

Bonus Episode: Research * Dreams (Melanie Rosen)

Are dreams just cognitive trash? Or do they fulfil a specific role in human evolution? How does dream time work? And what has Harrison Ford to do with dumb dream brain and eel related dice rolling games?

Philosopher and former Interacting Minds colleague [Melanie Rosen \(Trent University\)](#) has spoiled us with a visit from Canada to take us along on a journey into the depths of dream research. We get to talk about the continuity theory of dreams, explore the potential explanations for why humans might dream in the first place, and unpack the relationship between dreams and virtual reality.

Topics and Resources mentioned in this episode:

[00:06:40] [Inception](#)

[00:09:03] **Continuity Theory**

“The continuity hypothesis of [dreams](#) suggests that the content of dreams are largely continuous with waking concepts and concerns of the dreamer.” [Psychology Today](#)

[00:12:39] **Rolling dice to win an Eel**

“Aale Würfeln” (engl. Rolling dice to win an eel) is a traditional stand at the Bremer Freimarkt, the largest annual fun fair in Northern Germany. Visitors to the fair can pay to engage in a luck based dice-rolling game with 3 dice. Winners (rolling 1-1-1 or 6-6-6-) get rewarded with a smoked eel.



Image from

<https://www.holidaycheck.at/m/um-die-raeucheraale-muss-man-wuerfeln/e67c936b-2939-38ba-976c-dec12c1e4b91>

[00:32:50] [Paper with John Sutton](#)

Rosen, M., & Sutton, J. (2013). Self-representation and perspectives in dreams. *Philosophy Compass*, 8(11), 1041-1053.

Threat Simulation Theory

See for example: [Valli, K., Revonsuo, A., Pälkä, O., Ismail, K. H., Ali, K. J., & Punamäki, R. L. \(2005\). The threat simulation theory of the evolutionary function of dreaming: Evidence from dreams of traumatized children. *Consciousness and cognition*, 14\(1\), 188-218.](#)

Learn more about Melanie Rosen and her research

- [Google Scholar](#)
- [TEDx Aarhus Talk: The understanding we gain whilst we sleep](#)
- Rosen, M. (2022). Dreaming as a virtual reality delusion simulator: Gaining empathy whilst we sleep. *International Journal of Dream Research*, 73-85.
- [Dreams \(in Danish\)](#) available