

ANTH 404: FREUD AND PSYCHOANALYTIC DREAM INTERPRETATION

Slide #1

Slide Title: ANTH 404: THE SELF IN CULTURE

Slide Content:

Freud and Psychoanalytic Dream Interpretation

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: Today, I want to introduce you to the psychoanalytic view of dreams. We have looked at a number of different ways of approaching dreams in the course so far and many of them can be explained in simple steps and are fairly transparent. But the psychoanalytic way of working with dreams needs a little thought and training and we will do that today.

Slide #2

Slide Title: Review of Psychoanalytic Principles: Parts of the self: id/ego/superego

Slide Content:

Baby = Id = “I want”

Pleasure Principle

- organized around needs
- fantasy world

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: The Id is what you might think of as the “I want” which is organized around the person’s own needs.

Slide #3

Slide Title: Review of Psychoanalytic Principles: Parts of the self: id/ego /superego

Slide Content:

Kid = Ego = “I will”

Reality Principle

- manipulation of
- deals with what is
- mediates
- comes with language

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: The ego is the “I will” and it is organized around the reality principle which has to do with the manipulation of the real world. The ego mediates between the self and the world.

Slide #4

Slide Title: Review of Psychoanalytic Principles: Parts of the self: id/ego/ superego

Slide Content:

Superego = “I should”

Crisis of early childhood splits the mind into:

- Conscious: okay to think
- Unconscious: thinking produces anxiety and defensiveness: “don’t even think about it”
- Universal amnesia

Oedipus: fear of castration (feminization)

- Phallic theme

Witches: fear of social annihilation

- Raganda
- Snow White
- Oral them (eating/being eaten)

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: The superego is the “I should.” You remember that psychoanalysis posits a splitting of the mind in reaction to an early childhood crisis. The mind splits into a conscious part and in the conscious part is material that it is okay to think about. And the mind splits also into an unconscious part and that is filled with things that it is not okay to think about. Where thinking about these subjects produces anxiety and defensiveness. You remember a child interiorizes a parent figure. When that parent figure is external that parent figure says, “Don’t do it.” But when the parent figure is internal, it says, “Don’t even think it.” The result is a kind of amnesia about one’s own desires. We saw that in the West, the Oedipus crisis is quite important with its fear of castration which you might also see as a fear of feminization, a fear of loss of power. On the other hand, in Bali, we looked at witches and the crisis of early childhood that they represented. And with them, a fear of annihilation or social annihilation. And we saw that with the Raganda in Bali, but also in Western fairy tales like Snow

White.

Slide #5

Slide Title: Review of Psychoanalytic Principles: Crisis of Childhood:

Slide Content:

Redirection of aggression back towards the self

- Balinese witch and dragon film: turning *kris* on oneself
- Symbolic of threatening/punishing the self
- An inner voice that says: if you do that something really bad will happen to you
- Your imagination starts going and you can't do whatever you think you wanted to do

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: These crises, you remember involved a redirection of aggression back towards the self. In the Balinese witch and dragon film, you saw the Balinese dancers turning their long swords, their *kris*s, on their own chest and trying to stab themselves. This is symbolic of that turning of aggression. So once you might have gotten angry at people who are trying to tell you what to do in the external world, but the idea is that you come to play the part of that authority figure in your own mind. You introject that authority figure. So rather than some external figure threatening you with punishment, you threaten yourself with some kind of punishment. And this represents a turning of aggression that was once directed outward back towards the self. You introject a voice that says, "Ah, if you do that, something really bad will happen to you." And then your imagination starts going and you start imagining all the bad things that might happen to you. And then you find yourself inhibited and it very difficult to do whatever you thought you wanted to do. Say if you want to ask someone to dance. You start imagining that you are going to trip over your feet and make a fool of yourself. And it becomes extraordinarily difficult to do what you thought you wanted.

Slide #6

Slide Title: Review of Psychoanalytic Principles

Slide Content:

Repression

- may suppress the desire
- guilt, inhibition, anxiety

How to undo?

- associative nature of the mind and memory
- dreams

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: All of this may also result in repression. Where you actually suppress your desire and become unconscious of it, or you may simply feel guilty, inhibited, and anxious in any situation where this desire is likely to arise. All right, so I mentioned to you previously that Oedipus means “hurt foot.” In the Oedipus story, Oedipus’ feet are injured in early childhood. And he never walks properly. And this is a symbol of a kind of laming. Socialization results in repression, results in the turning of your aggression back against yourself in order to make you a more socialized person, but the result is also a kind of self laming. A kind of being in your own way in many situations. So then the question becomes, how can we undo this? How can we undo repression, so that rather than aggressing against our self, we have all of our energy to attack real problems in the world. One answer is that one can uncover these inner conflicts. These inner conflicts that can be subtle and repressed through dreams.

Slide #7

Slide Title: Freud’s View of Dreams

Slide Content:

1. Dreams:
 - “guardian of sleep”
 - keep you asleep by convincing your conscious mind that you are fulfilling desires
 - unfilled desires can wake you up
2. Daytime struggle between desire and repression
3. Sleep: superego relaxes
 - dreams represent desire fulfilled
 - nightmare: “a little message to the superego”

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: Okay, so how did Freud view the dream? From Freud’s point of view the dream is the “guardian of sleep.” The job of the dream is to keep you asleep by convincing you that you are in the process of fulfilling your desires. Now this is an idea that is in popular culture about the dream. So we talk about dreams come true. Right? The idea here is that dreams, well they are about what we want, they are about desires. But this, Freud believed functioned in a very practical way in the dream. Let me give you a physical example. Let’s say you are asleep, but you have to pee. Well, the job of the dream is keep you asleep, so you might dream of a faucet that was running and that would represent to you in symbolic form that you

were actually peeing. And the message to your mind would be, “Don’t worry. You don’t have to wake up and do that, because it is being taken care of.” Of course, it is not actually being taken care of and probably, eventually that need would wake you up. But many of our desires are less physical and less specific than that and with these the dream probably works pretty well to keep you asleep by representing these desires as being fulfilled.

Freud’s view of our daily life is that it is a kind of constant, low-grade and largely unconscious struggle between desire and repression. All day long you bump into things that remind you of some unsatisfied desire. Unsatisfied because it is forbidden. Unsatisfied because you won’t let yourself become aware of what you want. You can see an example of this in the movie you are watching, *Spellbound*. It is not so much an example of an unsatisfied desire, but an example of a conflict that the protagonist, J. B., keeps bumping into in daily life. You remember that whenever he sees dark lines on a light surface, so the fork marks on the table cloth or the dark lines in her robe, he becomes extremely anxious. And that is because it reminds him of his unconscious conflict. This conflict is about what happened in the murder, but also about what happened when he was a young boy in his relationship with his brother. Freud believed that mostly we repress these conflicts and even the things that reminded us of them during the day before we are even aware of it. But, he thought, when we began to relax and sleep, our superego, too, relaxes. And then unsatisfied needs and desires arise and they threaten to wake you up, because normally we go after what we feel we need. So the dream represents desire as fulfilled as a dream come true, so that you don’t have to worry about disturbing yourself. Now you may say, “Okay, Jeannette, it’s true we talk about dreams that way, but mostly dreams seem unpleasant, scary and anxious. How could they be about fulfilling desires?” Well, the superego threat, whatever it was, those terrible things that were going to happen to you, if you had those forbidden thoughts, they get thrown into the dream too. So you might say there is also a message to your superego, don’t worry the dreamer is being punished and don’t worry, furthermore, because the dream is not really about desire at all.

Slide #8

Slide Title: Manifest vs. Latent Dream Contents

Slide Content:

Classic Freudian view

- manifest = plot & disguise
- latent = real meaning, hidden wish

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: Freud thought the wishes the dream was in the process of fulfilling were disguised, so Freud thought there was a difference between the manifest and the latent content of dreams. The manifest level of the dream was simply the plot, but it was also a level of disguise where the latent meaning of the dream, the hidden wishes, were all confused so

you couldn't tell what they were.

Slide #9

Slide Title: Manifest vs. Latent

Slide Content:

Contemporary Psychoanalysts

- manifest speaks language of symbols
- opaque to verbal mind
- not nonsense
- need to translate imagistic language into verbal language
- Example: Hollan: surface of Limbong's dream of cannibalism a visual metaphor for how he feels, not a "hidden" meaning

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: Contemporary psychoanalysts question this distinction. They think the manifest level of the dream simply speaks a language of symbols. And these symbols are opaque to the verbal mind, but this doesn't mean that they are nonsensical. To understand the dream, one simply has to translate the language of the image into verbal language. So for instance, we saw Hollan's analysis of grandpa Limbong's dream about cannibalism. Do you remember? Cannibalism was simply a visual metaphor according to Hollan for how he felt. For the feelings the dream reflected. It wasn't so much a "hidden" meaning

Slide #10

Slide Title: Manifest vs. Latent

Slide Content:

Versus Manifest = forbidden meanings

- Clue to mystery
- We are all amnesiac
- An existential condition

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: From the classic Freudian view, however, the surface of the dream gives us clues to a mystery. From this view we are like the protagonist of *Spellbound*, all amnesiac. We knew the meaning of our actions, but we cannot remember because of repression. From a psychoanalytic view this is our existential condition.

Slide #11

Slide Title: Dreamwork and Disguises of Forbidden Wishes

Slide Content:

Displacement: meaning transferred from real object of the feeling to a symbolic object

- Father to father figure in *Spellbound*
- Important in normal life, not just dream
- Can be misleading: psychiatrist from *Spellbound*

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: The dream from Freud's point of view confuses the forbidden wish through three processes: displacement, symbolization and condensation. In displacement the meaning is transferred from the real object of the feeling to a symbolic object that is similar. So your feelings about your father might be displaced to a father figure. Displacement is an important psychological mechanism in normal life. So for instance, Freud believed that as we grow up we displace feelings we once had to our mom and dad, a girlfriend or a boyfriend in adolescence, and this actually leads to a resolution of our early conflict. But displacement can be misleading in dreams, because it can suggest that feelings are about one character that really have to do with another character.

Slide #12

Slide Title: Dreamwork and Disguises of Forbidden Wishes

Slide Content:

Symbolization: basic Bodily symbols symbolized by cultural objects

- Knife = phallus
- Hair may = phallus

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: Symbolization represents basic bodily symbols symbolized by cultural objects. This is the classic form of symbolism that is associated with Freud and psychoanalysis. So a Freudian might see a knife as phallic, or hair as phallic. Any object that projects, particularly that projects from the body. Now this may seem strange to you, but many of you probably remember the Biblical story of Samson and Delilah. Where was his power concentrated? In his hair, right? And when they cut it off, he didn't have any power left. He was impotent, castrated in a way. Monks, you may know, shave their heads. In some places, they even shave their eyebrows too. And this symbolizes a relinquishing of their sexuality.

Slide #13

Slide Title: Dreamwork and Disguises of Forbidden Wishes

Slide Content:

Condensation: the representation of more than one meaning by one figure

Man in dream that falls off roof represents both murdered man and dreamer's brother

(See Artwork)

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: The third kind of dream symbol was condensation. Condensation means the representation of more than one meaning by one figure, often a synthetic figure. So in the movie you are watching, *Spellbound*, there is a man in J.B.'s dream who falls off a roof and this man represents the murdered man, but in a sense he also represents the dreamer's brother. It is this association between the murdered man and the dreamer's brother that makes it so hard for J.B. to actually remember what has happened.

Slide #14

Slide Title: Dreamwork and Disguises of Forbidden Wishes

Slide Content:

Puns in dreams: *Spellbound*

- card game with clubs = The 21 Club
- holding a wheel = a revolver

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: Another important mechanism in dreams for Freud was punning. You know what a pun is? It is kind of a play on words and this happens in dreams as well. So in *Spellbound*, you remember, there is a card games with clubs and this actually refers to a nightclub. Right? The 21 Club where the initial argument that led to the murder took place. And also you remember the man in the dream, or the man who was hiding in the dream, was holding a wheel and this was a pun. Because what he was actually holding was a revolver.

Slide #15

Slide Title: How to Discover Disguised Meaning

Slide Content:

Dreams are memories, so use the nature of memory to get back to their source

Free association = mind's peripheral vision

- Retraces unsatisfied desire
- Hampered by repression

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: So if dreams disguise their meaning, how can we discover what they mean? Dreams are memories and represent memories via their associations. And, so in the movie again you remember that in J.B.'s dream, he is running down a hill chased by an Angel. And this actually represents the fact that he was in Gabriel, an Angel, valley. Okay, so again, how do we do it? How do we get back to the source of the memories our dreams are about? We do it through something called free association which you might think of as the mind's peripheral vision.

Slide #16

Slide Title: How to Discover Disguised Meaning

Slide Content:

Dreams are memories, so use the nature of memory to get back to their source

Look for "day residues":

- clues to the moment when the conflict between desire and superego occurred and to what the conflict was
- daily objects/events that re-evoke desire
- symbolic nature of experience
- repression as constant/ongoing

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: In a psychoanalytic dream analysis, one free associates to all important dream symbols, but first of all to day residues. Day residues are things in the dream that remind you of something that happened the day before. And the reason why they are in the dream, Freud believed, is because in that situation, in that moment, a conflict between desire and the superego occurred. So what is in your dream is not going to be actually that conflict, but just something from this situation in which it occurred, because the mind works by association. So that whole situation becomes associated with that conflict between desire and the superego. Again the idea is that daily objects and events re-evoke desire. Not necessarily directly, but sometimes only symbolically by reminding us of some unfulfilled desire.

Slide #17

Slide Title: How to Free Associate

Slide Content:

- let the mind go

- say whatever memories of the day come to mind
- ignore the inner voices of repression
- let mind go blank and be patient
- free associate first to any day residues and then to every important object and character in the dream

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: Okay, so we are supposed to get to what day residues are about by free association. What do you do in free association? Really, you begin by just letting your mind go. Just let it go. And then what you do is say whatever memories or thoughts come to mind. At first, your mind may go blank. This is very common. And you will say, “Well, nothing comes to mind. I am not thinking about anything.” But if you are patient and wait, there will be some thoughts or memories around the periphery of your mind. Often before you can get them out, there will also be a voice that says, “Oh, no that is not what Dr. Mageo meant” or “that’s silly” or “that’s irrelevant” or “that’s bad. I cannot say that.” But what you have to be committed to do in psychoanalysis is to ignore these voices and just go on. They are the voices of your superego. And if you just go on associating and putting down your associations, they will lead you back to the conflict that generated the dream to the day residues that the dream came out of. And then you can also free associate to every important object or character in the dream. And gradually part of it will be a forbidden desire.

Slide #18

Slide Title: *Spellbound*

Slide Content:

Protagonist = an amnesiac = Everyman

Represents all of us because repression is a universal state

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: So once again in *Spellbound*, the protagonist is an amnesiac. And as such, he is a metaphor for all of us from the psychoanalytic viewpoint, because repression is a universal state.

Slide #19

Slide Title: *Spellbound*

Slide Content:

Dream interpretation as regression to the point of conflict

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: Dream interpretation is a way we can regress to the point of conflict just like John Ballantine does in the movies.

Slide #20

Slide Title: *Spellbound*

Slide Content:

Transference: transfer of unresolved feelings from childhood onto a present relationship

- E.g. J.B. getting mad at Constance for pressuring him to remember
- shapes our present experience of the world.

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: There is one more important part of the psychoanalytic relationship and psychoanalytic interpretation. Something that is very likely to occur in such a relationship is called transference. In transference, one transfers unresolved feelings from childhood onto a present relationship. So for instance in the movie, J.B. gets mad at Constance when she is pressuring him to remember. He is not really mad at her. He is mad at others from his past, but these feelings get transferred onto her. Through transference our past shapes our present experience of the world. We tend to see it through the glasses of our past. Transference determines often how we see and experience others.

Slide #21

Slide Title: *Spellbound*

Slide Content:

Good relationships from the past can be the basis of trust

- Psychiatrist telling J.B. to look on him as a father

Audio: [Professor Jeannette Mageo]: One can also take advantage of an early good relationship to establish trust, so that a person is willing to be open and to work on themselves. And so in the movie, the psychiatrist tells J.B. that he should look on him as a father figure. That is that he should trust him. And that he hopes to build upon this kind of transference to form a good relationship with J.B.