

Orality in dreams and myths

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Orality and mythology: A good deal of mythological features reveals its relationship to hallucinatory functions in various ways and as an introduction to a short lecture on Orality in dreams, I refer to two examples from important Greek myths:

The first example symbolizes the teeth of a very dark blue snake and its sowing in the earth as procreation and birth of human beings, here men.

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in the 3rd book on Cadmus: "and he ...scatters the teeth as mortal semen into the soil, as commanded ... and the number of men with shields grows..." *spargit humi iussos mortalia semina dentes.*" Those are the triple rows of teeth from the slayed snake. Cadmus then hears a voice, which prophesies to him, that he too will be seen as a snake one day.

Here we encounter an old symbolisation of the tooth in dreams as a male procreative principle, as phallus and semen, more exactly in a poly-phallic form; the ploughed soil as the mother.

Turning to another myth, the *Oresteia*, we learn the following detail from Pausanias in the eighth book of his *Periegesis*: he describes the place, dedicated to the Eumenides, in which Orestes turned insane after the matricide of Clytemnestra: Not far away, there was a little hill of soil, on which there was a stone finger as a fixture; the monument was called "daktylou mnema", "Finger Monument": Orestes, in his insanity had bitten a finger off his left hand. In Aeschylus on the other hand, we find a prophetic dream of Clytemnestra, in which a snake, which she gave birth to, sucks milk and blood from her breast, so as to imply matricide. She wakes up in panic. In this dream a snake symbolizes a son.

Orality in myths does not have to be sought in remote times: until this day, the priest in Catholic rite takes the flesh and blood of his god in the form of bread and wine, as *communio*.

If the point in question is to outline orality in dreams briefly, a limitation of the theme down to tooth and teeth presents itself: In an over 2000 year old tradition, from Aristandros and Artemidoros to Freud, Stekel and furthermore to authors of the recent past like H. Darlington, S. Feldman, M. Friedemann S., L.Kanner, S. Lorand, C. Seligmann, the symbolism of teeth in dreams has been worked on more.

According to a literature debate, a small selection of polymorphic, manifest dreams from a long series of dreams (N=3638; 13 years) is to be submitted, as an empiric footing for a comparison of literature and implicit of terminology -, which is of course empiric material- in the words of Artemidoros: "*dia peiras kai ten ton apotelesmaton martyrian*" "Through experience and the testimony of the issues of the dreams" having priority with regard to merely deductive and vague terminologies: in Grünbaum's words: of "deductive traps".

Aristandros, Alexander the Great's dream-reader, is quoted as follows, by Artemidoros: "You should of course conceive the mouth as a house, the teeth as the people in the house ..." This old, rigid symbol significance has been conserved until today in folk superstition and interprets, for example, the loss of a tooth as the death of a certain relation. Schubert, a source of Freud's interpretation of dreams, distinguishes between symbol association and speech association and defines the former as the more extensive.

Artemidoros' definition of the significance of teeth in dreams is substantially more modern: "after that the teeth represent the necessities of life...": it corresponds exactly with the concepts of "*kaptaiv*" in the neo-psychoanalytic terminology of Schulz-Henke. Artemidoros used the term "*Chreia*", which means necessity, desire, yearning, distress and short-coming.

After more than one and a half millennia, Artemidoros has now become Freud's source: Freud calls Artemidoros' procedure "cipher method", because of the use of rigid symbol significances.

Freud defined some of the tooth dreams as typical dreams.

Freud's concept "oral phase" was amended by Abraham with a second oral-sadistic stage in early childhood development. It is characterized by the appearance of the teeth and biting. According to Freud, the "oral chamber" is extended via parts of the body to the whole body and its surface in the oral phase through the contact between the hands and feet with the mouth. In some manifest dreams, we will be able to show analogous degrees of freedom in the hallucinatory body pattern.

In more recent times Lorand gives a synopsis of interpretation possibilities of the tooth symbol in manifest dreams: "...Teeth can depict aggressive weapons, strength and sexual attraction. Teeth ... are a symbolic term for loss, separation, disintegration or danger of any kind ... they can represent masturbation, parturition and castration, too ... in any case the tooth symbol originates ... from the pre-genital experience of the individual ... some tooth dreams lead back to the earliest stage of thumb sucking, when the baby still has no teeth and feels happy with little or no interference from reality."

Lorand summarizes tooth symbolism in manifest dreams as follows: the tooth as a phallic symbol; teeth advance as a symbol of birth, abortion and death; teeth as *Vagina dentata* inter alia. Turning to Schubert's topic of speech and symbol association: in Slavonic languages *zub* means tooth as well as penis. Jung mentions that tooth dreams represent birth for female dreamers.

Kanner emphasises as follows: "...Indeed no other part of the body, with the exception of the eyes and the genitals, shows such a variety of folklore as the teeth...". Kanner sums up as follows: "...In folklore, the tooth is a sexual symbol ... for phallus and semen. The incest theme and bisexual fantasies are found in abundance ...".

Friedemann interprets dreams about the loss of hair or teeth as follows: "...The common denominator of such like dreams is the deprivation of manliness, expressed through the loss of physical characteristics. Extending this symbolism, Friedemann also includes the functional loss of dull objects in the manifest dream – for instance a gun.

Darlington presents interpretations in the direction of a deeper temporal regression: "...Obviously, the oral chamber in dream symbolism is the upward transfer of the womb chamber .. grave, body and house are all concentrated in (the theme) mouth, it would seem. A variety is concentrated and united in a sort of archaic unit ... Consciousness differentiates, Unconsciousness integrates ..." He quotes a mythologem of the African tribe Nandi: "...what is the wall in the interior of the human being's house, built by the ghosts (of the ancestors)? It is his teeth!"

Lewin refers to casuistry by Fenichel and sets up the following hypothesis:

"... the imagination that the whole body is a penis, symbolically represents a passive feminine reverie, the equivalent of the castration reverie on a phallic level. The imagination "returning to the mother" or entering the mother with the whole body is a distortion of the idea of being eaten up .. the identification of the whole body with the phallus is a special case of an even more general mechanism of the identification of the body with any part of the body ..." The problem arises here of the general representative proportions of the body pattern in the hallucinatory area of the manifest dream, further in psychotic production, in psychosomatics, perversions and last but not least in mythology and folklore.

After the abundance of topics broached, here are some examples of regressively structured manifest dreams of a neurotic male probationer from a long series of dreams, from 3638 dreams over 12 years: The outline of raw frequencies shows 146 manifest dreams with oral elements mainly from day`s residues, while 64 dreams show polymorphic, primary-process symbolisation, which allow a comparison with the quotations above from psychoanalytic literature and the mythologies mentioned.

The frequency of the 3 classifications shown, differ by one order of magnitude each.

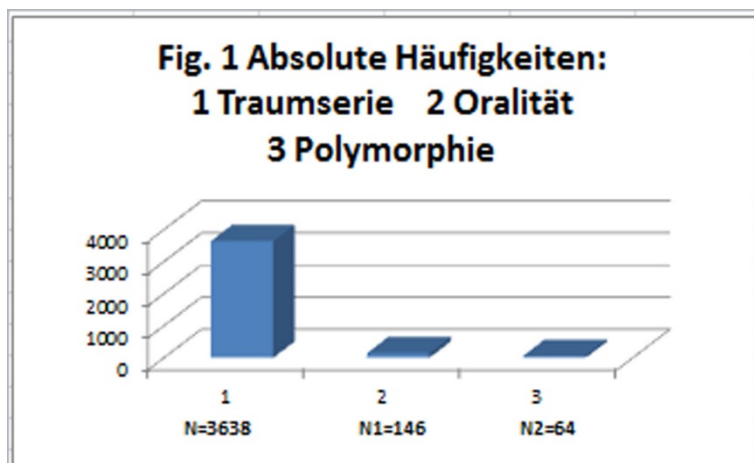


Fig. 1 Raw Frequencies:
1 Dream series
2 Orality
3 Poly-morphism

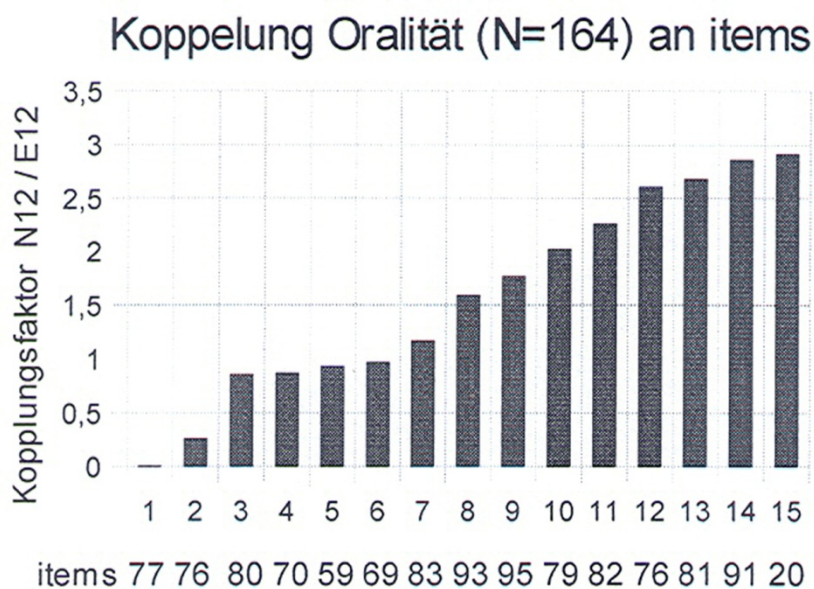


Fig. 2

Linkage orality (N=164) to items

Linkage variable N_{12}/E_{12} (N_{12} : frequency of intersection of two items; E_{12} : expected value of the same intersection)

Fig. 2 shows a spectrum of linkage variables (E. Olbrich) of the item orality with other items; linked are female "shadow figures" (Jung), anality, homosexual themes and castration themes.

Freud – in his main work “The Interpretation of Dreams” (Appendix 1909) – connects dreams about tooth irritation with craving for masturbation in puberty and presents a manifest dream of a young man with latent homosexuality: the central theme is: “...two university professors are treating him at my instead of ... one of them does something to his penis, he is afraid of an operation. The other thrusts an iron bar against his mouth, so that he loses one or two teeth ...”.

To this dream example: a manifest dream from the series of dreams N=3638 of a young man:

T2232: “Picasso, a looking lika a miserable crank and an old homo-type, who appears with a black hat and a black lace veil half pulled over his face, are our hosts. Picasso indulges in a joke: He puts both his index fingers in my mouth and others’ mouths insidiously, stretches the corners of our mouths and pushes the canine teeth, so that they become loose.”

Both manifest dreams resemble each other in several elements: both a university professor and a highly renowned artist are father substitutes and index fingers are phallic elements, as are penis and iron bar. The homosexual implication is manifest in the second dream. The dreamer plays a passive role in both dreams.

A dream example of paralleling penis and teeth is T493:

“... I have a date with my girlfriend ... I then consider cleaning my penis, or what seems more urgent to me, my teeth ...”

The following dream example shows an oral-anal permutation of the body pattern:

T2439: “... I discharge large amounts of excrement. Between two amounts of excrement I suddenly have a mouth full of faeces ... am amazed at the amounts of accumulated excrement ...”

A tooth dream without a manifest context follows:

T3513: “...Gradually all my molars and a few front teeth fall out – whole for the most part. I prepare for almost toothless biting ...”

A further permutation of the body pattern:

T1951: "...I lose my own penis, which I am easily directing to my mouth with my hand; pleasant."

Finally a dream of erotically stimulated orality – of a sexually frustrated dreamer:

T876: "Hussy meal ... lots of striped ladies lust after each other and eat."

In the following dream we find a castration theme with an oral element; one dream element suggests the degree of senile regression:

T1075 "... I castrated myself, the testicles next to me at the table. I nibble at them. A primary school friend is taken aback."

A further manifest dream shows colour symbolism and phallic and bisexual-passive elements in addition:

T88: "... I smear my teeth with lip stick or red wax crayons. I fail to flirt with the girl with determination, whom I had already grabbed by the knee as a result of her clear insistence."

A further dream – like all the dreams in this series from the sixties and seventies of the last century – is of sad journalistic topicality and shows manifestly, the connection between father substitutes and passively oral homosexual elements and anal-oral permutation:

T 1748: "Someone mimics, how Clergymen insert a phallus-like cigar on a stick into a boy's mouth, which causes the parsons orgasm. Repulsive."

A dream with an oral-anal implication:

T3247: Group of young people, who lust for each other; A Viennese sausage is inserted into a boy's anus."

Finally one last manifest example of a dream with an oral-sadistic and probable phallic implication:

T1673: "Someone roasts his own thigh stubs and his abdomen as a dish for others. Terrible."

The sketch at issue is confined to transcripts of manifest dreams; independent associations are not available for this series of dreams. The axiomatic precedence of the manifest dream is however indisputable today. The monstrosity of the dreams quoted is due to regression in juvenile-infantile pre-genital sections of the oral, anal and phallic level of Freud's diction. The justified criticism of Freud's mostly deductive structure for conceptions by Grünbaum for instance underestimates his empiric reference and Freud's self-criticism as well: Freud himself repeatedly calls his own constructions "rohe Hypothesen" "raw hypotheses". His daughter Anna calls the constructions of the post-Freudian schools frankly "Anarchy", just as Dilthey also speaks of the anarchy of the philosophical systems. The topic can be extended to Kant's criticism of the constituent use of noumena and Aristotle's criticism of sophism – the differentiation between onoma and pragma, but this is not the place for that.

Starobinski develops this problem with a simple but striking argument: "Freud tried to mythologise the language of his contemporaries in medicine and psychology again ... We have got so used to using Freud's conceptions to interpret myths that we forget to turn the problem over and to question whether the myths were not instrumental in forming Freud's conceptions..." This perfect conversion conclusion refers to a difficult form of "adaequatio intellectus et rei", as a scholastic definition of truth says and aims to the convergence of deductive thinking and hallucinatory automatism. Implicitly, Starobinski's statement is also valid for Freud's interpretation of dreams.

As a final figure in this short outline, may a witty quote from Mark Twain serve the purpose: Originally meant for Wagner's music, be it here for Freud's terminology: "It is better than it sounds."

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