Chapter 2

The Dream Analog: Psychecology Video Games

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ABSTRACT

Increasingly, human perceptions of reality are based on virtual illusions. This altered reality called the metaverse is dreamlike. If reality, the metaverse, and dreams are virtual illusions, the metaverse and dreams are real. This suggests that virtual realities may be analyzed according to Carl Jung’s compensational dynamics of dream analysis. The objective of such analysis would be discovery of contextual (target group) meaning in unconscious dimensions. Such discovery could lead to the use of mediated biofeedback to engineer Earth-sustainable media content in order to promote coherent frequencies on correlated electro-magnetic scales. This chapter will emphasize the authenticity of research on the collective unconscious as projected into the metaverse. Based on fundamental correlations in structure, function, and purpose of dreams as defined by Carl Jung, drama-based video games can be understood as a genre that may serve as an unprecedented, interactive dream analog for purposes of cognitive research.

INTRODUCTION

Since Edward Bernays created “Public Relations”, the advertising industry has been employing techniques that stimulate unconscious association with products in order to promote sales and political agendas (Curtis, Adam, 2009). Focus groups have been a mainstay in the discovery process. With similar limited motives, the modern neuromarketing industry is probing the virtual unconscious of target groups based largely on Freudian principles that are “reductive” and view the unconscious in negative terms. (Curtis). Moreover, there has been an explosion of interest in exploiting video games and “gamefication” in research and engagement for tapping “buy buttons” in selected target groups. (Claes, 2014) This trend has been associated with ever more sophisticated use of “pseudo-spiritual” messages that promote their own worldviews and cult-like adherence to brands. (Goodman, Barak & Rushkoff, Douglas, 2004) Ultimately, the drama-based game research model based on Jungian/Lakoffian principles would provide more authentic research that would go far beyond marketing motivations in order to foster individual
and collective self-realization and healing. Such an expansion of consciousness would have profound positive impact on all aspects of human “reality”—education, commerce, healthcare, and law.

Unlike “reductive” Freudian principles, amplification principles and dynamics underlying Jungian therapy are “not an unbroken chain of causally connected associations leading backward, but a process by which the dream content is broadened and enriched with the help of analogous images.” (Jacobi, 1973, pp. 84-87, 103) The Jungian Amplification Process emphasizes contextuality, empowerment, and empathy with the patient on multifunctional psychic levels. Therefore, adhering to authentic Jungian principles should dictate against misuse or manipulation of powerful subconscious forces. The same is true of George Lakoff’s (2008) work. Lakoff says: “American values are progressive values,” (2008, pp. 77-82), and it is critically important to verbalize this truth relative to the collective persona of the USA. Lakoff emphasizes that saying it matters. It matters because language works by mental simulation. Here, Lakoff cites Feldman: “‘Words evoke whole frames—whole mental structures. Those mental structures activate an embodied mental simulation, giving the words meaning.’” (Feldman, 2006; Lakoff, 2008, p. 240) Metaphorically amplified Jungian symbols can also be understood as “whole frames”.

In other words, according to Lakoff’s reasoning, progressive thinking (according to the Nurturant Parent model) is in harmony with the greater symphony of American cultural ideologies. The term “progressive” denotes values based on the “common good”, egalitarianism, and mutual respect that pervade theories of the Social Contract including John Locke (Locke, 1991, p. 5) and Jean-Jaques Rousseau (1754) who have argued that obtaining civil rights is dependent on accepting the obligation to respect and defend the rights of others, giving up some freedoms to do so. John Stuart Mill’s Principle of Utility (Mill, John Stuart 1909, p. 258) and Harold Lasswell’s Functional Analysis. (1948 pp. 203-243; Wright, W. R., 1960, pp. 610-613) Among his many contributions, Lasswell studied social structure as patterned social arrangements in society and the media that are both emergent from and determinant of the actions of individuals. His prescient work set the stage for modern discussions of the interactive metaverse.

Both Jung and Lakoff understand the collective unconscious with reference to dramatic structure as fundamentally defined by Aristotle. (Aristotle, 350 B.C.E.; O’Donnell, 2010) This subject will be expanded in the section on dramatic structure. In the dramatic context, “dramatis personae” may be defined in terms of human “function” (thinking, sensing, feeling, and intuiting) and purpose (learning and healing). A character’s purpose may be understood as what s/he learns from experience in the drama, and this learning process may be understood in terms of character “premise” (Schafer, Stephen, 2007; Glassner, Andrew, 2004, p. 69) and psychological plot-exposition-and-resolution of the dramatic “problem”—exposition leading to lysis. Using modern technologies such as EEG, ECG, fMRI, and MEG to track neural electro-magnetic activity during game-play could provide real-time tracking of neuro-functional dynamics in order to disclose contextual meaning at levels of the cognitive unconscious. Relative to unconscious cognitive frames, Lakoff cites Feldman who points out that:

Combinations of simple “triangle nodes” are sufficient to characterize the neural computational properties of frames. Each “node” is a relatively small connection of neurons forming a circuit, and the firing of any two activates the third. In addition there is a control node, a simple circuit that accomplishes this. (Lakoff, 2008, p.275)
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