ASSIGNMENT TWO. The Dream Generator

Description of Final Application:
An image of Sigmund Freud dances across the screen and a small title welcomes you, oddly enough, to your own dreams. A sequence of five randomly selected, powerfully suggestive video clips accompanied by a densely layered sound track follows. It is over as quickly as it began, leaving you pondering the significance of the images you have just seen. You attempt to piece together a narrative from the fragments, and your preliminary interpretations of this “dream” are enough to send you running to the nearest therapist before you even have a chance to hit the “more sweet dreams” button.

Theoretical Context:
The Dream Generator combines Freudian concepts of dreamwork with more recent neurological studies of dream to create a computer-simulated version of your slumbering mind at work. According to research conducted over the past twenty years, REM sleep involves the random firing of neurons, which creates a sequence of unrelated images pulled from short and long term memory. Such a theory is not completely inconsistent with Freud’s idea of secondary revision, the notion that the narrativizing done by the waking mind (the stitching together of a story from fragments) holds the key to understanding unconscious thoughts. In other words, many dream images are simply remnants of the day held in short term memory; it is the story the dream comes up with to explain these fragments as a narrative whole that is revealing of the secret processes of the human mind. Freud also believed that some dream images are pulled from deep within the unconscious mind, escaping the repressive forces of the conscious mind via condensation and displacement. Unconscious desires get coded into dream elements through a displacement of one object for another. For example, your dream about a search for a lost dog in the park actually expressed a displaced desire for the cute owner of the dog that you saw in the park yesterday; the dog replaces the owner through the process of displacement. Or several significant objects can be condensed into a single dream symbol. For instance, your dream about the hateful stranger with a beard and a ratty baseball cap is actually a condensation of your bearded father and that no good, baseball cap wearing ex-boyfriend of yours. The recent betrayal on the part of the latter has unearthed feelings of vulnerability and anger toward your father experienced as a child, feelings that you have long since repressed. Other dream images come from the media and from a shared reservoir of cultural symbols.

The Mechanics of the Dream Generator:
A sequence of five silent video clips, all less than 20 seconds in length, are randomly chosen from a section of the cast and played in a sequence. A soundtrack of three to four sounds layered over one another with increasing complexity and intensity heightens the drama and tension of the “dream” before a quick fade to silence at the dream’s conclusion. A look at the scripted “insides” of the Dream Generator reveals that a video clip is randomly chosen and played. Director continues to check whether the video is still playing. When the video clip finishes, the playback head seamlessly moves back to the frame where the video was first chosen. Reading the same script once again, another video is chosen through Director’s randomization function and the value of one is again added to a counter. When the counter reaches five, no more videos are played, and all image and sound fade to black silence. The soundtrack may be the same for each dream sequence, or it may also draw on the randomization function. With each new video or every other new video, another sound is added to the sound design, with more dramatic or urgent sounds being added later in the sequence. Each sound plays in a different soundtrack to ensure that one does not overwrite another. If the user desires, she can
Preparatory Work (due September 15):
Bring in three surrealistic or enigmatic video clips (less than 20 seconds in length) and one sound that lasts between one and two minutes. The sound, like the video, should serve to heighten the dream-like mood but be simple enough to work well in a layered sound track. The Quicktime videos should be silent and 240 by 320 in size and can be representative of the everyday or the psychoanalytically interpretable. Feel free to borrow images from elsewhere and use After Effects to give them that eerie or nightmarish quality.

Scripting Assignment (due September 22):
The example shown in class will be available as a projector, but the scripts will be inaccessible. However, many of its media elements will be available for you to copy. Also draw upon class-created videos and sounds so that you have a pool of about 50 videos and 20 sounds (or just the sounds that you feel work best). You must use Lingo to randomize video selections, puppet sounds, control volume, check video playback, and monitor progress through a series of five video clips. Include a “dream again” button in a menu or on screen. All scripts must be commented. Turn in the final project to the partition with your name on it and document one of your project’s scripting innovations or triumphs on the coweb for an extra point.

Helpful Lingo

```lingo
set diceRoll = random(6) + random(6)
set the foreColor of sprite 1 = random(256) - 1
set the member of sprite 1 = random(50) + 22
set gHighDramaSound = random(5) + 72

puppetSound whichChannel, whichCastMember
puppetSound 5, member gHighDramaSound

puppetSound 5, 0 [sound in channel 5 stops]

the soundLevel [a system property that ranges from 0 to 7; default = 7]

sound playFile 5, the moviePath & “Thunder” [for external files]


sound fadeIn whichChannel, ticks

sound fadeIn 5 [default number of ticks is 15 * (60/tempo setting)]

sound fadeOut whichChannel, ticks

soundBusy (5) [returns true or false]

set the volume of sprite 1 to 256 [applies to video, ranges 0-256]

set the volume of sound 5 to 255 [volume of sound channel, 0-255]

soundEnabled [system property which is true or false]

set the soundEnabled to not (the soundEnabled) [toggles on\off]

set the movieRate of sprite 1 = -1 [video property, 0, 1, or -1]

if the movieRate of sprite 1 = 1 then go to the frame
else go “pick random”

put the duration of member “myVideo”

set the stageColor = the stageColor (to refresh screen after video)

set the pausedAtStart of member “myVideo” = 1

set the loop of member “myVideo” = 0

set the mask of member “myVideo” to member “binoculars”

set the invertMask of “myVideo” = 1
```