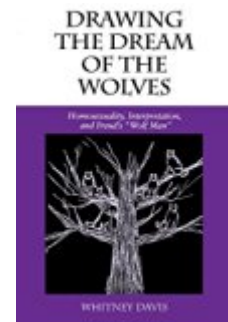


H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Whitney Davis. *Drawing the Dream of the Wolves: Homosexuality, Interpretation, and Freud's "Wolf Man"*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995. xxv + 259 pp. \$39.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-253-32919-6; \$18.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-253-20988-7.

Reviewed by Stephen Chenault (University of Arkansas, Fayetteville)
Published on H-PCAACA (June, 1997)



Sigmund Freud's "Wolf Man" case served as a stepping-stone toward the development of his theories on infantile neurosis. And, since its publication in 1914, the case has come under scrutiny by those in the academic community. Whitney Davis' energetic book introduces a startlingly fresh angle for the on-going discussion of the relative merits of Freud's most famous case. More than providing a simple examination of the case history as presented in Freud's *From the History of an Infantile Neurosis*, Davis analyzes the lives and histories of the two principal participants, Freud and his patient Sergius Pankejeff, and the emergence of latent or overt homosexual tendencies in both subject and scientist.

Dreaming the Dream of Wolves is at once an historical look into the four years which surround the analysis and a psychological examination of the interaction between the two men. Davis does not hesitate in utilizing all the tools available to the academic in uncovering Freud's latent homosexuality as reflected in the definition of his patient's neurosis. The narrative is well-written and meticulously constructed so as to leave the reader little doubt as to the author's emphasis.

In the body of the first three chapters Davis examines the duo, the case, the analysis and the peculiarities of the drawing of the wolves, which came to psychically symbolize the "Wolf Man's" neurosis. The patient's dream, from which the drawing originated, came to symbolize for Freud the latent homosexuality of Pankejeff. Davis, however, without refuting Freud's own analysis, determines that Freud's own diagnosis derived from his own feelings of latent homosexuality. Far from controlling these feelings within himself the Doctor reflects the suppression of his own subjective feelings in the case study

itself.

Davis follows this startling revelation with several chapters examining the roots of Freud's latent homosexuality and the possible origins of his repression. In a copiously orchestrated chapter entitled "Family Trees" Davis carries the discussion into an extremely technical, though understandable, examination of the symbiotic relationships that existed within and around the two men. This chapter and the following one, "Intersubjective Transformation" are detailed psychological examinations of the drawing, the patient and Freud.

This represents the book's only deficiency and its underlying strength. The clinical psychological aspects of the case are extremely complex and at times the language in these two chapters becomes moribund in technical terminology that the lay reader may find difficult to follow. This is offset, however, by the highly meticulous structure that Davis adheres to throughout the whole work.

The book would be a valuable scholarly addition to any student of Freud or as research material in a library. The insight that Davis commands both in the case study, its history and the relationship between the two men is the source of a wealth of scholarly material. The research's credibility is further strengthened by the wealth of source material that Davis cites directly and relies upon throughout the whole work. The possibility of Freud's display of an overt homosexuality is of further value in understanding the cultural roots of homosexuality both in nineteenth century Europe as well as twentieth century America.

This review is copyrighted (c) 1997 by H-Net and the Popular Culture and the American Culture Associations.

It may be reproduced electronically for educational or scholarly use. The Associations reserve print rights and permissions. (Contact: P.C.Rollins at the following electronic address: Rollins@osuunx.ucc.okstate.edu)

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

<https://networks.h-net.org/h-pcaaca>

Citation: Stephen Chenault. Review of Davis, Whitney, *Drawing the Dream of the Wolves: Homosexuality, Interpretation, and Freud's "Wolf Man"*. H-PCAACA, H-Net Reviews. June, 1997.

URL: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=1035>

Copyright © 1997 by H-Net and the Popular Culture and the American Culture Associations, all rights reserved. H-Net permits the redistribution and reprinting of this work for nonprofit, educational purposes, with full and accurate attribution to the author, web location, date of publication, originating list, and H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online. For any other proposed use, contact P.C. Rollins at Rollins@osuunx.ucc.okstate.edu or the Reviews editorial staff at hbooks@mail.h-net.msu.edu.