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## LUCID DREAMS AND SHAMANISM

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Dreams have held the fancy of poets, philosophers, psychologists and, probably, most anyone who has had a vivid recollection of a dream upon awakening. Dreams have played an important role in tribal cultures throughout the world; some like the Senoi in Malaysia placed an extraordinary emphasis (by our standards) on their dreams and often patterned their waking behavior on the basis of dreams. Dreams have also influenced and guided shamans, adding to the knowledge they have gained on their journeys. In this paper, I will explore the possible connections between shamanism and dreams by focusing on a particular dream state known as lucid dreaming, proposing that a combination of dream and shamanic techniques may prove to be a useful method in gaining knowledge and insight from the lucid dream state of consciousness.

Lucid dreams have been referred to as dreams "in which the subject is aware he is dreaming" (Green 1968:15). As early as the fourth century B.C., possible evidence exists for this type of experience. At that time Aristotle wrote, "when one is asleep, there is something in consciousness which declares that what then presents itself is but a dream." But this may, in fact, only be the precipitating event of a lucid dream. Tart (in Wolman 1979:255-56) explains that simply the thought, "I am dreaming," while asleep is not enough to signify a lucid dream. Rather, it is a complex shift of psychological components to form a "discrete state of consciousness" which imitates waking consciousness, yet occurs during a dream, that distinguishes a lucid dream (Ibid.). The feeling that occurs, says Tart, is "just like your mental functioning feels right now, except that you know the world you perceive around you is some sort of clever imitation, no matter how real it seems, because you know you are asleep and dreaming." I shall generally follow Tart's description in considering the recorded accounts of lucid dreams.

To illustrate the discreteness of the lucid dream state of consciousness, it is useful to examine the psychophysiological research done so far on sleep and dreaming. Aserinsky and

Kleitman (1953) made one of the first major breakthroughs with the discovery of regularly occurring periods of eye motility (REM), alternating with periods lacking such characteristics (nREM). By measuring brain waves with EEG's and muscle activity with electromyograms, scientists have actually divided sleep into four nREM states (stages I-IV) and the REM state. An individual normally passes through a drowsy waking state through the four nREM stages, which are characterized by brain waves of varying frequencies and active muscle movement, to the REM state which typically is associated with low EEG's (4-8 cps), rapid movement of eyeballs and suppression of other muscle activity (Fiss in Wolman 1979).

The relationship of these physiological factors has not been conclusive, but the sleep research to date suggests that the "bizarre" mental experiences commonly called dreams are more likely to be associated with the REM state. Foulkes (1962:123ff.) found that mental activity was reported from both nREM and REM awakenings, but that the content of subjects' reports for the two stages of sleep was qualitatively different "along a number of dimensions." The nREM awakenings were more likely to produce reports labeled as thoughts, while REM reports were more likely to be considered as dreams. Moreover, REM reports were typically more "vivid or highly elaborated" and less likely to be directly connected with recent events and memories. Monroe et. al. (1965) confirmed these findings by having independent judges attempt to distinguish the sleep stage the subject had been awakened from solely by the content of the report. These judges averaged 80% accuracy or better in

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accurately classifying reports as emerging from REM or nREM sleep. Thus, while not being conclusive, by any means, these studies suggest that accounts typically referred to as dreams are associated with REM sleep.

Lucid dreams occur when the dreamer gains lucidity, i.e. becomes aware that he/she is dreaming. Moreover, in lucid dreams, the dreamer typically attains a degree of conscious control over events occurring in a dreamlike setting. As such, it would seem that lucid dreams should manifest themselves as a qualitative shift in the state of consciousness associated with REM dreaming.

The key for sleep researchers was to demonstrate this in the sleep laboratory. LaBerge and others become interested in an example of regular horizontal eye movements on the part of a dreamer that was being observed in the sleep laboratory. The dreamer reported that he had been observing a ping-pong match and had been following a long volley (LaBerge 1985:62). LaBerge theorized that if eye movements could be similarly reproduced in a lucid dream, they could be used to signal to researchers in the sleep laboratory. This was especially relevant because it appeared that other muscular movement was suppressed during REM sleep. In fact, LaBerge was able to demonstrate these eye movement signals through experiments at the Stanford sleep laboratory. He entered into a lucid dream state and directed his "dream gaze" according to a prearranged pattern. His corresponding eye movements were observed and recorded on the sleep laboratory equipment just prior to a REM awakening (Ibid.:64). These results were extremely significant, for they showed physiological correlates of dream behavior as it occurred, and also provided the first observable evidence of volitional control over dream events.

LaBerge expanded his laboratory research to examine whether particular behaviors could be deliberately induced within a lucid dream and, if so, whether these activities could be made evident to an outside observer. He instructed sleep subjects to signal, using prearranged eye movements, that they had gained lucidity in their dream state (thereby verifying the subjects being in a REM sleep state). Once the subjects gained lucidity, they were to perform, in their dream, a specific task—these tasks included counting from one to ten, singing, and having sex. They then used eye signals to indicate that the task had been completed. LaBerge then compared physiological readings of the sleep subjects while performing supposed dream tasks with readings of subjects who performed these activities while awake.

He found remarkable correlations between the physiological readings of the sleep subjects with those who performed the same activity while awake (LaBerge 1985:74ff.). This seemed to be further indication that the subject could control his/her actions while dreaming in a REM sleep state; moreover the accounts of these dreamers' experiences could be, at least partially, corroborated by recordings made of the subjects' physiological activity while asleep and dreaming.

Besides the obvious benefits to sleep researchers conducting work in the sleep laboratory, volitional control of dream and sleep behavior opens up a myriad of possibilities that one can experience while asleep and dreaming. One question that comes to mind, then, is what does one do upon realizing that one is in a lucid dream state and free to experience almost anything he/she chooses. I would therefore like to turn to a discussion of the shamanic state of consciousness, phenomenological aspects of lucid dreams that seem to incorporate shamanic elements, and possibilities that might occur by using shamanic techniques to explore lucid dream phenomena.

In order to formulate a working definition of shamanism for the purposes of this paper, I shall borrow from the works of Harner (1980) and Eliade (1972). According to Harner (1980:20), a shaman is "a man or woman who enters an altered state of consciousness—at will—to contact and utilize an ordinarily hidden reality in order to acquire knowledge, power, and to help other persons. The shaman usually has at least one, and usually more, 'spirits' in his personal service." According to Eliade (1972:4), a shaman is the "great master of ecstasy." These definitions suggest that the shaman is in control when entering the ecstatic state; that is, the shaman possesses and utilizes helping spirits, rather than being possessed by them. Using these concepts to define shamanism will serve to distinguish shamans from other mystics who may enter an ecstatic state, but then lose their sense of volitional control.

The shaman, then, operates in a "transcendent state of awareness;" I shall use Harner's (1980:21) term, Shamanic State of Consciousness (SSC), in referring to this state. Shamans generally induce this ecstatic state deliberately through practiced means; though, occasionally, such experiences may come spontaneously, as in the case of initiatory illnesses (see, e.g. Eliade 1972:33ff.). Probably the most archaic and universal means of attaining this state is the use of drums to produce rhythmic resonance at a particular tempo. Harner (1980:52) cites Neher and Jilek's works in showing certain physiological changes are evident, possibly in the brain's theta wave activity as well as in "many sensory and motor areas of the brain not ordinarily affected," in response to stimulation by repetitive drumming. Other techniques of entering the SSC include repetitive singing or chanting, which Harner (Ibid.:53) suggests may produce changes in consciousness in a manner similar to yogic breathing or, I would add, meditative mantras. Another common practice among tribes worldwide is the use of hallucinogenic substances to produce the desired change in state of consciousness. Subsequent research into the physiological aspects of these means of inducing the shamanic state of consciousness should prove quite illuminating.

I would like to turn, now, to a discussion of the phenomenological aspects of the lucid dream state, emphasizing occurrences, perceptions and examples of mental cognition in

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## FROM THE EDITOR...

As our members may have already noticed in the following section, the AASC is going through a period of transition as we become part of the American Anthropological Association. I am personally very excited about this change in our association for it will move the topic of consciousness into a more central place in the larger anthropological world. For many years we have maintained an independent existence and struggled to create an anthropology of consciousness. Our independence has given us complete control over our own research directions and a certain intimacy but at the price of remaining small. On the negative side our independence isolated us from mainstream anthropology and kept us from reaching many anthropologists with similar research interests as our own. This in turn has stifled our own scholarly growth and diminished the anthropological focus of our endeavor. This lack of growth is counterproductive for a field of study as important as the anthropology of consciousness.

In order to move the AASC out of this situation our board of directors decided last year at the annual meeting to put all efforts towards affiliation with the AAA. It was felt that such affiliation would open our association up to new members from mainstream anthropology and stimulate dialogue and new research. Our goal remains to build the anthropology of consciousness into a vital and important subfield of anthropology. Consciousness is one of the central research interests of the latter half of this century and such an important field involving human beings needs the cross-cultural perspective that only anthropologists can give it. Without this perspective consciousness remains like so many sciences a Western culture-bound study which tells us more about our own epistemological idiosyncrasies than about the fundamental dimensions of human consciousness. Without careful anthropological research and theory, it is too easy to co-opt the spirituality and spiritual disciplines of other cultures for our own materialistic goals. Anthropology, in my view, forces us to acknowledge the knowledge of other peoples as sophisticated and sacred. Anthropology helps force us out of our own scientific arrogance that we have all the answers. The study of human consciousness is too important to be left solely to psychologists or the New Age. Anthropology has important contributions to this field which will yield more complete understanding for all humans interested in their own consciousness.

These themes are echoed in the two papers in this the last issue which will be published as the *AASC Quarterly*. Ian Kanair in the lead article tackles the important issue of the comparison of states of consciousness and how they are manifest cross-culturally in lucid dreams and shamanism. There is little systematic comparative work of this nature. I was particularly struck by the similarity of the experiences which lucid dreamers describe and those found in the literature surrounding near-death experiences (NDE) and out-of-body-experiences (OBE). For

instance, he describes the vividness and realness of lucid dreams. NDE and OBE experiencers report the same perceptions. Figures of the dead or of spirits appear to both the lucid dreamer and the NDE experient. His description of the detachment felt in the lucid dream of someone falling over a cliff is actually very similar to the detachment reported by people who have suffered near fatal falls while mountain climbing. Lucid dreamers also report autoscapy much like that found in cases of the NDE and the OBE. Kanair's findings are only the beginning of research in an area needing much more work.

The second paper, by AASC president Geri-Ann Galanti, takes up the theme of comparison but in this case of psychotics and shamans. This theme is not new to the study of shamanism, but her approach of interviewing psychics is. She took the bold step of asking psychics to describe their own view of themselves and psychotics. Rather than impose psychoanalytic categories on the psychics she let them classify and describe their own abilities. Such research is the hallmark of anthropological approaches.

Next year's issues will be printed under a new name, *The Anthropology of Consciousness*, but will continue to offer full length articles, book reviews, and short notices. Publication will remain on a quarterly basis. Within the next year or two as the new **Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness (SAC)** grows, we plan to develop the quarterly into a full size journal. I hope our many members will remain with us either as SAC members or subscribers as the next few years will, I feel, be a period of transformative growth for the anthropology of consciousness.

## AASC AFFILIATES WITH AAA

At the 1989 meetings of the American Anthropological Association, the AAA Board of Directors voted to accept the AASC as an official unit of the AAA. Affiliation marks the recognition of the study of consciousness as a legitimate specialty within Anthropology.

We will be formally inducted at the AAA meetings in New Orleans next November, but the actual merger will take place as soon as the appropriate legal papers can be drawn—hopefully by January, 1990.

From a practical perspective, affiliation means that for some (AAA members), dues will go down; for others (non-AAA members), dues will increase. It will be possible to subscribe to our quarterly publication at the old membership rate, however, subscribers will receive no discounts at conferences.

In order to be a 1990 member, you must first *join the AAA*. The cost is \$55 for anthropologists, \$30 for non-anthropologists (associate members), \$35 for students, and \$35 for spouses (joint members). To belong to the AASC (which will become the *Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness* when we

affiliate), you must pay an additional unit fee of \$20 for regular members, \$15 for associate members and students, and \$5 for spouses. All members (other than "joint") will receive 10 monthly issues of the *Anthropology Newsletter* in addition to the publication *Anthropology of Consciousness* (formerly *AASC Quarterly*). Individuals may subscribe separately to the *Anthropology of Consciousness* for \$25.

Although affiliation may mean higher costs for some, it will also mean we can reach a much wider audience among anthropologists. In addition, we will have a column in the *Anthropology Newsletter* and an organized panel and organizational meeting at the November American Anthropological Association meetings. Since the AAA has its meetings in rotating parts of the country, our organization, which has previously been based largely in California, will be accessible to many more people.

Memberships and subscriptions will now be handled by the AAA, but all other activities (conferences, publications, general information) will continue to operate out of the current P.O. Box 1391, Venice, CA 90294-1391.

We have taken a major step in the creation of what may prove to be a new subfield within Anthropology; I hope you share in my excitement.

—Geri-Ann Galanti  
President

## AASC ANNUAL CONFERENCE

We have an exciting program lined up for our annual conference being held February 28 through March 4, 1990 in the Los Angeles area. The tentative program schedule includes organized panels entitled:

- Trance Channelling: Cultural, Neurological and Phenomenological Aspects
- Dance in Context: The Study of Consciousness in Motion
- Exploring the Martial Arts
- Conceptual and Terminological Issues in the Study of Altered States of Consciousness
- Spiritual Aspects of Multiple Personality Disorder
- The Transformative Classroom: Teaching the Anthropology of Consciousness

There will also be several individual papers, organized under the following titles:

- Field Studies of States of Consciousness: Dreams, Healing, Kundalini, Sobriety, Shamanism
- Methods and Issues in Parapsychology
- Studying the Paranormal: Miracles, Near-Death Experiences, Reincarnation

Besides these scholarly presentations there will also be

several workshops designed to explore the methodological difficulties of doing participant-observation of rituals and practices involving altered states of consciousness. These experiential workshops will introduce conference participants to selected aspects of Shaktipat-Kundalini, martial arts, and shamanic medicine; additional workshops are still being arranged. There will also be films and videotapes and an evening of folk dancing.

A major advantage of our conference is that it is small enough for people to get to know each other in a relaxed and informal manner. There are no overlapping sessions, so it is not necessary to choose between topics. We also have free time built in, so people can discuss each other's research and ideas, go hiking, or simply relax.

The conference is being held on the grounds of the Presbyterian Conference Center in the Pacific Palisades. It is a beautiful, rustic area, five minutes from both town and the beach. The accommodations are simple, and the food fresh, wholesome, and delicious. Room and meals, including two snacks a day, cost \$160 per person for the entire four day conference.

For further information, contact the Society for the Anthropology of Consciousness (formerly the AASC) at P.O. Box 1391, Venice, CA 90294-1391 or call (213) 827-0937. Geri-Ann Galanti is in charge of the program. Jim Matlock is handling conference registration and accommodations.

## BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

Readers interested in reviewing the following book should contact book review editor, **Michael Winkelman** at *AASC Quarterly*, P.O. Box 4032, Irvine, CA 92716-4032.

*Altered States of Consciousness and Mental Health: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, edited by Colleen Ward, (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications), Cross-Cultural Research and Methodology Series, Vol. 12, 1989.

## PSYCHICS & SHAMANS: PSYCHOTICS IN CONTROL?

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Are psychics and shamans crazy?

If "craziness" is defined as beliefs and behaviors which deviate from the cultural norm, then yes, psychics could be called crazy. Certainly, by the standards of western mental health, shamans could also be diagnosed a psychotic.

The first question we might ask is *why have both shamans and psychics been accused at various times of mental illness?* Perhaps because they share certain characteristics with psychotics that separate them from the "normal" population. These characteristics, which in large part define them professionally, are diagnostic of schizophrenia. Consider the following:

A man whom I'll refer to as "John" stated that he was 2,000 years old and had been, among other things, a professional tennis player, jockey, and carpenter. He claimed to have lived several lifetimes. About a thousand years ago, according to his report, he was captured by a boatload of aliens.

"Peter" claims to have lived past lives in Greece, Egypt, and Atlantis. He states with conviction that *he* was the Jew who drove the nails into Christ's body.

"Hedda" believes there are people on Earth who come from other planets. She states quite authoritatively that *every* planet is inhabited by spiritual beings.

"John" has been diagnosed as suffering from chronic, dissociative schizophrenia, and has been in and out of mental hospitals 25 times in the last eight years (*Los Angeles Times*, 7-15-79). "Peter" and "Hedda" are both Los Angeles psychics living otherwise "normal" lives.

It is clear that all three individuals share beliefs which deviate from the mainstream. In psychiatric terms, they could all be said to be suffering from *delusions*, in that they believe things that others do not.

Psychics and shamans both see and hear things that others do not. In parapsychological terms, they experience clairvoyance and clairaudience; in psychiatric terms, they suffer from visual and auditory *hallucinations*.

Finally, and I feel most importantly, psychics, shamans, and psychotics experience a *loss of ego boundaries*. I will discuss this in more depth shortly. For now, let me point out that

hallucinations and delusions are two of the major symptoms of schizophrenia. In fact, Schneider's (1959) system for diagnosing schizophrenia on the basis of identifying "first rank symptoms" includes seven (of eleven symptoms) which involve ego boundary disturbances which might be interpreted as psi. These include telepathy and experiencing the feelings of others.

Thus, psychics and shamans have been labeled "crazy" because many of the beliefs and behaviors intrinsic to their roles are a priori defined as symptomatic of schizophrenia.

There is an additional connection between psychics and shamans on the one hand, and psychotics on the other. There have been reports of alleged psychic abilities among institutionalized psychotics for a great many years (Ullman 1977). Much anecdotal evidence exists on this topic. For example, a psychologist friend of mine was once treating a psychotic patient, when the patient inquired after the new boy that her daughter had gone out with the night before. The psychologist began to answer, then realized with a start that she had not mentioned to *anyone* at the clinic that her daughter had a date with a new boy, let alone that she even had a daughter! Unfortunately, little systematic evidence exists on this subject.

Nearly every one of the approximately fifty psychics I interviewed felt that most psychotics display psychic abilities. Many also feel that some of the people in mental institutions are not crazy but merely have psychic abilities which are misunderstood and misinterpreted as signs of mental illness. For example, June Bower explained to me that

Psychotics get flipped unwillingly into another level of reality, which is very disorganized for them. They can't synthesize or integrate the experience; they don't understand it and they stay there. Many times it can be an illumination experience which is psychotic in nature by our definition of mental illness, but may actually be an enlightened or heightened state...I had a client once who told a psychiatrist she heard death knocking on the doors and walls. He thought she was psychotic. I thought she was probably clairaudient.

In addition to being psychic, June is a practicing clinical psychologist with a Ph.D. in Psychology.

Psychic Theodore Mills told me about a friend of his who works with mentally disturbed people. He said that many psychics become mentally ill because they had been told by friends or parents that they were crazy, and, since they knew nothing of their abilities, they accepted the statement that they were insane. His view reflects that of the majority of psychics I interviewed. Perhaps this reflects the actual situation; perhaps it underscores their sensitivity to the issue of mental illness. The preceding discussion raises a second question: *is there a relationship between psychic/shamanic abilities and psychosis?* I would argue that there is, and it lies in what we might term "*loss of ego boundaries*."

Many of the psychics I interviewed emphasized that it was important to “let go of their own individual ego” in order to be psychic. Rather than having a “checklist” of individual psychic abilities, most saw themselves as having the ability to enter into an altered state of consciousness where ego boundaries dissolved and allowed them to connect with the “oneness” of the universe. They often spoke of being “open” and experiencing what their client was experiencing. Taken to an extreme, this loss of ego boundary is what schizophrenics experience—the failure of the ego to differentiate between self and not-self (Greyson 1977).

One of the psychics described her experience of this:

I was always afraid of (going insane) before I became a practicing psychic. (Then) I did go insane. It was only for five hours and I realized once I did it that being insane is nothing more than taking the ice cube tray dividers out of the ice cube tray. And that all consciousness is no longer divided, but it's all there at once, simultaneously. That's what being insane is, and to be psychic, you've got to be insane.

Psychics often commented that “reading” a client was simply a matter of “becoming one with” that client and then “reading themselves.” What psychics do, then, is predicated on the ability to literally or metaphorically “let go” of their ego boundaries.

The work of shamans almost by definition also involves the loss of ego boundaries. One of their major skills is the ability to control spirits. This usually takes the form of spirit possession. Certainly, allowing another “spirit” to enter into their body involves a letting go of ego boundaries, as does their work of locating lost objects and people (clairvoyance) and diagnosing illness.

An important distinction, however is that the psychic or shaman's loss of ego boundaries appears to be a kind of transcendental experience, creating a sense of connectedness between the individual and the world. In contrast, the psychotic's loss of boundaries creates a feeling of confusion. Rather than experiencing a sense of unity or “oneness” with the external world, the psychotic is simply unable to distinguish between himself and the external world. Psychotics may be able to identify the feelings of others, but real communication or connection is absent because they cannot grasp the intention of the others' feelings (Stein 1967).

Thus, both psychics/shamans and psychotics experience a state of consciousness in which ego boundaries are dissolved in merging with the external world. This state appears to be an integral part of their experience of psi phenomena. The major difference is in the value attached to it. To the psychotic, it is a negative, disorienting state; to the psychic or shaman, a positive, transcendent one.

The next question I would like to address involves the observation that psychic or shamanic abilities often follow a psychotic episode. *Is there a meaningful connection between psi and psychosis?*

As I indicated earlier, I believe the key to psychic or shamanic abilities is the loss of ego boundaries. How does one “lose” one's ego boundaries? (I should point out that I realize I am speaking metaphorically here. I don't believe that a neurophysiological correlate of the “ego boundary” has been identified.) I suggest that there are at least two major ways of achieving a state of consciousness in which ego boundaries are dissolved. The first is involuntary: through a psychotic episode or disorder. This is the path of the “wounded healers,” the shamans who were once sick but have cured themselves and now have control over what appears to be psychotic behavior. The recorded statements of a Siberian Yakut-Tungus shaman speak eloquently to this point:

When I was twenty years old, I became very ill and began to “see with my eyes and hear with my ears” that which others did not see or hear; nine years I struggled with myself, and I did not tell anyone what was happening to me, as I was afraid that people would not believe me and would make fun of me. At last I became so seriously ill that I was on the verge of death; but when I started to shamanize I grew better; and even now when I do not shamanize for a long time I am liable to be ill (Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia*, p. 173, cited in Norbeck 1961:118).

Parapsychologist D. Scott Rogo points out that psychic abilities often emerge *after* curing psychotic disorders, as well as in early stages, as described in the autobiographies of recovered schizophrenics. O'Brien's (1976) account of her journey into schizophrenia and her subsequent recovery is an excellent example. As she emerged from her psychosis, she found to her great surprise that she knew who was around the corner as she approached it and she could predict the exact words people would use before they spoke; she even had an astoundingly successful trip to Las Vegas, in which every number she felt urged to play came up a winner. This talent lasted four days, and disappeared as abruptly as it began.

There is some evidence to suggest that at least among some of the psychics I studied, emotional crises precipitated the development of psychic abilities (Galanti 1981). For example, Claire Black described the abuse she received from her stepmother.

I was a child who got whipped every day. If they couldn't catch me in something, I got whipped at nine o'clock at night, before I went to bed, for what I might have done that they didn't see. I've been beaten so bad I've had thorns picked out of my butt in the hospital; I've had my hand put over a flame for playing with

fire. All the things that children do and investigate, I got caught in and beaten for.

A second way of achieving a state of consciousness characterized by a loss of ego boundaries is through a "self-directed apprenticeship." These are the individuals who take psychic development classes or who apprentice themselves to a practicing shaman. Even those shamans who receive a "calling" generally go through an initiation period. Murphy (1964) describes the initiation for the would-be shaman on St. Lawrence Island. It involved a five-day period of wandering alone on the tundra, without food or sleep, suffering much physical and emotional anguish. The hoped for outcome of the initiation was to have a vision of a spirit-familiar, who would continue to work with the potential shaman in his rituals. Murphy states, "It is said that people who become shamans felt very sick and perplexed during this (initiation) time; they 'go out of mind, but not crazy' and they felt all right again when they had 'straightened up in their minds what was bothering them'" (1964:58).

The key factor is that the exercises used to teach psychism or shamanism involve entering altered states of consciousness. Psychic information appears to originate in these altered states. Meditation teachers often comment that psychic information may manifest during meditative states, but that these are insignificant side effects and should be ignored (LeShan 1974).

To return to the point I want to make here, *I believe that certain states of consciousness which characterize some forms of psychosis, specifically, those states which involve a loss of ego boundaries, are common to both psychic and shamanic functioning. These states can be achieved through practice, as meditation is perfected through practice. Or, these states can be achieved involuntarily, during a psychotic episode. Once they have been experienced, however, a pathway is laid down, making it easier to achieve that state again. It is for this reason that psychic or shamanic abilities are often observed to follow bouts of trauma or mental illness. Once you've been there—through whatever means—it is easier to go there again.*

Thus, to answer the question posed at the outset, I would state that psychics and shamans commonly experience a psychotic state of consciousness. However, there are several important characteristics which distinguish psychics and shamans from psychotics.

- 1) **Recognition:** psychics and shamans generally *recognize* that they are in an altered state of consciousness; psychotics may not.
- 2) **Control:** to a great degree, psychics and shamans can *control* going into and out of psychic states of consciousness; psychotics often cannot. Furthermore,

psychics and shamans generally have a sense of control over their experiences and states of consciousness. Psychotics tend to feel a loss of control in these areas.

- 3) **Context:** psychics and shamans enter into altered states of consciousness at appropriate times and places; psychotics do not. Furthermore, due to the inappropriateness of the context, psychotic *behavior* is perceived as deviant by the society, whereas psychic and shamanic behavior is not.

In conclusion, let me state that yes, psychics and shamans can be perceived as "psychotics in control," but that control is monumentally significant and can make the difference between being the healer and the mental patients that they may treat.

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## LUCID DREAMS AND SHAMANISM

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recorded lucid dream accounts which seem to have some parallel in classic shamanism as revealed by accounts of tribal shamans. These accounts should help to illustrate the "qualitative shift in state of mental functioning" that generally occurs.

As mentioned, lucidity arises from the dreamer realizing, while in the dream state, that the experience is actually a dream; this is often accompanied by a change in the state of perception. Oliver Fox (in LaBerge 1985:33), a British writer, describes his first lucid dream after becoming aware he was dreaming:

Instantly the vividness of life increased a hundredfold. Never had the sea and sky and trees shone with such glamorous beauty; even the commonplace houses seemed alive and mystically beautiful.

Lucid dreamers commonly report the ability to focus their perception on specific objects in the dream environment. The following account by Subject B (in Green 1968:73-74), shows this:

It occurred to me to wonder whether this might be a dream, and I looked carefully around the room, trying to decide whether the texture of it differed in any way from waking life. The room was lit by electric light, which had a slightly artificial quality—perhaps more mellow than real electric light. I looked down at the carpet and suddenly became convinced that this was in fact a dream.

The perceptions of lucid dreamers may also involve many of the senses, as illustrated in the following account by Van Eeden (in Green 1968:76):

I took the broken glass and threw it out of the window, in order to observe whether I could hear the tinkling. I heard the noise all right and I even saw two dogs run away from it quite naturally. I thought what a good imitation this comedy-world was. Then I saw a decanter with claret and tasted it, and noted with perfect clearness of mind: "Well, we can also have voluntary impressions of taste in this dream-world; this has quite the taste of wine."

Shamans also experience a shift in their sense of perception upon entering the SSC. This is apparent in the following quote from Aua, an Iglulik angakoq (shaman):

But I was a shaman. I could see and hear in a totally different way. I had gained my quamaneq, my

enlightenment, the shaman-light of brain and body, and this in such a manner that it was not only I who could see through the darkness of life, but the same light also shone out from me, imperceptible to human beings, but visible to all the spirits of earth and sky and sea, and these now came to me and became my helping spirits...I felt such a power of vision, that I could see right through the house, in through the earth and up into the sky... (in Halifax 1979:119).

The shaman uses this sense of heightened perception, along with help from guardian spirits (see discussion below) to see things ordinarily hidden, such as lost souls, future events and harmful intrusions in patients (see e.g. discussions in Eliade 1972:60-61 and Harner 1980:22-24,116-117). It would be interesting to see if lucid dreamers could use their abilities to perceive specific objects in detail in an attempt to find harmful intrusions in figures of friends or relatives who are suffering from some illness.

Entrance into the lucid dream state is often accompanied by a feeling of unbounded joy. Oliver Fox (in LaBerge 1985:33) expressed his feelings upon the realization that he was dreaming:

Never had I felt so absolutely well, so clear-brained so inexpressibly free! The sensation lasted only a few minutes and I awoke.

A similar experience of tremendous joy was related by Aua, in reference to his new found shamanic state:

Then, for no reason, all would suddenly be changed, and I felt a great, inexplicable joy, a joy so powerful that I could not restrain it, but had to break into song, a mighty song, with only room for the one word: joy, joy! (in Halifax 1979:118).

Despite the common experience of unbounded joy, the lucid dreamer often experiences the need to maintain a sense of emotional detachment in order to remain in the lucid dream state. Green (1968:99) gives the following as being a "typical" account:

I was in hospital. I had had a not very serious operation, but something had gone wrong. I was up near the ceiling watching two doctors and nurses by my bedside.

I seemed completely detached and said to myself 'I wonder if they will save me,' not really seeming to mind—which was absurd, for I was young with a husband and two children.

This emotional detachment could be present for the lucid dreamer even under extreme circumstances. The following account illustrates this vividly:

...I tumbled down 500 ft. of ice in the Lake District mountains. I had no feelings of fear or panic as I lost my balance and fell down the ice. Instead, I was physically relaxed and so detached mentally that I was not in the least concerned about the events of my immediate future (or lack of it!). For all I knew then I might have been speeding to my death or to serious injury but was not even remotely interested. I had fairly severe friction burns on my thighs and some lacerations on my forehead but experienced no pain during the descent (Ibid.:179).

Autdarta, a Greenland Eskimo, relates a similar feeling of detachment despite a shamanic experience of being dismembered:

I had not been lying there long before I heard the bear coming. It attacked me and crunched me up, limb by limb, joint by joint, but strangely enough it did not hurt at all; it was only when it bit me in the heart that it did hurt frightfully (in Halifax 1979:109).

These accounts would seem to be in marked contrast to ordinary dreams in which the dreamer can be so absorbed in the terrifying aspects of some dreams. (Indeed the feeling of excitement can wake one almost instantly from a lucid dream.)

As one attains a degree of detachment in the lucid dream, it becomes possible to maintain the lucid dream state for a longer period of time. One can then exert one's state of clear mental functioning to direct one's actions in the lucid dream, as in the following example given by Saint-Denys (1982:85):

In another dream, I see myself riding on horseback on a fine day, and suddenly I remember my true situation and the question of whether or not I can freely choose my actions in a dream... A fork in the road appears in front of me. The right-hand path disappears into a thick wood, the left-hand path leads to some sort of ruined manor house. I feel at liberty to turn either right or left, and therefore to decide for myself whether I shall evoke ideas and images relating to the ruins or to the wood. First, I turn to the right; then it occurs to me that I would do better, from an experimental point of view to turn to the left, to guide this unusually clear dream towards the turrets of the manor house, and seek to memorize the exact details of its architecture, so that on waking I can try to remember the origin of these memories. I therefore take the left-hand path.

Fox (in Green 1968:61) used his ability to direct his dream actions to try and get to a specific place:

I then willed to travel to a certain temple which I have been told once existed in Allahabad. I moved off at a great speed and came to rest in a modern brilliantly lighted room. Here a man and a woman were seated at a table, having a meal. They did not seem to see me. Again I repeated my desire: 'Temple-Allahabad-India-in the Past.' And now it seemed to me there was a sort of hole or break formed in the continuity of the astral matter; and through this, in the distance—as though viewed through a very long tunnel—I could see something indistinct which might have been an entrance to a temple, with a statue still further away showing through it...Sticking to my objective, I once more repeated: 'Temple-Allahabad-India-in the Past.' The tunnel arrangement was coming into view again, then something must have occurred which broke my trance—though what I do not know. Instantly I rushed back to my body and awoke.

Fox's account shows motifs common to shamanic experience. His flight of the soul, ability to remain focused on intention, and the appearance of a tunnel are techniques also important to operating in the SSC.

In particular, the tunnel is important to shamanic journeyers for it allows them to leave the ordinary plane of existence and enter the sacred realm. Old K"xau, a !Kung bushman, describes his usual method of journeying:

When people sing, I dance. I enter the earth. I go in at a place where people drink water. I travel in a long way, very far. When I emerge, I am already climbing. I'm climbing threads, the threads that lie over there in the South... (in Halifax 1979: 61)

As Harner (1980:25) notes, this isn't an isolated example:

Entrances into the Lowerworld commonly lead down into a tunnel or tube that conveys the shaman to an exit, which opens out upon bright and marvelous landscapes. From there the shaman travels wherever he desires for minutes or even hours, finally returning back up through the tube (henceforth called the Tunnel) to emerge at the surface, where he entered.

In my own lucid dream experience, I was able to access such a technique of descending through a tunnel beginning from a place I'd been to in nature:

I realize it must be a dream...I am transported to cave (as I think of Harner's entrance to Lowerworld). At first, I attempt tunnel at Mt. Wilson, but don't get anywhere in it so I think of other entrance and

somehow I wind up at Obergletscher (ice cave in Switzerland I have visited). I go in some ways not making too much progress until I finally come to tree that's in cave. I concentrate on that as rings start moving past quickly—then I start going down and through dark black passages until some light emerges at one end and I get feeling of getting to other side. When I know I'm there, I crash through wall of cave and am above clouds.

Using a familiar place to begin a journey is also important for it provides one with a point of reference—to return to when the journey ends and to use for future journeys. (Eliade (1972: 182) mentions the importance of knowledge of these regions to shamans:

Healer and psychopomp, the shaman is these because he commands the techniques of ecstasy—that is, because his soul can safely abandon his body and roam at vast distances, can penetrate the underworld and rise to the sky. Through his own ecstatic experience he knows the roads of the extraterrestrial regions. He can go below and above because he has already been there. The danger of losing his way in these forbidden regions is still great; but sanctified by his initiation and furnished with his guardian spirits, the shaman is the only human being able to challenge the danger and venture into a mystical geography.

I believe that lucid dreamers also could use a particular starting place, such as a tunnel, to begin to “map out” the regions that can be accessed in one's dreams. In this manner, one could return from dream to dream in what would become an increasingly familiar realm.

In venturing into these sacred realms, then, the shaman is usually aided by helping spirits; I believe this is a technique that may also be available to lucid dreamers. I will therefore turn to the theme of guardian spirits and communication with other figures in the lucid dream and shamanic states of consciousness.

Eliade (1972:95) describes the importance of helping spirits to the shaman:

Hence the guardian and helping spirits without which no shamanic seance is possible can be regarded as authenticating signs of the shaman's ecstatic journeys in the beyond. This is as much as to say that the animal spirits play the same role as the ancestral spirits; these, too, carry the shaman to the beyond (sky, underworld), reveal the mysteries to him, teach him, and so on.

Thus, these helping figures which appear to the shaman may take the form of animals of deceased ancestors; the important distinction is that these figures guide the shaman and provide him/her with knowledge in the sacred realm.

These helping figures may come to the shaman in dreams, as in the following account given by a Go'ld shaman, who describes his experience (including sexual relations, a common theme for lucid dreamers) with an “ayami,” that is, a teaching spirit:

She has been coming to me ever since, and I sleep with her as with my own wife, but we have no children. She lives quite by herself without any relatives in a hut, on a mountain, but she often changes her abode. Sometimes she comes under the aspect of an old woman, and sometimes under that of a wolf, so she is terrible to look at. Sometimes she comes as a winged tiger. I mount it and she takes me to show me different countries. I have seen mountains, where only old men and women live, and villages, where you see nothing but young people, men and women: they look like Go'lds and speak Go'ldish, sometimes those people are turned into tigers. Now my ayami does not come to me as frequently as before. Formerly, when teaching me, she used to come every night. She has given me three assistants—the jarga (the panther), the doonto (the bear) and the ambe (the tiger). They come to me in my dreams and I summon them while shamaning (in Halifax 1979:121-122).

One sees here an actual crossing-over between the dream and shamanic states of consciousness; i.e., spirits which appeared to the shaman first in dreams later are called upon to assist while in the shamanic state of consciousness.

In my own lucid dreams, I have encountered helping spirits, as well as communicated with spirits of deceased souls:

I climb out of bird as it lets me off there, where I call for my cloud spirit. He asks me to ask what I'd like...I think a moment and ask if I might communicate with J.M. (who is deceased). So I am immediately confronted with the spirit of J.M. I say hello and he asks unenthusiastically what I want. I say what poem would he like communicated if I were to bring back poem bearing his name. He revealed this as I looked through his eyes at the image (of L.A. Co.-USC Medical Center). I recite poem to myself as he leaves, so I remember. I am back at plateau with cloud spirit who asks if there is anything else. I ask if he'll guide me through this weekend's activities and he says he'll be there with me.

This spirit helper, then, provided knowledge relevant to my waking state; moreover, it had appeared in a prior lucid dream. The ability to contact helping figures can provide one with a rich resource to return to in successive lucid dreams.

Communication with deceased souls has also been experienced by other lucid dreamers. This account was given by Dr. Frederik Willems van Eeden:

In May, 1903, I dreamed that I was in a little provincial Dutch town and at once encountered my brother-in-law, who had died some time before. I was absolutely sure that it was he and I knew that he was dead...He told me that a financial catastrophe was impending for me. Somebody was going to rob me of a sum of 10,000 guilders. I said that I understood him, though after waking up I was utterly puzzled by it and could make nothing of it...

I wish to point out that this was the only prediction I ever received in a lucid dream in such an impressive way. And it came only too true, with this difference, that the sum I lost was twenty times greater. At the time of the dream there seemed not to be the slightest probability of such a catastrophe. I was not even in possession of the money I lost afterwards. Yet it was just the time when the first events took place—the railway strikes of 1903—that led up to my financial ruin (in Green 1968:112).

A somewhat more beneficial encounter with a deceased relative was experienced by Tankli, an Australian Kurnai. He received his shamanic initiation through a dream he had of his father:

I had some dreams about my father, and I dreamed three times about the same thing...My father tied something over my eyes and led me inside. I knew this because I heard the rocks make a sound as of knocking behind me. Then he uncovered by eyes, and I found that I was in a place as bright as day, and all the old men were round about. My father showed me a lot of shining bright things, like glass, on the walls, and told me to take some. I took one and held it tight in my hand. When we went out again my father taught me how to make these things go into my legs, and how I could pull them out again. He also taught me how to throw them at people...Then I woke up and found that I was lying along the limb of a tree. The old men came out with fire-sticks and when they reached the tree, I was down, and standing by it with the thing my father had given me in my hand. It was like glass, and we called it Kiin. I told the old men all about it, and they said that I was a doctor. From that time on, I could pull things out of people, and I could throw the Kiin like light in the evening at people, saying to it Blappan (Go!) (in Halifax 1979:124-125).

One can see from the preceding account that the dreamer received reinforcement of his dream experience from his peers upon waking.

One other application of shamanic principles to lucid dreamers, then, that I believe would be beneficial is the attitude of the dreamer/journeyer in regards to the interpretation of the experience. While most analysts of lucid dreams still consider such dreams to be mental creations (see e.g., LaBerge 1985:90), I think this is an ethnocentric and somewhat limiting viewpoint. It is useful to look at how other cultures, versed in these experiences for generations, have interpreted these phenomena. The Hopi, for instance, divide reality, not into time and space, as most Western cultures do, but into the subjective (which would include dreams, thoughts and desires) and the objective (to which we attribute ordinary waking events as well as past history); each type of reality is accorded equal validity (see Whorf 1983). Similarly, Harner (1980:53) notes:

The learned component of the SSC includes the ascription of full reality to the things one sees, feels, hears, and otherwise experiences in the altered state of consciousness. These firsthand, empirical experiences are not viewed by the shaman as fantasy, but as immediate reality. At the same time, the shaman recognizes the separateness of the SSC reality from that of the OSC ordinary state of consciousness, and does not confuse the two...The learned precepts used while he is in the SSC include the assumption that animals, plants, human and other phenomena seen in an altered state of consciousness are fully real, within the context of the nonmaterial, or nonordinary, reality in which they are perceived...In both the SSC and the OSC the shaman approaches the other forms of life with familial respect and understanding. He recognizes their antiquity, relatedness, and special strengths.

I believe that a similar attitude would be the most efficient means towards gaining knowledge and wisdom while in the lucid dream state. Rather than continually questioning the experience, as many lucid dreamers have done, it might prove more effective to ask questions of helping figures while in the dream state and reserve judgment for later. In this way, the experience of the lucid dream might be judged, not by its relative phenomenological merits, but by the results which it confers upon the dreamer in his/her waking state. Utilized in this manner, lucid dreams might prove extremely beneficial in tapping one's potential.

Based on the preceding analysis of lucid dream and shamanic accounts, it would appear that, in terms of emotional and perceptual quality, recurring themes (such as falling, tunnels, sex and communication with helping figures) and available mental cognitive faculties (including volitional control, memory of pre-state intention and memory recall of the experience), the two states of consciousness—lucid dreaming and shamanism—are qualitatively very similar; there is even a crossing-over of some phenomena between the two states. In terms of how they differ, I would say that lucidity in the dream state is somewhat

more tenuous than the SSC, requiring a degree of emotional detachment to prevent waking or returning to the ordinary dream state. Moreover while learning to become lucid in a dream is sometimes more difficult for the novice (LaBerge 1985:129ff. suggests the practice involved in acquiring this skill), the real learning process in shamanism begins in the altered state of consciousness. However, based on my own experience and those recorded in accounts of shamans, I feel that once lucidity in a dream is attained, shamanic techniques are readily accessible and can be of benefit to the dreamer. To this end, it should be productive to train lucid dreamers in the techniques of shamanism, and vice versa, to increase the knowledge available from both states of consciousness.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

### Dreaming: Anthropological and Psychological Interpretations

edited by Barbara Tedlock. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), xi + 297 pages, \$39.50 hardcover. Reviewed by Joseph K. Long, Plymouth State College of New Hampshire.

This volume, published as one of a long string of volumes sponsored by the School of American Research (Santa Fe) as part of their Advanced Seminar Series, represents a major block of largely new research, perhaps the most important anthropological one since Jackson Lincoln's *The Dream in Primitive Cultures* (1935). In many respects the individual contributions in this anthology underscore the great importance of dream behavior to understanding culture and the severe lack of knowledge we have about dreams even now. As far as anthropological work on dreams is concerned, the surface has scarcely been scratched as is apparent by checking the HRAF or other sources. But this book is a major step forward, and no dream researchers will be safe without adding it to their libraries.

Tedlock starts the volume with an altogether too brief introduction, "Dreaming and dream research," including a survey of various methods, ideas, and theories and a cursory examination of recent work on ASC's. She notes that the volume is "...the product of a convergence between anthropologically informed psychoanalytic and psychodynamic approaches to dreaming on the one hand with natural-language, sociolinguistic, semiotic, and interpretive approaches to the study of meaning on the other" (p. 30). Waud Kracke follows with a chapter on "Myths in dreams, thought in images: an Amazonian [Tupai] contribution to the psychoanalytic theory of primary process," thus providing some empirical support to ideas which mythologists and various students of consciousness have maintained. Gilbert Herdt's "Selfhood and discourse in Sambia [New Guinea] dream sharing" provides a much-awaited believable account (in the vacuum of Kilton Stewart's apparently debunked account of Senoi sharing) and also applies the data to guided imagery.

Ellen Basso's "The implication of a progressive theory of dreaming" on the Kalapalo Indians of Brazil emphasizes the relevance of dreams to the future of the dreamer. The *akua* is reminiscent of the "self" identified in OBEs (or what Basso avoided calling the "soul" because "the moral implications of the term are absent in the Kalapalo usage") (p. 95). Basso's data are rich but interpretations are confused by preconceived notions and yet unfamiliarity with literature such as Eisenbud's and Ehrenwald's on psi and psychoanalysis. Tedlock's "Zuni and Quiche [Mayan] dream sharing and interpreting" is a fruitful comparison and contrast. She presents some fascinating data on night dreams and sleep paralysis as well as substantial materials relevant to the general subject of precognition. Bruce

Mannheim's "A semiotic of Andean [Cuzco area] dreams" follows the models of Turner and Levi-Strauss and includes materials on prognostication in particular.

Michael F. Brown's "Ropes of sand: order and imagery in Aguaruna [related to the Jivaro] dreams" takes its title from Jorge Luis Borge's statement that modeling dream materials is "...much more difficult than weaving a rope of sand..." and then proves the point. Although he makes reference to Harner's comments on dreams as reality and everyday life as illusion (and later mentions the precognitive nature of dreams) (p. 1476) he completely fails, apparently ignorant of the past relevant literature in parapsychology, to see the relevance of all this for his own work. Benjamin Kilborne's "On classifying dreams" draws relevant parallels among ancient Mesopotamians, second-century Greeks, and modern Moroccans, on whom he did his fieldwork. William Merrill's "The Ramamuri [Tarahumara] stereotype of dreams" on northeastern Mexico seeks to show that the attitude toward dreams does not determine or even have impact upon dream contents.

John Homiak's piece on Jamaica, "The mystic revelation of Rasta Far-Eye," is a valued new contribution to the already extensive literature on this cult and contains at least as much data on psychedelics, visions, and other behaviors as on dreams in particular. His detailed study of one Ras Mobutu shed interesting light on the nature of visions in mazeway resynthesis (à la A. F. C. Wallace) of revitalization movements. Douglass Price-Williams shifts the focus still more in "The waking dream in ethnographic perspective." This further bridges the gap between "visions" as seen in vision quests or Elkins' account of *Aboriginal Men of High Degree*, including ostensible psi effects, and sleeping dreams as conventionally handled by psychologists. Referring to hypnosis and other widely divergent materials, this article seems in some respects to be the most sophisticated. It too adds to our understanding of mazeway resyntheses: "The mythopoetic function can produce drivel as well as wisdom; ..." (p. 261).

On the whole, these contributions are very well written, highly sophisticated, and loaded with valuable original data. On the other hand, AASC members will find the lack of discussion of psi disappointing. But not surprising. It has been almost a convention in anthropology to gloss psi phenomena or to pointedly ignore them. Three fairly blatant parapsychologists who have published in national anthropological journals recently have so deeply imbedded their discussions of psi as to camouflage them for the casual reader (which may be why their contributions were judged publishable). One searches mainly in vain for such key researchers as Ehrenwald, Eisenbud, Krippner, Van de Castle, or Ullman. Where they do occur, e.g. with Hall or Zimmerman as co-authors, the only works cited are those having nothing to do with psi, and the "classic" works, like Krippner's and Ullman's on precognition of Malcolm Bessent, are missing. If we look under "precognition" in the index, we are referred on to "omen dreams," which is apparently

regarded as a more neutral term (which, incidentally, lists 16 different discussions! Certainly, of all forms of psi which are generally accepted, precognition is the least plausible in terms of current scientific or emic systems or world views. Even authorities on the subject like Eisenbud have woven elaborate theories to explain the phenomenon in terms of a more reasonable emic scientific system. But other phenomena like OBEs and NDEs, which hardly need be regarded as paranormal, are also omitted, and these two have certainly occupied major places in recent literature.<sup>1</sup> We cannot assume of course that omission of such references demonstrates ignorance or antagonism toward psi on the part of the editor or the contributors—of any contributors—but we can make the assessment that this may represent an intellectual debasing of the research as well as scientific dishonesty on the part of those who are familiar with the psi literature.

This brief review is entirely inadequate for conveying any sense about the rich ethnographic fare and sharp methodological and theoretical insights which the volume provides. To the extent that one can analyze dreams without ever resorting to the mention of psi, this work will stand as a major contribution for many years to come.

#### Note

1. We must also recognize that glossing of psi is an easy way out in cases of ostensible ESP in which the fieldwork does not have the time to track down all facts to determine whether ostensible precognition is apparently valid or merely a case of fantasy. But it seems unlikely that so many researchers would ignore the great importance of doing such a determination unless there were some systematic bias against reporting on it.

#### A Little Course in Dreams

by Robert Bosnak. (Boston: Shambhala, 1988), 121 pages, \$8.95 paper. Reviewed by Deborah Jay Hillman, Narcotic and Drug Research, Inc., New York City.

Since the emergence of the dream work movement in the United States in the early years of this decade, both public and scholarly interest in dreams has become more widespread. In academic disciplines, and in social settings, where the role of dreams was once marginal or absent, we are beginning to pay more attention to this rich and remarkable phase of our experience: dreaming. In the public sphere, the message is spreading that dreams can be understood and appreciated by lay people, without having to rely on the interpretive guidance of experts. More and more people are engaging in dream work alone and with others, and non-clinical dream groups of many different stripes are proliferating. Some of the impetus and method for this activity is provided by the work of therapists who support and encourage the expanding social awareness of dreams. *A Little Course in Dreams*, by Jungian analyst Robert Bosnak, is just such an inspiration and resource.

This beautifully written and delightful little volume is a treasure chest of insight about the world of dreams, and the imaginative journey back to it from waking life. Evident here is the link between Bosnak's gift for speaking in metaphor, and his exquisite sensitivity to the reality of dreams. And yet he makes it clear that dreams are not easy to get a handle on; that [w]ith most dreams, you get the feeling there's nothing you can do, and yet you've got to do something" (p.74).

What, then, does one do in order to begin understanding dreams? Above all, the task is to develop a trained imagination, capable of entering into the reality of the dream world. According to Bosnak, "the training of the imagination is a discipline, just as important as the training of the mind" (p. 73), and "[d]reamwork is work on the imagination" (p. 113). Ordinary, habitual consciousness is a stranger to the dream world, unable to make sense of what it finds there. And so [o]ne of the tasks in working on dreams is to trip up our daytime consciousness again and again in order to unhinge our fixed positions" (p. 28). Bosnak brings a fresh perspective to such general aspects of dream work as remembering and recording dreams, handling resistances, developing association, and finding metaphors. And he lucidly explains, in its own brief chapter, the Jungian concept of amplification, which allows one to explore the "physiognomy of each image." Framing the text with personal reflections on two related dreams of his own, he illustrates the many themes and concepts woven through the rest of the book, including the tendency for dream figures to develop and change over time.

I particularly like Bosnak's keen sense of the living, organic nature of the dream world, and of the spatial quality of dreams. In an interesting chapter called "A Dream Series," he traces the evolution, over a period of months, of a particular theme in the dream life of one of his analytic patients. He notes that in many such series, there is an interweaving of constructive and destructive images; that "[i]t is as though a creative development goes together with a certain process of destruction and decay. Renewal is at the same time dying out of the old" (p. 59).

Observation of this cyclical process if facilitated by recorded dream texts, yet Bosnak carefully distinguishes the dream story from the actual dream. "The dream itself," he writes, "is a texture woven of space and time inside which we find ourselves" (p. 7). And so he begins his "little course" with a set of memory exercises designed to develop the kind of spatial memory needed to re-enter the dream while awake. Later, in a chapter called "Movements through Space" (which draws on material from his Cambridge, Massachusetts dream practicum), we see how the ability to move about in the spatial reality of the dream can be used to explore one's emotional responses to the imagery. This kind of active imagination makes Bosnak's approach to dreams experiential in the deepest sense.

Although one can work on dreams alone, Bosnak advocates

doing it with others. This is because ordinary consciousness does not want to see what lies outside its well established viewpoint. "One or more other people supply an auxiliary consciousness that can see in areas where habitual consciousness is blind" (p. 33). Bosnak's sensitivity to shared dream work as it occurs in and out of therapy—outside of it in reciprocal pairs, as well as in groups—sheds light on the unique character of each approach. At one point during a dream group session (which readers have been invited to "attend"), he notes the exploratory path that he and the dreamer would take if this were the therapy setting. Bosnak describes a strong therapeutic relationship as one which "can withstand great pressure" and "contain many explosive situations without going to pieces" (p. 62). He cautions that not all dream groups can contain the same degree of intimacy; that "[t]he more personal the material that is brought into a group, the greater the cohesiveness of the group must be" (p. 85). With dream work in pairs, the "problem...is that transference—unconscious role-playing—sometimes gets complicated" (p. 34). Groups have the advantage of less concentrated closeness, and a greater variety of perspectives to play with. But in all forms of "Listening to Dreams" (as one of the chapters is evocatively titled),

the dreamer should discover what the dream is about.

The job of the listener is only to bring close the images that the dreamer gives less emphasis to and to help the dreamer get involved with the images. It is not a matter of interpretation. The dream images must reveal themselves through the constant attention paid to them (p. 35).

This passage is a simple yet eloquent statement of a principle uniting most contemporary approaches to dream work outside of therapy. Perhaps in time it will find its way into a larger number of clinical consulting rooms, as well.

At the center of the book is a fascinating and decidedly "Jungian" chapter called "Alchemy as Exercise." Here, Bosnak demonstrates how alchemical metaphors can be used to describe psychic processes. For in addition to being the archaic form of chemistry, alchemy "also comprised the study of processes of imagination that took place in connection with the impossible task of transforming base metals into precious metals" (p. 62). We're introduced to three alchemical worlds—the black (nigredo), white (albedo), and red (rubedo)—and offered an exercise to help us explore the kind of imagery associated with each of them. I find this a stimulating means of conjuring up metaphorical worlds (in essence, producing waking dreams), and of experiencing directly the power of words to evoke imagery with which one can actively engage. Yet I feel strongly that what's missing is some thoughtful discussion of the way in which image-worlds are mediated by cultural meanings. We have an excellent opportunity, in doing dream work, to look more deeply at the cultural roots of the stereotyped images that find their way into our dreams. Bosnak might have explored,

for example, the deeper social implications of the dream in which the "stiff white professor found the one to set him free in a run-down black neighborhood" (p. 60).

This book is not without a profound social message, however. In a concluding chapter, "Imagination as Healing Poison," Bosnak underscores the imagination's dual power to create and destroy. He tells us that "[n]ow more than ever, it is vital to focus upon the raw urge to destruction that exists in the imagination" (p. 118), if we are to succeed in avoiding the fatal end made possible by our nuclear weaponry. Thoroughly feeling that urge, without identifying with it, "can become a remedy," and dream work allows this to happen. It is a noble purpose for teaching a "little course in dreams," and both novice and seasoned dream workers have much to learn from this skillful book.

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