

As the central concept in psychoanalytic studies, the unconscious is notoriously difficult to define. Present your understanding of how this term has been used by Freud to deepen an analysis of one psychological and/or cultural phenomenon you've encountered on your studies so far.

Introduction

The unconscious even for Freud was hard to pin down, as he throughout his life would change and adapt his views according to his latest research. However, something he was consistent on throughout his life was the significance of dreams. I will be presenting my understanding of how the term unconscious was used by Freud to better understand the psychological phenomena of dreaming. Using Freud's writings that deal with dreams, I will outline and elaborate on his view of dreams and how they relate to Freud's usage of the term unconscious. Works used include the Interpretation of Dreams, first and second part which is his Magnus opus when it comes to Freud's insight into the psychological phenomenon of dreaming. Also cited is 'On metapsychology' where Freud gives a foundational basis of interpreting dreams and goes beyond to describe the way he sees the unconscious. I also used texts which due to the difficulty of finding a translation I paraphrased from the original German to still capture some of its importance. These texts are important as they highlight important examples of how dreams are ultimately hallucinatory wish fulfilments and how dreams function in symbols which must be deciphered.

Discussion

The unconscious has been used by Freud to deepen our understanding of dreams through viewing the nature of Dreams as similar to hallucinations. For example, Freud said, "we shall be in agreement with every authority on the subject in asserting that dreams *hallucinate*— that they replace thoughts by hallucinations" (Freud S. et al. 1953, p.50). This is because dreams come from within the mind and appear to be real, this feeling of believing that the sounds heard, and things seen in a dream are in a literal sense occurring demonstrates their similarity to hallucinating. This means that Freud's knowledge of the unconscious improves our understanding of psychopathology as dreams reflect thoughts that are replaced by hallucinations. One motive for why dreams feel like hallucinations is so the conscious can interact with the unconscious as for instance taboo behaviour can be acted out allowing the dreamer to for a short

while to believe that they are engaging in something and that they reject the constraints' society places upon them. That behaviour Freud argues is valuable insight into the unconscious mind of an individual. Therefore, the unconscious has been used by Freud to deepen our understanding of dreams through understanding the nature of Dreams as similar to hallucinations because it allows dreamers to engage with their unconscious fantasies believing for a short while that what they are doing is in a physical sense real.

The unconscious has also been used by Freud to deepen our understanding of dreams through the mind operating without sensory impression. Sensory impression refers to the interaction of our senses with external stimuli. This is argued by Freud (1953) who said, "the sensory stimulus which impinges on the sleeper plays only a modest part in generating his dream and that other factors determine the choice of the mnemonic images which are to be aroused in him." (Freud S. et al. 1953, p.29). This is because whilst dreaming although external stimuli have an impact, "the rest of their content seems too self-contained, too definite in its details" (Freud S. et al. 1953, p.29) for external circumstances to be the deciding factor on what occurs in a dream. This means that the mind operates to some extent on its own as dreams occurring without sensory impressions must gather information from another source if not external stimuli, this would be the unconscious mind which feeds repressed thoughts and wishes into dreams. Therefore, the unconscious has also been used by Freud to deepen our understanding of the psychological phenomena of dreaming as Freud's insights allowed for a unique insight into the mechanics of dreaming and what mental processes relate and impact its contents.

Another way the unconscious has been used by Freud to deepen our understanding of dreams is by arguing that Dreams are motivated by hidden motives which fulfil unconscious wishes. This is pointed out by Freud (2001) stating that "Thus, the formula for such dreams is as follows: *they are disguised fulfilments of repressed wishes*" (Freud S. et al. 2001, p.674). This is because the unconscious mind has unrestricted reign when dreaming, as Freud described it as the "royal road" (Freud S. et al. 1953, p.608) to the unconscious, meaning that all seemingly random or irrelevant events have a deeper undiscovered motive/cause which Freud argues can be uncovered through free association and dream interpretation. This means that dreams function in ways that represent wish fulfilments as for instance Freud in 'A Typical Example of a Disguised Oedipus Dream' describes a dream where a man married someone else's wife. To paraphrase from the

original German text, his wish can kill the man in order to win the woman as his wife; his dream expresses this wish in hypocritical distortion (Freud, S 1911a). These dreams do not occur randomly and require some inner motive for coming up. Therefore, another way the unconscious has been used by Freud to deepen our understanding of dreams is by viewing the unconscious as causing dreams to represent repressed wish fulfilments.

The unconscious has also been used by Freud to increase our understanding of dreaming through viewing dreams as being induced by repressed thoughts and feelings. This can be seen in the infamous 'Interpretation of Dreams' where Freud shares his analysis of his own dream often called 'Irma's introjection'. For example, in his analysis regarding his dream he states, "I had already revenged myself in this dream on two people: on Irma with the words 'If you still get pains, it's your own fault'". This is because more than just a wish fulfilment, Freud's unconscious repressed these vengeful feelings which led to the dream where he was able to act these vengeful feelings out. Freud also gives insight into the relationship between the unconscious and the origins of dream content, as what occurred in the dream was not consciously decided or the formation of external stimuli. This means that Freud's insight deepens our analysis of dreaming by pointing out that reason why these thoughts and feelings in dreams are often hidden is because acknowledgement would be unpleasant. Also, Freud said, "*Dreams are the guardians of sleep*" (Freud S. et al. 1953, p.233), meaning that the reason our dreams work with unconscious and repressed thoughts and feelings is, so we do not wake up. Therefore, the unconscious has also been used by Freud to increase our understanding of dreaming through viewing dreams as being induced by repressed thoughts and feelings as the oddness and sometimes specific comparison to real life situations represents unconsciously felt thoughts and feelings that were repressed.

The final way the unconscious was used by Freud to deepen our analysis of dreaming is through dream interpretation. For example, in 'Additions to the Interpretation of Dreams' a section translated from the original German is called, Representation of the genitals through buildings, stairs, shafts (Freud, S. 1911b). This is because Freud sees dream interpretation as the way to uncover repressed wishes and thoughts, because this is often times not done directly symbolism is important to recognize and interpret to have a more accurate understanding of the latent

content. This means that Freud had to dive deeper to discern the latent from the manifest content, with manifest meaning the content remembered by the conscious individual and latent referring to the hidden and unconscious motivations, wishes and other types of meaning. For Freud this is done in analysis where “we make the acquaintance of these ‘day’s residues’ in the shape of latent dream-thoughts” (Freud, S., et al. 1984, p. 224.) as the unconscious often functions in subtle ways where learned individuals may be able to spot patterns and symbols to interpret specific meanings, uncovering hidden wishes. Therefore, the final way the unconscious was used by Freud to deepen our analysis of dreaming is through dream interpretation as his unique perspective paved the way for decades worth of research into the phenomena of dreaming and how it relates to the unconscious.

Conclusion

To conclude, the unconscious was used by Freud to significantly deepen an analysis of various psychological phenomena, in this essay this phenomenon was dreaming. He did so studying the psychopathology and mental processes around dreaming and used the unconscious to compare the experience of dreaming with that of hallucinating as that allows for the dreamer to act out his unconscious fantasies believing it to be real. Further analysis from Freud occurred when he argued that the mind operated without sensory impression when dreaming, as internal processes have a large impact on what occurs in a dream as compared to something external picked up by the senses. The arguably most controversial way Freud used the unconscious to deepen our understanding of dreaming is by viewing dreams as wish fulfilment, as in the Irma's injection he argues that dreams ultimately serve the purpose of allowing the conscious to act out their unknown wishes to protect the state of sleeping. The broader insight of Freud regarding dreaming was by arguing that the situations that you find yourself when dreaming come from repressed thoughts and feelings as dreams protect you from waking up which requires the mind to somehow placate the conscious from waking up through wish fulfilments. The final and largest impact Freud's use of the unconscious has had on the psychological phenomena of dreaming is dream interpretation, as his in depth analysis of catching different symbols and discerning the important from the irrelevant pioneered decades worth of research in that field.

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