Walking on a Maladaptive Daydream: Predictors and Correlates of Ethereal Paracosms

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Maladaptive daydreaming (MD) is an under-researched psychological condition affecting people in all countries and ages. Researchers describe the phenomenon as an escape into a paracosm, an inner fantasy world created by dreamers with elaborate plots, characters, and personalities that can become so immersive that the sufferer confuses fantasy with reality, spends hours, or even days, in a dissociative state, and neglects relationships, academics, and occupational tasks. These paracosms can be anxiety-reducing or dark depending on the patient's mood and circumstances. Although the characters and plots can benefit the patient's mood, hours spent daydreaming can be distressing. In addition, MD can be borne of events in one's real life that have been stressful or traumatic. The researchers studied MD as a predicate of adverse life experiences (ACEs) in childhood and adulthood. ACEs can include abuse, neglect, an incarcerated parent, or other incidents. Negative experiences in adulthood are anxiety and depression. Personality traits such as extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism were also measured. The researchers utilized the Maladaptive Daydreaming Scale (MDS-16); The Brief Coping Orientation For Problem Experiences (COPE); The Patient Health Questionnaire-4 (PHQ-4); Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES); and the Big Five Index (BFI). I posted the surveys on Facebook, Reddit, Twitter, and fellow students in classes at the University of Colorado - Denver. After 286 responses were received, these data were analyzed via regression and correlation analyses in the Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS). There is a strong, positive relationship between adverse childhood experiences, depression, anxiety, neuroticism, and maladaptive daydreaming. To ascertain themes of daydreams, the researcher interviewed four self-identified

maladaptive daydreamers. Themes included a grandiose sense of self, retribution towards real-life antagonists, and aspirations for one's future and current environment. Future goals will focus on sleep and mindfulness.