**Dream Theories**

1. Activation Synthesis

**Book Definition:**Theory developed by Harvard University psychiatrists John Allan Hobson and Robert McCarley that dreams begin with random electrical activation coming from the brain stem. It answers all the questions about the meaning of dreams by the simple expedient of declaring them meaningless. Dreams, according to this theory, are the brain's attempt to make sense of the random electrical activity.

**In your own words**

* The brain's attempt to understand and interpret the electrical activation that occurs at the start of dreaming.
* This theory tells us that dreams do not have any interpretive meaning. They're no more than the brain attempting to make sense of random electrical signals. This theory implies that dreams have no meaning and that when you have a dream, it's totally random and there is no explanation for it.
* We dream in order for our brain to understand all of the spontaneous bursts of activity.
* so like when you sleep your dreams are like totally caused by electrical impulses surging through the neurons in your brain dude, so in a sense when you go to sleep your brain is like cowabunga! and shoots a whole bunch of electricity through your brain, and then your dreams start!.

**Examples:**

* A dream about a komodo dragon actually caused by random firing of neurons in the brain but interpreted by your brain as a dream about komodo dragons..
* The movie Inception would be completely irrelevant since our dreams do not mean anything.

2. Information Processing Model

* dreams sort, sift, and fix a day's experience into memories. REM sleep facilitates memory

3. Cognitive Theory of Dreams

Hall believed that dreams were a**conceptualization** of our experiences (Hall, 1953). These experiences involved our perceptions of those in our environment, as well as our ideas of our self. His **Cognitive Theory** of dreaming was one of the first of his time that was not consistent with Freud’s idea of “wishful thinking”. Instead, Hall believed that our dreams were a way of shaping our own ideas of the world. He believed that during dreams, we expressed creativity, similar to what we would do when expressing ourselves through metaphors in poetry(Hall, 1953).

Hall developed five main conceptions that were present in our dreams (Hall, 1966):

1. ourself (how we see ourselves and our prominent roles in life)
2. others ( how we react to others around us)
3. the world (optimism vs. pessimism)
4. morals (what is accepted as human beings and what are our limits)
5. conflict (conflicts within our psyche)

Because Hall was a behavioral psychologist, he believed that our conceptions have a tremendous impact on our behavior when awake.These accomplishments have made a tremendous influence in the field of studying dreams. The scale provided the first opportunity to **measure dream cognition** in a quantitative and statistical way!

4. Psychodynamic Theory of Dreams

**Freud's dream theory:**  
  
Freud believed dreams served to guard sleep, to press cognitive needs, and to reflect important events or fantasies in a dreamers mental world. This the theory ties into Dream Interpretation Therapy. He also believed that it broke into the manifest and latent content.  
  
**Manifest content:** Is the story line of a dream, and the obvious connection to our lives.  
**Latent content:** Is the symbolic meaning behind the objects in your dreams.

**Hypnosis Theories**

1. Hypnosis is a divided state of consciousness

(divided, dissociated, altered consciousness, or hidden observer)

Evidence

* + Supported by Hilgard’s work on divided consciousness and hidden observer
  + Brain can engage in unconscious processing similar to processing under hypnosis.
  + Hidden Observer – part of the brain can operate as an interpreter or reporter of events.

1. Hypnosis is a social phenomenon – It is a response to social factors, role playing, sociocognition or other environmental factors created by the hypnotist.

Evidence:

* + Supported by Spanos, Kirsh, Orne, Barber
  + No behavioral, physiological or neural makers for hypnosis.
  + Hypnotic phenomenon can be duplicated by using placebos or imagination
  + Can be explained as obedience and conformity to other participants
  + Fantasy prone individuals are more prone to social influence
  + Effects are more drastic when the hypnotized individual is motivated to trust the hypnotist.