

Dreams and Active Imagination

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The dream theories of CG Jung

Complexes cause dreams, dreams put complexes into context, they process complexes.

Theory of compensation:

Dreams compensate the conscious attitude

Understanding of dreams 1

«In the majority of my cases the resources of the conscious mind are exhausted...In such cases...my attention is directed to dreams...These at least present us with images pointing to something or other, and that is better than nothing.» (CW 16, §82, 84)

Understanding of dreams 2

«I know that if we meditate a dream sufficiently long and thoroughly, if we carry it around with us and turn it over and over, something almost always comes of it. This something...shows the patient what the unconscious is aiming at. ... the result means something to the patient and sets his life in motion again.»

(CW 16, §86)

Complexes trigger dreams

The *via regia* to the unconscious is not the dream... but the complex, which is the architect of dreams and symptoms. CW 8, § 210

Dream psychology shows us as plainly as it could be wished how complexes appear in personified form when there is no inhibiting consciousness to suppress them, ... CW 8, §203

The complexes «are the actors in our dreams»...
CW 8, § 202

Affects cause complexes, complexes influence affects

The « self-control suffers in proportion to the strength of the complex; the purposefulness is ...replaced by unintentional errors...»

CW 3, § 93

CW 3, §78: (1906) „The essential basis of our personality is affectivity. (Footnote: For feeling, sentiment, emotion, affect, Bleuler proposed the expression of affectivity.) Thought and action are, as it were, only symptoms of affectivity.”

To have complexes is a «normal phenomena of life» CW 8, § 211

«Complexes are in truth the living units of the unconscious psyche..» CW 8, § 210

They regulate the perception and the reception of information and emotion

Symbols depict complexes

Complexes develop a imaginative activity

«In sleep fantasy take the form of dreams. But in waking life, too, we continue to dream under the threshold of consciousness, especially when under the influence of repressed or other unconscious complexes» CW 16, §125

“The complexes are called forth whenever the individual has a painful or a significant encounter with an outer event or demand in their environment which overwhelms them or which they do not have the capacity to deal with.”
(Afterwards Jung is speaking about parental complexes, so we can conclude that the encounters are interactions of infants with those who care for them.) CW 6, § 991)

COMPLEX EPISODE



TOPIC
EMOTION
NECESSARY BONDING
EXPERIENCE WAS
DENIED

CE : INTERNALIZED AS A
WHOLE
(EPISODIC MEMORY)
DEFENSE

Complex episodes

Complexes can be understood as internalized conflictual relationship experiences, with a theme that is emotionally stressed.

There are generalized conflictual relationship experiences in the area of central needs of the personality, in a situation where a bonding experience would be needed.

C.E. SHAME



I feel
ashamed under the critical
eye

feeling of
self esteem
is pulverized

Reactions

Regressive d.

Depression

Progressive d.

- hyperperfectionism
- hiding
- angry reactions

C.E. SHAME 2



THE FRIENDLY LOOK
BENEVOLENT

Complexes trigger dreams

The leading emotion points to a complex

Complex episodes are depicted in the dream and are changed

Complex episodes can be represented in symbolic form

Jung: The theory of compensation

«The more one-sided the conscious attitude is, and the further it deviates from the optimum, the greater becomes the possibility that vivid dreams with a strongly contrasting but purposive content will appear as an expression of the self-regulation of the psyche.»

CW 8, §488

Compensation and Individuation Process

«Hidden behind the compensation ..is a kind of developmental process in the personality itself... A long dream- series ... resembles the successive steps in a planned and orderly process of development. I have called this unconscious process spontaneously expressing itself in the symbolism of a long dream series the individuation process.» (CW 8, § 550)

The process of individuation

«Individuation has two principal aspects: in the first place it is an internal and subjective process of integration, and in the second it is an equally indispensable process of objective relationship. Neither can exist without the other...

(CW 16, § 448)

The process of Individuation 2

«This process of becoming human is represented in dreams and inner images as the putting together of many scattered units, and sometimes as the gradual emergence and clarification of something that was always there.»

CW 11, § 399

Finality. What is the intention of the dream?

In the dream are challenges for development.

The dream has «a value of positive, guiding idea or an aim whose vital meaning would be greatly superior to that of the momentarily constellated conscious content.» (CW 8, § 491)

Imagination

„Imagination is the reproductive or creative activity of the mind in general. It is not a special faculty, since it can come into play in all the basic forms of psychic activity... Fantasy as imaginative activity is...simply the direct expression of psychic life, of psychic energy which cannot appear in consciousness except in the form of images or contents....“ (CW6, § 869)

Imagination 2

«To fantasize as an imaginative activity is identical with the sequence of the psychic energetic process.» (CW 6, 869)

That's a reference to the ongoing emotional processes.

«I am indeed convinced that creative imagination is the only primordial phenomenon accessible to us, the real Ground of the Psyche, the only immediate reality. Therefore I speak of *esse in anima (being in the soul)*, the only form of being we can experience directly.»

Letter to Kurt Plachte, January 10, 1929

«To the extent that I managed to translate the emotions into images – that is to say to find the images which were concealed in the emotions – I was inwardly calmed and reassured. Had I left those images hidden in the emotions, I might have been torn to pieces by them.»

Memories, Dreams, Reflections, p. 201



«The best way of dealing with the unconscious is the creative way. Create for instance a fantasy. Work it out with all the means at your disposal. Work it out as if you were it or in it...»

Letter of November 25, 1932

Symbols depict complexes

Complexes develop a imaginative activity

«In sleep fantasy take the form of dreams. But in waking life, too, we continue to dream under the threshold of consciousness, especially when under the influence of repressed or other unconscious complexes» CW 16, §125

«Default» network

Spontaneously active during restful states, supports mind wandering and daydreaming during waking.

«In dreaming,...external sensory inputs are almost entirely blocked...
dreaming can be seen as an intensified version of waking spontaneous
thought – or conversely, that MW during wakefulness could be seen as
an attenuated waking form of dreaming.»

Self – generated thought

Terminology:

Mind Wandering

Spontaneous thought

Stimulus-independent thought

Daydreaming

Creative thinking

Rumination, obsessive thinking

«All refer to subjective thoughts during wakefulness.»

Dreaming as MW, 2

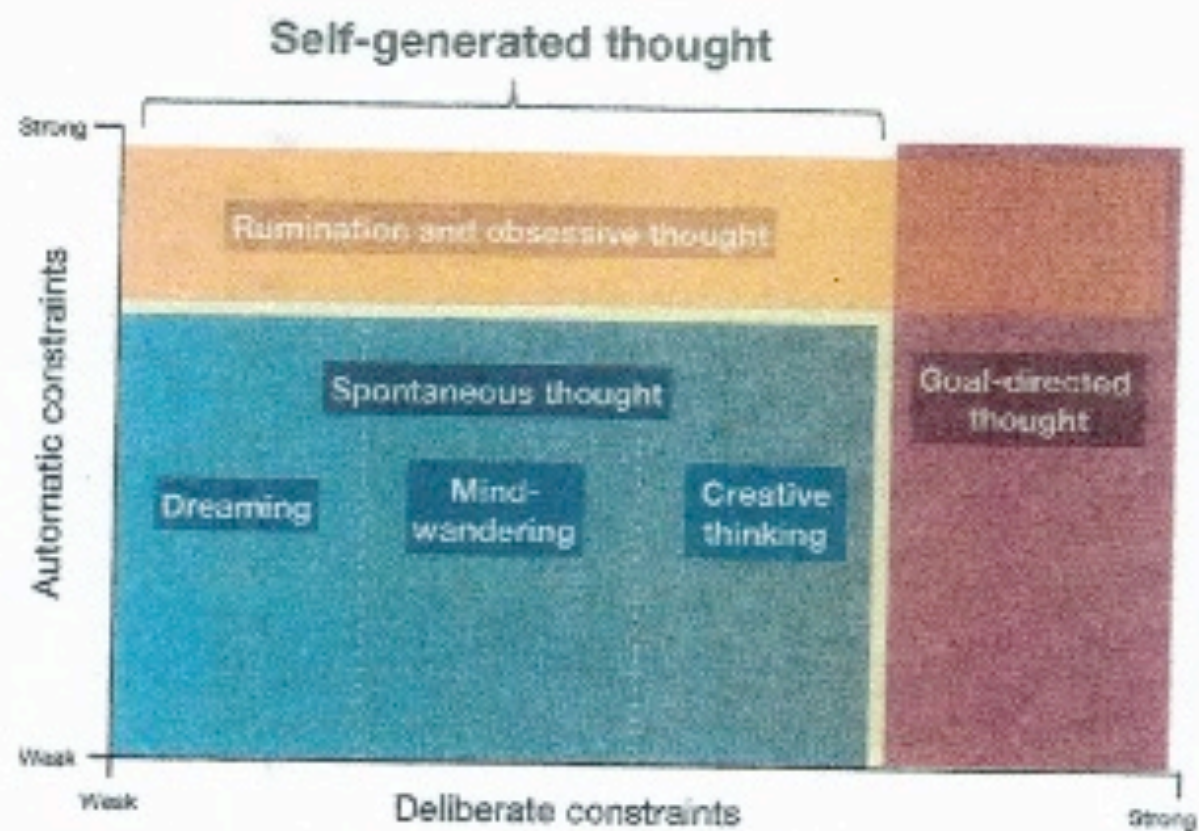


Figure 1. Conceptual space relating the concept of self-generated thought to deliberate and automatic constraints on cognition.

MW and dreams: similarities

Contain bizarre or implausible elements

Contain positive or negative emotions

Draw on proximal and distal memory sources

Relate strongly to subjects current concerns

Involve simulated social interaction

(Dreaming as MW, p.11)

MW and dreams: differences

The sensory aspects of dreams are far more intense than during MW

Potential for bizarre elements: more intense

Dreams seem to be temporally more extended. (cohesive narratives)

(MW and dreams, p.11)

Dreaming is a form of embodied simulation, is often focused on the relationship with significant others, regrets about the past, worries about anxiety arousing future events.

Domhoff et al (2015) Dreaming and the default network. In Consciousness and Cognition. 33 (2015) 342- 353, p. 347

Mind wandering (MW) and dreams

...»dreaming can be seen as an intensified version of waking spontaneous thought – or conversely, that MW (mind wandering) during wakefulness could be seen as attenuated, waking form of dreaming.»

Kieran C R Fox et al (2013) Dreaming as mind wandering : evidence from functional neuroimaging and first-person content reports. In: Frontiers in Human Neuroscience July 2013, Vol 7, Article 412, p.11)

CG Jung

«In the deepest sense we all dream not out of *ourselves* but out of what lies *between us and the other*»

Letter to James Kirsch, 29.9. 1934

Affect

Affect is ubiquitous during self-generated thoughts
(waking 50-67%, night time dreaming 75 – 95%)

Great diversity of emotional content

Mild bias to positive or pleasant affect in self generated thought

«excessive» daydreamers appear to have more rewarding and pleasant self generated thought than the general population.

Fox et al (2018) Affective neuroscience and self-generated thought.

In: Ann.NY Acad Sci (2018) 1-27. New York, Academie of Sciences

Imagination

„Imagination is the reproductive or creative activity of the mind in general. It is not a special faculty, since it can come into play in all the basic forms of psychic activity... Fantasy as imaginative activity is...simply the direct expression of psychic life, of psychic energy which cannot appear in consciousness except in the form of images or contents....“ (CW6, § 722)

Contents in Limbo (in suspense)

„ Our unconscious contents are potentialities that may be but are not yet, because they have no definiteness...Definiteness only appears where matter appears... To give body to one`s thoughts means that one can speak them, paint them, show them, make them appear clearly before the eyes of everybody...“ (Z, p.194)

Active Imagination

The point is that you start with any image.... Contemplate it and carefully observe how the picture begins to unfold or to change. Don't try to make it into something, just do nothing but observe what its spontaneous changes are. Any mental picture you contemplate in this way will sooner or later change through a spontaneous association that causes a slight alteration of the picture.

You must carefully avoid impatient jumping from one subject to another. Hold fast to the one image you have chosen and wait until it changes by itself. Note all these changes and eventually step into the picture yourself and, if it is a speaking figure at all, then say what you have to say to that figure and listen to what he, she [or it] has to say.

Thus you can not only analyse your unconscious but you also give your unconscious a chance to analyse yourself, and therewith you gradually create the unity of conscious and unconscious without which there is no individuation at all.

(Letter to Mr. O., May 2, 1947, Letters Vol. II, p.76)

Changing nightmares

Working on nightmares with imagination

Explanation: if you work imaginatively on a nightmare, it changes. We'll do it together - and if you need help, I'll help you. (Safe place)

Steven Starker, 1974, Today: Imagery Rehearsel Intervention.

Technique

The dreamer visualizes the dream in the analytical situation, the analyst asks questions if necessary, intensifies emotions, determines the focus. e.g. the situation that changes in the repetitive dreams.

Helping figures are introduced, fear is reduced in the common imagination.

This procedure has an influence on nightmares. They lose their frightening character and change.