

**Is the psychological interpretation of dreams
more or less valid than those interpreted
from a religious base?**

By

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Introduction:

Dreams have fascinated philosophers for centuries, but only recently have dreams been subjected to empirical research and scientific scrutiny. These recent findings have caused debate about whether more scientific, contemporary views, such as psychology appear more valid than traditional religious beliefs. Throughout this report I will be discussing the debate that exists between science or psychology, against religion in terms of dream interpretation and aim to bridge the debate. For a psychological basis, I will be explaining some of the most well known theories in psychoanalysis to get an overview of the key beliefs in dream interpretation. The report will start with the beliefs of the 'Father of psychoanalysis', Sigmund Freud and his theory that 'dreams are disguised fulfilments of repressed wishes'. I will then compare his view against Carl Jung and finally, will discuss the view given by Dr Allan Hobson, that dreams are simply a result of signals reaching the brain during REM sleep¹.

I will then contrast these psychological views against the pre-historic Shamanic view of dream interpretation, and follow with the Christian belief. After looking at dreams with a traditional religious view, I hope to find links of the traditional beliefs with more contemporary beliefs. When looking at each argument, I aim to critically analyse them to see if their argument and evidence is more or less valid than the psychological beliefs.

I hope that this research will help me find a common base of dream interpretation, and reach a conclusion based on all my findings.

It is important to note that there is no absolute definition of a 'dream', because of their variable nature between people. Kendra Cherry defined a dream as a variety of pictures, thoughts and emotions that someone experiences while they are sleeping and can be vivid or vague, joyful or frightening, clear and understandable, or unclear and confusing². Bill Domhoff and Adam Schneider, oneirologists (the scientific study of dreams) define a dream as a "report of a memory of a cognitive experience that happens conditions that are most frequently produced in a state called 'sleep'"³

There are initial problems with this report, in that it will only be relating to a selection of psychologists and religious beliefs. The idea of dream interpretation is constantly evolving, and people are always developing different views. By choosing which beliefs to look into, the report becomes subjective, as I have selectively choosing which theories to use.

Another, is whether it is ethical to interpret dreams? As you will see in this report, a lot of people postulate that dreams may have some personal significance in meaning. If this is true, then should people be looking at them in depth?

¹Defined as: a stage in the normal sleep cycle during which dreams occur and the body undergoes marked changes including rapid eye movement, loss of reflexes, and increased pulse rate and brain activity

²www.psychology.about.com/od/statesofconsciousness/p/dream-theories.htm

³www2.ucsc.edu/dreams/FAQ/index.html

Psychological Interpretation:

Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), was a founding father of psychoanalysis and has been regarded as one of the most influential and controversial minds of the 20th century⁴.

Freud's experience in the understanding of human behaviour, from working in hospitals, gives his theory reliability as he could have expertise in the human psyche. However, it could be argued that he lacks neutrality.

Freud published *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), based around the idea that dreams were disguised fulfilments of repressed wishes⁵. This may have credibility because of its high popularity and reputation. Despite this, it was published over a century ago, so could be irrelevant today.

Freud believed the unconscious motivates everything, even by repressing the dreamer's true urges and impulses. These impulses get released through disguised or undisguised dreams - "*it is my experience, and one to which I have found no exception, that every dream deals with the dreamer himself. Dreams are completely egoistic.*"⁶.

This doesn't however, account for traumatic dreams, where the dream is from external trauma, not internal desires. Freud's theory also fails to explain anxiety dreams, where the dreamer is being beaten or attacked; how does that represent wish-fulfilment?⁷ This lessens the argument's validity because the theory may not be universally reliable and is therefore committing a false dilemma by limiting dreams to wish fulfilments.

Whether a dream is disguised or not, depends on whether the unconscious' desires are too disturbing for the dreamer; if so, dreams are likely to be shown through symbols. These symbols make the dreamer think of the dream as unintelligible, when according to Freud, the symbols are universal and easy to understand by trained professionals.

The concept of universal symbols is strong because it seems logical. Even though the dream may be culturally relative, globally people associate certain symbols with specific meanings, thus limiting the possibility of Freud overgeneralising e.g. the cross is a universal symbol for Christianity.

Freud thought sexual desires play a big part in dreams because every symbol has a sexual meaning, e.g. "*every long slender or elongated object (i.e. knife, cigar, gun) represents the phallus, while cavity or receptacle (i.e. bowl, cave, tunnel) denotes the female genitalia.*"⁸" However, this over-generalisation could represent his own sexual relationship, not everyone.⁹ It could also be thought only relevant in 1900, but not in contemporary society.

The 'manifest content'¹⁰ is more likely to disguise the 'latent content'¹¹ in adult's dreams compared to children's dreams. The latent content may be demonstrated by Freud's dream, known as Irma's Injection, where a former patient complained of pains as a result of Freud's colleague giving Irma an

⁴ www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/freud_sigmund.shtml

⁵ *The Interpretation of Dreams* by Sigmund Freud

⁶ Dream Psychology, Psychoanalysis for Beginners by Prof. Dr Sigmund Freud

⁷ www.why-we-dream.com/othertheories.htm

⁸ www.dreammoods.com

⁹ www.circleofa.org/qanda/WishFulfilment.php

¹⁰ Defined as: what the dream is saying on first appearances

¹¹ Defined as: true meaning of the dream

unsterile injection¹². Freud believed the dream fulfilled several wishes, which had happened the previous evening, such as situations Freud wished to be in, in terms of understanding he was not responsible for Irma's suffering. However, there is no evidence to suggest that this should be generalised to everyone.

Freud's dream interpretation theory, is relatively valid as he gave evidence to support his claim that dreams show the fulfilment of repressed wishes. Despite this, Freud's technique was derived from the analysis of his own dreams, not an overview of the public. This makes his findings appear to be less reliable because it is subjective and based around an over-generalisation. He has also been criticised for being too reductionist, reducing everything to repressed desires.

Even though his theory has undergone criticism from other psychologists, many latter theories show aspects of Freudian thinking.

In my opinion, wish fulfilment cannot be empirically proven or disproven because the dreamer would not be aware of it, as it's in the unconscious. Despite the weaknesses of Freud's argument, I believe it has validity and logic.

Carl Jung

Carl Jung (1875-1960), another key figure in psychoanalysis, has credibility because of his expertise and ability to see within medicine and work with psychiatric patients¹³. Jung and Freud met in 1906, and together formulated theories of the mind. This implies Jung has a high reputation and has sound reasoning because an expert such as Freud trusted the theories too.

'Jungian Dream Interpretation, a Handbook of Theory and Practice' by James A Hall, bestselling author, expert in Jungian Analytical Psychology and clinical dream interpretation, and practicing psychiatrist¹⁴ talks about Jungian interpretation. The source has credibility due to his high reputation and expertise in Jungian psychology and PhD, meaning his arguments are likely to be sound and reliable, because of his high ability to see.

According to Jung, dreams reveal aspects of the dreamer that they are unaware of - "*a spontaneous self-portrayal, in symbolic form, of the actual situation in the unconscious*"¹⁵—through universal symbols (archetypes). This differs from Freudian psychological theories, because the dream is not representing wish fulfilment. This therefore suggests because of the varying cognitive views, the psychological interpretation may vary in validity. However, Jung does show similarities with Freud because he also believed that unconscious thoughts are represented through symbols. I believe however the concept of universal archetypes to be an over-generalisation because dreams are variable personal experiences.

Jung believed dreams guide the conscious to achieve full potential and offer solutions to problems, but also understands that dreams may have alternative interpretations. By avoiding a false dilemma there is a higher possibility of him being correct, which strengthens his argument.

There are 7 main archetypes that are shown through dreams¹⁶:

¹² www.haverford.edu/psych/ddavis/F_Intdre.html

¹³ www.psychology.about.com/od/profiles/majorthinkers/p/jungprofile.htm

¹⁴ www.us.macmillan.com/author/jamesahall

¹⁵ Jung, 1967, Vol. 8, par. 505

¹⁶ Jungian Dream Interpretation- A handbook of theory and practice by James A Hall

1. **The Persona:** the image that the dreamer portrays to the world when they are conscious. In a dream, the persona is typically represented by a physical or non-physical Self.
2. **Shadow:** dreamer's ugly or unappealing personality that is hidden from people in waking life. The shadow is the uncultured aspect of the mind and often symbolises weakness, fear and anger. The shadow normally makes the dreamer feel angry or scared; a frightening figure such as a stalker, murderer, bully, or even a close friend or relative. The purpose, is to force the dreamer to confront things they don't confront in reality.
3. **Anima/Animus:** the female aspects (anima) and male aspects (animus) of the dreamer. The anima appears as very feminine, while the animus appears very masculine. The anima/animus is often experienced in projection upon another person of the opposite sex. For example, a male may dream he is in women's clothing, or a female may dream she has grown a beard¹⁷. These archetypes appear depending on the dreamer's ability to integrate their feminine and masculine qualities; they are a reminder that people should express their emotional or assertive side.
4. **Divine Child:** represented by a baby or young child, to show the dreamer's purest, innocent and helpless form.
5. **Wise old man/woman:** shown through teachers, priests, doctors etc...to guide the dreamer to make correct decisions.
6. **Great Mother:** the nurturer, and appears as the dreamer's mother or other nurturing figures that provide positive reassurance. However, Jung also notes this archetype may be demonstrated by a witch or old lady to show seduction, dominance and death.
7. **Trickster:** when the dreamer is uncertain about a decision or when the individual has overreached or misjudged a situation. The purpose is to stop the person taking themselves too seriously.

The main weakness to the archetypes is that it could be viewed as an over-generalisation to say there are 7 main symbols; wouldn't it vary from person to person if dreams are culturally relative?

However, James A Hall's book, fails to provide evidence to support Jung's theory, e.g. dreams from patients with a Jungian interpretation. This weakens Jung's argument, and makes it less valid because there is no evidence to back up his argument to suggest its accuracy. On the other hand, his arguments appear to be sound with no obvious flaws. I believe dreams are personal and vary from each person, so therefore I think it is reasonable to suggest that dreams reveal aspects of the dreamer's personality. Therefore, Jung's theory, despite lack of evidence, is more valid than Freud's because the arguments appear more sound and have received considerably less criticism than Freud's.

Dr Allan Hobson

Dr Allan Hobson (1933- present day) a dream researcher and psychiatrist with a M.D from Harvard Medical School, followed by experience in Mental Health Centres, also has a dream interpretation theory. He has published several theories, expanding on scientific studies about dreaming¹⁸. As a result of this, Hobson has a high level of expertise having extensive knowledge in Psychiatry. His work with mental patients furthers his credibility because of the high qualification levels. His awards for his publications and research recognise their quality, showing he has neutrality and no bias.

¹⁷ www.dreammoods.com/dreaminformation/dreamtheory/jung.htm

¹⁸ www.sleep.med.harvard.edu/people/faculty/212/J+Allan+Hobson+MD

Ryan Hurd wrote about Hobson's theory in his 2007 blog, *Dream Studies*¹⁹. Hurd's expertise and reputation includes an MA in Consciousness Studies and a Certificate of Dream Studies, and his many publications about dreaming, outweighs the weakness of the source being a Blog. He is also a board member of the International Association for the Study of Dreams, which by being an international institution furthers his reputation and expertise.

Hobson hypothesised that, in waking life, the brain strings together logical stories to keep up with the individual's emotions, movements and thoughts as they interact with the world. In dreams, this logical part of the brain becomes less active and increases activity in the limbic system²⁰, which brings about a state based on emotions and sensations. This suggests that dreams have an emotional basis, also postulated by Freud and Jung, resulting from the brain interpreting internal activity from neurochemicals in the brain.

Hobson's findings assume dreaming is a pre-programmed event in the brain and not a response to day residue²¹. However, psychologists such as Freud disagree with this concept because dreams may be a result from day residue. In order to get detailed findings of the brain, Hobson carried out detailed, scientific experiments, which gives him more credibility. However from the sources, it is unclear how he developed the theory, e.g. number of patients experimented on. On the other hand, his publication in the American Journal of Psychiatry²², gave a detailed explanation of Hobson's theory, showing Hobson's graphs and scans. This therefore gives his evidence credibility because scientific experiments tend to be accurate.

According to Hurd, other researchers have suggested that chemical activity in the brain is not the only aspect of dreams, and it is possible that dreams can occur when the individual is not in REM sleep. This implies Hobson is committing a false dilemma as he only considers the idea that dreams occur in REM sleep, when there are other possibilities.

This assumption of dreams being meaningless, because they are from chemical reactions, was counter-argued by Hobson who argued "*Dreaming may be our most creative conscious state.... while many of these ideas may be nonsensical, if even a few of its fanciful products are useful, our dream time will not have been wasted*"²³. Jung also believed there are aspects of dreaming that use creative thinking, such as Trickster archetypes, in order to stop the dreamer taking themselves too seriously.

According to Kelly Bilkey²⁴, Hobson presented his findings as a controversial argument against Freud, who he believed prevented scientific research taking place. Hobson is not against psychological interpretation; instead he believes that the meaning does not necessarily need to be hidden away under layers of the subconscious. Therefore disagreeing with Freud, who believed the latent content is hidden in the unconscious and require a professional to reveal the true meaning.

¹⁹ www.dreamstudies.org/

²⁰ Kendra Cherry defined this as a group of structures in the brain associated with emotions and drives

²¹ Defined as: a dream related to an experience of the previous day.

²² American Journal of Psychiatry 134:12, December 1977

²³ www.psychology.about.com/od/aindex/g/activation.htm

²⁴ www.dreamstudies.org/2010/01/07/neuroscience-of-dreams/

Hobson therefore could be argued to take a Jungian approach to dream interpretation because he believes dreams may be interpreted as an aspect of the dreamer, which can be highly transparent in meaning; they may seem complicated, when the symbols used may in fact be explained simply. Jung also believed that dreams might not be as complex as it may seem, as he focused on archetypes in the manifest content.

I believe Hobson's dream interpretation theory is stronger than both Freud and Jung as he has scientific evidence and generally has a more sound argument in that it lacks fallacies. Jung and Freud relied upon analysis of personal dreams, which has less credibility because there is no empirical evidence, whereas Hobson carried out detailed experiments using high quality equipment.

Religious Interpretation:

Traditional Shamanism:

Shamanism is based around the spiritual approach to the earth, universe and life through mediation between visible and spirit worlds for healing. Michael Harner demonstrates Shamanic beliefs in, *The Way of the Shaman*. Harner, an anthropologist and founder of a nonprofit international organisation dedicated to the preservation of Shamanic knowledge²⁵, has credibility because of his expertise and ability to see based on past experiences. Another strength is that he lacks vested interest because of the non-profitable organisation. However, working as a Shaman, it could be argued that he lacks neutrality towards other beliefs.

Unfortunately, there is scarce mention of dreams and any information in this report, is based around my personal interpretation, which weakens the Shamanic theory because it is based around unstated assumptions.

In general Shamans view dreams as doorways through which the Shaman can travel to the inner realms and gain direct knowledge to the unconscious.

Harner mentions that a Shaman enters the Shamanic State of Consciousness (SSC) to acquire knowledge, healing or soul retrievals. Jung may interpret this as the Shaman analysing dreams to help find hidden personalities in the unconscious. According to Harner, the Shaman enters the SSC through drum beats, singing, meditation, or aromas in the dark or with their eyes covered; therefore similar to a dream. However, most Shamans are men, which weakens the Shamanic view because by interpreting the SSC as a dream, and only Shamans enter the SSC, would imply that only men dream. However it is believed everyone dreams, and that generalising it to men would be a fallacy.

In the SSC the Shaman sees a 'non-ordinary reality' as well as beautiful and mysterious realms that provide the Shaman with information about the meaning of his life. The concept of information about their existence could be argued as a sign of an abstract dream to show aspects of the dreamer. Freud, believing in wish-fulfilment, may argue the SSC reflects the Shamans repressed wishes on their 'place in existence'. Jung may argue parts of the SSC resemble aspects of the dreamer's personality. Whilst, Hobson may argue the 'non-ordinary reality' may be a result of chemical activity in the brain.

²⁵ www.shamanism.org/articles/article01.html

When Shamans enter the SSC, they are typically able to see into the present, past and future for community members. In terms of revealing aspects of the past, Hobson may interpret it as a dream from the previous day's residue.

Contemporary Shaman:

Leo Rutherford is a contemporary Shaman, teacher and author²⁶, giving him a strong ability to see. His credibility is strengthened by his MA in Holistic Psychology because he should have neutrality about which is the more valid form of dream interpretation, as he knows aspects of both arguments and came to a personal conclusion.

It is relatively valid research because it was carried out myself (primary research) meaning there is less possibility of it being misinterpreted through different sources.

The SSC is a state of connection with the spirit world which enables the Shaman to see into the fabric of energy which underpins the world we call 'reality', much more than a dream. He explains this view with the atomic theory, based on the concept that everything is energy and that the reality we perceive is not here; Shamans also have the ability to see the real world. His reference to scientific theories, strengthens his argument because it is probable there is evidence to support it, which may support the SSC. Hobson could argue however, it is chemical activity in the brain from the Limbic System. There is, also, little evidence to suggest that what we know as 'reality' is not the proper 'reality'.

Rutherford stated that Psychological interpretations are more focused on the symbolic meaning of dreams in relation to the dreamer. Whereas, religion reinforces its own prejudices against the dreamer. Rutherford believes religion demands belief in a 'God' who is separate from 'His' creation, whereas Shamanism is a way to help a person develop themselves, not a religion.

Despite the differences in psychology and religion, Rutherford uses Psychological interpretations in Shamanic work. This implies that the Psychological interpretation is more valid than religious analysis because in his view Shamanism doesn't count as a religion, meaning the argument does not logically lead into the conclusion. I believe there is therefore an unstated assumption that spiritual interpretation of dreams may be more valid.

As indicated by Rutherford, "Dreamtime" is based on the idea that everyone is a spirit dreaming this life; we really exist in the spirit world.

Connie Caldes, another contemporary Shaman, believes dreaming is necessary to heal and guide the individual, and that it is necessary to reflect upon dreams for their true meaning. This implies the earlier implication that the SSC is a dream, may be accurate. However Caldes' view differs from the traditional Shamanic view as they do not typically make explicit reference to dreams. The idea that people must reflect on their dreams to reveal their true meaning may also be supported by Jung and Freud who believed dreams have significant meaning.

In my opinion, the Shamanic view of dream interpretation is just as valid as the Psychological interpretations, if not more valid because Psychologists developed their theories around scientific research, and still support a lot of pre-historic Shamanic beliefs. Overall, the Shamanic arguments

²⁶www.lifeartsmedia.com/leo-rutherford-contemporary-shamanism

tend to be relatively sound. However, the belief loses validity because it is based around the assumption the SSC is a dream, when Shamanism fails to explicitly mention dreams. Another problem is that Shamans don't talk about the SSC because they view it as personal, meaning there is a lack of empirical evidence about the SSC. Therefore it is possible that the SSC is the Shamans imagination, which would be supported by Freud, as an illusion of the mind. Along with the reference to Psychology in their Shamanic practice, the idea that Shamanism is not a religion, suggests that the Psychological interpretation is more valid than religious interpretations.

Christian prophetic dreams:

The Bible has a high reputation and credibility, which is demonstrated by approximately 33% of the world's population being Christian²⁷. As the Bible is based around God's word, people may argue this shows expertise, with God being the expert of all experts. It can also be argued to have a strong ability to see because the accounts in the New Testament (NT) were by the four disciples, who witnessed Jesus' preaching. However, the Biblical accounts were passed down to monks who then wrote the Bible which limits their ability to see and their level of neutrality because the monks may have interpreted the messages differently to the apostles.

Barbra Lardinais, a born and raised Christian, spoke of prophetic dreams. She graduated from Vision Christian Bible College with a Bachelor of Theology degree and then became a minister²⁸. Her degree and experience in Theology²⁹ gives her a level of expertise and reputation. However, being from a Christian background means she may lack neutrality.

In prophetic times, dreams were considered as direct communication from God to prophets: "If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision and will speak unto him in a dream³⁰". This undoubtedly demonstrates dreams as God's word, which limits the possibility of misinterpretation. However most Psychological explanations may disagree as they believe it is more to do with our unconscious brain. Freud in particular would disagree with this concept, as he thought religion was "an expression of underlying psychological neurosis and distress³¹".

According to Lardinais there are two types of prophetic dream: re-occurring and lucid dreams. A re-occurring dream signals a warning from God. "*An angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, 'Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead.'.... But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee*"³². However, this could be argued to be a coincidence and have no correlation; if Joseph heard elsewhere that someone was seeking to kill Jesus, then his subconscious may have informed him. If this is true, could Freud's theory of wish fulfilment, Joseph not wanting Jesus to be killed, be a valid interpretation? Alternatively, it has been suggested that the order was given after Joseph had the dream.

²⁷ www.christianity.about.com/od/denominations/p/christiantoday.htm

²⁸ www.hannahscupboard.com/barbara-lardinais.html

²⁹ Defined as: The study of the nature of God and religious truth

³⁰ Numbers 12:6 Old Testament

³¹ Quote from: http://psychology.about.com/od/sigmundfreud/p/freud_religion.htm

³² Matthew 2:19-22 New Testament

Prophetic dreams may also reflect a future event, which can be shown through the account of Jesus' birth. Before the knowledge of Mary's conception, Joseph dreamt: "*Joseph, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit*"³³"

This dream demonstrates a future event because there is historical evidence to suggest it came true. Shamans, who argue the SSC allows them to see into other aspects of our universe, may support the idea that dreams reveal a future event.

A lucid dream is vibrant, unusual and memorable but less clear with its meaning e.g. dream in the Old Testament where Joseph dreamt of the shafts of wheat bowing down to him- "*Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me.*"³⁴". Even though this dream was not clearly from God, Joseph strongly believed that it was God speaking. However, in my opinion, if it is unclear that it is God's word, it is possible that the dream was not the word of God and may have been a dream with implications stated by Freud, Jung or Hobson. For instance Hobson may argue that this dream may represent the brain being forced to make sense out of the noisy surroundings from various events in Josephs life.

Contemporary Christianity:

Nakia Mast, a contemporary Christian, runs a dream interpretation website³⁵ from a Christian viewpoint in order to help people grow in faith, which implies dreams are messages from God. Despite this, he states that to continue their work, they require donations to "cover their expenses". This weakens his validity because he has a vested interest in dream interpretation. He carries on to say, "please give as God leads you to give", which shows a bias towards Christian beliefs. However, in terms of the research material itself, it has strength because it was done independently and not passed down through different perspectives.

Mast's beliefs do not differ greatly from prophetic Christian dreams because according to Mast the purpose of dreams is to hear the spirit. He also notes that God is not limited to dreams, which strengthens his argument by not committing a false dilemma because he is allowing alternative ways for God to speak to people.

He continued to mention that Psychology can play a part in dream interpretation, but once he had experienced the spirit of God, he found that His ways were greater "in every way" than human interpretation. I believe his use of counter argument strengthens his argument, making it more valid, since it implies that he has considered the Psychological interpretation, and has come to a conclusion based on personal experiences.

According to Mast, only holy people will hear from God, which implies secular people experience dreams of a non-religious basis. However this implication is an important aspect to his validity because if this implication is wrong then he fails to explain why atheists dream; could atheist's dreams be explained through psychology and theists through religion?

³³ Matthew 1: 20 New Testament

³⁴ Genesis 37 Old Testament

³⁵ www.meaningsdream.com/index.html

The main criticism with the argument that Christian dream interpretation is more valid than Psychological interpretations is that it is based around the unstated assumption that God exists in order to provide prophetic messages. In contemporary society, the increase in scientific research, has caused debate about whether God exists, because aspects of life that were once thought to be God, can be explained through science. If we assume God exists, the religious interpretation appears to be relatively strong in that it has been shown to have come true. However, the same problem stands in that it is assuming that what it says in the Bible was accurate. Joseph may have interpreted his dreams to be from God, when it is possible that there are alternative explanations (false dilemma).

Due to the fact that the Psychological interpretations have more of a scientific basis to them and evidence to support it, compared to prophetic dreams, which are based around personal belief, I believe the psychological interpretation of dreams may be more valid than that of Christian prophetic dreams.

Conclusion:

Is the psychological interpretation of dreams more or less valid than the religious interpretation of dreams?

Initially I thought that there was no comparison as to whether the Psychological interpretation was more or less valid than that of a religious basis because Psychology has scientific evidence and more logic. I had a very sceptical view of religion and the concept of God, in that it was all based around the assumption that God exists, when there is no empirical evidence to support it.

Having researched into the debate, in my opinion dreams are personal and dependent on belief, so perhaps there is no valid interpretation. At this time, I believe there is no obvious conclusion as to which is more valid, and therefore necessary for further research to be carried out when there is a narrower gap between science and religion.

However based on the arguments I have researched in this report, I still believe the Psychological interpretation is more valid but not to the extent as before. The main reason for this is because even though the religious arguments are strong, many can still be explained Psychologically; as long as there is a Psychological alternative, it would be unreasonable to presume that religion has more validity because psychology has more empirical evidence.

From the findings in this report, I believe that the Shamanic interpretation is relatively strong but as it is strictly not considered a religion, means that it does not help in answering which has more validity, Psychology or religion?

The main problem with the religious interpretations, as stated initially, is their reliance on the existence of God. However, even if there was evidence of God, there still may hold the argument that the Psychological interpretation is more valid because His existence doesn't necessarily have to correlate to dreams. Many of the Psychological interpretations have been criticised for not having enough empirical evidence. However, they still have considerably more evidence compared with the religious dreams because religious empirical evidence requires evidence of a transcendent existence. An important aspect to mention is that it could be argued that the Psychological interpretation of dreams is more valid than religious analysis because they seem more logical, in that dreams are personal, which implies they show an aspect of the dreamer. This idea has been postulated in the Psychological interpretations through Freud, Jung and Hobson. Even though some religious aspects do represent the dreamer, the concept of identity is more focused on in psychology, less about God.

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