

Learning from Lockdown Dreams: Webinar Chat Transcript

This IM chat transcript is from the event *Learning from Lockdown Dreams*, a webinar hosted at the UCL psychoanalysis unit on 12 November 2020. A recording of this event is available online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jhgEdKluqN4>

01:18:41 D. O. —

Was there a collection of class and race?

01:23:58 Jacob Bates-Firth —

Hi everyone, we're really pleased to have you all here! My name is Jacob, and I'm going to be keeping track of any questions posted in this chat-box and hopefully getting a few of them across to the speakers. If you'd like to ask anything, please do post it here. There should also be a chance to speak directly later on, space / time permitting...

01:25:35 D. O. —

Very creative, congratulations.

01:34:30 Jacob —

Hi D., thank you! To respond to your earlier question: at present there's no data being collected directly on race and class. Our initial ethos was to keep things as pared back as possible (i.e. to just collect the content of the dream and some further associations

and comments on the part of the dreamer). In the final iteration of the survey, we did add some questions regarding further identifying details, for instance employment status and country of residence, but none of these directly engage with the question of the race or class of the participant. There would obviously be a lot of value in being able to easily organise and think about the material in this way, so maybe something to be added in the future...

01:37:18 A. —

It's interesting though - at least for me, dreams are very fragmented and mostly feelings. What exactly happened is hard to recall. So when I remember the dream in the morning it's almost a conscious restructuring and remoulding of what happened, but the feeling is what lingers for me.

01:42:11 Jacob —

Hi A., I'm the same! We added a question to the survey ('How did you feel when you woke up?') to try to give participants a chance to 'reach back' past the more organised imagistic / verbal content and express something of that more fundamentally emotional or feeling-based aspect of dreaming in their responses.

01:50:13 A. —

Thanks for sharing that you dream the same, Jacob. Adding the feeling question is definitely necessary when asking about dreaming. Sharing dreams is almost taboo, listening to these snippets of dreams feels almost intimate to hear that raw feeling and

subject matter. At least in my family it's not something we typically share with one another, and not a mainstream subject matter either, at least here in Canada.

01:51:03 Z. —

Great thoughts!

01:54:01 J. —

Or the slightly different angle, voiced by Dennis Reynolds: 'I hate listening to people's dreams. It is like flipping through a stack of photographs. If I'm not in any of them and nobody is having sex, I just don't care.'... I jest of course. But there is a parallel silencing of dreams

01:55:38 N. —

Here is the quotation from [Charlotte] Beradt's book [*The Third Reich of Dreams*]: 'In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then be openeth the ears of men.' — Job.

01:55:54 J. W. —

Are any of the dreams recurring?

01:56:38 Zara E Haghpanah-Shirwan —

Yes! Some of the dreams are recurring - dreamers often indicate whether this is the case, or if it's the first time they've had the dream

01:56:52 A. —

Oh exactly J., it can be excruciating to listen to a long rambling dream, haha. Maybe it's the dream themes, or when they come off poetic, or emotional that is the most intriguing.

01:57:31 J. A. —

Do you think that the dream process is where crucial symbols are formed, sited, as it were, on the border between body and mind?

01:58:49 J. G. — Have you had any increase in lucid dreaming? Or a greater influx for those who already were able to?

02:00:17 A. —

Yes, if dreams are an expression of emotions and processing them, it makes so much sense that a global pandemic would generate more recollection and vividness of dreams - seemingly worldwide.

02:01:25 D. A.—

Any frequency of dreams concerning people from the past late parents or partners possibly providing some reassurance?

02:02:02 D. —

What about the relationship between diet and having vivid dreams. People have documented the focus on eating during lockdowns.

02:02:16 L. C. —

I was wondering about the 'vividness' of dreams reported during lockdown, and what came to mind is the 'vividness' of being awake, the vividness of reality, so wondered if this aspect is pointing to or talking about a blurring of boundaries which has been a central part of the pandemic. Boundaries between work and home, between individuals living, working or being educated in the same space, so loss of privacy and general boundaries between us and the other, inside and outside have been blurred. Perhaps in a similar way the boundaries between conscious and unconscious, our sense of what is real and what is not has been disturbed.

02:03:50 K. —

Thank you everyone. Really interesting. Sorry I need to leave early. All the best.

02:05:12 N. B. —

Is there any data / is there a question on the form on how many of the participants in the project were in analysis?

02:06:18 V. B. —

Re: Daniel [Pick]'s comment on collective projects - it's been striking to see corresponding currents of collectivism and individualism playing out during the pandemic.

02:08:10 M. B. —

Do you think that as the primary source for the dream content is current waking life that covid and lockdown dreams might be more realistic and less metaphorical than ordinary dreams, for which it is the person's conflicts and recent life that combine to create the dream?

02:10:26 T. D. —

Is dreaming and the recollection of dreams related to having access / connection to preconscious processes and content? Possibly a place that offers more potential for transformation?

02:11:17 T. R. —

There's a fascinating and famous series of scenes near the end of The Sopranos - where Tony finds himself in a dream world he cannot escape, stuck at the airport indefinitely with no way of getting home...

02:11:43 D. —

So the production of vivid dreams has become a pandemic too?!

02:14:12 Soraya Kezelmann —

@D. poignant!

02:16:10 L. C. —

The modern version of Freud's shock at seeing himself might be the shock (and disgust?) when our phones are inadvertently on selfie mode and we see ourselves.

02:17:07 Jacob—

Hi Anuradha, thanks for your question. We didn't collect any information on whether participants were or had been in analysis (or, indeed, whether they were involved professionally in psychotherapy in some way). It would be very interesting to know this I wouldn't be surprised if a fair share of participants have some active interest in analysis. Access to our project has largely been mediated by social media channels related to analysis: by retweets by the Psychoanalysis Unit's twitter profile, the Freud museum's twitter profile, etc.

02:17:38 T. R. —

What are your thoughts on the gender imbalance in terms of responses?

02:17:40 N. B. —

Hi Jacob - thanks for the reply, very useful to know.

02:18:21 D. —

One interesting point seems to me what was absent in dreams in your project (like washing hands). I realised that most themes relates to recovering sense of security or avoiding annihilation, but sexuality (or infantile sexuality) is missing. I assume that some murderous fantasies, jealousy, voyeuristic desires may related to oedipal situation. Also government tried to intrude into the parent's bedroom indicating what is epidemiologically right sexuality.

02:19:36 D. A. —

I have read that Pinter may have used dream scenarios in his work. Did you get any accounts of subjects using their dreams creatively perhaps in a way that they wouldn't before covid?

02:19:41 N. B. —

So interesting - but the other way of thinking about this is that the government intrudes into the life of the individual - the parents who force the child to watch the primal scene.

02:20:51 S. —

This is wonderful and fascinating. Thank you everyone for the work you're doing. I have lots of questions but will limit to one: Is your work able to discern whether it's people who regularly remember their dreams that are having more vivid dreams and/or is it that there is also a higher rate of dream recall in and of itself? Thank you!

02:21:28 D. K. —

Fascinating project and discussion. Many thanks. As a clinician (I'm a psychoanalytic psychotherapist in practice both at the Tavistock Adult Dept and in private practice), I was particularly struck by the fact that the dreams that my patients started to produce seemed to relate directly to the changes of their experiences in the (transference) relationship to the therapist: the sudden move from 'in person' sessions to online sessions seemed to bring up issues of distance and proximity (including psychotic fantasies of intrusion and permeability - both ways) to the fore as never before. The political context, as Daniel [Pick] said, also seems to be invariably present in associations

and references to Trump and Boris as figures which have come to symbolise something about raw and primitive anxieties about control (concerns with confidentiality when the concrete boundaries are no longer the four walls of the consulting room) or the lack of it. I wonder if your research has shown any material along those lines?

02:29:31 A. F. —

Hello everyone and thank you so very much for these incredibly stimulating perspectives.

02:30:48 Jacob —

Hi everyone, there are a lot of questions which there may not be time to respond to. We should be able to keep a hold of this transcript and will try to respond to as many of these as possible in a later newsletter. If anyone is interested, please sign up via our website lockdowndreams.com!

02:31:16 S. W. —

Thank you to everyone for such a stimulating presentation. Really enjoyed this presentation. Thank you.

02:31:28 W. K. —

Thank you for an extremely illuminating talk.

02:32:21 D. O. —

Thank you for a very stimulating webinar and it'd be great to have a second webinar on this. Still much to unpick, and of course thank you very much for today!

02:32:33 C. B. —

I have been collecting dreams through social media in France to create a dialogue with illustration. I know have a collection of about 30 dreams, and could probably invite the dreamers to also send them the record of their dreams (starting March 2020) if you would like. Best regards.

02:33:23 D. O. —

I have a background in music and I would be very interested to know if any of the dreams you have collecting.

02:33:38 N. B. —

The last one is a lovely point - about boundaries. Inside and outside, safety and danger - thanks to Jake for bringing this up.

02:33:48 D. O. —

Have you been collecting that might have a sonic or musical element?

02:33:56 D. —

My sincere wish fulfilment is to wake up only to realise that coronavirus was all a bad dream! Thanks for a very interesting talk and project.

02:33:57 Jacob —

It's been so interesting reading everyone's questions and responses! Thank you for all the input and engagement.

02:34:27 Zara —

Perhaps next webinar we will go through some of the dreams in depth

02:34:54 A. —

Thanks so much for hosting and sharing this research! Great dialogue too, hope there will be another session. :)

02:35:19 Jake C Roberts —

T. - If I said Canada was so good I included it twice in the data, would that suffice?

02:35:28 T. D. —

Thank you for the discussion guys - and well done to the team!

02:35:54 M. —

I wonder if a recommended reading list could be made available from this presentation?

02:36:12 N. B. —

Thanks for referring to Klein, a wonderful description - the case of Richard, the evolution of the drawings and the links to the dreams

02:36:21 Zara —

Hi M. - we can put this on our website lockdowndreams.com. Great idea

02:36:35 M. H. —

Excellent presentation - many thanks to all those who organised it and spoke this evening!

02:36:37 . P. —

Thank you very much, I'll start following you on Twitter.

02:36:59 A. G. —

Thank you very much to all the presenters.

02:37:15 W. R. —

Thank you very much.

02:37:17 N. L. —

Thank you all. Miss ya.

02:37:21 V. —

Thank you.

02:37:22 C. N. —

Thank you for such a fascinating discussion, and congratulation on the project. I look forward to following it as it develops!

02:37:24 M. —

Thank you!

02:37:24 T. R. —

Thanks all - fascinating project.