

## EDITORIAL

### Dreams in Self and Society

*"I have no theory about dreams. I do not know how dreams arise. I am altogether in doubt as to whether my way of handling dreams even deserves the name "method". I share all my readers' prejudices against dream interpretation being the quintessence of uncertainty and arbitrariness. But, on the other hand, I know that if we meditate on a dream sufficiently long and thoroughly - if we take it about with us and turn it over and over - something almost always comes of it".*

C.G. Jung

*"Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar".*

S. Freud

In my work with dreams I have for the most part chosen to "meditate" on them and "turn them over and over" in a group setting. This seems to take care of the fact that a dream often has many levels and meanings which can be more easily brought out in a group where there is usually a wide range of experience and intuition. I have never been particularly able to work by myself on my own dreams in spite of following the step by step guides of the do-it-yourself advocates. Moreover it is the sharing process as much as the actual dream which is important to me.

In the last special edition of **Self and Society on Dreams** (May/June 1981) many of the articles were about sharing dreams in a group. In this edition I have tried to develop the idea further, looking at how dreams can be comments on the society in which they arise in the same way as dreams shared in a group can be comments about the group. Thus John Van Damm's article looks at how dreams are used in a community's struggle with the outside world, Jeremy Taylor, Alix Pirani and I all look at some aspect of dreams in society. The articles have in fact been arranged roughly on a continuum of the individual world of the lucid dreamer, to sharing with a few others, outwards towards social aspects of dreaming. Hence the title of the edition.

I enjoy listening to dreams and much of my understanding of them has, I think, arisen from this pleasure. And while at certain times I have found techniques like Gestalt, Psychodrama and free association useful in helping to understand a dream, I count being simply a receptive audience as one of my main resources. Symbolic language - the language of dreams - with its connection with myth, legend and fairy story, is, I believe a language whose richness we all have the capacity to understand and appreciate.

Robin Shohet

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## Morton Schatzman

### THE USES OF LUCID DREAMS

Lucid dreaming is the awareness while dreaming that we are dreaming. During ordinary non-lucid dreaming, as in waking life, we usually do not wonder whether we are awake or asleep: we assume that the world we are experiencing is real; we believe that we and our bodies are located within that real world, and are relating to persons and objects in much the same way as we do when awake. However, there are dreams in which we are aware of our true situation; namely that we are asleep and dreaming. These are lucid dreams.

'What use are lucid dreams?' I am often asked. In the eighteenth century, a woman is alleged to have asked Benjamin Franklin, 'But what use is electricity?' He replied, 'What use, madame, is a newborn baby?' (1)

Lucid dreams have already been used as a means of coping with nightmares. In fact, some people first learned to dream lucidly in order to end their bad dreams. One woman told me that as a little girl when a dream frightened her, she would tell herself it was only a dream and wake up. Another remembered that as a child she transformed bad dreams by realising that she was dreaming and spinning her body around within the dream, until the unpleasant dream scene disappeared. Eventually she stopped spinning and continued dreaming.