DREAMING AND THE ONEIRIC PARADIGM  
Seminar Year III, Winter 2017  

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The distinction between the real and the oneiric cannot be identical with the simple distinction between consciousness filled with meaning and consciousness given up to its own void. The two modalities impinge on one another. Our waking relations with objects and others especially have an oneiric character as a matter of principle: others are present to us in the way that dreams are, the way myths are, and this is enough to question the cleavage between the real and the imaginary. -- Merleau-Ponty

Freud wrote that the dream “appears to be a reaction to everything which is simultaneously present as actual in the sleeping mind” (S.E. V, p. 589). An individual unconsciously takes memories of the day or in the course of a life and arranges them in accordance with desire, finds a language for that desire and expresses the symbolic weight of desire through the lens of metaphor and metonymy (condensation and displacement) in the image.

For Bion, the dream work, known initially as dream-work α and then as α function, is active in both sleep and waking. α function transforms β elements, proto-sensorial or proto-emotional fragments into dream-thoughts, α elements that are the building blocks of experience, narrative and thinking. α function emerges from the body. This is a transformation in sleep or wakefulness where dream images are no longer something to be deciphered but are the symbol-poetic activity of the individual, the creation and development of an experience. The dream doesn’t hide, it reveals. Attention shifts from the dream to the dreaming process.

In this seminar, we will explore this transformation in the concept of dreaming called “The Oneiric Paradigm.” We will examine the ways in which our understanding of dreams shapes our clinical experiences of them, looking at various models of dream formation and interpretation, from The Interpretation of Dreams, to contemporary views of dreaming as part of an analytic or phenomenal field.

Each week, I’ll provide a brief contextualization for the readings, and we will discuss, raise questions or relate experiences that can clarify or elucidate the readings. If you will, select key passages for the reading that you wish to offer for exploration. Each week we’ll also discuss a dream from our clinical process. I hope that this combination of theoretical and clinical discussion will create animated conversations that will inform our dream work.

There are two small writing assignments: For the first class, write a paragraph describing your current theory of dreams. For the last class, repeat this first assignment.
1. February 9, 2017: Sigmund Freud

**Readings:**

Freud, S., (1900) An analysis of a Specimen Dream, Chapter 2, The Interpretation of Dreams. *S.E.* IV: 96-121. [PEP Web Link]


Learning Objective: At the completion of the session, the candidate will be able to characterize Freud's understanding of the function of dreams and his process of uncovering the latent meaning as it is both represented and disguised in the manifest content.

2. February 16, 2017: Carl Jung

**Readings:**


Learning Objective: At the completion of the session, the candidate will be able to differentiate Freud’s and Jung’s understanding of dreams and their approaches to the analysis of dreams.

3. February 23, 2017: Erik Erikson

**Readings:**


Learning Objective: At the completion of this session, the candidate will be able to articulate Erik Erikson's theories and technique of dream interpretation.

4. March 2, 2017: Wilfred Bion

Readings:


Optional:

Learning Objective: At the completion of the session, the candidate will be able to differentiate Bion’s “revolution” in his theory of dreaming from prior conceptualizations.

5. March 9, 2017: Thomas Ogden

Readings:


Optional:

Learning Objective: At the completion of the session, the candidate will be able to differentiate dreaming from not dreaming in Ogden’s formulations.


**Readings:**


Learning Objective: At the completion of this seminar, participants will be able to describe Levenson’s and Bromberg’s Interpersonal/Relational approach to dreams.

7. March 23, 2017: Antonino Ferro and Giuseppe Civitarese

**Readings:**


Learning Objective: At the completion of the session, the candidate will be able to elucidate the field concept in relation to dreaming.
8. March 30, 2017: Maurice Merleau-Ponty

**Reading:**

Learning Objective: At the completion of the session, the candidate will be able to describe Merleau-Ponty’s non-dualistic approach to oneiric phenomena.