

Dream Analysis and Culture

CORY: OK. Perfect. I'm Cory. And on behalf of Global Connections, I'd like to welcome you tonight to our webinar on dream analysis. Please feel free to use the chat box for any questions or comments throughout the presentation. And you have any trouble hearing or seeing any aspects of tonight, please send me a message and let me know, because that's what I'm here for.

And I'm very pleased to present Emily Castillas. She's going to be our presenter this evening. And she's a doctoral student and instructor in the Department of Anthropology, specializing in psychological anthropology. Her research interests include parenting, cross cultural conceptions of the self, decision making, cultural change, and Latin America.

EMILY CASTILLAS: Hello. OK welcome. Thank you for coming to Dream Analysis and Culture. And my name, as she said, is Emily Castillas. I want to repeat what she said about typing in questions. I can see the text box there, and I'm happy to answer. If I go too fast, or confusing in any way, let me now.

So we are going to talk about dreams. If I can get the first slide here. All right. What are dreams? So dreams are very interesting to lots and lots of people, not just here, but all around the world. So what we'll talk about a little bit here is why is that? Why are we so interested in them? And what can they tell us? What can we learn about ourselves? What can we learn about other things? About our culture or about our society. And it has a lot more possibilities than we think. But one point we will make, too, is that different cultures have different ideas of what you can learn from a dream.

So one thing that is interesting is that the existence of dreams or the phenomenon of dreaming, is universal among human groups-- among humans all over the world. And that's really, really unusual. They're not a lot of things that are human universal. So even things that we take for granted, we think are so normal, things that happen in our relationships, the way we think about things in the world, these turn out to not be universal.

There's a lot of cross cultural variation in a lot of really basic things. But the existence of dreams is cross cultural. So that must mean they're tied, somehow, to our biology. They're somehow fundamental to our species. They're not just a cultural phenomenon that happens in some places, but not others.

Dreams occur in almost all mammals, from what we can tell. And more and more scientific research is coming out all the time that allows us to understand that other animals are dreaming. Not all mammals dream. But almost all of them do. So that's another clue that it's gotta be something a little bit deeper, something in our biology, something we inherited from our ancestors, shared ancestors with some other mammals. So that's interesting.

Another fact about dreams that some of you probably already know, is that they're associated with a phase in the sleep cycle called Rapid Eye Movement or REM sleep. So they don't happen all the time when we're sleeping. And we certainly don't remember all of our dreams, as you all have experienced in your own lives, I'm sure.

Some people claim to never dream or to almost never dream, but the evidence from EKGs and things like that, shows us that these people probably are dreaming, They're just not remembering their dreams. That's a separate issue. So, interesting thing.

People have talked about dreams, theorized about dreams, come up with ideas about dreams, as far back as we have written record. So it's been interesting to us as a species for a really, really long time. Not so ancient, but pretty ancient, is the Greek. They had a god called Asklepios who was a healing god. And you can see on the slideshow, you can see a picture of him-- well, a statue of him. And you can see a snake crawling up a staff. And that might look familiar to you as part of the symbol of The American Medical Association. He was a healing god.

And what the belief was was that he could help heal people through dream. So if you were ill, you would go to one of his temples, where his priests and priestesses were working. And they would perform certain rituals, and then you would sleep in the temple. And while you were sleeping, the god might come to you in your dream and heal you during your dream cycle. So that was an early belief in Western culture. It's very interesting.

Different cultures around the world have completely different ideas about what dreams are, what they do for us, what you should do about them, and there's just a huge variety. I can't even begin to touch on them. But I will give you just a little sample. The Toraja people of Indonesia have a very interesting cluster of beliefs about dreams.

They believe that dreams are prophetic, that they can tell you things about the future, things that are going to happen in your life. They also think that when you're dreaming, you could be attacked by spirits. So it's a little bit of a time of vulnerability as well. Not that you would always be attacked. Just sometimes.

And a lot of other cultures believe something similar, that spirits, that creatures of the spirit world, that otherworldly beings, can visit dreamers. And that includes the practitioners of Haitian vodou. And they believe that you can have contact with important spirits in dreams. They can help you, give you advice, warn you of things. So there's a lot of importance around dreaming and what those dreams can mean in your life.

The Shan people of northern Thailand also believe that dreams can warn you that bad things are going to happen. They believe that if you dream of your teeth falling out, that means that misfortune is coming. So there's a really wide variety, really interesting.

And then, on the other end of that spectrum, a lot of cultures believe that you shouldn't talk about your dreams. That they're very, very private. That they would reveal something too private about you if you shared your dreams with other people. Or that some kind of punishment would come, spiritual punishment would come, if you shared your dream. So some cultures love to talk about dreams, think that it's very important to share your dreams with other people. Other cultures think they should be secret. So big variety.

So let's move on to around here, to Western culture. History of dream analysis here. And analyzing dreams goes back to the very beginning of what we call psychology, or the study of psychology. And Sigmund Freud, Dr. Sigmund Freud, is probably the most famous person associated with dream analysis in Western culture. And he was an early theorist associating it with psychology. And he was associated with the technique called free association.

And he believed that you had to sit and think about your dream, and that the items or the content in your dream were not necessarily the most important thing. But instead, those were symbols of more important things. So if you dreamt about one thing, it was actually symbolizing something else. And we'll talk about that more later on. He also wrote a book called *The Interpretation of Dreams*, we know that it was important to him.

So manifest content is the actual things you see in your dream, the items, the person you were talking to, or the animal that was in your dream, or the place that you were at, that the manifest content. It's the things you can put a name on and see. Things that were happening in the dream. And then the latent content is that underneath, that symbolic, that hidden meaning. And he believed that that was the more important part of your dream. So that was his thing. And then he went on to teach lots of other people about his theories.

An early theorist in anthropology about dreams was Dorothy Eggan. She was very important and interesting because she believed that dreams could tell us something about a person's culture. So I'm an anthropology student. I'm an anthropologist. So to me, this is the interesting question, right. It's really interesting to find out what a dream means to an individual person. But to me, the even more interesting thing is what does that tell us about that dreamer's culture? What does that tell us about a larger group of people?

And that's something I don't think a lot of people think about dreams being able to do for us. But they really can. So it's interesting to me. So she said that you couldn't just do a one to one kind of analysis. Some early dream theorists, and some people still today, believed that certain symbols meant certain things exactly. So if you dreamt of well, say, your teeth falling out, that meant bad things were going to happen. The symbol means an exact thing. One to one.

She said it doesn't really work like that. It's not an equation. It's not a mathematical equation. And that the dream meaning has to come from your context, from your cultural context. So you have to think about the environment, the cultural environment, that the dreamer lives in and exists in. And that would help you get towards the meaning of the dream. That person's life, that person's daily reality. So I think that's really interesting.

And another thing that she started, which has been valuable in anthropology, is the idea that when you talk about a dream, it's the way you can talk about something, that you otherwise are not supposed to talk about. So something that's a taboo subject. Something you're not supposed to talk about. Like, infidelity or disrespect of your elders. Something that you're really not supposed to talk about, or you're not supposed to be thinking or feeling. You can talk about it when you're describing a dream. That the dreams are a place where things that we don't like to talk about sort of come up in our dream.

And if you describe it in the dream, you can kind of say, it's not my fault, right? You can't control what you dream about. So you can say, I'm just telling you about a dream. I don't really want to cheat on my spouse. It's just a dream I had. You're able to talk about things that are difficult or that are taboo. But they're part of your psyche, part of your inner reality. So this has been valuable to many anthropologists.

So what can we learn from dreams? One thing that I believe and many people believe you can learn from dreams, is what their culture is. So on a surface level, people dream about things that they see in their life. So you can learn about sort of the day to day life or the material culture of people in that dream. So those of you here in Washington state probably don't have a lot of dreams about being in the Amazon jungle, subsistence farming.

These are not things that we probably dream about very often, because they're not part of our day to day reality. But you'll have dreams with cars and planes and school and all kinds of things that are part of your culture, your life here. So if you ask about a dream, if you find out a lot about a dream, you can kind of find out what's important in the day to day life of that person.

But there's deeper things we can learn too. So we can learn a little bit about the sub-conscious self of that dreamer, of the person. So I already said the dreams are a space where we sometimes think and we do mental work about things that we don't usually want to talk about. Things that we're not dealing with in our life. Things that we are pushing down. They will sometimes creep up in our dreams in strange ways. Sometimes in important and obvious ways. Sometimes it's subtle and hard to figure out.

But that can be really interesting, because the sub-conscious self is part of our overall self. And it's part of our cultural self, because every culture has different rules, different taboos, about what you can and can't talk about. What you're supposed to feel, what you're supposed to think about certain things. So if there's something that you never talk about and it's cropping up in your dreams and it's bothering you subconsciously, that tells us about what is taboo or not taboo in that culture. It's pretty interesting to an anthropologist, to somebody wanting to learn about a culture.

Another thing that's really interesting that we can learn about is culture change. So people who are experiencing culture change, maybe they've moved to a new place, maybe they have been living in a place that's changing really quickly-- like you lived in a small fishing village and all of a sudden it's full of tourists and everybody's making money, instead of subsistence fishing.

These are big changes that happen in people's lives. And people in their day to day lives, just try to cope with it, right? We just try to do the best we can. We're too busy getting enough food, and making money for our families, and doing the day to day things, but our dreams can reflect the conflict. They can reflect the clash of your old culture and your new culture that you're dealing with. So culture change is very interesting to anthropologists.

So dreams can be an interesting window into the parts of culture change that people aren't talking about. The things that they're pushing down and not really talking about because they're too busy living your life, right? So lots of interesting things that we can learn.

The culture change one was particularly an argument from Dorothy Eggan that we talked about. That was the contribution she gave to the theory of the field. So you've moved on into your new culture, you're thinking about just getting to your job on time and things like that. But your dreams, your subconscious mind is holding on to those memories and trying to work through it. We change really quickly in our lives, but sometimes our brains have to try to keep up.

OK. So moving on to a little bit of the fun part. This part of the lecture, I'm trying to give you an idea of what you could take away from this. So I gave you sort of the theory and the background, and hopefully, it wasn't too dry or too boring, or anything like that. And now, I'm going to talk about a few different types of dream analysis. And this is something you could do for yourself. You could remember your dreams, and you could work on them yourself. And you could do it with your friends or your family or something like that.

Or maybe you've had some dreams that have really bothered you. And you want to go back and try to figure out what was that dream talking about. And I don't think any of you sent in a dream description for this class, but if you think of something, if you've already thought of something, or if you think of something, you're welcome to share it. And I can help you try to come up with some ideas about what it might be about.

You could just type questions in, or if you have a microphone, or even a webcam, you could get on, and we could talk about it, if you want. So keep in mind if you want to, just let us know, and we'll get you set up.

So this says to types, but I think I have three types in here. So we'll get started. Oh, before I start, I'd like to talk about how to remember your dreams. So some of you might not remember your dreams very often. And I'm like that. I'll remember a lot of dreams, but they tend to be just tiny little flashes of images, things like that. And then, every once in a while, I'll have a big, complicated dream. And I bet some of you are just like that. Other people remember lots of dreams all the time. They're very vivid. Some people remember hardly anything ever. There's a range.

But for any of you, there's ways you can increase the likelihood that you will remember your dreams. So the first one is probably the reason I don't remember my dreams, and that is get

enough sleep. Some of you are students, this might be easier said than done. But it is a big thing when it comes to remembering your dreams.

The second one is a little more unusual, and that is, when you lay down in bed at night, and you're getting ready to go to sleep, tell yourself, I am going to remember my dream. I am going to remember my dream. Talk to yourself about it. Convince yourself. And it actually does help a little bit. So give it a try. And then another one is to keep a pad and paper or a recording device, something like that, next to your bed. And record your dreams as soon as you wake up.

And I mean as soon as you wake up. So not after you've gotten up and gone to the bathroom. As soon as you wake up. Before you turn on the light, or at least enough light to write. Before you move around a bunch, before you start thinking about your day. Because, as you probably have noticed, they disappear so quickly. This is really important to get down some details immediately. You could always fill in more details later. But the details are disappearing really fast. And sometimes some of the best information from your dream is in the details.

What you get out of a dream, if you try one of these analysis types, is going to depend completely on what you put into it. So the amount of time you spend thinking about it, the amount of detail you can remember, that will all improve what you can get out of the experience, what you can learn about yourself, or what you're trying to do with the dream analysis. So definitely try that out. It really makes a difference. Those are my little tips. And let's start learning about dream analysis.

OK. So Carl Jung. Carl Jung was a student of Sigmund Freud. So he was a psychologist. And he was early on in the field, but he's still pretty popular today. He's still in [AUDIO OUT] differs from Freud in a lot of ways. There's a Freudian analysis dream type too, but I didn't include it in this lecture.

OK. So Carl Jung. He thought dreams were very important. He definitely talked about dreams with his patients. And he believed that the dream has a protagonist in it. And the protagonist is important. The protagonist is basically part of yourself. So he also believed that there were other characters in the dream. These characters do not have to be people in the dream. You could have a dream that has an animal in it. And that animal could be a character. In the United States, we think about cars a lot. We think about mobility and vehicles a lot. And so cars and other vehicles are often symbols in dreams. They're often characters in Jung's, in his methodology, you'd call it a character in the dream.

And if you are interested in this idea of cars and vehicles in dreams, you've got to something by Dr. Jeannette Mageo. She's a professor here at the University and has written some really interesting things about dream analysis and culture. And I'll have a citation for her book at the end, if you want to look into it.

OK. So part of Jung's theory of personality, theory of how our brains work, how our minds work, was that we start off, when we're born, as this big whole psychic person-- psychology. And he

believed that in order to become adult functioning members of our society, we had to break off chunks of our psychology, chunks of our psyche. And split them off.

Splitting them off was the term that he used. And we dissociate them from ourselves. So the first one, he said, was for a little infant, splits off mom. The infant realizes, I am not mom. That was like, the first realization for an infant. And so that mom becomes split off from yourself. Later on, you split off the gender that you don't associate with. You split off dad. You split off bad person who doesn't follow the rules. You split off all these different things as you get older.

But then once you're an adult, you're stripped down a little bit, right? You've split off a whole bunch of different things. And so you might cause yourself some problems. So let's say you're a woman. And you've split off male. I am not male. I split that off. And later on in your life, you're having lots of relationship problems. And the reason is you split off male too much. You split it so completely that now you can't even relate to men. You can't even understand them, right? So the problem is that you've dissociated a little too much.

And you're going to have dreams with that dissociation in them. Because there's a problem. You're having these problems because you split too much. And so that dissociated part will come into your dreams to communicate with you, to let you know that there's a problem. And you will have to interact with that dissociated part. And hopefully, you'll work through the problem and you could sort of incorporate male a little bit, so that you're not so completely split.

And it could be any of these other parts of yourself too. And a few different parts could show up in one dream. Or you could have one part coming to dreams over and over and over, trying to get your attention. And then you could also have parts where there's not a huge problem, but they're there in your dream communicating with you for some reason.

So the dream takes the perspective of one of these split of parts. So the dream might be you acting as if you were the male, say. And so you're sort of seeing the other perspectives. Sort of forcing you to try to reintegrate these split off parts. So, interesting theory, I think.

Oh, one last note on the Jungian analysis. So these things are cultural, right? The parts you split off from yourself have to do with your culture because your culture tells you what to split off. Tells you what is a female, what is a male, what is a mother like, what is a father like, what is a well-behaved child like. All of these things. And so this might be an older analysis type.

This might be a theory of how the mind works that maybe not everybody agrees with anymore. But if you use this one, you still could uncover some interesting ideas about yourself and about your culture, about how your culture taught you to be a person. Every culture has different definitions of good people.

So how to do a Jungian dream analysis. It starts first with something he called amplification. And what you do, sit quietly, you relax, you let go, and you just try to think of nothing else but the

dream. Describe it, remember as many details as you can. You try to make it come back to you. And then you compare it to your life situation. What's going on in my life right now. That might give you some clues about why I was dreaming about that thing specifically.

And then you try to think of the metaphor. Right. What in the dream could be symbolizing something else? So if you were dreaming of male, of the male split off self, it's not going to tell you that in the dream. There's not going to be like, a man walking up to you saying, I represent all males. It's not exactly like that. You have to work a little harder and try to figure out what things were being symbolized. So maybe it was a man that know in your life.

Or maybe it was an animal, or a vehicle, or something like that. But you'll have to work at it to try to figure out what it actually means. And then, that's where you start naming, OK, what are those characters? And how do they match potentially split off parts? Which part of myself is in that character possibly? So it's really a focus on what things or people are you interacting with in the dream.

Selfscape dreams. This is a different kind of dream. And this was described first by an anthropologist and psychologist-- he was both-- named Douglas Hollan. He noted that people have a lot of different kinds of dreams, and they can do a lot of different kinds of work for us. So you could have dreams that are helping you think about certain things that are wish fulfillment, showing you something you wish you had, that are releasing stress, all different kinds of reasons.

But he said that there's some dreams that are special. He said that there's some dreams that are so vivid, they're so real, they just scream at you that they must mean something, right. He said that everybody around the world, everywhere, has this kind of dream at least once in awhile. Not all the time. Just some times. And some of you might have had that and that might be why you're even interested in this class, right, is that you're like, oh, I had this one dream and I still remember it to this day. It was so real.

I know I've had that experience, so maybe some of you have too. You could talk about in the chat room, if you want. And he said that those dreams are special. That they have some information for us. But they're doing a special kind of work. And that that's why they're universal too, right. They're a part of the human experience because they do something for us that we need.

And he says that the main thing they're doing is they're giving us an update. They're giving us kind of a news flash about how we are doing in our lives right now, in relation to other people. To our important relationships in our life. And humans are social creatures. We don't do very well alone. So our relationships are really, really important to us. We spend a lot of time thinking about them all the time. So this is an important job that those dreams do for us.

So he says that this changes all the time, right. Our relationships are always shifting, they're always changing, we're always growing. And that they can be in a bad state, you could have

problems. You could have a conflict with somebody you care about. It could be in a good state. But that these dreams are giving you an update. They're giving you a map of your relationship.

And so he says that your dreams can kind of help you out with this. And that you can figure out what these dreams are trying to tell you. They can help you out in coping with your relationships in your life.

Now, to do a selfscape dream analysis, you definitely have to do Jung's first step of relaxing and thinking about the dream. That's going to be a step in any kind of analysis. You kind of clear your mind of other things and think about the dream. And he says, just like Jung, first think about how does this reflect your life right now? How does this reflect your current life?

And then-- this is an unusual one-- how does it reflect your body? So there was a you in this dream, is the theory. Maybe it was you yourself, looking like yourself, or sometimes people dream about being much older than they are, or much younger, or maybe they look the same, but their body behaves differently in the dream. Like those dreams where you can't move. You want to move, but you're frozen. Or that you're moving very slowly. Things like that.

Sometimes people will dream about being pregnant when they're not. So your body in the dream matters, under this theory. So he says that your body could be showing a lot of vitality, showing you superhuman strength, or youth. Your youth coming back. Something like that. Or it could show decrepitude. It could show illness, or weakness, or something like that.

And he says that this is because your relationship to your body is one of the very important relationships you have in your life. And so that's the first relationship you can uncover in this kind of dream analysis. So that can be very helpful to some people.

So another thing is the other people in your dream. And again, they don't have to be actual people. Or they could be people that represent other people. So maybe you dream about a friend of yours, but that person's actually representing lots of your friends, or something else. Or representing a totally different person. Be like, well, the person in my dream was this friend of mine, but really, I was dreaming about my boyfriend. Or something like that. That can definitely happen in these dreams.

So you go through these steps, and you learn about what the dream is telling you about yourself, your relationship with yourself, and your relationship with other people important in your life. So that can be things that we definitely want to know about, right? This type of the dream also really emphasizes the emotional content.

So how were you feeling emotionally in the dream. Were you very upset? Were you very peaceful? Were you scared? Whatever emotions you were feeling will really give you clues about what's going on in those relationships in your life. The emotions are very important and a clue.

And then this dream analysis type also really emphasizes that there could be things going on in your life that you don't really think about, that you're trying not to think about, or that your culture tells you you shouldn't think about, and that you're pushing those things down. And that the dreams are a place where they can come back up again. So could be very interesting and useful for you.

There's another dream analysis type called the cognitive/affective analysis. And this one tells you something right in the name of it. So cognitive. That's how you're thinking. That's an analytical side of your brain. And affective refers to affects, or your emotion. So the idea is that there's these two parts of your brain or two halves of your brain, but that they interact and they work together.

And so this dream analysis is trying to come up with information based on those connections. And this type really works a lot with schema theory. And schema theory's really interesting in anthropology. Schema theory says that you have schema for everything important in your life.

So one schema that you have, everybody has, is a mother schema, or mom schema. And what that means is that you have an idea in your head about what a mom should be. What a mom acts like or is. And it's based partly on your own mom. Maybe it's based on other mothers that you've known. Nowadays, it could be based partly on mothers you've seen on TV. Things like that. Maybe if you are a mother, that schema has evolved a little bit. And so when someone talks about a mom, you're thinking of that sort of image in your head or what moms are, what are moms supposed to be, what are they supposed to be like.

And you have schemas for all kinds of things. You have a boss schema. You have a dog schema. You have all kinds of schemas. Tons and tons of them. And the ones that are most important to you can be very complex, because you've known a whole lot of moms, right? And got all kinds of emotional connections to the idea of mom, probably.

And then there's also emotion schema. You have a schema in your head, of what is love, of what is hate, what is friendship. What are all of these different things? Emotions schemas are very important to us, according to this kind of analysis.

And the other part of that is that there is something called "extra-semantic" knowledge. And extra-semantic knowledge means it's more than what you're just thinking on the surface. It's more than your analytical brain. That part of your brain that is emotion driven is it really collecting a lot of information, it has a lot of knowledge, but that we don't usually prioritize it.

We really prioritize our analytical lives in this culture, not in every culture. And so we spend a lot of time thinking about things analytically and ignoring the emotional knowledge that we have. And so your dreams are a place where your emotional knowledge can have a voice, not being pushed down so hard.

And so this dream analysis thinks about what are the important symbols in your culture. Because the schema you have as a mom, say, to stick with that example, it's probably not all that different from the schema I have of a mom, if we're both from the same culture. I'm assuming pretty much everybody in this room is from more or less the same cultural group. We probably have a lot of overlap in our ideas of what a mom is. We'll have little differences here and there, but we're from the same culture, so we have some similar ideas.

And so we have some similar symbols for those ideas, too, right? And so, those will show up in our dreams. You'll have things that are symbols to you that would maybe be the same thing symbolized to me. And so if you understand that culture, you might better understand that person's dream. Or, on the other side of it, if you understand that person's dream, it might teach you something about that person's culture.

So we take all these symbols that our culture gives us, all of these schemas that we create around the information our culture gives us, and we fit them all inside. We keep them all. They're all part of our self. And so this dream analysis type is really trying to get a lot of cultural information. But it can be really interesting to do to learn about yourself and how you interact within your culture.

So to do this type of analysis, you think about how does this dream relate at all to anything that's going on in my life right now? So you dream about school, maybe that's easy. Maybe you're in school right now. So you're, oh, definitely connected my daily life.

Some dreams could be a little harder than that, right? You'll dream about a place you haven't been to in 20 years. Or an imaginary place. Or the people in the dream are not people you know in your real life. It might be harder to get at. But it probably relates somehow to something that's going on in your life. It might just be all through symbols and metaphors and things.

So then we try to think about what were the emotions going on in the dream? And so what is the emotional schema that was being used in this dream? So if the dream was full of fear, then what is your schema of fear? And how was that happening in the dream? And then what are the symbols?

So I once had a student that had a dream that had a person who's on a murderous rampage, exactly like a scary movie, was in her dream. And that is a person running with an ax is an easy symbol of a fear schema in our culture, right. Totally out of a movie. Totally a cultural symbol that we would recognize, being from this culture. And then you should think about, in this dream, this emotion from the dream, so say it was fear, when did you experience that in the past?

Sometimes this really comes right to people. They're like, yeah, I was dreaming about this, and I was running away from the ax murderer. But this dream feels like it had something to do with when I was like, 10 or 11. And other times, it's hard to tell. They'll say, I don't see how that

connects with my past. I don't know. But if you think about it long enough, it will sometimes connect to something that happened in the past also.

It might be like, well, think about when have you felt that way in your life? And that might give you some information. So you can also think about that emotional schema and about the tension in the dream between your thinking brain and your emotional brain, and how that connects to your culture. How was that symbol or that schema given to you by your culture?

Can you say that if the thing that was happening in your dream, could someone else have had something similar happen to them? And that means it was part of your culture. And so it can tell you about how you're processing that. Because sometimes we have a conflict, right. Our culture is telling us to feel one way, but we don't really feel that way. There can be a conflict. But if you know about it, maybe you can work through it a little more easily.

All right. So, conclusion. Why talk about dreams? Why study dreams? Why is this interesting to us? I think that dreams can be really important for social sciences because they can give us the culture of the dreamer. They can really kind of take us into their inner lives and really give us something.

But you can also think, well, it's just interpretation, right. You can say it means anything. Who knows. Who knows if they're even telling the truth, this person. Or who knows what your subconscious self is. Who knows if you have a subconscious.

But to me, it's still interesting because I can ask someone what they dreamed about and they can tell me what they thought it meant. I don't know if that's true or not, but I have learned something about that person. I've learned what they think it means. And that's as much truth as anything else.

That tells me something about that person right there. What they think about the dream. If it has any value to them. What they think it means. It doesn't mean that I have to agree with their interpretation, or that other people have to agree. It's valid, just because it is. That's what they think about it. So that's interesting. What we think about things tells us about ourselves and tells us about our culture. So I think it's interesting.

All right. Anybody interested in volunteering? Nobody's stepped up so far. But we definitely have time. I've left time for it just in case. You could give me just a tiny little thing, or you could talk in depth. Think about it. You don't have to reveal anything that's embarrassing or very, very personal. You don't have to tell us anything you don't want to tell us. It doesn't have to be like that.

You can always say, like, well, I dreamt about that and it's uncomfortable. I don't want to talk about that part. And that's completely fine. But don't be shy. If you're thinking about it, then you should definitely let me know. Or if you have questions about any parts of this, or comments. [INAUDIBLE]

These are some reading recommendations I have if you thought this was interesting. There's also a class taught by Jeanette Mageo. You can see her name up at the top there. It's difficult to pronounce. It's M-A-G-E-O. And she designed a class, an anthropology 404 class that's taught online mostly. And she uses dream analysis in the class to great effect. It really is very interesting. And the students almost always get a lot of it and really enjoy learning about it.

Oh, good. I've got some things to read from people. Let me take a moment. Oh, more than one. Good. So I'll just go from top to bottom and we'll fit everybody in. OK. [AUDIO OUT] Oh, somebody's had the dream of their teeth falling out. Isn't that so interesting? You're not the first student who has told me that. So what I would say is you're saying, so does it mean the same thing here? And the easy answer no.

So for those people, for the Shan people, they have a cultural knowledge that says this is what it means. You dream that, it means this. But you weren't brought up thinking that, right? I'm assuming that your parents didn't tell you that, or your culture didn't tell you that. So for you, it could mean something different. But if you wanted to go through and analyze that dream, I would highly recommend the one we talked about-- I'll go back to it. The selfscape dream.

Because remember that talked about your body. And I think your teeth falling out would probably be a reflection of your body falling apart, right? Of some kind of weakness or decrepitude in your body. And so that is very interesting, right? That could give you some clues in that dream. So if you were coping with something in a dream, and your body was falling apart, it might be telling you that you are feeling not capable of coping with that thing that was happening in the dream. That problem in a relationship, or that problematic emotion.

So that was possibly what was going on in that dream. So maybe take that selfscape analysis type and go through the steps while you think about that dream. Could be really interesting. Might learn something about yourself and your relationships.

OK. And I've had a similar dream. [INAUDIBLE] Can't do that. And having fear in the dream. OK. Cannot speak within the dream. OK. All right. OK. So in the dream, your body is trying to do one thing. It's trying to speak, it's trying to pray. But you can't, right? You can't speak. You can't pray. And there's an emotion of fear.

I think selfscape might also be a good one to kind of attack this dream with. Because you're trying to do something, you're trying to accomplish something, and then you try to do something else in reaction to the not accomplishing something, which is speaking. And you can't do that also. So for one thing, that does sound scary just right there. But then you say there's also an emotion of fear.

Maybe there's something else happening in the dream that you didn't talk about. Maybe not. So you might think about your body not responding. But then for this type, you might also consider the cognitive/affective type to think about. If there's no other characters in your

dream, which you didn't mention any, so there might be, but if there's not, you might think about the cognitive/affective analysis. And be thinking of that.

What is your fear schema? What does fear mean to you? And when have you felt that fear in your life? And it might be unexpected. You might not realize that you were feeling fearful in a certain situation in your life. And so, you'll have to really think about what were all the other details in the dream. Was there anything that started the need to speak? Was there anything else happening at the same time? And go through those schemas and things. And try to come up with some ideas. That might be helpful.

All right. Let's look at Allison's. And the two people I already talked about, too, feel free to ask more questions or something, too, if what I said didn't help. All right. Every night [INAUDIBLE]. Oh, interesting. Every night. Wow. So you remember a lot of dreams. And they always are a central character in those dreams, that one of these houses. That's interesting. I think that's interesting just by itself.

You might think about the phase of your life when you were in that house, when you lived in it or when you were visiting it, what was happening in those phases of your life? What was the sort of overriding emotional memory associated with those houses? So maybe it was your typical turbulent teen years. Or maybe it's the innocent happiness of childhood. Or whatever it is could be associated with one of the houses.

And so then what you need to do though, is it to pick one dream, maybe tonight, maybe tomorrow's dream, and try to analyze what else happens. Because I'm assuming your dreaming isn't just like a sitting photograph of the house, right. Something else is happening. But what's happening in that dream. And then associate it with that specific house. And think about why are those actions happening with that house?

So maybe it's a person from your current life is in this family vacation home of your past or something like that. And so maybe that person in your current life is associated with the emotional memories of that time in your life that are associated with that house. I'm not sure. I'd have to talk with you about it more. But it might be something to think about.

And I would definitely recommend trying to write down one of these dreams in the morning, which sounds like, to you, might be easy. And really think about the emotional content of those dreams. And there might be-- those houses are symbolizing something for you. And it could be a time in your life. It could be an age of your life. It could be the people that were in your life at that time. It could be an emotional sort of backdrop of your life at that time. Any of those could be possibly true. Sounds like you could have some really interesting ones to talk about.

Oh, and a turquoise couch. From the way you talk about it, it sounds like it's not a real object from your life. It wasn't like, the couch your grandma had or something like that. So I think that there's not very much I can say just based on that, but if it's an object that recurs over and over,

I think you're right that it probably means something. But to figure out the meaning, you're going to have to think about the other things that happen in that dream around that couch.

And if it's been in multiple dreams, maybe you could think about what was happening each time associated with that couch? Maybe the couch is linking different ideas that you're having. That in your waking life, you're not connecting them.

Like, to use the example from the previous dream, maybe there's an important person in your life right now. A relationship. And you're not associating it with the memory of that thing that happened to you when you were 10. But those things are supposed to be put together. And so different dreams are using the couch to put those things together. It's possible.

So to figure out what it symbolizes, if it symbolizes something rather than a connection, you would have to think about what else was happening in that dream. Because there really is no dream dictionary. That really doesn't work. You can't just say this thing represents this. That's just not how dream analysis works in reality.

Because everybody has their own symbols. Every culture has their own symbols. And then every person has their own. Because you weren't told throughout your childhood, dreaming of a couch means you're going to meet the love of your life. You weren't told that as a child. If you had been told that all the time as a child, then when you dreamed about that thing, that is what it means, because your brain says, I want to tell self, I want to tell you that you need to be nicer to your mom. So therefore, I'm going to put a couch in the dream. You weren't told that as a child. So hard to say.

OK. Recurring dream about drowning. OK. I'm having trouble keeping up with you guys. So if you typed something in response to something I'd just said, it'll take me a second to get to it. But I'm expanding the screen now so I can try to keep up a little better. OK. Now where was I? Now where was I?

Recurring dreams about drowning. Well first off, that sounds terrifying. I think discovering the emotional content, or if you're using the cognitive/affective, you could say the emotional schema of that dream. That one might be easy. So I think that if there's other things happening in the dream, that would be very important. What is the situation that brought you into the water? Or where is the water?

Things like are there other people around? That would all be really important. Because it might be some kind of symbol of distress about something else, like a relationship that you're worried about could be in that dream. Something like that. If there's not a lot of other things going on in the dream, then I would just try to think about the emotions themselves. The emotion about what is happening at that time.

And if your body is affected in the dream. Because some people have drowning dreams where they're trying to swim but their body's frozen. I don't know if that's the case with you. But that's

something to think about. Is it something about your body? Are you feeling incapable in your life? Are you feeling very afraid in your life right now?

Which could be, not that you're walking around feeling afraid all the time, but maybe there's something happening. Maybe you're under some stress of some type. Maybe you're a student and you're feeling like, I can't possibly accomplish all of this school work. And so, you dream interprets that as drowning. It's hard to say without more information. But I think that, think about those few things, see if any of those feel right to you. And think about what else is happening in the dream. OK. You're welcome. I'm glad that helped, Allison.

Can nightmares be part of an inner conflict? Absolutely. That's something I was kind of trying to say in the dream analysis. So not all very vivid dreams are nightmares, but it seems like a lot of them are, right? Seems like that happens a lot.

Goodbye, Erin. Thanks for coming. Oh, actually, yeah. Sorry. I'm trying to keep it up with the reading. So yeah, nightmares are absolutely.

So the emotional schema in a nightmare can be easy to figure out, right? They're generally terrifying. Or there might be other emotions too. You might be very sad. Or you might be very anxious or something like that. So with nightmares, attack them like any other dream analysis. And that might actually help you feel better about it too.

If there's a nightmare that you've just been haunted by, it might be helpful to sit down, choose one of these analysis types that feels like it might be right for you. And just sit down and try to think about-- go through the steps. Who were the characters in my dream? How were they interacting with me? How did I feel about myself in the dream? How was my body behavior during the dream? So depending on which analysis type you're using, I definitely recommend doing that.

And that goes with the next person too, is talking about her husband's dream of drowning. And actually, she's drowning in the dream, which also sounds terrifying. And I think that that would really be useful. And maybe it could stop the dream. Or maybe it could help with some kind of stress in your life that's causing you to have those kinds of dreams.

But part of the Jungian theory of analysis-- to go back to the inner conflict idea-- is that these split up parts of yourself can be in conflict. That if you haven't successfully reintegrated everything as a perfectly mentally healthy person, which how many of us achieve that-- that they're going to be in conflict. If you've split them off too hard, if you're denying a part of yourself, then that's a conflict, right?

Because yourself misses that part. Or is now being antagonistic with that part, when it's better to be in harmony with these split off parts, right? They should be in balance. But we aren't always in balance. Sometimes we are in conflict. And so maybe a Jungian would be a good way

to attack a dream analysis. Maybe there's some characters in the dream that you can see as split off parts of yourself that you're dealing with.

With the bike riding and drowning, he should think about that the ravine could be a character in the dream. It doesn't have to be a person, right. The ravine can be a character. And it could be something that is sucking him in or trapping him, associated with the water. But it could also be more appropriate to the selfscape, because he can't remember how to swim. That's like his body failing him. That's like a weakness. So it could be he's failing at something. And so that means that he's afraid of failing at something in his life.

And if it's a location from his childhood, that's also interesting because it could be, he should think about the emotions from that time in his life and how they're associated with a current fear-- a current fear of failing, possibly. Something like that. So that might be something he could try. You could help him. Doing dream analysis with someone can be very helpful. You can sit and ask them the questions while they answer. Sometimes it helps to talk it through, right. So yeah. So you can help your friends.

Oh, and so I like this. You guys are helping each other come up with ideas as well. I see we're over time, too, so if anybody has to leave, thank you very much for coming. [INAUDIBLE] terrified. Yeah, but Allison brings up a good point, that it might not be the obvious thing, always in a dream, right.

You might think like, oh, dreaming about dying and drowning, that's automatically horrible and anxious and terrifying and all of that. But for some people, it might not be exactly that. There might be a really happy part a dream in the beginning, back at his childhood home or something like that.

So you should look for some of the more subtle things in a dream. Some little symbols, and little parts of it that you think are unimportant, sometimes they can turn out to be an important part of it. So we're going to have to go in a second here. Any last questions or thoughts?

If you want to try one of these analyses, and would like some more steps or you feel like you don't understand how to do it, let me know. Good night. Thank you. I'm really glad you came. It was really great to have you all. You're welcome, Allison. Thank you for sharing.

SPEAKER: Thank you for joining us tonight on our dream analysis webinar with Emily Castillas. We look forward to seeing you again.