



## The Dream-Art Scientist: A Sethian View of Dream Lucidity

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The experiential reports of lucid dreamers are often a clue to the underlying psychological, scientific or metaphysical biases that each dreamer incorporates into his nightly reveries. Such opinion can be the result of long-term philosophical commitment or new belief experiments. The phenomenon of the client who conveniently dreams Jungian dreams for the benefit of her Jungian therapy is an example of the latter case.

It is less easy to pinpoint the belief system of the dream researcher unless he or she provides evidence through the sharing of personal dream records. Yet, personally and culturally held beliefs and opinions bias content, process and even the structure that dream study will take.

In contrast to those dream researchers who view lucid dreams as objects of study apart from the dreamer, Jane Roberts' Seth material advocates the creation of a new subjectively involved dreaming professional called the dream-art scientist. This is a model that I've found practical, appealing, and continually challenging since I began to study lucid dreams.

The Sethian view sees dreaming as an art that involves personal style, originality of expression and inventiveness. Learning to become lucid, maintaining a focus, creativity with dream images and landscapes, incubation of dream topics, obtaining specific information, understanding dreams, and mutual dreaming are skills of the dreaming arts (Reneau, 1988).

Dreaming is also considered a science requiring objectivity in such outer activities as recording, analysis, and determining correlations between dreams and waking life. However, a dream-art scientist is also one who is skilled enough to study the nature and principles of dreaming from within the dream state.

The study of dreaming can be specific to the individual: "What do dragons mean to Sue and how does she handle them in her dream state?" or it can seek to establish

general creative principles: "Does a change in consciousness result in a change in the dreamscape?"

Thoughts, emotions and intuition provide data for study provided an appropriate methodology is applied: inductive/deductive reasoning to logical/rational thinking processes; direct/emotional cognition to emotions and intuition. A hypothesis is not considered a rigid assumption to be proven true but serves as an lightly held idea for exploration, allowing new and unexpected material to emerge (Reneau, 1988).

To develop objectivity both within and without the dream state, self-knowledge becomes crucial. Acting alternately as observer and participator, continually reflecting on and questioning his basic assumptions, the dream-art scientist begins to see around and beyond his intellectual and emotional biases. Such an approach allows debate to go beyond the issue of lucid control and its use, for example, to resolve symbolic conflicts or confront nightmare figures. It moves on to a deeper level of questioning. Why have a nightmare in the first place? Are dreams useful only for therapeutic treatment or is there any other purpose to be served by understanding and interpreting dreams (Roberts, 1986)?

To be a dream-art scientist requires the development of specific talents. Lucidity is a prerequisite.

...A practitioner of this ancient art learns first of all how to become conscious in normal terms, while in the sleep state. Then he becomes sensitive to the different subjective alterations that occur when dreams begin, happen, and end (Roberts, 1977).

Lucidity includes experience of hypnogogia, imageless dreams, out-of-body and initial awakening states, mental and aural dream periods, and other dream states which have yet to find commonly accepted nomenclature (Roberts, 1986). "He familiarizes himself with the symbolism of his own dreams... (Roberts, 1977)."  
Sethian lucid dreamers don't have to wait until waking to understand a dream symbol, they can ask while in the dream state. "Who are you?" "What do you represent?" "What message have you for me?"

...and sees how these do or do not correlate with the exterior symbols that appear in the waking life he shares with others (Roberts, 1977).

Dream dictionaries become inappropriate to the Sethian who realizes that the meaning of her own dream symbols are primarily personal in nature, and furthermore, that they change over time (Roberts, 1986).

There are inner meeting places, then, interior "places" that serve as points of inner commerce and communication...Our dream-art scientist learns to recognize such points of correlation (Roberts, 1977).

Secondarily, symbols can serve as correlating elements between dreamers,

providing evidence for mutual dreaming and shared life issues.

...he or she then begins to recognize the fact of involvement with many different levels and kinds of reality and activity. He must learn to isolate these, separate one from the other, and then try to understand the laws that govern them (Roberts, 1977).

Is there a level of dreaming in which, for example, it is not possible to go through walls because one's body sense is too dense, too close to the waking state? Or does every lucid dream level have the same laws (Roberts, 1986)?

Current scientific thought holds objectivity in high esteem and this approach is valid for objectifiable data. But until we invent a dream machine that holographically depicts dream images, feeling tone and the myriad sensational, emotional, intuitive and cognitive components of dreams, we are left with written or oral reports, often self-selected. How can we even know what data to look for, what questions to ask, what subtle distinctions to define if we aren't dreamers experienced in a wide variety of lucid skills?

There is more than one dream state, more than one experience of lucidity, more than one approach to dream study and the sooner we acknowledge that, the better chance we give ourselves to explore the frontiers that we have just begun to discover.

## References

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