



SYMBOLS IN PSYCHOTHERAPY

The Influence of Myth on the Nature of Symbolic Forms in the Manifest Dream

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THE INFLUENCE OF MYTH ON THE NATURE OF SYMBOLIC FORMS IN THE MANIFEST DREAM

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From

Table of Contents

[THE INFLUENCE OF MYTH ON THE NATURE OF SYMBOLIC FORMS IN THE MANIFEST DREAM](#)

[INTRODUCTION](#)

[ON THE STUDY OF MANIFEST DREAM SYMBOLS](#)

[TERMS AND DEFINITIONS](#)

[MYSTIC SYMBOLS AND PSYCHOANALYTIC ONEIRIC SYMBOLS](#)

[CONCLUSIONS](#)

THE INFLUENCE OF MYTH ON THE NATURE OF SYMBOLIC FORMS IN THE MANIFEST DREAM

An Historical Study of the Use of Dreams By Cultures

"Gleams of a remoter world visit the soul in sleep."

Shelley.

INTRODUCTION

For the searcher combing through the historic world of dreams, no bit of antique glory may escape the eye. Intent on finding clues to culture in tattered recalls of dreams from the past, we search for facts in the reports of anthropologists and from neglected historical recalls of primitive manifest dream symbol content. Many scientists declare such data to be useless for they cannot be used for understanding the principles of brain function nor can they help us to learn about unconscious meanings and latent dream content. Manifest dream symbols were not always held in such low regard. In past times they served as keys to the future and as manipulative tools for societies. There were eons when societies reached into the minds of their sleeping members and mauled that now private place which is the world of manifest dreams.

In antique cultures, manifest dream symbols were molded to conform to myths about that which dreams were believed to be. Dreaming, that ultimate bastion of individuality in the Western world was harnessed to the needs of cultures by dream psychologies that were shaped by local myths. As Dodds (1951) has pointed out "side by side with the familiar anxiety-dreams and wish-fulfilling dreams that are common to humanity, there are others whose manifest content, at any rate, is determined by a local culture pattern." (P 103)

The latter most process was very intense in nations for whom rational science was nonexistent and for whom magic was the key to the powers of the universe. For these nations, that which we now call "useless manifest dream elements" were transmuted into entities exalted in their time to the same high

level as augury, mystical experiences, visions and revelations (See Savary 1984 P 51). In this regard, Dodds (1951) has noted that “there are types of dream structure which depend on a socially transmitted pattern of belief, and cease to occur when that belief ceases to be entertained.” (P 103)

Mutual influences of cultural shading and latent content produce variations in the manifest symbolic forms of dreams and myths. In primitive societies this interaction skews manifest dream symbols in the direction of serving cultural needs. In modern dreaming, manifest dream symbols, containing personal and idiosyncratic content, predominate.

ON THE STUDY OF MANIFEST DREAM SYMBOLS

The study, for their own sake, of the manifest symbols found in dreams is a relatively neglected field. This is especially so in psychoanalytic dream studies, where clinically manifest symbols are used as touchstones—starting points—for the associations that will lead to the latent dream content wherein lies the true meaning and value of the dream. Psychoanalysts who linger to look for value in manifest symbols as they stand alone cannot expect that their effort will be welcomed kindly. As Pulver (1978) has stated, “To many analysts, the very mention of the value of the manifest dream is equivalent to sounding a general alarm, seeming to imply an attack upon the entire analytic theory of dreams” (P 679). What “many analysts” object to is the wild, guess-oriented approach to finding meaning in manifest dream symbols. The main thrust of this chapter is an investigation into the cultural factors and processes, which influence the form and function of manifest dream symbols.

What follows is an example of the use of a manifest dream symbol in which the clinical use of the form of the symbol is emphasized rather than its latent meaning. Fitzgerald (1971) described the dreams of a number of patients who had recently been blinded. “One woman, widowed six months and blind one year, dreamed ‘of my husband, that he hasn’t died and of sight, that I still can see or have recovered my sight. I am very disappointed and fed up when I wake. So I prefer to go to bed earlier for these dreams.’”

This woman’s dream could be interpreted to be a simple wish-fulfilling dream, with a manifest content, which restores her dead husband.

Such an approach utilizes the symbol in the manifest content as a key to dream meaning. There is more to be derived from this dream's symbols, if we turn our eyes from the search for latent symbol meaning and direct our attention to symbolic forms and structures. Their very existence offers meanings in a world of knowledge all their own.

The fact that symbols found in the manifest content of dreams have a primarily visual form (Freud 1900, Piaget 1946) and are experienced as real had appeal to this dreamer. She went to bed early. This was done in pursuit of the manifest dream content, for when she went to dream, this blind woman could see once more. She adapted the phenomenological visual aspect of manifest dream symbols to her needs.

The phenomenological characteristics of manifest dream contents and symbols, especially the sense of reality that accompany them, have been seized upon and adapted by human societies to support their created realities. Mythological contents have been wrought from them, providing a place and a purpose in the social order for manifest dreams. An attempt is made here to explore the social evolution of the role of the manifest symbols of dreams in an individual's life, and to answer such questions as the following. How do dream symbols fit into the dreamer's life in a way that fits the dreamer into society? How has it come to be that in Western society this process (a central role for the dream in a social context) has been so minimized that the very concept is hard to grasp?

This information is of more than theoretical interest. Each psychiatrist, analyst and therapist comes into daily contact with a number of manifest dreams. It could be of value to have available a study of the vagaries, the glories and the ills that may beset, distort and otherwise mold the form and function of those reportedly pale and passive messengers from the system unconscious, manifest dream symbols. There is value in knowing that it is possible that sometimes the form, the function and the content of a manifest dream can be effected by and can effect culture. This is especially true when working with people from cultures foreign to one's own. These insights add to our knowledge and do not in any way contradict the fact that the key to the latent meaning of manifest dreams resides in free association nor is it meant to diminish the importance of the contents of the system unconscious.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

In studying the concept that the myths of a culture can influence its dreams and the symbolic forms that make up those dreams, it is important to clarify the particular meanings of the key words that will be used throughout this chapter. A definition of each form follows.

Dreams:

How does one define “a dream”? The common definition, ‘a cluster of symbols perceived during sleep as a coherent entity’, is not sufficient to our purpose: neither is the dictionary definition—“a series of thoughts, images or emotions occurring during sleep” (Webster 1959, p. 785). In this chapter I use the term “experienced dream” to mean “more or less coherent imagery sequences occurring during sleep” (Hallowell 1966, p.27—paraphrased). This should be differentiated from the “reported dream”, for reported dreams are a mixture of experienced dreams and culturally determined post dream interpretive elements.

Coherent imagery sequences make up the experienced dream. Drive impelled hidden (latent) content arising from the system unconscious shapes the choice of imagery that arises in the dream. The experienced dream is transmuted into remembered imagery through visuo-verbal associations that are rooted in culturally determined symbolic linkages. In this way the dream makes sense to the dreamer (secondary elaboration). More intensive tuning of dream content to culture occurs when the dream is told to someone (tertiary elaboration). Mutative influences that add communicative mode characteristics to dream symbols are generated in the dream to ready it to be told to a listener or dream interpreter. The manifest (e.g. reported) content of the dream is a socialized construct. Multiple cultural and social factors cause this mutation of dream content to take place. By the time the dream experience is reported by the dreamer to the analyst or dream interpreter, it has, to varying degrees, been elaborated to conform to linguistic forms, culturally congruent interpretations, myths, and the shared expectations of skilled listeners.

Levels of Experience Encountered during Dreaming:

There are four levels of experience encountered in any reported dream:

- 1) There is the *latent content*. "Latent dream content" refers to the hidden meaning of the dream. This is the shape or armature which, when fleshed out with sensation and symbolic forms, becomes the experienced dream. Latent content is influenced by culture when external prohibitions foster the repressions, which enhance the content of unconscious themes. Through this, certain instincts, wishes, and drive derivatives are relegated to the repressed portion of the system unconscious from which many latent contents are derived.
- 2) There is the *experienced dream*. This consists of sequences of sensations and coherent images that are sensed by the dreamer during sleep. This is influenced by culture to the extent that cultures provide the visual elements that contribute form to symbols.
- 3) There is the *remembered manifest dream product*. This is the product of sensitivity to the broad influences of the dreamer's remembered personal synthesis of culture and myth. Preexisting fantasy contexts and cultural myths are superimposed on the experienced dream to integrate the dream into the dreamer's conscious thoughts. This last is called secondary elaboration, which in Freud's words (1900), creates a situation in which "... the dream loses the appearance of absurdity and incoherence, and approaches the pattern of an intelligible experience." (P 391) Secondary elaboration is the psychological process, which underlies, for the most part, the harnessing of dream experiences to the demands of culture. Secondary elaboration provides a conduit through which the myths of a culture gain access to and shape the form of the remembered dream. In some cultures, such as our own, mythic influence is minimally exercised. The dream remains primarily an expressive channel under the hegemony of the system unconscious. In a psychoanalytically educated society, "the dream" is automatically regarded to be solely a prerogative of the system unconscious. As such, dreams in our culture are primarily the symbolic evocation of the repressed unconscious. In many other cultures, this mythic influence is organized as a culture element, which is usurped in the service of mythologically educating social forces, which generally dominate their mental life.
- 4) There is the *dream as reported to another*. Here the expectations of the dream interpreter as listener pull dream content, in the context of the dreams of many nights, in the direction of symbol nets that are familiar to or championed by the dream interpreter. The process of giving final shape to the reported dream was called by Bernfeld (see Hoffer 1978) tertiary elaboration.

Cryptic Dream Symbols:

Cryptic dream symbols are perceived dream elements, which represent a thing, concept,

experience or affect at odds with its manifest content. The important symbolic forms experienced in dreams are simple symbols, psychoanalytic symbols, transcendent and oneiric symbols. In addition each symbolic form has evocative and communicative polarities.

Simple symbols are direct representations of remembered events and meanings.

Psychoanalytic (cryptic) symbols were described by Jones (1916), as symbols (see above Unit 1 Chapter 2) about which “. . . the person employing the symbol is not even conscious of what it actually represents” (P 116).

Transcendent symbols are recognized by their champions in dreams populated by deities.

The term *Oneiric symbols* refers to all the symbolic forms, which appear in dreams. Oneiric is the word for dream in the language of the ancient Greeks. These include both cryptic dream symbols and those symbols whose full meanings are apparent to the dreamer such as those symbols, which occur in the simple wish fulfilling dreams of the very young child, and in the traumatic dreams, which follow and emulate devastating experiences. (P 182)

The Characteristics of Oneiric Symbols:

The absence of contact with objects of the outer world and the concomitant heightened influence of inner urges and memory that characterize the psychology of the sleep state imparts certain characteristics to oneiric symbols. These characteristics can be summarized as follows in an elaboration and paraphrase of Piaget's (1945) study of the matter:

- 1). The appearance, disappearance, and activity of the oneiric symbol are not under the conscious control of the dreamer (P 179).
- 2). A special group of oneiric symbols have the characteristics of psychoanalytic symbols. These are the cryptic symbols of night dreams. The oneiric symbol has a heightened potential in its psychoanalytic symbolic form for becoming porous to the affect against which it defends.
- 3). The oneiric symbol tends to be derived from the visual rather than the auditory sphere and cannot involve the use of material substitutes as, for instance, do the symbols (ludic) of

play.

- 4). Oneiric symbols have the quality of real experience, imparting believability to the experience of the dreamer.

- 5). The verbal conceptual memory organization, which begins at the point that a child learns to use words, dominates until eight years of age, and continues to influence cognition throughout life, (See Sarnoff 1976 Chapter 4.) requires that experiences be processed so that they can be remembered and recalled in verbal form. (See Head 1920). Because original experiences undergo modification when they are transformed into verbal concepts, verbal memory is inexact. These limitations met with in the use of words for recording experiences alter remembered reality. A verbal reservoir that contains an approximation of the experiences of the potential dreamer is created as a result of this transformation of perceptions into verbal representations. (See Langer (1942 p 146). The verbal conceptual memory organization supports the memory panels that are utilized for recognition recall and the interpretation of experiences. Memory distortions, value judgments and the cultural influences (myths) of the society in which the subject lives are also contained in memory. These influences inform the interpretation of new perceptions, intensify preconceptions, and model the myths that reshape individual realities for a lifetime. These wells of knowledge also serve as the memory reservoirs from which is fetched the momentary flashes of drive impelled coherent imagery that are experienced as dreams in sleep. (Piaget 1945 P 205) During this conversion of memory into dreams, symbols and other forms of dream imagery are drawn from memory contents, which have been rendered into visual derivatives. The shift to visual representation is the product of the blocking of retinal input that comes with the eye movements and the shift to acetylcholine domination that occurs during REM sleep. (See this Book Volume 1, Pp 201 and 218.) This alteration of brain function forces the transmutation of the contents of verbal memory reservoirs through a gamut consisting of symbol and visual rebus formation that produces the sight images of dreams.

- 6). Cryptic Oneiric symbols may express either the evocative or communicative polarity of the psychoanalytic symbol. A definition of these polarities follows.

Evocative and Communicative Symbols

Evocative dream symbols are idiosyncratic. They express highly personalized content. They are dominated by and motivated by irrational, primitive, instinctual contents. Their purpose is the discharge of drive. Communication and comprehensibility are minor considerations. Cultural influence is minimized and limited. Evocative symbols predominate in the dreams reported in Western society. The

deeper the sleep level, the more evocative is the symbol. The greater the communicative barrier that exists between the reality sensing cognitive systems of sleep and the manifest content of the dream, the greater is the potential of the symbol to be experienced in its evocative form. For example, the symbols of *pavor nocturnus*, which occur during arousal from fourth stage sleep, are horrifying when reported by the child to his parents. Yet they are not remembered by the child the following morning, when he is using waking cognition. The persistence of such dream states with burgeoning awareness of evocative dream content unaltered by tertiary elaboration in the telling is part of an aberrant process approaching psychosis.

Communicative symbols are shaped primarily to carry meaning to others. They are heavily weighted with the influences of myth and the memory of social interaction. As such, their content is easily recognized by a listener with similar experience or social background. The “coherent imagery sequences” that constitute the initial direct dream experience are modified during secondary elaboration which produces the communicative symbol of the manifest remembered dream.

Tertiary elaboration based upon the influence of a therapeutic dream interpreter causes further modifications in the dream symbol. For instance dream experiences are often interpreted to conform to myths through the process of tertiary elaboration, which reshapes and transmutes dream events till in the telling they come to fit the mythic patterns of the culture. The expectations and symbol vocabulary of the culture of the dream interpreter influence the content of the dream. Through this process, subjective dream experience is altered to serve the perpetuation of the source material from which the communicative symbols of myths were taken in the first place. Communicative dream symbols dominate dream reporting in many cultures to the extent that the line between the influence of myths and the influence of internally motivated content on dreams becomes blurred.

Myths and Dreams:

Myths place into verbal form primitive understandings about those things that objectively are barely understood. The definition of a myth as an ancient tale of kings, of gods, and famous men who did heroic deeds catches only a descriptive remnant of those powerfully influential cultural memories, which in retrospect we call myths. A myth is a tool, sought by societies facing a need to explain “the

unknown". It is used to organize and convey information about that which would otherwise remain an uncontrolled mystery. Myths adapt mankind's belief that through naming one can understand and control that which one can name. Some of the items brought under control are storm, death, life beyond life, harvests and destinies. The mythopoetic process makes it possible for social groups to be organized around the belief that they alone have "the secret of control over the unknown" and of the powers of the universe.

As the awareness of evolving mankind expanded, mankind's arenas of reflection, bewilderment and conscious fear increased to include preoccupations with nature, unexpected events, and the future. Men came to ponder the impotence of mankind before inconstant harvests and rainless skies, death, the waxing and the waning of the light, the coming and the going of the stars, seasonal change and the regeneration of depleted herds, the difference between the sexes, and the vagaries of fate that make one man ill and one man strong, one man—pauper, one man—king. These preoccupations are the fruit of a broadened awareness. They call forth a basic human response. That is the impulse to explain the unknown to a point at which one could predict and control it. A product of this impulse was a comfort for individual men in the thought that in all this confusion, in which natural events go their own way with no apparent heed to his need, those who are wise and are his leaders can call the universe to order and offer him logical explanations through myths.

The production of myths, which explain the unexplainable, was derived early in history from sequences of coherent imagery experienced during sleep. Dreaming seen as communication from supernatural powers became a hallowed source of data, explanations and history. The concepts produced became characteristic of specific groups, which organized their identities around shared explanations and common definitions for reality. In their role as explainers, myths presented hypotheses that ordered the world. From within this seminal cauldron came forth explanations of natural events. These were tales that lived for men and which men lived by. It was here the gods were born, and here, too, hardly noticed, in a primitive and magic form, science slipped into the world.

Established myths are far from being simple, entertaining tales. They are the templates and patterns, which guide men on the courses of culture and shape interpretations of future dreaming. One of the mechanisms, by which mythic patterns transmute the lives of men, involves authoritarian

manipulation of the memory components that shape reporting of the manifest content of dreams.

A sense of reality, which occurs as a characteristic of regressed cognition in sleep, cloaks the oneiric symbol. It reinforces the quality of reality found in those myths whose content had earlier been shaped by similar dreams. Mythologized dream content, by an exercise in circular logic, is called upon as testimony to the truth of the myths that gave them form. Thus, dream content may seem to reinforce myth, when in actuality myths had initially informed the content of dreams. Dreams are not the only means by which mythic culture elements are reinforced. There are also visions and revelations, as well as politicized control of the content conveyed by the media for the transmission of culture. Such media could be temple carvings, stained glass, the written word, or the reported experiences of mystics in states of transportation.

The Evolutionary Timelines Of Man

In exploring change and continuity in the characteristics of individual features during the sequential evolution of individual cultures, we will be delineating a developmental time line. Our points of emphasis on this time line will be the evolutionary stages experienced as culture progressed, rather than the commonly dated eras of more typical studies in history. These evolutionary stages are early man, primitive man, both non-literate; and ancient man, medieval man and modern scientific man—all literate. The manifest symbols which the peoples of a culture chose to use in dreams, vary from stage to stage. Between stages, there are distinct hinges, which mark the changes in the symbolic forms that typify manifest dream symbols. The most striking change of all is the advent of literacy, which accompanies the shift from primitive to ancient man.

The Dream Psychology Of Non-Literate Early And Primitive Man

Introduction

The dreams of early man are obviously lost to us. However, knowledge of the evolution of the symbolizing function places at our disposal the raw material from which the nature of their dreams can be reconstructed. Primitive men still exist. Their dreams can still be explored and their dream psychology

studied and used as a source for the reconstruction of the dreams of early man.

The low order of the socializing mythopoetic organization implied by the concept “early man” makes it likely that his dream symbols were protosymbolic and limited to evocation of inner needs and the mastery of trauma. The more highly developed mythological penetration of the cultures of contemporary primitive man makes the appearance of communicative symbols in his dreams more likely. This shift was probably supported by the fact that dream symbols could be used to support the myths and pretensions of emerging culture leaders. Dreams could add a unique contribution in support of the myths that emerged at the dawn of primitive society. The characteristic of the manifest dream symbols of early and primitive man, which forges a link between religion, myth, and dream, is the sense of reality experienced when dreaming. This has been described by Callois (1966) as “the dream is seen to bear stronger witness than reality” for primitive man. This characteristic dominated early dream interpretation and was harnessed by Western cultures until well into the medieval period. Since dreams seemed to be real to the dreamer, they could be used as veridically experienced confirmations of unrealistic elements in myths. The malleability of dream symbols coupled with the sense of reality associated with dream experiences made the integration of dreams into the world of myth and religion a mandatory political step. As Morgan (1932) has noted “Myths influence dreams, and these dreams in turn help to maintain the efficacy of ceremonies.” (400).

Dream Psychology Of Early Man

The earliest dreams of evolving man were probably like the dreams of animals or very small children, “coherent imagery sequences” evoking simple and undistorted memory elements. Such concrete symbolic forms were all that these minds were capable of achieving at the point in primate evolution that bipedal locomotion developed and hands took from the mouth the tasks of gathering and holding food. The mouth was freed to evolve till through speech it could convey a form of direct naming recall called “declarative memory”. These were the first simple symbols. With the development of disjuncture (capacity to delay expression of drives), the autonomic reactions to drive expression that had impelled flight or fight became sustained affect states. To adjust to these affect sensations, displacement within declarative memory to representations that had less valence for attracting attention to affect introduced the first psychoanalytic symbols.

Once hands could carry tools, and declarative memory for syntaxes of work patterns (called implicit “skill memory”) developed to accompany each tool,¹ the way was open for the identification of variations in work patterns from group to group. Recognition of variations in work and skill patterns became the basis for identification and differentiation of group members. Since they could be used to establish the characteristics of the group, recognition of work patterns presaged the function of myths in providing a touchstone through which group identity and cohesion could be established.

The more that skills and tools were developed and differentiated, the more were there possibilities for variations in the vocal signals of declarative memory that differentiated tools and accompanied motor work syntaxes. The storage of such vocal signals associated with motor patterns could, if spontaneously recalled, give rise to a reflective verbal consciousness, at first to be used for giving orders or coordinating efforts. At this point, dream content could reflect self-awareness related to tool use and associated skills. Multiple tools and multiple learned motor patterns (tool skills) provided mankind’s precursors with alternative concepts. After alternative memory elements became available, delay of drive discharge and shift of action through displacement to alternatives became possible. At this point, Hartmann’s (1948) differentiation between man and lower animals—“man’s adaptive behavior has a characteristic plasticity in contradistinction to the relative rigidity of that of lower animals.” (P 81) had its origin. At this point in disjuncture, displacement could appear in dreams. The mental mechanism of displacement that utilized alternatives to substitute one idea for another, increased when there occurred a burgeoning of memories of alternative technical syntaxes for performing work.

Once one idea can be substituted for another, we have a symbolic form called a symbolic equivalent. Symbolic linkages are established through these equivalents. It is generally agreed by workers in the field of paleoanthropology (i.e., Washburn and Avis, 1958) that primitive speech was possible when brain size increased to 750 cc. This is the brain size of Homo erectus. Homo erectus of all early men was probably the first to accomplish a degree of verbal conceptual memory. Creatures with primitive speech could have developed concrete symbolic representations containing memories and primitive words to represent them. If a primitive word were blended with another to represent two concrete concepts in a single word, a new kind of word would be introduced. It would be an abstraction since it is not linked solely to a single tool, syntax or concept. Rather, this new type of word could take on a career all its own. At this point in evolution, the idea of the word and the idea of the thing could become separable entities.

The memory for things could be carried in images and words. These images and words used as symbols for things could enter dreams.

The Dream Psychology Of Primitive Man

With Neanderthal man (100,000 B.C.) there appear signs of the capacity for representation of abstract non-concrete concepts. Flowers are found in graves, and burials occur, signifying a self-reflective concept of life and awareness of death. During the Cro-magnon period beginning about 35,000 B.C., painting representing direct and realistic depictions appear. If dream symbols did not exceed in their complexity the limits on symbolic forms superimposed by their evolutionary phase, then Neanderthal and Cro-magnon dreaming were limited to non-distorting wish-oriented symbols.

Distortion dominated symbols first appear in cave paintings about the fourth millennium B.C. There may have been psychoanalytic symbols before this. However, there is no direct evidence of this in art. Historic dreams are lost, giving no clue to the time when distorting symbols, which mask meaning, first appeared in dreams. It was certainly not before 100,000 B.C. probably not before 40,000 B.C. and not after 4,000 B.C.² That gives us about 36,000 years to play with. Actually, it's probably better than nothing. The dreams of primitive peoples, living today in a cultural milieu like that of the advanced cultures of 4,000 B.C., have distortion dreams. The time of the beginning of distortion dreams is likely to have been earlier than that. Actually, the timing is not as important as the fact that there was an evolution. This evolution of symbols was congruent with the evolution of society. One can use this as a starting point for conjecture on the possible relationship between the development of culture and the development of masking symbols in dreams.

As cultures evolved, repression that influenced dream symbols emerged. The Philosopher Alfred North Whitehead (1927) defined the role of masking symbols in maintaining the structure of society: "In the place of (social) instinct which suppresses individuality, society has gained the efficacy of symbols, at once preservative of the commonweal and of the individual standpoint"(P 113). This thought has special meaning in regard to the development of dream symbols. As man evolved, traditions developed which interfered with the direct expression of an individual's drives. Traditions, such as tool skills, became the means for identifying group members. Traditions served as survival tools for the group. The

individual man was reduced to the status of an element in the organic unity of mankind. Traditions, as in the case of sexual customs and prohibitions of aggression, transcended the needs of individuals, causing limitations in the expression of the instinctual aspirations of single beings.

In the face of repression, drives continue to push for expression. Where can individual needs find satisfaction and discharge in such a system? Overt challenges to tradition resulted in expulsion or death. Satisfaction of urges denied by the traditions of the group had to find a secret place for expression. Even the individual must be sheltered from his own drive expression. Psychoanalytic symbols expressing drives through the secret world of dream symbols could have been adapted to serve this need. Since forbidden wishes can find release in dreaming, group intactness could be preserved by the presence of this safety valve.

By the time of this turn of events, dreams filled with cryptic symbols became a part of the every-night experience of man. Social traditions evolved. Forbidden instinctual wishes found expression through dreams, which transmuted their derivatives into acceptable symbolic distortions. In this regard Bernstein (1986) quoted Marc Bloch to the effect that "... visual images were 'Very often the refuge, as it were, of certain values which could not find expression elsewhere.' (P 9) Thus, the visual symbolism of dreams could enable the limitation of the actions of a man to the traditions of his culture as it evolved, while giving mental license to the secret discharge of private drives and their desires. Mead, M. (1958) recognized the importance of the cryptic (Psychoanalytic) symbol in the evolution of man and of society. She noted "There is good reason to believe that man's evolutionary progress depends also on his ability to dream..." (P 488n).

As man's awareness expanded, and as early concrete explicit dream symbolism was invaded by evocatively driven cryptic symbolic elements, one more item was added to the perplexing world of unexplained events that confronted early man. What were these things, which felt real and which one saw when one left this world and entered the night world of dreams? Try to imagine that you have never dreamed or heard of strange and cryptic dream symbols and suddenly one appears in a dream. You'd want an explanation. So, I think, did early man. Traditions and mythological explanations were expanded to include these new events of the night. Callois (1966) has culled the essence of this interpretation by primitive man of the meaning of dreams and dream symbols, "The dream (as seen by

the primitive) does not only presage reality, but is a kind of lien on it which has to be redeemed quickly, lest some irremediable split appear in the tissue of events capable of causing the dreamer's death." (P 30) The dream was seen as a part of the very tissue of life. It became a commanding link in the chain of life events. It became necessary to have a dream of the hunt before one hunted, and to dream of victory before going to battle, or there would be neither game nor victory. Life events were shadowed by the manifest symbols of dreams. Dream symbols, in turn, were derived from memories of life events. The effect of this dual reflection was that dreams and life's realities both verified cultural truths. The content of the culture was reinforced by dreams. In turn dream content was understood to be appropriate to the social context (see Bastide 1966.) to which it had contributed form in its formation.

Eggen (1966), in studying the Hopi indians, found that "much of the learning process among the Hopi, especially with reference to religion, involved perception through imagery derived from dramatic rituals enacted over and over again before learners and that this imagery later, according to individual need pattern, could easily be and frequently was translated directly into dreams." (P 241)

There are a multitude of possible symbolic forms available for dreaming. Each society places emphasis on a few forms as a result of the influence of myth on dreams. Other dream elements may continue to occur. However, they are devalued and are relegated to the zone of the unimportant. A society's dream psychology creates a worldview. For instance a belief that a dream symbol can dictate one's profession (see below "Ojibwa Dream Fast") makes of a dream symbol a culture element to be used in ritual. A related belief that dream symbols are mirrors of the future makes of dreams the stuff of augury and clairvoyance.

The dreams, which were valued by primitive man contained symbols heavily weighted for communicative value. Communicative symbols were the order of their night. Primitive man placed his dream priorities far from the personal unconscious. By way of contrast, communication is not a primary function for modern dream symbols, since modern industrial society emphasizes dreaming which evokes the content of the unconscious. From dreams, primitive peoples sought skills, career guidance, power, and predictions of the future. Specific symbols with established meanings were searched for and when found, were used in support of social patterns typical of the society.

Dream Symbols of Primitive Man that Support the Acquisition of Skills

The Ojibwa Dream Fast

Among the Ojibwa (a Canadian Indian tribe which functioned on the preliterate primitive culture level), as Hallowell (1966) tells us, "boys between ten and fifteen stay in a tree fasting for ten days awaiting a dream in which they communicate with other than human persons, such as the 'keeper of the wild herds.'" In this way, communication is established with nature for the benefit of the future hunter (P 284). In this tribe, there is evidence regarding the transmission from one generation to the next of the pattern of the dreams. An example of one of these dreams and its effect follows.

The pawagan (non-human dream figure) appears in anthropomorphic guise. Later this creature said to the boy, "I think you are strong enough to go with me." He danced, and as he danced, he grew feathers. The boy looked at himself and found he was covered with feathers. Henceforth it was known that the boy was capable of changing himself into an animal.

Dreams That Direct And Give Power To The Dreamer

Amongst the Jivaros of Equador, there is a ritual in which one takes a drug and sees a vision which, when touched, explodes (Harner 1973). After nightfall, one goes to sleep and awaits the creature of the vision that is expected to appear in a dream. The creature appears as an old man who says to the dreamer, "I am your ancestor. Just as I have killed many times, so will you." The soul of the old man is believed to enter the body of the dreamer. The dreamer is believed to be changed once he awakens. He is strong, invulnerable and prepares to kill someone. This dream was part of the rites that precede the taking and shrinking of heads amongst these former headhunting people of South America (P 138). A belief in transmigration of the soul with manifestations of that soul in socially derived dream symbols (communicative symbols) is indicated here.

Mantic Dreams And Prediction Of The Future

One of the most important uses of manifest dream symbols in primitive societies is in the prediction of the future. Dreams, which predict the future, are called mantic dreams. This is based on the myth that

dream symbols provide a key to an extra human world where future events are known. There is for each society a rich vocabulary of dream symbols whose mantic implications have been learned by individuals who are talented in their use. In primitive societies, manifest dream symbols do not usually reveal directly what these events to come may be. A dream interpreter must be sought out by the dreamer. No one else, save the dream interpreter, must hear the dream. Once the interpreter predicts, the predicted future must be acted upon. If the interpretation involves hunting, the dreamer must go in search of game.

The presence of a person to whom a dream is to be told places the task of secondary elaboration in the hands of the dream interpreter. Under these circumstances, the evocative aspects of the dream symbols become less subtle, often depicting genitalia and themes usually associated in industrial society with latent content. Indeed, dream symbols throughout history have probably been multiply determined. Each symbol draws form from unconscious sources, evoking gratification of personal needs as well as from socially defined elements, which serve communicative and community needs. Where a dream interpreter can suggest a new defensive manifest content with an implied counter-cathetic defensive function, latent sounding content can surface in the manifest dream with impunity.

Krakke (1975) has given an example of a dream symbol with such content, in a dream of a Kagwahiv man. The Kagwahiv are Amazon River Indian tribesmen. The man dreamed of a penis. He was told by his dream interpreter that this means good hunting, and that he would kill a tapir.

Crapanzano (1979), in describing a Moroccan tile maker, tells of the persistence of ancient mantic dream psychology in the experience of dreams of a man living in the twentieth century. He states, "Dreams . . . are believed to be true and indicative of the future." Dreams are produced by the soul, which reports on wanderings from the body and tells of things witnessed elsewhere (P 187). Apparently, this includes journeys far into tomorrow.

The strength of the influence of mantic dreams on the primitive mind was as great as any reality. The realistic quality of the oneiric symbol gave rise to the myth that dreamed events are real. At times the tide of history was changed, if only briefly, by the primitive tendency to equate dream events with reality. Chief Joseph, in his recollections of the battle of the Little Big Horn, reported that Sitting Bull had just passed the age where he could be considered to be not only a military leader, but also a person with

special spirit strengths. His dreams were considered to be very important. The night before the battle took place, he dreamed of blood. This was interpreted to mean victory. The Sioux were encouraged by this not to break camp, but to stand and fight. As is well known, in the ensuing battle General Custer and all his men died.

Summary

In the preliterate world, early and primitive man had a mythological tradition that assigned to dream the quality of reality, the ability to predict the future, prestige as a source of power and the ability to carry messages from the extra human world. The communicative aspects of dream symbols were sought out by preliterate peoples to serve a social purpose. The unconscious, irrational roots of dream symbols were ignored. In this psychology and dream tradition can be found the roots of a dream mythology, which with modifications in keeping with changes in social structure, became the basis for the interpretation of manifest dream symbols in the ancient and the prescientific world.

Transition In Dreaming From Primitive To Ancient Man

Two elements occurred that changed the psychology of primitive dreaming into the dream mythology of the ancient world. First, there was the development of writing. This afforded the codification—in books to be used by the seers of dream prediction—of fixed interpretations drawn from broadly accepted traditions of dream symbol meanings. These interpretations persisted, even when the language itself changed, to create the worldview that a dream offered a window into tomorrow and that dream symbols had mantic power.

Second, there was the growth of cities and their priest-kings with the ensuing hypervaluation of one man, who was thought to be priest, god, king, and leader. There was no lessening of the mantic (Predictive) dream as a resource for the common man. However contact with non-human intelligence through dreaming was reserved for the most part as a privilege for the king who was also a god. As a result ancient dream mythology enhanced the power of the king. His dreams and their symbols conveyed to the common man the unique relationship of their king to their gods for whom he served as a messenger. Evocative aspects of dream symbols, with their reflections of individualism, went largely

ignored in ancient dream psychology.

The Dreams Of Ancient Man

Some examples of the dream mythology of the ancient world follow. This material is based on literary dreams and dream books as well as real dreams reported by observers contemporary with the dreamers. This is in contradistinction to the dreams reported for preliterate peoples, which appear above. These were either reconstructions or reports of anthropologists who interviewed people living in primitive social organizations.

Notes

[1](#) See Robbins (1996) and Knowlton (1996).

[2](#) See Sarnoff (1976) evolution of symbols.

The Dream in Mesopotamia

In the earliest literate culture, dating from the fourth millennium B.C. in Mesopotamia, manifest dreams appear to have been regarded as guides to one's fate (mantic dreams), and as messages from the deity (message dreams). Mantic dreams, a carryover from preliterate times, appear to have been available to all. Message dreams, which carried the words of gods, were reserved for the king and for those whose legend of arising to importance required dream messages that loomed large.

Oppenheim (1966), in explaining Mesopotamian dream psychology, has emphasized the limitations involved in trying to develop a universal dream theory for Mesopotamia, or any other culture for which the habits of the multitude are unsung, especially for those multitudes whose dreams have been lost deep in time's cauldron. In ancient Mesopotamia, dreams are recalled in contexts, which demonstrate the way that dreams were used. These appear in literary works, written documents, and the reported dreams of famous men. We can presume that such dream use conformed to the accepted dream psychology of the time. The contexts had to conform to the attitudes and the customs of the people for whom the tales were told. The fact that there are dream books (compendia of dream symbols and their meanings), leads us to conclude that people who lived ordinary lives also dreamed and used dream interpreters. There may be a limitation to this conclusion, since Artemidorus, a famous second century dream interpreter, (White, 1975) reported that only the educated in Ancient Greece dreamed interpretable symbols.

Mesopotamian dream mythology used dream symbols as a means for predicting the future. Dream symbols were broadly integrated into the cultural way of organizing time and the future. The understanding of natural events and prediction leaned heavily on divination. Divination refers to the use of signs to discover truths, such as the location of water, and to predict the future. Dream symbols were included amongst those signs to be used for divination. Frequent among such symbols were those enclosed in duplicate dreams. Throughout the ancient Near East there appeared as a convention in literary dreams the duplicate dream in which elements repeat in two dreams that have occurred on the same night. Such dreams appear clinically in the evocative symbol-laden dreams of contemporary Western man. Freud (1900) pointed out that duplicate dreams represent the same latent content. They

are, in essence, the same dream. For ancient man duplicate dreams predict the same event. In the Gilgamesh legend, Gilgamesh dreams of a star to which he is attracted as to a woman and cannot move. Then he dreams of an axe to which he is attracted as to a woman but cannot move. He tells the dream to his mother who interprets the dream to represent a strong friend who will never forsake him. Gordon (1962) described duplicate dreams in the Old Testament. He noted that “The dreams of Joseph, where the members of his family are first represented by sheaves and then by heavenly bodies; and the dreams of Pharaoh, where the years are symbolized first by cows and then by ears of corn; are familiar examples of duplicate dreams” (P 64).

Message dreams, which conveyed their god’s commands, are frequently reported as having occurred in Mesopotamia. Man’s relationship to the gods of Mesopotamia could be likened to the role of a slave to the absentee owner of an estate. The king served as steward of the estate. The king was, in essence, the ensign of the gods. Dreams were the conduit through which messages were delivered from the owner/gods to the ensign/king. The dreamer of a message dream had to be a male, a king, hero or priest, though such symbolic dreams could be interpreted by ordinary people. Male interpreters were called *ensi*, female—*endique*. (Kilbourne 1979) Such a message dream was the only kind of dream that was considered worthy of notice by the priests.

Typically message dreams appeared in moments of crisis. In the dream the needed deity appeared. He called the noble sleeper. He gave the message in clear terms. The dreamer awoke suddenly as the deity disappeared. For instance, Jacobsen (1946) tells of Gudea, Ensi (king) of Lagash, who had noticed that the ebb and flow of the Tigris River was amiss. To divine the meaning of this, he took himself to the temple and there had a dream¹. “In the dream he saw a gigantic man with a divine crown, with wings like a great bird, and with a body which ended below in a flood wave. To the right and left of this man, lions were lying. The man commanded Gudea to build his temple” (P 189) Day breaks in the dream. People appear and show details of the building. After Gudea awoke, he went to a dream interpreter because some of the details were unclear. The interpreter sent him back to the temple to dream some more. It took several nights, but eventually the god (Ningirsu) appeared to tell in detail “what units the new temple should contain.” (P 191)

Such a dream readily conforms to one of the themes of this chapter as phrased by Oppenheim

(1960), "It is well known how culture conditioned and standardized actual dream experiences can become in certain typical situations" (P 348). As an example, Kilbourne (1979) has pointed out the pervasiveness of a "tall man" in message dreams, which are sought out by people who are seeking an answer to a question or cure for a malady. In such dreams, known as incubation dreams, the dreamer goes to a sanctuary or temple and waits for a dream. When the dream occurs, usually there is a god or a tall man in the dream. Such tall men appear in the incubation dreams of men in present day Morocco (Kilbourne 1979) as well as in the Aesclepeia (medical settings) of ancient Greece.

Acceptance of the myth that dreams and the future are related phenomena provides a starting point for the exploration of the possibility that magic control over natural events, including weather, harvest, and death is possible through the use of dream symbols. Two dreams from the Epic of Gilgamesh (Sandars 1960) illustrate this approach to the dream. Gilgamesh was traveling with his friend, Enkidu, looking for the monster, Humbaba. When they came into Humbaba's territory, they lay on the ground and said, 'O mountain, dwelling of the gods, bring me a favorable dream.' They sleep. Gilgamesh dreamed, and at midnight sleep left him, and he told his dream to his friend. He said, "(There was) terror and confusion; I seized hold of a wild bull in the wilderness. It bellowed and beat up the dust till the whole sky was dark, my arm was seized and my tongue bitten. I fell back on my knee; then someone refreshed me with water from his water-skin."

Enkidu's interpretation of the dream follows. "Dear friend, the god to whom we are traveling is no wild bull. That wild bull which you saw is Shamash, the Protector; in our moment of peril, he will take our hands. The one who gave water from his water-skin, that is your own god who cares for your good name. United with him we will accomplish a work the fame of which will never die." (P 78) Here, dream symbols were used to predict the outcome of battle.

The following dream was experienced by Enkidu and told to Gilgamesh, accompanied by a self-analysis. The two had been successful in the battle, but Enkidu fell ill. He dreamed, "The heavens roared, and earth rumbled back an answer; between them stood I before an awful being, the sombre-faced man-bird; he had directed on me his purpose. His was an eagle's talon. He fell on me and his claws were in my hair, he held me fast and I smothered; then he transformed me so that my arms became wings covered with feathers. He led me to the house from which none who enters ever returns, down the road from

which there is no coming back.” His interpretation: “misery comes at last to the healthy man, the end of life is sorrow.” He called the dream “ominous”. (P 93) This ominous dream was part of a tissue of events. Were one not to alter the tissue to reverse the flow of these events, death could be expected as a matter of course. Such ominous dreams were described by Oppenheim (1966) as part of a process that was understood by ancient Mesopotamians that supported the myth of the power of ritual that could change fate if applied to the dream. Ominous dreams were interpreted to be manifestations of a state of desertion by one’s protective spirits. A man in such an exposed position could expect death. The process could be reversed if the dream were dealt with magically. Should the dream be manipulated for magical change, all the associated aspects of the process, even its outcome—death—could be changed. The magic was affected by speaking the dream to a lump of clay. The clay was then dissolved with appropriate prayers. This resulted in freeing the dreamer from the grip of the dream and the ongoing process of decline of which the dream was a manifestation.

The Dream in Ancient Egypt

Ancient Egyptians thought of their Pharaoh as God. Their mythology limited important message dreams to those dreams used as a means for communicating with other deities. Dreams of everyday life were the subject of much interest. There were media (Stelae and Papyri) devoted to the meaning of dream symbols (Gardner, 1935). It is implied in today’s popular legends that our contemporary dream symbol books originated in ancient Egyptian works.

Belief in an extrahuman source for dreams was the basis for dream interpretation in preliterate man. This belief persisted in ancient Egypt. The hieroglyphic sign for “dream” depicted an inner eye to the mantic world of prophesy. It reflected the ancient Egyptian belief about dream content.

Dreams were selectively told to individuals talented in dream interpretation. These interpreters drew information about the meaning of manifest dream content from interpretive dream books (White, 1976-p. 257). No room was left for addressing unconscious influences. Such an interpretation from the Chester Beatty Papyrus follows: “If a man sees his face in a dream, it is bad; it means a new wife.”

Clark (1960) reported that such dream experiences influenced the lives of people in ancient

Egypt. He stated, "In the ritual for 'opening the mouth,' the chief officiating priest pretended to sleep and dream that his father had called out to him." This sets in motion a ritual, which depicts Horus descending into the underworld to embrace his father, Osiris. The power of the dream was invoked to justify a feature of this religious observance. There is a legend in regard to Tutmos IV, which emphasized the regard with which dreams were held as support for "facts." They could easily be called upon by a leader in support of his legitimacy as ruler. Tutmos dreamed that a sand accumulation of centuries should be removed from between the front paws of the sphinx. When this was done, an inscribed tablet, which attested to his legitimacy, was uncovered.

Dreams of the Ancient Hebrews

The Bible contains dream symbols, which reflect the future and which contain messages from God. Prediction of the future amongst the ancient Hebrews was not dependent on divination, which required sacrifice of animals or astrology. Prediction was served by dreams. Spero (1975) described dreams as ordained vehicles for prophesy as well as channels for God to speak to man. There were special receivers for message dreams. They were called prophets by the Lord, who proclaimed, "Hear now My words: if there be a prophet among you, I the Lord do make Myself known unto him in a vision, I do speak to him in a dream." (Numbers XII-6, Cohen, 1971)

For the biblical Hebrews, visions and dreams provided a view into the future as well as a conduit for messages from God. Joseph's interpretation of the seven lean animals and the seven fat ones that appeared in the Pharaoh's dream as years of feast and seven years of famine to come, and his interpretation for his fellow prisoner's dream of a basket lifted from his head to mean that the dreamer would be beheaded, indicate the sort of interpretation of manifest dream symbols as predictors of the future that was current amongst the ancient Hebrews.

The most famous prophetic dream in the Bible is that of Jacob, who while fleeing the wrath of his brother Esau stopped to sleep. He dreamed this dream (Genesis XXVIII, 11): "behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold angels of God ascending and descending on it and behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord, god of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; (these words redound to this

day) and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all the places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee." In response, Jacob sets a symbolic pile of stones that represents the house God had commanded him to build on earth.

Notice in this dream the appearance of the deity, the clear and strong statement and command, so like the god-sent message dream from the Mesopotamian gods to the Ensi. As with so many ancient peoples, the dream carries weight with readers. This literary dream² is recognized as an acceptable pathway for communication between God and man.

The ancient Hebrews reported their dreams to dream interpreters. A certain amount of talent was recognized in this work. Some people, notably Joseph in Egypt and Daniel in Babylon, were singled out for biblical mention. Spero (1975) indicated that frankly sexual material was often reported to these interpreters. They interpreted such symbols as having a non-sexual connotation. This followed the general trend in the ancient world that supported the interpretation of dream symbols as elements of the world at large and as representations of future events, rather than as reflections of the dreamer's body or irrational inner drives.

The ancient Semitic peoples had aspects to their use of dreaming that were considered foreign to monotheism and forced their exclusion from the officially recognized documents from which history has been derived. There is a clear principle in the history of dreams that applies to Semitic peoples and to the Greeks as well. When polytheism gives way to ethical monotheism, divinities and the rituals, which have been bypassed in the process, persist in the form of saints or are transmuted into weavers of black magic, leaders of demon hordes, rejected progenitors for all evil, and as denizens of erotic dreams.

In reconstructions of ancient customs, we find descriptions of Semitic peoples of old who have both male and female gods (Patai, 1967), some of whom shared the beds of mortals (i.e. Ishtar and Lilith). Patai (1967) tells us that Lilith, the succubus, spent her life seducing men. She bore children from them and afflicts them with sickness. "Spontaneous nocturnal emission is the visible sign of Lilith having

succeeded in arousing the desire of a man in his sleep" (P 196). There is a tale of Rabbi Joseph de la Reina of Spain who used incantations to lure Lilith to his bed in an attempt to slay Satan (P 200). Tales of Lilith go back to Adam. Temple prostitution permitted ritual intercourse with goddesses in ancient Mesopotamia. Harrison, J. (1903) described such couplings amongst the Ancient Greeks. These produced Dionysius, Hercules, and Helen and Clytemnestra. Sacred marriage was part of the Eleusian mysteries.

With the ascendance of monotheism, erotic deities were assigned to lesser status or were excluded altogether. Banished gods are not dead gods. The human need that created them nourishes and sustains their existence. They persisted in hiding, worshiped in secret cults and covens. Or they continue their amorous ways in dark night's dreaming for dreams provide a unique arena for the perpetuation of banished symbols and beliefs. Secret, hidden, capable of producing ejaculation and orgasm associated with sexual fantasies, dreams become testimony to the existence of forbidden sexual urges.

Overt manifestations of erotic contacts between man and divinity lost favor as a result of the advent of monotheism. Metaphor replaced intercourse when a monotheistic deity wished to place his child on earth. It had not been so with Zeus. Dream contacts and night contacts with lovers from the world of the supernatural were organized into traditions in displaced form. Observations from medieval and modern times attest to the vital presence of these traditions, whose strength has carried them living to our time in spite of a lack of support from liturgy or respected institutions and organizations of religious belief.

In a tale based on a folk legend of recent vintage, Singer (1979) tells of Teibele, a woman deserted by her husband, who is denied the companionship of men. At night she is seduced by a man whose claim to be a demon conforms to the folklore tradition by which she has learned to live.

Bilu (1979), in his study of dream interpretation in present day Jewish Mystical Tradition confirms the Hebrew dream psychology described above, which sees the dream "as wish fulfillment, as symbolic in nature, and as a means of expressing sexual impulses" (P 3.) as well as a phenomenon capable of being interpreted. The sexual metaphor is especially vivid in regard to the "... Shekinah female aspect of God" (P 4 See also Patai, 1967, pp.99-121). Bilu tells of a medieval mystical (Kabalistic) tradition with inferred ancient roots in relation to dreams. "Sleep is the state in which the soul seeks to realize its fundamental yearning to be united with the Shekinah in the 'Heavenly World.'" A long way to the goal is

described. The way is strewn with well-known demons from folklore. A veritable world of culturally shared threatening communicative symbols lies in wait for hopeful dream wanderers. Most of the searching souls are captured by demons and evil spirits on their way. Dreams transport these wayfarers on these sometimes-erotic spiritual journeys. "Valid dreams of righteous people are nurtured by angels and carry messages indicating future events; dreams of sinners are false." (P 5)

Some dreams can be interpreted in terms of Gilgul (i.e., transmigration of the soul). This is "reflected in the interpretation of some human figures in dreams as spirits of the dead" (P 7). Here we have an element of a dream psychology that reflects the influence of the dream psychology of primitive man on that of ancient man with remnants that persist to this very day.

Crapanzano (1978) described contemporary people whose dream psychology had ancient roots, when he studied the dream life of an illiterate Moroccan tile maker. In addition to formal current religious beliefs, he shared with a multitude of his peers a sense of demonic interference attached to manifest dream elements in situations in which the students of psychoanalytic symbols would interpret unconscious forces. Within this matrix, dreams with their capacity to utilize communicative symbols and their realistic quality, become a meeting place for man and demon or saint. The specific demon who possessed this person and stirred sexuality is called "A'isha Qandisha . . ." (P 27). Saints and demons (jinnizza) in Morocco manifest themselves in dreams, visions and other states of consciousness. (P 97) Commonly, people go to the tombs of saints for a dream to direct their lives. They must follow the orders of the saint who appears in the dream. The dream symbols are direct and non-cryptic, requiring little interpretation. Specific orders are given. The symbols are primarily communicative, therefore. As in the incubation dreams of the Greeks, people may await dreams for years. The reality quality of the dream demon is so great that the sexual life of the dreamer can be limited to the dream, and the person considered to be married to the demon with strong sanctions from her should he seek a wife from the mortal fold. The tile maker "Tuhami was married to a capricious she-demon, a camel-footed jinnizza, a spirit who kept a firm control on his amorous life. (She) was a jealous lover." (P 4)

I am postulating on the basis of persisting traditional elements, that among early Semitic peoples, dreams served as elements in a broad tradition of sexual communication between man and gods. This tradition can be traced to Mesopotamian sources. With the advent of monotheism, forbidden traditional

elements became communicative symbols, which were drawn upon to produce erotic dreams. Through these dreams, congress with the supernatural could continue unhindered. Folk traditions, though frowned upon by the “powers that were”, took support from these dream events.

Dreams in Ancient Greece

In Greece the scope of dream interpretation expanded. Additional types of manifest dream symbols (i.e., incubation or healing dreams) were given greater emphasis as culture elements. Dream symbols were categorized into groups according to type and became the objects of deep reflection. Joseph’s admonition about dream interpretation to the effect that, “Do not interpretations belong to God?” (Genesis XL) was replaced with conscious reflection on the nature of dreams and the process of dreaming. A leader in this area was the second century dream interpreter, Artemidorus (see White, 1975). His work on the subject is called “The Oneirocritica.” This translates as “The Interpretation of Dreams.” Freud took the title of his dream book from this reference. Artemidorus traveled the known world. He collected thousands of dreams. He felt that dream symbols had meanings that could be learned through careful studies of successfully interpreted dreams. Most of his work focused on mantic or predictive dreams. He was a leader in the categorization of manifest dream symbols. His two main categories of dreams were the oneiros and the enhypnia.

Oneiros, he defined as “a movement or condition of the mind that takes many shapes and signifies good or bad things that will occur in the future” (P 15). Oneiros were subdivided, in turn, into theorematic dreams, which predict the future exactly and allegorical dreams, which “signify one thing by means of another.” (P 15-200 A.D.).

Enhypnia refers to a dream, which predicts nothing. One of its possible motivators is “an irrational desire” (P 184) of the dreamer. These dreams were disregarded by the Greek dream interpreters as of no worth since they do not predict the future. Freud, who refers to Artemidorus in his own “Interpretation of Dreams”, held such dreams to have greater meaning.

Artemidorus felt that mantic dreams were the province only of the educated. “The masses”, said he, “do not have the same dreams as those who know how to interpret dreams” (P 185). The latter see their

wishes expressed in symbolic dream forms that reflected future events without riddles" (P 185). He and his predecessors defined which symbols and dreams predicted the future and which did not. He reported such interpretations as; "If a sick man dreams that he is fighting, it means that he will go mad." (P 161) He filled five books with such interpretations.

The characters who appeared in dreams followed certain rules. Thus (White, P 147), "Only certain gods were supposed to impart knowledge through dreams." Only Aesculapius, Serapis and Minerva could prescribe a cure for bodily ills. These "messages" were often cryptic. A special group of dream interpreting priests were developed to interpret them.

A cryptic character was common to the dreams reported by the Greeks. Dreams reported from earlier cultures could be cryptic, as in the case of Jacob's ladder dream or the dreams Joseph interpreted for the Pharaoh. However, god-sent dreams in earlier cultures for the most part, tended to have greater clarity of meaning. This was especially so where the dreamer was a king, priest or leader. Kings, priests and leaders were usually the ones who had god-sent dreams. The myths of the culture limited such dreams to message dreams. These god-sent dreams had a clarity of meaning to their manifest content that made it possible for them to be understood by ordinary mortals with little interpretation. They served to support the policy of the king. It is not possible to determine the extent to which these dreams were political projections of the king's own wishes into the words of the god in the dream. One cannot rule out the possibility that at times there appeared consciously fabricated dreams which gave the aura of divine approval to the personal decision of a powerful, albeit mortal, king.

There now follows an example of ancient Greek dream interpretation reported as part of a legend. Illustrated are culturally determined motives for dream presentation and interpretation shaped by concepts of that which was a dream in ancient Greece.

The quote is from the "Voyage of the Argo." of Apollonius of Rhodes—250 B.C.

"Euphemius then remembered that he had had a dream in the night, and in deference to Hermes, god of dreams, he took pains to recall it. He had dreamt that he was holding to his breast the lump of earth which the (son of Poseidon) had given him and was suckling it with streams of white milk. The clod, small as it was, turned into a woman of virginal appearance; and in an access of passion he lay with

her. When the deed was done he felt remorse—she had been a virgin and he had suckled her himself. But she consoled him, saying in a gentle voice: 'My friend, I am of Triton's stock and the nurse of your children. I am no mortal maid, but a daughter of Triton and Lybia. Give me a house with Nereus' daughters in the sea near Anaphe, and I will reappear in the light of day in time to welcome your descendants.'

Euphemius, after committing his dream to memory, told it to his leader Jason, whose interpretation was that Euphemius had been blessed by a god and would be a founder of a dynasty if he would only cast a clod of earth into the nearby sea. "When you have thrown this clod of earth into the sea, the gods will make an island of it, and there your children's children are to live." Jason based this interpretation on an oracle of Apollo that he recalled.

From this literary dream we can postulate a dream psychology of the Ancient Greeks with which this dream and its handling is likely to have been wholly compatible. Dreams are important. In deference to Hermes, dreams are to be remembered. Dreams consist of symbols with universal meanings that can be found in books. They are told to a dream interpreter who translates somewhat undisguised manifest content into a well-defended, secondary elaboration which is dominated, not by the associations of the dreamer, but by socially influenced knowledge of the dream interpreter such as an oracle of Apollo.

How important were dreams and their interpretation thought to be? Apparently, they were very important. Witness the words of Achilles in conference with his peers in the Iliad of Homer. "But could we not consult a prophet or priest, or even some interpreter of dreams—for dreams, too, are sent by Zeus—and find out from him why Phoebus Apollo is so angry with us." (P 24 in Rieu 1950).

The ancient Greeks differentiated between god-sent dreams and nightmares, which were thought to be sent by Ephialtes, the nightmare demon. "Hepiales is a disease caused by a Ker" (a flying demon, the nightmare bacillus described by Harrison on P 167 1903). Such demon sent dreams were painful to experience and direct in content.

God-sent dreams amongst the ancient Greeks typically contained more cryptic symbols set into allegorical contexts than were to be found in the message dreams of their predecessors. There is a trend in the history of dream symbols. The more recent is the culture, the more masked are the symbols. The

dreamers of such dreams ceased to be kings alone and had added to their numbers any serious mantic dreamer (White, p.222). Paradoxically, the unconscious content of secular dreams became more explicit among the Greeks. A contemporary, Artemidorus, called attention to the frequent appearance of undisguised Oedipal dreams amongst the ancient Greeks. (White, 1966-p. 81, 237) White (1966) suggests that dream interpreters made this possible. He noted that "the forbidden impulse was not disguised in the dream images themselves; this disguise was subsequently and necessarily accomplished through an interpretation, which attached an innocent symbolic meaning to it" (P 81). Thus, we may conclude that the conceptual myth that dreams can be interpreted permits greater freedom in symbol selection in personal, non-mythologized dreaming. This occurs when interpretation provides the mask and secondary elaboration becomes the task, not of the dreamer, but the dream interpreter. As a parallel to this, we might imply that the more a society is involved with dream interpretation, the more will latent content of personal dreams become overt.

From this *mélange* of symbolic forms that have a place in social contexts, some order can be derived. In cultures in which there are dream interpreters who actively interpret dreams according to a tradition, dream symbols tend to be either close to latent content or molded by socially determined patterns. Where the tradition of manifest content dream interpretation ceases, dream forms become displaced, cryptic, and highly personalized evocations of socially prohibited drives and infantile wishes.

Artemidorus' transcendent view of dream symbols did not stand unchallenged. Humanism, which had its beginnings in ancient Greece, devalued phenomena that drew sustenance from an extrahuman world. The dream as a message from the extracorporeal world was soon to lose ground. The decline of dream interpretation for Western civilization was in sight by the second century A.D. In its ebbing days, dream interpretation in the West experienced a mighty last gasp that involved most of the classical world.

A health related mythology based on dream interpretation took hold and pervaded the Mediterranean basin (Meier, 1966). The idea that dreams could be used for instruction in the ways of cure for illness (see p.315) became the basis for the Cults of Esklepios and of Poseidon. An ill person could seek help for his ills at one of the 420 health centers or Aeskeliapiads spread throughout the ancient world. Each was an extensive temple grouping set in a beautiful landscape. Epidaurus in the

Peloponnesus of Greece was an example. The ill, the deformed and the crippled came for stays of a few days to a few years. In seeking health, one underwent purification rites. These included cleansing ablutions in lustral baths during which catharsis of one's sins and the sins of one's fathers were flushed away. This was followed by a sacrifice offered to the local deity. The patient then went to a cubicle, called an "abaton" to sleep and to dream. This was called incubation. If the dream contained the god Asklepios, one awakened cured or armed with instructions (sometimes cryptic and needing interpretation from the priests) for cure. In the manifest dreams so experienced (P 315), Asklepios appeared "as the bearded man of his cult image"—or as a boy—or accompanied by "his virgin wife or his daughter, Hygeia, and sometimes by yet another daughter, Panacea." At times he came as a dog or snake and touched the stricken part of the patient (P 315).

Harrison (1903), in her broad overview of ancient Greek religion, stated that Asklepios was only the god around which the concept of healing gods was finally organized (P 343). According to her view of Greek mythic dream psychology, healing power was in nowise peculiar to him. Indeed before him the healing oracular power of the dream was the proper domain of earth-born heroes. The prescribed ritual of sleep could be performed at the grave of any hero, while no one slept in the sanctuaries and precincts of Zeus or of Apollo (P 343) (though the sanctuary of Poseidon in Tinos served this purpose.) "When men came to the beautiful little sanctuary of Armphiarnos at Oropus, they purified themselves, sacrificed a ram, and spreading the skin under them, they went to sleep awaiting a revelation in a dream." (P 343)

The use of incubation dreams persists today, though the Olympian Greeks no longer prevail. On each August 15th in our time, on the timeless island of Tinos in the Aegean Sea, there gather the sick and the lame. At first, the casual visitor is bewildered by the crowds which include legless men clawing their way up a holy road to the hilltop church of St. Panagia to pray for limbs. Once inside the church, the visitor is struck by the myriad families whose blankets are spread within the cloistered precinct of the church. They have come to sleep the night in hopes of a curative dream. Harrison (1903) tells us-

"Today, year by year, on the festival of St. Panagia, a throng of sick from the islands round about make their pilgrimage to Tinos, and the sick sleep in the church and in the precinct and are healed" (P 45). The following day, those seeking blessing kneel in the center of the holy road (Via Sacra). A procession passes, carrying a sacred icon over their heads. The goal of this ritual is cure.

From all the possible dream symbols which ancient man is capable of producing, and from all the many symbolic forms that appear, individual societies create and then select the ones they need in support of their cultures. Shared evocative symbols are the ore from which communicative symbols are refined. Dream books, which carry dream traditions from generation to generation influence dream symbols at the point of selection as well as through dream interpretation. (See also Kilbourne 1979)

Dreams In Western Culture

The Dreams of Christendom

With the dawn of Western Culture, Greek mantic tradition gave ground to rationalism, undermining dream interpretation to a modest degree. The fatal blow to dream interpretation that accompanied Western Culture came from a different direction. Newly developing cultural forces had arisen that pushed dream interpretation aside as a conduit for contact with God and the future. One force that undermined such interpretation of cryptic dream symbols was the newly developed tradition of Christian mysticism which insisted that, as Wilder (1970) has pointed out, "Though God Himself is hidden, He does not speak ambiguously" (P 70) "He wills to be understood." Indeed when dreams appear in the New Testament, they are clear in meaning, and "There is no dream interpretation in the New Testament" (P 70). "No New Testament witness thought of basing the central message, the gospel, on dreams" (P 70) or the interpretation of cryptic dream symbols. This change in the intellectual climate seems to be reflected in Acts 002:017, in its declaration that "Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."

Three dreams of clear meaning, which motivated action, occurred early in the history of Christianity, before the fifth century A.D. They presaged the twilight of polytheism and of the power of the gods of Greece. They stand out in Christian tradition. St. Joseph's acceptance of a pregnant Mary resulted from a dream in which an angel explained the source of Mary's pregnancy (Mathew 1:18-25) St. Paul crossed the Bosphorus when he dreamed that a Macedonian man had bid him "Come over to Macedonia and help us" and Constantine converted to Christianity and brought the Roman empire with him in response to a clear message from an angel in a dream.

A force antithetical to dream interpretation in search of transcendence has been the monotheism of the Judeo-Christian tradition, which implies denial of oracular power and the right to exist for other deities. This force became especially immanent during the fifth century A.D. As described above, the Old Testament contains many interpretations of cryptic dreams. New Testament content in translation reflects fifth century monotheistic suppression of other religions accompanied by concomitant suppression of their necromantic rituals involving dreams.³ During the first five centuries A.D. both Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox worshipers had welcomed dreams as a means of encountering God. During the fifth century theologians of the Roman church rejected such dreaming. A leader in this movement was St. Jerome (342-420 AD) whose “Great Mistranslation” (Savary 1984 P 51) led the way. In the preparation of a Latin translation of the Bible from Greek and Hebrew sources he mistranslated a Hebrew word in such a way that condemnation of transcendence in dreams was introduced into the Holy Scriptures. The Hebrew word for witchcraft or soothsaying, *anan*, which is associated with augury, paganism, superstition, and sorcery, appears ten times in the Bible. In doing the translation, Jerome used two meanings for *anan*. He used “witchcraft” primarily. However in two contexts, both of which condemned witchcraft, “*anan*” was translated as “observing dreams.” (Vulgate—Leviticus 19:26 and Deuteronomy 18:10) Henceforth theologians who were familiar with the Vulgate (Jerome’s translation of the bible) found within its teachings, a prohibition meant to keep people from turning to their dreams for hope, religious insight, and contact with a transcendent God. The mistranslation probably was part of a condemnation of a then current heresy that included dream interpretation in its codes of necromancy. With the power of dreams diminished, thenceforth vision and mystic revelation became the primary conduits for personal contact with the Deity. As a result, in the burgeoning western Christian world, the value of the manifest dream as a means of contact with the future and the deity was de-emphasized. Mantic dreams were reduced to the despised level of demonology, animal sacrifice and augury. Waking visions and revelations took center stage in mysticism. The low repute of manifest dreams as revelation is reflected in Hermes Trismegisthus (2nd century) comments that some “fancy visions in their dreams” (See Chambers (1882.)

Aristotle’s demurrer in relation to mantic dreams, which relegated them to the realm of superstition and their successful predictions to the zone of “coincidence”, and St. Jerome’s mistranslation did not extinguish the folk belief that dreams somehow have valid religious significance, predict the future or,

alert one to chances in the world of “the about to be”. In later centuries isolated examples persist in tales of Christian Hagiology, (legends of saints) containing mantic dream elements. For instance, Durell (1977) tells us that it was believed that St. Rosalie of Palermo was translated by angels directly to heaven. In reality, she had retired to a hermit’s cave on Monte Pellegrino, there to pass a long life of anonymity, and finally there to die without letting anyone know what she had done. This was in 1159. A long silence fell. She was forgotten; all trace of her was lost. Then in 1624 while the town was in the dread grip of the plague, a holy man was troubled by a dream of her. He dreamed her history, and quite clearly saw in a vision that her remains lay buried in a mountain cave—he could indicate the exact spot. He suggested to the proper authorities that if these relics, which had in the interval acquired great magical power of healing, were reverently gathered and carried in triumphal procession round the walls of the city, “the plague would abate” (P 193).

Brown (1975) reports, “A twelfth century knight, crippled by a stroke, first thought that it was just his bad luck. Then he dreamt that he was slapped in the face by the Virgin and reminded that he had poached on the fishing rights of the local monastery” (P 147).

These reports present undoubted evidence of persistence of religious revelation through dreaming in medieval Christendom. However, these should be considered to be spontaneous responses, not mainstream events. They were aberrations or intrusions from past practices or had sources in parallel cultural revelation, such as dream interpretation and mantic dreams, which have persisted in Islam and in Kabalistic mysticism. (See also Lecerf, 1966; Corbin, 1965; and Grunebaum, 1965.).

Relegation of mantic dreams to the precincts of demonology did not put an end to them. Williams (1969) in his footnotes to these lines in Pope’s “The Rape of the Lock” (Canto I, Lines 21-23)

“Her Guardian—Sylph—prolong’d the balmy Rest.
Twas he that summon’d to her silent Bed
The Morning-Dream that hovered oer her Head.”

explains that (in the time of Pope, 1711)

“morning dreams were considered to be especially portentous.” (P 80 N22)

Dream Symbols and Demonology

Demonology persists in the western world as folklore often supported by the testimony of dreams. The nightmare, especially, has served as the basis for the use of manifest dream content to express and support the concept of demons. Murray (1921) speaks of “the undoubted fact that in many cases the witch confused dreams with reality and believed that she had visited the Sabbath”. (P 15)

Western Theories of Dreaming

Until Freud, no other explanation than transcendent forces were applied to dreams. In “Dreams and the Occult,” he propounded the current Western scientific view that there is no validity to the use of dream symbols for mantic purposes. There were for Freud no premonitory dreams. In his (1900) “Interpretation of Dreams,” he sought the origin of dream contents in irrational drive dominated latent content derived from the system unconscious. Of the symbolic forms he recognized in dreams, he singled out the psychoanalytic symbol as the key to the unconscious forces that dominate content in dreaming. This opened the door to neurophysiological exploration of the timing and shaping of dream forms. (See this book Volume 1, Section C, Chapter 9. Jung (1941), on the other hand, holds forth a connection between dream symbols and the tissue of the infinite, as “ . . . autochthonous revivals independent of all tradition . . .”. (P 71) Alongside the shaping influence of science on theories of the dream today there remain atavistic remnants of ancient myths about dreams.

MYSTIC SYMBOLS AND PSYCHOANALYTIC ONEIRIC SYMBOLS

Psychoanalytic symbols and transcendent symbols have subgroups, which occur under conditions of sensory isolation. This includes dreaming. These subgroups are the Psychoanalytic oneiric symbols and the transcendent symbols of the mystic way, (see Underhill 1910). In both of these symbolic forms there is an exclusion of sensory input that frees one’s attention so that one can experience the symbolic forms of one’s deepest yearnings and urges divorced from external influences.

The severe sensory deprivation of sleep makes the oneiric psychoanalytic symbols of dreaming possible. This can be the spontaneous experience of every sleeper. Those initiated into the world of religious sensibility know of a way to exclude external sensations, as a means of mobilizing transcendent symbols for communication that establishes a personal (I-Thou) relationship with one’s deity. Such

symbolization is the product of active steps aimed at achieving states of sensory deprivation. Symbols are generated under this condition as the result of the human tendency to fill thought vacuums, left by the absence of external stimulation with mental content derived from memory and longings, inner needs and yearnings.

The goal of mystics, in seeking to achieve conscious states of sensory exclusion, was explained by St. Thomas Aquinas (1258-64). He noted that "The higher our mind is raised to the contemplation of spiritual things, the more it is abstracted from sensible things . . . the mind that sees the divine substance must be totally divorced from the bodily senses . . ." (P 361) The active search for the mystic experience begins with isolation, which leads to a state of self-concentration. Isolation encourages the appearance of a period of voices and visions. A strong level of symbol cognition is present in this stage. Recognized culture elements are called upon to represent latent content. This supports the production of its frank symbolic forms, such as voices asking that churches be built or directions to the location of the remains of saints. This symbolizing strength differentiates the stage of voices and visions from the later final unitary stage. Expectations of communications to follow arising from the experiences of voices and visions are not immediately fulfilled. A reaction of disappointment follows, which creates a time of hopelessness sometimes called "the dark night of the soul" Eventually a state of unity with one's god is experienced. ". . . The person becomes directly . . . aware of God's loving, purifying, enlightening, and unifying presence." (Meisner 1992 P 279) The latter state of infused contemplation is accompanied by affects of a strength that generates awe. The state is accompanied by sensations of light, fire, odors, and ecstasy. These are the latent affects, which had generated displacements to structured manifest symbolic forms (voices and visions), when they impinged on cognitive states with strong symbolizing functions. One can perceive related affects peep through into consciousness as a result of the inadequate displacements that give rise to affect porous psychoanalytic symbols. The final stage of unity with god interposes little evidence of the symbolizing process in bringing latent content to consciousness. This results from the generation of protosymbolic unprocessed awe level affects, such as bright light, which require intensive secondary elaboration to convey communication of meaning. Meissner (1992) described such a bright light experience of St. Ignatius Loyola, which occurred when he had been left alone in a dark room. Nieces who entered the room in response to his loud voice ". . . found the room illuminated by a bright light." (P 291)

An alcoholic patient in his late thirties reported that about ten years before he had had an episode of extreme rage when his wife interrupted his attempt to steal bottled baby food from the family pantry. He had intended to sell it in order to obtain money to buy whiskey. Just at the moment that he raised his hand to strike down his wife, he reported that the room filled with bright white light. After this, he began a period of sobriety, religious conversion and Sunday school teaching, which lasted for years. The white light experience is described often in reports of the mystic way.

There are alternate ways to activate visions and hallucinations. Some examples follow. Many symbols generated during grandiose and psychotic states are influenced by culturally derived content, which supports self-interpreted transcendental meanings. A woman was admitted to a mental hospital proclaiming that she was St. Mary; She was placed in restraints in a room shared with another woman, who had also declared that she was the Virgin. The second woman resolved the issue by declaring herself to be St. Ann. The first woman expressed her bewilderment at this solution in a loud question, "Is she my mother?"

States of incidental personal isolation such as solo sailing over long distances can generate interpretable hallucinatory imagery. Passively experienced mystic symbols such as the visions of St. Bernardette and St. Francis of Assisi occur to the devout and the lonely. Authorities given the task of evaluating the miraculous nature of mystic visions and visionaries themselves are careful to take these into account so as to accept true visions and saintly states of ecstasy and rule out false, irrelevant and psychotic experiences.⁴

Intoxicants can produce alterations of cognition, which are associated with hallucinations such as the use of laudanum by Coleridge, which produced his poem "Kublai Khan". Practitioners of the Native American religion use toxic mushrooms, which alter cognition and produce pietetic trances. The effectiveness of alcohol in releasing deeply personal content to consciousness was early on described by Erastosthenes. (see Caratelli's (1996) thoughts on this in the poem that follows:

"Wine is as powerful as fire, when it overtakes man: it upsets him as Boreas and Notus do the Libyan sea, revealing what is hidden in the depths, and ravaging the whole of his mind." (P 514)⁵

There are thus waking states which are capable of evoking symbols similar to the symbols of

dreams.

Dream Symbols Used as Transcendent Symbols

Dream symbols, are at times interpreted by those initiated into a given system of belief to be transcendent symbols. They are recognized to be messages from their gods or from streams of consciousness, which exist beyond the physical boundaries of human creative cognition. Most of the dreams described in this chapter were interpreted by the dreamers and their dream interpreters as god guided advice or as imbued with mantic significance, which is capable of supplying keys to future events. Even in antiquity, such dream prophecies were not accepted without challenge. Prescriptions dictated during Greek incubation dreams were only considered to be valid if given by one of three gods. In the Odyssey, dreams are classified as false, "passing through the Gate of Ivory" or true, "passing the Gate of Horn"

Other influences on visions are: migraine auras as inferred by modern writers to be the origin of the visual content of the visions of St. Hildegard of Bingen, cultural sanction, such as the multiple experiences of visions of the Madonna seen in a group of schoolgirls from Staten Island, following vivid presentations in the classroom, and states of intense artistic concentration as described in the chapter on Thomas Cole (below).

Of all the interpretations of the symbols of mankind, perceptions of transcendent symbols are the most plentiful. This family of symbols appeared in protean abundance at the dawn of reflective awareness in man as mythic symbols, mantic dream symbols, and the symbols of mysticism and revelation. Psychoanalytic dream symbols have been recognized by an informed few for only 100 years.

The Dream Symbols Of Western Industrial Man

A limited armamentarium of symbolic dream forms characterizes modern Western industrial man. Their dream forms, which are free of mythic influence, have dominated dreams for a relatively brief few hundred years. The symbols of modern man have for the most part been limited to frank wish fulfillment, expressions of irrational inner wishes and mastering trauma. They are personal and evocative and their manifest contents are made up of simple and psychoanalytic symbols. They draw on elements of

everyday life for their form.

Summary

There is a concordance between the nature and use of dream symbols and the local culture myth that explains that which a dream is. This occurs because the form and use of dream symbols can be adjusted to the cultural mythic interpretation of that which a dream is thought to be. This can create a distortion in the body politic, for a distinct hinge develops at the interface between the beliefs of the old order and of the new. This can be seen clearly in the transition between the dream symbols of ancient times and the dream symbols of medieval Christianity. In ancient times, dream symbols were believed to serve the gods and to bear portents of the future. As a result of the reassignment of dreams from a role as an augury for predicting the future to the role of a device for demonological from necromancy, dream symbols became tools of the devil. Like Lucifer they fell from grace. Their use diminished as revelation through visions replaced dreams in their role as a conduit between the extra-human world of the Almighty and man. In the world of legends that created medieval Christianity, cryptic dream symbols as deistic messages were de-emphasized and converted to demon errands.

New ways of viewing dreams accompany changes in culture. Old ways are not forgotten. Once a way of using dreams as a culture element, in the many expressions described in this chapter, is established, it tends weakly to persist or if lost sight of, to reappear far removed from its origin, yet still intruding upon the more sophisticated successor thought processes of the incumbent culture. This is a thought one should keep in mind while conducting analyses of the dreams of sophisticated patients. Potential for magic persists in the labyrinths traversed by usurped drive derivatives.

On limitations in Technique in Studying Dream Symbols from the Past

In exploring dream experiences reported as having occurred in the past, we must depend on third-party reports. These provide us with two types of dreams, those reported as the true experiences of individuals and those, which are essentially the creative works of poets. In the case of the former, the dreams are relevant without commentary. In the case of the latter, the dreams need some degree of processing before being acceptable for our use. Without question, their form and content conform to what

must have been the accepted theory of dreams for their time. As Devereux (1978) has said, "literary dreams are meant to be consciously understandable for theatre-goers more or less familiar with traditional systems of dream interpretation" (P 28). There is no modern mythology of dreaming to shape dreams or intrude on their form save the new dream mythologies of science. An exception is the patient in analysis who creates tertiary elaborations of dreams that take into account the interests and interpretations of his analyst. For instance Oedipal themes are frequent in the presented dreams of patients in Freudian analysis and there is a plethora of Greco-Roman classical mythological themes in the presented dreams of patients in Jungian analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

The typical cryptic dream symbols which we have come to expect as the only possible symbols to occur in dreams are only a few of the symbolic forms of the many that are possible. Our tendency to see them as unique is a product of ethnocentrism. Where magic and myth dominate in the lives of men, communicative symbolic forms are inserted in dreams, which stretch the dream form to reflect the society. Where science dominates, dreams are devalued and when no longer harnessed to the will of the world, they become playgrounds for expression of unconscious content and forces.

In spite of the advances of science in dealing with manifest content, beliefs in myth and magic live on. Manifest dreams are still scanned by a dwindling few in search of superficial meaning or for predicting the future. Frequently seen, even today, are dream books to be used for "playing the numbers". One should keep in mind in analyzing in a cross-cultural context, possible antique determinants of manifest content from other than the system unconscious.

For western scientific man, all that is left of man's dream heritage is an awareness that dreams once had a power in the lives of men greater than we dream of for them now. The power lives on in metaphor. When the Man of La Mancha sang of "the impossible dream" or Martin Luther King said, "I had a dream." they were calling forth evocations of an ancient myth that taught man that he can find a guide to the future in dreams. This skill still gains recognition through the persistent belief that a dream is not a wish, but is a mirror set into the night to catch reflections of a burnished blush that might well be tomorrow's dawn.

Notes

1 For additional comment on this dream, see Unit I Chapter 13.

2 Called literary, for it had been written down we know. Whether such a dream took place, we only have the testimony of the scribe. The power of such a dream in a sacred book attests to a belief in the mystic power of the dream.

3 See Savary (1984). chapter 4 pp 50-52.

4 See Van Biema (1996). P 72, and Underhill (1910). p 281.

5 The psychobiology of these regression activated symbolic forms is discussed in Vol. 1 Chapter 10.