

The Bridge of Dreams

*The myth is the public dream,
a dream is the private myth.
~Joseph Campbell*

*There is a thinking in primordial images, in symbols which are older than the historical man,
which are inborn in him from the earliest times, and , eternally living,
outlasting all generations, still make up the groundwork of the human psyche.
It is only possible to live the fullest life when we are in harmony with these symbols;
wisdom is a return to them.
~C. G. Jung*

The never ceasing fog along the shore seems to thicken here. We pause in surprise, as an aroma begins to arise from within the dense wet blanket. We smell a mingled concerto of ancient incense and exotic eastern flowers, poppies perhaps. It was a famous witch who made a comment about poppies. "Poppies will put them to sleep!" she cackled. We press on, and rounding a rocky promontory, we find that a wet wooden frame confronts us at the water's edge. A Bridge? Here? Something truly different is going on. Our heads are spinning by now; shall we succumb to Morpheus? Slumping down upon fragrant sands, we surrender. And yet down the unseen flights of this Bridge, a gentle white light begins to flicker and beckon. In bodies of aire, of aether, we arise from our slumbering material forms, and glide toward it through a menagerie of transient faces and forms, born of the mist itself.

Some of the Bridges to Avalon's strand are trodden in the flesh, with sweat and struggle and splinters. Others are of a more subtle matter, and none are more ephemeral than this one. For this path, as sure a road to wisdom and truth as any other, is the Bridge of Dreams.

The way of the dreamer is unique, and it is hoary with age. Along its winding course are not only dreams large and small, but also the waking form of dreams: signs and omens. The symbolic language of the universe as it talks to itself. The language of God. As centuries of dreamers would swear, an understanding of dreams and the acquisition of knowledge, wisdom, and growth from them are not child's play. It is as deep a matter as any one of the physical sciences.

Join us now, in the realm beyond slumber.

Perchance to Dream

Dreams are the bridge between the conscious and the unconscious mind. Everything that has ever become manifested in our consciousness originated deep in our unconscious, whether it is in our dreams, inspiration, or ideas. The most important function of dreaming is to reveal these depths of self-knowledge, and thus allow them entry into the waking world where reality and life may be altered.

Our dream world may have been shaped in an era long ago, when we were still very far down on the evolutionary ladder. Consider the fact that sleeping animals in the wild had to rely on some aspect of their unconscious to remain alert in the event of danger. In today's world, sleeping soldiers are aware of impending danger, and many a slumbering mother knows her baby needs her even before the cries are heard. Survival

may have been a factor for an active unconscious state; however, as lifestyles changed and humankind became more “civilized”, our survival issues changed their focus from physical survival to psychological survival.

Our primal, limbic brain functioned in the skulls of our hominid ancestors. It was a brain not yet capable of speech. As the evolutionary process continued, our neocortex acquired the ability to promote speech. So, here we have a very old brain attempting to dialogue with the more evolved brain. The only common ground for communication is symbolism. The evolved brain’s duty became transforming these symbols into a narrative – a dream. It may rearrange the symbols, combine them with real memories, and form a bizarre story. Perhaps we have evolved to a point that our instant recognition of images from the primal brain has atrophied.

The Aboriginal Australians have believed in Dreamtime for tens of thousands of years, and even have a code known as Dreamtime Laws. They believe that the ancestors speak to them through their dreams in the form of Big Dreams and Little Dreams. Big Dreams should not be ignored, for they are archetypal myths from the collective unconscious. They may clarify the purpose of your being – the meaning of your life. Little Dreams may be hopes, fears, desires, or anxieties from the personal unconscious that cry out for understanding. Consider this motif - "Big" and "Little", as we will turn to it repeatedly. It has been a very useful guideline for us.

No matter what culture one examines, the myths, folklore, symbols, and rituals arise ultimately from dreams. These become tools to deal with the common denominators of human existence: birth, death, pubescence, family, and rites of passage. These universal symbols allow them to understand their function as an individual and a member of society. Indeed, these dream images are representative of the first language of humankind, ere we even knew how to grunt.

A Tiny History of Dream Interpretation

Dreams were considered oracles of the highest importance in ancient cultures. The interpretation of such nightly visions was considered a form of divination, or oneiromancy to the Egyptians.

In Greek culture, Hypnos (the god of sleep), Morpheus (the god of dreams), and Hermes (the winged messenger), were the proprietors of this realm. Zeus employed this trio to facilitate his transmissions to the mere mortals. These Hellenic mortals did not “have” dreams, but rather they “saw” them as phantoms representing gods. The Greeks also were well aware that the gods were not above sending false dreams to mislead wrongdoers.

While the Greeks and Egyptians saw dreams as messages from the gods, other cultures had a different spin on the matter. The Zulu and Aboriginal Australians believe that dreams are a form of contact and guidance from their ancestors. Traditions as diverse as Tibetan Buddhists and the Kai tribe of New Guinea equate dreams with reality. Hindu belief tells us gently that creation itself is merely a dream of Brahma. The Pokokoman believe that the soul leaves the body for its nightly dream journey. All cultures attempt to explain the phenomenon in their own way.

Cultures fostered the belief that the atmosphere surrounding the dreamer played a vital role in the quality of dream transmission. Dream sanctuaries, such as Delphi in

Greece, Asclepienon of Memphis in Egypt, and the Shinto temple at Usa in Japan were utilized as a sacred place to incubate dreams. Early Christian church leaders designated areas within many of their shrines to increase the receptivity of further guidance from prophetic dreams. Stone beds or pillows seemed to play an important role in the production and psychic magnification of dreams as did a variety of rituals, purification processes, and dietary restrictions.

The Native Americans highly revered dreams with power in them, and they developed practices to increase the likelihood of such sought-after dreams or altered states of reality known as vision quests.

In India, children are encouraged to report dreams, for in these recitations the parents may recognize a tale of a former life still fresh in the soul's memory. A memory which is not yet clouded by the confines of the current reality.

While all primary cultures attempted to explain the formation or origin of dreams, the next step that evolved within our human drama was the attempt to understand the function and interpretation of dreams.

The great Classical philosopher, Aristotle, tackled the function aspect in his two short treatises, "On Dreams" and "On Prophesying by Dreams". He recognized that dreams were not entirely mystical encounters, but also from emotionally charged senses in our daily lives. He was skeptical of prophetic dreams (as we might presume one of the pioneers of logic might be), believing them to be causes, tokens, or coincidences. The influence of a dream may *cause* you to take a future action. A *token* sign of disease may simply be more evident in the sleeping state when we are more aware of slight movements within the body. Extravagantly prophetic dreams were simply dismissed as *coincidence*.

One of the early, great soothsayers of dreams was Artemidorus of Daldis, who authored the Oneirocriticon (Interpretation of Dreams) in the second century A.D. In his extensive work, he recorded, classified, and interpreted over 3,000 dreams. He was able to identify five different types of dream experiences: symbolic, prophetic, fantasies, nightmares, and daytime visions. Artemidorus was keenly aware of the growing skepticism of his time and tried to legitimize the value of dreams through his work.

Indeed, a revolution in empirical science had begun, and the contemplative realm was under serious fire. In the West, the scale had been tipped in favor of religion and spirituality as the cultural backbone, but science was looking to fill a void. Modernity gave rise to a shunning of anything that could not be proven, and spirituality began to lose favor in the psyche of humankind. Dreams began to be seen as mere frivolous churning of the mind.

During the twentieth century, Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung were pioneers in early attempts to try and reconcile the warring factions of science and spirituality. They were considered two of the most influential dream psychologists of their era or any other. While they differed in their approach and beliefs regarding interpretation, they did at least provide a dialogue for the thin link still present between science and spirituality.

Other great researchers, with widely varying theories that cannot begin to be explored within the scope of this book, were Alfred Adler, Medard Boss, Thomas French, and Erich Fromm, Montague Ullman, and Frederick Perls. While you may not

find any of the above mentioned researchers in agreement on the causal formation or function of dreams, they all believe that the interpretation must be set in the reality of the dreamer's life.

The Psyche

Before we can begin to have an understanding of any culture's "Dreamtime", we must have a general understanding of the human psyche. In Jung's view, the psyche is made of three layers. The inner core is *consciousness*, the middle layer is the *personal unconscious*, and the outer layer is the *collective unconscious*. Let us now peel away the onion layers...

The *collective unconscious* is an inherited reservoir of *archetypes*, or primordial images, whose existence is not dependent on personal experience. They are images, memories, and instincts inherited from an ancestral past and manifest themselves as predispositions for experiencing and responding to the world. It is also made up of material that may never have been in the conscious awareness of an individual's life, yet is accessible to all. This may also be the realm or astral library known as the Akashic Records; this realm contains all past, present, and future knowledge, and was referred to in the esoteric teachings of the world-renowned mystic, Edgar Cayce.

Jung believed that archetypal dreams of the collective unconscious were rare, tending to appear at pivotal points during a person's lifetime. There are several major archetype images: the persona, the anima/animus, the shadow, and the self. Other archetypes representing distinct themes to a person's life may be the victim, martyr, trickster, wise old man, earth mother, hero, prostitute, mystic, God, death and resurrection, and so on. Each individual main archetypal theme may consist of various symbols.

As discussed in the Bridge of Visitors, Jung began to believe that these archetypes may sometimes be more than symbolic images. They may actually hold their own form of consciousness and intent. He stated, "The archetypes are the great decisive forces, they bring about the real events, and not our personal reasoning and practical intellect...the Archetypal images decide the fate of man".

The next layer of psyche's onion is the *personal unconscious*. The term personal unconscious is actually very misleading, for it is always consciously continuing its business. Its activity is usually only obvious to us during the dream state; however the unconscious mind is ever present, and much like the aether, permeating all levels of existence.

The personal unconscious is the storehouse for all memories: good, bad, repressed, suppressed, irrelevant unsolved, or experiences too weak or misunderstood to reach full consciousness. We can call many of these events forward from our personal unconscious' memory banks into our conscious mind. We may ponder until we bring forward an old friend's phone number or a trivial bit of information that was unneeded when initially stuffed into the recesses of the grey matter in our skulls.

Jung discovered that the unconscious mind tends to expose itself most clearly in the language of symbolism, be it through dreams, mythology, or other esoteric means. Astrology and divination methods, such as tarot card reading, may actually be tools of contact between our conscious and unconscious mind. Likewise, alleged channeling or

encounters with mystical beings may actually be representative of an unconscious projection of images linking us to our higher self.

The ego, a gatekeeper or distiller of images, lies between the personal unconscious and the final layer of psyche's onion, the *conscious realm*. The informational bridge from the personal unconscious to the conscious can be traveled, but it must first pass the gatekeeper – ego. Ego is very selfish in what it wants you to realize in a fully conscious state. Just as the “Three Billy Goats Gruff” wish to pass over the bridge to eat the metaphorical sweet green grass of consciousness, they must find a clever way past the ego troll. Dreams are that bridge – and symbolism is the encrypted trick.

A victim of incest during childhood may have repressed these memories as a psychological defense mechanism. The ego, your valiant protector, would have pushed these memories deeply into the subconscious, slammed the door shut, and hidden the key. In adulthood, those memories may try to resurface so that you may deal with them from a mature perspective and integrate them into your psyche, but ego will be reluctant to allow this interaction. Even though you are asleep, the ego still attempts to protect you from full-consciousness knowledge of some memories, but these recollections will seek a crack in the door. Anxiety-ridden memories attempting integration may slip through a crack, and become the basis for some nightmares. Painful memories that suddenly burst in to your consciousness in full or fragmentary form, flashbacks, can be compared to a leak in the dyke; the ego is still shoving its finger into the hole, but the pressure is immense.

Freud believed that when we are asleep, our ego relaxes somewhat. The dream messages from the unconscious realm are not something that the ego might normally allow to surface freely; therefore, they are not permitted to present themselves in a straightforward or literal fashion. The subconscious must find a clever, disguised way around the gate of the protective ego. Symbolism is the tool of choice.

Consciousness is awareness through the four mental functions: thinking, feeling, sensing, and intuiting. Along with these functions, we are governed by the modes of extroversion or introversion. Extroverts focus on the external world, while introverts focus on their inner world. We are created whole, but through the experiences of life, our psyche (Latin for soul/spirit) fragments into lopsided personalities by predominantly using a combination of the aforementioned mental functions and modes.

Our psyche strives to regain a balance of these mental functions; it strives for wholeness, or atonement (at-one-ment). This is the act of “individuation”. Individuation is a term coined by Jung to mean self-realization or to become a balanced personality. This process can be achieved by paying attention to your unconscious when it speaks to you in your dreams. It is the soul's yearning to be whole, to call in its fractured parts; the psyche wants to re-member. To become whole, we must bring more of our unconscious knowing into a state of full consciousness. Our dreams serve as a magical bridge between these realms.

Dreaming Dilemmas, Archetypes, and Faerie Tales

“But how can all this knowledge of the psyche help me, if I can't remember my dreams?” you may ask.

When travelling the path to individuation, not only should one be attuned to one's dreams, but to other clues that may present themselves and be utilized. Some people claim to not dream or to have extremely poor recall. The truth of the matter is that everyone dreams, whether they can retrieve the information upon awakening or not. Many people may simply choose not to remember their dreams, because they do not understand the wisdom held in the often-silly tales they weave.

The beginning of the fine art of constructive dreaming is in recollection, and this matter is given some deep consideration later in this chapter. It is not an easy task, for we children of the modern West. But there are means...If dream recollection is difficult, you might consider this exercise: try looking for clues in your favorite childhood fairy tales. You should ponder the fables from the Brothers Grimm, Aesop, or any old yarn-teller in search of a story that appeals to you, and proceed with a sort of "fairy tale forensics". In your most beloved stories, you will find a tale with clear archetypal images or themes pertinent to your psyche's journey. If you have an affinity for a specific story, then your unconscious is recognizing a theme in your life that you must focus on for wholeness.

The mythic journey of individuation generally centers around the main archetypes, although it is certainly not limited to these. (There are potentially hundreds of minor archetypes!) We can examine each of the prevalent major archetypes, as proposed by Jung.

The first major archetype we will look at is the *persona*. The persona is the outward mask or façade you wear for the public; it is the outward face of psyche that conforms to impress society.

While we all wish to "fit in", sometimes we have allowed this mask to be forced upon us. Succumbing to the wishes of parents, we may have gone to that Ivy League school, became a lawyer, and joined the country club. All the while, we were spiritually starving. Our persona had taken over. Our true being – a soul who just wanted to lead a quiet, simple life running a guide service in Alaska - was lost. While both occupations may have required extravert personality traits to be successful, the psychological conflict arises when we examine the mental functioning aspects. The lawyer would have been the thinking type; the guide would have come from the sensing type. You may have just paved the path for a neurosis or complex.

The definition of a complex is "an image or impulse that is in strong conflict with other aspects of the personality". A person with a guilt complex may commit a blundered crime in the unconscious hope of being apprehended, punished, and thus temporarily relieving his guilt. A neurosis or psychosis (severe neurosis) is partial impairment of the personality often presenting itself as phobias, anxiety, hysteria, or a malady of physical ailments that defy medical diagnosis.

Pinocchio, a boy fashioned by his father, is a classic literary representation of the persona. After his creation, he goes out into the world and succumbs to the pressure of his peers, which is against the will of his unconscious, the cricket. The neurosis manifests as a physical malady in the form of a growing proboscis, as he continues to deny his true nature. As in many faerie tales, he continues on the path of individuation, and eventually finds his true self.

The *shadow* archetype is a conversion image representing of the dark side of our psyche; those elements not formerly brought into the light of consciousness. The

shadow also represents one's own gender and influences with the same sex. It contains much of our animal nature and is deeply rooted in evolutionary history. It holds our vitality, creativity, and our animal nature – those traits often tamed by the ego. It is also looked at as the unconscious opposite of what a person stresses in his conscious state.

In this first stage of shadow work, you must turn inward. You must no longer look to the outside, but to the inside to discover a new dimension of yourself. The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde blatantly displays elements of dealing with the shadow.

To graduate to the next stage of shadow work, you must be cautious not to stumble into two pitfalls. You must not project your shadow onto others as a way of disowning a part of yourself that you are not comfortable with. These projections can be the seeds of such atrocities as racism and prejudice. Secondly, you must not suppress the shadow by attempting to lock away or hide those aspects of yourself that are undesirable. “The Shadow Knows”, to coin a comic book phrase... and it eventually demands recognition and integration!

Another state of individuation is recognizing the *anima/animus*. This archetype is the inward face of the psyche whose desires are projected on the opposite sex and responsible for the quality of relationships between sexes. The animus is the masculine side of the female psyche representing assertiveness, courage, and feistiness to name a few. The anima is the feminine side of the male psyche, representing compassion, tenderness, patience, gentleness, and so on. Jung referred to this as your ‘soul image’ containing characteristics not possessed by your persona. To have a well-balance personality, there must be a healthy yin/yang balance in the way individuals express themselves in behavior and consciousness.

The Steadfast Tin Soldier by Hans Christian Andersen, tells the anima-themed story of a toy soldier (animus) who could not take his eyes off the toy ballerina (anima). During the dark night (of the soul), a series of incidents occur which eventually cause the soldier to become separated from the collection of toys, representing the fragmenting of the soul. The soldier experiences a frightful journey by water (a classic symbol of the unconscious) until rescued by a fisherman. After surviving the depths of his unconscious, he miraculously ends up back in the kitchen of his own home (representing a return to wholeness). He was then placed too near the stove and began to catch fire. The ballerina was caught by a draught and flew into the flames with him. When the maid emptied the ashes the following day, all that was found was a blob of tin in the shape of a heart. The anima had completely merged with the animus.

Pitfalls of a suppressed anima may be indicated by a man who finds it necessary to belittle women and keep them subordinate; likewise, he has probably chosen a partner who has a suppressed animus and does not exert her masculine power to stop the behavior inflicted upon her. This is a classic example of opposites attracting as a way of the psyche’s attempt to bring to light their own weaknesses. Dysfunctional relationships such as these are indeed successful if the individual is afforded the opportunity to see their weaknesses and correct them...even if the relationship itself does not last.

Dream images of intercourse, marriage, or a hermaphrodite may symbolize a union between the conscious and unconscious anima/animus aspect of the individual, indicating progress in the individuation process.

Further along the path to individuation is the meeting of what Jung referred to as ‘mana personalities’, or images of extraordinary power and wisdom. A woman will meet the Wise Old Woman and a man will meet the Wise Old Man archetype. Mana is a term meaning holiness or the divine, and therefore our attempt is to meet the wisdom that lies in the deepest part of our psyche.

The Wise Old Man or Woman may appear as a king/queen, warlock/sorceress, priest/prophetess, guru, or guide to name a few. Any male or female form whose fertility aspects seem to be prominent or greatly exaggerated, for example an image of multi-breasted woman or very phallic male, may be an image of the Wise Old Characters.

Again, literary examples abound! In the tale of Cinderella, the fairy godmother represents a meeting of the mana personality. In this meeting, she was able to see the beauty she possessed and her ability to make her dreams come true. Children’s fascination with superheroes is another excellent example of their psyche’s growth process and search for their own mana personality.

Pitfalls to this archetype are projection and possession. If you project mana personalities onto others, you are liable to only see these qualities in others. David Koresh and the Branch Davidian Cult, the Jim Jones group, and the Heaven’s Gate saga are all examples of men who were possessed by the Wise Old Man archetype. Their megalomania was able to draw in individuals who were willing to project their mana personalities onto them. One could not easily exist without the other, and the combination in these cases were recipes for disaster.

The final stage of individuation is rarely reached according to Jung. It is the stage of self-realization, or the encountering of the *self*. In this stage, integration of all aspects of the psyche is realized. All opposing elements and conflicting forces of the psyche are brought together in harmony. Your consciousness is no longer governed only by thinking, but by having a knowing of what was formerly under sole ownership of the unconscious. It is an intense knowing of your self, your purpose, your destiny, and an understanding of the meaning of life in general.

In this stage, you will have a radical readjustment to your perception of what was important in life. There is bliss just in being. All ego demands of achievement have been trivialized. It is a state of nirvana. It is the state of mystics. It is the realization that your consciousness is a part of everyone and everything’s consciousness. It is a transpersonal reality, or the realization of the interconnected of all creation sometimes referred to as a cosmic consciousness.

Jung believed that dreams involving geometrically whole figures, such as UFOs or other mandala-like images, were often signs of the psyche’s integration work.

The Wizard of Oz is probably so loved because of its connection to all aspects of the individuation process and the recovery of the *self*. Dorothy, a parentless child, has a storm looming in her unconscious. Feeling its tornadic pressure, she eventually is forced to succumb and surrender herself to its lessons. She must face her fears, symbolized by the *shadowy* witch, through understanding guidance imparted by its counterpart, Glinda - The Wise Old Woman; this is a representation of a balancing of polarities in the psyche. This is not an easy path to follow, but it is paved with golden lessons. Each brick in the road symbolizes family, friends, lovers, and foes that have been teachers on the path to spiritual growth. Her personality deficiencies were

archetypal spirit guides represented by the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and the Lion. Eventually she meets the wizard, an over-identifier with the persona, and comes to realize that the intellectual confidence, self-love, and emotional courage she needed were always within her reach. It is at this point that she finds her *self*, leaves the alien land in a symbolic gesture, and returns Home.

The final pitfall to be avoided when obtaining this wholeness is the complete absorption into the unconscious. While this blissful state of being may seem too comforting to leave, we must remember that residing in this spiritual state is not practical in the light of everyday functioning. We are still conscious humans, and remembering our spiritual essence is a by-product of individuation.

How many people have never recognized just how “deep” those silly dreams and fairy tales really are? We have discussed why dreams are so important both mentally and emotionally, and where we might also find clues to our psyche’s inner processes in literary tales of whimsy. But let's round out the view a bit and take a look at the biological mechanisms underlying dreams.

The Science of Dreams

Over the past three decades, scientific breakthroughs in understanding the process of sleeping and its relatedness to the dream state have been accomplished in sleep labs. Kleitman and Aserinsky are two of the most notable researchers who have used empirical, physiological-based scientific tools to illuminate territory formerly ruled over by psychologists and philosophers. These "sentinels of the night" were just two more pioneers laying pavement over the bridge between the science and spiritual character of dreams.

A biological process that occurs at about 24-hour intervals called the circadian rhythm regulates our sleep cycle. This term is derived from the Latin *circa dies*, meaning “approximately one day”. This rhythm that coaxes our body into sleep each day also has within it another set of rhythms that provide cyclic waves of behavior during sleep itself.

These cyclic nightly patterns can be monitored with Electroencephalograph (EEG) machines, which record electrical activity in the brain. These brain waves form a reliable pattern common to everyone. This pattern of light sleep – to heavier sleep - and back again to light sleep consists of approximately 90 minute complete cycles, which may repeat themselves several times throughout the night.

Researchers have divided these cycles into four different stages determined by eye movements and alterations in brain waves. Just before lapsing into actual sleep, a pre-stage may result in the person experiencing hypnogogic hallucinations and/or the hypnogogic startle (sudden spasm or jerk); brain waves at this stage register similar to fully awake states (60 microvolts). Stage One is a short, light sleep with NREM on its first encounter; the second visit to this stage usually results in REM sleep with vivid dreams. Stage Two shows the emergence of delta waves; sleepwalking and talking may occur. Stage Three shows slowed physiological responses in pulse and respiration; extremely strong electrical impulses (up to 300 microvolts) may be registered, which could be up to five times more active than the waking state! Stage Four involves REM and sleep paralysis; the brain waves are similar to comatose patients.

The sleeper's rapid eye movements (REM) or periods of non-rapid eye movements (NREM) also correlate to these specific stages of sleep. REM sleep is usually peppered with vivid, action-packed dreams. NREM sleep tends to comprise of intellectual or learning dreams. There appears to be both a psychological and physiological importance in maintaining a balance between REM and NREM cycles.

During REM sleep, there also appears to arise the opportunity to experience lucid dreams, where the dreamer is very much aware that they are dreaming. Lucid dreaming is one of the more controversial topics in dream research. And one would presume so - consider the implications! If one could dream, and retain a conscious mastery of the course of their dreams, then one would arrive at a virtual state of godhood! Any reality would be yours. Slay monsters, lead armies, take to the skies like an eagle. Make love in legendary fashion to any partner your fancies might conjure.

Is there any solid evidence for lucid dreaming? Both of us, as well as most other folks, we would imagine, have experienced dreams that are on the verrrry edge of waking. For a few brief moments, we become aware of our dreaming state. But alas, for most the magic passes before any control can be achieved. There is belief that through practicing techniques such as autosuggestion, individuals can learn to exert extended control over their dreams, and sustain the precarious edge-of-consciousness state needed. Those few individuals who appear to have been able to apply this technique claim that controlled lucid dreaming can proactively assist them with problem solving, health and relationship issues, creativity, and the cessation of nightmares. One of the groundbreaking works on the topic dates from 1913. In *A Study of Dreams*, researcher Frederick Von Eeden described his experiments in lucid dreaming. The paper was published in Vol.26 of "The Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research", and is widely promoted by lucid dreaming organizations, such as www.lucidity.com

Science seems to have no qualms about accepting the data between verifiable evidence of the sleeping subject's brain waves and REM/NREM states in conjunction with dreams. In fact, they recognize types of dreams within these cycles. This may be one of the few areas where objective science and subjective visions can meet in the middle with mutual respect.

Interestingly, hard-core skeptical scientists don't have too big of a problem bridging this gap of the subjective world of dreams and the objective world of neuroscience. Maybe this isn't difficult for them since everyone dreams...even scientists. If only a very few members of society could remember their dreams, one would wonder how seriously science would have taken them. Would science have bothered to look deeper into the mechanism behind dreams? Would these people been looked upon as eccentric or crazy? Would their nightly visions be dismissed as some sort of delusional fantasy?

And what if the realm of dreams is accessible while fully conscious by even fewer individuals? Might this elite "day" dreamer (who would of course be more difficult to study in the lab) be what we call an intuitive, psychic, or shaman? Is there experience any less real simply because skeptical scientists don't want to acknowledge it, simply because they have not personally experienced it? Oh, but these are tales for the Bridge of the Mystic, yet to come.

Demons of the Night

The term *nightmare* is derived from “mara” meaning “goblin or demon” in Old English. In Sanskrit, “mara” means “destroyer” - its root word being “mar” for “crush”. Or in more generic terms, the “bad dream” is that nocturnal visitor filled with anxiety, fear, and apprehension - the common denominator being a feeling of helplessness.

Freud believed that dreams were a type of wish fulfillment. Nightmares became somewhat of a stumbling block for him, because who would wish for such terrible visions and experiences unless you were masochistic (which Freud did leave as a possible option)? Eventually, he came to accept that they were meant to draw attention to a physical condition or emotional situation. They were also believed to serve as the function of a type of emotional inoculation, or desensitizing agent, against traumas that could not be faced in the conscious state – a sort of toning up of the “fight or flight” mechanism in preparedness for a real emergency.

Physiological factors devoid of emotional disturbances also appear to play an important role in the incubation of nightmares. Hormonal changes spurring night sweats or heart palpitations can be converted into disturbing dream visions. A fever may also bring about hallucinations or unsettling images. Nocturnal myoclonus is jerking muscle movements that induce nightmares when the sleeper is awakened by these muscle contractions. General physical illness and notably neurological disorders such as epilepsy and post-encephalitic Parkinsonism can also be attributed to these nightly invasions. From the mental health perspective, the onset of psychosis (especially schizophrenic episodes) and depression are fraught with nightmares.

The spiritual boogey man of the night seems to have lost its high rank of power to the sword of science. Research seems to clearly indicate that neither demons nor the once favored belief of sleep apnea (lack of oxygen during sleep) can be attributed as the cause of nightmares. There are believed to be two distinctly different types of negative nightly experiences: the night terror and the REM nightmare.

The REM nightmare or dream anxiety attack is the most common, uncomfortable nightly incident. It will occur late at night, during the last three hours of sleep, and often during a long REM period lasting twenty to thirty minutes. Physiologically, the dreamer will undergo a low elevation in blood pressure and pulse along with paralysis. Vivid dreams will be experienced. This type of nightmare is more common in children than adults, occurring primarily between the ages of 3 – 6 and increasing again between the ages of 13 – 18.

The second major type of nightmare is referred to as the night terror. This is probably more in line with the image of the male incubus or female succubus sitting on the chest of their victim. This event will occur early in the night, usually occurring in stage 3 or 4 of sleep, and will result in an abrupt awakening. It can be triggered externally by a sudden noise. The sleeper may experience any or all of the following: sweating, screaming, sleepwalking (especially in children), along with a marked increase in body movements, pulse, and respiratory rate. Rather than vivid dreams from a REM nightmare, the experiencer will only remember a single dream image that caused the terror or no image at all. A sudden shift in a physiological state rather than a psychological process of the unconscious seems to be the causal factor. There also appears to be a familial element, giving one a predisposition to an abnormality in the brain’s sleep-wake mechanism known as a “disorder of arousal”. Instead of the normal

shift from stage 3 or 4 to the REM cycle, the sleeper partially arouses; children are believed to be more susceptible to this experience because they spend more time in stage 3 and 4.

A most harrowing phenomenon that appears to at least be within some definitions of the term "nightmare" is nocturnal paralysis, or sleep paralysis. Centuries old traditions from a variety of cultures meld together in the form of the "Old Hag" or "hagging" experience, where the sleeping individual feels physically held down or crushed by a supernatural being. These events were not experienced in what appeared to be the usual dream state, and therefore an element of realism seemed to be present. Since tradition deemed these encounters to be unnatural, they were explained as more of an external supernatural event. As we see in *The Bridge of Visitors*, however, the "hagging" experience is also a point of departure into even more anomalous realities.

Hypnogogic/hypnopompic hallucinations and PTSD nightmares should also be mentioned. The hypnogogic and hypnopompic hallucinations are categorized as a terrifying fantasies experienced just before or awakening from sleep and have their onset before stage 1. They are also associated with sleep paralysis. Repetitive nightmares brought on by post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from episodes of combat, violent accidents or crimes share characteristics of both REM nightmares and night terrors.

Ernest Hartmann has researched nightmares at the sleep lab in Lemuel Shattuck Hospital in Boston. He recruited long-term nightmare sufferers, those experiencing vivid dreams but not nightmares, and those reporting neither vivid dreams nor nightmares. He found that frequent sufferers had distinct psychological patterns. They all had lifelong artistic or creative interests. They experienced a stormy, rebellious adolescence filled with depressive tendencies; while after adolescence they became overly trusting and vulnerable individuals not especially angry, anxious, or depressed. Sensitive, empathetic individuals who are also very aware of their own feelings would describe these nighttime sufferers. They have thin boundaries on an interpersonal level, yet do not strongly identify with any group. They may feel that they are "different" from others and have a poor sense of their own identity. A vulnerability to mental illness also appears to be a factor.

Dr. Hartmann goes on to categorize chronic sufferers of nightmares into three distinct types: psychologically induced by thin-boundaried individuals, PTSD dreams, and stress induced. The first type has a history since childhood of nightmares occurring sometimes on a weekly basis. They may be stress induced, contain recurrent themes, and contain vivid imagery with highly emotional content. The PTSD sufferers have their traumatic ordeal reappearing in their dreams, yet over time they do seem to diminish. The purely stress-induced nightmare is usually related to events at work, school, or any interpersonal relationship where the dreamer's self-esteem is threatened.

Nightmares do present valuable opportunities for growth and awareness. In the act of dealing with our demons metaphorically in the night, we can gain conscious control and self-reliance when awake. So maybe Freud was initially right all along, for we do dream as a sort of wish fulfillment – our wish for freedom from our fears.

Creativity and Inspiration

The ancient art of dream incubation is a method utilized to stimulate creativity

and solve problems. Daylight activities such as brainstorming, free thinking, or thinking “outside the box” can help to stimulate the unconscious. The act of forming a question, or pondering on a creative block, right before lapsing into slumber, has the ability to produce revelatory dreams. When logical, linear thinking seems fraught by dead ends, dreaming allows the mind to hover above the situation and approach it from another angle.

Dreams are a legendary source of inspiration for artists, musicians, world leaders, and innovators to name a few; however, dream influence or guidance can be seen in any vocational direction. They may act as encouragement, solve a problem, suggest a direction, or provide a confirmation. The influence of these nocturnal visions can often serve as the creator’s best work or opus. So many dreamers, so many wonders.

Famous artist such as Chagall, Delvaux, Magritte, Dali, and William Blake all attribute the power of dreams to the quality of their work. The goal of artistic surrealists was to merge two apparently conflicting states, visions and reality, into a congealed representation in their work. As in the well-recognized, fluid-like watches of Dali, the surrealist uses dream elements and distorts them to take on symbolic meaning.

Accomplishments in the literary and musical fields also attribute many of their opuses to the visionary state of dreams. Robert Louis Stevenson felt as if he had plots dictated to him in his sleep from elfin helpers. Composers, Schumann and Mozart, both claimed to have first heard their scores in the dream state. While referring to his dream opus “Tristan and Isolde”, Richard Wagner stated in reverence, “For once you are going to hear a dream, I dreamed all this. Never could my poor head have invented such a thing purposely!”

Many ideas and innovations that affect all of humankind have their origins in dreams. Elias Howe invented the lock stitch sewing machine. Rene Descartes developed mathematical concepts and “Cartesian dualism”. Friedrich von Kekule solved the riddle of the benzene molecule. Otto Loewie devised an experiment that helped him prove his theory on the chemical transmissions of nerve impulses. Dmitri Mendeleev created one of the great periodic tables of elements. And Frederick Banting successfully isolated the insulin hormone saving the lives of millions of diabetics.

Not to be slighted, even sports figures can lay a claim to the dream world. Jack Nicklaus revived a slump from analyzing a different grip on his club in a dream. The famous acrobat, Tito Gaona, invented stunts that had never before been performed in his dreams.

Religious implications are probably among the most popularly documented product of dreams. The Bible is filled with actions taken by Hebrew prophets that directed the course of history. Christian mystics such as St. Joan of Arc attribute their actions on the directives of dreams. St. Don Bosco founded the Salesian order of monks to care for homeless children based on life-long dreams. Much of the Koran was revealed to Muhammad in his dreams. There is seemingly no end to the topic of the inter-relatedness of dreams and religion.

Dreams seem to show no favoritism in the fields of violence and non-violence. George Patton (self-proclaimed multi-reincarnated warrior) dictated battle plans dreamed during the night to his personal secretary. The warrior, Genghis Khan, also based battle directives on images from the dream state. Mahatma Gandhi received

guidance on acts of non-violence. Harriet Tubman received instructions on acts of personal freedom, as she dreamed safe pathways on the Underground Railroad.

What are we to make of these claims to fame? A skeptic might say that their dreams were a fabrication, or that they were so consumed with power in their conscious life that it permeated over into the unconscious dream state. An ego-driven individual may willingly hand over ownership of their accomplishments to an unseen dream-dictating source, if it affords them public realization that they were in direct contact with God. Of course, remaining always open minded, might there not be some communication with a yet undetermined supernatural force?

Nick: "One of the more fascinating pursuits I have held has been the collecting, studying, and sometimes replication of 'machines' or technological devices seen in dreams or visions (my own or other peoples'). Some have even come to me from UFO experiencers who felt that aliens gave them 'plans' or other technological information! (We cover this a bit more in *The Bridge of Visitors*)

I have always paid close heed to the handful of techno-dreams I have had personally. I will periodically go back and obsess on some of these, when occasion brings some new theory of gravity or energy, for example, to my attention. I find myself wondering things like 'wow, that reminds me of the coil dream! Should I once again give it a whirl and try to add this or that, and now it will work?' Oh the perils of being too literal! This is bolstered by the fact that without exception, when I have tried to build dream or visionary machines, verbatim, they don't work. I do allow myself the luxury sometimes of looking for specific principles or elements from these dreams, to try out...

One of my favorites was a dream I had around 1990. I was standing in a room admiring an intricate machine or system that was generating many hundreds of watts - a lethal amount I was warned- of electrical power. The power was being generated from out of the aether, certainly one of my traditional interests as a 'boy mad scientist'. The machine consisted of a set of what looked like empty juice can cylinders, wrapped with layers of metal and plastic like orgone accumulators. Wrapped in turn around each of these were a number of turns of wire that was itself helical, like spiral telephone cord! The helical windings terminated at the bottom in a single straight wire that then ran up through the empty center of the cylinder, to be connected in series with the start of the helical winding on the next cylinder. Perhaps some intrepid reader will give this scheme a try, and get it working. I wish them well, and would love to hear from them if they ever do!"

Dreams and Healing

In ancient times, dreams were widely believed to have healing properties. Hippocrates stated that "it is obvious that beginnings of sickness and other accidents that are produced in the body...are necessarily clearer in sleep than in waking state".

The Greek Temple of Aesculpius at Epidaurus, built to honor the god of healing, was the focus of pilgrimages of the sick. In fact, in classical times over 300 such temples honoring this god were scattered throughout Greece. There, they believed that the god would visit them in their sleep and either produce an instant cure or wisdom regarding herbal remedies or a dietary change.

Patients to such temples underwent preparatory rituals and potions were administered to promote sleep. The patient would then sleep on the ground that was crawling with snakes. The term incubation was used for this process as it originally meant “lying on the ground”. Later, sleepers began using a *kline*, which was a precursor to the clinical couch. Once asleep, Aesculpius would appear and convey his message of healing. It was not necessary to interpret the dreams, for the dream itself was thought to be the healing.

The ancient symbol of snakes entwining themselves up Aesculpius’s cane or Mercury’s caduceus is still visible in today’s medical symbolism. The snake represents good/evil or health/sickness, for it has the ability to cure or kill. Homeopathy, vaccines, and allergy treatments use this symbolism literally, for the agent that causes the disease is administered to promote a cure. The skin-shedding snake represents immortality, as it sheds old for new in its own form of healing.

As a fledgling science took hold, dream healing was still utilized as a sort of blended medicine. Hippocrates, the father of medicine, believed in a link between the mind and body, and dreams were a tool to be utilized as messages from the individuals own physical body.

Aristotle and Plato began the shift away from belief in dreams as transcendent messages from the gods and placed the focus on the mind of the individual. The more traditional belief of organic illnesses not recognized consciously is represented objectively or subjectively in dreams.

Spontaneous healings are extremely fascinating. Frequently, those who have reported such a healing indicate being the focus of a light source in their dreams which has facilitated an immediate healing. Another common theme is interaction with a divine being relevant to their culture beliefs: Catholics are visited by the Virgin Mary, ancient Egyptians by Imhotep, Christians see angels, and so on. Follow along with us later in *The Bridge of the Mystic* as we explore this domain of the miraculous.

As in the case with neurosis or psychosis, physical ailments occur as an outward signal to an inner problem. Possibly your unconscious had been attempting to alert you to an issue through your dreams that needed attention, but you would not or could not heed its message. When this happens, the unconscious puts away its spitball dream images and brings out heavier artillery...dis-ease.

Lori: "An anecdote that I can share on this theme relates to a dream that my mother reported. She called me one morning, which was extremely uncommon, to report her strange nocturnal vision. In her dream, she was writing a check. It was being made out to a “Bledslow”. That was all there was to the dream, yet she evidently recognized that this was a Big Dream. Several days later, she ended up hospitalized to undergo a colo-rectal exam and biopsy due to sudden bleeding which was eventually diagnosed as a lesion in the lower end of the large intestine caused from colitis. “Bled – low”. I feel she was being forewarned."

Dreams, myths, and stories are medicine for the soul and the physical body. They do not require us to do anything but listen to their remedies or notice their call to dis-ease. They are healers disguised as bards or cantors of a sort of psychic archeology - a cathartic, image-laden guide to dig up the bones of our psyches for examination and

interpretation. Through examining the bones, we can determine what the cause of our spiritual or physical demise and how to achieve repair and rebirth. It is the act of psychology in its truest sense: *psyche* or soul; *ology* or knowing.

Psychic Dreams

The Bridge grows very flimsy here, for we find that it is very easy to lose our foothold and slip right onto the Bridge of the Mystic. Which is not a terribly bad thing at all, but we are on a roll, so let's press on. As you will see, it *is* a common occurrence on the paths to Avalon. We will try to stay focused for our readers. However, be aware that dreams and their paths are wonderful but nefarious and remain one of the strongest links between all the Bridges

Symbolic seeds of knowing cross the threshold into consciousness through dreams. Upon reflection, the dreams may appear contain psychic elements, but they may merely be preparing us for changes about to take place in our lives. In The Bridge of the Mystic, we step from that concourse back to this one, as we discuss the topics of clairvoyance and precognition. The veil between the Bridges grows especially thin when dealing with topics such as these.

Prophetic dreams give insights to events before they occur. These dreams are a direct link to the universal collective unconscious. Typically, these dreams are not straightforward, but slightly askew or cryptic. They seem to be immediately recognizable as a Big Dream delivering a warning, but specifics are not discernable. Oftentimes however, the prophetic dream is recognized after-the-fact in a type of hindsight.

Anecdotal tales freckle history with reports of nocturnal prognostication. Many tales have been told of persons altering flight plans because of a premonition-laden dream. Abraham Lincoln dreamed he saw his coffin lying in state in the White House just a few days before his death. Numerous people reported foreboding nightly visions of the doomed Titanic prior to its demise.

Freud was very suspicious of alleged telepathic dreams, as he felt they seemed more to be attempts at reviving religious superstitions. He believed that warnings and predictions might reflect an unconscious awareness of a situation based on conscious observations no longer recalled. He was, however, open minded enough to recognize that this phenomenon should be studied to see if it could be empirically verified by science. Jung, too, stated: "Dreams prepare, announce, or warn about certain situations often long before they actually happen. This is not necessarily a miracle or a precognition. Most crises...have a long incubation".

Lori: "I once had a dream in which I felt I was being forewarned of a traffic accident. In the dream, I simply saw an intersection with a traffic light that had both the red and yellow light illumined. I thought it odd that the green light was not visible, and felt certain that this was in some way important. Was it trying to tell me that someone may run a red light and put us in harms way? For about a week, I was especially cautious at intersections with traffic lights, as I was convinced that my family would be in an accident. About one week after the dream, Jimmy Krabill, a classmate of my son, Pete, was struck and killed by a car near his family farm while riding his bike. From the

spot of the accident, an always-flashing traffic light (which either displayed yellow or red depending upon your direction of approach) was clearly visible; this was not a light that even offered a choice of green! While I was aware that I was experiencing a Big Dream, I was not able to clarify it enough to be accurately specific.

Several months later, my son had a dream in which Jimmy visited him. They sat together on a bench in a nondescript room. Everything was white. Jimmy helped Pete put a red tennis shoe on his foot, and then departed after stating that he would not see him for a long while. Almost ten years later, Pete wrote about our dream experiences with Jimmy as part of the essay portion necessary to apply for the "Jimmy Krabill Scholarship" set up by his family. Pete won that scholarship, and it wasn't until that point that we recognized the symbolism in his dream....Jimmy was indeed helping him get his "foot"ing as he headed off for college.

Another dream of psychic content that I experienced first hand could not be considered precognitive, as it appeared to be occurring on the dream plane as events were unfolding simultaneously here on the earthly plane.

I could not have been asleep for more than a half an hour. I was dreaming that I was standing in the proverbial tunnel leading to the light of some great Source that we all must traverse when we die. While standing in the tunnel that appeared to consist of a swirling gray, cloud-like construction, I saw my beloved grandmother (who as far as I consciously knew was alive and well). She stood there to my right, in a long flowing gown just looking at me.

I assumed that I was dead, and she was there to meet me and take me into the light. I had always heard that you would be met by many of your relatives and/or friends, yet she was the only one there. I questioned her as to why my parents weren't there (who in real life were not even dead; but I had assumed that since I was dead, they surely must have preceded me). She did not answer me.

At this point in the dream, I was awakened by the telephone. My father was on the line, informing me that my grandmother had just suffered a heart attack and was being rushed to the hospital...and it did not look good. Of course, I knew and will always believe that vision was her good-bye message to me, and I will always consider it her greatest gift."

Some people are able to display precognitive abilities through deep meditation work. Intuitives or channelers receive information straight from what many perceive to be their guide or from their higher self, both of which reside at this level of consciousness and convey information held there. These individuals seem to be able to ignore, or at least hold at bay, the ramblings of the conscious mind and tap into this realm at will, where the majority of us may need to be asleep and dreaming to make contact.

Telepathic dreams are another psychic anomaly. Paranormal dream researchers such as Montague Ullman and Stanley Krippner studied these for nearly a decade in the dream laboratory at Mainmonides Hospital in Brooklyn. Basically, an agent or sender would attempt distant image projection to subjects during specific points of monitored REM activity. In nine of thirteen major studies, statistically significant results indicating a psi explanation were found.

Lori: "One of my most intriguing telepathic dreams was a shared experience. My spouse and I awoke simultaneously to the cries of our infant son. Upon awakening, we shared our dreams. To our amazement, we both dreamed that we were in our elementary schools (we went to different schools). We were both aware of a tornado that was on the horizon and perilously heading our way. We both attempted to warn others of the imminent danger, but no one seemed to wish to heed our warning. At this point, we awoke.

Were we both aware of some literal or symbolic future event? Was only one of us perceiving the message from the unknown, while the other was an "unconscious individual-to-unconscious individual" receiver? Or could this have been a dream of synchronistic relevance?"

Which leads us on to further contemplation...

Signs and Omens: The Door to Synchronicity

If we move beyond the traditional 20th century rationalist view of dreams, we arrive in the symbolic kingdom of Morpheus, and we begin to learn the language of the realm. If dreams are the voice of higher power, and we become the recipients of these tales, advice, and warnings during our sleep, then are we bereft during our waking hours? Does the symbolic tongue continue during the ride of Helios?

For as many cultures and traditions as proclaim the sacred nature of dreams, most of these also proclaim the waking corollary of dreaming: the sign— the symbol of fate.

Omens. Signs. Portents. Visions. The lore surrounding them is rich and nigh universal through geography and time. A village under the ancient sun of old India rejoices at the birth of an extraordinary white elephant from among the herd. In a medieval Slavic farmhouse, a young mother- to- be eagerly counts crows flitting about outside the doorstep. A Lakota medicine man furrows his brow at the prospect of an ill-formed length of bison gut. On a hilltop in West Virginia, an old woman shudders at the hooting of an owl.

As in his study...Jung ponders the meaning of discs seen in the sky...

In like fashion of the hidden players moving their pieces through the internal mind-world of sleep, so are the elements great and small of our physical universe arranged in auspicious fashion.

Signs are the other great structural member of the Bridge of Dreams. While not as eagerly studied by we moderns, apart from the anthropological aspects, the sign has been the cornerstone of daily affairs for most human beings who ever lived up until the dawn of this past century. Perhaps signs were the more rejected member in later years because the notion interfered with the cherished western thought pathology called "free will". Perhaps they are not Newtonian enough. Maybe the thought that physical events and objects can be arranged for the benefit of the observer is just too damned freaky for the straights and normals!

Nevertheless, therapists and psychologists who wouldn't bat an eye at the safe "inner" world of dreams are often vocal denouncers of the waking realm of signs, or at least the belief in them *apart* from the "hands-off zones" of religion and cultural anthropology.

The topic of signs has also been somewhat more difficult for the mainstream of science to swallow due to the fact that it is also often seen as synonymous with "miracles". Things like lightning from a clear sky neatly splitting a tree. Bleeding icons. A tornado that levels the house of a nasty rich man while completely sparing the home of the poor but beloved widow next door. Of course, such things DO occasionally happen, and a faithful army of Forteans and anomalists continue to catalog such events.

However, in a more complete sense, signs are most often like dreams, 1 part imagery or event, 1 part interpretation, and 2 parts obsession and action. Just a crow sitting in an old tree because his wings were tired, without our viewing and understanding...

If we examine the appearance of a sign from anecdote, we generally observe a well-defined and consistent sequence:

1. An event occurs that, while usually not outside any stretch of probability, is perhaps dramatic, unique, or perceived as surprising.
2. The events often involve a complex sequence or pattern of lesser phenomena producing a striking result, OR involve complex systems with traditionally unpredictable behavior (weather, animal behavior, sudden astronomical events, or perhaps a Hank Williams' song mysteriously played on a top 40 FM station).
3. The event occurs in proximity to the observer.
4. The observer, either due to knowledge of folklore or to a particular belief pattern, finds a high significance in the occurrence of the event.
5. This significance is interpreted as being beyond reasonable "chance" given the juxtaposition of all elements.
6. The observer develops an expectation of a particular outcome of a major issue that is symbolically related to the "sign", but isolated by normally accepted rules of causality.
7. The observer carries this expectation into action, or waits patiently, or collapses into wailing prayer, etc.

Do signs exist as a valid form of communication to human beings from a "non-human" pattern of intelligence? Or are they a great delusion, the ultimate embodiment of and tribute to wishful thinking? Or does it make any difference?

The proof is in the pragmatic. If human lives and evolution are positively enhanced and aided by belief in and observance of signs, then we have proof enough. In our searching across the Bridges, we have ourselves encountered the atavistic wonder of subtle signs.

For all of their depth and wonder, signs, omens, and the symbolism of dreams are the tip of a potentially even greater issue - synchronicity. Now some might argue that the "S" word once again tilts precariously toward falling into the realm of The Mystic. And far be it from us to argue. Particularly in the study of precognition and remote viewing, the potential for synchronicity to play a potentially powerful role looms. Sometimes, we catch ourselves wantonly attributing the formal name of the phenomenon, studied like so many other mysteries by Carl Gustav Jung, to an overly large set of events. "That was a real synchronicity!" Or "What a synchronistic coincidence"! The point is that we should pause for a moment here and explain a little

about this amazing property of our world. If symbolism is the language of dreams, and archetypes are the individual letters, then synchronicity is English 101 - the definitive grimoire of rules for applying said language to the world at large...

Jung believed that synchronicity was the mere surface effects of a deeper, holistic reality. He recognized that physical synchronistic events have their origin and their degree of meaningful recognition in human consciousness. Thus, he sensed that the interplay between these two realms was even deeper rooted in psychic energy from the collective unconscious and the activation of the archetypes.

Jung was explicit in qualifying which coincidences would be classified as synchronistic. Only those meaningful coincidences, which involve two mental states at once, could be considered truly synchronistic. It must involve the ordinary and non-ordinary state of mind, the latter of which involves activation of the archetype and a sense of numinosity (a connection to the divine).

Let us view this from another, yet complimentary angle.

Quantum physicist, David Bohm, might consider Jung's conscious and unconscious realms representative of his explicate and implicate order. The explicate order is the physical world as we know it. The deeper, more fundamental order beneath the surface is the implicate order. Consider our everyday world around us to be a computer game. What we can see with our senses is the explicate order. However, behind the game lies the software with a myriad of game-altering possibilities; this is the implicate order. The explicate aspect of the computer game is unaware of the implicate software running. The figures on the screen seem to be directly interacting, but it is entirely reflective of the deeper workings of the computer.

Moreover, Bohm sees the explicate order as representative of a holographic image. If viewed under the right lighting, the hologram opens up the enfolded pattern of an even vaster image. Every holographic image contains the enfolded whole.

This becomes highly important in understanding synchronicity. If Bohm is correct, then Descartes' universe, one limited by locality where events must be near one another to be related, is flawed. In fact, the holographic enfoldment of the implicate order allows for events separated by time and space to have a relationship or connection. Indeed, synchronistic events often involve coincidental events that seem connected outside the limited views of causality.

Neurologist, Karl Pibram, has argued that the human brain operates like a hologram. We do not perceive the world as a flat, two-dimensional universe. We are able to perceive a richer visual image through our brain processes. The way the brain stores memories holistically rather than in specific locations is also similar in function to a hologram.

A hologram is created by the synchronous action of light waves. Synchronistic events tend to occur more frequently to individuals who are capable of achieving meditative states where both hemispheres of the brain are in balance, thus achieving synchronous EEG waves. Therefore, do the synchronous actions of EEG waves mimic the holographic effect produced by synchronous light waves?

If the physical explicate human brain has the ability to view the implicate order of the mind via meditation or dreaming, what might it see? What is the computer language of this software? Signs? Symbols?

But the bigger question may be: “Who wrote the implicate order software?” This would represent a super-implicate order. We could go so far as to say God, but he may be much further up the illusory heirarchical ladder. The writers of the software may be those potentially conscious entities/Visitors....the archetypes.

So, we find ourselves back in Jung’s lap again. A person undergoing a transformative stage in their life, and whose brainwave patterns are receptive to the implicate order, either through the avenues of meditation or dreams, may activate the archetype who typically stands at the door between realms....the Trickster (aka Hermes, Coyote, or the Questing Beast).

These archetypes are the gods of thresholds, boundaries, states of human experience, sleeping and waking, conscious and unconsciousness, and so on. They are always mythologically presented to represent transformative periods or stages of life. They arrive unexpectedly as a clown, a thief, a prankster, or a creator; and always they display irreverence for order.

The Trickster may lie dormant in an individual, until an outward or inward set of circumstances causes him to awaken. Once awake, this powerful psychic energy reverberates throughout the individual, producing symbolic dreams of guidance. In addition, the energy may be so strong that themes from this implicate order of the mind begin presenting themselves in the explicate order of reality in the form of synchronicity. These coincidences are acausal in nature, because they do not rely on locality to manifest.

Hermes was the trickster god associated with exchanges made in the marketplaces of Greek villages. These marketplaces were situated on the outskirts of the town, because of they were cautious of exchanges with their unknown or feared neighbors. Hermes appears as the boundary god as he facilitates interaction with these *alien* neighbors, which you will see symbolically leads us down a path to the Bridge of Visitors.

Hermes, too, is the guide to the underworld or Hades, which symbolically represents our nightly decent from consciousness to unconsciousness. It is here that we look for the implicate order of our lives. It is here that we seek to see the inadequacies of our waking life.

Synchronicity: meaningful, acausal connections between the inner/implicate/subjective realm and the outer/explicate/objective realm. Jung may have said it best when he proclaimed that “When an inner situation is not made conscious, it appears outside as fate”. Therefore, if we do not heed the symbolism presented to us in our dreams, the Trickster will present itself to us through outside events.

The Hermit at Dawn: From Sleep to Waking Wonders

Independent of what type of dream we experience, Big or Little, the dreaming is only the beginning call to knowledge. If we wake up on a bright morning, imagery still swimming in our minds, but allow the dream to fade forever like morning fog, then no purpose is served. Empires, quests, scientific breakthroughs, and religious movements have all started with dreams and dreaming, but never would they have manifested without the waking obsession of the dream, and the actions of the dreamer that followed.

We find a rich tradition of the dream - as - catalyst in the Arthurian mythos. In Malory's Le Morte d'Arthur, particularly in "The Tale of The Sangreal", the principle characters are prone to experience dreams of the Big variety. The questing knight, sleeping in an abandoned castle, or by a lake, will typically experience a dream chock full of animal or geographical imagery. Sir Gawain experiences one of the most powerful dreams in the tale: a vision of many black bulls, two white bulls, and a white bull with a black spot. Like the other dreaming knights, Gawain is sorely vexed and puzzled upon waking, and allows himself to obsess on possible meanings of the dream. We find that while the knight is convinced of the divine source and supreme importance of the dream to the grail quest, he is at a loss to interpret it.

This problem of interpretation is solved, without fail, by one of the great archetype characters, found in many cultures, the Hermit. The puzzling knight sometimes seeks out the nearest holy hermit, other times one crosses his path, presumably by the will and grace of God. The hermit listens to the recounting of the knight's dream, and always offers up the true interpretation. With newfound knowledge, and the inspiration accompanying it, the knight goes forth, toward the proper castle or down the correct road. Sir Gawain, along with fellow knight Sir Ector, sought the wisdom of the holiest hermit in England, Nacien, to discover that the dream of bulls contained both warning and pure prophecy about which knights would eventually attain the Grail.

In the Arthurian tradition, dreams (at least the Big ones) are divinely administered, and are to be heeded under threat of utter failure and damnation. They are the symbolic voice of God. However, just as the spoken word requires not only the tongue to emerge, but the ears of the listener as well, the Big Dream requires the Hermit for correct interpretation.

As dreamers and seekers, however, we should not be discouraged at the lack of traditional hermits these days. Wisdom comes in many more forms than beards and hair-shirts. The message here is clear. Dreams are not to be taken at face value; rather they require the translating magic of wisdom, however and wherever one can find it. The heart knows the Hermit when it meets it. Perhaps your heart considers Freud to be the Hermit. Or the Bible. Or the Tao Te Ching. Or maybe the stinky, aged fellow at the corner of Jefferson and 8th. The Hermit might lurk in a late night Brady Bunch re-run, or a scratchy old blues record, or the bottom of a bottle of good Scotch.

The Hermit is, by the way, a full time inhabitant and fixture of this Bridge...

Once distilled by wisdom, the dream becomes a winged horse, a Fury, a power that many cannot fathom. By following the core of the Big Dream with a pure heart and no ego, the world turns and arranges itself effortlessly about the dreamer. Like an arrow shot down the dark length of the Bridge of Dreams, the quester eventually touches the sands of the Avalon shore.

And yet the way of dreaming serves those who traverse any and all of the Bridges! We ourselves have found that despite the topic we were pursuing at a given time, Big dreams have popped up like the Questing Beast itself, to push us along.

Every man, woman, and child has rued those occasional mornings when they awaken from an episode of delight, or deep imagery, or adventure, only to find that within minutes, the dream is gone. "I had such a wonderful dream last night", we cry, "why can't I remember it?" Perhaps it is truly just one of those little tragedies of life that

the unseen powers seem to dole out in order to maintain karmic equilibrium. Similar, perhaps to flat tires, addled socks, or soggy picnics.

On the other hand, maybe the forgetting of a dream is the true meaning of the dream. Perhaps the anguished concentration on the forgotten dream produces a serendipitous recollection of some soul saving fact or forgotten errand!

Becoming a dream Hermit takes some work. And there are tricks to the trade.

Many of the symbols we receive are intrinsically designed to make sense only to ourselves. The messages are very personal and can only be deciphered by understanding the issues we are dealing with in our own lives. Ultimately, we must become our own analysts as we study our dream images.

It is vital when embarking upon this self-analytical journey that you be prepared to utilize a variety of tools or practices. The following suggestions may be helpful in your dreamwork:

- Incubate your dreams. Before going to sleep, meditate on what message of guidance you wish to receive.
- Practice lucid dreaming techniques.
- Keep a journal, recording your mind's nightly wanderings immediately upon awakening. Any lapse of time between dreaming and writing may result in reduced accurate recollection.
- If writing is not comfortable, a voice-activated tape recorder could be utilized and transcribed from at a later time. When recording, it is advisable to speak or write using present tense (*I am* swimming...not *I was* swimming), which will allow you to have a better connection to your dream and thus recollect details more accurately.
- Take notice of seemingly insignificant, minute details. Each element of the dream may represent a disowned part of the individual's personality that needs integration. Identify with every element of the dream describing what it would be like to be that element.
- There are vast numbers of books available to assist us in deciphering the mysterious symbolism of our dreams whenever we feel stuck in our attempts to decode our unconscious mind's cryptic messages.
- Respect, record, and review your dreams and know that you may never fully comprehend the entire meaning of any dream.

Once you begin to keep a journal, you may notice that recurrent dreams or repeating themes may begin to appear. These are cries for attention from your soul. If you have not dealt with an emotional issue in your conscious state, your subconscious may attempt to break through by creating recurrent dreams, psychokinetic activity, or subjecting you to acts of synchronicities in an attempt to get your undivided attention so that issues may be resolved.

Lori: "In my own journal, I noticed that I began to repeat a theme of being in various confined places with numerous members of my husband's family. In my personal life, I was indeed struggling with being able to stand up for myself in regards to nuclear and extended family life. I was aware of my need to be true to myself, however I was not

exerting enough effort towards this goal. Once I recognized the imprisonment theme, I knew I must act on it to continue my spiritual growth.”

For as much as our instinct tells us that life could be enriched and wisdom gained if only we could remember our dreams, the best of us often come up frustrated. Is this sort of recollection a skill or ability that must be attained and perfected? OR might there be shortcuts? Maybe some methods of dream enhancement or remembrance could be produced by artifice... There are hints that it is. We tender for the reader some thoughts on this topic.

There is mention made among many folk traditions that some herbs and plants promote dreaming. Some are now about \$120 bucks an ounce, and a bit on the illicit side, thanks to the lobbying of anti - hemp paper industrialists of the 1930's. However, one herb described in Wiccan and European Pagan tradition that is legal, pleasant of smell and won't upset your grandmother is *mugwort*.

The tale goes that one makes a sachet or pillow of mugwort, and either lays ones head on it in sleep, or places it under ones usual bed pillow. The fresher the better it is said. The mugwort pillow draws in dreams of high quality and bestows them on the sleeper. No, smoking it doesn't do much except raise a terrible coughing fit.

Nick: "In winter and spring of 2000, I procured a baggie of dried mugwort, and placed it inside my pillow-case. Subjectivity being the caveat, I found that it did indeed start to produce a noticeable effect within about 3 or 4 nights! I would not specifically vouch for the quantity or quality of dreams, however I found that upon waking, I could recount what seemed to be the entire night's inventory of dreams; Big, Small, or just silly. Try it! Perhaps it is something more than a wish-placebo. However, be warned. Remembering a ton of small and silly dreams does little more than amuse. It's still the Big ones that take us down the Bridges!"

Another observation crosses into the technical.

Nick: "The reader will recall that in the Bridge of the Visitors, I mention efforts in the period 1992 to 1994 to devise anti-abduction hardware. A tip of the hat to the Questing Beast there; while these devices were most likely useless against what I now perceive to be a far different phenomenon, they led to an interesting observation!

Two of the devices I designed and built were essentially RF ‘white noise’ generators. One model was simply a vacuum tube noise amplifier, with a final output power of about a watt and a noise band extending from a few kilohertz to maybe 10 or 15 megahertz. The other was similar, except solid state and containing an additional section for pulsing the noise signal. These machines were placed beside the abductee's bed, and left on every night, all through the night.

From three experiencers who had volunteered to try these devices came back surprisingly similar independent anecdotes. It was uncertain whether the routine of their ‘abduction agenda’ had been altered, but all mentioned that after about a week, the vividness of their dreams and the propensity to remember them had increased.

I tried the pulsed output generator by my own bedside for two weeks. I would have to say the effect did not seem to be as abrupt as the mugwort (herbs - is there anything they can't do?) however I found myself concurring with the volunteers.

Why would RF electromagnetic noise affect the dream state? My own hypothesis is that the rich and chaotic EM field of those 'shield' devices may have been coupling and beating with the equally chaotic RF emissions of the human brain and nervous system. Perhaps there is some small portion of the brain that limits dreams, and causes us to forget them. If so, then maybe there are methods to bypass this suppression center. Ambient electromagnetic noise, and complex aromatics found in certain herbs could be two such methods!

Consider one last synthesis here. Another great old dream tradition came from the Greeks, and said that one could receive the dreams of the gods by sleeping with one's head on certain stones. Ouch! We presume the ancient Athenians had good chiropractic care.

But follow me here - one of the discoveries of the great experimentalist, Thomas Townsend Brown, was that some rocks, particularly those of igneous origin, produced spontaneous emissions of very low-level, high frequency electromagnetic noise! Granite and basalt speak, perhaps in the tongue of dreams, the voice of the psyche. Should we wonder then, at the notion that some rocks are dream givers?"

Once you begin to become more adept at the hermetic dreamwork process, you will recognize that not all dreams are necessarily meant to have profound meaning. You may notice that some "little" dreams are simply your mind's way of sorting out the events of the day and closing the file, similar to a computer as it prepares to shut down at the end of the business day. A way to differentiate between a big dream and a little dream is to simply pay attention to your internal voice or knowing; this voice is aware of the difference between a sorting dream and one teaming with symbolic wisdom.

Onward then - let us be each other's Hermit...

Reflections from the Bridge

Stretch and yawn, as the sunlight of a new day streams in like it did on the first Sunday morning in all of history. You think back on the images and adventures from a universe that was left behind a few moments ago, and as these fade into your unconscious, to be someday remembered when you least expect it, your thoughts turn to coffee and a muffin. It's al-right. Feel the solidarity and connected-ness, as you share the ritual of the moment with a thousand generations of humanity...

Through a tortuous path, the world of dreams shapes the world of waking matter. This we have seen; all that is needed is to never stop believing, and act. And yet, there is one matter that all dreamers have pondered, as have we. Does the reality of dreams stop at our skulls, or for a short while, do we actually co-exist in a universe that has no less solidity than our own? This is a theme encountered from time to time in works of fantasy and science fiction, but never proven. In H.P. Lovecraft's The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath, a human master dreamer, Randolph Carter, navigates the land of dreams, and finds it to be an actual physical world in its own right, connected to our own at a few secret points and locations of tangency. When we dream, does a physical portion of ourselves differentiate, and travel to another dimension or reality?

In his on-line web journal, researcher Slavek Krapelka recounts an experiment performed by a friend in Eastern Europe. Krapelka's friend had a young daughter who

was a known chronic sleepwalker. The girl's parents took the opportunity to examine a claim that arose from unknown sources in the 1970's that dreamers and sleepwalkers lose a certain amount of weight when in their dreaming state. The parents set up a low profile scale in the doorway of the daughter's room, that would be stepped upon by the daughter when she left her room whilst sleepwalking. When the girl was heard to be stirring, late at night, the parents would sneak to their daughter's room, and observe the scale reading when the little girl stepped on it. On a number of occasions, in 2000 and 2001, it appeared that the weight of the child was anomalously and drastically decreased, from about 42 kilograms to sometimes almost zero! It is true that many caveats and questions surround this amateur experiment. Yet it provides, at least, a starting point for speculation...

In the end, the reality and mechanisms of dreams and the dreaming world matter less than their influence upon our lives and ultimately upon our actions in the waking world. In Stephen R. Donaldson's deeply allegorical The Chronicles of Thomas Covenant, an embittered and cynical man from our modern world, novelist Thomas Covenant, is transposed to an alternate Earth where wonder and magic exist in the same way as electricity and magnetism exist here. He assumes the role of Unbeliever- a reluctant skeptic who cannot believe in the reality of the dream-like "Land" but who realizes that his life (and ultimately the redemption of his tortured soul) hinges on his acceptance of the Land and the quest thrust upon him by the people there. In the end, Covenant triumphs and is given a second chance at life in the "real" world. He learns that reality is a paradox, and that all that matters is what we choose to do with our hearts and hands, independent of what universe unfolds around us.

No true dreamer has ever assumed anything else.

Dream proudly, therefore, and live every moment of your life as symbolically as possible. Dreams represent a force far beyond any hydrogen bomb, as the mighty dreamers of history have shown - Alexander the Great, Abraham Lincoln, Gandhi, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., and most importantly - YOU!