

DREAMS
AS
ANGELS

Feeding the Dream with Our Substance

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DREAMS AS ANGELS



The courier awaits my reply

Laughing, she said, “It just flew away, like a bunch of starlings.”

“Or angels?”

My question startled her and drew upon her face something akin to fear. She was telling me how her dream had flown away and she could not remember a thing, but her laughter became a different thing when I spoke of angels.

“You’re *not* serious, are you?”

I did not answer in words but gave my answer to her eyes.

“You *are*, aren’t you?”

“To be fair,” I said, “I’m writing something on dreams as angels, so it’s been on my mind. Let’s consider it.”

I told her the word angel is rooted in the Greek *angelos*, which in those times meant messenger.” It was spawned from an older word, *angaros*, meaning, “mounted courier.” These root images emphasize the intermediary nature of whatever it is we refer to as “angel.” In addition, this is the general sense of angel in the iconography of many of the world’s religions, that is, the angel (or some comparable being) serves as a go-between delivering messages between “heaven” and “earth,” between “human” and “divine.”

I have no difficulty, I said, conceiving of dreams as messages originating in some unknown, uncertain elsewhere, traveling to my conscious memory as I awaken from the experience of a dream. I do not sense my consciousness plays a part in the manufacture of the dream, so it is hard to claim a dream as “mine” in any proprietary sense. More accurate is that I bear witness to it; it comes as *news* to me, befitting the sense of message and messenger, as a headline might in a newspaper. The idea of dream as message is very old, rooted in ancient cultures. Taking the dream as angel one can see at once that the “object” quality of dream-as-message becomes personified, as Hillman would say, dream-as-person, dream-as-angel. One is then dealing with not only the message but also the messenger, the content as message and the *fact* of the dream as evidence of the *presence* of something “other.” I have no hesitation in calling this otherness, this presence, angelic. Moreover, this presence begins to *resonate* with something deep in myself, a calling forth of something I cannot quite name.

She said to me, “Of course, you are speaking metaphorically, or poetically, yes?”

I expected this question. Still, I took a long time before I answered. It is easy to be misunderstood when talking this way.

I have spent a good bit of my professional life, I told her, trying to convey the idea that when we speak metaphorically, poetically, in figures of speech, in tropes, we are not speaking entirely in an “as if” mode, a kind of intended indirection, an egoic verbal twist for effect. No, these efforts are in fact trying to “name” something experienced, something palpable, but something inchoate, something “other.” This only takes form through *similarities* of reference, which is to things more solidly known, things already in our experiential repertoire, things expressible. However, in all such efforts we are being analogical, using the “non-literal” as an attempt to name something literal for which we have no name—the “presence” which inhabits us when we wake from a dream, come out of a vision, hear a “voice,” and the “resonance” the presence engenders.

“What’s to be gained by calling it an angel?” she asked.

I explained that when I use the term “angelic,” I am not thinking in traditional religious terms. Instead, I am imagining older images, a mounted courier arriving with a message, the horse or rider flapping wings. My first obligation is to receive the message, to recall and remember the dream—not always an easy thing to do as dreams can fly away quickly as we all know. It is easy then to say, “Oh well, it was just a dream.” However, I do not find it so easy to say, “Oh well, it was just an angel.” So this is something gained, a kind of respect for these visitations we call dreams. I think we would do well to remember the warm way in which Baucis and Philemon welcomed the strange visitors to their humble abode and treated them by unreservedly sharing everything they had, not knowing at all that these “beggars,” denied entrance elsewhere, were in

fact Zeus and Hermes. Thinking of dreams as angels helps me to welcome the dream, *any* dream, *all* dreams, from the big dream to the most mundane, from the most pleasant to the most horrendous, and treat them all with all the courtesy and relational vigor I can muster.

Then I said to her, “The courier awaits my reply.”

I had not planned to say this, but there it was, just popping out. I mulled on this and finally came to a sense of it. I do not think my reply (to be returned by courier to that “elsewhere”) is going to be the *meaning* I come to in the analysis of the message, nor its interpretation, nor its understanding via the usual tools to which dream messages are subjected. If meaning were enough the poet would write out meanings and not poems. If meaning were enough, the artist would write out meanings rather than novels, or sculptures, or paintings or photographs. No, meaning is not enough in relation to dreams. *Ever*. I am talking about sending something back with the courier, the messenger, the angel—after all, if angels are *intermediary*, why cannot the message go both ways, the courier go both ways?

What an odd idea.

What could this be?

Well, to me it begins in my imaginal response to the dream, to the message (as well as the messenger). This I sense is what Corbin means by the *mundus imaginalis*. It is the imaginal encounter with the “other” embodied in the dream *and* with the “other” embodied in the *fact* of dreaming. It will be in what I *do* in response to the dream. It is not that dreams are at root erotic, but that dreams occasion Eros. That is the crucial idea. Eros is a winged creature and for this reason, I think of him as angelic and serving an angelic function. When we enter this space, this

geography, this temporality, this liminality wherein we can sense but not quite “know” what we are experiencing, then I believe we are at the threshold of the rhizomic connections between not only conscious and unconscious, not only between us and other, but between us and whatever we mean by “divine.” It is this space that we develop through the imagination and where we generate the message to be carried back, to be carried, if I may say so, “home.”

If it is true, as I have argued in these pages for years, that *all* dreams have to do with the future, and not with the past, then it must be so that angels are not delivering old news, but new news, and we must deliver something even newer in response. How might we do this?



From the place of stones

In a dream, I came upon a set of small rough stones. As I picked each one up, I could see writing on the various surfaces but I could not make out the words. Yet, in some mysterious way, I comprehended something that was being expressed. When I woke, I had the sense that I must give up my initial clear authorial intention and write from this place of stones. So, I have resisted the effort to force the “stones” into coherence, into too definite a shape, wondering if the rough edges might catch your imagination or your breath, and by following these hints lead you into wrestling anew with your own dreams as angels as I have wrestled with this one.

The man asking the question was George Mackey, professor of mathematics at Harvard. “How could you, a mathematician, a man devoted to reason and logical proof ... believe that extraterrestrials are sending you messages? How could you believe that you are being recruited by aliens from outer space to save the world?”

It was May 1959. The man about to answer was already one of the great mathematical minds of the twentieth century, but at this moment, he was a patient at McLean Psychiatric Hospital. The answer John Nash gave to Professor Mackey did not win the Nobel Prize, which would come later

in 1994, for his contributions to economics. However, his answer is prize worthy. John Nash replied: “Because the ideas I had about supernatural beings came to me the same way that my mathematical ideas did. So I took them seriously.”

In his mathematical visions, he saw the vision first and whole, and only later and laboriously worked it out. Nash was a loner, having no mentors, no followers. Well, not quite. His mind was his mentor and for all its madness and genius, he followed what his mind presented to him. He took the contents of his mind seriously, no matter what. He bore witness, he hosted. This is rare.¹

What and where is the “place” from which these ideas arise? How shall we name it? Earlier, I referenced this place as some “unknown, uncertain, *elsewhere*.” I am happy with that for now.

Where does one learn to “take seriously” the full contents of one’s mind? Not in school. (Just try to imagine a school where each child’s mind would be taken seriously *from the beginning*.) Not in the workplace. (Just try to imagine a workplace ...) Not in relationships or in entertainments. (Just try ...) Not in therapy or treatment, where medication or other means are used to quell, quiet, still, silence, stop, or eliminate such experiences and any taking seriously one’s ideas about them. Old and primitive cultures may have (hence mythologies and folklore and tales), but we moderns, except in rare cases, do not. What is the cost of not taking the fullness of our mind seriously?

Another who took his dreams, visions, delusions and hallucinations seriously was Philip K. Dick, the novelist and short story writer who

¹ For an exquisite biography of John Nash and the story of his self-treatment when all else failed, see Sylvia Nash, *A Beautiful Mind*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998.

experienced a series of revelations in the period February-March, 1974. He would later refer to this as his “2-3-74,” which he spent the rest of his life trying to understand. His way of doing this was through an unparalleled exploration of his mental processes. This exploration became the basis of much of his fiction² as well as the unprecedented written account of his experiences (more than 18,000 pages), which he called *Exegesis*.³ This prodigious effort was not for his psyche, or for the salvation of mankind. Rather, as he said, these two things were one and the same. In view of my considering dreams as not about the past, but about the future, one idea in particular that interests me that Dick developed was that the future communicates *backward* to our mind and does so through dreams, imagination, and stories. Imagine that!

This stuff of imagination, dreams, and, yes, madness, if taken seriously, can be a great teacher. True listening to the voices of psychosis, as Jung discovered, “reveals the foundation of our own being.” Extending this idea, Dick says, “What has got to be gotten over is the false idea that an hallucination is a *private* matter.” The implications of this are astonishing.⁴

What these men were dealing with (and others before them and after them of course) was what I call the *fictive* mind, the mind which at its roots engages in the spontaneous production of fictions. By their very nature these fictions are different than what we call reality and should not

² Dick lived much of his creative period in poverty and obscurity. Recognition of his genius is increasing and especially as an inspiration for more cinematic features of importance (e.g., “Blade Runner”) than any other science fiction writer.

³ *The Exegesis of Philip K. Dick*, edited by Pamela Jackson and Jonathan Le them (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011), follows the publication of Jung's *Red Book* by two years. Mining these two exemplars of “taking seriously,” will prove a boon to anyone who studies them together.

⁴ The interested reader might consider the work of Marius Romme, the Dutch psychiatrist, and founder of the Hearing Voices Movement.

be judged by what we call reality. Fictions are not false. All fictions create “new worlds” that are stories, whether these be dreams, visions, hallucinations, memories, novels, or our identity stories we create about who we are. This process is inescapable, but how it is regarded is crucial.

What professor Mackey was saying might have been said by Newton, but Nash's answer would have set Goethe's hands to clapping and his face smiling. The secret is in taking your actual experience *seriously*--no matter what the content and this leads on to Goethean stories not Newtonian stories—yet, stories all.

Kids take their own minds quite seriously by nature resulting in their learning language, learning play, learning art, learning story—none of which have to be “taught” in the usual sense. But when we reach school age, then our being taught in the ways we are taught *fractures* our relation to the natural mind and we begin to lose our capacity to take our own mind seriously. As we grow we are complicit in deadening the child's storymind in ourselves and in others. This leaves us totally unprepared to deal with the reality of the natural mind as it cyclically insists on itself at various points in our growth. Separation from the story aspect of the natural mind might be one way of characterizing the origin of the many dysfunctions that begin to take control of most people's lives. People's lives are still stories, still narratively structured, but then our stories are more and more populated with *demons*.

Robert Olen Butler has been characterized as “the best living American writer, period.” Arguable, of course, but certainly someone to listen to when he reflects on the process of writing fiction. The 1993 Pulitzer Prize winner asserts: “Art does not come from ideas. Art does not come from the mind. Art comes

from the place where you dream. Art comes from your unconscious; it comes from the white-hot center of you.”⁵

While at first seeming to be saying something different from John Nash, I think Butler, Dick and Nash are all referring to the same general perception, that the white-hot center from which “creation” springs is some place *other* than what we usually think of as our conscious, rational, logical, linear mind. The creation place, being other and elsewhere, is why we need messengers and messages *from* there. We can’t just “go there” in the same way we can go to the various habitats of our conscious mind.

Most moderns are desperately cut off from this white-hot center, or are consumed by the fiery demons that result from its utter neglect. Primitive man was immersed in contents thrown up into their experience from the white-hot center. The story nature of these contents, and the storymind that dominated man’s early experience, no doubt played a significant role in human evolution. The many scenarios played out in stories and dreams and imaginings and cave paintings served to prepare the mind and body for whatever would be encountered in so called “real” life.

This evolutionary significance of story and what Butler calls the *story space*, is being brought more and more to light in contemporary brain research in general and in sleep and dream research in particular. What is now being discovered is that structures at all level of brain function are *imposing* narrative structure. Because of this I like to think of the brain as a story engine, whether awake or asleep. While we are used to thinking of dreams as occurring only in sleep, it now seems clear that we are dreaming all the time, generating stories all the time. We become more aware of this when we do sleep, when our conscious brain turns itself off, and the body goes into paralysis.⁶ We are defenseless when we sleep, but what we are experiencing then is more crucial to our lives than

⁵ Robert Olen Butler, *From Where You Dream: The Process of Writing Fiction*. New York: Grove Press, 2005.

⁶ For a brilliant account of this new research and its implications, see Jonathan Gottschall, *The Story Telling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012.

most people ever know. There is a cost to taking the full range of our experience seriously. But we pay an enormous price if we do not.

As I noted earlier, “The courier awaits my reply.” What can I “send back” with the messenger to that elsewhere aside from these skeletal observations? And what about the “presence” the messenger and the message engendered?



The coming guest

I have illustrated that the root idea in considering dreams as angels, is first that dreams are experienced as something *other* (that is, strange, foreign, uncertain, ambiguous, irrational, etc.) and second, this simile is one way of "personifying" otherness. Personifying (following Hillman) has the effect of attributing the fact of dreaming and the message of dreams to "something" having the qualities of a person, that is, a "being" having intentions, desires, and purposes different than those we claim for our conscious selves. Call it angel, a courier from an unknown geography, a messenger with a message.

Add to this, Henri Corbin's question: "How do we feed the angel?" And his extraordinary answer, "We feed the angel with our substance."⁷

How, then, do we feed dreams, feed them with our substance, in contrast to mining, harvesting and reaping from the dream (the angel) to feed our ego? Whether we turn away from dreams (by all the various

⁷ Quoted in Paco Mitchell's "The Heron's Demand." *Dream Network Journal*, Vol. 31, No. 2, 2012.

means from forgetting to drugging to discounting as nonsense), eagerly embrace them (seeking their meaning, cajoling their guidance, courting their counsel), or interpret them (with all the ubiquitous ways of turning the dream into something we can bring under the sway of understanding), all of this is different than the idea of feeding the angel, feeding the dream, feeding the other with our *substance*.

You will recall that in talking about this topic of dreams as angels, I found myself spontaneously saying, "The courier awaits my reply." The nesting of these ideas suggests that I must give the courier something of my substance to take back to the realm of the other.

What can that be?

I am working on an answer to this question, but I am not there yet. Consider what follows as scattered "notes" toward an answer.

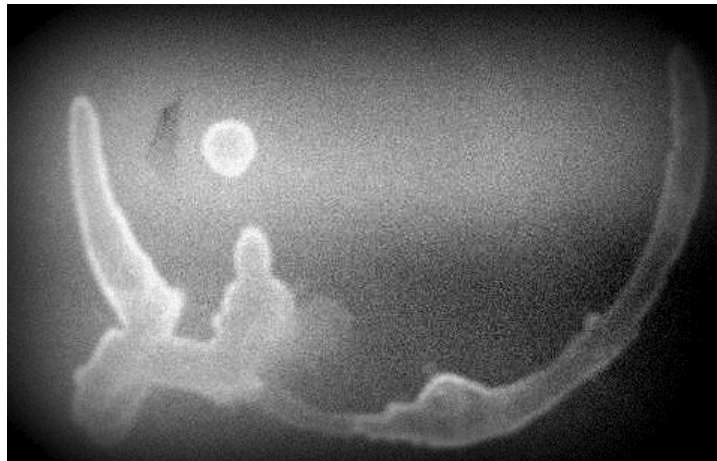
Otherness comes in many forms, not just dreams. Consider what I call the "accidental other."

To illustrate *this* quality of otherness, I take close-up photographs of coffee spills, oil patterns in the street, bark of trees, clouds in the sky—literally anything, that is *not* a product of my direct intention, but of "something else." This something else captures my fancy and stimulates my imagination. I pay close attention to the experiences these found images bring forth in me. I call this way with images a "Goethean way of seeing" to contrast it with the highly intentioned and more familiar "Newtonian way of seeing." What one finds in this odd activity is that images so encountered "speak" in ways that would be difficult to come by

from intention alone. In this sense, they are like “found dreams” and this is why I call them experiences of the "accidental other."

I experience “seeing” these images, that is, the “finding” of them, as a gift. They are so easy to miss, so easy to dismiss, so easy to misrepresent as inconsequential, meaningless, without significance—just like dreams, or visions, and all such. Yet, like slips of the tongue (and all the other “parapraxes” of daily life), they are expressions of something other than our conscious intentions. I take these things as *messengers with a message*. Here too, I believe, the courier awaits my response.

After dinner one evening, by “accident,” I spilled some coffee on a ceramic table surface. Before the table was cleaned off, I took a picture of this spill, adding it to my collection without examining it closely at the time. Later, I had a dream. In the dream, I was in my studio area and a voice called out: “only riding the moon enables one to see the coming guest.” I knew that the voice—whatever its source—was talking about this most recent spill. Voice dreams are difficult to ignore. They have quality of truth speaking. Here is the image.



Now in looking at the image (on which I have used some contrast and darkening tools in order to see it better, the original being very light, but

without altering the image in any other way), I invite you to see the figure “riding” the crescent moon, looking out at the earth, and seeing that approaching figure the dream calls “the coming guest.”

I have been talking and writing about the coming guest since 1982, prompted by Jung’s letter to Herbert Read in 1960. Here is the portion of the letter I quoted in *Psyche Speaks*:

We simply have to listen to what the psyche spontaneously⁸ says to us. What the dream, which is not manufactured by us, says is *just so*...It is the great dream, which has always spoken through the artist as a mouthpiece. All his love and passion (his “values”) flow towards the coming guest to proclaim his arrival...what is the great Dream? It consists of the many small dreams and the many acts of humility and submission to their hints. It is the future and the picture of the new world, which we do not understand yet. We cannot know better than the unconscious and its intimations. *There* is a fair chance of finding what we seek in vain in our conscious world. Where else could it be?

Even though I have worked for 30 years on “the coming guest,” the coffee spill and the dream that followed bring a new message, “news” if you will. The dream pushes me to become aware of the implications of the “accidental other” pictured in the coffee spill, a rider riding the crescent moon, able to *see* the coming guest as it approaches the earth. We can’t

⁸ “Spontaneously” is an important word here as it was when I uttered, “the courier awaits my reply.” The word comes from *sponte*, Latin for “of its own accord,” and refers to the intention of something other than the conscious ego. Deeper, the root is *spen-*, which means to “draw across,” “to stretch,” “to spin.” This root gives rise to our word “spider.” We may not like spiders, but at the root of spontaneous, is the spider as *other*, entangling our conscious ego in *its* web, in *its* intention, in *its* desire. It is this spider's spinning that connects the image to the idea of “fate,” and why “the other” will always bring us closer to the reality of our fate than will our conscious intentions. This is why we try to turn away otherness, to turn our backs on the other, to shy away from relationship, and therefore from a genuine eros (erotic) encounter with the other.

see it from earth. It is not something we can readily point to from our earthbound perspective.

I'm sure that part of what Corbin meant by "substance," is one's time, energy and soulful engagement in depth with the other—most particularly the other that comes to us from dreams.

I'm also sure that in our time, the possibility of this kind of engagement is becoming ever more difficult. Why? The "economics of corpocracy" (to borrow David Mitchell's chilling phrase from *Cloud Atlas*) is driving our time, energy and soul into enslavement to the surface and into ever more engagement with each other in superficial ways. This is where the money is and it can be drained from the many to the few in ever-increasing flow as we lose connection to taking time, making place, and engaging deeply with our individual psyche. The ego seems almost happily drawn into this ubiquity of consumption, what I have called the commodification of desire. It is not accidental that the icons of these phenomena are labeled "I" (I-Pod, I-Phone, I-Pad) and the company that has mastered this process to perfection has become the most valued company in the history of the world. It is Walt Disney's dream of mastery and control through entertainment. It is the pinnacle of achievement of Edward Bernays' (double nephew of Sigmund Freud) principle that "if we understand the mechanisms and motives of the group mind, it is now possible to control and regiment the masses according to our will without their knowing it."

Given this, given that this process is so pervasive, and is overwhelming any meaningful opposition, does it make sense to ask how one rides a crescent moon?

I think so.

And what would that be? I don't know for sure, but I imagine it begins in the imagination. And for that I must disconnect from the wired and wireless world, turn inward, and turn on to my imagination, to let it lead. I think this is what Jung was getting at when he said that "it" speaks through the artist as mouthpiece as the "great dream." It may be from my imagination, then, that I can recruit the substance I can give to the courier and send him on his way. And, if Jung is correct, part of what I send back with the courier must be something of a welcoming of the coming guest, that is, "art." It is perhaps a foretaste of what Harold Rosenberg speaks to when he talks about the necessity of "a society in which everyone will be an artist."

Before sleeping, I gaze on the moon rider. Words begin to tumble together in my reverie forming something that might become a poem. "Moon rider: May I join you?" is one of those lines. It does seem as if the voice in the dream suggests that it is possible to become a moon rider and from this vantage point witness the coming guest. I drop off to sleep with more lines swirling. I awake with a dream. In this dream, I see an owl, a tree, a moon. The owl is formed by pistachio nuts. I do not "understand" what the dream "means." But I do understand that I *must* make this owl, that in some way this owl will become part of the substance I feed the dream. And I understand as well that *The Pistachio Owl* comes as a gift and that I feel impelled to circulate it, knowing that it is this gift circulating that forms the basis of community. *Communis* means gifting (*munis*) together (*com*). I give you *The Pistachio Owl* and ask you to pass it on.





The dream's desire

Earlier, I described a dream that referred to a coffee spill I had photographed and put aside. In the dream, a voice made a dramatic assertion: "Only from the moon can you see the coming guest." The dream also contained an image of an owl, a tree and a full moon. The dream owl was formed from pistachio shells. I was impelled to manifest this image, which I did using pistachio shells and encaustic techniques. I suggested that this owl would become part of the substance that I fed the "dream as angel," as an example of what Corbin had asserted: that "we feed the angel with our substance."

I want to inquire more deeply into this sense of "substance" and to examine what constitutes the acts of feeding our substance to dreams.

Looking at the roots of the word substance (*sub-* and *-stance*), we get the sense of "what stands beneath," and the development of this image leads to what stands at the "deepest" place, often referred to as "essence."

It is hard to appreciate now that the deepest heresy in Christian history concerned substance, that is, the question of whether Jesus Christ was the *same* substance as God, or a *similar* but different substance created by God.⁹ The solution to this, promulgated at the Nicaean Council in 325 and remaining so to the present time, was the *absolutist* notion of consubstantiation (that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are all of the *same* substance) while the heresy, promulgated by Arius, was a “relativistic” view, that the substance of God was primary and the substance of the Son and Holy Ghost was secondary, similar, but different. The Arian notion was considered heretical because *any* difference in the substance of the Trinity would allow for the possibility of evil (or some other principle) to enter the Godhead. This could not be allowed, and still cannot be permitted within the dogma of most Christian traditions.

A little reflection reveals that this absolute/relative dimension pervades all human activities, not just Christian tradition. In psychoanalysis, for example, Freud’s absolutism contrasts with the heresy of Jung’s relativism. We have the absolutism of many traditions, discounted by the heretical relativity of modernism and the hyper-relativity of postmodernism. There is no need to present further examples here because the main point is clear: when we focus on “our substance,” that which we are calling upon to feed the “dream as angel,” we are going to run squarely into this same issue *within* ourselves, and most specifically in terms of the typical absolutism of the ego in relation to the heretical relativity of the deeper psyche.

⁹ I am indebted to my colleague Paco Mitchell for reminding me of the relevance of the Nicaean Council and its manner of dealing with the Arian heresy relating to the nature of “substance.”

I think it fair to say that in most dream work, whether in the professional consulting room, in myriad dream groups, in most any setting where dreams are given any attention at all, the primary emphasis is on the care and feeding of the ego. We want to know what the dream means. We want to know now. We are willing to pay to find out, whether from books, from lectures, or personal engagement with those who profess to lead us to meaning. We are easily frustrated at the opacity of dreams, their riddle quality, their confusion, their ephemerality, their seeming irrelevance to our conscious concerns. They don't yield to ego's purposes and intentions easily. Certainly the vast majority of human beings pay scant attention to dreams, let alone accord them any value. Dreams don't register much in what we call our daily world, in our cultural contents and conflicts, or in our commercial enterprises that take up the bulk of human time, energy and resources.

Suppose that the purpose of dreams is not *for* the ego at all. Instead, imagine that the purpose of dreams is to recruit the ego's attention, time, value, and action in relation to the "otherness" of the dream. Then, we would ask: What is the dream's desire? Remember what Jung wrote to Herbert Read: "...what is the great Dream? It consists of the many small dreams and the many acts of humility and submission to their hints." You can see here that Jung is not speaking of how the dream is to serve the ego; rather, how the ego is to serve the dream with *acts* of humility and submitting to the hints dreams bring forth.

I may prefer to operate from solar consciousness. But the dream voice stated without reservation that the coming guest could only be seen from the moon, so that I must submit to a lunar perspective in my future work on the coming guest. The lunar perspective has much more in common with imagination (and lunacy) than with explanation and

interpretation (rationality) which are the hallmarks of solar consciousness. As I began to imagine upon what the dream voice said, interior voices sprang up spontaneously: “Moon rider, may I join you?” You see here the images taking the lead, not my usual ego-consciousness. Then I acted further on the images from the dream by manifesting them in an encaustic/pistachio-shelled image that could then be circulated to others and playing at least a potential part in community.

One could say, the dream knows something I do not. That the coming guest can only be seen from the moon is not a thought I would ever have had. This “dream knowing” is very powerful and compelling. It is common to think that our dream world belongs only to our individual selves and serves only our individual consciousness. I no longer believe this is correct. I suggest we may be more connected to one another in the dream world than we have ever imagined before.¹⁰ As Philip K. Dick concluded, “What has got to be gotten over is the false idea that an hallucination is a private matter.”

Try this as an experiment in your dream group or with a group of friends or with your colleagues at work or school or wherever. Sit in a circle. Close your eyes. Recall a dream image from some recent dream, or even from childhood. Just an image, not the whole narrative. Just speak out the image, such as, “There is an owl made of pistachio nuts with a tree and a full moon.” Then someone will speak another image. Round and round the circle these images are given voice. What happens may astonish you. You will begin to “sense” the presence of something palpable, but not definable, something quite real, but unnamable. Do not be surprised if

¹⁰ This is at least part of what I mean by the *rhizomic* layer, which analogically is like the way trees communicate underground, or like electrons communicate with one another across “empty” space, differing senses of how we are connected in the rhizomic layer through dreams.

what you begin to experience what seems indistinguishable from dreams, for in fact, you are *in* the field from where you dream. Your imagination will begin to flow—it may be in the form of what seems poetic speech, it may be images, it may be the beginning lines of a story forming— for you are in the presence of storymind. There is no need to “discuss” the images, no need for interpretation, no need for understanding. You will feel the Eros of action forming; you will want to “do” something, for this is the ground of substance to be fed back to the “presence” that was incarnated by nothing more than giving voice to dream images.

By doing this by yourself, or with others, you will be creating the welcoming field for the coming guest and bring forth the possibilities of futures that may not be had any other way.

When I look at the definitions of “substance” in the dictionary, I’m taken by the entry: *gist, heart*. I like it that these two words are there together. I like it that “gist” has its origin in “to take action.” Heart in this sense, strikes me as quite similar to what Kim Rosen¹¹ writes about in *Saved by A Poem*, to take in a poem “by heart,” not so much as school memorizing, but as *engaging* the poem so deeply it becomes an *indweller* in one’s bones. Something of this sensibility is what is meant by feeding the angel, feeding the dream.

If only the world would pay attention!

¹¹ See my interview with Kim Rosen in *Dream Network Journal*, Vol. 30, 2011.