is the Royal road to the knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind.

Thus, Freud's technique of dreams is ingenious but even he agreed that certain types of dreams did not fit his theory.

- A. There are dreams that do not require interpretation- am hungry person dreams of food. These are called convenience dreams express wishes but referred to ones present state and not his infancy.
- B. There are traumatic dreams which occur when the trauma was so sudden that the mind could not shield itself against anxious preparation. Therefore these dreams repeat, in undisguised form same shocking event like rape, car accident etc. They are not fulfilling wishes.
- C. Anxiety dreams – sometimes amounting to nightmares, appear to contradict his theory of wish fulfilment. He did not modify his dream theory to include then the new interpretation of anxiety that is as a signal pointing to a possible danger threatening the ego, making the person feel helpless. But earlier he regarded anxiety as simply a manifestation of undischarged sexual energy.

Though Freud agreed that repressed infantile wishes were the main instigation of dreams, his clinical examples deal with the emotions of adult life- with rivalry, inappropriate sexual desires etc. Today, very few psycho analysis support Freud's theory in its original form. All dreams are not concerned with unfulfilled or disrupt reputable wishes. It does not also follow that dreams are necessarily concealing something unacceptable.

For Freud, the great majority of symbols in dreams are sexual symbols. They serve the function of concealment or of making the anatomical aspects of sexuality more acceptable.

Freudian symbols are supposed to be objects occurring in dreams or fantasies which represents the genitals. Thus, hollow containers like keeves handbags symbolise female genitals and swords, umbrellas, pencils indicate male genitals. Modern theorists are inclined to think of dreams in terms of information processing- perhaps something to do with comparing the experiences of the day with similar experiences that are stored in the long term memory.