

The Dream Experience: A Systematic Exploration

by Milton Kramer, M.D. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, New York, N.Y., 2007, 243 pages, \$49.95.

The Dream Experience: A Systematic Exploration is a comprehensive text about dreaming. It initially guides the reader through a number of basic concepts about dreaming, including the evidence for dreams actually existing, how dreams are recalled, how dreams are measured and collected in the laboratory, and the range of different types of dreams people experience. It then examines more complex ideas about dream function and meaning. On a personal level, I feel that the subject of dreams is one that was neglected in my own undergraduate medical training, and, although we were taught some basic sleep physiology, the area of dreams had always seemed somewhat mysterious and unscientific. This book has certainly done a good job of filling gaps in my knowledge and has helped me to appreciate the extent of scientific evidence already available in the area. It has provided me with a good foundation to be able to consider and discuss dreams more confidently.

The author aims this book at mental health professionals, but I would suggest that it may have a wider audience. The introductory chapters are clear, concise, and well thought out and cover the fundamental ideas and concepts about dreams in an easily readable format. These chapters would be a good source of information for anyone with a general interest in dreams, including the layperson. However, some chapters, such as "The Measurement of Dreams" and "The Biology of Dream Function," do assume some background knowledge about sleep physiology and science and would probably be more suitable for mental health professionals, as intended by the author.

The book is divided into 13 chapters, which are well structured and referenced. The author's vast experience and knowledge about dreaming is clearly evident from his ability to summarize and critique the many complex theories regarding dreaming and to present them in an easily readable text. He also presents results from his own extensive dream research, in addition to the research of other authors, to provide evidence for his dream theories. Each chapter is helpfully concluded with a summary of the information provided.

Overall, I found this book both informative and enlightening. I particularly enjoyed the chapters, "Do Dreams Exist?" and "The Functions of Dreams," as they explore some fundamental ideas and questions about dreams that I had never even previously considered. My only criticism of the book is the lack of illustrations and diagrams. Although a couple of small tables are present, they do little to alleviate the intensity of the long paragraphs of comprehensive and rich text.

I would certainly recommend this book to anyone who has an interest in dreams as it provides an excellent overview of the subject, with a fascinating and extensive exploration of the numerous aspects of dream theory and research.

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Personality Disorders and Older Adults: Diagnosis, Assessment, and Treatment

by Daniel L. Segal, Ph.D.; Frederick L. Coolidge, Ph.D.; and Erlene Rosowsky, Psy.D. John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, N.J., 2006, 332 pages, \$60.00.

As an academic geriatric psychiatrist and a former training director of a geriatric psychiatry fellowship program, I am always on the lookout for books that can give a comprehensive review of topics in geriatric psychiatry for trainees to read. Over the years, I have reviewed multiple books and articles on personality disorders in the elderly, but was never impressed by what I saw or read. It was fortunate that I got a chance to review this wonderful book by Drs. Segal, Coolidge, and Rosowsky.

In my opinion, *Personality Disorders and Older Adults: Diagnosis, Assessment, and Treatment* is a must-read for anyone who is caring for elderly patients. It is also a must-have for any medical library, as the contents of this book will be useful to any clinician interested in dealing with difficult elderly patients. The charm of the book lies in the fact that it is beautifully written in a simple style that catches one's attention immediately. It has enough material to not only provide basic information to satisfy the curiosity of a lay person but to also cater to the needs of a senior professional dealing with the care of the elderly.

This book is very easy to read because it is well organized into different chapters starting with an introduction to personality disorder and aging (chapter 1) and ending with the chapter on the "Goodness of Fit" model and its implication for treatment (chapter 11). The book provides a comprehensive review of each cluster of personality disorders and addresses the issues of comorbidity, epidemiology, diagnosis, and treatment of the elderly with personality disorder. Case vignettes highlighting each of the clusters of personality disorders make the narrative more interesting. The authors have also done an excellent job of providing a comprehensive framework for conceptualizing personality disorders combining the psychodynamic, cognitive, and biological realms.

It is a tribute to the authority of Drs. Segal, Coolidge, and Rosowsky on the concept of personality disorders in older adults that they have been able to provide such a comprehensive narrative on this difficult to understand and treat condition. Elegantly designed in hardcover and priced appropriately at \$60.00, *Personality Disorders and Older Adults: Diagnosis, Assessment, and Treatment* is a wonderful addition to the growing world of literature on psychiatric issues in the elderly.

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