



# Book Review; Dreams and History. The Interpretation of Dreams from Ancient Greece to Modern Psychoanalysis.

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Devlin is, however, explicitly writing about a uniquely American culture at a very specific historical moment. This presents some difficulties for an international audience for whom important coming-of-age dramas like the 'junior prom' lack the intimacy of personal experience. While this does nothing to invalidate Devlin's argument, it creates some problems of understanding when nuance is clearly so vital to a full appreciation of her work. Once alert to the importance of cultural differences, a number of other points occur to the reader. Devlin is talking about post-war culture, but many of the key texts she identifies either originate in the years 1939–45 or draw on other work from this earlier period. Although Devlin acknowledges the impact of wartime disruption, the British reader cannot help but give more weight to the problem of family separation than father-daughter bonding, and feel that it is rationing rather than 'shared consumerism' that shaped many social attitudes and rituals in this period. This is not hugely important, as Devlin does not seek to look beyond the USA, but European readers would instinctively give a greater role to the state in shaping family policy, especially in the management of juvenile delinquency. They would also appreciate more information than Devlin gives about the audience for the American books, plays, magazines and films that she analyses. Nonetheless Devlin should be congratulated on making the apparently safe and familiar world of 1950s domesticity so interestingly disturbing.

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Daniel Pick and Lyndal Roper (eds). **Dreams and History. The Interpretation of Dreams from Ancient Greece to Modern Psychoanalysis.** *London and New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2004. Pp. 276. ISBN 1-58391-282-5 (pbk).*

This collection contains an essay-length introduction to the topic of dreams in Western history, followed by thirteen essays, twelve of which were previously published between 1999 and 2002. The collection offers the historian and educated reader a sampling of current scholarship on the cultural history of attitudes towards dreams, fantasies and related mental states, written by scholars from art history, anthropology, history of religion, medicine, psychiatry and psychoanalysis.

Organized chronologically, the collection begins with anthropologist Charles Stewart's challenge to Freud's conclusion that the Greeks were less repressed than moderns: 'Oedipus was tragic but Hamlet was neurotic.' Historian Hans-Jürgen Bachorski contrasts three uses of dreams in medieval German literature, and raises the larger issue of how one can approach a dream text psychoanalytically when the dreamer is a fictional character.

Most of the essays in the collection are on topics in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, including a discussion of the recorded dreams of English

women during the Enlightenment, and essays on popular dream books written for Victorian women and Russian peasants, and what they reveal about their respective audiences. The art historian Stefanie Heraeus argues against her readers' supposed 'fixation' on Freud as the first to describe the unconscious mind, and surrealist artists as the first to depict dreams, by pointing to the many artistic precursors in nineteenth-century France. She focuses on the charming, whimsical dream images by the illustrator Jean-Jacques Granville, and the darker visions of the theatre of the night presented by Victor Hugo and Odilon Redon. Nine fascinating dream images by these artists and others accompany this essay. The historian of medicine Jennifer Ford discusses the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge's interest in dreams and other nocturnal psychic phenomena in terms of early nineteenth-century medical models of the mind. A revelatory dream by an American historian of Assyria is also set in its context – late-nineteenth-century Protestantism – by the historian of psychiatry Rhodri Hayward. Threads linking these diverse historical topics include authors' frequent comments on the need to understand accounts of dreams in a broad cultural context because of the fluid boundaries between reality, illusion, natural and supernatural, and changing perspectives on the human mind.

The birth of psychoanalysis is described by the analyst and historian Ilse Grubrich-Simitis in her account of Freud's writing of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) and his revisions of this founding text for each of its editions, manifesting his life-long struggle to establish psychoanalysis as a science. After a discussion of the outlook on dreams of an analysand of Freud, the botanist Sir Arthur Tansey, the collection of essays ends on the topic of the changing use of dreams in the psychoanalytic hour, with an interview with Hanna Segal, a case history by analyst Edna O'Shaunessy, and a survey of recent trends by sociologist Susan Budd.

Any attempt at an overview of this vast topic invites the reader to note omissions. This reviewer felt the absence of any discussion of Freud's original goal of creating not only a psychology but also a physiology of the dreaming mind, and the widespread attempt within neuroscience today to fulfil Freud's objective by integrating the fruits of a century of psychoanalysis with current research on the neurology and evolutionary biology of the mind.

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Allen Thiher. **Revels in Madness: Insanity in Medicine and Literature.**  
*Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004. Pp. 354. ISBN 0-472-08999-4 (pbk).*

This is a welcome publication. Allen Thiher's book, first published in 1999, is now available, with all its faults, in paperback, and remains required reading for anyone interested in the relations between insanity, culture and