

An Enriched Conception of Dream Metaphor

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Examination of the analogy between dreams and literature within a neoformalist perspective indicates that current accounts diminish the importance of the other major literary tropes, such as metonymy and irony, and fail to appreciate the importance of interactive theories of metaphor. By contrasting collective and composite dream images (Freud, 1900/1953), the reductionistic nature of current conceptions of dream metaphor becomes evident. An alternative, based on composite dream images, substantiates States (1988) characterization of the analogy between literature and dreaming. A method of dream analysis is introduced that identifies central themes within the dream, independently of dreamer associations, and specifies the expressive devices that provide defamiliarizing transformations of those central themes. Preliminary explorations using this method indicate the importance of identifying the defamiliarizing transformations of composite dream images in any attempt to understand their effects, especially as these become evident in impactful dreams. (Sleep and Hypnosis 1999;1:112-121)

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For several reasons, the analogy between literature and dreams is among the most persistent themes in contemporary dream studies. First, literature is a construction of the creative imagination. The novel representation of familiar forms in dreaming also seems creative in some sense of that fickle term. Second, literature is the narrative portrayal of how one thought, action, or event leads to another. Dreams similarly possess the structure of reasonably well formed stories. Third, literature is richly laced with figurative expressions, such as metaphor and metonymy. Dreaming also seems to participate in the processes that shape these familiar tropes. So, the analogy between literature and dreams is tantalizing and a potential counterpoint to the biological and psychological reductionism pervading modern dream studies.

However, in an era laced with post-modern commentary, there is something profoundly problematic about the proposed analogy between dreams and literature. The analogy has become clouded by theories of literature that ardently deny there is anything distinctive about

literary texts. As Terry Eagleton (1) puts it:

Anything can be literature, and anything which is regarded as unalterably and unquestionably literature -Shakespeare for example- can cease to be literature. Any belief that the study of literature is the study of a stable, well-definable entity, as entomology is the study of insects, can be abandoned as a chimera ... Literature in the sense of a set of works of assured and unalterable value, distinguished by certain shared inherent properties, does not exist. (p. 9)

If literature has no distinctive identity, if there is no such thing as literariness, then what becomes of the analogy between dreams and literature? Does dreaming, like literature, simply become one more domain for the operation of an historically relative network of conventions and ideologies? Do studies of dreaming, like studies of literature, become subject to an historicism that constantly and relentlessly deconstructs their guiding social and political interests?

Although studies of dreaming might be considerably enriched by historical scholarship, scholars and researchers interested in the analogy between dreams and literature have not thoroughly explored the implications of 20th

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century shifts in literary theory from Formalism, to Structuralism, post-Structuralism, and Deconstructionism. There may still be reason to do so even though the history of the analogy of dreams and literature is not the same as the history of literary theory.

From Mythopoesis to Neo-Formalism

During most of this century, conceptions of the analogy between dreams and literature have been mythopoetic. Primarily narratological in their efforts, scholars and researchers tried to clarify how the most primal stories in collective or personal memory were recreated in dreams and literature. The abiding notion was that literature and dreams create their endlessly renewable forms by transforming a common repertoire of phylogenetically or ontogenetically primal plot patterns. Whether Appollonian or Dionysian, Promethean or Oedipal, obsessive or hysterical, comic or tragic, scripted or archetypal, a legacy of common plot patterns, inherited with varying degrees of supposed fixedness, were rediscovered in dreams and literature. With roots in 19th century scholarship, mythopoetic characterizations of dream narratives were initiated by Sigmund Freud, Otto Rank, Carl Jung, and their successors, while mythopoetic literary theory was offered by Robert Graves, Maud Bodkin, Northrop Frye, and others.

In contrast, presentations of the analogy between dreams and literature during the past three decades have offered a neo-formalist alternative. Rather than focusing on transformations of primal plot patterns, these theories emphasize the transformations of experience that become manifest in and through figurative expressions, especially through the major literary tropes such as metaphor and metonymy. At least in principle, the literary tropes can alter the experience of any plot pattern whatsoever. In formalist literary theory, such as represented by the Russian formalists beginning in the second and third decades of this century, the literary tropes were among a broader array of literary devices that define literariness and constitute the distinctive transformative potential of literary texts. Similarly, neo-formalist discussions of the analogy between dreams and literature, such as those by George Lakoff, Bert States, and others, address whether the processes by which these literary devices have their effects also are among the modes of experience that constitute the transformative potential of dreams. To clarify that transformative potential, it is useful to review the original formalist enterprise.

The Russian formalists, such as Viktor Shklovsky and Roman Jakobson, and members of the Prague Circle, such as Jan Mukarovsky, originally proposed that literary texts differ from non-literary ones in their manner of language use. Literary texts are characterized by an organized array of devices, departures from ordinary language use at the phonetic level (e.g., alliteration, assonance), grammatical

level (e.g., ellipsis, repetitive phrase structure), and semantic level (e.g., metaphor, metonymy). These literary devices purportedly have in common their capacity to defamiliarize the referents of a text, to make the familiar strange, to make the stone stony, as Shklovsky put it (2). For example, in Theodore Roethke's poem, *Dolour* (see 3), two closely related metaphors challenge our familiar conception of common desktop tools:

I have known the inexorable sadness of
pencils, Neat in their boxes, dolour of pad
and paperweight.

By attributing sadness and then dolour to inanimate objects, the reader is offered a fresh characterization of these common office items, and the alliterative repetition of /p/ sounds in the second line gives a soft, deflating accent to their melancholy stillness.

According to neo-formalist proposals, dreams participate in the same matrix of defamiliarizing devices. For example, when a four-year old child says upon awakening from REM sleep, I was asleep and in the bathtub (4), the dreamed conflation of bed and bathtub is plausibly compared with a metaphoric statement that dissolves familiar category boundaries: This bathtub is a bed. Moreover, the dreamed conflation is a bemusingly fresh conception of the bathtub as a place to recline and rest. Or, consider the example of a young woman who dreams that, during preparation for a first anniversary re-enactment of her wedding ceremony, she cannot find her wedding dress (5, p. 179). The wedding dress is plausibly compared with a metonymic expression in which an object needed for her anniversary celebration represents prior ceremonial promises of a fulfilling marriage. And, this metonymic substitution of part for whole accentuates the failure to find fulfillment of those wedding promises: My wedding dress is missing is tantamount to The promised fulfillment in my marriage is missing. Or, as another example, consider the young man who experiences a recurrent nightmare in which, as he puts it, I'm chased by dogs through the forest (6). The homophonic resemblance between I am chased and I am chaste adds captivating sexual connotations to the virtue that is being safeguarded by his flight.

The scope of the neo-formalist argument about dreams is in dispute. Some have argued that dreaming in general possesses the defamiliarizing capacity alluded to in the preceding examples; others, including myself (7), would argue that dreams only sometimes possess that transformative potential. Of the myriad texts that we read, only some are literary and have the exceptional capacity to defamiliarize our familiar conceptions of life events; similarly, among the many dreams that fill our nights, only some have comparable defamiliarizing and transformative

effects. We have habitually obscured this possibility by mundanizing the literary tropes, especially metaphor, so that their referential structure seemingly is manifest in all dreams. By doing so, we have homogenized dream experiences and the processes that shape them; correspondingly, in our interpretive efforts, we have often forfeited their transformative depth. To substantiate this possibility, first I want to comment on metaphor, the literary trope that has most often been implicated in discussions of the analogy between dreams and literature.

The Limits of Metaphor

Among the array of devices described in formalist literary theory, those invoked in discussions of the analogy between dreams and literature seldom range beyond metaphor and metonymy. In part, this constraint can be traced to Jakobson's (8) influential argument for the primacy of two generic linguistic principles. By his account, metaphor is the vehicle for representing resemblance, such as that between flame and passion, and metonymy is the vehicle for representing contiguity, such as that between wing and bird. As suggested by Jacques Lacan (9), the dichotomy between metaphor and metonymy converges with the language of the unconscious in Freud's account of the dreamwork, specifically, in his description of condensation and displacement. The language of condensation, such as in the bathtub-bed, captures the root process in metaphoric thought; like condensation, metaphor might be called a resemblance-seeking mode of experience. The language of displacement, such as in the representation of marriage promises by wedding dress, captures the root process in metonymic thought; like displacement, metonymy might be called a context-seeking mode of experience.

Although it is not always possible to trace the influence directly to Jakobson, Lacan, or Freud, metaphoric and, to a lesser extent, metonymic modes of experience are given precedence in most contemporary discussions of the analogy between dreams and literature. Sometimes discussion of these modes of experience takes what might seem an unexpected turn: metaphor is given a privileged position at the expense of metonymy. Kugler (10), for example, presents metaphor as the voice of imagination in poetry and dreams, whereas metonymy is the linear syntactical language of propositional consciousness. Kugler's reading of Jakobson's distinction between metaphor and metonymy sharply contrasts with Lacan's, for whom both metaphor and metonymy were understood as literary tropes, as the figurative voices of the unconscious. Consequently, for Kugler, as well as for Hunt (11) whose perspective is similar, the language of metaphor remains the virtually exclusive focus of the analogy between literature and dreams.

More often, the language of metaphor is given priority,

while metonymy is cast in a supporting role. According to Lakoff (12), for example, dreaming is a form of thought within which conceptual metaphor provides expression to whatever is experienced there (p. 87); when Lakoff invokes metonymy, it is only to help map the source domain onto the target domain of a conceptual metaphor. Similarly, although Calvin Hall (5) includes both metaphor and metonymy as modes of expression for the dreamer's conception of referent objects, metaphor is clearly most prominent in his examples. On the other hand, Hall, like other inheritors of the mythopoetic emphasis, often uses the term symbol in a manner that obscures his tropological analyses.

In general, in their treatment of the analogy between dreams and literature, Kugler, Hunt, Lakoff, and Hall regard metaphor as the queen of the tropes, the primary language of the imagination. Richard Jones (13), who is perhaps most unequivocal about this coronation, summarily says that a dream on its face is an effortlessly and un-self-consciously produced series of incomplete metaphors connected by a story-line (p. 88). My objection to this perspective is not simply that the other major tropes (synecdoche, metonymy, and irony) are missing from these analyses, although I do regard States (14) attempt to include all the major tropes as the most thorough account of the analogy between dreams and literature in contemporary studies. Instead, my objection begins with these authors' analyses of metaphor *per se*.

The first major difficulty is that dream metaphors are usually presented as signifiers, that is, as expressive forms referring to something separate from themselves. Roughly speaking, the child's bathtub is regarded as metaphorically referring to her bed. This conception of metaphor has two unfortunate limitations. First, it fails to capture the performative process by which a vehicle and topic interact to constitute a metaphor (cf. Richards, Black, Beardsley). Second, by failing to capture such interaction, this theory of metaphoric reference fails to explain a dream metaphor's novel, defamiliarizing force. To see how this might be so, it is useful to review Freud's (15) discussion of condensation. If, as Lacan suggests, condensation is analogous to metaphor, it may help to recall that Freud described two forms of condensation proper. As it turns out, each suggests a different model of how dream metaphors function.

First, to form a collective image, two or more similar elements in the dream thoughts are represented by a dream element that is physically identical to one of them. One element, A, within the dream, refers to one or more elements exterior to the dream, B and C. For example, in Freud's specimen dream, the image of Irma represents Irma, of course, but also another of Freud's adult patients, one of his young patients, his eldest daughter, and his wife (p. 399). On the other hand, to form a composite image, two or more similar elements in the dream thoughts are fused to

form the dream image; the physical appearance of the dream image combines features of the several figures whose similarities are being represented. In this case, A, B, and C are all partly -but perhaps vaguely- present in the dream. So, in another of Freud's dreams, the figure of a man with a yellow beard represents Freud's friend, his uncle, his father, and himself -but it does so by combining the features of these bearded faces into one slightly blurred, graying, composite image (p. 400).

For many authors, whether deliberately or not, the collective image seems to suffice as the dream analogue for literary metaphor. In general, if A and B resemble each other, and if the condensation mechanism incorporates A but not B into the dream, these authors are willing to suggest that A metaphorically represents B. So, when Jones (13) describes a dream in which the dreamer's daughter says, *Mother, there is a bear behind you. Run!*, that outcry metaphorically refers to a time when the dreamer's daughter urged her mother to divorce her husband (p. 90). Or, when Lakoff (12) describes a dream in which the dreamer says, *I m blind, I m blind!*, that exclamation metaphorically represents the dreamer saying to himself, *I m ignorant, I m ignorant* (p. 89). In both of these examples, there is a gap, a separation between the metaphoric vehicle and its topic. Two aspects of this separation stand out. First, just as in a collective image, the metaphoric vehicle, such as the dreamer's exclamation, *I m blind, I m blind!*, is an explicit presence in the dream and the topic, *I m ignorant, I m ignorant!*, is an absence that is only implicitly -or unconsciously- present. Second, the relation between the metaphoric vehicle and its topic is unidirectional. The metaphoric vehicle, the dreamer's exclamation, is about the topic, i.e., about his self-perceived ignorance, and that relation is not reciprocal.

This separation is not diminished by the most commonly mentioned indicator of expressive power among metaphor theorists: the plurisignificance of the dream image (cf. 14). Lakoff (12), for example, suggests that, ... especially powerful dreams have multiple meanings (p. 89). Whatever that expressive power is, it is independent of the separation to which I am referring. On the model of the collective image, it makes no difference to add another metaphoric topic so that A metaphorically represents both B and C. If the dreamer's exclamation, *I m blind, I m blind!*, metaphorically refers to his saying to himself, *I m impotent, I m impotent*, as well as *I m ignorant, I m ignorant*, the relations between the metaphoric vehicle and the now multiple referents are unchanged; they remain related as presence and absence, and they remain related through unidirectional aboutness.

If models of dream metaphor were analogous to Freud's conception of the composite image rather than to his conception of the collective image, the result would be very different. The separation between a metaphoric vehicle and

its topic would be dissolved. What happens when, A and B resemble each other and combine to create a composite dream image? Does A metaphorically represent B or does B metaphorically represent A? Consider the following dream narrative, described by Hall (15), which may help to clarify what is different about this model of dream metaphor:

I got out of bed and went into the bathroom and attempted to turn on the water faucet. I turned and turned but no water came out. I then decided to call a plumber. Soon afterwards the door opened and an individual dressed in coveralls approached me. Upon close examination, I discovered the plumber was female. I scoffed at the idea of a lady plumber, but unruffled she went to the basin, turned the faucet, and water immediately flowed. (p. 113)

Since this dream ended in a nocturnal emission, Hall felt confident that the faucet metaphorically represented the dreamer's conception of his penis on the night of February 22, 1948 (15; p. 114) and that it represented the dreamer's purely mechanical conception of sex (5; p. 177). Hall is clearly invoking a model in which dream metaphor is like the collective image: the faucet, a dream presence, metaphorically refers to the dreamer's penis, an implicitly present dream absence.

But States (18) has provided an alternative interpretation of this dream according to a model that treats dream metaphor much like a composite image. States does not dispute that the dream has sexual connotations. However, he suggests that both a plumbing scenario and a sexual scenario are present in the dream, creating a composite scenario that is, in his phrase, a double-agent. When he reads this dream as he would a literary text, it appears that:

The precise nuance of sexual encounter that was on the dreamer's mind that night ... involved the need for sexual release, rather than, for example, the titillation of seduction or the pleasure or frustration of the sexual act itself ... Skillfully the dream harnesses the world of public service to the private needs of the body without so much as a whisper of sex. (p. 75)

In this context, the composite image of faucet and penis provides bathroom equipment that can be turned on only by a woman. The full complexity of this image is generated, as States puts it (19), through the confrontation between apparently incompatible meanings. While States language of confrontation suggests active competition (p.

147) and Freud's language of superimposition suggests passive filtration (p. 219-220), both are concerned with the composite images that result from the interaction between meanings from incongruent domains (20).

So, for Hall's decorously turned on dreamer, the separation between metaphoric vehicle and topic is dissolved. Both the plumbing scenario and the sexual scenario have a presence in the dream, although each is altered by the absence of some familiar attributes, such as the typical maleness of the plumber and the distinctive bodily form of the male sexual organ. Also, the aboutness relation is dissolved. It is not obvious that, in any way, the plumbing scenario metaphorically refers to a sexual one. Instead, both scenarios seem to participate in a dreamed decomposition of familiar meanings on the way toward composition of novel and less familiar variations on their somehow similar themes. In this respect, the composite image model of condensation captures the resemblance-seeking nature of dream metaphor. Moreover, it seems to capture the deviating, defamiliarizing, transformative potential of dream metaphor.

There are two points about the faucet dream that warrant further consideration. First, States' characterization of the dream metaphor, like the composite image model of condensation, remains faithful to the full complexity of the manifest dream. In contrast, Hall's characterization of the dream metaphor, which is analogous to the collective image model of condensation, does not. States' reading captures the tension between the sexual and plumbing scenarios in a manner that is simply missed when the dream is interpreted as being about the dreamer's equipmental conception of his sexuality. More specifically, Hall's interpretation misses the sense in which this dream is also about the dreamer's sexual conception of his sociality. The dreamer conceives of public service activities as cloaked sexual encounters, and he conceives plumbing as a subtly sexualized occupation. In this sense, Hall's interpretation is psychologically reductionistic; it reductively misreads the bi-directional influences that constitute composite imagery as the unidirectional referential relation of collective imagery.

In this critique, I am not concerned about the biological reductionism that also is inherent in the identification of sexuality as the referent of the plumbing metaphor. Hall's interpretation would be reductive even if he thought that the faucet metaphorically referred to the fountain of youth. Instead, I am concerned that Hall sacrifices the complex and expressive novelty of composite imagery by invoking a mode of interpretation suited to the referential language of collective dream imagery. Also, I am not primarily concerned that this form of interpretation might deaden the dreamer's experience of the dream for therapeutic purposes. Rather I am concerned that this form of interpretation might be therapeutically flat precisely because it

misunderstands the dream, both how it was formed and the full complexity of its resulting imagery.

My second point is that this dream announces a shift to the composite image model of metaphor in a manner to which neither Hall nor States draws attention. That announcement is in the phrase, upon close examination. Prior to that phrase in the dream report, the dreamer referred to the plumber as an individual dressed in coveralls. Also, prior to that phrase, the dream report is a well-formed narrative without particular interest. In fact, it is as mundane as the representative dreams typically reported after systematic awakenings from REM sleep in the sleep laboratory (e.g., 4,20):

I got out of bed and went into the bathroom and attempted to turn on the water faucet. I turned and turned but no water came out. I then decided to call a plumber. Soon afterwards the door opened and an individual dressed in coveralls approached me.

This is a rather familiar go-to-bathroom-find-faulty-faucet-call-plumber script, much as Foulkes (4) would emphasize. And, except perhaps for implicit frustration with the faulty faucet (I turned and turned), this narrative is disappointingly flat. But then that key phrase, Upon close examination, suggestive of a visual reorientation within the dream, marks a transition in dream structure:

Upon close examination, I discovered the plumber was female. I scoffed at the idea of a lady plumber, but unruffled she went to the basin, turned the faucet, and water immediately flowed.

After the transition, there is novelty worth scoffing at: a female plumber. And, after the transition, within the familiar go-to-bathroom-find-faulty-faucet-call-plumber script, unexpected erotic connotations emerge during the repairs. Our research (21,22) indicates that impactful dreams regularly include visual reorientations of the kind just described. Impactful dreams, then, may provide a unique opportunity to examine these transitions toward defamiliarizing imagery composites.

Defamiliarizing Transitions in Dreams

Dreams that influence thoughts and feelings after awakening, independently of deliberate interpretive efforts, are likely to include rather distinct visual reorientations. In some instances, these reorientations occur as gaze adjustments within a dream scene: aphids, when examined more closely, become spiders looking a little like beetles; threatening snakes, when examined more closely, become

colorfully peaceful companions; etc. In other cases, these reorientations are complete scene shifts: action within a dingy hotel in Alberta suddenly becomes action within a vacation hotel in France; action within a narrow bathroom suddenly becomes action within a dimly lit living room; etc. In still other cases, these reorientations are marked by the intrusion of previously absent objects, settings, or characters: an elevator suddenly has an extra door; a character suddenly has a knife in his hand; etc.

There is independent evidence that these reorientations in dreams are associated with phasic events, such as the middle ear muscle movements, the transient eye muscle potentials, and the eye-movements that occur during either REM or NREM sleep (23-27). There is also evidence that such reorientations typically involve intra-class transformations (28), that is, aphids become spiders, and hotels of one kind become hotels of another kind, but aphids do not become hotels. And, there is some evidence that these reorientations within the dream narrative constitute transitions toward greater vividness, emotionality, and dramatic complexity (29).

Perhaps these dream discontinuities are metaphoric transitions in dream narratives; that is, perhaps they are psychobiologically mediated shifts toward the defamiliarizing novelty inherent in composite imagery. We have recently begun to examine this possibility more systematically. In this section I will demonstrate our approach by considering in detail a dream, reported by States (18), that clearly presents defamiliarizing dream transitions:

I am in a narrow bathroom with Mrs. K., the department secretary. We are apparently making a curtain for the window by putting four evenly spaced tacks into the wall, nowhere near the window itself, on a precise horizontal axis. It is not clear why the precision is necessary or what departmental function our work will serve, but she assures me that it is always done this way. I measure the space and put in the last tack, and the bar fits snugly across it. Mrs. K. is pleased that I have been so accurate, and I immediately feel a sense of pride in having done the job so well.

The scene fades. I am now in what appears to be a darkly lit living room of the same house. The only light, in fact, comes from the bathroom, which is now vacant. It reminds me of the living room in Polanski's *Repulsion*, though this did not occur to me until I woke up. I am talking to R., a colleague, though I recall nothing of what is being said. There is a strange sense of gloom

and intimacy in his bearing toward me, and after a time he mutely proposes that we have a homosexual relation. I say nothing. Immediately he goes into a second bathroom, adjoining the first, to have a shower. I return to the first bathroom to urinate. Suddenly I realize with horror that I have virtually consented to a sexual relation with R. to be carried out in a moment in the living room. My stream strikes the edge of the bowl and splashes on the floor. I wipe it up with toilet paper. The dream ends.

Just as visual reorientation (On closer examination ...) introduced the defamiliarizing novelty of a female plumber in the faucet dream, in this case visual reorientation (The scene fades) introduces the defamiliarizing novelty of unspoken acquiescence to a homosexual liaison.

Using the dreamer's associations, it is possible to identify the composite of loosely scripted activities that form this dream. As States indicates in his commentary (18; p. 162-3), the initial episode involving Mrs. K. combines three loosely scripted sequences. One is related to an event in which he had carried out an administrative task that he was normally very bad about and in response to which Mrs. K. was known to be short and direct. The second involved an expression of kindness toward Mrs. K.'s son that evoked greater friendliness between them, as people often do when they have been drawn together by a common interest outside of the professional routine. The third involved his nocturnal need to urinate, which, as States suggests, probably evoked the bathroom imagery. So, the first episode in this dream combined the carry-out-administrative-task-at-the-risk-of-criticism scenario, the express-kindness-and-evoked-more-than-professional-friendliness scenario, and the go-to-the-bathroom-and-take-careful-aim scenario to form its composite imagery. These three layers of meaning are carried forward into the second episode where they interact with yet another loosely scripted sequence. States reports that he had become silently and guiltily complicitous, i.e., illicitly intimate, during a series of conversations in which his colleague R. was critical of one of their fellow colleagues. States articulates the additional composite complexity in the second episode in a manner that is consistent with his (and my own) analysis of the faucet dream (see above).

States' account relies heavily on personal associations to the dream. However, not only do we not normally have access to such a rich and carefully documented array of associations, but, just as with literary texts, it should be possible to articulate the dream's defamiliarizing devices and the resulting transformations of meaning without such recourse to the author. The present -and modest- addition to States' analysis is this: I will demonstrate how to identify

the defamiliarizing devices in a dream in the absence of familiarity with the biographical scenarios that are superimposed to form composite dream imagery. Thus, I will argue that we can articulate dreams expressive functions independently of the dreamer's associations - and independently of any material outside of the dream narrative *per se*.

Consider the opening statement in States' dream report: I am in a narrow bathroom with Mrs. K., the department secretary. A phenomenologically inclined interpreter might say that this expression can be interpreted as: I am in a narrow bathroom with someone from work or I am in close, private quarters with Mrs. K., the department secretary. States is expressing his conception of the dream scene as a narrow bathroom, his conception of Mrs. K. as the departmental secretary, etc. Moreover, States' conception of a narrow bathroom is a meaning of the kind a phenomenologically inclined dream interpreter might capture as close, private quarters; States' conception of the departmental secretary is a meaning of the kind such an interpreter might express as someone from work. In this example, (1) each of the two interpretive paraphrases (close, private quarters; someone from work) captures a different but compatible aspect of States' meaning; (2) each of the two interpretive paraphrases captures the meaning of States' expressions but does not signal some independent or associated state of affairs (e.g., that States is concerned with secretarial efficiency); and (3) neither interpretive paraphrase need reflect what was consciously on States' mind as he dreamed of being in a narrow bathroom with Mrs. K., although both make explicit the implicit meaning of being in that narrow bathroom with Mrs. K.

While the preceding interpretive strategy is familiar to those acquainted with phenomenology, review seemed necessary to prepare for the following point: given the aspectual nature of interpretation, interpretations are determinate to the extent that a paraphrase captures meanings shared by two or more expressions. To see why this may be so, consider the following somewhat spicier paraphrase of States' opening statement: I am in a room, in which the mood is intimate, with someone from work. Assessing the plausibility of this paraphrase requires consideration of other expressions for which this paraphrase is apt. As a case in point, States reports later in this same dream, I am now in ... a darkly lit living room ... with R., a colleague. The close, private bathroom and the darkly lit living room suddenly become more interpretable because they share connotations of intimacy and also share analogous positions within two similar narrative structures. A theme that appeared plausible but unsubstantiated when only the original expression was presented becomes more compelling when that same theme is re-expressed in an analogous meaning structure within the same dream.

Using this approach, it is possible to identify the theme complex that recurs within the two episodes in States' dream. The transition from the first to the second episode is marked by a visual reorientation, much like we have found in other impactful dreams. A theme presented in the first episode is then re-expressed in the second episode. That common theme can be paraphrased as follows:

I am in a room [with a rectangular opening that allows visibility] in a particular house. I am in a room [in which the mood is intimate] with someone from work [with whom I am not typically intimate]. We are involved in constructive/creative interaction [with no obvious extrinsic function]. The other person encourages / invites an unjustified / unacceptable action and acts as though undertaking that action has a certain inevitability... I take measured aim with my ([hammer/tack], penis)...

Identification of recurrent themes in this manner is conceptually akin to the identification of what Zholkovsky (30) calls central themes in literary texts. From within his neo-formalist perspective, he has shown how central themes are transformed through contrast, augmentation, reduction, and other expressive devices to create a literary text's poetic world (p. 63). Similarly, when two or more variations on a central theme have been identified within a dream, it is possible to examine the expressive devices that transform, defamiliarize, and deepen the dream's poetic world.

In States' dream, the transition from unjustifiably definite carpentry to unacceptably inevitable homosexuality involves defamiliarizing novelty in more than one respect. First, the conventional inevitability of taken-for-granted patterns of departmental interaction (it is always done this way) gives way to the unconventional inevitability of unspoken acquiescence to homosexual encounter (I have virtually consented to a sexual relation with R.). Second, Mrs. K.'s professionally supportive assurances to the dreamer give way to R.'s strangely gloomy intimacy. Third, the dreamer's aims have orderly and predictable consequences in the first episode, but disorderly consequences in the second. The examination of such transformations of a common theme may provide a poetics of dream expression, a description of the shifts in meaning that make some dreams especially and personally profound. Zholkovsky (30) uses concepts such as augmentation, contrast, repetition, etc., to identify the expressive devices with which he is concerned in literary texts. Although we find these terms useful, they also seem too general for our purposes. We are currently trying to

develop a vocabulary of expressive devices that is especially well suited to the transformations found in dreams.

Beyond Metaphor

I have argued that dreams, at least impactful ones, are marked by shifts toward composite images that resist interpretation so long as dream metaphor is modeled on Freud's conception of collective imagery. I have also argued that such resistance to interpretation occurs because the collective imagery model misrepresents how impactful dreams are formed and reductively misconstrues the complexity of their meanings. However, the conception of metaphor that is analogous to collective imagery has been challenged repeatedly by I. A. Richards, Max Black, and others. So, with numerous interaction models of metaphor available, it is puzzling that such models are evident neither in most contemporary discussions of the analogy between dreams and literature nor in most of the approaches to dream interpretation that voice the rhetoric of dream metaphor. If the interaction theories of metaphor were more seriously considered, we might become more alert to the risks of reductionistic interpretation and go even further not to praise metaphor but to bury it within a more complete conception of the analogy between dreams and literature.

One part of this extended analogy, I suggest, is that both literature and impactful dreams involve variations on central themes. Rather than a deliberate literary construction, theme variations may be a natural feature of both the dreaming and literary imagination. These variations can occur at more than one level of analysis. When insects of one kind, aphids, become, insects of another kind, beetle-like spiders, we have a variation on an insect-pest theme. Or when a plumber of one kind, the familiar male in cover-alls, becomes a plumber of another kind, the unruffled female in cover-alls, that is a variation on an agent-in-public-service theme. In States' dream, we found that theme complexes that span entire episodes can be varied in this manner.

Consider another example of a dream in which an entire theme complex is varied:

The first thing I remember is that a friend ... is driving up the highway and we're supposed to meet ... He's been in a marriage where he lives in a different city from his wife. In any event, we eventually get ... to his house ... There are a lot of people there. There was a little bit of nervous, Will I fit in with all these different people ... but all the while knowing ... I would fit in ... because [my friend is] such an incredible host and person. One of the [good] things was seeing this couple together because their marriage

has been in a kind of difficult place ... And it was just sort of seeing them and going Wow, I'm glad ... things are back together for them.

Then I'm at my [childhood] house ... with my mother and my stepfather ... and this Siamese kitten [that had been] hanging around my house ... She's so beautiful, she's got these little white front paws and this little bit of white around her mouth...I was afraid to let her touch me ... But I decided, No ... I will let her close, and ... when I thought she was just touching my face...she broke the skin and I had all these marks on the left hand side of my face where I thought she had been just so gently stroking with her paw ... But I still was happy ... because there was this ... loving connection...she made a step to come close to me and I made a step to allow her.

Besides exemplifying impactful dreams of the kind we fairly frequently obtain in our studies, this dream contains variations on a complex theme that first involves apprehension about acceptance and then satisfaction with reconciliation. Progression through these variations on a theme, as in States' off-limits intimacy dream, is similar to a process that, as proposed by Roman Ingarden (31), is characteristic of literary aesthetic experiences. That is, the dreamer expresses a preliminary emotion in the first episode and then repeats and varies it in the second, as though, as Ingarden would say, to satiate [herself] with the quality in question, to consolidate possession of it (p. 114).

Dream theme variations in which felt meanings are progressively varied in order to consolidate possession of them, may be crucial to understanding their impact on subsequent waking thoughts and feelings. In this example, the dreamer was amazed, both during the dream and afterwards, at the depth of her love for the kitten. However, she also described a much more significant change: When she was able to love the kitten freely, she also found herself able to love her mother, someone whose claws (speaking metaphorically) had also left painful marks on this dreamer. Although later reflection deepened her appreciation of this change, the dreamer's initial sense of resolution and reconciliation was experienced within the dream.

The proposal that such theme variations are distinctively associated with impactful dreams and with the depth of literary aesthetic experience should not be confused with the position taken by Wilse Webb (32), who argues for a parallel between dreams and poetry because at the very core of both is their emotional meaning, their appraisive function (p. 195). Among the difficulties in Webb's behaviorist position is that emotional meaning is

not distinctively associated with either literature or dreaming. More plausibly distinctive are theme variations in which felt meanings are progressively varied in order to consolidate possession of them, such as occurred in the kitten dream. Thus, it seems likely that the progression of defamiliarizing composite images in impactful dreams intensifies and deepens the dreamer's experience of related felt meanings.

And yet, why should that be so? There may be a broader principle that shapes the direction of theme variations in impactful dreams - and that principle returns our attention to the major literary tropes. Consider first that metaphor dissolves conceptual boundaries. Aphids and spiders are conventionally separate conceptual domains, but composite dream imagery, such as beetle-like spiders, explores resemblances within the domain temporarily created by conflation of these conventionally separate ones (33). A crucial question then becomes: How different are the conceptual domains that are conflated during the formation of composite imagery? For most of us, aphid and spider seem rather near conceptual neighbors, while plumbing activities and sexual activities are relatively distant, and party strangers and stray kittens are even more distant. Dream transformations, at least transformations in impactful dreams, then, may involve the dissolution of boundaries between relatively distant or incongruent conceptual domains (34). As States (18) points out, extreme incongruity links metaphor to irony, the literary trope that provides a way of uncovering a thing's potential for not being what it appears to be (p. 150). The contribution of dream irony, then, may be to provide maximal difference (p. 156) between the conceptual domains that are conflated to form composite dream imagery in impactful dreams.

However, some caution is required to keep dream irony in perspective. First, as implied by the dependence of sarcasm on meta-communicative elements such as tone of voice, irony is such a self-conscious trope that it may not assume its classic forms within the relative single-mindedness of dreaming. Second, I am wary of States' suggestion that irony is based on vigilance, as though dreams take themes to their catastrophic extremes because

what is feared becomes fulfilled in dream thought. Our studies (21) suggest that such vigilance-guided transformations may be specific to nightmares or anxiety dreams - and rather uncommon in other types of impactful dreams in which equally radical defamiliarizing transformations occur. Third, just as metaphors remain apt to the extent that the incongruent conceptual domains nonetheless enable the exploration of similarities, dream irony is constrained by the similarities that are available across the domains that shape composite dream imagery, for example, the similarities that exist between social gatherings with strangers and family gatherings with a stray kitten. Psychoanalytic discussions of irony often ignore this point, arguing instead that a dream element can be understood as associatively representing its opposite, simply because dream thought is presumed incapable of marking negation.

More plausibly, dream irony begins with the denial of complete integrity to either of the contributors to a composite image. As indicated earlier in the faucet dream, both the plumbing scenario and the sexual scenario are altered by the absence of some familiar attributes, such as the typical maleness of the plumber and the distinctive bodily form of the male sexual organ. In this way, within the dream, the dreaming process undermines what plumbers and male sexual organs seem to be. It does not simply convert them into their opposites, but rather gives them a partly familiar presence and then undermines that presence with incongruous features. It as if the dream constructs a presence and deconstructs it, too, all in one composite stroke. Irony, in this form, is already at the heart of dream metaphor. As the incongruity between domains affected by dream metaphor increases, the defamiliarizing transformations may be sufficiently radical to warrant using the language of irony, instead of the language of metaphor, to talk about dreaming. Or more likely, we might begin to focus the discussion of the analogy between dreams and literature on ironic metaphor, with its particularly powerful capacity to provide defamiliarizing transformations of felt meaning (35). As States (18) reminds us, quoting Burke, if you thoroughly explore any of the major literary tropes you find the others there, too (p. 180). The opportunity to do so may reside especially in the study of theme variations in impactful dreams.

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