

## Do dreams reflect reality?

In this essay I will investigate the impact of technology on the science of psychology. More specifically, how computers and technology advancements will one day help solve psychological phenomena.

In the article, 'Do dreams reflect reality?' They discuss a topic that is a mystery, dating back to Ancient Greece, dreams. They were thought to be a gift from God or a demonic trick, often being mistaken as a vision of the future. Throughout the decades, theories presented have directly been reflective of the time; most assumptions are made by a pre-conditioned societal viewpoint, often clouded by religion, philosophy and/or bias. One notable voice on the matter, Sigmund Freud believed that dreams are "*the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind*" (*The Interpretation of Dreams, 1900*), Freud believed dreams were a form of actualising wishes. The downside of this is his bias as Freud's theory on dreams is constructed upon one of his previous works, 'The Oedipus Complex', now an outdated theory.

Since the 1800s, psychologists began innovating machines to aid their research in the study of the mind and body. However, these are few; technology has been evolving at a rapid rate and proving useful in many sectors; aiding in research for medical science (cancer nano therapy) and mapping out plans for engineers. In this, the practicality of technology can and should be implemented into psychological research. An example of its benefits is in the results of the analysis conducted by Dr Fogli, Dr Maria-Aiello and Dr Quercia, using a language processing algorithm they were able to put to test thousands of test subject results with pre-existing theories. The advantages were they could test thousands of results and required little manpower, seen as the results were digitised.

The future of psychology lies within computer algorithms, data digitalisation, accessibility and analysis. Thus far, data collection has been made simple by the 'computerisation of tests becoming the norm', cutting months from the old-fashioned method of in person participation. However, this is only the start. In theory, there could be countless possibilities that are yet to be put into practice: could we rely on data from test subjects being put into augmented reality settings? Will virtual reality be reflective of a real-life scenario? What if we were to tackle thought experiments such as 'The trolley problem' paired in with VR? Alongside these advancement comes a new set of issues but none that cannot be controlled; we can finally put away the multiple-choice questionnaires and actively see what each participant will do. More importantly collecting data will one day be able to remove the need of human participants. What does this mean? The subject of ethics will no longer need to be considered, psychologists can put to test their theories such as "The Stanford prison experiment" and no longer be condemned due to its impact on the participants.

In conclusion, there are plenty of mysteries left unsolved due to our lack of understanding, bias and even due to ethical issues. Perhaps we need a new lens with which we can take a closer look into the human brain. Use our advancement to answer the age-old question of: How does the mind work?

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