

# Strange Creative Gifts and Freud's "The Symbolism of Dreams"

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## **Abstract**

Unlike the symbols found in folk-lore and fairy tales, Freud argues that "dreams symbols are used almost exclusively for the expression of sexual objects and relations." Dreamers, Freud argues, draw upon an ancient language within their unconscious and thus have a mode of expression at their disposal which they do not know in waking life: "we can only say," he writes, "that the knowledge of symbolism is unconscious to the dreamer, that it belongs to his unconscious mental life."

Do artists, too, have access to this ancient language of dream symbols, but only during moments of creativity? Examining various nineteenth century writers, I identify similar dream symbols or images used in mapping out choreographies of assault and violence, and also consider the ways in which various writers, male and female, invoke similar dream symbols of flowers and landscapes.

Keywords: Terdiman; landscapes; flowers; unconscious

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## Strange Creative Gifts and Freud's "The Symbolism of Dreams"

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"Once you eliminate the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth." (A. Conan Doyle. 2003. "The Adventure of the Beryl Coronet," 514)

### I

Freud's lecture, "Symbolism in Dreams," appears as the tenth chapter in his *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, a series of lectures he gave during the winter terms of 1915-1916 and 1916-1917. He had previously spoken about the manifest and latent content of dreams and about censorship in dreams. And in turn, this lecture will be followed by one on "The Dream Work." But even with all of the rich dream material surrounding this chapter, he nevertheless suggests

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