“It is in dreams where our humanity is most touchingly visible. It is dreams that offer the opportunity of a deep plunge into the unifying experience of our common, shared human condition.”

— Markku Siivola, *Understanding Dreams*

*Understanding Dreams: The Gateway to Dreams Without Dream Interpretation* is an enlightening, accessible text that helps the lay person examine and understand his or her dreams without any formal training or psychological experience. Inspired by dream research pioneer Montague Ullman’s dream group approach, this book breaks down the steps of the process for readers to fully understand dreams and apply their meanings to daily life. Translated from the original Finnish, *Understanding Dreams* makes it easy to access dreams with a fearless, hands-on approach that anyone can learn and master.

Ideal for dreamers in all cultures, for readers put off by traditional dream psychology and dream interpretation, and even professional therapists, this book avoids clichéd terms and approaches, focusing instead on the dreamer and how dreams can help break down the thoughts and feelings we are normally too busy to analyze. Inside, you will find commonly asked questions about dream interpretation, the history of dream psychology and its researchers, the dream group approach, and dreams in relation to the universe and our world.

“Siivola writes journalistically lucid and easily readable text, divided into short chapters [...] *Understanding Dreams* is an interesting book not only because of dreams, but also because of its life philosophy, art and poetry.”

— Jonamatti Joutajarvi, *Parnassus Literary Magazine*  

“The most interesting chapter in the book is the last one, ‘Dreams and the Universe, which rises up to lyrical heights, examining from the dream viewpoint, among other topics, creativity, art, and visions born in scientific domains.’”

— Puiu Remikainen, *Oulu University Student Magazine*  

MARKKKU SIIVOLA is a doctor of psychiatry who practiced liaison and rehabilitation psychiatry in Finland and Sweden before becoming an approved dream group leader. He has been nominated as an honorary member of the Swedish Dream Group Forum and co-founded the Finnish Dream Group Forum. His works include a Finnish translation of Montague Ullman’s *Working with Dreams* and the bestselling *Unien Opissa*, a book of instructions for the dream group process.

Cosimo Books  
Body, Mind & Spirit/Personal Development  
www.cosimobooks.com
“It is in dreams where our humanity is most touchingly visible. It is dreams that offer the opportunity of a deep plunge into the unifying experience of our common, shared human condition.”
— Markku Siivola, Understanding Dreams

Understanding Dreams: The Gateway to Dreams Without Dream Interpretation is an enlightening, accessible text that helps the lay person examine and understand his or her dreams without any formal training or psychological experience. Inspired by dream research pioneer Montague Ullman’s dream group approach, this book breaks down the steps of this process for readers to fully understand dreams and apply their meanings to daily life. Translated from the original Finnish, Understanding Dreams makes it easy to access dreams with a fearless, hands-on approach that anyone can learn and master.

Ideal for dreamers in all cultures, for readers put off by traditional dream psychology and dream interpretation, and even professional therapists, this book avoids clichéd terms and approaches, focusing instead on the dreamer and how dreams can help break down the thoughts and feelings we are normally too busy to analyze. Inside, you will find commonly asked questions about dream interpretation, the history of dream psychology and its researchers, the dream group approach, and dreams in relation to the universe and our world.

“Siivola writes journalistically lucid and easily readable text, divided into short chapters [...] Understanding Dreams is an interesting book not only because of dreams, but also because of its life philosophy, art and poetry.”
—Jonimatti Joutsijärvi, Parnassus Literary Magazine

“The most interesting chapter in the book is the last one, Dreams and the Universe, which rises up to lyrical heights, examining from the dream viewpoint, among other topics, creativity, art, and visions born in scientific domains.”
—Pia Remikainen, Oulu University Student Magazine

MARKKU SIIVOLA is a doctor of psychiatry who practiced liaison and rehabilitation psychiatry in Finland and Sweden before becoming an approved dream group leader. He has been nominated as an honorary member of the Swedish Dream Group Forum and co-founded the Finnish Dream Group Forum. His works include a Finnish translation of Montague Ullman’s Working with Dreams and the bestselling Unien Opissa, a book of instructions for the dream group process.
UNDERSTANDING DREAMS

THE GATEWAY TO DREAMS
WITHOUT DREAM INTERPRETATION

MARKKU SIIVOLA
TRANSLATED WITH RICHARD JENKINS
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

NOTE: You find a DETAILED Table of Contents at the end of this document!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To the Reader</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Frequently Asked Questions About Dreams</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. In Search of the Meaning of Dreams</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. From Dream Interpretation to Dream Appreciation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The Essence of Dreams</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Methods for Understanding Dreams</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Dream Sharing in a Small Group Setting</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Dreams and Society</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Dreams and the Universe</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilogue</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End Notes</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the Author</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first aim of this book is to be a practical guide, which advises how dreams can be best understood by oneself, with a helper and in a group. We will go through the stages of a dream group process, examining the difficulties that we might encounter on the way, and working out how we can cope with and solve them.

I will describe in detail the dream group process created in Sweden at the beginning of the ’70s by a U.S. psychiatry professor emeritus, Montague Ullman. It is the most effective way of studying dreams that I have ever encountered. In this process, dreams belong to the dreamers themselves, instead of to any experts. In dream groups, we will practice the art of listening, which enriches our understanding of human relationships and life in general.

The second aim of this book is to present the historical roots of dream research, which makes it easier to see dreams as one integral sector of the totality of human consciousness, in turn making the modern status of dream research more understandable in our contemporary culture.

The third aim is to lead dreams away from their state of isolation by drawing attention to common features of dream consciousness and waking consciousness. I will look for these connections in both ordinary everyday experiences, as well as in the final chapter of this book, “Dreams and the Universe,” which addresses philosophies of religions, arts, and sciences. Through all these connections, it is easier to see the common denominator behind varied appearances of human consciousness—the connecting element that permeates ages and cultures—and how dreams are the common language for the whole of mankind. It is in dreams that our humanity is most touchingly visible. It is dreams that offer the opportunity of a deep plunge into the unifying experience of our common, shared human condition.
INDEX

Aha! moment, xi, 38, 60, 62, 75
Altered states of consciousness, 132,
   155–159
Andersen, H.C., 30
Archetypes & archetypal symbols, see Jung,
   Carl G.
Art
   and creativity, 140
   definition of true art, 139
   derivatives of dreams, 4
   expressions of, 139–140
   meets society, 140–141
Art of listening, vii, 3, 159
   in psychoanalysis, 141
Artemidorus Daldianus, 15
Atman, see Implicate order
Attitudeless attitude, 48, 54, 125
Authority, 31
   avoiding, 82
   harmfulness of, 3, 17, 82–83
   misusing, 92
   need to find, 68, 76
   of dreamer, 120
   unnecessary for understanding, 43
   via profession, 17

Basic assumptions
   freeing from, 21
   psychoanalytical, 90, 141
   unintentional, 32
Black hole of the psyche, 148
Body language, 32, 62
Bohm, David, 144, 148

implicate, explicate, manifest, and per-
ceptual orders, 144
Boss, Medard, 47–48
Buber, Martin, xiv

Comforting the dreamer, 100
Confessional systems
   alienating people from dreams, 125–126
Confidentiality, 90, 95
Consensus reality, 129, 144–145
Craft and talent, 19, 140
   definition of, 76
Creative arts
   the purest form of, 138
Creativity, 138
   dangerous freedom, 139
   Einstein’s, 143
   in madness, 139
   ultimate form of, 138
Culture automatisms, 128

Dali, Salvador, 139
Democritus, 144
Discovery factor, 88
   balancing with safety factor, 118
   free association as catalyst, 112
   maximizing, 97–101, 141
Dream diary
   importance of waking diary, 71
   Freud’s cynical attitude to, 71
Dream group
   advising the dreamer, 101
   as actors, 106
as blind detectives, 89, 110, 121–122
as curling team, 89
as focusing magnifying glass, 34
as horse whisperers, 89
as medium, 127
as midwives, 88
at workplace, 77, 93–94
composition of, 92
definition of, 88
frustrated, 124–125
metaphors of, 88
other forms, 125
participant selection criteria, 92–93
pushing the dreamer
by challenging, 121
by exhausting, 111
by seeking acceptance, 119
with group members’ overwhelming emotions, 98
with group members’ own world views, 99
with non-transparent questions, 100
with psychotherapy theories, 99
with theory-based interpretations, 43, 126
relation to therapy group, 81–82, 94, 132–134
screening of candidates, 92–93
setting up, 91–94
size, 50, 94
starting your own, 91–94
supervision, 77, 93
universal, 136
various ways to distract the dreamer, 98–101
Dream Group Forums, 91–92
Dream group leader
atheoretical, 132
certificate, 92
double role, 92
fear to lead, 92
in Sweden, 91
nature of expertise, xii
no therapist role, 97, 100, 132
not only for professionals, 81, 132
qualification, 91
Dream group process
choosing the dream, 103–104
duration, 50, 94–95
free from confessional systems, 51
harmfulness of, 118, 123, 126, 134
history, 89
not democratic, 97, 133
outline of stages, 101–102
stages
clarifying the dream, 104–105
dialogue, 113
dreamer’s response, 111–113
orchestration, 85–86, 98, 116–118
delayed, 103
playback, 114–116
playing with dream, 105–111
presentation of dream, 103–104
projecting feelings and metaphors, 107–111
search for emotional context, 113–114
Dream group supervisor, 91
Dreamer
always has the last word, xii, 111, 120
as medium, 127, 149
as teacher, 118
associations, 75, 82
Freud’s & Jung’s approaches, 46
Ullman’s approach, 49
bodily reactions, 62
bragging, 155
demanding role, 124
resistance of, 21, 43, 90, 123–124, 132
silence of, 97–98, 117
special position, 97
Dreams
ambivalence in, 78
appreciation, 88
and understanding, 20
vs. interpretation, 3, 20
Understanding Dreams

as attorneys, 76
as common language of humankind, 49, 65
as flying Dutchmen, 131
as healing knife, 100
as homeostatic system, 29, 45
as metaphors in motion, 75
as real as waking reality, 47
as saboteurs of small talk, 135
as soap bubbles, 121
as state of innocent wisdom, 30, 76
as stepping stones, 126
as wish fulfillments, see Freud, Sigmund
authenticity of, 4, 30, 97, 140
converting abstractions to concrete images, 42, 55–56
day residue, see emotional context
deepest form of art, 140
dependence on, 4, 76, 82
emotional context, 59, 114
how to spoil the party, 135
in disservice of waking ego, 76
in psychiatry, 132
infinity of, xi, 5, 122
interpretation and explanation, x
literal, informatory, 137
lucid, 155
meaning of, x
meanings as shadows of, 38
modified, 32
naïve, childlike, 30, 60
no messages in, 76
not reflectors of reality, 38, 47
past events pitfalls, 42
pitfalls of encouraging/guiding/counseling/advising, 77–80
precognitive, 5, 13, 112–113
projections of self, 30
psychiatrization of, 132
purest form of mental images, 4
quantum qualities of, 146
sexual, 41
sexual symbols in, see Freud, Sigmund
sharing (presentation), 103–104
compromises in, 141
stages between day consciousness and
infinity, 148
through night and day, 136
transformatory, 138
visionary, 138
worshipping, xii, 2, 76
Dreamwork
Freud’s vs. Ullman’s, 20
solitary, 75–76
Eckardt, Marianne H., 20
Ego development
Jung’s and Freud’s opposite views, 45
Einstein, Albert
about his own religiosity, 142
about mystical, 27
similarity of his creative process with
dream images, 143
Emotional reasoning, 63
Enlightenment experiences, 156
Ethical aperture, 129, 147
Evolution, 49, 130, 153
determining consciousness, 153
the necessity of simplifying operations in, 19
Existential Analysis, 47
Experiential dream group, see Dream group
Expertise, see Virtuosity
False awakenings, 155
Fishing question, 72, 113
Four dimensions of life
Freud lacking the fourth, 53
Free association
in analytical therapies, 75, 82
in dreamer’s response, 49, 111
Freud, Sigmund
circular reasoning, 29
dream pioneer, 1
dreams as pathological products, 28, 132
dreams as wish fulfillment, 27–28
institutionalization of dream interpre-
tation, 131
longing for dictatorship of intellect, 54
method not suited for general use, 81,
131
no tools for non-professionals, 9
power of interpretation, 16
Project for a Scientific Psychology, 27
religions as neuroses, 54
sexual symbols, 39–41
theory as tower of Babel, 52
Fromm, Erich
dogmatism in psychoanalysis, 51
dreams from interpreters to everybody,
131
no censorship in dreams, 29
replacing interpretation with under-
standing, 20
Gelassenheit, see Heidegger, Martin
Gestalt therapy, 31
Goalless goal, 125
God, see Implicate order
as heavy metal band, 42
as merchandise, 99
beyond definitions, 35
beyond religions, 22
Good manners, 9, 19, 118, 128–129, 135
Harrison, Jim, 2, 55
Healing, 14, 50, 100
...
traditional concept of, 16
vs. understanding, 20

James, William, 7
Jenkins, Richard, 162
Juhela, Pirjo, 162
Jung, Carl G., 155

active imagination, 49
archetypal symbols, 44–45, 148
archetypes, 44–45, 47, 148
basis of all his work, 52
breach with Freud, 44

Buddhist, Christian, rational intellectual, 131
cf. Freud, opposite direction of theories, 52
delirium or reality, 156–159
dreams as unintentional, purposeless phenomena, 29
Freud’s psyche as trash can, 53

homeostatic model, 29
individuation, becoming what you are, 45
institutionalization of dream interpretation, 131

Memories, Dreams, Reflections, 29, 46
method not suited for general use, 81, 131
not sure about anything, 54
Self as God’s archetype, 45
view of sexuality, 44, 61

Kilpi, Volter, 55

Knowledge
as intellectual coping, 62
as Procrustean bed, 62
evidence based, 62
explicit, 23
relation to understanding, 22
silent, 23

Lawrence, Gordon, 32
Leading questions, 98–99
Levels of human life, 137

Manifest order, 145
Marshall, Barry J.
about illusion of knowledge, 146
Meaning
as intellectual trap, 37
as pruning result, 37
relation to explanation, 37
relation to waking state, 37

Metaphor, see Symbols, metaphors, meanings, signs
Mona Lisa, xi, 37, 140
Moreno, Jacob L., 31
Multiple choice questions, 99, 119

Newman, Edwin, 143

Nirvana, see Implicate order
beyond everything and beyond nothing, 146

Note taking, 72, 112, 121

Objectivity
Jung’s absolute, 158
primitiveness of, 147

Off the rails
double meaning, 143

Ontological obstacles
incurable, 61

Open-ended questions, 83–84, 89, 99–100, 115
outside dream groups, 136

Paradox
as illusion of intellect, 68, 146

Perceptual order, 145

Perls, Frederick
dreams as projections of self, 30–31
empty chair technique, 31
Gestalt therapy, 31, 32
helpful therapists are doomed, 30
Playback Theatre, 32
Polanyi, Michael, 23
Markku Siivola

Pontalis, Jean-Bertrand, 16
Projections, 118–119
as conscious activity, 119

group’s projection or dreamer’s repression, 122–123
orchestrated, 98, 102, 116
waking life, 150

Prostituting
at abstract level, xiii, 42

Psychiatry
as a subculture, 131–132
blind spots of, 132

Psychoanalysis
art of listening, 141
claiming copyright over dreams, 51
dream baby and afterbirth, 25
dreams as turning point in, 28
Finnish, 18
Glass Bead Game of, 18
ideal for civilized rationalist, 18
interpretation, 16–17
seclusiveness, 18
suitability to dream work, 1

Psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, psychiatry,

psychology
confusion between, 132

Psychodrama, 31–32

Quantum perspective of reality, 144–146

Raippamaa, Orvo
my old wise friend; an unknown poet, 162
spiritus rector, 49–50

Reality
disregarding dream evidence about
nature of, 153–154

extreme subjectivity of, 58, 152
incongruence with sense impressions, 53
mixing up with familiarity, 153
practical benefit of total subjectivity of
reality, 154
simplifying by classification, 19

Religions
Jung’s interest in, 44
red thread of, 156
the deepest core of, 145
vs. science, 9
Revonsuo, Antti
dreams as threat simulations, 49
Roadless road, xiv, 160

Safety factor, 87

balancing with discovery factor, 98, 118
maximizing, 95–97, 141
outside dream groups, 135
prerequisite in dream work, 21

Science
common sources with art, 141
natural, human, and intuitive, 25–27

Self-hypnosis, 106

Senoi tribe, 130

Sexual symbols, see Freud, Sigmund

Sexuality
Freud and Jung on, 44, 61
typical interpretation traps, 43, 60–61

Simplifying
as waking state strategy, 19, 62, 66, 122

Social Dreaming
compared with Ullman process, 34
effacing the individual, 32–34
Matrix, 33–34
unfocused infinity, 33–34

Societal images, 33, 63–64, 138, 142

Sontag, Susan
Against Interpretation, 38
shadow world of meanings, 38

Source of real energy, 150

Spiritual leader, 49

Standardized procedures, 67–68
as killers of innovation, 67

Subject and object
sameness of, 150–154

Symbols
as obstacles to understanding, 38
collective, 44
Freud’s sexual, 39–41
negative side of, 37
personal, 35
vs. signals, 39
Symbols, metaphors, images, 37
Symbols, metaphors, meanings, signs, 34

Truthfulness and survival; role of dreams, 49
Tähkä, Veikko, 16
about analysts’ narcissism, 18
Transference
minimizing, 134
Trust, see Safety factor

Ullman, Montague, vii, 20, 21
abandoning psychoanalysis, 126
benefits of psychoanalysis, 141
central ideas, 50
David Bohm’s influence, 144
dream view comparisons with other dream authorities, 48–51
significance of strange youth experiences, 142
Ultimate reality, see Implicate order
Understanding
relation to insight, xi
relation to knowledge, 22
relation to methods & techniques, 67
Universe, 144
beyond, 145
in Jung’s mandalas, 45
is you, is mystery, 153
Unlearning
from assumptions and interpretations, 21
from psychoanalysis, 21
from psychotherapeutic routines, 100
from the illusion of knowledge, 146
in art and religions, 21
Jung’s way, 133
Ullman’s way, 21

Virtuosity, 67–68
of life, 68
technical, 68

What is Truth?
artist or madman, 139
awake or dreaming, 153–154
delirium or reality, 156–159
real or unreal, 158
subject or object, 150–154
Whitman, Walt, 27, 156
Why not to ask why, 99
Wish fulfillment, see Freud, Sigmund
Work dreams, 94

Zen
insight stories, 77
koans breaking down rational thinking, 31
spiritual path in ox-herding pictures, 160
As a young man, MARKKU SIIVOLA (b. 1945) was convinced he would become a chemist, but after mystical experiences in his twenties, his main interest became the human psyche. He switched to medicine and specialized in psychiatry. A major part of his career was in liaison and rehabilitation psychiatry in Finland and Sweden.

In 1980, he participated in a dream group for the first time, led by Dr. Montague Ullman in Sweden. It became a pivotal point in his life. Since then he has led groups for non-professionals and professionals. Siivola is an approved dream group leader and supervisor in Sweden, and in 2008 he was nominated as an honorary member of the Swedish Dream Group Forum. He is the co-founder of the Finnish Dream Group Forum, founded in 2003. He created Montague Ullman’s website in 1999 and later developed the Swedish Dream Group Forum site.

He translated Ullman’s book Working with Dreams into Finnish in 1982. Siivola wrote and compiled the first detailed instructions for the dream group process, published by the University of Jyvaskyla in 1984. It was expanded into the bestselling Unien Opissa in 2008, now used throughout Finland by dream group enthusiasts as their main textbook. You can find him online at www.siivola.org/markku/
DETAILED Table of Contents

TO THE READER

INTRODUCTION
  My dream background
  The basic concepts of this book
    Interpretation and explanation of dreams
    The meaning of dreams
    Understanding and insight of dreams
  Practice above all
  Beyond dreams

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DREAMS
  What is the importance of psychoanalysis to the understanding of dreams?
  Do dreams have any sense at all?
  Are people interested in their own dreams crazy?
  Can dream interpretation be harmful?
  In what way may understanding dreams be beneficial for me?
  Is it possible for everybody to learn to understand dreams?
  Do clairvoyant and precognitive dreams exist?

IN SEARCH OF THE MEANING OF DREAMS
  Our nightly companions
  Obstacles in the seeker's way
  The keys to my own exploration
  The tale of two telephone poles

FROM DREAM INTERPRETATION TO DREAM APPRECIATION
  In search for dream interpretation
    Psychoanalytic view of interpretation
    The historical burden of interpretation
    Interpretation, presupposition and prejudice
  Dream Appreciation
    Unlearning
    Beyond a priori assumptions

THE ESSENCE OF DREAMS
  Scientific research
    Natural sciences
    Human sciences
  Intuitive research
    Freud's wish fulfillment
    Carl Gustav Jung's homeostatic model
    Frederick Perls: dream as a projection of self
    Moreno's psychodrama
    Social dreaming
  Symbols, metaphors, meanings
    Meaning is the invention of waking consciousness
    Freud and sex
    Jungian archetypes
    Medard Boss: dreams do not symbolize anything
  Montague Ullman's dream view
    Dreams out of therapy rooms
  The many shapes of images
    The fiery lava of images - the difference between Freud and Jung
    Images of language
    The red thread of feelings
    The stars in the sunshine
    The criteria for understanding dreams; the aha!-moment
    Images of individual and society
    Dreams as reflectors of the inner and outer world

METHODS FOR UNDERSTANDING DREAMS
  Routine, expertise, virtuosity
  Understanding dreams on one's own
    Remembering dreams
    Searching the recent emotional context
      Previous day
      Dream diary
    The fishing question
    Separate the wood from the trees
Investigating symbols and feelings
Staying with the dream
Problems when working on one's own
Surroundings
Dreams have no messages
Guiding and counseling dreams
Working with one another
Two spotlights are better than one

DREAM SHARING IN A SMALL GROUP SETTING

Two essential factors for a functional dream group

Montague Ullman's Experiential Dream groups – the most powerful tool for understanding dreams

Dream group definition
The history of Ullman dream group process
Setting up a dream group – you can do it yourself
General principles of maximizing safety and discovery factors
  Maximizing safety
  Maximizing discovery

The stages of dream group process

The dream group process
  Presentation of the dream (1)
  Listening to the dream (1A)
  Clarifying the dream (1B)
  The game - playing with the dream (2)
    Projecting feelings (2A) and metaphors (2B)
  The dream is returned to the dreamer
    Dreamer's response (3A)
    Search for recent emotional context (3B.1)
    Playback - reading the dream back (3B.2)
    Orchestration – composing the whole (3B.3)

The demarcation line between interpretation and projection
Big and small crimes
Blind detectives
Projection or repression?

When a dream does not open - about the importance of dream groups' goals

Other forms of dream groups

DREAMS AND SOCIETY

Culture automatisms
Dominant culture and subcultures
The subculture of psychiatry
  A dream group is not a dream therapy group
Life outside dream groups
  Dreams outside dream groups
  The dream group of humanity

DREAMS AND THE UNIVERSE

Sources of dream images
Creativity
Art and art forms
The art of dreams
  A key in the lock of its society
Common sources of science and art
  The similarity of Einstein's and dreams' creative processes

Breaking up the world view of day consciousness
  The world view of a quantum physicist
  The implicate order and religions
  Dreams as mediators between manifest order and perceptual order
  The projections of dreaming and waking life
  The sameness of subject and object
  False awakenings and lucid dreams

Beyond the known
  From the understanding of dreams to the understanding of life

EPILOGUE

END NOTES

Index