

*Dreaming – Gateway to the Subconscious and Beyond*

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Much of research on dreams and dreaming have consisted of analyses of whether, and how much, dreams affect waking life, or whether dreams have useful meaning, or what areas of the brain become active during dreaming. Freud and his followers thought that dreams could shed insight on schizophrenia and other pathologies (Dixon, 2005), whereas Jung and others believed that dreams were indicative of archetypes and the work of the unconscious (Adamski, 2011; Giannoni, 2003). However, some authors have viewed dreaming as the landscape of another reality than ours, or even of an infinite number of realities (Castaneda, 1993; Frecska, 2008; Lee, 2010; Wojtowicz, 2008). It is not my interest here to say which of these perspectives is the “right” one or the “best” one, but only to portray what I have found in my own journeys on “the other side” of consciousness, and to make some sense of it for the listener. The data for this task lie in my dozen dream journals which I have been keeping for more than 30 years, and in many of the songs I have composed using material from my dreams (Klein, 2014). The techniques and methods I used for exploring them come from Jung, Gestalt, Senoi, Castaneda, and shamanism (Castaneda, 1993; Frecska, 2008; Gackenbach, 1991; Murray, 1991; Walker & Johnson, 1974).

Since we Westerners do not yet have methods for verifying the veracity of “dream-realities,” what it makes sense to discuss here would be the procedures by which these states are entered, and the effect that experiencing those alternate realities has on an individual. As I mentioned, I have my personal notes, but I also have experiential reports from the people with whom I have participated in dreamwork sessions, encounter groups, and rituals. My hope for this exercise is that we will end up with a greater appreciation and understanding of the varieties of dream experiences (to paraphrase William James) and also, perhaps, new methods for coming to terms with unconscious impulses and gifts. Many of us in academia regard the unconscious as the seat of proclivities with which we must always battle: decisions made by an unloved infant or an abused child, continued reaction to traumas and injuries, and “instincts” which reside mysteriously beneath the surface of consciousness, but those of us in spiritual and mystical disciplines also regard the dreamscape as a resource for transformation and ascension (James, 2010; Klein, 2013).

In many of my dream-journal entries, I am either witnessing a scene, as if from a movie, or acting a role in it. These scenarios may seem ordinary: performing chores or working at a job. But quite often, no particular character is recognizable from my waking life, and I may even find myself to be significantly different from my normal persona; for example, I have been a woman in several dreams – sometimes young and other times older. In other dreams, I have been, quite realistically, a member of a family whose members do not compare to my waking relatives, and working at jobs that I have never done in waking life. More often, however, I find myself working at a “plausible” job – one similar in various respects to jobs I have done, but with special conditions and challenges. For example, I am a draftsman in a particular dream, but (as in waking life) I no longer have a drafting machine until, eventually, I remind myself in the

dream that drafting machines are no longer used, having been replaced by electronic technologies.

In the following dream-journal entries, I demonstrate methods of working with the dream content in order to derive deeper meaning and transformation than with most analytical methods. My method is an amalgamation of suggestions and observations found in a number of useful books and papers (Castaneda, 1993; Frecska, 2008; Gackenbach, 1991; Holzinger, 2009; Lee, 2010; Walker & Johnson, 1974).

### **Entries from my Dream Journals**

*May 15, 2013*

I thought that Dr. Don was done for the day but, just before walking out of the cafeteria, he sees me waiting at the candidates' table, and beckons me to come with him to go over my proposal. He passes a number of empty tables and squeezes through a crowded section to get to a table on the patio. There I recognize a girl in my class, and she has me follow her – I thought just to a different spot, but now I find myself in her car, across the street from where we were. It takes me a long time to walk back over, and by then, I've lost my chance at advising. I keep missing Dr. Don on the phone, and I am getting frustrated.

Discussion

In this dream I can see my concerns over completing qualifications for my PhD program, along with awareness of my tendency to be distracted. "Dr. Don" is not making my contact with him easy, and "squeezes" me by requiring me to follow him farther than I was prepared to do; I take this to indicate my distrust for authority along with my wish to protect my own ideas. I give my dream-self credit for recognizing that I have become distracted and unfocused. My further meditation shows me my general patterns of letting responsibilities become unnecessarily difficult by my tendency for distraction, although I also recognize that this tendency has been a great source of creativity and expansion of my general knowledge. Notice that my telling of the dream is in first person and present tense; most of the lucid-dreaming instructors recommend doing this in order to remain close to the dream context in order to reveal its details and significances.

*May 23, 2013*

I am sitting with my family (?) at one end of the banquet room. A Christian comes over and quotes something about "one child for one parent," indicating that

I did not have the right to exist, being a second child, then he returns to the other end. He has left his silver salad bowl, so I install a healing and blessing into it, and then brings it back over to where the Christian sits among a crowd. He rises and reaches for the bowl, and I return to my seat.

My team has to decipher the code phrases before our nemesis can activate the secret weapons, which are protected by poison gas. We succeed, but my teammates are annoyed that I have to stop off in the restroom before rejoining them. When I do get to the chamber, we find that we can breathe normally without masks. I wonder what happened to the poison.

### Discussion

This dream falls on my birthday, which brings up my disappointments with my relatives and also my existential self-doubts. The Christian seems to represent some abstract external moral authority (my family is non-Christian) and also a sense of holiness. I notice that I often take a priestly role in my dreams, which is not too surprising, given that I conduct New Age and shamanic rituals quite frequently. I cannot quite tell if my final return connotes that I know my assigned place in relationships, or simply that I have completed my task.

The second part of the dream seems to indicate my leanings toward science fiction scenarios, but it still contains a message about my life, perhaps that, by taking care of my ordinary needs (the restroom stop), challenges may dissipate on their own. I also see a message to not let pressure from others rush me to take erroneous actions, although I often see this go the other way.

*May 31, 2013*

I have to finish up, here at the retreat center, so I can get back to my motel down below, in time. Vicki is going on to Tibet to continue her spiritual ascension, leaving several of her classes ungiven. I consider whether I want to take them over, but decide not to ask about it because I would not really have time with my other work, and Vicki's class is a bit too basic to be of value to me.

### Discussion

Retreat centers are a very common theme in my dreams, due to my having attended so many of them. In a way, they have become more “home” to me than my family residences. “Vicki” is a former student of mine, but one who has found her own path and is also teaching others what she knows; I feel proud to have brought her to that level. This dream reveals my tendency to take on more responsibility than I can handle, but it also shows my awareness of this

trait. In addition, this scenario has helped me to determine the value of teachings, both those that I give and those I receive.

*June 2, 2013*

The tall man seemed nice enough at the spelling bee (?), but once we were downstairs in the street, he started accusing this young man of betraying the gang or letting his sister be killed. The younger man tried to protest, but the other had two of his goombahs bring a leather sofa across the street, and ordered the second man to sit in it. The tall man pulled out wads of \$10K each, apparently to tease the younger into giving up information, saying, “When they find this money on your body, they’ll figure it was you who did the job.” When they left, I scooped up the money and took it up to the service attic in our big, old house, where there is a secret compartment in the floor. However, that turned out not to be so secret, as the maid was stepping around it, and the top layer had curled and discolored, making it obvious, in with the left-rug exposed. The lids that I had assumed were coins turned out to be some kind of silvery gears.

### **Discussion**

It is very easy to discard such messy dreams, with nonsensical tangents and secrets that are not secrets, but entering into a light trance allows me to walk around in the dreamscape and get a sense of how my mind arranges itself. The exposed compartment suggests that something valuable is becoming available, and the loose money suggests that opportunities are also becoming available. However, I have learned not to count on such prognostications.

*June 10, 2013*

No matter what the hunters do, the native troop can always get past them. I realize that I can just keep collecting my paycheck, or I can actually find out what the elusive scouts are doing. It turns out that they are taking advantage of the cross-dimension, which the “pale-faces” are never going to notice.

Back in the prison, after failing to have the committee approve release, our ward is arguing his own case with the warden. He just speaks in his own crude way, but that makes his case – something about using music as language.

### **Discussion**

The first part shows my admiration for shamanic traditions – the natives have access to parapsychical constructs which the Westerners (academics?) can neither see nor understand

(many of my dreams have taught me how to identify and utilize dimensional lines and fluxes). I notice that I do not take sides in this dream. The second part of the dream hints at making a special use of language to win release (freedom? approval?). The dream did not identify the other two people in “our ward” but only the point that he was making.

*June 17, 2013*

I am at a ritual at the house in the Hollywood Hills. I borrow the extra hymn binder from the hosts, and have my instrument plugged into it. When one of the two banks of big, blue candles is lit, we take a break. I fold my neatly pressed white jacket into the plastic sleeve with my hymn folios, and I am happy to see that the cleaners succeeded in getting the stains out. When the host comes by where I am, I try to return his binder to him, but he has other matters he wants to talk to me about. Later, I stop off at home, but no one else is here, including my wife, who wants to go back with me, and ultimately it seems like too much trouble for me, as well.

### **Discussion**

The presenting context is a familiar setting for me in waking life, and was my spiritual center for several years. The guitarists would plug into their amplifiers, but I never played guitar, so my impression is that here I am more fully a member of the group. Normally, a suit jacket would not fit into a book sleeve, but here it fits neatly; I take note of the general message of “fitting in” along with the host’s including me in his process. My wife seems to be dissuading me from involvement, but the message is ambiguous.

*June 19, 2013*

I am sharing an old hotel room with two other men, one white, one black. We are in town for our mutual religious gathering, but if we get up early enough, there is an interesting-sounding class we can drop in on. Our room is divided up in unexpected ways, requiring us to sidestep through the passages. The bathroom on the far end has its hamper overflowing with towels. Back in my own room, I seem to have overfilled my pills with one type, so I dump them out on the bed, which turns into a lawn. I am worried that the cat will get up here and mess up the pills. Now I am having trouble telling pills from clods. The cat does come up, but stays at the end of the bed. I end up mixing up both days’ of pills so I can’t even take them. My white roommate turns out to be a tour-bus driver on our last day here; he says he will pick us up with his bus and take us to breakfast. At

the restaurant, they learn that it is my birthday, so they all sing for me. It turns out that May 26 is the annual birthday event here, so everything is special. I recognize an old aunt, a relative of my step-mother's, sitting a few seats to my left, but she does not seem to have anything to say to me.

### **Discussion**

The white-and-black polarity shows up in most of the literature on dream analysis, and I saw nothing in this dream to indicate other than a mental process I was having concerning some dilemma I was having at the time, which may have had to do with how I would continue my PhD studies, since the date of the entry is the beginning of a summer leave of absence that I took. I was also concerned about the future of my religious organization, which is indicated in the dream. The problems with the way the room is divided feels as if it pertains to my not knowing how to prioritize my several responsibilities: life, career, studies, finances, family. The idea of overflowing shows up twice here, which might ordinarily be taken in a positive sense (abundance or wealth) except that, in both instances shown here, the idea clearly refers to what is in my way, blocking me. The reference to pills (and their being mixed up) seems to refer to my ongoing concern that I am taking far too many prescriptions and supplements, especially since I do not fundamentally believe in their use, much less their overuse. The cat is indicating to me that some of the things I fear are not actually a threat, and some may even be allies (Castaneda, 1993); this idea is supported by the availability of transportation to the restaurant. The fact that the dates are mixed up here (my birthday is May 23), along with the taciturn aunt, hints that I am still carrying over my self-doubts and my disappointments with my relatives.

*July 5, 2013*

The convention attendees seem to consist both of members of my mystical church and of psychological academics. We are all sitting on the floor for the singing. I see that there is a place set for "Robby, the drummer" from Santa Cruz, but his seat is empty right now. When the leader tells all of us to greet each other, the red-haired fellow near me kisses me on the lips (no reaction of mine is recorded in this entry). I greet everyone else around my table, and comment to someone else from Santa Cruz about how fortunate it is to have Robby here, but he says, "He is right there – why don't you greet him yourself?" Lunch offers a choice of sushi and other foods, with special plates available. I decide to begin with sushi. Outside in the parking lot, I am either trying to rest or to find something in my car, annoying the cab driver behind me. When I move my car, the cab turns out right in front of where I park. Before I reenter the festivities, I stop in the restroom to adjust my clothing and whatever it is that I am carrying back from my car.

### **Discussion**

This dream obviously takes “members” from my two main endeavors – the mystical church and my PhD studies. Sitting on the floor reminds me of being a child in school and also of many New Age rituals in which I participated. The fellow kissing me seems to express my ambiguity between my need for privacy versus my wish to be a full, vulnerable participant (he is not sexually attractive to me in the dream). My not noticing “Robby” reminds me of the many times when I have missed opportunities by not seeing what is in front of me; this idea is supported by the variety of foods available for lunch (I did not see this connection until much later). The dream then removed me from the group activity and placed me into a private space (my car), suggesting a need of mine to regain some privacy, which is interrupted by the cab driver – somehow, my car was blocking the traffic lane. Evidently, my wish to participate overcame my desire for privacy, although I still had some self-consciousness to deal with (the restroom stop). I was not able to see what I had brought back with me from the car, which suggests either that I had simply concocted the idea of having found something out there, or that I am not yet ready to know the result of my searching – I hold both options as subjects of contemplation.

*December 7, 2013*

I am invited to the rustic but large home of an insider who knows Castaneda personally. They tried to get Carlos to call me on my cell phone, but it requested me to call back, and I just got his message that way. When they serve food, I just take some vegetables – I know that there is chicken, but I don’t want to disturb anyone (the place is crowded). Now Castaneda comes in and pretends to be someone else, but I can sense his presence. I tell him I love where he takes me, and I get high thinking about that, but I also say, “I know why your critics are assholes to you.” At that point he leaves. To me, he feels like a combination of my two teachers, Padrinho Alfredo and Paulo Roberto. I go downstairs to leave, but before I can get my motorcycle ready, several of the people on the upstairs walkway call my name repeatedly – it seems that Carlos wants me to sit at his table, which turns out to be the last one around the large back yard – there are many tables filling the yard, and everyone is seated at them. I go to sit at the place near the end, but that turns out to be reserved for Carlos. Instead, they insert a small extension for me, separating me from Carlos. I am somewhat annoyed at this intrusion, but “I get it.” By this time it has gotten dark.

### **Discussion**

An overall theme in this dream is the ambiguity of my great respect for my mystical teachers vs. my distrust of them – each one of them has helped me achieve extraordinary



experiences and knowledge, but they have also marginalized me in various ways and times (I had met and worked with Castaneda and his female warriors in the early 1990s, and with the two Brazilian teachers in both Brazil and the U.S.). The dream presents me as somewhat of an outsider, but one who is invited and perhaps respected, although the members do present challenges for me (letting me almost leave and making me go around to the end of the yard, plus being separated from the teacher). Castaneda's pretense suggests two meanings for me: one is his role as a trickster, requiring me to penetrate his disguise (perhaps in order to prove my worthiness to learn from him), the other being that I regarded him personally with some suspicion. The motorcycle always seems to show up when I need to assert my independence. Now I am thinking that being separated from Castaneda may have two significances: the first is that, by my not showing due respect for my teachers, I may be missing the power or depth of what I could learn from them; the second being that my path seems to involve learning from many teachers, but not becoming tied to them.

*December 11 2013*

Even though I've been coming here, for a while, to see Drs. Edmund or Burke, today I get confused and go back the other way, getting lost in the process. People I pass are no help, so I stop at the information booth, which is a window about 8' high up so one has to climb up on the landscape barrier to see the information lady. I ask her for Dr. Edmund, but without a first initial they cannot help – there are too many doctors with the same last name. I guess at 'E' for the initial, but the information people figure it out by the department. They give me a card with directions which are unclear for me, and now I think I will be too late for my appointment.

Now that the classroom has emptied, I find a recording scroll that appears to be valuable, so I contact online the person whose information is on it. In the meantime, a girl from my class asks me whether Walden's dissertation policy is outmoded, and I start to answer her, but we are interrupted by the appearance of her fiancée – the girl seems to have forgotten that I was talking to her. Then she prepares to go off with the young man, and I ask, "Don't you want to hear what I was going to say?" She replies, "Sure, but I am out of time," so I offer to walk with them. I pick up the recording on the way out, hoping to find the owner. As we walk, I point out that, with the Walden experience, I am prepared for my research task, whereas with some more "modern" approach, I might become too specialized for what is required. As we reach the main lobby, I see the woman I need to contact, so I stop there with her; she has long, brown hair to her shoulders, and eye-glasses. She asks me what I want for the object, so I take my time and reply, "Some of your wisdom." She acts as if she would have preferred to pay a

monetary reward, but I hold my position. Then she leans forward and kisses me lightly on the lips, and I stay with that, and then we continue kissing.

### **Discussion**

In the first part of the dream, it appears that I have taken the famous Dr. Edmund Burke (host of the “Connections” series on PBS) and made two doctors of him. Despite the implication of connections, I habitually get lost and/or delayed, which frustration the dream is revealing. It is also typical in my life that the information I need is often somewhat out of reach, and that I frequently lack what I need to obtain the information, but somehow generally find my way.

The scroll represents knowledge that I have which other people tend to dismiss and, in fact, unwittingly forget that they were talking to me – this has been a pattern throughout my life, for whatever reasons; my dreams often remind me of these patterns, although omitting what it would take to change them. It is interesting to me that I offer the same justifications for Walden’s methods in my dreams as I do in waking life, even though I have my criticisms with them. The woman’s kissing me suggests that I am being rewarded for holding to my principles, and its continuation felt less like lust and more like connecting to an overarching message.

*February 24, 2014*

Before the Sabbath service begins in the synagogue, I see that I can do something helpful with one of the large prayer books on the altar table. By cutting its cover appropriately, I can have it demark the significant sections of the order of ritual observation. Another cut sheet allows showing even more detail and categories when placed atop the other template. The first person I show this to does not even want to look at it, but other people seem fine with my invention, and the rabbis seem not to notice any difference.

### **Discussion**

This is yet another dream which combines my academic research with my spiritual work – I have been developing theories and methods for delineating states of consciousness so that new treatments and transformation methods could be developed based on having such finer mappings; my interest in doing this stems from my lifetime of mystical work and my hundreds of extraordinary experiences, and my pursuit of Transformation Psychology gives me a platform upon which to operationalize these ideas. Some of my ritual peers have disapproved of the ways that I personalize the sacred services whereas others seem to recognize at least some of the improvements I make in the quality of insights and religious experience by adding more than a thousand of my own hymns (Klein, 2014) to the sacred liturgy; few people outside of our St. Louis locality have sung these new hymns, but members around the world know of them. What

is different about my hymns from the standard liturgy is that they are framed less in terms of prayer and devotion, although those elements are still present, but feature actual mystical experiences, often framed in Eastern symbologies. Church elders have so far withheld judgment about my work. Many of my dreams explicitly refer to the insights and experiences from these rituals, often portraying magical actions and dramatic shifts of conscious states within the dream.

The following are earlier dreams with specific mystical elements.

*October 2, 2011*

The young woman behind me in line at the store has strangely large eyes, and we connect awkwardly. I explain to her, telepathically, that she can accept more or less of my presence, as she chooses, and that I would follow her lead up to my own choosing. Despite the subtlety of this exchange, it somehow feels very real.

### **Discussion**

We apparently had to communicate telepathically because neither of us was completely human in this scenario, something like the half-animals of mythical legend. Even in simply recalling this dream I feel other-worldly, and I once again can sense both the realness of the experience and its numinality. What is no longer clear, after all this time, is what sort of transformations we were choosing together. It still feels very magical.

*November 9, 2011*

I am in a vortex of Holy Spirit – it looks like the vortex scene in the film “Altered States,” except that I am conscious of it, and it changes all the reality around me, not only my personal reality. I feel an urge to share this experience with people, but I *see* that they would die or do some violence if I touch them with this power. I feel that this state belongs to me, but if there is anyone to share it with, they would have to be very pure and strong. It feels as strong as the most profound miracle states of my mystical religion.

### **Discussion**

Due to my long history of non-ordinary experiences, such states occur with me both within and outside of my dreams. They might be related to Jerusalem syndrome, in which a person who is “touched” believes that he is now the next prophet of God and starts gathering a cult around himself, but I have been trained not to feed my ego that much. Besides, people tend not to follow me, nor even listen to me very much, and I believe in endeavoring to make such experiences available to other seekers.

*Excerpts from previous 20 years' dreams*

I am tasked with stopping the propeller of a plane in flight without disturbing the course of the plane. As I grasp the propeller with both hands, I spin the universe in the opposite direction, thereby accomplishing my assignment.

I am trapped in a prison courtyard whose wall is topped with electrified barbed wire. I find that I can fly between the power lines to freedom.

The church meeting is being held in a subterranean room which has no doors or other physical access. Only those of us who can translate through the walls are expected to attend.

One of my wings is disabled, but I must carry the little ones across the river to safety. I find a way to fly with one wing while carrying each child.

A demon is scratching at the soles of my feet with its long talons. I know that if it manages to scratch through, I will be in its power, but I am totally paralyzed. I make an effort of will to pull my feet up out of its reach, but the effort startles me awake.

*(A single dream sequence)* 1. It is night in a city like New York. I observe an airliner crashing into a skyscraper; I am horrified and helpless. 2. My gaze is focused on the skyscraper which was damaged in the previous segment. As the airliner approaches, I slow it down until it is stopped at a point just before contacting the building. With this perspective, I observe its trajectory and other influences. 3. I am flying the airliner. I am sensing an obstacle coming up, so I start swerving to the right – it turns out that I barely miss hitting the skyscraper. I make a point of landing the plane smoothly and then making sure that all the passengers get their luggage.

One of our braves did not make it back from his vision quest, so the chief assigns me to retrieve him. Along the way, I pass the remains of several warriors who had not survived their ordeals. I find my brave, who is bloody and unconscious, but alive. In order to retrieve him, I am forced to pass through my own death while staying with a thread of my continuity. Once I have done this, I carry the warrior back to camp on my shoulder. The chief blesses both of us.

Some of the people in my channeling circle suspect that we are dreaming, and usual tests like pinching ourselves and asking each other riddles designed to prove the situation, one way or the other, prove unconvincing, so we combine our intent to levitate the central table and pass it through the solid wall.

At several church meetings (different journal dates) I am challenged to demonstrate what I have learned there. At one, I spin in the air like a whirligig, vertically. At another, I ascend internal levels of consciousness – in the dream, I can sense each change, both physically and sentiently; those in the congregation who are prepared sufficiently are following my progress through the steps.

In some dreams, I received communications in non-human languages – some written in science-fiction figures, others auditorily, like chirping and twittering, but somehow making sense to me. Some of these communications seemed to connect to “astral libraries” on other worlds or in other dimensions.

### **Discussion of the excerpts**

My dream apparatus spontaneously gives me “super powers” which I neither anticipated nor requested overtly. They always seem to entail some beneficial purpose: finding freedom, rescuing people, preventing disasters, enabling non-ordinary communications, or demonstrating state shifts as examples for other seekers. Numerous classical themes appear, both from the lucid-dreaming literature and from mythology (Frazer, 1993): returning from death, relationships with quasi-humans, levitating, psychokinesis, telepathy, and extraordinary sensibilities.

### **Conclusions**

This autoethnographical study demonstrates some of the benefits of dreamwork inspired by Jungian-Gestalt-Senoï methods; that is, entailing deep, personal involvement in the dreamscape so that the Unconscious and the Subconscious are allowed to present their own issues in their own terms (Hobson, 2009; Wamsley, Domhoff, Perogamvros, & Cicogna, 2013; Watts, 1999). Visible in the vignettes are suppressed memories and emotions, persistent character traits which can then be understood or modified, and reminders of what is important to the dreamer. Beyond those benefits, dreamwork can reveal the effects of on-going disciplines and aspirations, showing up as “super powers” and mystical experiences, both within the dream and enriching waking life.

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