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### The 'DREAM-ART SCIENCE' of Waking Life: A New Kabbalah

The characters in a good novel, like those in a vivid dream, come alive. The events and environments surrounding them come before us, not as a mere nexus of fate and causality in which they just happen to be involved, but as something more like a shared dream. In this shared dream things are revealed as living symbols, and events as a living allegory, of the inner worlds, the unspoken wishes and fears of the individuals' existence.

Where however does the author fit into the picture he paints? Not only where but as **who**? Is the novel or dream a part of his reality or is he also a part of its reality? In art, as in dreams, does the creator merely re-shape his own waking-life experience? Or is it, as Lawrence Durrell observed, a **fact** that events in what we call reality invariably follow and re-create situations and challenges that the fictional imagination had previously entertained? The only difference being that life reproduces our mental pictures in a way which involves us on the stage of our own productions, and as actors, not only in our own plays but in those of all the other persons involved.

How could we begin to explain this transformation of inner creativity into physical events, not only as it occurs in creative writing, but as it also takes place in the **life** of the novelist, artist, or dreamer? Freud gave up on this question, admitting that "*before the problem of the creative artist analysis must, alas, lay down its arms*". More recently the British psycho-analyst W.R. Bion did attempt to get to grips with the paradoxes posed, in his own creative work entitled 'Memoirs of the Future'. I suggest that the "*problem of the creative artist*" offers clues to the inner comprehension of everyday life that we can not afford to miss whether or not we are psychologists.

For many years I have been developing a praxis of 'Dream-Art Science', inspired by a fascinating literature known as the 'Seth' books, produced by Jane Roberts (Prentice Hall). The term 'Dream-Art Science' stresses the importance of the arts as highly scientific models of reality . . . life as a stage, as a novel, symphony etc. In groups I have laid particular

practical emphasis on the value of recollecting our waking lives as we would a dream, approaching events with the question "*How would I interpret and respond to this event if I had dreamt it?*". It is my belief that we are as capable of being responsible (response-able) to the events of our everyday existence as we are capable of facing its 'dream-meaning' directly. Our ability to do this can in turn be developed and aided by entering our nightly dreams themselves without forgetting our waking self: an **art** known as 'lucid dreaming' in which the dreamer is fully aware and alert to being in the dream state.

Freud believed that every dream contained a hidden dream thought, usually of the nature of a wish, to which it served to give subconscious expression. I work from the principle that every real-life situation is itself a gestalt of symbolism, containing an 'objective idea' (Hegel) that is possibly very different from our subjective ideas about it. To re-discover this objective idea within ourselves and with the help of our dreams, is to re-find ourselves within the physical situation itself, our waking life. Conversely, the more fully we are capable of recollecting our waking life and interpreting it as a dream, the more we will find ourselves capable of 'lucid dreaming' at night: of waking up **in** our dreams without waking up **from** them, of responding to them directly rather than merely in recollection. For not only is there a level of waking reality which we normally only **dream** of, there is also a level of dream reality which we are usually quite **asleep** to, and which 'lucid dreaming' awakens.

I call 'Dream-Art Science' a new Kabbalah because of this mystical element in our lives which it releases in both dream and waking states, and because the question 'where do I fit into my dreams' parallels not only the question 'where does the artist fit into his creations' but the religious question 'where does God fit into Creation'. It is in our **beliefs** about this question that we find the answer to the question of 'where do I fit into my life', for such central beliefs, acknowledged or not, form the objective foundation for our personal and social realities.

Subjectively we may dispute this, for our subjective thinking includes the whole stock of mechanistic explanations of events in terms of doing and 'being done', determining and being determined, as well as our whole logic of belief in opposite forces, personal, natural and social . . . itself reflecting nothing so much as our beliefs about good and evil, sin and punishment. The Judaeo-Christian tradition is thus the basis of a modern scientific intellect which denies any objective reality to our thoughts and feelings themselves; even though their power to create and destroy is well evident in our dreams.

Yet in the Jewish **mystical** tradition known as 'Kabbalah' another form of thinking was prominent, one native to our dreams themselves. This way of thinking: by analogy, allegory, association and symbol is familiar to us again from Freud's work on **dreams**, but the Kabbalists put it to work on their waking lives, and in particular on the interpretation of that religious **drama** most central in their lives (and which is 'recollected' both in the Torah and in Jewish religious practice.) Being so central, the work the kabbalists performed in re-interpreting and re-dreaming this drama constituted a revolutionary form of 'spiritual' psycho-analysis for both the individual and the religious community; applied to **everyday events** as well as to the ethics and psychology of the unconscious.

Nowadays kabbalists are few and far between. Instead our culture is divided between the technological rationality of science and a psycho-analysis of the soul limited to the interpretation of **internal** events of the psyche alone.

The gap in between is where most of us lead our lives and towards which 'Dream-Art Science' is directed. Its most immediate service is towards our own bodies, for here is where both technology and psycho-analysis fail rather sadly.

Medicine 'explains' sickness in terms of a victimisation of human beings by viruses, accident, or our genes themselves. Like psycho-analysis, it seeks an explanation from the past . . . though one which tends to encourage paranoia rather than heal it. By contrast Jane Roberts speaks of the body's symptoms, not as marks of imperfection in nature but as a perfect **living** symbolism of the psyche: a way we have of using biological language and organs when we fail to otherwise express, organise and generally embody our energy in life. Symptoms speak, as symbols speak . . . they are intended to be seen and heard, and not suppressed as offensive reminders of our humanity.

Here again however the relation of thought and reality is conceived as a relation of medical theory and technical practice, in which the living power of thought is itself denied. Yet thoughts can sweep our bodies with the potency of any virus that may follow in their train and complete their work. They influence our bodies no less than our dreams . . . and they can create nightmares if we allow them. Suppressed they will crop up as easily as any fever. The common cold itself can be seen, not as an evil hazard, but as a compensation for a cleansing activity of our psyche, native to the dream state, from which we have cut ourselves off or blocked with our thoughts

and our breath. Through the cold we are faced with our own 'stiffness' and restored again to a natural rhythm of thinking and breathing . . . and dreaming. As for more serious maladies . . . those of the heart, liver and other vital organs: does not the symbolism often speak for itself, or have we just lost heart to digest it? If we have, we call for the doctor, but then this is a symbolic act in itself, through which we seek someone who will see us through our symptoms, through which we allow ourselves to express dependency . . . and a trust that should be taken with quite a lot more respect for both body and person.

But what is true for our own physical bodies is no less true for what we might call the 'social body' with its organs, and with its ruling ego and rebellious 'sub-personalities'. The media give us a constant portrait, not merely of the politics of society, but of the politics of the personal psyche which this symbolises. New leaders and new societies: do they emerge from the depths of the historical past or the socially symbolised emergence of a new model of selfhood and personality, of the average individual psyche and its internal metamorphoses. Just as we are all familiar with the capitalist 'ego' and the menacing 'collective' unconscious of the East, is there not also indeed a truly socialist level of the psyche in which personal identity is neither merely 'private property' nor some impersonal 'archetype'. Our dreams themselves hint of such a society: for there we freely exchange roles and combine identities; there we become symbols of each other's other selves and life-possibilities in a social gene-pool of private worlds.

The 'objective idea' that is then materialised in our waking world is conceived there, in that level of soul which Rudolf Steiner called the most social dimension of our existence . . . sleep. Conceived in an intercourse of psyches and gestated privately and personally in our dreams. The children of our joint dreaming, of this socialist dialectic of dreaming and being dreamt, symbolising and being symbolised, these children may be fictional or of flesh and blood, works of art or facts of life, personal life-experiences or public mass dramas. Our aim however should be to give them a natural spirit to unfold. Yet we must also acknowledge that our subjective ideas themselves provide not only the physical framework of words and actions with which we 'bring them up' but **were** the very psychic seed from which their objective reality took shape . . . as an element in our own.

Technology itself is not immune from the spillover of our psychic activity, for it too is a symbolic expression of our innermost psychic dynamics, a materialisation of our nature, functioning as part of

our psycho-social reality. It might seem absurd to see TV and radio as electronic symbols of psychic clairvoyance and clairaudience. It becomes less so when we are able to use these symbols in the dream state to consciously switch from one psychic channel, or one dream level, to another. It might seem absurd to interpret a mechanical failure in a car in terms of its symbolic as well as literal meaning, but in the event both are inseparable as they were for the Kabbalists in interpreting Torah. True, you cannot repair a car just by psycho-analysing its fault as an analogy of something bugging the owner's ego. If you are in too much of a hurry to get somewhere, it might seem doubly inappropriate, except that one quite practical meaning of the event might be: don't be in so much of a hurry. This being so, the chances of a repair being successful would be enhanced by taking this in. **Why** this is so can be explained in ordinary terms (for example that the repair might otherwise be rushed) but on many levels it cannot and instead what appears as 'co-incidence' steps in. Would it be a more coincidence that, having ignored the feelings that the breakdown brought up in one, the man at the garage just happened to have a hangover from the night before? Or that the breakdown occurred on a journey which you weren't too sure you wanted to take in the first place?

These instances may appear trivial, or even banal, but then so do many of the events of our dreams. Yet for each of us they are the mundane starting point . . . or end result from which we may begin to grasp what I call the 'meaningful appropriateness' of what happens to us, and of our actions themselves, regarded in terms of their symbolism. There is no blueprint for grasping our 'karma' in this way, for in life everything can be and everything is in some sense, an analogy for everything else. The four levels of meaning of the Kabbalists literal, practical, allegorical and 'secret', and the other tools which they applied to their symbolic science are highly appropriate themselves. Yet the essence of this praxis is not so much to think 'about' events, or to 'have' feelings towards them, but lies in what I call Following and Recollection. Followed up, our thoughts and feelings will lead us to the objective heart of the present moment within which all events in life are as meaningful and appropriate as those of our dreams, and as 'synchronous with our state of mind as any so-called co-incidence.

To our waking consciousness the time elapsed between falling asleep and waking up is condensed into a single moment. Our sciences study events only as they appear in Space-Time, as action between moments. But our dream consciousness expands the inner space **within** each moment as it does our momentary sleep. After all what is dreaming

except everything that we normally split off as 'past' or 'future' now experienced within an expanded present, a 'Dream-Time'. And as the Australian aborigenes stress, the Recollection of the Dream-Time is not a recollection of the past but of the present moment itself. When we Recollect our days as we would recollect our dream episodes we are entering this Dream-Time in which past and future unite and may both be understood and seeded with new thoughts to re-grow our Tree of Life-in-Time. And as a tree has many invisible branches so do our lives-in-time. From Recollection we may glimpse these hidden emanations and Follow them to where they lead.

For in life as in dreams we embody each other's latent potentials, each other's hidden psychic genes and chromosomes . . . we are mediums for each other's message to themselves, and transformers of it at the same time. Yet if, for example, you encountered a blind man on the street today, would you respond to this figure with more concern or with less than if you had dreamt you saw him or came up with such an image in a psycho-analytic session? If you overheard a conversation on the tube, would you take what you heard as seriously as if you had dreamt it, or just deny any symbolic relevance for your own life? The co-incidence of inner and outer events and landscapes, of intra- and inter-personal dynamics, private and public 'plots' that are the warp and weave of the novel: are these purely the guileful manipulation of the author or his inner perception of an "*unofficial order of events*" (Jane Roberts), and of unofficial streams of personal and social life that flow unendingly in our dreams? The secret intelligence with which we may reveal their meaning is the same intelligence which guides their creation and eruption into life, the same tradition renewed by us all in time, yet which has never known 'past' or 'future'.

To relegate this tradition to the personal past or project into the social-political future is one way of forgetting it, of explaining rather than living our dreams. I am glad to have had an opportunity in this article to suggest an alternative by no means 'occult' but which has always been forced to make its way more or less unofficially . . . and will always succeed in doing so, like the Eternal Jew.

*Further information about 'Dream-Art Science' may be obtained by writing to the author via 'Inner-World-Outlooks', 47 Broughton Ave., London N*