**DREAM ANALYSIS CRIB SHEETS**

**Note: this material has been gathered from a number of sources, including your textbook, Freud’s Interpretation of Dreams, Jung’s “Dream Symbolism in Relation to Alchemy,” and Memories, Dreams, Reflections and assorted other readings. Do not use this information for any formal papers; it is only a rough guide. (You may use it as a starting point for your application paper.)**

**FREUDIAN DREAM ANALYSIS**

**Main focus:** Dreams as the product (sometimes distorted) of complex, dynamic unconscious processes. The **manifest content** is what is remembered from the dream, and the **latent content** is the underlying (unconscious) root of that content. The manifest content is kind of like a script that’s been argued over by writers, directors, and network censors. The latent content was what originally provoked the manifest content to be made. The manifest content attempts to “satisfy” the latent content and keep the person asleep. From Freud’s Interpretation of Dreams: “We may therefore suppose that dreams are given their shape in individual human beings by the operation of two psychical forces. . . and that one of these forces constructs the wish which is expressed by the dream, while the other exercises a censorship upon this dream-wish and, by the use of that censorship, forcibly brings about a distortion in the expression of the wish.”

**Common latent content:**

**Sensory experiences** (sounds, sensations going on at the time of dream)

**Current concerns** (things going on for the person in real life)

**(simple) Wish fulfillment** (wishes that are not objectionable to the “censor” and are represented fairly directly)

**(complex) Wish fulfillment** (wishes that are objectionable and therefore cannot be expressed directly)

**Note also that secondary elaboration and condensation** are processes involved in deriving manifest content from the latent content.

**Content of wish fulfillment:**

The content of wish fulfillment is often primitive and related to unresolved childhood conflicts. Sex, aggression, and impulses related to the psychosexual stages (oral, anal, phallic) are often the source of wish fulfillment.

**Common dream processes (from latent to manifest):**

**Symbolism** (latent content is symbolized by manifest content)

*Phallic symbols (longer than wide; guns, swords, snakes, teeth, canes, neckties)*

*Womb/vaginal symbols (openings; windows, doors, stairwells, tunnels, caves)*

**Mechanism of opposites** (the manifest is the opposite of latent content)

**General distortion** (the latent content is otherwise distorted; parts left out, etc.)

**Focus of interpretation**

The focus of Freudian dream interpretation is typically to uncover the unconscious conflicts and impulses (latent content) that give rise to manifest content. The dream is a source of potentially useful information that has been distorted by the ego in order to keep conflicts, urges, and impulses out of consciousness. However, the dream itself is not an attempt at communication, nor is it trying to “tell you something.”

**Hints: Symbols** are going to involve some form of wish fulfillment; Freud would not typically say anything like “The ice in your dream symbolized your cold nature” *unless* the person has an unconscious impulse to be cold and feels s/he shouldn’t be. (“The ice symbolizes the cold nature you wish you could express.”) *Freud also typically does not talk about things or people symbolizing parts of oneself.*

**Distressing dreams** are explainable only if the latent content is *more* distressing than the manifest.

**Distortion** must be accounted for by the actions of the censor. For example, the hypothesis that a dream involving eating bananas refers to oral sex only makes sense if the person’s psyche finds the conscious awareness of wanting to have oral sex objectionable.

**It’s possible** for dreams to be very straightforward (i.e., no distortion), but Freud seems to think most dreams involve some distortion somewhere along the line.

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**JUNGIAN DREAM ANALYSIS**

**Main focus**: Dreams are a form of communication from the unconscious, which is expressed as a web of associations requiring a close interpretive reading. Contents are not intentionally distorted, but may be confusing because the unconscious isn’t always proficient at explaining itself, and is, by nature, irrational. Dreams are usually interpreted such that everything in the dream is a part of the dreamer. However, the process of understanding the content involves understanding the archetypes expressed in the dream, which means that various other sources (e.g., mythology, literature) may be consulted for help. Jung also believed that dreams could be prophetic, in that they could foreshadow events or psychological development that has not yet happened. These kind of dreams are likely to be subject to the same “expression problems” as others (i.e., Jung’s idea of prophetic dreams are not dreams that out-and-out portray an event that’s going to happen).

**Common archetypes, common dream content:**

**Shadow:** Typically the same sex as dreamer, possesses qualities dreamer denies in him/herself. May be seen as “undesirable” or “evil,” but still offer important information to dreamer.

**Anima/Animus**: Opposite-sex of dreamer, possesses dreamer’s “opposite sex” characteristics; may also carry the sense of being the “dream man/woman” in the “ideal mate” sense.

**Self**: Sometimes older or more authoritative person than dreamer, sometimes religious figure respected by dreamer. Other times may be represented more abstractly as a “whole,” circle, symmetrical pattern.

**The unconscious**: Often represented as an unknown or partially unknown place that allows diving, digging, or otherwise involves being submerged or “going in.” The sea, caverns, the ground, caves, archeological-type places are common examples.

**In general**: Archetypes of all kinds may be present in dreams. A snake in a dream would lead Jung to take a look at snakes in myths and literature to see what meaning the dream might have. The meaning of the archetype is usually looked at in terms of the person’s psyche. For example, “going on a journey” is likely to mean, “beginning an exploration of the psyche” and “a fetid, dank swamp with dead fish everywhere” is likely to mean “a disregarded unconscious that has become stagnant and unproductive.”

**Focus of interpretation:**

Jung usually focuses on dreams as (1) an attempt by the psyche to communicate what’s going on and what should be done and (2) a way to gauge the development of the psyche (i.e., toward individuation). Ideally, in Jung’s view, a person should be on friendly (or at least communicative) terms with the elements of his/her psyche, and what the parts of the psyche have to say should be taken as directive.

**Hints:**

**Symbolic interpretation** is also used in Jungian analysis, *but largely through the analysis of archetypes*. So, for example, a snake in a Jungian interpretation is unlikely to be interpreted merely as a phallic symbol. Instead, the snake’s role in various mythologies and literature would be consulted.

**“Primitive” content** *that may look like Freud’s idea of id impulses is not likely to be interpreted this way*. For example, a dreamer who has a vicious fight with an “evil” figure is likely to be seen as someone who is struggling violently with shadow aspects of his/her personality and needs to find ways to be more accepting (or at least respectful) of these elements. That this person may have aggressive impulses, or even be aggressive in real life would be attributed to similar problems with the shadow and projection—*not to “aggressive impulses” from the id.*

**Even people recognized by the dreamer** *are more likely to be interpreted as parts of the psyche than as those people per se*. The explanation is likely to be that the real life person is similar to the element of the psyche that he or she is representing in the dream. For example, it would not be surprising if a person’s

spouse often played the role of anima/animus in dreams. *Thus, the dream’s message relates directly to the person’s psyche and only indirectly to the person’s relationship with the real person.* (Trouble with the anima or animus will probably lead to trouble with opposite sex partners.)