# Book Reviews

**Richard M. Jones** *The New Psychology of Dreaming.* Published by Penguin Books. £1

This beautifully-constructed and clearly argued book begins, and continues, by making a distinction between the interpretation and the psychology of dreams. To Jones, the interpretation of dreams is the relation of dream thought to waking thought; in other words, it is the way the dreamer, therapist or folk-loreist most commonly deals with dreams. The psychology of dreams is an effort to account for dreaming as a process, and to discover the mechanisms of dream-formation.

To illustrate his meaning, Jones makes the comparison with a poem. When it is read by other people than the poet, they may not only give their own interpretations to it, but are likely too to imagine that they know something of the processes within the poet which resulted in his writing the poem. 'This was his way of dealing with his impotence in the face of war', and so on. To me this illustration demonstrated the only comparatively threadbare places in the rich stuff of the writer's perception and research. Within this example, Jones spells out that it is of course the poet who alone knows the processes by which the poem came about. But this is certainly not his position with regard to dreams themselves, or the act of dreaming. He states explicitly that any scientific knowledge of dreams is dependent on two successive phases of waking thought: on the retrospective observation of the dream by the dreamer; and on the observation of the dream report by the investigator. I have no absolute quarrel with this view. But I am at odds with the weighting of the book, which on occasion is in danger of reifying, objectifying, of giving more apparent validity to the 'observation of the dream report by the investigator' than to the insights of the dreamer; the poet.

Now, Jones' mode, that of Western descriptive philosophy, does not seem to me very satisfactory for exploring dreams. Jones might well reply that his intention in this book was other : it was to explore dreaming. And there to me is the other minor discomfort I had in the reading. In the end, the distinction between dreams and the act of dreaming is a little less clear than his words suggest. The example of the poem reinforces what I am saying. The poet will find out about the processes of poem-formation by examining first the poem. Perhaps we shall find out in the surest way the processes of dream-formation and function when we use investigative methods which

are, or are analogous to, the dream mode or the mode of poetry. At the moment, it is as if Jones and some of the thinkers he quotes are standing, notebook in hand, staring through a doorway into a world they can report but partially, and cannot enter, touch, smell or explore. In all this scholarly and enthusiastic work I did not find a reference to using the dream mode to explore dream psychology.

As a therapist, Jones refers to the clinical necessity of finding some way of letting the dreamer own, or re-own, the contents of a dream, if she is to learn usefully from it. My recurrent experience when I am the helper or therapist to this process is that the person who had the dream is very likely to continue it as we sit there, once she has, as it were, re-entered it by the technique I am used to, (Gestalt). I have found very little reference to this process even in Gestalt theory. My guess is that the phenomenon is not dependent only on the technique I know, but is likely to be familar to many therapists as evidently sympathetic and invested in the worth of dreams as Jones. So, with an impertinence which I hope is excused by my enthusiasm about his own goals, I wish that he and others might engage the dreaming faculty of the dreamer as a tool of scientific study of the psychology of dreaming.

The writer confesses early in the book to impertinence of his own, in finding himself wondering how Freud might have modified his theories of dreams and dreaming, in the light of the discoveries of the last years about mammalian sleep. (All mammals have periods of their sleep characterised by rapid eye movements, irregular pulse, and a number of other physiological changes. In humans dreaming occurs in these REM phases, which as a species we experience about every ninety minutes.)

Using this data, he goes painstakingly back to the interpretation of Dreams, and leads us step by step through the developments and reactions of later thinkers to Freud's propositions. Are dreams the guardians of sleep? Are they preparation for wakefulness? Is the preconscious a censor of the infantile impulses, or is it less value-laden, is it simply a transformer? Are dreams a relic of a pre-verbal mode of experiencing? In support of this idea he quotes from Schachter, who used the word conventionalisation to describe the process by which we apparently lose the mechanism to evoke our early life:

'. . . taboo and repression are the psychological cannons of society against the child and against man, whereas in normal amnesia society uses the methods of blockade and slow starvation against those experiences and memories which do not equip man for his role in the social processes.' *And, suggests Jones, dreaming is the survivor of this blockade, in Schachter's words again,* 'in which potentialities of progress, of going beyond the conventional pattern. . . are forever present and waiting to be released.'

Piaget's analogy of play and dreaming, his suggestion that what is unconscious is as likely to be what is taken for granted as what is suppressed, or that symbols are not necessarily primary or secondary, resemble Schachter's ideas in being very considerable modifications of Freud's theory about more

than dreaming. One of the pleasures to me of this book is Jones' ability to display such evidence appropriately, by considerable quotation from fifteen or sixteen writers; he invites us in on his exploration of new hypotheses, rather than simply trying to argue us round.

Finally, modestly, he allows himself what he will not even call hypotheses, but speculations, about his subject. It turns out that these postulate similar functions for dreaming as for the REM-periods of sleep themselves. Dreaming may be to the psyche what REM sleep is to the body. It may *neutralise* some noxious impulse or memory; *stimulate* emotion or memory in this or that state of experiential deprivation; *reorganise* the ego in response to the disorganising effects of waking life; serve as an *alerting* function to potential threats to psychosocial integrity; and establish and maintain *perceptiveness in depth* within the person. In Koestler's words, 'without this daily dip into the ancient sources of mental life we would probably all become dessicated automata'.

Some of the earlier possibilities I have listed here so briefly owe such to the contribution of Andras Angyal. Like Sacks, he has clear in his mind the two potential systems every person has available for organising his total personality: sick, (neurotic) or healthy. In dreaming, humans seem to adjust the balance of power between these two systems. It is this reflection which leads Jones to suggest that dreaming may include a recuperative or growth process which is independent of waking interpretation. I expect so. And I expect too that this examination of much current speculation about the psychology of dreaming may influence those concerned with the interpretation of dreams.

It seems likely to me that dreaming has all the functions Jones suggests, and probably more. And it seems to me, too, that the surest primary tool for discovering more of the psychology of dreams is to return humbly and enthusiastically to the dreamer: *'Go back into your dream. What are you noticing? What does that say to you?'* My guess is that if we allow the dreamer undirected ownership of this intensely private, totally idiosyncratic invention, her own dream, we may paradoxically move the faster to some grasp of the universalities, of the psychology of dreaming

**Gaie Houston**

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**R. Corriere & J. Hart.** *The Dream Makers*, Funk & Wagnalls, N.Y., 1977.

*The discovery of a new special type of dream that functions as a systematic, practical and concise means of solving life's problems; and the finding of which is claimed to be one of the most important psychological discoveries ever made.*

For centuries mankind has been fascinated by that strange 'other' world he visits during certain periods in his sleep. He has sought to understand the functioning of these nightime adventures and to find the meaning of their coded messages. THE DREAM MAKERS IS NOT A BOOK ABOUT HOW TO INTERPRET DREAMS. Instead, in a revolutionary approach to

dreams, it tries to teach the reader how to dream a totally different kind of dream than what people normally dream. This new type of dream is described as being very vivid, it needs no interpretation as it is very direct in its message, and it has to do with giving practical solutions and wise guidance to any pressing current problems that the dreamer may be having difficulty with in his daytime life; it can often demonstrate new more satisfying ways of living.

Corriere and Hart call this special type of dream a 'Breakthru Dream'. In 'The Dream Makers' they describe how they and their fellow psychologists at a Los Angeles multi-disciplinary psychotherapy clinic (Centre for Feeling Therapy) discovered the 'Breakthru Dream' by pure chance, when one of them (Dominic) began to have a type of nightmare-dream that they had not encountered before and which was apparently causing him to be very unsettled and uneasy during the daytime. During the nightmare, Dominic was conscious that he was dreaming, but like in most nightmare experiences, he struggled and fought against the terror in it. After a few repeats of this same nightmare, Dominic allowed himself to consciously surrender to the terror in the dream, which then turned into a 'Breakthru Dream' conveying very impactful important insights and wisdom concerning his life. Other psychologists began to have similar experiences and they described them in the following way. . . . . .

> *"The dream experiences could be seen as a breakthrough or snapping within the mind. What is happening is that the barriers between our unconscious mind, in which our feelings, power, and creativity are stored, and our conscious mind, which we use to control our life, is broken down. There is a snap, a breakthrough, and all the power and energy of the unconscious is freed amd blended with the control and decision-making of the conscious mind."*

One psychologist investigated the anthropology of American Indians and found that the concept of 'Breakthru Dreams' was in fact only new to our own culture, and that these special dreams were recorded and used extensively by the shamans of the Irquois tribe, and also by the Senoi tribe of Malaysia. The book tells how that psychologists at the clinic, who had not experienced a breakthru dream, were very sceptical of their power. One retorted at a staff meeting, "This isn't some council meeting of Indians or some voodoo rite, I want to get down to business." Another commented, "It begins to sound like magic or shamanism or who knows what." One by one the sceptics had their own special dreams and their opinions changed. The authors cite really beautiful examples, taken from their own and their colleagues' personal experiences, of how these dreams brought about a marked increase in their quality of life, how they changed their personalities, and how there was an expansion of the empathy within their group. It is interesting to note that these psychologists claim that in many cases, certain negative and regressive aspects of personality were changed through the experience of a relevant breakthru dream, when previously these personality aspects seemed to be largely unaffected by the intensive psychotherapy that they practise. They say that they eventually came to regard their finding of the Breakthru Dream as one of the most important psychological discoveries ever made.

Corriere & Hart go on to describe how many questions were raised by their discovery. An important one was: Could people, who are not included in our intensive therapy, also experience these Breakthru Dreams and improve their quality of life through them? Their further investigations and subsequent dream workshop presentations show that the affirmative was very much the case. The second half of the book entitled "Twenty One Days to Breakthru Dreaming"; it describes a detailed 21 day programme which the reader can follow in order to experience Breakthru Dreaming and become a 'Dream Maker' - a person whose dreams work for them.

I have found 'The Dream Makers' very easy to read, very very interesting and also exceptionally enjoyable. I think that like Freud's 'The Interpretation fo Dreams', it could very well become a classic of its day.

**Wilfred Baron**