

Dreams and reoccurrence of feelings

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Summary. This note presents the hypothesis that dreams strictly echo feelings the dreamer experienced in recent life. This innovative translating approach has been tested on a series of 42 dreams including 344 scenes and 516 feelings. We show here that for 67 % of these dreams, the correlation with the past real-life is a very certain one. As none of the other dreams contradict this approach, we really can hypothesize that there is a link between the dreamt-feelings and the near-past real-life feelings.

Keywords: Dream, feeling, emotion, continuity hypothesis

1. Introduction

This note describes a report based on the observation of 42 dreams running for 5 years. Although there are some methodological limitations, this synthesis suggests that dreams strictly recur a type of feelings which have been experienced the day before.

In order to visualize this approach, we'll first begin with an example. Then, we'll show that this example is not a particular case but a case that fits with a general principle.

2. Dreams and reoccurrence of feelings through an example

Dreams are not only thoughts and mental images experienced during the sleep. Each dream is full of more or less notable psychological feelings (such as anxiety, enthusiasm, disappointment, satisfaction...) and physical sensations (such as pains, pleasures...). Even when someone dreams he stops, for instance, he is actually experiencing a background sensation of turning a feeling of movement into a feeling of immobility.

Such as in the next example, the important thing is in paying attention to the feelings which are experienced in the dream rather than to the story.

2.1. The dream of the inflatable little boat

"I am in a small inflatable boat with someone else. (Concentration feeling). I feel a strange and enjoying sensation due to huge and distant waves. It goes up and down. When down, I am aware of the next coming of a huge wave and I feel stressed and confident. Stressed because of facing a huge thing and being confident because the

course of the boat is setting such as the wave should be passed. Moreover, waves are distant enough to have the time to place the boat in a good position" Feelings of the scene: pleasure, shock (when waves are coming), excitation (when manoeuvring), getting secured (when up in the wave). This kind of feelings will be called "foreground feelings" as they answer the question: "what are the notable feelings of the scene?" (The question of the subjectivity will have an answer later).

2.2. Reoccurrence of feelings

In real life, still today, when I remind my first career troubles, I remember – and even I re-experience – the same foreground feelings as in this part of dream: the same shock when career troubles were seen about to burst, the same confidence and excitation when the situation had to be managed, the same getting secured when I found and achieved a job opportunity, the same pleasure due to expected success.

Identical were the feelings of difficulties and danger, the feeling that career troubles were distant enough to get my breath back and so being able to attack the next wave (the next trouble).

The dream continued like this: *"The huge distant waves were replaced with small sharp and close waves. The boat was much more difficult to control"*. I felt in danger of being thrown. This sequel strictly recurred the mental turbulences I experienced when I was reminding job failures that happened during the 10 months before the dream.

This dream appeared the night after a discussion about careers. During this discussion I experienced the feelings which have been exposed here. In the real-life, these feelings were not noticed as my attention was kept by the talk. They were under-exposed, like floating about. Nevertheless, such under-revealed feelings have existed and were recurred through the dream.

We'll see now how general is the idea that dreams strictly reflect day before feelings. Let's note that reminding day-before real-life under-exposed feelings is not so easy. They are moments which lasted a few seconds, indeed they sometimes are speed flashes. So, it's like searching a lost key – it's not so easy to review the whole day in order to remind where the key has been put – and that's why it sometimes

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takes a long time to remind the involved “under-exposed feelings”.

Moreover, the notion of “under-exposed feeling” is not easy to get. It is an observational thing to which we are not used to paying attention. So one can be embarrassed with that notion until he has experienced what this notion stands for.

3. Generalization

3.1. Tendentious links?

Our sample contains all the written dreams which have appeared once the approach was clear enough. All of them have a more or less suitable translation, and that is not due to a selection of dreams as there was no selection. Each dream has its translation either because this approach is generalizable or because a translation is artificially built as it is too much expected. So, the fundamental question is to be sure that this translating approach is not the result of a more or less complete accommodation.

3.2. What to focus on to ensure non-accommodating linkages

Let's have a look at a short example. In the “being stoned in flight” dream, I was flying powerfully. During the flight, I was hurt by a stone a little group of bad boys threw at me. There is no doubt that this dream recurs under-exposed feelings I experienced the day before. That day was seen as an especially difficult one and I succeeded in all my actions. I really felt as “being floating on air”. But, one moment, I was told that I was considered as a liar. This accusation touched me and I was surprised with a notable shake, shake to which I didn't pay attention at the moment (that's why it was “under-exposed”). This shake was so particular in its sensation, surprise and intensity that it makes no doubts that the dreamt shake – which was unexpected and notable as well – was the real shake due to the accusation. Indeed, there was something of so identical in the sensations experienced in the dream and in real-life that there is no doubt concerning the echo. In this case the link between the dreamt-feeling and the under-exposed feeling of the real-life is an irrefutable one.

That doesn't mean that all of the questions were resolved. When I translated this short dream, I was in front of a question: does this dream recur the fact that I was told I was a liar (in that case the bad boys are the people who are supposed to say I am a liar), or does it recur the fact that, in the very same moment, I charged me with having made a situation such as I could be regarded as a liar (in that case, the bad boys are a part of I who accused an other part of me)?

Never mind, the present purpose of the article is not to validate a translation but to validate the existence of a link based on feelings reoccurring. As this validation is based on an individual sensing method, we'll first focus attention to irrefutable cases.

3.2.1 *Irrefutable links between dreamt-feelings and real-life feelings*

Although the borderline is questionable, it is possible to talk about exceptional feelings. In this case, the feelings are so particular (original, intense...) that they are not supposed to

happen twice in a short time unless the second appearance is a natural repetition of the first one.

In the “being stoned in flight” dream, for instance, the dreamt-shake and the real-life shake were so characteristic and identical in their heart that there was no way except considering an echo phenomena.

Among the 42 dreams of the sample, 15 of them present such an irrefutable link. Indeed, in the next cases, the echoes are so clear, so obvious that they convince us about the reality of the feelings reoccurring principle. As we are in an observant position, we won't try to explain the reasons of the feelings. We will only emphasis their particularities as their reoccurrences make us believe to the existence of the echo phenomena.

So, in addition to “the inflatable little boat” dream and the “being stoned in flight” dream, one can find:

- 3 dreamt-scenes in which I was at death's door. In each dream I felt terror and despair. The day before each dream, I experienced flashes with the same terror and despair as I was in front of a huge deception. (In real-life, intensive morbid feelings usually don't last. That's why it may take a long time to remind them).
- A dreamt-scene in which I was in space. I marvelled with a special mystic fear and I felt being sucked in. All of these exceptional feelings were felt together in a day before moment.
- A dreamt-scene in which I was in danger of being devoured by a lion. The sensation was an amazing one: stomach contraction, sensation of being near to be absorbed. The same amazing sensation was experienced the day before when I considered a task to achieve.
- A dreamt-scene in which I was fighting. I felt an unusual and very notable letting off steam during the whole dream such as the day before when I was taking it out on somebody.
- A dreamt-scene in which a dog bites me. I felt a serious pinch such as the day before when a torment, due to reminiscence, increased up to a heavy-hearted flash feeling.
- A dreamt-scene in which I took a shower. I experienced a special pleasure of taking the rough edges off me such as the day before when I experienced a sort of mental wash sensation.
- A dreamt-scene in a car where I felt a serious adrenalin outbreak as the car was about to miss a bend such as the day before when I felt an unusual and identical adrenalin outbreak after a blunder.
- A sex-scene with a married mistress. In that dream, I felt a notable and exceptional mix of excitement, triumph, enjoyment and guilty conscience absolutely like the day before at a particular moment.
- A dreamt-scene in which I was eating chocolate while a bombing was expected. An original feeling of respite and enjoyment interrupted a typical anxiety. So was it the day before, when I had very pessimistic prospects (expectation of the shakes of a bombing). I made rid of this anxiety by seeing me in the pleasure I planned for the weekend. That was the respite and the enjoyment.
- A dreamt-scene in which I felt a curious excitation and concentration when I was taming snakes. They sometimes bite me but I didn't feel any danger such as the day before when I was in front of gossips who were criticizing my way of doing things.

- A dreamt-scene in which I was very afraid of an animal (an iguana) that was not felt as supposed to scare me such as the day before when a reminiscence of a little failure (that was supposed to be neutral) brought disproportionate effects which cause an intense scare of the reminiscence.

Thanks to these exceptional echoes of so particular feelings, it becomes possible to believe that dreams can recur real life feelings.

Likewise, there is no talk of accommodation with some other dreamt-feelings which are intense or originally mixed.

As well, it is possible to be sure that common dreamt-feelings echo real-life feelings without any accommodations when, in a long dream, the succession of those common dreamt-feelings perfectly fits with the succession of the linked real-life feelings. That's the compatibility of the framework.

3.2.2 *The compatibility of the framework*

When I write dreams, I distinguish the scenes and, once the story is written, I answer the question of the experienced feelings concerning each scene. These are the "foreground feelings".

So, for instance:

1. Scene 1: I'm skiing with somebody. In this scene, I felt pleasure and I was a little afraid of falling. So, here, the foreground feelings are pleasure and little fear of falling.
2. Scene 2: I stop and a skier nearly crashes into me. Foreground feelings: instability, fear.
3. Scene 3: my colleague says I did wrong. The skier's face shows he thinks so. Foreground feeling: guilty.

The foreground feelings involved in this example are common ones. But we can talk about a "framework-link" when the succession of the dreamt-feelings fits with the succession of the real-life feelings.

It is the case with our example. This dream reoccurs a day before moment when I was meditating on psychology.

1. At first, the ideas were coming easily. In addition to that pleasure, I was feeling a tiny fear that could be expressed by "what would happen if some difficulties appeared?" (That is the pleasure and the little fear of scene 1).
2. Then, some critical ideas began to make me feel uncertain (feeling of instability of scene 2) and finished to block. That was accompanied with a fear: the fear of being discouraged (fear of scene 2).
3. After that, I felt guilty (scene 3) for not being able to deal with the situation.

This particular dream contains 22 foreground feelings running for 12 scenes. None of them depart from the rule of the parallelism in the foreground feelings (identity in the feelings, identity in the orders of succession). That's why this kind of link is a compatible one. Through this "compatible framework-link", the feelings reoccurring principle is not supported, but it is not contradicted.

3.2.3 *Scene-links*

In fact, it is possible to go further. In our example, for instance:

1. I'm first skiing with somebody. In the real life, at first, while I was meditating, the development of the ideas seemed obvious, easy. The result was a feeling of slide without any convulsions and with the sensation of absorbing criticisms such as the ski sensation of slide and bumps absorbing. In addition to this, I felt as if I were accompanied by a self-sufficient strength: the part of I who generates intuitions.
2. Then, I stop and a skier nearly crashes into me. When the easy development of ideas ceased, I felt a stop and I felt a part of I whispering something like "you're not likely to clarify anything". That made me feel near a crash, a collapse of strength.
3. After that, my colleague says I did wrong and the skier's face shows he thinks so. In this guilty moment, I didn't deal with a tormenting culpability. It was just like being confronted with a verbal observation.

So, the reading of the story may revive background feelings – such as the sensations of skiing, of being with someone else, of stopping – which are connected to real-life sensations. When it works like that all along a dream, then, the framework link becomes irrefutable.

In our example, 10 scenes out of 12 suit like that. How can an honest translator worry on an accommodation in such a case, especially when it is far from being the only case?

So, scenes and real-life moments are also connected through background feelings. This is the "scene-link" and that makes it possible to reach a much more deep level.

4. Results of our pilot study

Our sample contains all the written dreams which have appeared once the approach was clear enough. There has been no selection. As a first translation of a dream usually takes me one day, I write a dream only when I know I have the whole day absolutely free. That's why I have got 42 typical dreams and a lucid dream in 5 years. All of them have a more or less suitable translation.

Regarding the 42 typical memorable dreams there are:

- 516 foreground dreamt-feelings from which 470 (91 %) provide a compatible or an irrefutable link with a day before real-life under-exposed feeling.
- 344 scenes from which 242 (70 %) provide a correct scene-link.
- 31 dreams (74 % of the dreams) refer to a single incitement moment.
- 28 dreams (67 % of the dreams) refer to real-life moments through exceptional or irrefutable foreground links. (That means that there is no doubt concerning the incitement to dream moment).

Of course, we have to be careful due to the quality of the measurement. Some borderline questions have happened and the answers were certainly not always exact. We can't exclude that eyes have sometimes judged as they wanted to see. Nevertheless the trends are eloquent:

- 67 % of the dreams are linked to an incitement moment through an exceptional or irrefutable foreground link. There is a very little doubt concerning the type of links. That means that there is a connection between dreams and day before real-life moments.
- 18 dreams (43%) advocate, through all of the details, the feelings reoccurring principle and 12 dreams (28%) were compatible with this principle (in this case, a real life story tallies, within all of the details, with the dream but it is not eloquent enough to make sure of the uniqueness of the translation).

The rest was questionable due to partial misunderstanding or lack of memories. All the more that regarding the 12 questionable cases, it's worth noting that:

- i. 5 of them are questionable because of lack of memories. In that case, we can't conclude in a way or in the opposite one. In fact, these dreams could have been withdrawn from the sample.
- ii. 2 of them were near to be correct.
- iii. 5 of them are questionable due to partial miscomprehension in the dream-links. That can be explained by a lack of knowledge.

A single incitement moment has been identified in 74 % of the dreams. The 26 % missing could be a consequence of the feelings reoccurring principle itself. According to this principle, under-exposed feelings may re-appear. Typically, under-exposed feelings occurred during the action and reoccurred later in the real-life when reminding the action (such as with the dream of the inflatable little boat). So it may happen – and, in fact, it has happened in at least half of the so-called non-single incitement moments – that under-exposed feelings reoccur in the real-life, hence combinations.

5. Conclusion

We can presume that dreams are linked to moments of the near-past real-life through the feelings. Of course, it is to be confirmed by other studies.

The existence of such a link would bring many theoretical and practical consequences. Probably, the first of them is that studies of dreams would be able to be supervised by an observable criterion: the feelings. That would mean that studies of dreams would enter a new experimental field, although it will be psycho-centred.