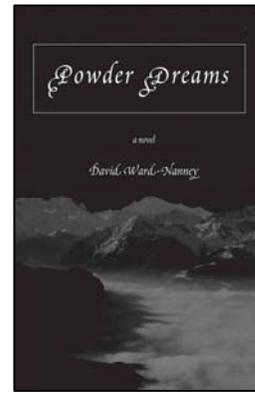


Q&A with David Ward-Nanney,



author of



Tell us about your new novel, *Powder Dreams*.

It is a novel about one man's inability to reconcile his inner ski bum with impending adulthood. His first attempt at the reconciliation does not go well. It combines several of my favorite things: skiing, Jungian psychology, the financial markets and youthful sybaritism.

What exactly is Jungian psychology, and what got you interested in it?

The process of analytical psychology (the trade name of Jungian psychology) first came to my attention in 1987 when I was reading Robertson Davies' *The Manticore*. I have had an on and off relationship with it ever since. I became serious about the Jungian approach in 2003 after an extended depression the year before. I subsequently spent almost three full years with an excellent analyst.

The therapeutic approach really boils down to understanding the forces that are making demands on you and learning to make peace with the ugly side of yourself, and pay more attention to your essential self. Cool rationality gets you barely off the starting line in the process. You have to draw on your whole person to make it work.

Are you a Jungian analyst?

No, but I have all the respect for those who have put in the considerable effort to become qualified analysts.

Does every dream have some sort of meaning?

Absolutely, but whether we have time, energy and patience to pursue that meaning is a whole different matter. A carefully understood dream is like an electric shock and helps us steer an even course in our lives. The dream-like state of the artist is the same thing. A well-painted picture does the same thing.

How can the average person interpret his or her own dreams?

The first step is to honestly ask yourself how you feel about a dream. If you are wrong, very often a follow-up dream will point this out or you will otherwise rebel against your own interpretation. The one certainty is that over a very long period, certain trends will emerge in your dream analysis. The gold is in these trends. And when the gold has been mined enough, the trends will change and you'll be presented with a new vein to mine. Dream analysis is not for everyone, but for those who pursue it, the answers will find you.

What themes do you explore in your literary fiction?

My first novel, *A Particular Obedience*, follows three generations of Southern women as they deal with money and power on a grand scale. A friend of mine pointed out that of course women loved the book because I gave them everything they could want. The reality of the story is that even though they had everything they wanted, they still could not escape morality and ancestral containment, not without tremendous persistence and luck, if you believe in luck.

Powder Dreams by chance explores the difficulties of being a man when society does not expect you to grow up anytime soon (why would it, if you're likely to live 90 years), of balancing man's sensitivity with the expectation of being tough as hell, and finally of how women's liberation (which I love) has made all of this so much more difficult.

My real intent when I started writing *Powder Dreams* was to cross-pollinate a Greg Stump ski film with a Jungian novel.

***Powder Dreams* focuses on two important things for you – skiing and Jungian psychology; how do the two relate?**

I use Jungian psychology as a tool for sorting through my life and have done so for eight years, a relative newcomer. Skiing and the other things I do in the mountains (e.g. running, mountain biking, having a beer) are vital to my sanity. In the mountains I feel I am as close to God as I can be. There is a Jungian explanation for this but it is in the book.

Is it difficult to write about an analysis?

Painfully difficult, way beyond walking to China on your knees, because Jung operates on the premise that each person is unique and to create a character that is unique in a very deep sense is hell. 2010 was not a good year for me for this very reason. There are lots and lots of other technical difficulties. Have you ever read a novel that uses therapy sessions and the whole thing seems like two people talking about nothing? I have. I worked like crazy to avoid this miserable fate.

Has anyone else done it, written a literary novel using a Jungian analysis as a narrative device?

Yes, actually. The best example (and my inspiration) is Robertson Davies' *The Manticore* (1972). The other two notables are Morris West's *The World Is Made of Glass* (1983) and Timothy Findley's *Pilgrim* (1999). I can only find three other novels that use analytical psychology, two by famous writers. Notice the timeline. These novels come along few and far between.

How did you create your protagonist, Bo Grayson? Is there any of you in his character?

Bo Grayson started off as a composite of various scenes, attributes and problems that I noticed in other people. He eventually became a singular person during the three drafts and two years of writing this novel.

There is naturally some of me in the character. The material was difficult and I found myself cheating on some of the stage management of this novel. For example, Bo is the same age as me, although we are not the same person. And further, I have never skied Jackson Hole, which is a terrible admission for a skier to make.

You've lived in a few different US cities and have settled in the UK. Would you say one country follows Jungian psychology more than the other, or does it vary no matter where you are?

There are large and established Jungian communities in both America and the United Kingdom. But I've also found the same everywhere else. I know, for example, that the marketing preparation for this book has unearthed large Jungian communities in Brazil and well, actually, on all continents.

How often do you ski? Where does your love of the sport come from?

I'm in a seven-year drought because of family circumstances but hope that will change soon. If I'm lucky I'll get a couple of weeks a year in Chamonix.

High school ruined sports for me. All those jocks and the coaches I found unappealing. I rediscovered outdoor sports after high school, but really my love of skiing started when my mother used to take me out of school on Wednesdays for a church bus ride to the mountains for a day of skiing.

<http://nanney-land.com/>