Theories of Dreaming (Overview)

Dreams were initially considered a strange occurrence, as they were regular during sleep, but poorly understood by psychologists. They have been viewed as meaningless, and systematic studies of dreams were never pursued in a scientific manner. Psychologists believed that dreams had specific meanings, and believed different theories on how dreams were formed and affect humans. There are three major theories: the psychodynamic theory of dreaming, the physiological theory of dreaming, and the cognitive theory.



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Physiological Theories of Dreaming

Physical-body Dreams

The physiological theories of dreaming discuss how the brain processes information, and how it manifests as a dream. Some theories believe that dreams are simply the result of trying to make sense of the high amounts of cortical activity. Theories under this realm believe that dreams come from the brain's attempt to interpret cortical activity, or that dreams help forget unnecessary information. Another part of this theory is that dream helps aid memory, and consolidate things that were previously experienced.

Psychodynamic Theory of Dreaming

Sicko-dynamite Dreaming

The psychodynaimc theory of dreaming follows Freud's ideas that dreams are meaningful and the major function of dreams is wish fulfillment. Dreams, under this theory, contain deep desires and needs which are buried in the unconscious.

Cognitive Theories of Dreaming

Dreaming through Cogs

Cognitive theories of dreaming cover the ideas that dreams have important psychological functions, and they help people solve ongoing problems they face. Dreams relate to the status of our ongoing needs and dreams function to assimilate new data and reorganize related memories.

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