

The Dream: In Search of a New Abode

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I am going to begin with a parable.

In the current era dreams have come to us as a psychiatric heritage. Mention the word "dream" and two names come to mind, Freud and Jung. In the unique home Freud built for our dream life, the energy source came in the form of the personal unconscious and was located in the basement. Jung came along a bit later and built a quite different style home with a dual energy system in the form of both a personal and a genetically determined collective unconscious. Besides, it was not hidden in the basement but was built into the very obvious facade of the house. These two geniuses took us quite far in explaining the healing potential of the dream. Freud's instinctual theory has been extensively remodeled over time in the direction of a more adaptational model. Jung's home for the dream is still pretty much the way he built it. Both homes provided shelter to people who were in need of it.

Two problems emerged from this architectural parable of our dreams. Both homes were available only to those who mastered the two very different metapsychological keys to the front door. Thus did our dream life become institutionalized. Mastery of design (theory) and maintenance (technique) were essential for those who sought to live there. What was necessary but strange about this was that it became more like a hospital setting rather than a normal home. Dreaming is a universal feature of our existence serving a natural healing function and as such should be universally available. The fact that dreams deal with our emotional life does not relieve us from our individual responsibility to make the best possible use of them. Of course if our emotional life gets too askew we need more than our dreams to regain our balance. By way of analogy, babies came into the world before there were obstetricians. Midwives often sufficed. If there is danger to the mother it's good to have an obstetrician nearby. We are all midwives to the dreamer in group dream work.

The professionalization of our dream life left the public to flounder in its ignorance until fairly recently. In the recent decades professionals and laity joined together to stimulate the public's interest in and knowledge about dreams and how to work with them. The message was that everyone had the energy source to manage their own dream house. Not enough such homes have been built but compared to the situation that existed for most of the last century, there has been a relative real estate boom. Many years ago a book appeared, "Mr. Dowling Builds His Dream House." That's something every human being on this planet can do and perhaps someday will. Only in the last thirty years has a concerted effort been made to return dreams to the people who dream. There are two lessons to be learned from this. Dreams are as helpful to us to the same extent as any other bodily system. The second is that analytic theory is a limited container for our dreams.

Dreaming is characteristic of all mammals. Just as each of our bodily systems serve as maintenance and repair, so do dreams. Their task is to deal with the changing scene in the way we live out our lives. Awake we have a range of authentic and unauthentic emotional responses. Asleep and dreaming we each have an incorruptible core of being that confronts us with who we are rather than who we think we are. It ferrets out the truth as current emotional residues surface in their link to our past (when relevant) in an effort to alert us to predicaments that vary from the mundane to the momentous, from joy to tragedy.

We are better off for discovering the truth about ourselves in any of the four dimensions of our life. In the biological dimension dreams remind us of bodily needs. On occasion, organ pathology appears in a dream before waking awareness. In the psychological dimensions, where most of the subject matter of our dreams comes from, we explore our vices and our virtues. In the social dimension there is both negative and positive fallout from the various "isms" that are swept into our unconscious like sexism, racism, ageism and I might add dreamism, a derogatory attitude toward dreams, prejudging them from the point of view of the waking state as silly, unimportant, or meaningless.

There is a fourth dimension that has no generally agreed upon designation, e.g. transpersonal, cosmic, spiritual. This has to do with the many unanswered questions about our place in a universe not of our own creation. Religion has attempted to fill in this gap but has not had a good track record in uniting us as the single species that we are.

Despite the advances in our psychological study of dreams and the current experimental and observational studies, there are many unanswered questions about the nature of dreaming consciousness. Here are a few of them.

Where does the inexorable honesty of our dreams come from? It is as if we have a magic camera with an ethical aperture that opens wider while dreaming than in the waking state.

What is the source of the creativity that shapes very original imagistic metaphors in our dreams that embed our true feelings and do so in a way that is oblivious of time, space and causality?

What is it that so instantaneously links our remote past memories in their relevance to the current source of feelings that instigated the dream, something we can't do consciously?

Where do the occasional "big" dreams come from that Jung referred to with imagery that evoke feelings far beyond our ordinary range?

Why do paranormal events such as telepathy occur more often in dreams than in waking life?

Why are we more acutely aware of all four dimensions of our life while dreaming than awake?

In seeking answers to these questions I have sought help beyond my own field of psychiatry. The last ten years of the twentieth century was known as the "decade of consciousness." Quantum physicists, in concert with many other disciplines, began to focus on "the hard problem" (Chalmers, 1995), namely, the connection of consciousness to its underlying neurophysiological substrate. With only few exceptions, however (Wolf, 1994; Walker, 2000; Eccles, 1953), the focus was exclusively on waking consciousness. Quantum theory was so successful in the light it shed on all its applications to the world of matter, perhaps it could bring us closer to an understanding of the relationship of mind

to matter. The problem was that no one understood the strange features that came with it. These included its indeterminism, the wave-particle duality, the jump an electron makes in going from one orbit to another without being in between, the measurement problem where all aspects of the experiment including the observer influence on the end result, and finally the reality of the impossible, namely non-locality, where a signal goes faster than light.

There was something about these puzzling features of quantum theory that suggested an analogy to the nature of dreaming consciousness. My comments will be limited to complementarity, the contextual linkage of the observer and the observed, non-locality and interconnectedness.

Complementarity

Bohr (1961) sounded a clarion call when he wrote of the relevance of the general concept of complementarity to quantum mechanics and how it might apply to disciplines other than physics, including the life sciences and the mind itself.

The use of apparently contrasting attributes referring to equally important aspects of the human mind present indeed a remarkable analogy to the situation in atomic physics, where complementary phenomena for their definition require different elementary concepts. (p. 77)

We do not know what an electron is when it is not being measured. What we do know is that it has a dual nature depending on how we go about measuring it. Under one set of circumstances it becomes manifest as a particle. Under another set of circumstances it appears as a wave. This hidden unity of opposites is known as complementarity. It is also an apt term to describe the dual nature of consciousness. Awake we are in the particle mode facing a world of discrete objects. Asleep and dreaming we are coping with the internal resonant wave-like feelings seeking to embed themselves in symbolic imagery. Both states, while experienced in qualitatively different ways, are derivative of a unity. They are complementary. Both are necessary for a complete description of the individual. To the extent that one is in focus the other is not.

More specifically, the two different forms of consciousness reflect the unique and paradoxical predicament we are in. We are one with the material fabric of the world and

at the same time capable of observing that world, reflecting on it and interacting with it. Awake we function in a world characterized by its discreteness and patterning. Asleep and dreaming we shift to a more diffuse imagistic portrayal of residual feeling tones. Awake, the feeling tones that later surface in dreaming consciousness are dimly felt in a manner akin to a Greek chorus. The latter registers the background dissonance between a particular conscious response to a given experience and the seeming unawareness of its actual felt impact. Asleep and dreaming there is a figure-ground reversal highlighting the feelings involved while the waking ego is assigned to a more reactive role.

The Observer and the Observed

Quantum mechanics has brought to the fore the inter-relatedness of the observer to the phenomena under observation. This is known as the "measurement problem" and is still a very mysterious aspect of quantum theory. We become, as Wheeler has noted, participatory observers in the world around us. The quantum features of an experiment are determined by all the aspects of the experiment including input from the observer in determining the end-result. There is something quite analogous to this when we are dreaming. Awake our observing egos, taking our discreteness as a given, interact in ways that are at times coherent with the underlying reality of our situation and at times are not. By this I mean we are either emotionally engaged or not. Asleep and dreaming there is a radical shift in the observer role. The reality that now comes into view is spontaneous and un-summoned. We remain an observer but are now observing a scenario not of our own conscious making. It is as if the dreamer experiences herself at the onset of a dream as a member of an audience in a theater witnessing a drama about to ensue as the curtain goes up. She has no awareness that she herself has written the drama about to unfold, cast the characters, arranged the props, and reacts to what is going on on the stage as a novel experience.

There is, in effect, an actual merging of the observer and the observed as the dream context unfolds. Freed of temporal and spatial constraints, having a causality of its own, the feeling residues of the waking context come into full view in a metaphorical narrative. By changing our focus asleep we change the "measurement" arrangement and arrive at different views of a unitary entity.

Non-Locality

The term non-locality refers to the instantaneous transfer of a signal from one place to another through no known physical means. Non-locality at the quantum level has been subject to experimental proof but still remains a baffling mystery. Non-locality at the macro-level, as cited in dreams, has been supported by the experimental work in parapsychology and also remains a quite mysterious happening. Whether we are catching glimpses of one mystery or two different ones remains to be determined.

My own interest in telepathy began in the course of psychoanalytic practice when a patient of mine would report a dream containing striking and non-inferential information of concordant events in my own life. This eventually led to experimentally controlled studies using the REM sleep-monitoring technique resulting in statistically significant findings with regard to both the occurrence of telepathic and precognitive dreaming (Ullman, Krippner, Vaughan, 2002).

We do strange things with time and space in our dreams as we impress them into metaphorical service. In the case of time the instantaneous condensation of past and present might be looked upon as a kind of subjective non-locality. The paranormal dream, on the other hand, suggests the possibility of an objective non-locality by spanning across space in the telepathic dream and across time in the precognitive dream. The information picked up is literally or symbolically depicted in the dream. At an anecdotal level Louisa E. Rhine (1961) noted that dreaming seems to favor the occurrence of telepathy over waking consciousness.

Interconnectedness

Here there are three strands that seem to fit together, if only by analogy. The first is the assumption that quantum connectedness applies to the universe as a whole. This view has gained support with the experimental proof of the general acceptance of non-locality as a basic feature of quantum mechanics.

The second is the view of Barlow (1980) who wrote,

"Consciousness is not a property of a brain in isolation but is a property of a brain that is and has been in communication with other brains.... I shall suggest that

consciousness ... is Nature's method of making humans behave cooperatively." (p. 82)

This implies and I believe correctly that consciousness, awake or dreaming, is contextual in nature and that we lose sight of this in our assumption that it is our unique gift to do with as we want. Awake the capacity to love is the most coherent way of relating to a given context. When that capacity is impaired, efforts at healing are set in motion in a way similar to the efforts at repair when a bodily system is damaged in any way. It is in this sense also that dreaming consciousness as a natural healing system exposes impediments to connectedness and explores the coping resources available. Just as we are not in control of our own natural healing potential in response to trauma, infection or other sources of impairment, dreaming is an unconscious effort at healing in the realm of feelings, biologically enforced and spontaneously set in motion. Dreams shed light on unresolved tensions and in so doing pave the way to a truer sense of connection to one's past and to others in the present. Awake we are the beneficiaries of a biological adaptive mechanism that arose in connection with sleep. Once dream content became oriented to social existence in the human sense, the value of that content found its way into waking life. A prime example is the way preliterate societies have made use of their dreams (Eggan, 1949).

Towards a New Abode

What kind of a home is needed for that very special entity known as the dream? As the parable continues, the needs of that occupant are briefly summarized.

1. The dream needs an abode that is safe, warm and supportive regardless of the emotional weather outside where we encounter the occasional "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune."
2. Like all our organ systems, it is a functional system operating in its own way. In this sense it is part of an extended family that at times visits this house because of functional needs such as the need to urinate. In a recent dream of mine I was building my own water supply system. I caught on and managed to get to the bathroom in time. There are times when a particular organ gets into trouble and it may move into the dreamer's house until recognized and the needed help arrives.

3. In this new house there has to be sufficient space to accommodate the special furnishings of the dreamer. These include the following:

Creativity: Dreaming, in a sense, is a very personal art form. Our waking life is full of dead metaphors. "Full" is used metaphorically as its concrete meaning has to do with volume. "Dead" is used as a metaphor as its ordinary reference is to actual death (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Dreams, as the major occupant of the house, spend a good part of the night churning out brand new metaphors.

Memory: The dream has the key that opens up our remote memory bank and links relevant memory to its role in the dream. Waking consciousness does not have the key. The dream connects us to the personal past and orients us to the social future.

Imagination: This is a remarkable aspect of the dream that is called upon for the manufacture of metaphors. It is the source of their uniqueness.

Honesty: This is the most important tool the dreamer has. It is concerned with house maintenance and repairs. It does this by ferreting out flaws in the structure. Honesty connects. Dishonesty disconnects. Life is full of traps for the unwary that lead at times to expediency instead of authenticity.[\[1\]](#)

4. The dream has an extended family who also inhabit the abode and contribute toward its maintenance. They come from different regions already noted -- the biological, the psychological, the social and the fourth or cosmic dimension.

The parable ends here.

The new abode owes its origins to the work of a distinguished theoretical physicist, the late David Bohm. I want to say in advance I cannot, in this presentation, do justice to the range and depth of his argument in setting forth a new theory of the nature and origin of

matter. Nor can I ask him to shoulder any responsibility to the way I have applied it to the origin of our dreams. In my personal meetings and in his writings, he has never, as far as I know, referred to dreams or dreaming.

My interest in the possible relevance of quantum theory to dreaming was awakened in 1974 when I had the good fortune of attending a week long dialogue between David Bohm and Krishnamurti. Twenty-three years before this meeting Bohm wrote what was and still is a classic text on quantum theory. There was an interesting sequel to this book. He wrote it to deepen his own understanding of quantum mechanics but instead it left him with the feeling that a major shift in perspective was needed to go beyond the mysterious gaps in the then and still current Copenhagen indeterministic view of quantum theory. His scientific curiosity was also fueled by his sensitivity to and deep concern with the level of fragmentation that exists among the peoples of this earth and the precarious state we have arrived at in our current efforts of civilizing ourselves. Encouraged by Einstein and Pauli, Bohm began to move in two directions at the same time. He developed an algebra to resolve the anomalies of quantum theory and a metaphysics that addressed the origin of matter and ultimately the source of the generalized fragmentation (Bohm, 1980). Bohm posed the need for a new order to supersede quantum theory just as the latter superseded, but included, the Newtonian order.

Bohm set forth a fundamental order, the implicate order, an order of wholeness that included all that exists and does so in a state of interconnectedness. It is structured holographically, the entirety manifest at every point. Bohm preferred the term holomovement to emphasize that it is a generative order in flux. This order of what he refers to as enfolded wholeness is not only the source but also the maintenance of all that exists. All matter unfolds out of the implicate order to form the explicate or unfolded order in a continuous equilibrium of enfoldment and unfoldment.

The contents of the implicate order no longer exist as discrete elements. They retain their individuality but not in the form experienced in waking life. They exist in a form that reflects their intimate contact with the whole. An analogy would be of a flowing stream where all the fundamental elements of the stream are in contact with all others. There is a continuous and sustaining exchange between these two orders. All matter in this sense is regarded by Bohm as temporary abstractions from the implicate order. He cites as an example of this what is known as a standing wave. In a flowing body of water interacting eddies may throw up a wave that appears to be stationary but exists only as long as the eddies support it. In a sense we are all standing waves existing as apparent entities that sooner or later fall back into the underlying matrix, the implicate order from which we came.

What now follows is an exploration of the possible relevance of Bohm's work to a deeper understanding of the nature of dreaming.

In the beginning there was Freud. Whether you agree with his metapsychology or not, he realized the importance of an unconscious domain that made itself felt mainly through our dreams. Then came Jung along with a broad interest in other fields such as psychic phenomena and quantum physics. He enlarged the unconscious to include inherited archetypes. We now had a collective unconscious in addition to a personal one. The unconscious was safely ensconced in the new profession of psychoanalysis.

Then came Bohm who worked out an overarching metaphysics that addressed the basic issue of wholeness and fragmentation. What I am focussing on from the point of view of dreaming is that in the implicate order all matter, inorganic, organic, sentient, exist in their interconnectivity. If we were to consider the implicate order as a Universal Unconscious, what would it contribute to our understanding of the nature of dreaming? Broadening the unconscious in this way extends dreaming to a much wider range of content than we usually consider. Dreams point outward^[2] as well as inward. This would include events usually considered outside the range of our dreams such as the cataclysms of nature as well as telepathic and precognitive dreams. In short, Bohm's implicate order, considered as a Universal Unconscious, links us more authentically not only to ourselves but to all forms of matter.

Just as we described standing waves as formed and maintained by an invisible energy source giving it the appearance of permanence, so are we. We are all standing waves existing as temporary entities that sooner or later fall back into the underlying matrix, the implicate order from which we came. Just as standing waves can be buffeted about in the ocean by outside forces that may impinge upon it, we are buffeted about by social and material forces that impact us. Depending on the nature of those forces they can deepen or limit that sense of connectivity with others and with our environment that is our heritage from the implicate order. To the extent we honor that gift of connectivity to others and to our environment we end up as either saints or sinners or somewhere in between. At one extreme is that rare occurrence of cosmic consciousness where the individual feels profoundly connected to all that exists if for only a fleeting moment. It is as if the individual catches a glimpse of the implicate order while in the explicate order.

Bohm's approach to wholeness in the framework of the implicate and explicate orders suggests a more felicitous appreciation of the role our dreams play in our life. Dreaming consciousness is situated between the two orders. As such it could be considered as a relay-station with input from both orders. The contributions from the implicate order would include the capacity to open up our remote memory bank, the freedom from space and time, contiguity based on feelings rather than the logic of waking life, the wide range of imagination and memory, a prevailing quality of truthfulness and finally the creative energy of the implicate order (Bohm refers to it as generativity) prepare this remarkable brew for the dreamer.

The dream acts as a relay station receiving input from both orders. What does it need from the explicate order? Dream content itself is triggered by recent residual feelings that have been stirred up and not yet resolved. Those feelings include what Freud referred to as the day residue. I prefer to include a larger time span which I refer to as enduring emotional residues that evolved over days or even weeks before the dream. What the dream needs from the implicate order are the remote memory sources of the current issues and the creative dynamic that characterizes the holomovement. The feeling tones then find their way into the dream.

As a relay station between the two orders dreaming enriches both Bohmian orders. It makes its own unique contribution to the implicate order, just as any other experience does and it makes its contribution to the explicate order by infusing it with a bit more honesty and authenticity. The dream presents a fresh supply of authentic feelings, the true source of our connective tissue. Inauthentic feelings maintain disconnection. Authentic feelings do not let our ego get in the way. They serve to save ourselves from ourselves when we need to.

Dreaming consciousness thus integrates input from the implicate order making it available to the explicate order. In its unfoldment from the implicate order it may be regarded as explicate to that order. As it, in turn, unfolds its message to the explicate order it may be regarded as implicate to that order. This form of consciousness has its own unique language made up of feelings embedded in metaphorical imagery and arranged in narrative form. In its development differs from the logical causality of waking life in that it evolves by feelings generated by the successive transformations of the metaphorical imagery. This projectory follows a dialectic path much as a playwright hints at the theme in the first act followed by a second act which develops the source of the tensions initiated, followed by a third act, conveying the way the tensions have been resolved. For the dreamer the extent to which the tensions are resolved are, of course, dependent on the inner resources available at the time they are occurring.

The dream is a creature of the night and may or may not readily find its place in the explicate order. If interested, we find that place in our own way. It's in the order of a dream, if remembered, for the dream to be socialized to fully communicate what it has to say. The form this socialization has taken, and properly so, is the experiential dream group. Such groups have been organized in various ways. My own groups are atheoretic, following the dream as the only guide necessary to fully disclose the dreamer's predicament at the time it occurred. Eschewing a priori theoretical formulations the members of the group, including the leader, are all midwives creating the conditions for the safe delivery of the dreamer's own personal creation -- the dream. Self-disclosure is the analogy to labor pains prior to the end result justifies the means. The baby's first cry gets a new life going; the dreamer's "aha" has the same effect. The dream has found its rightful place in the world.

We do have to learn a new language to reap these benefits but that is not so bad. We all learned the language of metaphors in grade school when we committed our first poem to memory. The poet rearranges words to express feelings. The dreamer rearranges imagery to tell a story.

I began with a parable and I'm going to end with one. The dreamer who lives in this new abode gets up in the morning, leaves his new abode and goes to work with his dream safely ensconced in his briefcase. His workplace is a very unusual building. It's a building in progress. It is a skyscraper^[3] with no roof leaving room for a limitless supply of additional "stories." The interior is also unusual. There are no private offices for CEO's, managers, etc. There are only large rooms which can accommodate a small group. The chairs are arranged in a circle. One briefcase is opened and dream work begins in a process controlled by the dreamer.

Four banners are draped over the facade of the building.

The first was designed by Sigmund Freud. It reads:

"The dream is the royal road to knowledge of the unconscious attributes of the mind."

The second was designed by Carl Gustav Jung. It reads:

"So flower-like in its candor and veracity that it puts us to shame for the deceitfulness of our lives."

The third is from the abstract impressionist artist Robert Motherwell. It reads:

"Oppression in art, as in life, is when the conclusion to be reached is predetermined by inner or outer a priori notions of how art ought to be."

The fourth is a somewhat changed rendering from a well-known call to arms by Karl Marx in the nineteenth century. It reads:

"Dreamers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your theories."

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[1] Inauthentic feelings, such as neurotic guilt, which is a defensive maneuver to mitigate a situation. Genuine guilt, on the other hand, results in regret and remorse.

[2] My colleague Judy Gardiner has been exploring the environmental aspects of dream content.

[3] The skyscraper image was suggested by Judy Gardiner.