

**Dreaming and Development: early, mid and late phase shifts in associative and interpretive processes.<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Dreaming and Development: early, mid and late phase shifts in associative and interpretive processes.**

### **Abstract**

This paper examines how dreaming and interactive processes of dream interpretation reflect progressive development of ego states. We consider the associative and interpretive amplifications of dream process in treatment, with examples from early, middle and end phases of analysis. A corollary is that while dream structure and content may vary along a developmental continuum of treatment, technically, a playfulness in the office, and eventually in dream construction is central to the interpretative process, discovering the dreamer's truth.

We build upon Erikson's mid-century appeal to return to exhaustive dream analysis to learn about dream associations and interpretations *at different eras or phases in psychoanalysis*. This demonstrates a resonance: as ego structure changes, so dream structure changes, which affects ego structure. leading to new narratives linking past, present and future.

Freud discovered how dreams provide a royal road into the unconscious, reveal man's good and evil; how mundane, base metals of dream life can be transformed into precious metals of an enriched inner world. He distinguished manifest from latent contents, using free association, including day residue to reveal latent content. Symbolization, condensation, displacement and secondary revision are creative mental mechanisms, both disguising and revealing the wish. Later, he elaborated: dreams are constructed both from "below," and "above."

Erik Erikson in mid-century<sup>2</sup> lamented "that the art and ritual of 'exhaustive' dream analysis has all but vanished" (Erikson, 1954). Wallerstein considered this paper one of the major new contributions to dream interpretive work (1995). The *via reggia*, the royal road to the Unconscious, discovered by Freud, had few travelers then. Today, it remains sparsely traveled. As esteemed a writer as Brenner considers teaching dream interpretation a waste of time (2006).

The present paper hopes to rejuvenate collaborative dream interpretation by examining shifts in associations and interpretative responsiveness at different phases in psychoanalysis. We take Erikson's observation of a dream set within and reflecting the socio/historical context of the individual to elaborate how

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<sup>2</sup> These two lectures at the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Institute were later published as "The Dream Specimen of Psychoanalysis"(1954). Now a classic, it brought greater opposition to Erikson than he perhaps anticipated. He began his paper admitting that reanalyzing a dream is to reanalyze the dreamer, Freud. But Erikson seemed not to anticipate that his own analyst, Anna Freud, would block publication of the paper in the International Journal of Psychoanalysis (Friedman, 2000).

changes in the inner life will show up as changes in dream report and associations, how this influences interpretative response, and how some dreams may lead to turning points in analysis and a person's inner life, leading to more comprehensive narratives, ultimately linking past, present and future.

In his paper, Erikson carries out two major tasks:

First, he uses the dream's manifest content to gain greater detail of the dreamer's inner life.<sup>3</sup> He concludes, "Dreams (are) not only *wishes of sexual license, of unlimited dominance, and of unrestricted destructiveness*, (but also) *where they work, .... lift ... isolation, appease ... conscience, and preserve ... identity.*"

Second, he explores how the "repeated adolescence of creative minds" requires "alleviate(ing) a persistently revived infantile superego pressure by the reassertion of his ego identity." Freud began to achieve this with his Irma dream and its interpretation, thereby slaking his "ambition of uniqueness in intellectual accomplishment" which was both ego syntonetic and ethno-syntonetic, "almost an obligation to his people."

When we see how much Erikson accomplishes by exhaustive dream interpretation, we listen more assiduously to the dilemma of its waning.

He pleads with us:

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<sup>3</sup> A panel discussion celebrating the fiftieth anniversary publication of the Dream specimen paper (Peyser, 1994) emphasized Erikson's placing dream elements on a continuum from latent to manifest; the ego's response to "and acute conflict or life crises and must repair its sense of helplessness and vulnerability"; and how the manifest dream "reveals the psychosocial fabric of dream life." Levine (1998) emphasizes Erikson's humanistic perspective and the connection between trauma and dream origins. Neither of these papers discuss how a historical dimension introduces a developmental dimension.

“Our advanced technique of psychoanalysis, with its therapeutic zeal and goal-directed awareness of ever-changing transference and resistances ... too rarely, permits the *intellectual partnership*, that common *curiosity* between analyst and patient which would take a good-sized dream seriously enough to make it the object of a few hours’ concerted analysis .... we feel that even a periodic emphasis on dreams today is wasteful and may even be deleterious ... a psychoanalyst can know which dream details he may single out ... only if, at least preconsciously, he has somehow grasped *the meaning of the whole dream in relation to the course of the analysis and relation to the course of the patient’s life.*” (Erikson, 1954) (Author’s italics.)

“...*the meaning of the whole dream in relation to the course of the analysis and ... the course of the patient’s life.*” This phrase hints at Erikson’s third contribution: a dream can reflect a socio-historical moment in a person’s life. If so, then with developmental changes -- in life, in analysis -- there should be changes in dream content and possibly structure.

How do dreaming and the associative and interpretive processes of dream interpretation reflect progressive development of ego states in the life of unfolding treatment?

Several authors have written about changes in dreams over analysis (Bonime, 1991; Glucksman, 1987, 1988; Warner, 1983). Others have elaborated on dream function, structure and implications for technique (Freeman-Sharpe, 1978; De Monchaux, 1978; Peyser, 1994; Grinberg, 1997); or as a marker for termination (Grennel, 2002) that go beyond this paper’s focus. There is a

substantive literature on dream structure in children, beginning with Piaget (1962), followed by Foulkes (1982) and others (Ablon, S. L. and Mack, J. E. (1980); Medici De Steiner, 1993; 1995).

A clarification about “development,” since our task is to demonstrate both developmental changes in dream structure and content over in different phases of analysis and changes in associative and interpretive work.

The term development has at least three meanings in this context. First, the normative process over life showing increasing mental organization, complexity and coherence. Second, ego growth due to analytic treatment. Third, and related to the second, is how dreams at the same point of psychoanalysis both reflect and participate in new developmental events; how the patient “turns a corner” to a new, more richly developed perspective.

For this paper, I focus on development in analysis, although I select one child case to begin.

The first case, using a first dream in analysis by a child, shows how play, dream and verbalization interact over several months’ analytic dream work.

### **Losing one’s legs<sup>4</sup>**

This four and one-half year old Asian-American girl is brought by her

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<sup>4</sup> **To preserve confidentiality**, I have used techniques suggested by Gabbard and Dewald, including changing and adding details, such as family size, ethnicity, position in family and further, without changing the fundamental psychological structure and content of the material.

parents, because she still uses diapers and fears the toilet. The oldest child, she frets over touching things and getting dirty, getting sick; she touches her heart, worrying she will have an heart attack. She announces that she hates her father, wishes he would leave or die.

Niki presented in her first session, while her mother was turning to leave, by pulling off her shoes, socks and dress, announcing, "Here's the Problem!" pointing to her diaper.

Her analysis proceeded with Niki introducing and acting out various characters over several months:

--Stealer the fox, who was trained by his mother to sneak upon the analyst and steal Niki's food;

--Maybeat, a twin, who arrived from Mars to steal babies and consume them, or to lure them into her spaceship to die on Mars, where only babies with 1,000 ears could survive;

---Dr. Idiot, Maybeat's twin, who sat in her swivel chair proclaiming: "Tell me your problems," then interrupting to say: "Time up" or "I have to take a nap," or "Go see my mother, Mrs. Skunk about your problem." Mrs. Skunk inevitably would stink on me.

---Hannah, a fancy model with affected speech, who marries Stealer and kisses him profusely, teasing his mother (me) that Stealer no longer loves me, no longer needs his diaper changed.

---Sarah, one of her more precious characters: a girl of zero or 2, who will never grow up, because she was born that way. While she is precocious -- reading,

doing gymnastics, dancing hip-hop -- she wears diapers, sleeps in a crib, drinks from her mother's boobies every birthday. When I, the analyst-as-baby, am instructed to drink from *my* mother's boobies, Sarah snips them off and flushes them into the toilet. I cry; I'm told to retrieve them ... but the rats ate them.

---And others.

She assigns me various roles -- usually someone victimized by one of her characters. I am to be Pennywhistle's mother and watch helplessly as Maybeat kills Pennywhistle by luring her onto a high wire. Or, I am Pennywhistle and she kills Maybeat, who teases me to look out the window and see my mother -- in a coffin.

With time, the characters become less fantastical, more human. After one year, she presents her first dream:

First, for several weeks, I am a boy baby-sitting his sister. I must tease her by surreptitiously turning down the light. She "rats" on me to our mother.

Then, on one occasion she *makes* me a nightmare, the first dream in psychoanalysis. I, the big brother baby-sitter, fall asleep. I must awaken with a nightmare, she directs me as she oscillates between acting the baby sister and the stage director.

She: Tell me about the nightmare.

Dr. S: (I can't remember; can you help me?)

*It is about a baby sitting on the toilet pooping.*

*Because the mommy and daddy made her poop on the toilet.*

*And then the baby's legs turned into poops and fell in the toilet.*

*And the leg poops went into the sewer and the rats ate them, then pooped.*

*Then the babies died, and the parents holding hands, cry and bury them.*

Dr. S.: (YES! How did you know that?!)

*“Oh, I have that dream all the time.”*

And in fact, we played “my” nightmare repeatedly over months. With repetitions, she becomes less anxious, eventually nonchalant about this nightmare.

What do we make of this dream? What is its function to this child and to this early phase of her treatment?

Some of her associations are recounted above, but she also explains that only boys have diarrhea; girls rarely and only for short times. And boys’ diarrhea leaks down their legs, into their shoes, even come out the boys’ noses and into their mouths. I must act these out.

This is a terrifying dream. She “presents” it in our setting by having the analyst “dream it,” then she reports it, eventually in a somewhat offhand manner. She insists that I must act anxious about this dream: she projects both nightmare and anxiety into the analyst. She observes how the analyst/boy handles this anxiety dream. Over months of repetition, she becomes less and less anxious, even reassuring me.

There are several levels of interpretations over the next few months that we replay this nightmare.

In this anxiety dream, a baby prematurely finds itself on a toilet. Its legs turn into feces and fall off. This is on a spectrum between Annihilation and Castration Anxieties, precipitated (she insists) by premature push towards

maturity. The baby, now becomes many thousand babies, who die. The parents appear, mourn the babies, then bury them without praise.

We agree, Niki and I, that the “anti-wish” of the dream is that babies should not be placed on toilets; then they won’t lose their legs and die. She knows that her father insists that if she would use the toilet, she would be a “good girl.” She also senses that her father resents her for taking his wife away from her (which he expresses explicitly in later parent interviews).

Niki accepts this first level interpretation – being forced to grow up too soon -- readily.

But it is her dream after all, I remind her. She put the baby on the toilet; she pushed for “premature” anal phase maturation. Why would she do this (to herself), I ask after several months?

Over months, we learn that her dream-wish is to bring her parents together. She brings them into the picture after the babies die. This child’s love for her mother is so great that she imagines herself bringing mother and father together, although tragically with her “castration”-unto-death (breaking into feces, eaten by rats, shitted into graves). That is, the child’s “correct unconscious perception of reality” (Searles, 1980) was later confirmed: that her mother yearned for her husband, but could not connect with him; she perceived correctly that her father wanted her out of the picture. This dream is the compromise formation to bring her mother and father together.

Of course, the dream can be a lex talionis for the “wish in my heart” (in her words) that her father would die (as she put it, explaining that she worried that

her mother could read these heart-wishes). The dream can be read as a counter-Oedipal dream; the “Oedipal” tragedy truncated by the death of the babies, the Oedipal “victory” going to her beloved mother. (The child knows that when she was born, her father abandoned his wife for several months, resentful over the baby’s intrusion. The child also reveals that she knows her mother was and remains overwhelmed, resentful and angry over this abandonment.)

This child has significant symptom relief and improved functioning over the course of the dream work; we returned to this first dream later. Yet, she was further relieved to learn from her parents that in fact, her father wanted the child out of his life, that her “crazy” anger towards him (and consequent guilt) made sense.

Niki’s associations and Erikson’s suggestion about looking at the intrapsychic self-representations give us another perspective. If everyone and everything in the dream is some aspect, some part object of Niki’s self, what is she saying to herself and us? Niki begins alone, a baby. She forces herself to give up a part of herself, a treasured part, prematurely. This part is dirty, but losing these legs means that not only can’t she stand on her two feet, but also, she fragments into many babies, all dead. But she gains an intrapsychic couple-representation who mourn the death of “their” infant. She develops a more complex inner life -- holding in her imagination both parents united -- but at the expense of mourning the death of her infancy, because, in part, of a premature push towards maturity: a pyrrhic victory.

Niki feels a taut tension in herself, we discuss over months: as she grows

physically, uncontrollably, as she also grows cognitively, enjoying her newfound competencies, she desperately retains her diapers. In fact, when she has a bowel movement, as she did many times in my office after the first year, she struggles, reddens behind my Japanese rice-paper screen and is relieved when it is over.

At first, this child's dream confirms Freud's view of the simplicity of child dream, but only if we take a first pass at interpretation. As we course through this child's creation and its associations – which this child did over months -- this dream has greater depth, layers, richness. It ranges from the incapacity to be alone (an unseen force putting her on the toilet, resulting in her degeneration) to a tragic Oedipal scene, uniting Laius and Jocasta, but at the cost of their child's life. The child-director, in her associations, changes the ending of the play; sacrifices the child to unite the parents.

The analyst stays very close to the material, using words to help the child sculpt her view of her dilemma and -- at this early phase in treatment -- her painfully<sup>5</sup> tragic solution. The child uses the dream to tell and show where she is starting from and her *only* imagined solution.

During the dream work and associated play described above, not only did symptoms resolve, but also she was described as livelier, more engaging, freer, better able to play. Her anger at her father, however, was her most resistant symptom and did not resolve until he admitted his resentment.

Her work shows the fluid interaction of play, dreaming and verbalization

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<sup>5</sup> “Painfully” is literal: early in treatment, this child described and showed how passing a retained bowel movement felt like a ball with needles embedded.

within the consulting room. In the following three years, the father confesses to his furious jealousy of her, his engaging her in sadistic “games,” and agrees to enter both personal and marital treatments. The dream work, along with the elaborate play, opened up the treatment. Not only does this dream and the work over months represent a turning point in this child’s treatment and life, but also it has reverberating consequences and a clarification and realignment of the family constellation.

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The second and third cases show *how* higher order secondary process thinking about dreams participates in a new narrative connecting past, present and future that facilitates growth.

In Case two, playing, dreaming and talking mingle in the dreams themselves. One dream leads to another, as if, over several weeks, the later dreams arrive as associations to an earlier dream.

Here, by the midphase of psychoanalysis, we have two histories, as Loewald (1989) taught us: first, the analysand’s life history prior to analysis; second, the shared history (including the transference neurosis) constructed with the analyst.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> A constructed history is done collaboratively between analyst and analysand. However, if the analyst unduly influences these constructions, one risk is of creating or “analyzing” a false social self (Winnicott, 1974). That is, one may get “life stories,” but not the structural changes and the analysand’s sense of relief that one has with appropriate analysis of a true self. Of course, we can think of a spectrum from false to true self structures. We hope in this paper that it will be evident that in addition to the analysand’s associations and symptom improvement, it will be evident that the analytic work resulted in structural change.

## **Dreaming an Analysis**

In this series of three dreams, dream one sets the stage for further work; dream two reaches into the past to explain current distress; dream three is her solution to a current dilemma.

Donna is a 29 year old professional, recently married who started her psychoanalysis 2 1/2 years before marriage at her fiancée's encouragement. She can not say why she wants psychoanalysis, but when the psychoanalyst asks "Tell me about yourself," she quiets and a tear runs down her right cheek. Years later, she explains that she didn't feel she had a self to tell about.

She progresses well in psychoanalysis, her marriage is her delight, although she describes a pregenital quality to their relationship. She remains unhappy with her infantile, complaining mother, whom she cared for since childhood, and feels disappointed with her passive father. Ironically, she yearns to put her head on her mother's shoulder, realizing that Donna would have to be twelve years old to be short enough to do this.

She talks about termination before the marriage, then is surprised as feelings about her parents well-up. Her husband spends evenings playing Nintendo: sex becomes rare. As she resolves these issues, she complains that psychoanalysis is only about her problems: she feels she can not laugh or enjoy the sessions.

I ask why not, and she returns with the following dream:

*"I am riding in a bus in Marin [Author's note: a bucolic, hot-tub-saturated county north of San Francisco, near the wine country], away from the city. Next*

*to me is a guy whom I really don't like. My husband's friend. I left my husband behind. I'm not clear why. I look up ... no roof in the bus. Storm clouds loom above."*

She realizes that she is leaving behind her husband psychologically in the course of her psychoanalytic work. While there is a sweet, boyish pre-genitality to him, she is wanting more of a man. She dreams of moving into a realm of greater sensuality (Marin County) with another man. But she feels troubled by this; storm clouds above her, perhaps stormy feelings from which she could not protect herself. She does not address the transference love aspect of the man next to her, representing the analyst, someone to whom her husband had brought. The analyst leaves this for the time being: in fact, the apparent Oedipal character of this dream is modified in the next two dreams. We do discuss how, after her complaint about not being able to enjoy herself in session, she dreams with a sense of foreboding about enjoyment, Marin-bound. She asks herself in her dream: does she have to leave her husband behind in order to move into sensuality?<sup>7</sup>

Her associations prior to the first dream were a projection<sup>8</sup>: that psychoanalysis is a place where she can only bring her problems; no joy nor pleasure. When the analyst asks why she can't bring liveliness into analysis, she

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<sup>7</sup> While there are multiple possible interpretations, we use the ones *the analysand found most clarifying* and which the analysand and the analyst believed moved the psychoanalysis forward, as we hope the cases demonstrate.

<sup>8</sup> Strictly speaking, Giovacchini (1993) might describe this as externalization, rather than projection. That is the analysand found, experienced or created in the analytic setting the environment of joylessness she had experienced in her family of origin.

dreams her first dream, the possibility of sensuality albeit, troubling. She now realizes that she restrains herself from enjoying psychoanalysis (or her inner life) for fear that only by leaving her husband behind can she move into sensuality, or moving into sensual enjoyment might leave her husband in the dust.

Shortly thereafter, she dreams the following:

*I received an anthrax letter. I awoke twice, scared, trying to catch my breath. The envelope was addressed to Richmond. But I don't live there anymore. They pricked my finger -- I was O.K. Gave me meds. I felt tired and thirsty. I was trying to figure out what to do.*

She associates to her day residue: she had spoken to her childhood friend who still lived in Richmond, who had a cold. The friend lives in her old house, and does work with the mail. She was quarantined (during the anthrax scare in the U.S.A.). She is aware that her friend is stuck in a mundane past, lives alone in her old neighborhood: a past that Donna has been able to leave for a present life that is more intimate (and ultimately became sensual).

(More about the dream?)

*I was in a room, a concert, a movie theater? People were standing. There were picnic benches. TV's were on the ceiling.*

(Like a hospital?)

Yes.

*I wanted to lay down. I was looking for something to drink. I wanted to be there. I couldn't stand. I was relieved to lay down. I like being here.*

(Being here?)

*The TV reminds me of the window here. I felt like I was here.*

(You feel as if you were infected with something and need to recuperate here?)

*When you were away for two weeks, I felt I was a mess the last few days. I need this as an outlet.*

*If my parents hadn't raised me that way, how different my life would be. I think about that all the time. I see people on the street and feel they're confident, they have a sense of direction. Then I would do something I love. What I was meant to be doing. Instead, I am all over the place. What is my special thing? I want a family, children.*

(Perhaps your agenda here is to discover what it means to be  
a special person.)

*I don't want to wait!*

In her second dream, an interpretation precipitates further recall of dream content and more explicit transference/dependence pre-Oedipal feelings of missing the analyst during a vacation. In the transference, "windows," represent being in the office and seeing her inner life more clearly. She continues the work, moving from a metaphor of "windows" to explicitly understanding that the analysis has offered greater clarity into her self, in fact discovering and creating a self that she felt was not substantially present at the beginning.

In her third dream, she articulates a wish with both contemporary and childhood origins: a solution to her current dilemma.

*I was walking one of my two dogs, Sweetie, without a leash. She turns*

*around and I see her mouthing the words, "I hate you." No one thought anything of this. I didn't know why she said it. We were walking up hill on the way home. She went into the street and I called her back. I realized that I could pick her up. She liked this. People started leaving and I was alone holding the dog. We arrive home and I feel OK.*

"I have two dogs that capture two aspects of myself. Sweetie is the barking one, she insists on things. Robby is sort of "lah-de-da," like he kind of doesn't care about things, everything is OK with him, he's so laid back, he's so L.A. I think they capture different aspects of myself."

"Sweetie" is a name of reaction formation: when she barks or mouths-off, she is not so sweet. But in the dream, this woman can pick up this complaining part of herself, this part of herself who cannot be leashed, who hates herself, but who will run into the street, endangering herself, perhaps from guilt over hatred. She can protect and comfort her doggie-self, as she wants to be comforted by her analyst, as she wished she had been held in childhood. She moves from her wish from the previous dream -- lying-down and having her thirst slated -- to simply being held in the analysis. This helps her develop a more robust inner life, integrating both laid-back and healthy aggressive qualities. After this dream, she raises the Nintendo problem with her husband: tells him she has better things to do with his hands. Without barking at him, she brings romance back into their marriage.

In dream three, the analysand shows greater clarity about the split in her inner life between her laid-back doggy-self and her aggressive, yelping bitchy

self. The latter (an identification with her mother) puts herself in danger (including her anger at the bitchy mother), until the analysand can gather up this bitchy self into her own arms and bring her to a new home. That is, the patient recognizes that she can integrate aggressive aspects with her laid-back aspects to a more integrated self. After this, she is able to coax her husband into the marital bed. Across the three dreams, she shifts from a (pseudo-Oedipal) dependence upon the analyst (dream one) to pre Oedipal, oral dependence (dream two), to dependence on a more integrated self.<sup>9</sup>

By dream three, she sees her past split between reaction formation “bitchy” self and a more appealing “lah-de-da”, -- the laid-backness she has worked to develop. She pulls these together, comforts the bitchiness and can see a future in a new (psychic) home.

The patient who believed that her sequence of dreams and work on them helped clarify her current dilemmas, her current internal conflicts sufficiently that she could move forward in life. Two aspects of her work were significant to her: first, that she had the “creativity” (as Winnicott put it (1974)) to make, remember and report these dreams; second that she was able to clarify their meanings to herself such that she felt and understood them.

A year after completing analysis, their first child is born.

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In the third case, we note how little apparent work is done by the analyst.

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<sup>9</sup> Dreams building on each other may be an elaboration of Trosman’s (1960, 1963) demonstration that serial dreams of a single night develop one upon the other.

These are the last two dreams in a long analysis: they reflect how much the analysand has incorporated and integrated the interpretative process: her associations include interpretations, with only occasional questions from the analyst. This is like the apparently modest wand-waving done by Zubin Mehta at a concert, only because he has rehearsed avidly and over years with the Israeli Philharmonic.

### **From Despair to Vitality: A Generation's Legacy**

This thirty-nine year old professional, Dr. G., was born in Shanghai, an only child of a Jewish refugee family from Nazi Germany. She presents with two dreams in the termination phase of analysis, which capture the two generations of mourning and despair at the loss of her parent's family in Nazi Germany, despair that was transmitted even in a land of hope.

Her father was an internist from a highly assimilated German family. Her illiterate mother was from a small Czechoslovakian village. The parents met in Shanghai. Lonely and in chronic mourning, they married, then emigrated to Southern California.

To give some sense of development over eleven years of analysis, here are the first two dreams reported in analysis. First, she sits on a stained porcelain toilet amidst debris in an empty apartment with warped floorboards. Her second dream, she is lying prostrate atop an F15 peering into the cockpit. Among other associations, she understood that she thought of herself cloacally: her vagina was a "cock pit" into which cocks could be shoved, or out of which shit emerged. Later, she realized how powerful she was once she could "pilot" her

cockpit. But, her early identification was with Ubu Roi, with shittiness and mess. Further, she understood this image as a perversion, a denigration of psychoanalytic “intro-spection.”

Dr. G. was completing her analysis and dreamt the following two dreams.

*I am in an empty house. There is a grand piano. I am supposed to drag it out myself. I am unsure how to get it out the door. I see the door ajar ... held open with a mattress; someone with a large object is entering. I “realize” that I can take the piano through the door. I tie a rope to the leg and pull it out.*

*Once outside, I look back: the piano is now small enough to pickup and hold in my arms. There is snow. I am walking south on Fifth Avenue, Central Park on my right. I must be about 70th street, because I see the residential buildings.*

Her associations follow profusely.

*I don't know why piano. I don't play it anymore, never did well. It felt as if I were moving out. I know that it makes no sense that just because the mattress holds the door open, that a grand piano would fit. A funny name for the instrument, pianoforte. I guess in my dream, it is grand, kind of forte, and yet like how my parents spoke piano about their tragedies, while I felt them so forte.*

*On Central Park West, there is a building around 68th St. that is full of analytic offices with an Indian restaurant, Nirvana, at the top. I recall when I first went into the building that each floor had a single analyst's office; you could go from analyst to analyst, progressing upwards until you got to Nirvana, I once joked. When I started my analysis, I thought I would have to see that many analysts in order to reach Nirvana.*

*My first visit to NYC, I thought about how many Jews were there, including immigrants from W.W.II. I thought how different my life might have been growing up there as opposed to Southern California: so sunny, so far away from the Holocaust, all the beach babes in California. My adolescent rebellion included bleaching and straightening my kinky Jew-hair. I tried to act like the other beach babes: tits, ass, and no brains. In some ways, I felt more at home in NYC. Yet, I also thought that I might have been caught in a more parochial setting had I grown up in N.Y. In Southern California, I felt so alienated from my parents' experience, past and current: my peers and their parents seemed so sunny in comparison. I felt conflicted, wanting to escape to my friends homes in Brentwood, surfing in Malibu.*

*(More about the piano?)*

*Tying the rope to the leg reminds me of a friend of my father's -- well, really an acquaintance, dad said -- who had survived the Concentration Camp. He had been in Auschwitz and had shoveled the bodies into the furnaces and cleaned out the ashes afterwards. He had recently returned to Auschwitz. He continued living in Germany, now owns many buildings, especially bordellos. He enjoys the idea of a Jew owning bordellos with German whores. Anyhow, I thought of pulling the bodies out of the gas chambers. Even though I know that the bodies were pulled out by hand, I connect the rope on the piano leg to tying ropes to dead bodies in the chambers.*

*I have a patient who played piano. He lived with a woman who debased him for three decades. He talks enviously about Vladimir Horowitz whose wife*

*cared for him after his depressive breakdown. But I wonder whether Horowitz and my patient idealized her: perhaps she also kept Horowitz crazy. Horowitz used to take his Steinway on tours: the only way they could lower it from his West side coop was by removing the windows and lowering it by a hoist. Maybe that's a connection with the rope.*

*(More about Horowitz?)*

*My father almost lost his life to protect his mother. He blocked an SS man from gun-whipping her. It was after that episode that he was smuggled to Shanghai. I think he developed survivor guilt as the rest of his family died in the Camps. When my mother fell ill, my father was painfully self-sacrificing, even as my mother continued to denigrate him from the bedside. You would have thought that he was the peasant and she bourgeois from how she demeaned him. He would shrug silently, but tell me that he needed her to stay alive, that she was a wise woman, even though she did not return his love. I don't think that I could be so self-sacrificing. I think perhaps I am too self-centered.*

*(The snow?)*

*I once went to Tahoe skiing with my closest friend. My parents would never do that as they rarely permitted themselves enjoyment. But I was in this wonderland of snow and ice. We skied all day, then at night, by the lodge there was a skating rink. It was like a paradise with the people skating to music. The ice was lit not only from above, but also with blue light beneath. But there was one area near the edge that was blocked off with sawhorses: the ice was too thin. I wondered how they knew when the ice was thick enough to skate at the*

*beginning of the season. I thought that some tester would skate out to try it. I learned much later that they could tell by the temperature and the number of days of cold. But then, I imagined that someone was brave enough to skate out, drill a test hole. I guess even the romance of Tahoe felt like skating on thin ice: something could give way and I would be plunged into icy depths, like my parents' lives.*

(The piano shrunk?)

*Yes. I just looked back after I got it out of the building and it was smaller. I thought I could hold it in my arms, easier than dragging it. It shrunk.*

*Perhaps that's how I think of my work with you. My heritage is heavy, too large for me to manage. But it is also potentially beautiful, grand, musical. I think I needed to find a way out of my family's house, a house of eternal mourning, to enter a world of my own. Maybe the dream is about shrinking my burdens down to manageable size, so that I can carry on on my own. Looking back, like in psychoanalysis, shrinking the burden of my past, changing it into something I can handle.*

Perhaps this -- what the analysis has given us -- is a good enough interpretation.<sup>10</sup> Let us turn to the second dream to learn how it develops her feelings and thoughts.

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<sup>10</sup> To give some sense of development over eleven years of analysis, the first two dreams reported in analysis were of her sitting on a stained porcelain toilet amidst debris in an empty apartment with warped floorboards. Her second dream, she is lying flat atop an F15 peering into the cockpit. Among other associations, she understood that she thought of herself cloacally: her vagina was a "cock pit" into which cocks could be shoved, or out of which shit emerged. Later, she realized how powerful she was once she could "pilot" her cockpit. But, her early identification was with Ubu Roi, with shittiness and mess.

*I am sitting across a cafeteria or restaurant table from Dr. R. (one of the most accomplished and respected psychoanalysts). It is like the cafeteria at the University (Dr. R. had left the University) or perhaps Oscar's at the Waldorf. He is reading a newspaper, but it is dated 1948. He speaks Yiddish to me. I am pleased, although I struggle to respond. But I feel that I can talk better in Yiddish. I ask what would happen if I criticized the department or the university. He says, 'Ask Dr. \_\_\_\_ man.' I understand what he is referring to and he seems to know that I have already spoken to Dr. \_\_\_\_ man. I know that he was marginalized, lost his secretary and his desk put in the hallway next to the soda machine. I understand the message.*

*Why Dr. R.? ... I was surprised to learn that he was born in Germany, like my father. But he has no accent, he seems so Americanized, but with a strong Jewish identity. I guess I wish that I had had a father more like that. Dr. R. wears his success and accomplishments graciously. No grandiose narcissism here.*

*But I know that the University Chairman treated Dr. R. horribly, once the time for analysts had passed. We were all surprised about how brazen the Chairman, a no-one even in academic circles, disrespected Dr. R. We thought someone as accomplished as he would be invulnerable.*

*I don't get the Yiddish. He doesn't speak Yiddish. And also, I felt as if I spoke Yiddish better than English, even as I was struggling with my Yiddish in the dream. It was my first tongue, along with German, of course. But once I started playing with kids, I spoke English even as my parents spoke to me in*

*Yiddish: still to this day. Ironic, that my English is so sophisticated; my Yiddish is pathetic.*

*Oscar's reminds me of the meeting I had with a woman analyst. It was remarkably noisy and I was disappointed in her. She was so preoccupied with herself, fussed about the eggs not being scrambled properly. I realized that I saw myself as more closely identified with Dr. R. than with this woman analyst. I suppose the same with my parents, closer to my dad than my complaining mom.*

*(What about the newspaper, 1948?)*

*Israel Independence Day. My father seriously thought about moving to kibbutz, but finally decided that he did not want to spend his lifetime working and not owning anything. I think that my life would have been better had we lived on kibbutz; less of the mournfulness than living with two refugee parents from Shanghai. That's when they left Shanghai.*

*I have been reading about Ishmael and Isaac. How brother is set against brother to battle over this desolate land. I feel in the past I have been divided against myself. Odd, I feel: my father from a bourgeois intellectual German background, my mother from a peasant town, her father devoutly Orthodox. I suppose I feel divided within, although lopsided: I identify more with my father's side of the family.*

*I remember this movie by Woody Allen in which a Hasidic father is handing over a tuft of grass to his son, the grass cradled preciously in his palms. The father says, "This is your legacy, my son." Kind of funny, but I feel that way about what my parents handed me: a little tuft of what they had received -- from a*

*landscape of German childhood -- yet a tuft that can grow. I guess I would have liked a bit more territory, sort of like Olmsted and Vaughn's view of Central Park.*

*Maybe that's it, the last two dreams, I mean. I admire Dr. R., who also came as a refugee. I feel as if I have this legacy, either this unwieldy grand piano that I have had to shrink to a size I can handle, or this tuft, this shred of grass that I feel compelled to grown into Central Park. My true legacy is to regenerate something both for myself and for those murdered in my family. And oddly, I realize that I have adopted my profession as a continuation of Judaism, as a legacy to which to contribute and continue. Perhaps this is my way of uniting the division inside me: I realize at times that I am an intellectual like my father's father, his oldest brother; at the same time, I think of my mother's father, a poor Hasid, who dedicated his days to studying Torah. Perhaps I reconcile by making my Standard Edition both my Torah -- a rich textual past -- and my intellectual home, -- an enlightened future.*

The remaining months of the analysis included understanding these dreams as panoramas, both of past and future. She understood more clearly how divided she felt within, dismissive of her mother's background and ability, and idealizing of her father. She also considered further her ambivalence of receiving such a heavy inheritance: to fulfill the dreams of not only her parents, but of her parents' dead relatives. She thought further about how she rebelled against the religiosity of her maternal grandfather (an identification with her mother, in fact), yet also recognized how "religiously" she could be devoted to her Freud. She also talks about her wish to achieve the "Nirvana" (of primary narcissism), a time

when she could feel both the “illusion of omnipotence and blissful feelings” associated with this early period of life (Lasch in Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1985). With these recognitions, there was a broadening of her clinical perspective. She could see how past, present and future can be knit together into an elegant fabric of life.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, we have three examples that show both differences in dream structure and content in three phases of analysis, yet, also show how the associative processes and interpretations -- while shifting with development -- have common core characteristics: an ability to play within the office, within the dream and within one’s developing self.

In 1900, Freud describes dreams as coming “from below,” archaic phenomenon. By 1920 and 1923, he revises this view of how dreams are built, recognizing contributions from above and below. This makes sense, insofar as dream remembering and reporting involves ego mechanisms (such as the mechanisms he first described in 1900), whose overall aims are to preserve sleep, yet express *and* disguise unresolved issues.

Given Freud’s later writing, we would expect that as ego structures (and “mechanisms”) change, so will the ego’s contributions to dream structure, so would dreams and consequently the work of dream interpretation in analysis. But, Freud did not write about dream development in analysis.

Erikson(1954) opens the possibility of thinking developmentally about dreams in his mid century paper when he described a dream as created in the

context of a dreamer's life. If this is true at one point in the dreamer's life, then as that inner life changes, at least dream report will change. If we follow Erikson, to some degree a dream is dreamt by an entire preceding life. To some degree, the patient's entire life constructs the dream. And at times, the dream points to the future ... or possible futures.<sup>11</sup>

This is an aspect of the dream wish: a wish that comes from the infantile past, from the timeless Unconscious; yet because it is refracted through the ego, it may point to the present and future.

Erikson gave us additional tools to enlighten further nooks and crannies of dream life, shedding a brighter light upon the *manifest* content: the spatial and temporal representations, the cast of characters; that is, those aspects of dream content and structure that are built by ego mechanisms.<sup>12</sup>

With Freud's later work and Erikson's thoughts on the manifest content, the dream becomes less evanescent, less filmy, and begins to reveal both more evidence of contemporary psychological life *and* its enduring structures (including neurotic conflicts) that are part of character.

This paper extends their work and subsequent papers on changes in dreams with analysis: we hear how dreaming and the collaborative interactions of dream interpretations reflect the development of ego states as it unfolds over

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<sup>11</sup> The idea of several possible futures is a developmental (cognitive) achievement of adolescence as outlined by Piaget (Inhelder and Piaget, 1958). Analysis can promote structural change to permit the analysand to imagine several possible futures.

<sup>12</sup> By dedicating his entire paper to this one seminal dream by a seminal dreamer Freud, Erikson's paper generated controversy not only because he used the master's dream (to which Anna Freud objected), but also, because some analysts continued to hew closely to Freud's 1900 view of dream origins, rather than Freud's later revisions.

treatment. The examples herein go beyond Erikson's ideas of the value of the manifest dream: we can consider the associative and interpretive amplification of the dream process, such as the relation of dream to play in a child's analysis. But, as stated earlier, there is resonance: as ego structure changes, so dream structure changes, which affects ego structure. leading to new narratives linking past, present and future. We may not be able to prove that extended dream interpretation induces ego change; ego change also reciprocally permits freer internal life, ability to experience and work with transference and less defensiveness which may facilitate greater sensitivity to deeper dream processes. But, from these patients' perspective, the proof was in their new perspectives on their inner lives.

In discussing developmental phase of the dreamer, we understand different domains of "development": we have maturation through life, with increasing levels of mental organization, complexity and coherence; we also have ego growth through treatment, in which dreams at different phases of analysis have different shades in early, mid or late treatment. Further, in the examples given, dream sequences may reflect and participate in new development: the dreamer pivots internally to a new and more richly developed perspective on her or himself.

With a developmental framework for associations and interpretations, what do we learn from dreams about the inner lives of our dreamers and about the process of psychoanalytic technique?

*In early psychoanalytic work, the dream may function as a discovery of*

previously unknown aspects of one's mind. In a perhaps more modest way, each dreamer in psychoanalysis experiences the awe that Freud felt with his Irma dream. The dream grabs one's interest in one's own mind.

Why dreams? Like Winnicott's Squiggle Game (1974), the first dream in particular is a fairly clear distillate of the analysand's view of his or her dilemma, including the narrow, even tragic, future imagined.

But, dreams are also one of our more "independent" inner creations: we bring into our dreams what we are preparing to sort out, without having external, albeit important, figures muddling our inner dilemma such as a husband's, or child's, or wife's, or boss's, or even the analyst's external interactions.

*In mid-phase analysis*, dreams begin to participate more clearly in the interior dialogue: one dream poses existential dilemmas, generating responses in later dreams. The analysand becomes a dreamer whose dreams now work more collaboratively with the analysis.

*Later dreams* may enter the genre of heroic epic. They perform heroic labors, scanning back to earlier psychoanalysis to resolve and integrate early infantile and early psychoanalytic traumata, dilemmas. In the last case, the dream adopts Erikson's challenge to position the dreamer to address her past voyage, her present life coordinates and her future journey, capturing ego- and ethno-syntonic desires, transforming the mournful family myth into a realistically hopeful, creative future.

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