The typical contents of Freud's and Jung's dreams

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Summary. Freud (1900) listed many typical dreams, defined as dreams with the same manifest content. Jung (1944) differentiates the typical dream, in the manifest content, and the typical motif, an archetypical expression of psychic core contents and conflicts. From the viewpoint of the continuity hypothesis Domhoff (1996) analysed 28 dreams reported by Freud and 31 dreams reported by Jung (1961), showing that the differences between the two dream series are in continuity with the lives of the two theorists. From the same perspective, the analysis of five dreams of Sigmund Freud demonstrates that Freud himself linked these dreams to significant experiences, events and feelings of his waking life (Schredl, 2008). The main objective of the present study is to verify the frequency of typical contents in Freud's (32 dreams) and Jung's dreams (33 dreams). The research is carried out through three methods: 1) The list of typical dreams in Freud's Interpretation of Dreams (1900), 2) the Typical Dreams Questionnaire (Zadra & Nielsen, 1999); 3) The grid of Categories of Typical Contents (Maggiolini, Cagnin, Crippa, Persico, & Rizzi, 2010). The analysis with the list of typical dreams proposed by Freud (1900) shows that 12% of the Freud's sample has a typical content. With the TDQ 48% of Freud's and 63% of Jung's dreams has some typical content. The third method finds 91% of typical contents in Freud's and 100% in Jung's dreams. The relevance of typical contents in the dream narrative opens a new perspective on dream interpretation.

Keywords: Typical dreams; Typical dreams questionnaire; Content analysis

1. Introduction

In the various editions of "The Interpretation of Dreams" Freud (1900) gradually expanded his interest in typical dreams, defining them as "Dreams in which there is a frequent recurrence, in the dreams of different persons, of the same manifest dream-content" (Freud, 1900, p. 123). Even if the presence of typical dreams in the general population is universally recognised, their frequency in dreams' text and their relevance in the comprehension of the meaning and the function of dreams is still controversial. Typical dreams are not even a central issue in psychoanalysis. Many researches have actually demonstrated that the majority of people remember having had such dreams, such as being chased, flying or falling among others. Griffith, Miyagi, and Tago (1958), Ward, Beck, and Rascoe (1961), Stevens (1995), Garfield (2001) and more recently Nielsen et al. (2003) have proposed long lists of typical dreams. Most of the recent researches have been carried out with the Typical Dream Questionnaire (TDQ; Nielsen et al., 2003; Zadra & Nielsen, 1999), that encompasses 55 typical dreams. In TDQ researches the most frequent dream themes are "Being chased" (81.5%), "Sexual experiences" (76.5%), "Falling" (73.8%) and "School, teacher, studying" (67.1%), with a very consistent rank order across the different samples, in Canada, United States of America, Japan, Germany and China (Nielsen et al., 2003; Nielsen, Zadra, Germain, & Montplaisir, 1999; Zadra & Nielsen, 1997; Schredl, Ciric,

Götz, & Wittmann, 2004; Zadra & Nielsen, 1999; Yu, 2008; Yu, 2011). Some items of the TDQ, however, are very rare, such as "Travelling to another planet", "Being an object" and "Someone having an abortion".

According to Domhoff (1996), however widespread such dreams may be, they occur infrequently, so that typical dreams could not be very important in terms of the general dream life. Some dream motifs, actually, not only are shared by a majority of people, but also they regularly recur within a person. Most of the recurrent themes are also typical dream themes: dreaming of "being chased and pursued", "School, teachers, studying", "Searching for a certain place", "Falling", "Flying" and "Arriving to late" are the most recurrent themes (Yu, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2012).

Recent researches have demonstrated that this kind of content is really frequent in dreams. A research on a sample of 2853 most recent dreams (Mathes, Schredl, & Göritz, 2014) showed that overall all typical dream themes were found in the dream sample, in 58.69% of dreams, even though some themes occur very rarely. The most prevalent typical dream themes are "Flying", "Trying something again and again", "Being chased", "Sexual experiences" and "School, teachers, studying". Another research on dream diaries of 425 participants (Mathes & Schredl, 2014) found the highest prevalence for themes like "School, teachers, studying", "Being chased or pursued" and "Arriving too late". The high frequency (68.4%) in dream diaries (Mathes & Schredl, 2014), clearly indicates that this kind of content is not overrepresented in researches carried out with questionnaires, because of its oddity, but it could even be under represented. According to Yu the content analytical method tends to underestimate the frequencies of typical themes in dreams (Yu, 2015, p. 208): in a sample of dreams recollected from a randomly designated day following sleep 94,1% of dreams recalled by participants from last night showed at least one typical theme in his Dream Motif Scale (Yu, 2012).

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1.1. The theory of typical dreams in Freud

Freud distinguished three different types of dreams contents: a) the contents that can be interpreted through free associations; b) the contents that need a symbolic interpretation, with a translation of some manifest content in an unconscious meaning of the latent content; c) the acknowledgement of the existence of some dreams that have the peculiarity of sharing the same manifest content, the typical dreams. In this case we don't have many dreams' elements that could be translated in a few symbolic contents (mainly sexual, but also about birth, death and family relationships). Conversely, in typical dreams we have few signifiers in the manifest text that can have steady or various meanings. Freud, actually, divided these dreams into two classes: dreams which always have the same meaning (as examination dream), and those which, despite the same or a similar content, can have the most varied interpretations (as flying and falling dreams). In The Interpretation of Dreams Freud (1900) listed many typical dreams: Embarrassment dream of nakedness; Dreams of the death of beloved people; Examination dream; Dream of missing a train; Dream due to dental stimulus; Flying or hovering; Falling; Swimming; Dream of passing through narrow alleys; Whole suite of rooms; Dream of burglars; Dream of being chased by wild animals; Dream of being threatened with knives, daggers and lances. Even if in his interpretations he made reference to more typical contents, for example the feeling of being inhibited, he did not included these themes in his list.

1.2. Jung's perspective on typical dreams

Jung (1963) differentiates the typical dream, in the manifest content, and the typical motif, an archetypical expression of psychic core contents and conflicts. An archetype, according to Jung, can be expressed in dreams in many ways and not only with the same manifest content. From this perspective, the relationships between manifest text and content are different from Freud's proposal, because we could have some typical contents with different manifest expressions. The typical dreams, according to Jung (1944), are characteristic of some relevant and crucial phases of the life cycle, as in adolescence, in mid-life and when one is facing death. In those periods of the life's cycle the dreamer's mind needs a new equilibrium and the dream, with its function of compensation, can give a new mental equilibrium (Jung, 1963).

From a Jungian perspective, Stevens (1995) proposed as typical dreams: Dreams with aggression; Predatory animals; Flying; Falling; Being pursued by hostile strangers; Landscapes; Dreams of misfortune; Sex; Getting married and having children; Taking examinations or undergoing some similar ordeal; Travelling (whether on foot, horseback, car, airplane or ship); Swimming or being in the water; Watching fires; Being confined in an underground place.

1.3. The content analysis of Freud's and Jung's dreams

The continuity hypothesis in its general form states that dreams reflect waking life concerns, waking thoughts or waking life experiences (Schredl & Hofmann, 2003). From this perspective, Domhoff (1996) analysed 28 dreams reported by Freud in The Interpretation of Dreams (1900) and On Dreams (1901), and 31 dreams reported by Jung (1963)

in his autobiographical Memories, Dreams, Reflections. According to Domhoff (1996), even if some differential biases may have operated in the selection of the dreams' reports - Freud trying to support his theory, while Jung reporting his autobiography -, the analysis with the Hall and van de Castle method (1966) reveals differences between the two dream series in continuity with the lives of the two theorists.

Freud, actually, has more characters in his dream reports, although Jung reports more and longer dreams. Jung's dream narratives are filled with descriptions of scenery and objects rather than with people. Jung's interest in nature is confirmed by the fact that he has more animals in his dreams. Jung dreams are also more about members of his family, whereas Freud dreams are more about friends and acquaintances. Jung's aggressive and friendly encounters with males and females are fairly typical, with about an equal number of friendly encounters with males and females. Freud has an aggressive encounter with one out of every four female characters, and almost none with males, and more friendly interactions with males than with females. Freud was a striving person who liked the company of other men and held to a theory that has a negative view of women in general. Jung, on the other hand, was more solitary and interested in nature, and in his passionate relationships with women.

From the same perspective, Schredl (2008) analysed Freud's interpretation of his own dreams in "The Interpretation of Dreams". From the viewpoint of the continuity hypothesis, Freud's dreams clearly reflect the main issues present in his life at that time, his profession and his development of a new treatment method. According to Schredl (2008), the analysis of five dreams of Sigmund Freud demonstrates that Freud himself linked these dreams (as his other dreams) to significant experiences, events and feelings of his waking life.

1.4. Aims and Hypotheses of the Study

The main objective of the present study is to verify the frequency of typical contents in Freud's and Jung's dreams. The hypothesis is that typical content is as frequent in Freud's and Jung's dreams as in general population.

2. Method

2.1. Sample

The sample is composed of 32 dreams had by Jung (1963), drawn from "Memories, Dreams, and Reflections" and 33 dreams described by Freud (1900) in "The interpretation of Dreams". The analysis involved 33 out of 49 Freud's dreams, all his dreams in "The interpretation of Dreams", except for some dreams that are only fragments. Jung's dreams are longer than Freud's. The average number of words per dream in Freud is 121, while in Jung 209.

Even if using dreams in Freud's book could be considered a sampling bias, because "The interpretation of Dreams" introduces a list of typical dreams, we have to consider that Freud's and Jung's dreams have been used by Domhoff (1996) and Schredl (2008) just to demonstrate the continuity hypothesis between dreams and waking life.

Table 1. Categories of typical contents

Category	Typical Content
Gravity (movements in vertical direction)	Flying, falling, dreams of elevator, staircase, swimming; ascent, descent .
Spatial disorientation (the environment is upset)	Passing through narrow spaces; doors and windows; mazes; darkness and light; tunnels, large and narrow spaces, caves, being confined in an underground place closed spaces; discovering new rooms in a house; earthquake, fire.
Attack (the subject is in relationship with an enemy)	Being chased, pursued, kidnapped, attacked; being killed; dreams of police, thieves, escape; of predatory animals; one is rescued.
Examination (the subject is examined and has to demonstrate her skills to somebody)	Sitting an exam, participating in a competition, a test, a game in which you win or lose.
Hindrance (difficulty in controlling tools and means)	Being hindered in one's movements; not being able to do something, after many attempts; incapacity to reach someone; being unable to run; being unable to call for help.
Loss (separation and loss of somebody or something)	A beloved person being in danger or dead; losing or finding objects; abandonment, separation, reconciliation; not being able to find anyone; losing your purse or wallet; missing a deadline or an appointment; losing someone; death of someone you care about; finding money; missing the plane, train, boat or bus.
Nursing (the subject is taking care of a baby)	Dreams of pregnancy, delivery and birth, of the subject or others, even animals; taking care of a small child or a puppy; seeing neglected or mistreated babies or animals.
Sexuality (problems in sentimental and sexual relationships)	Jealousy, sexual acts, courtship, rapes, making love with an unexpected partner or a famous person; being coerced to have sex; your love running off with someone else.
Body transformation (something strange happening to the body)	Loss of teeth, hair, modification of sexual organs, body transformation.
Physiological needs	Dreams of eating, drinking, urinating, defecating.
Nudity and embarrassment (relation between privacy and public, familiar person and stranger)	Being naked in public or scantily clothed; being embarrassed; importance of clothes.
Time	Missing deadlines, arriving too late, e.g. missing a bus.
Performance/Grandiosity	Doing something very well, having superior mental or physical abilities.

2.2. Materials and Procedure

The research of typical dreams in Freud's and Jung's dreams is carried out through three methods:

- The list of typical dreams in Freud's Interpretation of Dreams (1900), with 13 typical dreams.
- The Typical Dreams Questionnaire's with 55 items (Zadra & Nielsen, 1999).
- A grid of Categories of Typical Contents (Maggiolini, Cagnin, Crippa, Persico, & Rizzi, 2010) including 13 categories of typical dreams' content. The previous Grid there were 15 categories, with Cognitive activities and Friendship, that were included for the analysis of waking episodes compared to dreams.

From this perspective the basic idea is that typical dreams are prototypes of content categories. Some categories correspond to a single typical dream as indicated by Freud (as exam dreams), while other groups are more typical dreams (as Attack, that encompasses Dream of burglars, Dream of being chased by wild animals, Dream of being threatened with knives, daggers and lances).

Different typical contents can be grouped in a category: flying, falling, swimming, going up or down the stairs or the elevator share the same relation with a vertical dimension of the Gravity. In some other categories we find TDQ's items that are not in Freud's list (1900). We added Performance dreams (doing something well/badly), Hindrance (it is im-

possible or difficult to do something or to control tools), Physiological needs (e.g. eating), Nursing (taking care of a baby or being looked after) and Sexuality (jealousy, sexual and intimate relationships). Categories are not defined by a single item (an object or an action), but by a kind of script, describing a certain relationship between the subject and the other, also the environment. Dreams are narratives, built on episodes (Montangero, 2012) and an episode is the elementary narrative unity, an event (something that happens or an action) and a reaction and therefore it is logical to define narrative unities as events.

Interrater reliability was assessed through Cohen's k. Two raters coded independently the entire sample of dreams (n = 65; 33 Freud's dreams and 32 Jung's dreams) using the three methods (Freud's list of typical dreams; Typical Dreams Questionnaire; Categories of Typical Contents). We report the mean for each method: for Freud's list we found a Cohen's k = 0.74; for the TDQ k = 0.68; and for the grid of Categories of Typical Contents k = 0.72.

Analyzing typical themes using the list of typical dreams introduced by Freud himself in "The interpretation of Dreams" could be a methodological flaw. This risk, however, can be reduced using the three methods, because TDQ and the Grid of Categories of Typical Contents include more themes.

Table 2. Frequency and percentage of dreams with and without typical content following the three methods.

	Freud	**Jung**
Freud's list (1900)		
No typical dream	29 (88%)	28 (88%)
With typical dream	4 (12%)	4 (12%)
TDQ		
No TDQ item	17 (52%)	12 (37%)
With TDQ item	16 (48%)	20 (63%)
Categories		
No typical content	3 (9%)	0
With typical content	30 (91%)	32 (100%)

Table 3. Frequency of content categories

	Freud	**Jung**
Spatial disorientation	8 (24%)	15 (47%)
Gravity	4 (12%)	13 (41%)
Time	3 (9%)	0
Performance	12 (36%)	8 (25%)
Hindrance	5 (15%)	5 (16%)
Physiological needs	5 (15%)	0
Body transformation	7 (21%)	6 (19%)
Attack	4 (14%)	7 (22%)
Nudity and embarrassment	5 (15%)	0
Nurse	3 (9%)	2 (6%)
Loss	9 (27%)	12 (37%)
Exam	0	2 (6%)
Sexuality	0	2 (6%)

3. Results

The analysis of Freud's and Jung's dreams with the list of typical dreams proposed by Freud (1900) shows that 12% of the Freud's sample (4 dreams out of 33) has a typical content, with 2 embarrassment dreams and 2 dreams of passing through narrow alleys. Also in Jung's dreams 12% (4 dreams) has a typical content, with 1 dream of the death of beloved persons, 1 flying dream, 1 of falling and 1 dream of passing through narrow alleys.

Overall 46% of TDQ's items were found in the dreams. In Freud's dreams there is a mean of 0.61 typical content per dream, while in Jung the mean is 0.72. The analysis with the TDQ shows that 48% of Freud's dreams (16 dreams) has some typical content: "School, teachers, studying" (3); "Being inappropriately dressed" (3); "Trying again and again to do something" (2); "Being on the verge of falling" (2); "Eating delicious food" (1); "Being locked up" (1); "Being tied, unable to move" (1); "Having superior knowledge or mental ability" (1); "Creatures, part animal, part human" (1); "Sexual experiences" (1); "A person now dead as alive" (1); "Failing an examination" (1); "Killing someone" (1); "Seeing a face very close to you" (1).

In Jung sample 63% (20 dreams) has some TDQ's item: "A person now dead as alive" (7); "Discovering a new room at home" (3); "Being chased or pursued, but not physically injured" (1); "Being physically attacked" (1); "Being frozen with fright" (1); "Falling" (1); "Having superior knowledge or mental ability" (1); "Creatures, part animal, part human" (1); "A person now alive as dead" (1); "Wild animals, violent" (1); "Killing someone" (1); "Being half awake and paralyzed in bed" (1); "Seeing a UFO un UFO" (1); "Seeing extra-terrestrial" (1); "Seeing an angel" (1).

The analysis of typical contents with the method of the categories finds a mean of typical contents per dream in Freud of 1.97 and in Jung of 2.25. This method finds 91% of typical contents in Freud's dreams (30 dreams). The most frequent categories are Performance (36%); Loss (27%); Spatial disorientation (24%) and Body transformation (21%).

In Jung's dream the entire sample (100%) is associated with one or more categories. The most frequent dreams are Spatial disorientation (47%), Gravity (41%), Loss (37%), Attack (22%); Performance (25%); Body transformations (21%).

4. Discussion

Freud (1900, p. 88) claimed he had never experienced typical dreams: "To those who wonder why I complain of a lack of material, despite the frequency of these dreams of flying, falling, tooth-drawing, etc., I must explain that I myself have never experienced any such dreams since I have turned my attention to the subject of dream-interpretation". Actually even in Freud's dreams we find typical contents, in different percentage according to the three methods. We should consider, however, that although Freud did not officially label some dreams, for example staircase or ladder dream, as typical dreams, he discussed many dreams listed in TDQ as typical.

If we compare the frequency of TDQ's items in Jung's and Freud's dreams with the results of a research on two samples of dreams, we can see that the percentage of dreams with a TDQ item are similar, with more than 50% of dreams with a typical content.

"School, teachers and studying" and "Trying again and again to do something", that we found in Freud's dreams, are also very frequent in researches with the TDQ (Mathes, Schredl et al., 2014), while "Being inappropriately dressed" and "Being in the verge of falling" are less frequent. "A person now dead as alive" is more frequent in Jung (22%) than in general population, the same as "Discovering a new room at home" (9%). With the Dream Motif Scale, an extended version of TDQ, Yu (2015) found a similar frequency of typical themes: 60% in the most recent dreams and 57% in diary dreams.

4.1. Dream interpretation with typical contents

Our research shows that typical contents are central components of the structure of the dream narrative. We can think of dreams contents coming from two sources: a) memories of daily experiences (day-residues) in continuity with daily life and b) typical contents, in discontinuity with daily life. Typical contents could be considered as prototypes (Rosch, 1978), as interpreters that have the function of giving meaning to daily experiences. From this perspective if I dream of

Table 4. Frequency of TDQ's items in Freud's, Jung's, and other dream samples

Source	TDQ (one or more items)
Freud	48%
Jung	62%
Dreams TDQ (Mathes, Schredl et al., 2014)	59%
Diary Dreams TDQ (Mathes & Schredl, 2014)	69%
Dreams DMS (Yu, 2015)	60%
Diary dreams DMS (Yu, 2015)	57%

my wife and then of an earthquake, the earthquake is a kind of interpretation of the relationship with my wife.

Typical dreams open a new perspective on dream interpretation and we will show an example of this perspective with one of Freud's dream, the dream of jumping the stairs (Freud, 1900, p. 78), putting in brackets the references to typical contents:

"I am very incompletely dressed (Embarrassment), and I go from a flat on the ground-floor up a flight of stairs to an upper story (Gravity). In doing this I jump up three stairs at a time, and I am glad to find that I can mount the stairs so quickly (Performance). Suddenly I notice that a servant-maid is coming down the stairs – that is, towards me. I am ashamed (Embarrassment), and try to hurry away, and now comes this feeling of being inhibited; I am glued to the stairs, and cannot move from the spot (Hindrance)" (Freud, 1900, pp. 78).

In this dream we have four typical contents and we can compare Freud's interpretation of his dream with an interpretation based on typical contents. In his analysis Freud (1900, p. 78-79) finds the meaning of the dream relying on associations and symbolic interpretation, with no reference to typical dreams, except for a reference to the typical content of embarrassment, symbolically interpreted as a disguised expression of a sexual content, a nakedness wish. He links the dream to an incident when he worked late and went upstairs and his fears about his heart trouble. The fact that he can mount the stairs so quickly is an expression, for opposition, of health concerns. The stairs are associated with a patient's house as an argument he really had with the maid-servant of his patient and the concierge about his spitting on the floor of the staircase. In the comment from the continuity viewpoint, Schredl (2010) points his analysis to these current issues in Freud's waking life (work, health problems, interpersonal issues). Freud himself, actually, linked this dream to significant experiences as day-residues. Actually in Freud interpretation there are also references to infantile desires and symbolic interpretations. In Freud's interpretation being incompletely dressed is a manifestation of an infantile desire of exhibition. The servant-maid coming down the stairs is not only associated with a real working situation, but also with an infantile experience. The feeling of being inhibited, a typical dream content, according to Freud, is a reproduction in the dream of the same feeling he had in the situation.

From the viewpoint of typical dreams, embarrassment, performance, gravity and hindrance are ways of giving meaning, e.g. interpreting, some real experiences. From this perspective, the dream could say that the feelings of Freud in relation to his work and his patients could be too grandiose and that he's running the risk of over-evaluating himself, with the consequence of being unmasked, embarrassed and inhibited. It is important to note that "Grandiosity" is one of the major categories in Yu's classification of typical themes (2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2012).

The meaning of the dream, in this perspective, isn't only a reproduction of some significant experience or a realization of a wish, but it is a kind of advice, illustrated by a simulation: if you are too self-confident in your work, you could be embarrassed and inhibited.

4.2. Conclusions

Typical dreams are a fundamental component of the narrative structure of dream narratives. If we choose to describe typical dreams not through single items, but as scripts or motifs, not only can we find a typical content in almost every dream, but we can also usually find in a dream two or more of this kind of contents. The dream from this perspective can be considered as a product of an affective consciousness (Solms & Panksepp, 2012), a symbolic innate device with a central function in social communication (Sperber, 1975). Typical dreams can be considered as prototypes, a concrete image of a member of a category (Rosch, 1978). Dreams are "emotional thoughts" and not only thoughts expressed in images, an expression of an affective symbolization that works through sensory, visceral and kinaesthetic codes (Bucci, 1997; Fornari, 1981). In giving meaning to dreams, typical contents act as metaphors. The comprehension of a metaphor does not need a translation, because the metaphorical meaning is in the manifest content. A metaphor is a natural concept (Gärdenfors, 2000), not only a more concrete representation of an abstract concept (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). It's an attribution, an expression of the position of the subject toward the object (Glucksberg, 2003). The metaphor "Lawyers are sharks" is an affective evaluation of lawyers and expresses the position of the subject towards the lawyers as predators, the feeling of being threatened. In a metaphor you combine two objects and the second one is used as an attribution of the first. In "My surgeon is a butcher" the second term has an attributive function, as in "My butcher is a surgeon", it is "surgeon" that is an attribute.

In dreams putting together two contents is a metaphorical attribution (as it happens with montage in movies). "Association" is between two contents, rather than between a dream's content and a day residue. From this viewpoint typical contents are the basic affective language of the evaluation of daily relationships for the anticipation of future events.

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