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To cite this article: Frank C. P. van der Horst, René van der Veer & Robbie Duschinsky (2020): Such stuff as dreams are made on: John Bowlby and the interpretation of dreams, Attachment & Human Development, DOI: [10.1080/14616734.2020.1748671](https://doi.org/10.1080/14616734.2020.1748671)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616734.2020.1748671>



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Published online: 13 May 2020.



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Such stuff as dreams are made on: John Bowlby and the interpretation of dreams

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, newly uncovered archival material from the Bowlby archives is presented on Bowlby's own dreams and dream interpretation. Although he was critical of orthodox psychoanalysis, Bowlby appears to have been seriously involved in Freudian dream interpretation in the 1930s and 1940s. Here, we present in annotated form his own interpretations of several of his dreams from that time and a series of lectures on dreams. In *Attachment and Loss*, classic dream interpretation is absent and Bowlby used the content of dreams as a reflection of the influence of real-life experiences on the representations of attachment relations, with a clear focus on grief, loss, and mourning. Bowlby's shift from psychoanalysis to a more behavioral approach and the introduction of the concept of "defensive exclusion" to supplant Freud's concept of "repression" may have led him to think about how grief and mourning may affect the content of our dreams.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 18 January 2020
Accepted 25 March 2020


KEYWORDS

Dream interpretation; psychoanalysis; attachment; defensive exclusion; grief and mourning

The interpretation of dreams is the Via regia to knowledge of the unconscious (Freud, 1900/1955)

Introduction

In contemporary attachment research, it is not uncommon to use dreams as a subject of research. In fact, in recent years, several papers addressing dream narratives and dream content have been published in this journal. For example, Mikulincer et al. (2011) showed that in a sample of young adults dimensions of attachment representations affected dream content: attachment-related avoidance predicted avoidant wishes and negative representations of other people, whereas attachment anxiety predicted wishes for interpersonal closeness, especially in dreams following stressful days. Selterman et al. (2012) found an association between relationship-specific attachment security of undergraduate students and the degree to which their dreams about romantic partners followed the secure base script. In another study with undergraduates, Mikulincer et al. (2019)

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concluded that attachment security on a given day was associated with higher levels of within-dream awareness and reflection (i.e. mentalization). Hence, these authors showed that real-life experiences of attachment to important others influence the content of our dreams without taking recourse to classic psychoanalytic dream interpretation.

This research is in line with what Bowlby proposed in his work on attachment theory. His general assumption was that early attachment relationships shape mental representations of self and others. These representations influence daily experiences and dream narratives or dream content. In part III of *Attachment and Loss*, Bowlby (1980) explained how he thought unresolved grief may affect dream narratives: "The exclusion of significant information, with the resulting deactivation of a behavioural system, may of course be less than complete. When that is so there are times when fragments of the information defensively excluded seep through so that fragments of the behaviour defensively deactivated become visible; or else feeling and other products of processing related to the behaviour reach consciousness, for example, in the form of moods, memories, day dreams or night dreams" (p. 65). Bowlby continued: "Whether on balance a bereaved person finds his dreams comforting seems likely to be a reliable indicator of whether or not mourning is taking a favourable course" (p. 97).

In *Loss* Bowlby (1980) gave several examples from clinical practice (his own and others') of vivid dreams after the death of a spouse or a young child. For example, Bowlby mentioned that "dreams of the spouse still being alive share many of the characteristic features of the sense of presence: they occur in about half of widows and widowers, they are extremely vivid and realistic and in a majority of cases are experienced as comforting. 'It was just like everyday life . . . my husband coming in and getting his dinner. Very vivid so that when I woke up I was very annoyed'" (p. 97). Bowlby presents another example about the death of a father: "The night after he died she [the daughter] had a dream . . . in which she saw her father lying in his coffin. He had reached up at her and had 'stroked' the left side of her body, whereupon she awoke to find the left side of her body paralyzed. In this case the paralysis soon wore off and she had no further symptoms of that nature. As in so many other cases of disordered mourning, here too the previous relationship had not been happy; during psychotherapy she dwelt at length on how in earlier years her father had harmed her in various ways" (p. 168). Bowlby also gave an example of a dream about the death of a child: "I dreamed one night that dear More was alive again and that after throwing my arms round his neck and finding beyond all doubt that I had my living son in my embrace – we went thoroughly into the subject, and found that the death and funeral at Abinger had been fictitious. For a second after waking the joy remained – then came the knell that wakes me every morning – More is dead! More is dead!" (p. 112). As we can see from these examples, in his published writings on attachment Bowlby clearly acknowledged the significance of dreams for clinical practice. Just like the modern researchers mentioned before; however, he made no attempt to interpret these dreams psychoanalytically.

We know that Bowlby resisted contemporary interpretations of psychoanalytic theory from the very beginning and had to overcome various obstacles to finally become a full member of the British Psychoanalytical Society in 1938 (Holmes, 1993; Van der Horst, 2011; Van Dijken, 1998). However, it now has become clear that during his training

analysis and for at least some time afterwards Bowlby engaged in psychoanalytic dream interpretation. In his personal papers,¹ under the heading of “Research on libido”, we were able to locate three of Bowlby’s reflections on and interpretations of his own dreams, Bowlby’s interpretation of Freud’s classic cockchafer dream, and the outlines of four lectures on dream interpretation. In this paper we will present and annotate Bowlby’s interpretation of his own dreams and his lecture notes. We have made no selection and present Bowlby’s text in full. Bowlby’s texts reflect more than a private episode in his life; they show that for a considerable period – starting from his training analysis with Joan Riviere from approximately 1930 to 1937 and extending to at least World War II – Bowlby was seriously engaged in psychoanalytic dream interpretation, something which was not known and is not reflected in his published writings. But first we shall briefly discuss the routine of dream interpretation in psychoanalytic (training) analysis as formulated by Freud.

The interpretation of dreams

In his famous book *The Interpretation of Dreams (Die Traumdeutung)*, Freud (1900/1955) laid down his ideas on the interpretation of dreams (cf. Jones, 1910), which in his view had a clear and comprehensible place in mental life. Although dreams sometimes seem to have no connection to everyday life, Freud held that this was untrue. Mental processes form dreams that are in direct continuity with “waking life” and express unconscious feelings and desires in a disguised form. Freud proposed the psychoanalytic technique of free association to access the unconscious meaning of dreams, that is, to find the underlying meaning (latent content) of the superficial (manifest) dream. The latent content of dreams would reveal the preconscious thoughts of the dreamer and repressed memories, desires, and wishes. Explicit dreaming about this repressed material would make sleep impossible, hence the manifest dream is the guardian of sleep. In his notes, Bowlby formulated the question “why the passage from unconscious Id to C[onscious] Ego is easy during the night and not during the day” (PP/BOW/D.2/45/7). Freud’s explanation was that during the night the superego is less able to suppress subconscious thoughts from the Id to reach consciousness.

The normal procedure for dream interpretation was to let the subject first describe the manifest dream content. Then the analyst would encourage him or her to explore the content of the dream through free association. These associations would often reveal hidden motives, feelings and wishes. The final step was to draw conclusions based on this exploration as to the subject’s unconscious life. In the case of analyzing one’s own dreams, the roles of therapist and client would, of course, overlap.

Bowlby’s dreams²

In the archive there are notes on a total of just three dreams. In what follows – and by kind permission of the copyright holders The Grandchildren’s Trust – we will present Bowlby’s

¹Wellcome Library, Archives & Manuscripts, PP/BOW/D.2/45/7, file titled “DREAMS”. PP/BOW stands for Personal Papers Bowlby.

²Text between [square brackets] was inserted by the authors. Text between <angle brackets> is very difficult to read in the original handwriting.

dreams and interpretation *in toto* to preserve their personal tone. In the interpretation of each dream, Bowlby followed the common pattern introduced by Freud (1900/1955). First, he laid down the manifest content of the dream, followed by free association to reveal the latent content. The final step in the interpretation of the dream was to make deductions and conclusions.

DREAM 1

Dream of 11.IV.33

A frightful [and] repellent dog was howling in an old house or castle which for some reason I [and] various others wanted to go into. The dog was white like Doris³ bulldog [and] was <conspicuous> for its vast [and] beastly mouth. It seemed to be diseased or mad. I suggested that it be shot. A companion who had a gun fired at it several times, but the gun failed to function. I then suggested that someone cut its throat. As no one apparently knew how to, I volunteered. I was very frightened for fear it might hurt me [and] I first dressed up in the evening clothes [and] had dinner. It was to take place in a cinema ... Knight-Adkin⁴ (padre at Dartmouth⁵) appeared [and] was said to have gone to the <bad> since being in charge of the fleet-pastors (Chaplain of the Fleet⁶). I found myself <made> the necessity of copulating with three old charwomen. I was annoyed [and] disinclined to do so especially as I was hoping to sleep with Rose⁷ tonight. I rapidly took two <however> from behind [and] whilst they were standing up, but when it came to Mrs. T.⁸ I was unable to get an erection.

ASSOCIATIONS

The dog

Doris bulldog which I hate

Prue's⁹ care for it

Its sexual activities under Doris guidance

Rose's large mouth

Shooting.

Boys in the street firing off air guns.

Unintentional murder by air gun.

<Liability> to wound [and] <infuriate> <the> animal by shooting

Throat cutting

A bloody business.

I know how to because I have learnt surgery.

³In 1933, Bowlby and his close friend (and later Labour politician) Evan Durbin had set up Bogey's Bar, a small cafe and sandwich bar, in the basement of the Royal Hotel near Russell Square in London. Doris Austin managed the bar between 1933 and 1937 (Durbin, 1985; Van Dijken, 1998). Several years later, Durbin and Bowlby (1939) published the book *Personal aggressiveness and war* in which they explained war and aggression by connecting Freud's views with evolutionary and anthropological thinking.

⁴Walter Kenrick Knight-Adkin (1880–1957) was an Anglican priest in the first half of the 20th century. He was Chaplain of the Fleet between 1929–1933 but was at Dartmouth Navy College when Bowlby was there too.

⁵Britannia Royal Naval College (BRNC), commonly known as Dartmouth, where Bowlby's was trained in the early 1920s.

⁶Head of the Naval Chaplains.

⁷During the 1930s, Bowlby had a "stormy relationship" (Van Dijken, 1998, p. 81) with Rose Elton (née Montague). Rose Montague had been married to Charles Elton in 1928, but the relationship had ended in amicable divorce. In 1937, Bowlby and she decided not to see each other for a year. In that year, Bowlby met Ursula Longstaff and they subsequently got married in 1938.

⁸Perhaps Mrs. T. or Mrs. Trustram, as she is referred to later, was one of the housekeepers in the Bowlby home.

⁹Lady Prudence Pelham, with whom Bowlby had a relationship in the mid-1930s.

The way one kills pigs [and] haunted deer
Pigs are castrated. Doris' dog ought to be.

GOING TO THE BAD because of promotion to authority

The admiral as <driver> } DRINK

Ted at the Bar } DRINK

Self as <sub>-cadet-captain.¹⁰

KNIGHT-ADRIN

Hearty evangelical <rugger>/[rugby]-player

Recently married [and] had a son.¹¹

Prepared us for confirmation [and] offered to inform us about sex.¹²

COPULATING WITH CHARWOMAN.

Mrs. T.<rustram>'s husband died of <drink>

left a widow with large family

Always accessible a Cambridge undergraduate¹³

Apparently allowed whereas Rose is not

Mrs. T. acquiesces in my sexual life.

Standing up to copulate looks like urinating.

CASTLE

<Kirkhill> castle¹⁴

Hermitage¹⁵ [castle] – Mary, Queen of Scots.

The artificial ruin in UP PARK. which we helped to ruin

DEDUCTIONS

(1) I am identified with K[night-]A[dkin]. We are both all right in minor positions but when no authority drink [and] sex ruins us.¹⁶

(2) Those in authority [and] who know about sex go to the <bad>.

(3) There is a savage male animal in a female building. Presumably father

¹⁰Bowlby was promoted to the honorary post of cadet captain in 1921, during his time at Dartmouth (Van Dijken, 1998).

¹¹Knight-Adkin was married to Elizabeth Cuff Napier (1891–1984) in Glasgow on 20 December 1915. They had one child, Peter Napier Knight-Adkin, born in 1917, who died at Portsmouth in 1918.

¹²Sex education in the army was of importance, as according to many sources venereal diseases had reached epidemic proportions during World War I (Doan, 2012).

¹³This association is difficult to interpret and we can only speculate about its meaning. It might refer to the fact that Cambridge undergraduates have certain rights after they graduate (e.g. use of the University library, occasional meals in their old college). That would continue the theme of certain things being allowed even after separation, of childhood or adolescent pleasures continued to be accessed in adulthood. It could also mean that Mrs. T. was available for sexual pleasure to Cambridge students and would explain Bowlby's comment that such things are allowed, whereas he is not allowed to sleep with Rose. But this is all very speculative.

¹⁴Kirkhill castle is located in Colmonell, South Ayrshire, Scotland. During his childhood, Bowlby each year spent August and part of September with the Bowlby family in Ayrshire. The family travelled by train in a specially hired railway carriage (Holmes, 1993; Van Dijken, 1998). Ayrshire and Galloway (where Bowlby's current dreams take place) are both regions in the southwest of Scotland.

¹⁵Hermitage Castle is located in Newcastleton, Scottish Borders, Scotland. Mary, Queen of Scots, made a famous marathon journey on horseback there to visit her wounded future husband James Hepburn, known as Lord Bothwell, only a few weeks after the birth of her son, the later James VI of Scotland and James I of England.

¹⁶Maybe Bowlby refers to the difficulties he had in forming lasting relationships with women before he met his future wife Ursula Longstaff in 1937. Several relationships were ended for rather dramatic reasons – such as Bowlby sleeping with the sister of one of his girlfriends (Holmes, 1993; Van Dijken, 1998).

Because I use his own arts

Two <father> animals – deer [and] pig.

If I kill father – it is necessary that I should copulate with his wives.

? Mop,¹⁷ <Hewie>, Nanna¹⁸

Fear that I shan't be able to.

I am afraid of Mop's interest in my sexual life.

Mrs. T. is not concerned

Doris supervises the dogs

CONCLUSION

WISH To kill father [and] copulate with mother¹⁹

ANXIETY <lest> I should be hurt in so doing [and] be unable to satisfy women²⁰

REASSURANCE Doris' dog is not dangerous.

Mrs. T. acquiesces in my sexual practices (of Mop)

DREAM 2

Dream of April 27²¹

I was on a walking tour alone in Galloway.²² The first scene I was walking at a road junction when there was a large heap of stones. This reminded me of a <remark> which B[aden] P[owell]²³ was supposed to have made recently that he thought knowledge should refrain from intruding everywhere [and] that boy scouts should definitely limit themselves [and] avoid certain (ill-defined) subjects. *The Times* had commented on this [and] in a very pompous article²⁴ had laid it down that no boys should become scouts owing to B[aden] P[owell]'s obscurantism [and] mysticism. At a later period I had apparently taken a bus [and] was walking a few miles in the evening. After going say 3 miles I realised that I had my <ruck-sack> either in the bus or elsewhere although I remembered having it by the <stones>. I was uncertain whether to go back [and] get it immediately or try to find a <bed> for the night first. I came to a small village (rather Spanish) [and] asked for a bed. A policeman took me down a steep hill [and] showed me a <bunch> of new cottages [and] a blackman in a motorcar. The nigger²⁵ promised help [and] spoke in German. I knew that I could get <in act> the <next> village – Bargrennan²⁶ – when there is a small pub called the "House of the Hill".²⁷ There was a lot of rain about. [And] I don't think I had a Mackintosh with me.

¹⁷Mop was Bowlby's pet name for his mother Mary Bridget Mostyn. Bowlby's letters to his mother would typically start with "Dear Mop".

¹⁸Nanny Friend, who was responsible for the nursing of the Bowlby children, was often called Nanna in the Bowlby household.

¹⁹A classic theme in Freudian analysis.

²⁰This anxiety may reflect Bowlby's insecurity regarding his relations with women (see footnote 16).

²¹Just the manifest content of this dream was retrieved. We do not know whether Bowlby also interpreted this dream and it was not possible to give a more specific date for this dream.

²²Galloway is a region in southwest Scotland (see footnote 14).

²³Lord Robert Baden-Powell (1857–1941) was a Lieutenant General in the British Army and founder of the worldwide Boy Scout Movement.

²⁴Although we went through all issues of *The Times* from approximately 1920 to 1950, we were unable to locate the article Bowlby mentions here. We assume the dream is dated before 1941 (the year of Baden Powell's death).

²⁵The use of the words "blackman" and "nigger" is now seen as derogatory, yet there is no evidence that Bowlby intentionally used these words in that way or held racist views in general.

²⁶Bargrennan is a village in Galloway.

²⁷The inn called *House O'Hill* exists to this day.

DREAM 3My dream²⁸

I was imprisoned by Nazis in a camp in Berlin.²⁹ It might have been during the War. I had 4 <companions> including Stilgoe [and] Collett.³⁰ We had all planned to escape, <and this> was carried out in two stages. On the first day we jumped into a motor-car driven by an English officer [and] <taken> to a house in which we hid. It was then necessary for us to walk 3500 miles to the frontier. The next day Nazis raided the house. We hid as best we could but it looked as though we were going to be discovered so I <woke> up. It appeared that on any day the Nazis were going to torture or kill us in the camp.

STILGOE

I always felt rather like him. We were <fair> friends – did things together [and] also <rivals> especially for 1st XV.³¹ Due to an expedition with me [and] 2 others he developed <pleurisy> [and] T.B. [tuberculosis]. Our expedition had <him> to dig up <lorried> forests.

COLLETT

A rival who beat me [and] whom I disliked partly for this reason. TONY³²

NAZIS

Brutalities against Jews [et]c. I wonder whether psycho-analysts [and] Freud might be attacked for exposing the unconscious.

Circumcision³³

I had attacked Freud the previous day in [the] P[sycho-Analytic] A[ssociation].³⁴

BERLIN CAMP

<Nicol>³⁵ was imprisoned there.

3500 miles is the distance across Atlantic.

<Whether> the psycho-analysts want

HIDING IN HOUSE reminds me of my <fear> [and] dislike of Mamma finding <double> bed.

(A) Anxiety lest I should be punished for practising P[sycho-]A[alysis]

(1) Psycho-analysts in Berlin are attacked because of this³⁶

(2) The anxiety has arisen the day after I had begun analysing Freud's dreams.

²⁸Bowlby gave no specific date for this dream, but given its content (e.g. the reference to the Nazis, the conjecture that the scene perhaps took place during the war) we assume it dates from a few years after World War 2.

²⁹Sachsenhausen is the only World War 2 concentration camp near Berlin. We do not know whether Bowlby visited the camp after the war.

³⁰John Henry Tweedie Stilgoe (1907–1987) and George Kempthorne Collett (1907–1982) were accepted for Naval Cadetships after qualifying examinations at Royal Naval College on the same day as Bowlby.

³¹At Dartmouth, Bowlby was part of the 1st XV for Rugby football.

³²Presumably a reference to Bowlby's brother Tony (cf. Holmes, 1993; Van der Horst, 2011). John had a very close relationship with his only-slightly-older brother Tony and yet they were rivals too: John did not accept his brother's seniority and Tony would "fight like a little tiger" (Van Dijken, 1998, p. 19) whenever he was challenged.

³³Of course, circumcision is practiced according to Jewish law, where boys receive their *brit milah* when they are eight days old.

³⁴Bowlby had long held views opposing classical Freudian theory. This was apparent in his analysis with Joan Riviere in the 1930s, but also after the war when he was considered one of the Independents in the British Psychoanalytical Society (Van der Horst, 2011; Van Dijken, 1998).

³⁵This might refer to Edward Christian Frederick Nicolay (1907–1941), who was also appointed at Dartmouth Naval College with Bowlby and the others mentioned here.

³⁶Psychoanalysis was considered a "Jewish Science" by the Nazis. Freud's books were among those that were publicly burnt in Germany after the Nazi's rose to power in 1933 (Frosh, 2003).

- (3) On the expedition to dig up old forest Stilgoe had developed T.B. [tuberculosis]
- (4) P[sycho-]A[nalysis] inquisitiveness seems like sexual curiosity which is punished
- (5) Freud's dreams, I interpreted, as betraying his own sexual feelings.
- (B) P[sycho-]A[nalysis] is equated to sexual curiosity.
 - (1) The analysis of Freud's dreams betrayed his sexual feelings.
 - (2) Mamma's curiosity about my sexual life [and] the purpose of my double-bed.
- (C) Stilgoe = sexual TONY [and] is punished.
Collett = asexual TONY [and] is successful.

What is remarkable in Bowlby's dreams and associations is the abundance of traditional Freudian themes such as interpersonal conflict, fear, aggression, rivalry, sexuality, cruelty, and the Oedipal conflict. In the first dream Bowlby feels threatened by a ferocious big-mouthed dog and wishes to kill it. Freudians might view this as signifying a fear of castration, in particular, because of the final scene which alludes to the theme of sexual impotence. Bowlby's own associations and his interpretation follow rather traditional lines: the sexually active dog (a rival?) must be castrated, sexual activity itself is linked with cruelty, fear, and aggression, and in the end there is the Oedipal conflict. In the second dream we see less of the traditional themes but the episode about Baden Powell ("knowledge should refrain from intruding everywhere") may reflect the fear that Bowlby's new ideas were not welcome and would be rejected by the psychoanalytic community. Finally, the third dream and the associations again revolve about the themes of rivalry (his mates Stilgoe and Collett, and his brother Tony), guilt (Stilgoe developed tuberculosis), and fear of upsetting authorities (the Nazis wish to torture and kill him, because he advanced new controversial ideas).

Of course, as one of the reviewers suggested, it is conceivable that the reported dream content and the subsequent associations to an extent reflected the training analysis with Joan Riviere, which Bowlby had to undergo to become accepted as a member of the British Psychoanalytical Society. Upon awakening, we remember just part of our dreams and what we remember we may relate or write down in a narrative structure that differs from the original content. Hence, the dream as reported potentially differs in important ways from the dream as experienced. Also, the dreams we discuss with our therapist may be a selection of the dreams remembered. Finally, the associations triggered by the dream may in part reflect conventional ideas about dream interpretation. In other words, it is quite possible that we consciously or subconsciously select dream content and associations that fit the favorite interpretation framework of our therapist. In the case of Riviere this involved the obvious Kleinian themes of the death instinct and aggression, unconscious phantasy, anxiety, and projective identification. The fact that Bowlby only partly met these Kleinian themes in his dream interpretations may be just one aspect of his difficulties with his training analyst and qualification as a psychoanalyst (cf. Van Dijken, 1998).

An exercise in dream interpretation?

Maybe as an exercise as part of his training analysis, Bowlby also interpreted a classic dream from chapter 6 of Freud's (1900/1955) *The Interpretation of Dreams*, in which the author discusses the mechanism of condensation in dreams and illustrates it with three dreams, one of which is the Cockchafer dream. It was the dream of an elderly woman who underwent analysis and its manifest content was as follows: "She

remembers she has two cockchafers in a box, which she must set at liberty, for otherwise they will be suffocated. She opens the box, and the cockchafers are quite exhausted; one of them flies out of the window, but the other is crushed on the casement while she is shutting the window, as someone or other requests her to do (expressions of disgust).” Freud did not analyze the dream to its completion, but the elements mentioned under “Reason” in Bowlby’s right-hand column are all borrowed from Freud’s account of the patient’s free associations (Freud, 1900/1955, pp. 307–309). The elements in the left-hand column under “Conclusion” and the interpretation are Bowlby’s contribution.

Cockchafer dream

CONCLUSION [by Bowlby]	REASON [borrowed from Freud]
[S]he is identified with the cockchafers.	1. They are both exhausted 2. She was born in May (MAYCHAFER)
She shuts the window [and] crushes herself at her husband’s request.	Her husband insists on the window being shut.
She has denied to be cruel to insects	She has felt guilty at not rescuing the moths overnight Also she shut the window
Identification with daughter in pulling off wings [et]c.	
Fear of being <torn> [and] eaten by a man (in copulation)	The man who ate cockchafers. Erection <thro[ugh]> crushing cockchafers
Desire to be seduced by own aristocrat (father)	The letter from an aristocratic admirer [and] BEDE ³⁷
Desire to poison both husband [and] child	Poisoning her daughter’s mind Giving husband arsenic for erection Hanging husband for erection.

Cockchafers probably also equal children [and] perhaps penis.³⁸

INTERPRETATION

She has wanted to be seduced by her father, but this has been denied her.

She then wants to be cruel to him [and] tear off his penis, to hang him [and] poison him.

In the dream itself, there is libidinal [and] also masochistic satisfaction in crushing herself at her husband’s command. Sadistic satisfaction in addition in so far as cockchafers equal husband [and] children.

Bowlby’s lecture notes

As mentioned in the introduction, Bowlby conceived several lectures on dreams and dream interpretation in which he used his own dreams. In Bowlby’s papers we were able to locate four of possibly six lectures (no outlines were found for lectures 2 and 5 in the archive file). We do not know whether Bowlby ever gave these lectures in public, there is

³⁷ *Adam Bede* was the first novel written by George Eliot (the pen name of Mary Ann Evans) and was published in 1859.

³⁸ This addition and the interpretation are Bowlby’s.

no evidence of that in the Bowlby archives, but it is certainly a possibility given the detailed nature of his notes.

LECTURE 1

Scope of lectures.

Typical and individual aspect of dreams.

Two inter-related methods of enlarging ego-boundaries.

Intuition, experienced knowledge, and expression, are aspects of one fact.

The principles of poetic diction are evolved from the unconscious laws of dream formation.

Language.

LECTURE 3. EVALUATION OF DREAMS³⁹

1. Value of dreams for the analyst.

a. With regard to interpretations given during analysis. – *confirmations*

b. With regard to transference.

infantile projection <from> analyst

2. Value of pre-conscious material.

Conflicts in terms of present-day events

3. Cardinal rule in dream analysis

Value of latent content.

Dreams about analyst must be explored particularly from latent content.

4. Exceptions to cardinal rule.

Value as dream as a whole:-

a. Diagnostic.

b. Accommodation. – *eg. of necessity of <urinating>*

c. Placation. – *of analyst -> analysis of <necessity> to <please>*

d. Potency. etc. – *producing many dreams*

e. *Purpose of dreams*

5. Delay in relating dreams.

6. Typical dreams

7. Dreams in which occur:-

a. Conversation.

b. Number.

c. Colour.

8. Summary.

LECTURE 4. DREAMS⁴⁰

(1) "I was going abroad and had reached Folkestone⁴¹ and found I had left my belongings at home, money, keys and passport. I was going to Holland. I went back home and only a charwoman was there and I found everything safe in my drawers."

³⁹The Bowlby archive contained these typewritten lecture notes with Bowlby's pencil notes jotted in the margin (the latter are presented here in italics).

⁴⁰These dream fragments were found together to make up a single lecture. We do not know whether they are Bowlby's or his patients'.

⁴¹This was the harbor for the ferry going to Flushing in the Netherlands.

- (2) "I see a lady in my dream who had black stuff around her chest and around her hips. Only her waist was bare."
- (3) "I was in a bedroom and a man was giving a woman some wine to drink. I wanted some. He didn't give me any but came over to me and kissed me."
- (4) "I went into a church. I was sure the vicar was receiving birthday presents. I tried to put the cushions straight in my pew and could not. I climbed over the pew. I saw a woman feeding a baby. There was a puddle on the floor. I climbed back to my pew at the back of the church but I still faced the audience."
- (5) "I saw a genealogical table and it showed how the different characters in Jane Austin's novels were related to each other, for some characters appeared in more than one novel."

LECTURE 6⁴²

Examples.

- (1) Repressed memories in dreams coming to consciousness during analysis.
- (2) Reconstruction of memories from dreams.
- (3) Affect and emergence of memory material.
- (4) Phantasy in dreams.
- (5) Dream stimuli.
- (6) Dreams and progress in analysis.
- (7) Dreams of analysed and unanalysed persons.
- (8) Conclusion.

top[ic] What he did

What he wanted to do

What he thought he did.

Conclusions

On the basis of his personal notes we were able to show that in the 1930s and 1940s Bowlby was seriously thinking about and involved in psychoanalytic dream interpretation. Bowlby studied Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, analyzed his own dreams just like Freud himself, and conceived a series of lectures on dreams. Bowlby may have been critical of orthodox psychoanalysis, but it seems that for a considerable period he seriously entertained the possibility that "such stuff as dreams are made on" reveals important information about our unconscious life. In his later published writings, though, he used the content of dreams as a reflection of the influence of real-life experiences on the (unconscious) representations of attachment relations, with a clear focus on grief, loss, and mourning.

In rewriting psychoanalysis from an ethological perspective (cf. Van der Horst, 2011), Bowlby later introduced the idea of "defensive exclusion" to supplant Freud's psychoanalytic notion of "repression" (Reisz et al., 2018). Bowlby (1980) argued that through "selective exclusion" information reaching the individual "is being routinely excluded from further processing in order that his capacities are not overloaded" (p. 45) and that the behavioral system is thus temporarily deactivated. Bowlby saw "defensive exclusion" as a maladaptive and permanent form of exclusion and "at the heart of psychopathology"

⁴²The Bowlby archive contained these typewritten lecture notes with Bowlby's pencil notes jotted in the margin (the latter are presented here in italics).

(p. 65) as it leads to mental segregation. We hypothesize that the introduction of the concept of “defensive exclusion” would have bearing for thinking about dreams in *Loss* (Bowlby, 1980) and how unresolved grief may affect dream narratives.

Acknowledgments

The authors have secured formal permission from the Wellcome Library, Archives and Manuscripts section, and from the copyright holders The Grandchildren’s Trust to present the material from the Bowlby papers here. We are grateful to two anonymous reviewers and to Michael Fitzgerald, professor of child and adolescent psychiatry at the Trinity College in Dublin, for valuable comments on the text and suggested interpretations of Bowlby’s dreams.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This research was made possible by grants awarded to the first author by the Köhler-Stiftung (S112/10210/16) and the Dr. J. L. Dobberke Stichting voor Vergelijkende Psychologie (no. 3819) and by a Medical Humanities Investigator Award from the Wellcome Trust (Grant WT103343MA) awarded to the third author.

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