The Awakening of Dreams

by Steven McCarty

A speech to the Meaning of Existence classes at Leeward Community College, and for the Facilitators of UH Manoa, dedicated to their professors, Ralph Odon and Mits Aoki, who made this opportunity possible for us all. Mahalo.

What is a dream? To answer that we need to recognize that our conscious mind is only part of our wholeness. The unconscious mind is difficult to find just because it is unconscious; it is hidden within us, or it appears as a projection, where we see our unknown face in the world.

So in the broadest sense a dream is preconscious mental activity, that which is not yet conscious and subject to our will. Like a fish, the unconscious image rises up from the depths and disturbs the surface of our consciousness, so that we might understand its message. A religious experience would be like a flying fish, where the unconscious becomes the superconscious.

Buddha remembered some dreams that he later interpreted as prophesizing his enlightenment. So to awaken our dreams is a living symbol of enlightenment, like the rising sun that illuminates what was before dark and unconscious. Both Buddha and Christ were known as the "Awakener," who awakened the image of the True Self in all the people. The essential feature of the religious quest is to make the unconscious conscious, in effect to awaken our dreams.

A definition of dreams is that they are a spontaneous and honest self-portrait of the state of our unconscious at that moment.

Then we have to ask, why do we dream and what for? What is the function or purpose of dreaming? Modern research has shown that the best recuperation and self-healing powers are at the alpha level where we dream.

The specific content of our dreams helps restore our psychological balance, by compensating the inevitable one-sidedness of our conscious attitude, and by showing us the unconscious aspects of our relationships. The function of compensation is like when we humble the exalted and exalt the humbled, when we play the devil's advocate or put down somebody's exaggeration. We naturally tend to compensate each other in conversations by pointing out the opposite side. In most cases, that is how the unconscious functions in relation to consciousness. One good example is that the narrow-minded materialism of our age is compensated by religious dreams.

But the higher function of our dreams, which we can see in a long series of dreams, is to guide us through the stages of the self-realization process. The stages of life that we naturally go through are represented in dreams by heroic initiations and mythological symbols that are universal, because the maturing process is common to all mankind. But through working with our dreams, as well as practicing meditation and imagination, we grow more quickly and surely towards completeness.

For thousands of years, dream-visions and voices were considered the primary religious experience. As Carl Jung said, "God speaks chiefly through dreams and visions." Today we are not so impressed by dreams, but we are missing their value by not comprehending the symbolic language of dreams. We need to interpret dreams today, to translate the message from the unconscious into conscious understanding.

Recording and interpreting your dreams provides the best everyday opportunity for self-knowledge and expanded consciousness, because it is not from information or knowledge that we grow, but from the unknown.
The universal need to understand the meaning of dreams has been confined to psychotherapy, but while psychology is the religion of sick people, religion is the psychology of healthy people. I assume you folks are reasonably healthy, but you can become more completely yourself by becoming conscious of your dreams.

Let me now present a rough classification of types of dreams. Its only importance is to give you an idea of their range of possibilities:

**Types of Dreams**

Daydreams, childhood dreams, nightmares, wish-fulfilments, wet dreams; recurring dreams — which can repeat for years until you get the message and possibly change your outlook, then they stop; compensations — the most common; catharsis — working out emotional conflicts; warning dreams — suggesting you change your plans or you may get hurt; affirming dreams — where the unconscious agrees with the conscious attitude, that it is true to one's nature; self-image — showing you some unconscious aspect of how you view yourself; relationships — showing unconscious aspects of your close relationships; falling, flying and specific kinds of dreams; visions; voices; anticipatory dreams — that plan or prophesize the future; telepathic dreams — that give you information from afar that the unconscious picks up through ESP; religious revelation dreams — that teach you truths you never realized before; and lucid dreams — where you are aware that you are dreaming while you are dreaming.

To interpret most dreams correctly, the majority which are about the person's own psychology, we need to know what circumstances in his outer life the dream might relate to, and ask, "what conscious attitude is the dream compensating?"

Then there are two approaches to understanding the dream, depending on the situation. To interpret on the objective level means that when you dream about familiar people you know, that you are dreaming about your relationship with them. But if the image of them is not like they actually are, then the person personifies an unconscious aspect of yourself. Interpretation on the subjective level is where the dream is like a theater and you are all the actors, the scenery is your moods, and the audience, critic, and producer are all different aspects of yourself. Subjective interpretation is helpful, because you can find out what you are projecting onto other people. And if you discover where you have gone astray, then you can correct your attitude, whereas it doesn't help anything to blame others for your problems.

Dreams generally give a cross-section of your whole life, which can only be done with symbols, which have more than one meaning and also express feelings. If you can understand the symbols, they reveal new and unknown qualities in your personality, and help you realize your hidden potentialities.

Symbolism is the key to understanding everything psychological except words, and even figurative expressions like poetry require symbolic understanding. We often express our relations to others and to the community by way of symbolic language, and we find great symbols in our dreams guiding us through the important stages of life. Because the most taken-for-granted patterns of behavior are non-verbal and common to all humanity, here is a list of universal symbolic languages to help you see where to look for symbolism:
Universal Symbolic Languages

All non-verbal languages
Metaphorical languages - such as poetry, similes and analogies
Body language - sign language, dance, yoga postures, and symbolic gestures
of contempt or affection, like kissing
Feelings - emotions, vibrations
Sound - music, harmony or discord, tone of voice or inflection
Symbolic objects - like flags, churches, crowns or rings
Omens - through divination, or coincidences between nature and human actions,
like the meteor of Mohammed, or lightning striking with a flash of insight
Parapsychological phenomena - ESP, telepathy, sometimes connected with omens
Mathematics - including shapes, proportion and symmetry
Color - in art forms and dreams, as symbols of feelings or values
Myths - symbolic stories, even lifestyles like the monogamous family structure,
the myth we live: our fundamental taken-for-granted assumptions
Archetypal images - in big dreams, visions and religious experiences, such as
the cross, wheel, mandala, tree; symbols of the wholeness of the Self
Awareness of existence - in the West, the "I am:" in the East, thatness or
suchness, as-it-is-ness.

Note that all these universal languages are subject to individual and
cultural differences, but at bottom, the basic patterns are universally human.
The Collective Unconscious of humanity is the universal depth of each mind,
the creative source, which individuals then translate through the learned
languages of the conscious mind. But the Collective Unconscious layer of the
mind is inborn and is mysteriously connected to the world outside the body,
by a kind of sympathy or correspondence, which accounts for the meaningful
coincidences such as when lightning strikes at the very moment one receives a
flash of insight.

As you know, Freud reduced all motivations to sexuality, while Adler
and Nietzsche thought everything was the will to power. But Carl Jung said
that Freud and Adler just projected their own personality types into their
psychologies. Life is too great to be explained by any one system. But let us
look at a picture that approximates to wholeness, derived from Be Here Now,
by my spiritual friend Baba Ram Dass:

A Psychological Interpretation of the Energy-Centers of Tantric Yoga

7. Crown - intellect
6. 3rd Eye - imagination
5. Speech - self-expression
4. Heart - sympathy, compassion
3. Navel - power, the ki or chi
2. Sex organs - sexuality
1. Root - survival

So this is not a hierarchy that values sublimation of energy from the bottom
to the top, but rather a harmony of integrated wholeness, where every function
has its appropriate place in life.
Now please take out your "Primer in Jungian Psychology" (see next page). The important thing in these charts is not to detail everything in our minds, but try to experience these principles within yourself as I speak.

Note the layers of the mind in the first chart; they become more universal as you go deeper. A picture is worth a thousand words, so let us say I am Maui and you are one of the Leeward Isles. Beneath the surface of consciousness, I join with my race, the Hawaiian Islands. Then both of our races join at the core of the earth to become the same Collective Unconscious of humanity:

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The Layers of the Psyche

Symbols
- Light (sun) symbolizes consciousness.
- Water surface indicates the threshold of consciousness.
- Pond or lake represents the subconscious.
- Sea or ocean signifies the collective unconscious.
- Earth or land symbolizes the physiology of the body.

Strata
- Consciousness
- Threshold of consciousness
- The subconscious
- Collective unconscious
- Physiology of the body

Contents
- The known
- Personal complexes
- Cultural norms
- Intuition
- Myths
- Instinct

Dreams
- Daydreams
- Personal associations
- "Big dreams" of collective relevance and significance (never before conscious)

Brain Wave Frequencies

- Beta: daydream meditation - - dreams remembered
- Alpha: dreams
- Delta: dreamless sleep

Contents
- Relaxation or eyes closed
- Waking consciousness

(Liquor & drugs are a substitute that people feel they need to reach deeper frequency brain waves)

The Four Personifications of the Whole Personality

- Ego (shadow)
- Anima (for men) / Animus (for women)
- Self

Ego
- Shadow
- Anima (for men) / Animus (for women)
- Self

- God/Devil;
- True Self;
- Wholeness;
- Bedevilment;
- Suicide;
- Wise old person of your same sex;
- Voice of wisdom;
- Whale; elephant;
- Child - meaning;
- Early stage of self-realization;
- Or a mandala

(All personifications and symbols can appear in helpful or wrathful aspects, or both, i.e. ambivalent, depending on what is needed to compensate your conscious attitude)

The Four Functions of Consciousness

- Sense-Perception establishes that x is;
- Intuition establishes what x is;
- Thinking establishes what x is;
- Feeling evaluates its relation to me;
- Intuition perceives through the unconscious or E.

S.P. where x originated and where it is going, for what purpose or meaning.

Introversion/Extroversion


t | f
---|---
T | F
E | F

Equilibrium of the 4 functions

Transcendent function

at the Center

Compass of Psychic Orientation

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞
Now this fourth chart is the province of our conscious mind, and these four functions of consciousness can be subject to our will. To define the will, most of our energy goes to maintain our life-support systems, but the overplus of psychic energy left over at our disposal is the will.

The general function of the conscious mind is to orient ourselves, as you can see by these diagrams, for the purpose of adaptation, ego strength, will-directedness toward goals, decision-making, moral choices, and awareness of existence.

Here again, it is important to be aware of what type of person you are, what faculty you lead with, and those with whom you communicate. The value of knowing your predominant type of functioning, and whether you are introverted or extraverted, is not so that you can identify with it but so that you can work on the opposite aspects in order to become a balanced and complete person.

If you are a thinking type person, for example, which is typical of the educated man, then its opposite, feeling, is not subject to your will but just happens to you as uncontrollable moods. But if you know that, and work on developing your feelings, then your lowest point becomes the key to your self-realization.

These other pictures I have on primitive and developed anima manifestations show the kind of symbols that might appear in a man's dreams to signal his stage of emotional maturity. His relatedness with the world and with women is reflected in the feminine personifications he dreams about. While they start out childish and crude, as a man refines his feelings, the anima-images progress on to higher manifestations as he becomes more capable of real relationships with women. Then the feminine principle can become a creative inspiration, where the swan and angel have wings that symbolize transcendence.

When we lift up whatever is lowest in ourselves, we grow as a whole. Making the unconscious conscious is the transcendent function in Jungian psychology. You transcend your old self and make a mature transition to a more comprehensive standpoint.

Dreams would express this transcendence more graphically, for instance as the metamorphosis from a caterpillar to a butterfly.

Now for the rest of the session, let us hear your questions and dreams, hopefully short dreams that you feel are important.
DREAM LOG PROCEDURE

1. Find a notebook with an appropriate cover or make one. Name your Dream Log as you like, for example: "Awakening Dreams." Keep the notebook with a pen by your bedside. You could also use a tape recorder during the night.

2. Before you go to sleep, with eyes closed, resolve to wake up remembering a dream or dreams. Jose Silva of the Institute of Psychorientology recommends: "I want to remember and understand my dreams, and I will." You can use dreams to solve specific problems, or for religious insight. In the Tibetan "Yoga of the Dream-State," you resolve to awaken into the state of enlightenment. In any case, if you honor the importance of dreams, you will be interested enough to remember them.

3. Preserve completely any dreams you wake up remembering during the night or morning. If you wake up slowly, review the dream sequences before you open your eyes. Then make sure to write down your dreams without falling back to sleep or waiting until morning. Dream-fragments can be important, so just narrate as much of the story as you can remember. Preserve every detail; it's all you. Describe the characters and settings completely, including colors and feelings associated with the images. You might want to draw or paint dream-visions. Also, watch for coincidences in your outer life that parallel dream symbolization, showing that you had "precognitive dreams" about the future. Include all your findings in the thoughts you express later to amplify and interpret your dreams.

4. Amplify the dreams with relevant associations from your waking life, reminded by the dream material. Write down whatever occurs to you in connection with the dream-images. If it is ambiguous, write down both sides or all the aspects. When you interpret the dream later, you can ask yourself why it was just so.

5. Interpret your dreams in the journal when you feel strong and alert. Use your intuition as well as feeling and intellectual analysis. Ask yourself, what is the message of the dream? What is it revealing about you? What is the moral of the story? What guidance is the dream suggesting for your conduct? Whatever observations you happen to make can be considered a valid part of the larger context of the dream in your life. But keep contemplating important dreams until you become fully conscious of the intention of the dreams and their purpose.

6. The difficulty for everyone is understanding the symbolic language of images in dreams, visions, and even the omens of our daily life. But we will grow by stretching our intuition to become conscious of something new. It takes courage to face everything our dreams reveal, our dark side as well as the light. But if we can accept all the elements of ourselves personified and symbolized in dreams, then the dreams progress to a higher level of revelation, and we grow accordingly as individuals.

7. Outline of the Stages of Dream Entries:

1. **Resolve**, before you go to sleep, to remember and understand your dreams.

2. **Preserve** completely all dreams, fragments, and visions you ever remember.

3. **Amplify** with relevant associations reminded to you by the dream images.

4. **Interpret** the meaning of your dreams through intuitive contemplation.

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What Can Be Done With Dreams

by Steven McCarty

I. From the "Dream Log Procedure"

1. Remembering dreams
   a) by being interested and desiring to remember them
   b) by making a resolution with eyes closed before going to sleep

2. Recording dreams, daydreams, visions, and meaningful coincidences
   a) by keeping a dream journal by your bedside
   b) by using a tape recorder
   c) by carrying a diary around with you

3. Amplifying dreams
   a) with relevant associations from waking life
   b) including future events and omens that give evidence of telepathy or precognition in dreams

4. Interpreting dreams and all symbolic experiences
   a) through intuition into the meaning
   b) through feeling the value and importance
   c) by studying mythology and dream-psychoLOGY
   d) by developing symbolic understanding

II. Aesthetic Formulation

5. Re-creating the dream or vision through the arts
   a) through painting, sculpture, poetry, songwriting, cartoons, story-writing, or invention
   b) by acting out the dream in psychodrama, role-playing or dance

III. Problem-Solving

6. Solving specific problems
   a) by questioning and resolving to dream an understandable answer
   b) by asking for certain information, even overseas or any time
   c) by asking if a certain decision in your career is true to your nature or not, seeing if the dream presents the situation in a positive or negative light
   d) by seeking inspiration to quit bad habits and change your self-image
   e) by using your imagination to discover questions

7. Solving general problems
   a) by resolving to dream a solution to the general problem
   b) by praying for self-healing in the dream-state
   c) by praying to telepathically heal another person
   d) by desiring creative inspiration in the arts
   e) by asking for clues to come up with inventions
   f) by using your imagination to find out what you need to become complete
IV. From the Tibetan Yoga of the Dream-State

8. Transmuting the dream-content
   a) by changing a remembered dream according to your will
   b) by changing a dream in your imagination spontaneously

9. Resolving to awaken out of the dream-state into the state of enlightenment

10. Meditating on the Thatness of the dream-state as the same as that of the waking-state

V. 11. Completing Dreams
   a) by resolving to complete a past dream in your sleep
   b) by reliving a past dream before going to sleep
   c) by reliving a dream in the state of meditation, and then completing it spontaneously in your imagination

VI. 12. Entering the Stream at the Source of Dreams
   a) by reliving a dream, then going back with your awareness into the source of your projection of the images
   b) by going backwards in your imagination from the completion to the film, then running backwards past the beginning and into the source
   c) go into the voidness behind the projection and ask "Who am I?" "Who is the dreamer?" "Who is dreaming whom?"

VII. 13. Lucid Dreaming
   a) by resolving to be as conscious as possible while you are dreaming
   b) by planning to become aware when a certain thing happens or a certain stage is reached in your dreams
   c) by resolving to wake up during a nightmare to conquer the source of fear, while you keep on dreaming to a satisfactory conclusion
   d) by resolving to project your awareness into different planes of existence not limited by space and time, to be aware of what goes on there, and to remain in full control of yourself

VIII. 14. Daydreaming
   a) by relaxing with eyes open and letting your mind wander into imagery
   b) by closing your eyes in meditation and being receptive to spontaneous imagery
   c) by starting with imagining a certain peaceful scene, and projecting yourself mentally into this ideal place of relaxation, then let it be colorful, lifelike, and moving; finally allow the situation to unfold like the completion of a waking dream
A Diagram on the Social Psychology of Religion

Relations Between Creativity and Social Change

Stable Society
Collective Representations

Crumbling Social Order

New Institutions, Values, Art Forms, and Religions

Collective Consciousness (commonsense cultural norms)

Collective Unconscious (depths of each mind)

New Visions, Religious Experiences

Deep Emotion

Discontent

Archetypes

by Steven A. McCarty

1978
A Diagram on the Social Psychology of Religion

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II. A Detailed View of the Example of Religion

New Visions

Intuitive Introversion
(prajñā)

Personal Complexes

double refraction each way

Intuitive Extraversion
(upāya)

New Religious Expressions

Introversion

Extraversion

A D A P T A T I O N

Primary
Religious
Experience

Conscious
Elaboration

Interpretation
of its Meaning

Creative
Formulation

New
Religion

When God Becomes God
Through Consciousness

The Subjective and
Objective Become One

Superconsciousness
Being the Collective
Unconscious Made
Wholly Conscious
with no refraction

Was it a hypotetical
view of cosmic
consciousness

Holistic Perception

Wholeness