**"The Multiplicity of Dreams. Memory, Imagination, and Consciousness", By Harry T. Hunt, New Haven And London: Yale University Press, 1989.**

**Reviewed by**
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Neuropsychological findings suggest that on the cortical level, apes are able to "translate" visual perceptions into tactile or kinaesthetic patterns, and vice versa, without interference of the reinforcement mechanisms located in the brain stem. On the other hand, they make less creative use of auditory perceptions, so that their vocal signals remain stereotyped. In *The Multiplicity of Dreams* Harry T. Hunt, psychology professor at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, postulates that in contrast with other primates, the consciousness of humans is based on "translations" including not only visual, tactile and kinaesthetic, but auditory perceptions as well. That is, for us to perceive, we must break down the patterns of these modalities with fundamentally different and virtually incompatible sensory systems and approach the aspects of a situation, not one after the other like a computer, but *simultaneously* on different levels of articulation, which constantly interact to form novel connections. The reciprocal reorganization and rearrangement among the perceptual patterns of the separate senses is the core of symbolic intelligence; the "synaesthetic" tying together of all these simultaneously occurring processes is consciousness.

If consciousness may be described as a "complex synaesthesia", which image of the dream follows from this?

Our waking consciousness is dominated by linear, logical-sequential operations closely connected with language. These are linked up to more sensorial, imaginal and intuitive capacities of syntheses to which, since they are mute, we generally pay little attention. In dreams, however, our logical-intellectual judgements are derailed so that cross-modal "translations" of, for example, language into images or sensations of motion come to the fore. Such transformations, says Hunt, reveal the usually hidden centre of the syntheizing operations of consciousness. Just as Freud and others have stated with regard to psychopathological symptoms, mental processes may be studied as under a microscope in the fantasy and "abnormality" of dreaming.

According to Hunt, however, dreams are not necessarily, and certainly not always, manifestations of "primitive" mental phenomena or of "primary processes". Twenty years ago, Heinz Kohut caused a stir by claiming that narcissism in adults does not have to be regressive -- as was common belief among psychoanalysts and psychiatrists -- but may follow its own line of a development independent of relationships with other people and lead, for example, to creativity, empathy, humor and wisdom. In the same fashion, Hunt

assumes, the capacities required for dreaming can develop and increase in abstraction. He wants to assist in building a cognitive psychology which, instead of trivializing and expelling from the realm of science, dreams and related modes of mystical, "archetypal" or "transpersonal" experience, will offer a model which does more justice to the non-regressive aspects of "altered states of consciousness". (I would like to add here that he illustrates some of his hypotheses by quoting not only from the literature on dreams, but also from his own dream diary. Yet while he does expose some quite personal experiences, he never falls into embarrassing "confessions".)

Hunt not only discusses psychoanalytic dream theories and findings of experimental dream research, but also visits other fields of knowledge, like ethology, anthropology, neuropsychology, and psychopathology. Occasionally he uses a theory from the humanities to throw light on a scientific one, and vice versa. He does not believe, however, that it is possible or even desirable to harmonize organismic -- holistic or depth psychology approaches (like that of Jung, for example) with the perspectives of academic psychology. He insists that on the contrary, they cannot be transposed onto each other; they should supplement one another like a mosaic, because they reflect a fundamental ambiguity of human experience which becomes particularly prominent in dream research. In his view, the two paradigms currently dominating dream research, the psychoanalytic and the experimental, satisfactorily address only forms of dreaming regarded as trivial in societies which are centered around dreaming. He tries to demonstrate that in the industrialized societies too, the spectrum of dreaming is broader than the prevailing theories suggest, and that laboratory dreams or orthodox Freudian dreams do not by any means exhaust it. Instead of declaring overwhelming, portentous or bizarre dreams to be exceptions or even aberrations, he wants to integrate them into a more comprehensive and, as it were, "pluralistic" dream theory.

The classification at which he arrives is presented in a diagram, his "dream diamond". On its faces, varieties of dreaming are grouped according to criteria like the degree of their symbolic differentiation and their vividness. Lucid dreams are found on the faces of the diamond as well as nightmares and "archetypal" dreams, that is, self-referential dreams which are about the modes of cognition itself. "Ordinary" dreams without self-reference are, as he assumes, centered around the deep structures of language and thus in general remain clouded and delirium-like. On the other hand, lucid dreams, "archetypal" dreams and certain nightmares are marked by intensity and impressiveness for they occur close to the waking threshold, where *all* our symbolic capacities, not only those related to language, unfold. In the sensorial metaphors of such dreams, our cognitive potential spreads out on more channels, so to speak, than at other times and thus can open up new and specific modes of recognition.

Unfortunately, not all of the book is written in good North American academic style, that is, basically accessible to the lay public. Hunt simply presupposes many findings of dream research and of cognitive and experimental psychology. And while he covers

much ground in the realm of the sciences in his search for the cognitive structures of dreaming, it sometimes happens that he treats issues quite briefly, or that he strikes connections and starts speculating, when he has not prepared his audience well enough. Yet looking at a book as full of ideas as this one -- I have touched on just a few -- it is easy to forgive such shortcomings.