Dreams are a Many Splendored Thing II: Challenging or Supportive/Extraverted or Introverted

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In the first essay, I noted that our dreams are often recurrent. This is in part because we don't seem to have learned an important transaction lesson the first time around. We might instead (or in addition) not have learned this important lesson because it is transformational in nature. And transformative learning is difficult. We are easily overwhelmed by the strong challenge of fundamental, transformative self-insight and self-change.

Most importantly, this change might not be attended by equally strong support (Sanford, 1980). It is to dreams that specifically provide transformative challenges that I turn, followed by dreams that provide support and safe venues for meeting these challenges constructively and creatively. I then turn to the differences between dreams that ultimately look outward (extraversion) and those that primarily look inward (introversion).

Dream Themes II: Challenging vs. Supportive

While dreams can sometimes be benign and affectively neutral (especially early night dreams), they are more often filled with images and narratives that are colorful, imaginative, and bizarre. They get our nighttime attention. Dreams can also be comforting, protective and fulfilling of our most important desires (even those that are "forbidden"). Many of our most memorable dreams, from which we can learn and address our long-term pressing issues (French and Fromm's "focal conflicts") (French and Fromm, 1964) arrive at night with a balance between challenge and support. As Nevitt Sanford (1980) has observed, it is at these moments of balance that we are most likely to engage in significant learning when we are awake. Perhaps, this is also the case when we are asleep and producing dreams.

If dreams do offer this balance, then we might find that the experiences of Flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), we find when rock-climbing, dancing, playing chess, or working on a crossword puzzle, are also to be found in our "many splendored" dreams. I propose that there may be such a thing as Dream Flow. It occurs when challenge and support partner in a dream. To make sense of this potential partnership, I consider both the dynamics operating when a dream is challenging, and when it is supportive.

Challenging Dreams

Dreams play a critical role in helping us address many life challenges. In particular, dreams enable us to work with the traumas that have occurred in our life, and that continue to "haunt" us—with the "ghosts" of anxiety, troubling flashbacks, and nightmares appearing often and with great emotional power.

Many theories have been offered to explain the sustained appearance ("hauntings") of trauma. These theories range from the simple fact that something has caused us significant physical and psychological damage that is not easily healed to complex biological theories regarding the interactions of multiple neural systems (primarily the amygdala, hippocampus and prefrontal cortex) and psychological theories (such as the "Traumagenic Dynamics Model" that focuses on the traumatic experience itself as it distorts a person's cognitive and emotional sense of self and the world, leading to changes in behavior, thoughts, and feelings that are directly related to the traumatic event.

One particular theory resides somewhere between the simple and complex. Trauma is assumed to be precipitated by an uncompleted action (Levine and Frederick, 2009). We feel helpless and powerless when unable to successfully engage in actions that will thwart the threatening event. As a child, we are too small and weak to fend off the attacker. As adults, we are too small and weak in the bureaucracy of our organization to fend off the abuse of our boss. We use the dream to complete the act.

Initially, we are faced with a traumatizing experience that seems to spread by relating to previous traumatizing experiences):

> . . . of danger or jeopardy, by reason of which the dreamer feels helpless and especially vulnerable in the face of powerful forces that threaten to destroy him. . . [T]his quality of helplessness relates to the sense of powerlessness of his existence– and the possibility that he, like the object around him, might disappear or be destroyed—is incorporated into his earlier dreams and finds expression in nightmares. [Mack, 1992, p. 370]

It is at this point that the dreamer brings all of their weapons to confront the spreading, existential threat of non-existence. The dreamer presents a unified front (*Integration*), ensuring the *Integrity* of their ego system. This achievement of integrity might occur by the dreamer assembling a phalanx of all their friends and relatives to fend off the evil force. The dreamer's long-deceased parents might even join in the fray. The dreamer could even bring in a powerful, archetypal figure (such as a warrior queen or a powerful tornado) to assist them in confronting the equally archetypal evil force (a witch or large, looming wave).

To gain further appreciation for this dream function, I will turn to a brief essay offered by Marie Bonaparte (1993), a noted psychoanalyst. Bonaparte offers a case study of a ranger called Wolhuter, who worked in the Kruger National Park of Africa. Wolhuter was seriously wounded by a lion in this park and was only saved after climbing up a tree. He later had several dreams in

which he is once again attacked by lion. In each case, he awakens “to find that it is only a dream, for which I am terribly thankful.” (Bonaparte, 1993, p. 70).

Bonaparte (Bonaparte, 1993, pp. 10- 12) comments on Wolhuter’s dreams:

> So, Wolhuter, the triumphant lion killer, celebrated throughout South Africa for his pluck in one of the most dangerous situations to which a hunter could find himself, appears in his dream life without force against the same mighty wild beast of prey. . . On walking from his dreams he is enormously relieved. . . We may assume that in his own capacities, the recurrent dream came to reassure him . . . “See,” it says, “it is only a dream that you missed the lion! In reality you killed it, “ a feeling of satisfaction. . . Excepting catastrophes that permit no choice, one may argue that the ability to be active, under circumstances that paralyzed others with fear, points to a particularly strong and relatively healthy personality which is less overwhelmed by painful realities, and has less need to adopt neurotic compromises than do most others.

This dream would seem to contradict the role of successfully meeting the challenge associated with a traumatic event (in this case, the attack of a lion). Yet, Marie Bonaparte views Walhuter’s dreams as quite adaptive. Perhaps there are actually three ways in which our dreams can be engaged to address a trauma. First, as Bonaparte suggested, a dream can fail to successfully address a trauma but can serve as a source of relief when we wake up. I find that this often occurs in my dreams about the extensive traveling I did for many years. While I never confronted a beast of prey, I have found myself stranded in some strange land without a place to spend the night. This scenario now often plays out in my dreams. Like Walhuter, I am relieved when I wake up and find that I am safely at home and not “on the road.” I am thankful that I am now retired and primarily “house-bound”!

Second, as Bonaparte also suggested, we can fail to successfully address the trauma in our dream, but upon waking us realize that we have actually (in the real world) been successful and can appreciate and even celebrate our success. For me, this second type of “success” is often manifest in dreams I have about challenging conditions associated with my teaching in Asian countries. While I loved working with the mature students from Taiwan, Thailand, and China, I did find that sometimes there were major challenges associated with relying on a translator, who doesn’t arrive on time, or fighting against the jetlag associated with the first couple of days teaching halfway around the world from my home in Maine.

I often have dreams in which I must suddenly speak Mandarin because my translator has deserted me, or in which I fall asleep in the middle of my lecture. Sometimes, I am on an airplane that never lands, and I am never allowed to sleep. It is absolutely hell! Like Walhuter, I wake up and realize that I have often been successful in handling the challenges of translation

and jet lag. I have relied on one of my students to provide translation if the translator isn't present. And I have found ways to take naps in the early afternoon (replicating the nap-taking habits of my Asian students) or have found ways in which to avoid or rapidly recover from jet lag. My 2,000 miles of air travel have served me well, as have the many weeks of teaching throughout the world. I awake from my dreams, feeling pleased with my past international experiences. However, once again, I am grateful that I am now retired and no longer have to climb a tree to escape my traumatizing lions.

Third, we can successfully confront the traumatic challenge in our dream. When we wake up, there might not be any conscious recognition of this success; however, we might hold some vague sense that we are "OK" and look forward to the coming day. Alternatively, we might recall the dream and can "make note" of the strategy used to address the traumatic challenge for potential use at a future time.

I have had dreams associated with childhood traumas, such as being a painful source of parental disapproval. I have received a poor report card or have blundered on my childhood newspaper delivery route. In the real world, I often could find no place to hide from my angry parents. In my dreams, I will often climb a tree in our yard and find that no one follows me to the top limbs! When I wake up, these "successful" resolutions of trauma can be a source of new learning for me. What might I do when confronted today with disappointing performance on my part? Perhaps, I can find a "tree-of-escape" in my current life, where I can hide for awhile. . .

The trauma and accompanying anxiety can be addressed in a couple of different ways within the dream. First, it can be addressed through the action depicted in the dream. The dreamer reenacts the traumatizing event (or a near replica of this trauma) and this time moves against the intrusive event or person rather than remaining inactive and powerless.

The second way to address the trauma relates to a process called "metabolism" of the emotions associated with the trauma. As presented by Wilfred Bion, there are so-called "beta" elements that enter our dreams (Bion, 1995; Segal, 1992). These are the unprocessed ("raw") feelings associated with the trauma—most of these feelings (such as fear, anger, frustration, hopelessness) being associated with anxiety. The dream provides a venue for "metabolizing" these feelings – which means converting the anxiety-saturated elements into elements that still exist, but now without all of the attached feelings.

For instance, the diffuse anxiety can be converted in the dream to a tangible evil figure or force. This evil can be confronted and defeated, or it can be evaded or become the source of ridicule or humor (becoming a clown or blustering ogre). In this way, anxiety is eliminated or reduced when we awake. Alternatively, anxiety remains in full force during the dream; however, when we wake up, there is a realization that whatever occurred during the dream that made us anxious does not exist in our waking life. In the dream, we might have been childlike in our fear of the "boogie man" but then we wake up,

safe in our bed, and realize that we are no longer a child. As was the case with Bonaparte's Walhuter dream, the dreamer feels "relief."

As I have already mentioned, I personally often have dreams in which my travel plans are messed up or I am stranded in some strange land where I do not speak the language. I am very anxious. I feel disempowered and hopeless. Then I wake up and realize that I am safe in my bed at home; furthermore, having retired from my teaching and consulting work, I feel "relief" knowing that I am no longer "in the business" of traveling all over the world. My anxiety regarding travel has been "metabolized" by setting up a stark contrast between the anxiety-filled events and circumstances portrayed in the dream, and the much safer and more secure circumstances which typified my current, waking life.

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It should be noted that the dynamics occurring when trauma is not fully addressed may actually be one way (and probably the most emotionally intense way) in which we react to uncompleted tasks. Eugene Gendlin (1986, p.152) writes about the lingering impact of 'unfinished events." Gendlin suggests that when we remember an unfinished event, then we are likely to find additional psychic material "crossing" with our memory of this event. Our dreams, in particular, are likely to expand as we introduce the unfinished event into the dream. For me, it is often an unfinished writing project: the page that is half empty either because the inspiration disappeared or time ran out. In my dream, I am completing this project, making use of words, concepts, and experiences that often are only tangentially related to the project on which I am working.

Supportive Dreams

While many dreams challenge us through offering vivid imagery of past traumatic events or the potential of future events, and through offering us insightful but perhaps disturbing portraits of important people in our current (and past) life, there are also dreams that provide us with guidance and support so that we might effectively address the challenging dreams. Sometimes, the support arrives within the challenging dream and at times in a dream that occurred during the same night as the challenging dream.

Most often, it is just a matter of the dream scales being balanced—some challenges and some support. Unfortunately, during times of stress and transition, the scales might be unbalanced. We are facing a majority of dreams that disturb us or leave us awake, frightened and sweating in the middle of the night. While these multiple challenging dreams might in some way "be good" for us, dreams which either allow us to escape the challenge or provide us with some guidance and support are frequently welcomed.

I can identify several different forms taken by those dreams that are supportive. They may contain safety-providing schemata or sanctuaries. Or they might serve as venues for incubating ideas and images or as the endpoints for regressive processes that support the generation of insights and creative productions. I will even introduce a process called Targeted Dream Incubation that offers the possibility of at least partial control over the type of dreams we produce during the night.

Schemata: I introduced the concept of schemata when considering transactional dreams in my previous essay (Bergquist, 2026c). At this point, I would suggest that schemata not only support the processes of memory and synthesizing information, but they also provide a safe place for the thoughts and images we generate. Our thoughts and images can "comfortably" reside inside powerful assimilating schemata (Bartlett, 1995; Paul, 1959; Paul, 1966). For instance, during a dream, we might imagine a person unknown to us, who is entering our imagined home in the dream. We give them the appearance of our parent or best friend (and might even mix up identities during the dream). A schema of the caring parent or trusted friend might be imposed (Young, Klosko and Weishaar, 2006). We provide support to match the threat incurred by someone new ("the other") entering our life. Unfortunately, this support sometimes comes at the expense of accuracy regarding the intentions and trustworthiness of this new acquaintance.

Conversely, the schemata of villainous person might be engaged in a dream that introduces us to a candidate for public office that we heard speak on television before falling to sleep. This person might initially be a bit threatening; however, we can easily place them in the category of "villain" and thus comfortably dismiss what they have to say. Furthermoe, during the dream we can deploy our archetypal hero to defeat this new villain.

It should also be noted that schemata can become too dominant. We can not only dismiss this one "villainous" political figure but also discount and intensely hate all members of this person's political party. We assemble an entire army in our dreams to defeat the politically opposing "rabble." We can go too far in our waking life as well as our dreams. We become "true believers" who impose a specific scheme on everything (Hoffer, 1951). Often following the dictates of a powerful authoritarian figure, we begin to march to a single tune (Weitz and Bergquist, 2025).

Sanctuary: safe place for feelings and behaviors. Building on Winnicott's (1971) concept of "play space," Alston, Calogeras and Deserno (1993) write about "dream space." This space serves the function of transition (like the teddy bear). I would also suggest that the dream space serves as a launch pad for new ways of being in the world. competence and creativity are on full display. The dreams in which we are flying might refer not to sexual performance (the traditional interpretation) but instead to this sense of being competent and capable of achieving great things (Bergquist, 2024). "I am flying and the whole wide world is before me!"

Incubation and Peremptory Ideation: the human's capacity to create or find safety while innovative and boundary-shattering images and ideas are being explored is evident not only in the use of schemata and sanctuaries, but also in the engagement of a process called Incubation. While we have known for many centuries that new ideas and surprising images often appear when we are taking a bath (or shower), driving to work, or walking our dog, there is increasing evidence that this "bubbling up" and

"breaking through" of creative ideas and images is not just one of those psychological fictions that populate our society.

As vividly recounted by the creative artists and scientists in Brewster Ghiselin's (1961/1985) book concerning *The Creative Process*, there really is a frequently occurring process called 'incubation" that produces these remarkable occurrences. Typically, we are struggling with an idea or with the formulation of an image and are locked in a restrictive mindset (called *Einstellung*) that allows no new thinking. Eventually, we abandon this task and move on to other matters. We now know that this task often is not actually abandoned; rather it is moved to a "back burner" (our nonconscious). Unattended, this abandoned idea or image has the opportunity to wander around and take on different forms. Then, at some point, when we are relaxed (bath or shower) or distracted (dog walking or driving), the evolving idea or image comes to the surface. *Voila!* The first version of a creative idea or image is present for our review and refinement.

Frequently, we will find that incubation has taken place, at least in part, through the production of dreams. Our unconscious backburners operate not just during our waking hours (possibly being manifest at times in our daydreams or mediations), but also in our transitional periods between wakefulness and sleep (hypnogogic and hypnopompic stages) and, most importantly, in our dreams. The transactional dream themes that I identified in the previous essay (Bergquist, 2026c) might often contribute to this incubation process, as might the introverted, symbol-rich dreams to which I will turn shortly.

As I have in previous essays in this series of dreams, I turn to the provocative theory offered by George Klein (1967) concerning what he labels 'peremptory ideation." This is a model of unconscious processes that are moving as an ideational train through our brain, picking up psychic "objects" (images, thoughts, feelings and memories), much as I described with regard to vivid images. An avalanche picks up debris as it courses down a mountainside, while the ideational process picks up these psychic objects as passengers on the train.

There is more to consider. We might find that this ideational train is closely associated with the process of incubation. We push some working idea onto the backburner and wait for it to develop and mature, only to appear later as a well-formed creative product. The initial idea might have "hitched a ride" on the ideational train and benefited from the attraction of many psychic "objects" to the train. If this is indeed what is occurring in our unconscious mind, then we might expect the emerging creative project to be "tainted" by unrelated events, relationships, and ideas that have been pushed onto the back burner.

How then might this process relate to dreaming. In the previous essays, I have proposed a variety of ways peremptory ideation and dreaming might intertwine. In this essay, as we consider the supportive and enabling dream, we might expect a dream to be given "justification" from the ideational train. This would mean that we tend to set dreams within a broader thematic context. That dream we have about our automobile breaking down might be associated with our daytime concern about finances and with

the dream we had two nights ago about the bear that ate our tent, and the dream four nights ago about the large wave that engulfed our home.

The ideational train has taken on the theme of impending physical destruction (precipitated by a fear that our basement will flood in an ongoing rainstorm). These subsequent irrational fears, archaic images and legitimate worries hitch onto the train. The outcome of an envisioned project regarding the purchase of a new boat comes with a faint, but persistent and "irrationally" growing concern about the financing of this purchase and the durability of any boat that we do buy. The somewhat mundane creativity comes in our recognition that we could write off some of the cost of this boat for tax purposes by using it to occasionally "entertain" the most loyal customers of our family business. A somewhat more ambitious outcome might be the abandonment of the boat-purchase option in favor of buying a houseboat and living during the summer months on this boat. Greater creativity would be expressed in the decision to write a short story about domestic mayhem (home repairs) for the local newspaper.

The ideational train might instead be activated by the "unfinished events" that were highlighted by Eugene Gendlin (1986). These events could be associated with trauma, as Levine suggested, or with any unfinished project. As often noted with regard to the so-called Zeigarnik effect, the uncompleted task is often held in memory for a long time. It would not be unusual for this task and Gendlin's unfinished event to hitch a ride on or prompt the operation of an ideational train. And recruit other passengers along the way.

There is yet another direction in which we can take this exploration of creative incubation. We can traverse time and space ending up in the research laboratory of Aleksandr Luria, the noted Russian neuroscientist. Luria reports on the extraordinary case of a man with infinite memory (Luria, 1987). Known as a Mnemonist, Luria's subject could not only recall lists of words from many years before but also recall the color of Luria's tie. The mnemonist reported that he sometimes simply envisioned a street with many store fronts. He would place the word or experience to be remembered in one of the storefront windows and simply wander back along the street to reclaim memory of the object in the store window.

It is possible that this memory process closely resembles the way the dreams which all of us have are used to visually consolidate memories at night. Given this mode of consolidation, then it is possible that this work will be done on the peremptory ideational train when this train is in full operation. Perhaps, items are stored on train seats or at least in specific cars of the train. Seatmates on the train might influence the content and form of the retrieved memory. We might even find that dream-based memory-consolidation taking place in this manner might operate alongside or in conjunction with creative reconstructions and resynthesizing of these consolidated memories intertwined with the other ideas, thoughts, feelings and experiences that are to be found as seatmates or at least carmates on the ideational train.

Regression in the service of the ego [RITSE]: As I have noted in previous essays in this series, RITSE is a concept engaged by ego psychologists to describe a controlled, temporary, and partial relaxation of the mature ego's critical and realistic functions. It is prominently displayed in our dreams. This ego-based process allows for access when we are asleep as well as when we are awake to primitive, unstructured, and often highly symbolic unconscious material. Unlike pathological regression—where an individual reverts to immature coping mechanisms under stress—RITSE is adaptive. It provides the "play space" and sanctuaries that I mentioned previously in this essay. The mature ego deliberately deploys this mechanism to retrieve preconscious or unconscious content, typically for constructive purposes such as problem-solving, insight generation, or creative expression. The "service" aspect means the ego initiates the process not as a defense against anxiety, but as an active strategy to overcome intellectual or emotional impasses.

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, Ernst Kris (1953) formalized the concept of RITSE, describing it as the way preconscious and unconscious material appears in the creator's consciousness. Kris' formulation helped shift ego psychology toward a more positive view of regression, linking it to creativity and innovation. In art and music, RITSE can manifest as a return to a childlike perspective—simple, fresh, and unencumbered by adult logic—yet skillfully integrated into the final product. For example, Picasso's remark about drawing "like a child" reflects this process. A spiritual leader, such as Burgh Joy (1979), can similarly talk about the process of becoming child-like when moving into a state of spiritual revelation.

In the description of RITSE as a key form of support in our production of dreams, it is important to note that regression occurs in at least three ways. We regress in time, revisiting our childhood and the collective history of our society and culture, possibly through our social unconscious (Hopper and Weinberg, 2019) or our collective unconscious (Jung, 1978). We also regress in our use of form and structure. This is where Ernst Kris's perspective on RITSE in art comes into play. Third, there is regression in defensive structure. We deploy increasingly primitive defenses, such as repression and displacement (A. Freud, 2018), once again, not on behalf of coping with stress, but rather on behalf of some adaptive purpose.

RITSE is truly an extraordinary capacity of the human psyche. We can move backward in personal and collective history to explore alternative portrayals of reality and to be selective regarding how best to guard against the massive intrusion of anxiety-producing memories, impulses or existential concerns. Someone like Carl Jung could plunge for a short while each day into "madness" as he chisels on granite blocks and as he prepared the visual illustrations and the narrative (written in beautiful old Gothic script) in his *Red Book* (Jung, 2009*)*. An artist such as Edvard Munch, can enter his Oslo Norward studio and create a series of deeply troubling painting of anguish and despair without slipping into deep depression himself. Thomas Wolfe (1929/2006) retains his sanity while write "madly" on tablets about his troubled childhood in North Carolina and about his inability to ever "go home again." We protect ourselves and find support inside ourselves for insightful and creative endeavors, while pushing the boundaries of emotional regulation.

This protection and support are particularly evident in our dreams. They provide us, as dreamers, with the capacity to be both controlled and uncontrolled (the dream serving as an independent entity). Our dreams provide a temporary "insanity" while addressing some of the most important and "sane" issues that we confront during our waking hours. Our ego ensures that the dream's regression is brief and reversible upon awakening. Like other forms of regression in the service of the ego, dreams provide access to primary process material, including illogical, symbolic, and often childlike thinking.

At the same time, dreams provide the mechanism for integration into secondary process. While most dreams are not recalled when we wake up, some are recalled. Furthermore, it is likely that the unrecalled dreams still linger in some capacity in our unconscious life (possibly hitching a ride on our ideational train). Furthermore, as I have suggested throughout this essay and other essays in this series, our dreams, like other RITSE processes, serve a constructive purpose. In a supportive RITSE environment, dreams often suggest novel ideas, provide images that can later be portrayed in paintings and novels, or yield important psychological insights.

Self-Efficacy: We can also move to the perspectives offered by Albert Bandura (1997) who views dreams not from a psychoanalytic perspective, but rather from a cognitive/behavioral viewpoint. Specifically, he looks to the ways in which dreams help to support Self efficacy. For Bandura, this state of self-efficacy centers on the belief in one's ability to execute behaviors necessary to achieve specific outcomes. In the context of dreaming, several Bandura-oriented practitioners offer the concept of dream self-efficacy (DSE), which refers to one's belief in their ability to influence or control dream content (Miller, Davis and Balliett, 2014; Rousseau, Dube-Frenette, Belleville, 2018).

In many ways, DSE is the ultimate expression of a belief among those oriented toward a cognitive-behavioral perspective that we can control our actions—even when asleep. From this viewpoint, dreams not only can provide guidance and support in our facing the challenge of self-efficacy, this efficacy, can, in turn, assist in the determination of how this support for efficacy is achieved. When successful, DSE is a self-reinforcing process.

Specifically, a technique called Targeted Dream Incubation (TDI) can be engaged (Horowitz, et al., 2020). Prior to falling asleep, individuals set intentions regarding what they hope to achieve in their dreams. A "seed is planted." The intentions ("seeds") are typically introduced during the hypnogogic transition between the state of being awake and falling asleep. The recorded intentions are typically accompanied by sounds, music, or scents that are intended to guide the dream content.

Much as in the case of preliminary ideas during waking hours that are moved to the back burner for incubation, the assumption is that TDI ideas presented during the hypnogogic state will move to the back burner and begin to "percolate"—often appearing in dreams produced during the subsequent night. I would suggest that these TDI ideas might hop on a peremptory ideational train or even precipitate the initiation of this train. Much as George Klein (1967) found that subliminal stimuli can influence one's memory and imagination, so we might find that the ideas presented during the hypnogogic state influence the content of subsequent dreams.

Some preliminary studies conducted at M.I.T. suggest that TDI can provide a structured, intentional approach to dreaming (Youngren, et al., 2025; M.I.T., 2026). Perhaps, DSE does work and one can shape their dreams. Dreams cease to be random, uncontrollable events. They become one of several controllable psychological processes (such as cognitive-behavioral therapy) for gaining support and guidance when facing life challenges. This being the case, one can use dream self-efficacy and TDI to overcome a sense of helplessness (Seligman, 1992) and assume what Martin Seligman has identified as the critical sense of optimistic hopefulness (Seligman, 1991/2006; Seligman, 2012; Seligman, 2018).

I do wish to offer a cautionary note. While it is reassuring to believe that we can gain some control over our dreams, we must be aware that the self-reinforcing nature of the DSE model leaves little room for the correction that can be provided by an independent dream. Whereas a cognitive-behavioral perspective begins with the assumption that rational, thoughtful processes can "win-the-day," the psychoanalytic/psychodynamic perspective begins with the assumption that these processes can easily be taken over by much less rational forces in our psyche. I can't help but wonder if the initial pre-sleep intentions are always what the dreamer should be embracing. An independently generated dream might suggest otherwise, as it portrays a quite different set of outcomes and perhaps even a pathway to these outcomes.

Yet another concern that was recently voiced by Nik Eyal (2026) in the *Boston Globe*. Reflecting on Bandura's concept of self-efficacy, Eyal noted that it is not enough to visualize effective action and outcomes, one must use this visualization to prepare diligently for the enactment. Simple visualization is nothing more than "wishful" thinking and may backfire if the visualization leads one to believe that the desired outcome is inevitable (as in the Greco-Roman fate-based dramas). With this belief comes a failure to prepare and resultant failure. As Eyal (2026, p. K5) notes:

> The real power of belief . . . operates through attention (shaping what you notice), anticipation (shaping how your mind and body prepare for what you expect is coming) and agency (shaping whether you keep going when things get hard.).

We are most likely to find self-efficacy with the actual experience of seeking to achieve something, "strengthened by small wins, and refined through feedback" (Eyal, 2026, p. K5). According to Eyal, belief is not so much a feeling that summons successful; it is more a feeling that motivates calibration, feedback and modification of what is occurring.

This being the case, then a dream directed by TDI and geared toward self-efficacy is likely to be successful as an influence on waking behavior if there is an experience of success in the dream and if the successful outcomes are readily apparent and even measurable. In other words, the ego needs to be quite active in setting the stage for the dream of self-efficacy. Transactional themes might be of great value if they can be enacted adjunctive to the TDI preparation. The fundamental question becomes: can a dreamer influence the overall theme of a dream as well as one of its specific intentions? The M.I.T. researchers are likely to issue a negative response to this question, given that TDI only seems to work when seeking to introduce a specific topic.

Dream Theme III: Introverted vs. Extraverted

While Carl Jung (1971) used the terms extraversion and introversion to identify differing personality types, these terms can also be used to identify two different kinds of dream themes. There are the extraverted types of dreams in which an external event interacts with, inspires, and stimulates internal dream content. By contrast, there are introverted dreams in which energy and content emerge from inside one's psyche and are then conveyed (if at all) to the outside world via the reports and (often creative) productions of the dreamer.

Extraverted Dreams

Most of the analysts of dreams differentiate between the dream content that is generated inside the dream (or at least inside one's psyche) and what they identify as the day residue that influences at least the "superficial" content of the dream—what is usually identified as the "manifest content" of the dream. The extraverted dream relies heavily on this latter source. While the manifest content might be dramatically changed during the dream, there is still the influence of the external world on this modified content. Put simply, extraverted dreams are considered to be fundamentally extra-psychic. In some way or another, these dreams offer a portrait of the external world as interpreted by the dreamer. Much as the real world in which we live is juxtaposed to an envisioned (dreamed about) world in novels (Samuel Butler's *Erehwon*), in movies (*Shangri-La*) and in political rhetoric ("I had a dream"), the real world interplays with the envisioned world (good, bad, and bizarre) that is created in the dream.

There are actually two types of extraverted dreams. One type begins with external events and relationships. These, in turn, precipitate the content and provide the motivation for the events and relationships portrayed in the internal dream. The second type begins with the internal content—often a portrayal of some desired future state—which is transferred forcefully and compellingly into the external world: "I have a dream . . ." I first consider dreams that move from the external world to the world that exists within our psyche.

External to Internal: An exceptional example of the first type of extraverted dream is offered in *Wild Strawberries*, the acclaimed movie prepared by Ingmar Bergman, the Swedish moviemaker. Izak Borg, the protagonist in this movie, is an old man who is "trigger-happy." Contemporary events and interpersonal interactions in his life trigger memories in his waking hours (daydreaming) and in his dreams. As I mentioned in a previous essay on dreams among older people (Bergquist, 2026b), the boundaries between one's previous life and one's current life are often quite permeable. We easily slip between nostalgia and awareness of our present surroundings when we are awake. External events also often trigger the internal processes of our dreams when we are asleep. This certainly was the case with Izak in the four dreams that were featured in Wild Strawberries.

Inspired by his own father's life, Ingmar Bergman offered a portrait of an elderly man who is preparing to be honored at Lund University as a very successful professor of biology and physician. "Wild Strawberries" opens with Isak Borg writing in his diary. The protagonist's name, Isak Borg, was carefully chosen. The initials, IB, evoke the words "ice" and "borg" (fortress in Swedish) "This is why I am isolated from almost all so-called interpersonal relationships." Like Bergman's father (and perhaps many men

whom Bergman knows in Sweden), Izak is completely fortified—what in another set of essays I have identified as the “character armor” first identified by Wilhelm Reich (1933/1980), a renegade psychoanalyst (Bergquist, 2026a).

The first dream involves a four-part encounter with objects: a clock without hands, a face without features, an unmanned hearse, and oneself lying in a coffin. The clock without hands symbolizes poor control of time. The passing or non-passing of time seems to make no difference. As I have noted, the past and present in many elderly people's lives are easily intermixed. The faceless people would seem to represent Izak’s encounters in life; he served for many years in a professional role, yet in this role, he was treating a patient as someone to be helped rather than as someone to be fully known. The unmanned hearse might be considered a representation of Izak’s awareness, as an old man of his own mortality. The coffin is waiting there for him.

Each of these images in this first dream might be considered a product of Izak’s daytime experiences from the previous day. In preparing to be honored for his lifetime of service, Isak finds that this honoring of the past in the present time is somewhat confusing, that he is being honored for work that left him impersonally related to his patients, and his honoring is taking place in large part because he doesn’t have many more years to live. Izak’s fortress is fully fortified as he prepares for the ceremony.

The second and third dreams occur while Izak is traveling to the university where he will be honored. Like the dream-based narrative of journey that I have already featured in this essay, Izak Borg seems to have gathered new, transformative insights about himself while journeying to the endpoint of celebration. Izak is accompanied on his journey to Lund University by his pregnant daughter-in-law, Marianne, who does not appear to like him very much. Along the way, Izak and Marriane pick up three hitchhikers (two young men and their companion, a woman named Sara). Sara is adored by both men—and by Isak. She is a double for the love of Isak's youth. He reminisces about his childhood at the seaside and his sweetheart Sara, with whom he remembered gathering strawberries, but who instead married his brother. The first group remains with him throughout his journey.

This reminiscence takes on the form of a dream, suggesting once again the permeable boundaries between the past and present, as well as between reminiscing and dreaming among the elderly. originates from Isak's love regrets in his youth.

In the dream, Isak is portrayed as a decent, sensitive and moral person. His fortress is fully in place. He wants to read poetry, talk about sin, and kiss only in the dark. His fortress can easily push away a young woman, who, in the dream, needs love and romance. In the dream, Isak experiences a betrayal of love. This betrayal may portray a fundamental regret in Isak’s life--his later marital failure. This dream, however, also represents one of the most precious moments in Izak’s life, this being his thorough enjoyment of time with his true love in the wild strawberry field.

As I mentioned previously in a previous essay (Bergquist, 2026c), important dreams often portray moments of sensory pleasure, accompanied by a loving relationship with another person who is also savoring this pleasure. As is often the case, this experience of joy and even Awe, that intertwines sensory pleasure with interpersonal pleasure, is often accompanied by an equally painful experience of

regret, for this type of experience is usually elusive and hard to recapture in real life. Izak brings his temporary admiration of Sara—an external event—into his dream-like recollection of a past experience, that, in turn, evokes a present-day experience of both joyful and painful remembrance.

We find a display of marital discord in Isak's journey between the second and third dream. Two other people join Isak, Marianne, and the three hitchhikers. They are a married middle-aged couple who begin to bicker while in the car. Eventually, Marianne asks to leave the car. And they comply, expressing considerable embarrassment and growing resentment of one another. This disturbing external event helps to precipitate another of Izak's dreams.

The third dream has obvious dream characteristics. It's a bizarre and illogical two-part story. There is first of all segment of the dream that is frequently dreamt by those who have achieved an academic degree. The dreamer is forced to take an exam, even though they graduated many years ago. They often fail the exam, as was the case with Izak. Everything is uneasy about the first segment of the dream. During the exam, Izak is unable to recognize words and unable to use the microscope. And here we have a retired professor and physician who is being honored but can't even pass this simple exam. As I have noted several times in this essay, the theme of imposter is not uncommon in the dreams of many people who have aspired in their life to some form of greatness – and worry about being "found out."

The second part of the dream offered yet another humiliating moment for Izak. He catches his wife openly cheating on him. The wife's infidelity is cold and even more painful: he has to forgive her, but this is not easy, given that he is living in a fortress. His wife in the dream declares: "Now I'll go home and tell Isak. I know what he'll say. 'My poor girl, I'm sorry for you.' Just as if he were God. Then I'll weep and say, 'do you really feel sorry for me?' He'll say, 'Yes, very sorry.' Then I'll weep even more and ask him to forgive me. He'll say, 'You mustn't beg my forgiveness. There is nothing to forgive.' But he doesn't mean a word he says, because he's cold as ice." He is I.B. – icily fortified. Karin and the man with whom she is having an affair suddenly disappear. Isak asks where they have gone too. The answer is, "gone...all gone. Removed by an operation Professor. A surgical masterpiece. No pain. Nothing that bleeds or trembles." Isak asks what the punishment is for this. The answer, "loneliness."

In his dream, the failure of Izak's marriage is fully attributed to him. The pain Izak is suffering when awake is providing him with even more reasons to fortify himself. And with this further fortification comes loneliness. Hidden in his fortress, Isak is alienated from other people. Apparently, the script for this film was written during Ingmar Bergman's unfortunate period in his marriage, when he had separated from his third wife and was still feeling the pain.

The fourth dream occurs after Izak received his honorary doctorate at Lund University. The three young hitchhikers join Marianne in attending this ceremony. Marianne has also shared some personal reflections regarding her own marriage to Izaks' son, who is just as cold and fortified as his father. At one point, Marianne asked the old man: "And what vices may a woman have?" Isak responds, "Weeping, giving birth and speaking ill of her neighbors." Marianne responds, "I still love you, and don't regret being born because of you."

At the end of the dream, Izak bids a loving goodbye to his young hitchhikers. The heavily fortified old man receives a playful declaration of the young girl's love. He whispers to her: "I'll remember." As he goes to his bed in his son's home, he is overcome by a sense of peace, and dreams of a family picnic by a lake.

This fourth dream is brief; however, it breaks through the barriers of detachment present in the previous three. Sara takes his hand in the dream and leads him toward the paradise island where his parents reside. Closure and affirmation of life have finally come, and Borg's face radiates joy as he settles into a peaceful night of sleep.

Tracing back to the source, at that time Ingmar Bergman was in painful conflict with his parents, unable to communicate with his father, and even though he could temporarily reconcile with his mother, deep-seated resentments remained. As Ingmar Bergman reflects in his autobiography: "One thread runs through the story in multiple variations: shortcomings, poverty, emptiness, and the absence of grace. I didn't know then, and even today I don't fully know, how through Wild Strawberries I was pleading with my parents: see me, understand me, and—if possible—forgive me."

In contrast to what Ingmar Bergman has suggested regarding forgiveness, the noted developmental psychologist, Erik Erikson, provides a profound insight regarding the nature of forgiveness as related to this final dream in Wild Strawberries (Erikson, Erikson and Kivnick, 1986). Erikson indicates that one of the fundamental developmental issues during the last stage of our life is to forgive our parents. We must appreciate the strictures and expectations under which our parents were living and find a way to appreciate that form of love and caring that they were able to offer to us. Then, according to Erikson, we might be able to successfully navigate the final, existential challenge in our life. We can find a way to forgive ourselves . . .

I would suggest that Izak Borg was only able to forgive his parent and joyfully observe them sitting on the island by the lake because he had finally been able to affirm his own worth and "love-ability." Sarah had shared her open, spontaneous love (or at least affection and admiration) for the old man. While Izak might have seemed indifferent to the honorary doctorate he received, I can't help but think at this point that Izak's fortress was breached and the good work he had done in his professional life was genuinely acknowledged, appreciated, and honored. Then, maybe Izak can begin to care about and care for himself, care and forgive his parents, and, finally, forgive himself for the moments of old indifference he displayed during his life.

Izak's experiences in the external world, enhanced by a journey of discovery and appreciation by others, provided the content and motivation for his experiences in the internal world. This is one form of extraverted dreaming.

Internal to External: Martin Luther King is standing in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. on August 28, 1963. He is speaking to a large, assembled crowd assembled to demonstrate commitment to jobs and freedom in the United States. In the midst of his speech, King declares the following:

> I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.' I have a dream that one

> day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

Referencing the aspirational image conveyed by Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg, and aligning with the strong statement of belief in the American dream offered by Franklyn Roosevelt in his "we have nothing to fear but fear itself," Martin Luther King captured something of the long-standing belief in American exceptionalism as it is contained not in accomplishments but in a determination to make American society increasingly just. Whether or not Dr. King actually dreamt of this future state, the imagery associated with dreaming struck a powerful chord with those assembled on this August day. This is considered one of the greatest speeches delivered by a political figure in American history.

Many years later, our first African American president spoke about "The American Dream." On November 7, 2007, Barack Obama observed that, "What is unique about America is that we want [realized] dreams for more than ourselves - we want them for each other. That's why we call it the American dream." Like Dr. King, Obama captured something of the aspirational nature of the collective dream in the United State—a dream that seems to have been forgotten, ignored or even dismissed in recent times. The speeches of Dr. King and President Obama exemplify the movement of dream content from an internal to an external location. Their two speeches represent the nature and function of extraverted dreams. Their speeches resonate with the American public in large part because they align with the themes found in the individual night dreams, daydreams and hopes of these citizens.

If not displayed in political rhetoric, then the extraverted dream might be displayed in some form of art, literature, or theater. For instance, the politically based dreams pronounced by Martin Luther King and Barack Obama find their roots in the theatrical productions of the Greco-Roman period. Dreams were vehicles for accessing the fate of a person or of an entire society. Later in history, we find the extensive use of fateful dreams in the dramas of William Shakespeare. Whether it be Calpurnia's dream in *Julius Caesar* about Caesar's murder, or *Macbeth*'s dream-based foreshadowing of his downfall, there is a vivid and dramatic display of fate in the plays of Shakespeare. In addition to dreams that convey the fateful and tragic downfall of a visionary leader, some dreams portray the inevitable trend of a nation toward justice or prosperity. These trends are foreseen in the dreams of visionary leaders—such as Martin Luther King and Barack Obama.

Dreams that produce clarity of vision can lead to a powerful external statement of possibility, such in John Lennon's "Imagine." Visionary dreams can also precipitate the external enactment of a plan or strategy that produces flight. In our dreams, we "defy gravity" so that we might hop on our broomstick (*Wicked*) or on our magic carpet (*Aladdin*). Passion that is stirred up and intensified in a dream leads to the external expression of love, devotion, and even despair in a novel/movie such as *Wuthering Heights*. We even invite other people whom we love to "dream a little dream with me" or "dream along with me."

A sense of what is longed for and possible in our future life is generated in an aspirational dream and then shouted out to the world in a song such as "Out of My Dreams" from the musical *Oklahoma*.

Dreams that lead us back in time to a moment when life was much better lead to the impassioned external expression of deep regret in the song “I dreamed a dream one day” from the musical *Les Misérables* or in the popular depression-era song, “Boulevard of Broken Dreams”.

A dream can also serve in a functional capacity. It can teach us something when the dream is realized in visual form as a motion picture. As we, in turn, look to the motion picture as a source of our content for dreams, we find that the movies “have taught the world a new way to dream” (from the musical *Sunset Boulevard*). One of the lessons dreams have taught us comes in particular from the movies of Walt Disney. We are repeatedly told that if we dream about something, it might very well come to pass. There is a popular song of the early 1940s that tells us to dream, “because it might come true.” This song was first performed in the midst of World War II. Perhaps this was a good time to dream about a somewhat different reality.

When translated from the interior to the exterior, dreams can also teach us about the fragile nature of reality. It is particularly in the production of paintings that we find an exploration of altered realities emerging from the artist’s dreams. Examples over time include the nightmares representations of Hieronymus Bosch, Francisco de Goya, and, more recently, Salvador Dali. We are taught that forms can be bent and time can be altered with only minimal effort in our dreams—and in our waking life. Perhaps, these paintings have portended our contemporary acceptance of “alternative realities” (Weitz and Bergquist, 2025).

Finally, we find an example of false dreams functioning as a vehicle for manipulation in a musical such as *Fiddler on the Roof*. The protagonist, Tevya, describes a dream to his wife, Golde, in which evil will reign down on them if their daughter marries the butcher—thanks to the butcher’s departed spouse. Once again, the use of dreams to manipulate reality and the resulting decisions to be made might portend what is happening in our mid-21st-century political landscape.

In each of these cases, whether they are a novel, movie, theatrical production, or work of art, the dream becomes a fertile ground for new ways of thinking, envisioning, and even feeling. As noted in a comment made about dreams on the Internet, dreams can serve as psychological mirrors, symbolic landscapes, and narrative catalysts. They can convey moral decay, foreshadow doom, reveal hidden truths, and deepen the audience’s engagement with the characters’ inner worlds. Whether rooted in classical prophetic tradition or modern psychological realism, dreams remain a potent device for exploring the human condition in high-stakes storytelling.

The diverse ways in which dreams are introduced into these art forms speak to the resonance of many dream themes for each of us in our often-challenging world.

Inside and Outside the Tent: There is one final point to be made about the movement of content from the dream to some external realities. It is a matter of generals, aides, and a tent. There is a particular way in which extraversion and introversion are portrayed by the Jungians. There is a General, an aide to the General, and the tent in which they operate. The Jungians suggest that in the case of extraversion, the General is located in front of the tent, speaking to the troops. The aide to the General is located

inside the tent and is assisting the General with logistics and specific information needed for his speech in front of the tent.

By contrast, in the case of introversion, the General is located inside the tent, and the aide, pretending to be the General, is in front of the tent. For the introvert, all of the important action is occurring inside the tent. For the extravert, action is occurring in front of the tent. The troops are not getting the "real thing" when their leader is an introvert, whereas they are getting the "real" General if this leader is an extravert.

The movement back and forth between internal and external has been effectively portrayed as an interaction between the General and the Aide to the General as they operate within and outside the tent. We can examine this movement when gaining a better sense of the dynamics that are operating in the translation of dreams into convincing speech or some art form. In the case of extraverted dreams, the aide resides inside the tent, and the general is outside offering the external translation of the dream. It is all about the delivery. Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" might not have been as compelling or memorable if delivered by a less effective orator. His speech is the type of extraverted translation of a dream that makes the headlines, for it is quite public and aligned with widely shared aspirations, hopes and fears.

Alternatively, the general can reside inside the tent, formulating the presentation. The aide is outside the tent delivering the dream. Under these introverted conditions, the content is all-important. The delivery is less important. We can be just as impressed with a speech if we are reading it than if we are observing it being delivered. Introverted functioning of dreams is all about content. This is often the case with several lines from Shakespeare or a great contemporary playwright.

Of course, when it comes to the external expression of dream content through a medium of art rather than speech, the content and delivery are inextricably bound. These translations of dream content are decidedly extraverted. The artist's work of art must stand on its own. We also find this to be the case with novels, while delivery is critical to poetry and the singing of songs. We might not even know the name of the composer of a famous song. And poems, like the lyrics of a song, are meant to be heard, not just read. Extraversion lives in the hopefully poignant and often soulful presentation of a poetic or lyrical theme.

When we consider the role of a "big-time" dreamer like Carl Jung, then we find that the General is in full command. Carl Jung is both the producer of dream-based content and the deliverer of this content to the general public. We find an exceptional example of the external display of internal dream content in *The Red Book*, prepared by Carl Jung. While this book was shielded from public view for many years, based on Jung's request, it has been available for viewing for the past 17 years.

While *The Red Book* is an extraordinary display of extraverted dream content that has moved from the interior to the exterior, most of the Jungian display of dreams resides firmly within the purview of the internal. The domain of the internal remains unavailable for external view. While the "Persona" (Mask) identified by Jung is intended for public display, all other elements of the human psyche, such as the

shadow, anima, animus, unconscious, archetypes, and collective unconscious, are not for public display. It is to this very full and complex introverted domain that I now turn.

Introverted Dreams

While many dreams seem to involve an interaction between our internal world and our external world, serving an adaptive function or providing guidance and support in meeting the challenges of the external world, there are other dreams—or at least interpretations of dreams—that are fully intra-psychic. These dreams seem to be in the business of portraying the psychic intricacies of our inner world.

There are essentially two kinds of portrayals of our psyche being offered in our dreams. There are portrayals that suggest ways in which we are distinctive and different from many other people. These are the dreams that reveal something about our personality. Long-standing models of personality differences, such as the Enneagram (Palmer, 1991; Riso and Hudson, 2003), as well as more recently presented models such as that offered by Carl Jung (1971) suggest ways in which to understand what our dreams are conveying about the unique ways in which we perceive and act in our world.

There are also portrayals that focus on those functions and structures of our psyche that are commonly on display in dreams we all produce. These portrayals include the introverted perspectives offered by many psychoanalytically oriented dream interpreters, beginning with Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, Attention is devoted to the various agencies in the human psyche that seem to play a role in the production of our dreams, as well as the way the interaction between these agencies are portrayed in our dreams.

I consider both types of intrapsychic dream portrayals, beginning with those that attend to personality differences. I specifically consider the portrayal of dreams offered through the lenses of the Enneagram. I then consider those portrayals that focus on what is commonly displayed in all dreams. I reveal something about the fundamental structure of the human psyche. My focus will be on the psychodynamic theories of Carl Jung.

Nine Views of the World Through Dreams: The term “Enneagram” comes from an Egyptian word for Nine. This ancient model of personality differences provides a nine-part template. We find all nine views displayed in dreams, as well as the appearance of the three powerful emotions that Riso and Hudson bring to their presentation of the Enneagram: anger, shame and fear. For instance, many of us dream of a forceful person or event that intrudes on our life (Enneagram 8), an uncomfortable setting in which we are asked to somehow mediate a dispute between two people (Enneagram 9), or a circumstance where we are required to be perfect in our execution of a test or physical performance (Enneagram 1). In each case, we experience anger—and we are often powerless or unsuccessful in addressing the challenge we face.

Similarly, the feeling of shame attends us when we are dreaming of our inability to be of significant help to another person (Enneagram 2), when we dream about ending a busy day with many tasks left incomplete (Enneagram 3), or when we are sharing something very personal (or even wandering around naked) and those around us are either indifferent or embarrassed about our behavior (Enneagram

Four). These are dreams filled with challenges and strong feelings, yet there is little support to match the challenge.

The third feeling of fear accompanies dreams in which we can't discern what is happening in our chaotic dream world (Enneagram 5), when we find ourselves in a foreboding place surrounded by potential enemies (Enneagram 6), or when we confront the reality in our dream of a fanciful vision not being fulfilled (Enneagram 7). The fear will often wake us up in the middle of the night, much as the anger or shame of other dreams will linger in our waking state.

Much like the Jungians, those who provide us with Enneagram-based insights propose that there is a specific Enneagram type that is the "home base" for each of us. This being the case, we are likely to find dreams that capture the content and emotion associated with a specific Enneagram type are most disturbing to us (challenge) and/or provide us with the most important insights (support). We might also bring in French and Fromm (1964) at this point, suggesting that a specific Enneagram type that is repeatedly represented in our dreams could relate to the primary focal conflict in our waking life. For instance, I am closely aligned with Enneagram 7 and find that dreams in which I have been disappointed regarding a failed venture, come not only with considerable fear ("everything is about to fall apart"), but also with important lessons for me to absorb regarding how to establish realistic goals and avoid reoccurring pitfalls.

An In-Depth View of the Human Psyche Through Dreams: We are looking at common features of dreams when considering the way dreams are organized and the nature of the fundamental way they are presented. This introverted focus on dreams is particularly prevalent among those dream analysts and interpreters who align with Carl Jung and his school of psychoanalysis (or more broadly, psychodynamic psychology). In a recent offering of Jungian dream analysis, Lisa Marchiano, Deborah Stewart and Joseph Lee (2024, p. 21) summarized the intra-psychic viewpoint taken by what they identify as the dream maker (the ego-function in traditional psychoanalytic terms):

> . . . dreams are usually about the inner world. The dream maker is mostly interested in us. In waking life, the external world demands our attention; we turn our faces outward to interact with others, accomplish tasks, and achieve goals. However, the dream maker remarks primarily on things happening in the interior. We are often tempted to see dreams as commentaries on external-world people and situations, but the dream maker usually selects familiar people and places to depict dynamics in our inner world.

It would seem that the maker of our dreams is truly an artist of great skill and creativity.

From this internal viewpoint, there is the matter of the lens and models used to capture the essence of the human psyche as it produces dreams. For the Jungian, the lens being applied is one that magnifies internal objects and events. As Marchiano, Stewart and Lee suggest, this lens is engaged to depict the dynamics operating in our inner world. It is also the kind of lens that one finds on a kaleidoscope. With a slight turn of the lens, one finds a completely different set of images. These diverse images are created by a set of mirrors located in the kaleidoscope. Carl Jung similarly talks about the mirrors to be found in dreams. He imagines us sitting around a fire, while he brings out a set of mirrors that provide us with

different views of the fire. He asks us to look at what he's trying to point at (Marchiano, Steward and Lee, 2024, p. 5):

> The unconscious—and the dreams that arise from it—lies outside the reach of reason, but when we approach it with an open heart, intuitive understanding builds. (Marchiano, Steward and Lee, 2024, p. 5).

This potential diversity and irrational nature of prospectives (lens and mirrors) to be found in dreams is particularly important to keep in mind. While a Jungian dream is considered to be primarily a portrait of internal psychic life, it can, like the transactional dream, also provide guidance and even solutions to problems arising in waking life. Marchiano, Stewart and Lee (2024, p. 2) quote Carl Jung about this matter:

> According to Jung, "Every dream, in its own manner, carries a message. It not only tells you that something is amiss in the depths of your being, it also brings you a solution for getting out of the crisis".

What then about an appropriate model to engage when providing a Jungian analysis of a dream.

Dream as Victorian Mansion: A residency-based model is often used by Jungians. A Jungian dream (and more generally the Jungian psyche) can be portrayed as a house. However, this is no ordinary house. Unlike the cognitive-behavior house of dreams and the psyche, which is a one-story ranch house that allows for the meddling of dream content by the engagement of waking intentions, the Jungian house is a large three story Victorian home that has a basement, attic, rooms that are unknown (Marchiano, Stewart and Lee, 2024, pp. 6-7) and rooms from which voices can be heard (Capote, 1994). Contained in the many rooms of this home are the persona (located in the parlor), shadow (in a darkened room), Anima and Animus (in adjoining rooms), the collective unconscious (located in the basement) and the individuated Self (located in the attic).

The Jungian home is filled with Symbolic representations of specific aspects of the self. The symbols in this home serve a different function from the symbols in the traditional psychoanalytic home. As Emil Gutheil (Gutheil, 1951, p. 121) suggests, from a Freudian perspective, "symbols occur as an effect of amalgamation of two or more ideas. At least one of them, usually a wish, is opposed by other forces within the ego." The Freudian symbols are typically meant to hide the actual, unacceptable forces and objects that operate in our psyche, whereas the Jungian symbols are typically meant to expand on these forces and objects, often linking them to deeper, historical archetypes. As Lisa Marchiano and her Jungian observe:

> . . . dreams are symbolic. Your dream maker seldom has access to the directed thought and straightforward language of your conscious, waking mind. The dream maker is an ancient part of us that speaks in image, metaphor, and symbol, and relies on intuition and feeling instead of linear thinking and explicit expression. Jung discovered that dreams are not disguises, as Sigmund Freud thought, but the clearest possible representations of psychic realities conveyed in the language of the unconscious. Dreams can be hard to understand because they speak a foreign tongue, but what they have to say is never pointless or obfuscating. Learning the dream

> maker's language starts by cultivating a symbolic attitude in tune with the mythic cadence of dreams. (Marchiano, Stewart and Lee, 2024, p. 20)

The Jungian home of dreams also contains many surprises. Like journeying through a House of Mirrors or a Haunted House located at the site of a carnival, we are unprepared for what awaits us in a dream. We are thrilled, shocked and simply baffled by the sights and sounds we encounter. As Marchiano, Stewart and Lee proclaim, dreams deserve respect because they "present a fresh perspective." (Marchiano, Stewart and Lee, 2024, p. 20). Our three Jungians offer the following almost poetic proclamation regarding the importance of this fresh perspective (Marchiano, Stewart and Lee, 2024, p. 7):

> Behind the veil of sleep lies a world of mythic images, improbable encounters, and strange beauty. Dreams companion us nightly, reminding us that we participate in another dimension beyond consciousness. Dreams let us know we are not alone. While our waking hours may concern themselves with the mundane, the practical, and the specific, our dreams attest to a way of being that transcends the limits of consciousness and provides us with another perspective. Dreams are nightly proof that there is something big, deep, powerful, and mysterious always at work beneath the ordinary surface of everyday life.

Given this "fresh perspective" provided by dreams, it is important to protect the unique (and fragile) nature of this companion that accompanies and guides us through this alternative reality. Like Virgil, who guides Dante through the complex and often terrifying world of the Inferno, we must trust our dreams and not our waking ego ("I").

The Untrustworthy Ego/I: While this ego might be skillful in guiding us through the life we lead when wide awake, it often does a lousy job of leading us through this second life. As Marchiano, Sewart and Lee have strongly suggested, our "I" (ego) can easily be misled. They (Marchiano, Stewart and Lee, 2024, p. 20) declare that:

> . . . the "I' in the dream is usually the least trustworthy part. Often at night our dream ego—the "I" in the dream—is confronted by figures that frighten, denigrate, or frustrate. Upon awakening, we tend to side with our dream ego and assume that the figures that have crossed us in the dream are mistaken or threatening. Usually, however, the new attitude suggested by the dream only seems wrong according to the conscious viewpoint. If we can set aside the prejudices of consciousness, we might see that a helpful, alternative perspective is being offered.

That is why dreams are so important. They operate independently of external, ego-based control:

> As Jung discovered, "there are things in the psyche which I do not produce, but which produce themselves and have their own life"—and dreams evidence the independent life of the soul. (Marchiano, Stewart and Lee, 2024, p. 10).

I am reminded of the caveat introduced during our consideration of Bandura's self-efficacy being applied to the content of dreams. The "I" is intimately involved in the provision of a pre-dream

intention. The Jungians, rightfully, might wonder if the "I" can be trusted. Do we really want to somehow bypass the independence of our dreams?

Conclusions

Ultimately, dreams are meant to do something. For Sigmund Freaud, dreams were meant to allow for the disguised expression of sexuality and release of libidinal energy. More recently, dreams have often been considered to have "Agency." They are produced to solve problems, explore alternative actions, and envision desirable end points. As I have noted, even Carl Jung considers dreams to be not just about portrayals, they are also about "cleaning up the messes." Marchiano and her colleagues offer a model of Jungian dreams that differs from that of the Victorian home. Their model offers greater agency (Marchiano, Stewart and Lee, 2024, p. 19-20):

> Moving through life is like driving a car. As you drive, you scan signs, navigate the route, and deal with traffic. In the back seat, an invisible passenger pays attention to every detail, especially what distracts or upsets you. If you and your passenger were asked about the trip. You'd have very different accounts. You might recall road work in progress, beautiful scenery, or a rain squall. Your passenger would reflect on your snacking, whether you were alert or sleepy, and how you dealt with the aggressive driver on Route 20. Your passenger observes your actions and reactions—and comments, comforts and offers course corrections.
>
> The backseat traveler is the dream maker, reporting nightly on your drive through life. The dream maker's insights can offer instinctual wisdom, provide a new approach to a problem, connect you with an emotional truth—and even put you in touch with a sense of purpose. The dream maker's reports affect you even if you don't remember or understand them.

Perhaps we are more likely to drive a car in our mind and heart than we are to reside in a Victorian mansion. Our challenging world of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, turbulence, and contradiction (VUCA-Plus) (Bergquist, 2026a) might best be addressed through the agency of a dream than through its idle portrayal of intrapsychic dynamics. Should we get out our driver's manual for dreams?

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