

Chapter 4

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**THE DREAM IN CONTEXT**  
**Robert D. Stolorow**

Psychoanalysis, in its essence, is a hermeneutic and historical science whose principal research method is and always has been the in-depth case study. Psychoanalytic propositions do not readily lend themselves to experimental procedures, and it is a rare and unexpected yield when data culled from the laboratory are found to bear meaningfully on psychoanalytic theory and practice. Greenberg and Fiss present two such welcome harvests, summarizing a variety of data from sleep and dream research that they believe offer support for a self-psychological understanding of dream function. Fosshage also offers important ideas about dream function, his data coming not from the laboratory but from the consulting room, where, I must confess, I also feel more comfortable.

Greenberg's contribution gave me some difficulty. According to him, the results of REM studies lead to a view of dreaming as "integrating information from current experience with past memories to produce schemas that are organizers of complicated behavioral tasks. Thus, the dreamer can learn and can modify or adapt behavior to new demands of the environment." "The dream," he continues, "portrays problems and also the dreamer's efforts at coping with these problems." Thus, if I understand Greenberg's argument correctly, he believes that the REM data show that the function of

dreaming is to aid adaptation and mastery. While this is a useful idea, illuminating *one* of the multiple purposes of dreams, it does not seem to me to be directly applicable to the principal domain of self-psychological inquiry—namely, *the organization of self-experience* and its vicissitudes in relation to the subjectively experienced surround. I agree with Greenberg that the theory of the self-state dream should be broadened and that all dreams can be seen to depict the organization of self-experience along a continuum of varying degrees of integration or cohesion, but I do not see clearly that his analysis of the sleep research data can provide the basis for this theoretical expansion.

Fiss, too, proposes that all dreams can be seen as indicators of varying self-states. However, the conclusions that he draws from dream research data pertain more directly to the realm of self-experience. This is consistent with his advocacy of "experimental strategies that are experience-near," an important methodological suggestion if such research is to be relevant to a depth psychology of human experience. Fiss extends the methodology of empathic inquiry to experimental data; that is, he uses the data to make inferences about the organization of subjects' self-experience and about the function of dreaming in contributing to "the development, maintenance, and restoration" of self-experience. I found his arguments persuasive and heartening.

Fiss cites Atwood's and my (1984) work on dream function approvingly, indicating that our theoretical ideas are supported by dream research findings. I would like to summarize these ideas in somewhat greater detail. Our aim was to shed light on what we regarded as the most distinctive and central feature of the dream experience—the use of concrete perceptual images endowed with hallucinatory vividness to symbolize abstract thoughts, feelings, and subjective states. We proposed that concrete symbolization in dreams serves a vital psychological purpose for the dreamer, and that an understanding of this purpose illuminates the importance and necessity of dreaming. We wrote:

It is in the need to maintain the organization of experience . . . that we can discover the fundamental purpose of concrete symbolization in dreams. When configurations of experience of self and other find symbolization in concrete perceptual images and are thereby articulated with hallucinatory vividness, the dreamer's feeling of conviction about the validity and reality of these configurations receives a powerful reinforcement. Perceiving, after all, is believing. By reviving during sleep the most basic and emotionally compelling form of knowing—

through sensory perception—the dream affirms and solidifies the unclear organizing structures of the dreamer's subjective life. Dreams, we are contending, are the *guardians of psychological structure*, and they fulfill this vital purpose by means of concrete symbolization [pp. 102-103].

We proposed further that dream symbolization serves to maintain the organization of experience in two different senses. On one hand, dream symbols may actualize a *particular* organization of experience in which specific configurations of self and other, required for multiple reasons, are dramatized and affirmed. In emphasizing that the aims of defense and disguise contribute to the construction of such symbols, and that therefore the distinction between manifest imagery and latent meaning continues to be applicable, our views differ from those of Greenberg, Fiss, and Fosshage.

On the other hand, dream symbols may serve not so much to actualize particular configurations of experience as to maintain psychological organization *per se*. With *these* dream images, the distinction between manifest and latent content is less germane, because the aim of disguise has not been prominent. Instead, the vivid perceptual images of the dream serve directly to restore or sustain the structural integrity and stability of a subjective world menaced with disintegration. This function of dream symbols is clearly illustrated by the self-state dreams discussed by Kohut (1977). By vividly reliving the experience of self-endangerment, the dream images bring the state of the self into focal awareness with a feeling of conviction and reality that can only accompany sensory perceptions. The dream imagery thereby both encapsulates the danger to the self and reflects a concretizing effort at self-restoration. Finally, we noted that the organization-maintaining function of dream symbolization can be observed not only when existing structures are threatened, but also when *new* organizations of experience are coming into being and are in need of consolidation—the developmental function of dreaming accented by Fosshage.

Following Kohut's emphasis on empathic-introspective investigation, Fosshage enjoins the analyst to explore the dream from within the dreamer's subjective frame of reference, "to illuminate as fully as possible the *experience* of the dreamer within the dream." Such an approach, he claims, unveils and furthers the emergent developmental movements envisioned in, and promoted by, the dreaming menation. His clinical material elegantly and convincingly illustrates his thesis.

Like Greenberg and Fiss, Fosshage downplays the role of uncon-

scious processes and of the aims of defense and disguise in the formation of dreams, and correspondingly his clinical approach eschews the technique of eliciting associations to dream elements. Here I fear that Fossage, Greenberg, and Fiss are all in danger of throwing out Freud's clinical dream baby with its metapsychological bathwater. What we need is not an approach to dreams that deemphasizes the unconscious, but a *revised theory of the unconscious* that is consistent with current clinical knowledge. The concepts of unconscious mental processes and unconscious motivation do *not* have to be conflated with the doctrine of instinctual drive.

Atwood and I (1984) distinguished two realms of unconsciousness that are important for psychoanalysis—the prereflective unconscious and the more familiar dynamic unconscious. The term "prereflective unconscious" refers to the shaping of experience by invariant organizing principles that operate outside a person's conscious awareness:

In the absence of reflection, a person is unaware of his role as a constitutive subject in elaborating his personal reality. The world in which he lives and moves presents itself as though it were something independently and objectively real. The patterning and thematizing of events that uniquely characterize his personal reality are thus seen as if they were properties of those events rather than products of his own subjective interpretations and constructions [p. 36].

We contended that an understanding of this form of unconsciousness sheds new light on the unique importance of dreams for psychoanalytic theory and practice:

The prereflective structures of a person's subjective world are most readily discernible in his relatively unfettered, spontaneous productions, and there is probably no psychological product that is less fettered or more spontaneous than the dream. As human subjectivity in purest culture, the dream constitutes a "royal road" to the prereflective unconscious—to the organizing principles and dominant leitmotifs that unconsciously pattern and thematize a person's psychological life [p. 98].

It is precisely this unconscious patterning of experience that Fossage elucidates so beautifully in his work with his patient's dream. His analysis moves well beyond the dream's manifest imagistic content to the thematic *structure* of that content, from which he can then make inferences about the principles unconsciously organizing his patient's experience.

Stripped of metapsychological encumbrances, the term "dynamic

unconscious" refers to that set of configurations that conscious experience is not permitted to assume, because of their association with emotional conflict and subjective danger (Atwood and Stolorow, 1984). From a perspective informed by self psychology, the dynamic unconscious is seen to consist not of instinctual drive derivatives, but of disavowed central affect states and repressed developmental longings, defensively walled off because they failed to evoke the requisite attuned responsiveness from the early caregiving surround (Stolorow, Brandchaft, and Atwood, 1987). This defensive sequestering of central emotional states and developmental needs, which attempts to protect against retraumatization, is the principal source of resistance in psychoanalytic treatment and also of the necessity for disguise when such states and needs are represented in dreams. Where disguise is prominent, associations to elements can assist in the illumination of the dream's intersubjective context of origin.

Let me illustrate with an episode that occurred some 17 years ago, when I was still a psychoanalytic candidate in training and just becoming familiar with Kohut's early papers on narcissism. The episode made a lasting impression on me, and I learned a great deal from it. I had been working psychotherapeutically with a young woman for about a year, during which we seemed to make little progress in establishing a therapeutic bond. At this juncture she suffered what was for her a severe trauma—she was mugged and robbed while trying to enter her apartment house after returning home from a therapy session. Shortly thereafter she told me she had decided to leave treatment. During what was to be our last session, she reported a dream.

In the dream, she was in a session with her therapist, a black woman. A robber broke into the consulting room as the therapist sat helplessly and did nothing. The patient's feeling in the dream was one of disparagement of the therapist. Her only associations were to the mugging and to a joke she had recently heard, the punch line of which described God as a black woman. Putting together the trauma of the mugging and the patient's manifestly disparaging feelings in the dream, I commented that perhaps she felt disappointed that I had not been able to protect her from the assault. The patient was untouched by my interpretation and terminated, with no apparent understanding of her reason for doing so.

With hindsight it seems clear that the patient's association to the joke about God pointed to a powerful, walled off, archaic idealizing longing, mobilized in the transference by the trauma of the mugging. My interpretation of her disappointment failed to take into account that this longing was *highly disguised* in the dream's manifest content,

because it was being deeply resisted, as it had been from the outset of treatment. What the patient needed was for me to investigate her *fears* of reexposing her idealizing yearnings to a transference repetition of crushing childhood disappointments and to extend empathic inquiry to her perceptions of qualities in me that lent themselves to her expectations of retraumatization. Only by fully exploring this intersubjective situation could her dream, and the resistance it encoded, have been comprehended.

Let us now consider the intersubjective field in which Fossage's patient's dream crystallized. The patient's transference relationship with Fossage can be seen as having two essential poles or dimensions (Stolorow, Brandchaft, and Atwood, 1987). At one pole is her yearning for requisite selfobject experiences that were missing or insufficient during her formative years. In this dimension she experiences Fossage as a longed-for new object who aligns himself with her strivings for differentiated selfhood, her search for a distinctive inner direction of her own. At the other pole are her expectations and fears of a transference repetition of early pathogenic experiences. In this dimension she believes that she must accommodate to Fossage's requirements in order to maintain the tie with him. Both poles of the transference are clearly represented in the patient's dream: on one hand, the wonderful stallion (Fossage) liberates her and enables her to pursue her own direction; on the other hand, she feels responsible for the stallion and required to take care of him. Fossage's interpretive approach to the dream seems well designed to facilitate and strengthen the selfobject dimension of the transference as he seeks to recognize and utilize the dream's developmental movements in order to "further within the psychoanalytic arena the [patient's] developmental course." In my opinion, he achieves this aim masterfully, yet I wonder if something important is being left out.

The patient declares that Fossage is secretly in love with her and has an agenda of his own for her, clearly replicating her experience of her father's "self-interested love." It seems to me that Fossage is in love with *development* and that his patient has been responding to, and benefiting enormously from, this passion. What has been the specific impact of this love on the patient's experience in the transference, and how is this impact depicted in her dream?

A stallion is an animal that loves to *move*, and the patient's dream is, above all, saturated with forward movement, both physical and psychological. When the patient insists that Fossage wants her to "leave everything" and "get on with it," I believe she is communicating her perception of the agenda that he does, in fact, have for her—that she go forward in her quest for a more distinct self-definition.

As with her father, this is an agenda to which she feels she must accommodate if she is to maintain the bond with Fossage as his "special one." I am suggesting that, alongside the patient's genuine developmental progress, her unconscious compliance with Fossage's developmental agenda has codetermined the galloping pace of the analysis and that this entire, complex intersubjective system is both represented and disguised in her dream imagery. Dreams, I am contending, cannot be comprehended psychoanalytically apart from the intersubjective contexts in which they take form.

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## ON DREAMING AND OUR INCLINATIONS

Paul H. Tolpin

*Dreams are faithful interpreters of our inclinations; but there is art required to sort and understand them.*

—Montaigne, "Of Experience"

For a number of reasons I had a lot of difficulty trying to clarify my thinking about the important and challenging preceding chapters. For several weeks after I received them I spent considerable time pondering the various ideas presented by the authors. I weighed their arguments in my mind, trying to reformulate their notions in terms more congenial to me. After a while I found that I was becoming increasingly irritated because I was unable to clarify my thinking, to write down what I had to say and have done with it. Then one night I had a disturbing dream. I awoke from it feeling anxious; I thought about it briefly and then fell back to sleep. On the way to the train the next morning I thought about it again. It wasn't all that complicated, but it was still puzzling.

This was the dream. I was having a discussion with someone I thought I knew—perhaps a colleague. He was talking to me about

I wish to emphasize that I speak here from the perspective of the patient's psychic reality—that is, her subjective experience in the transference.

ideas he had about something . . . some theory . . . some kind of psychoanalytic theory . . . conceptual issues. It was vague. He had made a statement. When I questioned him about it, he repeated what he'd just said and then said the same thing in another way. It still wasn't clear to me. I was becoming annoyed. "What do you mean?" I asked. Again he answered, but I still couldn't follow him—or I couldn't hear him well enough. By this time I was really angry. Almost shouting, I said, "I don't understand what you're talking about. Will you please say what you mean? Come on, can't you think straight?" or something like that. That's all there was to it.

What had prompted this dream? I began to associate to it. I tried to picture the colleague I was talking to. He was someone I knew from somewhere in the past, or I had seen him recently. The upcoming self psychology meeting and the papers I was to discuss came to mind. Was I arguing with the authors? Could be. I went on musing about various other possibilities, ending up, a bit desperately perhaps, with a competitive oedipal formulation. No, that couldn't be it. But nothing I thought of seemed to hit the mark. I decided not to think about it anymore.

Once at my office I started to get things ready for the day. Deciding I needed a few aspirins for an incipient headache, I went to the closet and opened the medicine cabinet. Suddenly an image of the dream returned, and suddenly I knew who the colleague I had been so angry with was: I had just seen him in the mirror. I had met the enemy—and I was he! Clearly, the tension I had been feeling about the various issues raised by the papers had finally gotten to me that night. The dream was on Thursday night-Friday morning, and I had promised myself to begin writing my commentary on Saturday. There were a few other determinants to the dream—but I don't have to tell all to make my point.

In the next few minutes I recalled again the increasing exasperation I had had with myself in the past week or so. While I was positively impressed with some of what I read, I had considerable discomfort with some of the experimental methodology, the levels of conceptualization, some of the leaps from data to conclusions, the interpretation of a particular dream, and so on. And using my own dream as a dream type, I didn't see that it necessarily or readily or usefully fit any of the three categories of supraordinate functions of dreams (the maintenance, restoration, and development of psychological organization) that the authors had argued for. But there was something else, too, beyond all that, that bothered me and that I was unable to put my finger on. For the time being, my thought research ended there. That weekend I did more thinking. I turned to Freud (1900),

"The Interpretation of Dreams," particularly chapter 2, then to my own 1983 paper, "Self Psychology and the Interpretation of Dreams," and more importantly to my own experience with analyzing the dreams of my patients and of myself as well.

First Freud: Freud described the detailed analysis of a dream of his own, the Irma dream, as it is called. He concluded that the motivating force of that dream was the necessity to exculpate himself from the implicit charge by another doctor that he had bungled Irma's treatment. What makes the investigation of that dream so important in the history of psychoanalytic ideas is not only Freud's demonstration of his piecemeal method of interpreting dreams, which to a considerable extent continues to hold sway over traditional analysis (and which method Dr. Fosshage has rightfully questioned), but, more importantly, that it gave rise to one of the most influential conceptual generalizations in psychoanalysis. Freud said, "When the work of interpretation has been completed, we perceive that a dream is the fulfillment of a wish" (p. 121). Although in one notable footnote (1900, pp. 506-507, fn2; see also pp. 503-505),<sup>1</sup> Freud seemed to modify that assertion, his basic conception remained essentially unchanged. (That passing observation certainly did not exclude the wish-fulfillment theory, but it did implicitly place it in the subsidiary role of one of a number of motivating possibilities.) Today it appears that Freud overgeneralized his discovery and that we must include other motivations for dreaming in a broader theory of the function of dreams.

Further theoretical considerations: In my 1983 paper, I argued that Kohut had indicated directions for understanding dreams that had been little recognized before. Extending Kohut's notion of the self-state dream, I suggested that not only could dreams in which the self was in danger of disintegration be designated self-state dreams, but that dreams about the general functioning of the self in relation to itself or in relation to selfobjects could also be considered self-state dreams; or, the better to differentiate them from calamitous states of failing self-cohesion, they could be called state-of-the-self dreams, or dreams understood by way of self-psychological theory, awkward though that locution would be. Or better still I would now say that self-state dreams can be understood to exist along a continuum. There are degrees of self-disruption ranging, for example, from

<sup>1</sup>The most crucial sentence of that footnote, added in 1925, is as follows: "The fact that dreams concern themselves with attempts at solving problems by which our mental life is faced is no more strange than that our conscious waking life should do so; beyond this it merely tells us that activity can also be carried on in the preconscious—and this we already knew."

calamitous disintegration to mild distress; and there are qualitative expressions of varieties of moods. The decisive issue is that the primary focus of the dream is the expression of the state of the self, of aspects of its mood, or of its organization.

Armed now with the concepts just mentioned, I understood my dream this way. It portrayed what I had been struggling with during the preceding days. There it was: an aspect of my self was actively responding to the distress I was feeling about my inability to master a problem I thought I should be able to master without much difficulty. I was dissatisfied with myself, angry at myself and my imperfections. My healthy, and perhaps not so healthy, defensive grandiosity had been mobilized and threatened. (There were also further, deeper issues I was aware of in myself that upset and annoyed me too.) In this instance the dream depicted the experience of the struggle itself, not the content of the struggle. In that sense it was like a self-state dream, but without the threat of self-dissolution. In addition, within a self-psychological framework I could also understand it to be implicitly motivated by the desire to fulfill a wish to master my conceptual block and get on with my work. Further, even though I could not readily place my dream in any of the categories of dream function suggested by the contributors in this volume, I could see how their conceptualizations might be useful for other types of dreams. Perhaps my dream could be included in another, as yet unnamed category. At any rate, aside from that, there were clear similarities between my formulation about the microclinical interpretive approach to understanding dreams and that of this volume's contributors. The function of dreams and dreaming, then, could be understood to include all these and perhaps still other motivations.

But I still felt uneasy. I began to recognize that without consciously being aware of it I was operating under the influence of two broad, basic assumptions about dreams. The first was the old-fashioned general principle that dreams usually operate to attempt to reduce disturbing tensions to an acceptable degree. The second was that dreams were a variety of thought, peculiar to the *sleeping* state, as Freud had said, and that they expressed (in their unique, usually visual, metaphorical form) the various kinds of mentations, conscious or otherwise, that we have during our waking life, and during portions of our sleeping life as well. Carrying these thoughts a few steps further, I finally realized that I was influenced by one more, underlying, basic notion about dreams that at the time of my dream probably been the most significant cause of my distress and of my consequent inner dialogue. The notion was this: I realized that, unlike

the other contributors to this volume, I did not think that dreams had a "function" in their own right.<sup>2</sup> By that I mean that dreams are night thoughts and feelings that we have become consciously aware of, however "fully" remembered or scarcely recalled they may be. I believe that the other contributors have also been guided by that assumption, but to my way of thinking, dreams have no inherent motivating force, but are, rather, simply windows to the usually unconscious, continual operations of the mental processes that constitute the experiencing self to which REM sleep gives us brief access.

The content of dreams is a vast variety of unconscious feelings and thoughts and the innumerable ways of dealing with those feelings and thoughts that our minds are capable of. Dreams, then, may consist of messages about somatic states, or they may be attempts to reduce internal psychological tensions. They can express conflicts, erotic and aggressive urges, wishes and fears of all kinds. They can express states of the self, moods, defensive tendencies, states of disorganization, states of satisfaction or desire, attempts to solve intellectual problems, visions of creative possibilities, and so on. They combine archaic memories and current experiences. They express loves and hates, hopes and despair. The list clearly is incomplete.

These mentations, whether we are conscious of them or not, are organized and re-organized during the day as the day's events impinge upon us. They are then further shaped and reshaped during the night. Under the right circumstances, some of these become dreams. But since the dreams are not just "still" photographs, the organizing activities of the mind (presumably including those designated by the contributors to this volume as the suprainordinate functions of maintenance, restoration, and development) that already are in operation, continue to function in the course of the dream and continue to alter it. Still, it is not the dream itself but the prior and continuing functioning of the mental processes of the self that are primary; what we are illuminating, then, when we investigate dreams is not the function of dreaming but the functioning of unconscious aspects of the experiencing self.

If what I have said is correct, does it detract from what I believe are the clinically most relevant formulations of Fiss, Greenberg, and Fossage? To some extent it does, and in other ways it does not. What it does, however, is alter the importance of the role of dreams and dreaming in the overall functioning of the mind. It requires that the overarching, suprainordinate functions that have been attributed to

<sup>2</sup> I am not questioning the apparently critical importance of the experience of REM sleep for neurophysiological homeostasis.

the dream be repositioned within the domain of some particular guiding sector of the self. If what I have said about the function of dreams is correct, the important and ingenious experimental work with dreams presented in this volume will have to be rethought so that the meaning of the findings can be reassessed.

Now I want to leave the conceptual issue of the function of dreams and turn to several clinical issues I think are important to underscore. First, Fiss comments on the value of expanding Kohut's theorizing about the self-state dream, and I certainly concur with him about that. Apparently we were both thinking independently along the same lines. He also points out in the analysis of his patient's cartwheel dream that "the focal problem was present . . . in the manifest content" and that insight was achieved by "translating from a sensory mode of expression to a verbal mode." He is arguing here for a new look at the issue of manifest and latent dream content and questioning an across-the-board assumption of the defensive nature of dream language. I think that is a basic insight into the understanding of dreams. Similarly, Greenberg questions the classical notion of disguise as defense in a manifest dream. He understands the disguise effect as a type of language or thinking mode that has to be translated into another language and thinking mode and further argues that we must ask "what waking experiences the image in the dream is presenting," not what it is hiding. Finally Fosschage deals similarly with the assumed defense function of the manifest dream and argues, rather, that, properly understood, the manifest dream can be openly revelatory of the subjective experiences of the dreamer.

All three of the authors, then, are urging a new way of looking at the manifest and latent content of dreams. And I strongly agree with them about that. But I hasten to add that *some* manifest content in some dreams may be a "disguise" in the sense that a purposeful attempt is made to conceal feelings and thoughts from observing sectors of one's self, just as presumably is done in undreamt, unobserved mentation. In addition, Fosschage also states a position similar to mine when he says that "the reported dream is the waking memory of a mental process that has occurred during sleep." (I have already indicated my agreement with his questioning of Freud's piecemeal method of associating isolated images to dreams, and, again, I can only agree. But, of course, at times associations to the details of a dream lead to valuable insights. I don't think Fosschage would disagree with me about that.)

I can only applaud Fosschage's extraordinarily sensitive and insightful analysis of Tamara's dream. It does seem to support his contention that "dreaming mentation . . . is positioned to promote . . . the

individual's developmental course." However, for reasons already stated, I would partially demur on this, since Fosschage's assumption is that this is the work of the dream rather than the antecedent and on-the-spot work of the experiencing self-mind reflected in the dream. Moreover, while this dream seems clearly to demonstrate a progressive development, it must be considered in the context of continued firmness and reliability of the self that can only be known over time. Finally, I want to underscore what I think is Fosschage's most important summary statement. It is that our method of investigating our patients' dreams must attempt "to illuminate as fully as possible the *experience* of the dreamer [as it is expressed] directly *within* the [manifest] dream. . . ." (Of course, both the patient's and the analyst's associations to the dream elements and the overall sense of the dream remain essential to its being understood.) For me that is an injunction we must always struggle to attain. The vastly expanded vistas of the mind's functioning offered by self-psychological theory allow us far greater possibility of success in that undertaking.

Let me end, then, as I began, with Montaigne's words, which I think by now have taken on wider meaning: "Dreams are faithful interpreters of our inclinations; but there is an art required to sort and understand them."

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## REPLY

**James L. Fosschage**

Tolpin and I concur that dreaming is a complex, image-dominated mental process that continues and closely corresponds with waking mental processes. Tolpin's view of all mental processes as expressions of "the experiencing self-mind" positions us accurately, I believe, to address the overall functions and motivations of a person's waking and dreaming mentation. What I have posited to be the supordinate functions of dreaming mentation (which include the function of conflict resolution, applicable to Tolpin's dream, see Fosschage, 1983, p. 658) also applies to waking mentation.

However, in contrast to waking mentation, dreaming mentation is an entirely unconscious process, utilizes predominately the imagistic mode, and is uniquely positioned during sleep—a time of solitude when stimuli from and behavioral responses to the external world are minimized—to address internal concerns. The consequences of these unique features of dreaming mentation are exactly what we are attempting to illuminate. For example, in my understanding of Tamara's dream I did not imply, as Tolpin suggests, that developmental steps were occurring *solely* through dreaming, but rather that the movements emerging out of the waking (conscious and unconscious) context of the analytic relationship were furthered through dreaming mentation. Dreaming both reflects and consolidates emergent psychological configurations, specifically views of oneself and others and relational themes. That new developmental thrusts occur in both forms of mentation (waking and dreaming) is to be expected and is clinically validated. Times of solitude (dreaming or waking) and times of togetherness (waking) each contribute to new organizations of experience.

Stolorow states, "Like Greenberg and Fiss, Fossage downplays the role of unconscious processes and the aims of defense and disguise in the formation of dreams. . . . What we need is not an approach to dreams that deemphasizes the unconscious. . . ." Stolorow maintains the link between unconscious processes with aims of defense and disguise in dream formation and thereby concludes, inaccurately, that my deemphasis of defensive operations in the formation of dreams is equivalent to a deemphasis of the "unconscious."

*Dreaming*, a mentalational mode occurring during sleep, is an unconscious process, that is, a process that is outside the field of conscious-ness. I am suggesting that we need to assess dreaming as a distinct state, distinguished from the waking state; that we need to illuminate this state in the clinical arena as best we can from a waking perspective by empathically entering into the dreaming experience itself. In focusing on the developmental function of dreaming, I am adding an often neglected dimension to dream analysis in the attempt to illuminate unconscious processes. *Clearly Stolorow's and my conceptualizations of unconscious processes, specifically the extent to which defenses operate within dream formation, differ.* The extent to which defenses are functioning in dream formation is ultimately an empirical question, albeit an extremely complex one, that Fiss and Greenberg address through REM research.

In discussing unconscious processes, Stolorow distinguishes "two realms of unconsciousness . . . the prereflective unconscious and the

more familiar, dynamic unconscious." With regard to the prereflective unconscious, he states:

It is precisely this unconscious patterning of experience that Fossage elucidates so beautifully in his work with his patient's dream. His analysis moves well beyond the dream's manifest imagistic content to the thematic structure of that content, from which he can then make inferences about the principles unconsciously organizing his patient's experience.

I agree that my analysis focused on the thematic structure of the "manifest" content. However, in my judgment I did not move "well beyond" the "manifest" content, but I attempted to illuminate the thematic structure inherent in the "manifest" content (what I prefer to call the *dream content*). These differences in the description of the interpretive process importantly reflect the extent to which the dream content is viewed as directly or indirectly revelatory of the subjective dream state. I believe that these thematic structures can be directly illuminated from the examination of the dream material itself without evidence of disguise and the corresponding necessity of translation of dream imagery.

Stolorow's distinction between the prereflective and the dynamic unconscious, while facilitating recognition of organizational patterns, unfortunately tends to preserve the latter concept (the dynamic unconscious), despite its extrication from drive theory, encapsulated in its classical linkage with ubiquitous defensive processes in dream formation. Although these two realms may be conceptually distinguishable, as revealed in clinical practice the operation of organizational principles or schemata and defensive processes are so intricately interwoven as to be inseparable. Additionally, my conceptualization of defensive operations focuses not on the employment of specific mechanisms, but on the recognition of momentary functional aspects of the organization of experience. For example, the self-protective function of the dreaming experience does not lead to a disguise of imagery but is illuminated by examining its relationship to the waking context prior to the dream. This aspect of an organizational pattern is best revealed in clinical practice through associations to elements wherein the elements are not taken in isolation but as they are embedded within the thematic context of the dream. Space does not permit exploration of the applicability of the traditional notion of disguise in the light of our changing formulation of defensive processes.

Interpreting the dream, Stolorow focuses on the delineation of the intersubjective context of Tamara's dream. He notes, corresponding to my description, both the selfobject dimension of the transference