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PSYCHOANALYSIS: SIGMUND FREUD

When, after passing through a narrow defile, we suddenly emerge upon a piece of high ground, where the path divides and the finest prospects open up on every side, we may pause for a moment and consider in which direction we shall first turn our steps. Such is the case with us, now that we have surmounted the first interpretation of a dream. We find ourselves in the full daylight of a sudden discovery.

—Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams

I wish there were some way we could avoid starting this survey with Freud. Practically every book on dreams that provides any sort of historical background begins with an obligatory outline of Freud's dream theories. I have grown accustomed to skimming over such outlines, and I imagine that most other readers of books on dreams do as well. However, now that I am setting out to survey modern approaches to dreams and religious meaning I find that I, too, must give an outline of Freud's dream theories. Freud is the first great modern explorer of the wilderness of dreams by means of that solitary, perilous foray through the "narrow defile" of his "specimen dream" interpretation in chapter 2 of The Interpretation of Dreams. Freud did reach a vista overlooking a huge expanse of terrain never before investigated with such rigor and honesty.¹

Even though we shall range far beyond the first trials Freud marked out and explore areas he never reached, we too cannot avoid taking our first steps along his well-trodden path. However, while the next few pages may be tedious to some readers, I will make two promises. One, this initial outline will be brief; we will not dwell excessively on such familiar grounds. And two, our later discussions of Freud will, I believe, lead us beyond the conventional evaluations of his work. After exploring the
other paths of dream study and after drawing upon the insights of different philosophical and theological guides, we will come back to Freud: we will find new reasons for challenging Freud, and we will also find many new values in his work.

The principal source for this assessment of Freud will be The Interpretation of Dreams. Although the book was written early in Freud's career, he made very few substantive changes in his theory of dream interpretation in later years and kept the work up to date through numerous minor refinements in its successive editions. We will, however, also draw on other writings of Freud in those places where they can help illustrate particular features of his theory.

In the early stages of his career, Freud conceived himself with the treatment of hysterical symptoms in his patients. He tried a variety of different therapeutic techniques, but was not satisfied with their success. Freud also set himself the goal of grounding psychology on a firm, rational, scientific basis, as firm as that of any of the natural sciences. The Interpretation of Dreams, published in 1900, reflects both of these concerns. Freud found that dreams could be of great help both in revealing the deepest unconscious conflicts of his patients and in portraying the fundamental dynamics of the human psyche.

The first words of chapter I of The Interpretation of Dreams announce Freud's basic approach to dreams:

In the pages that follow I shall bring forward proof that there is a psychological technique which makes it possible to interpret dreams, and that, if that procedure is employed, every dream reveals itself as a psychical structure which has a meaning and which can be inserted at an assignable point in the mental activities of waking life. (Freud [1900] 1965, 31)

Freud devotes the first chapter to a review of the various theories that have been proposed to account for the existence of dreams. He finds that almost all of these theories disavow dreams as arbitrary, nonsensical phenomena devoid of psychological meaning. Freud, however, devotes the rest of his book to proving that dreams do have meaning, that they are governed by identifiable laws, that they occupy a distinctive place in the psychic economy, and that their meaning can be determined by the employment of certain analytic techniques. Freud is, in short, bringing a new and hitherto untamed realm of human experience under the reign of scientific knowledge: the concern with laws, structures, causality, method, and technical control characterizes the agenda of nineteenth-century natural science. Freud sees the interpretation of dreams as an extension of that empiricist project. He asks in his Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis,

What is it actually that we want to arrive at? What is our work aiming at? We want something that is sought for in all scientific work—to understand the phenomena, to establish a correlation between them and, in the latter end, if it is possible, to enlarge our power over them. (Freud [1917a] 1966, 100)

Freud describes the process of dream formation in the following way. When we fall asleep, a conflict soon arises between two different desires: on the one hand, we need the rest that a peaceful sleep brings us; on the other, various unconscious urges, which we repress while awake, take advantage of the weakened powers of consciousness in sleep to assert themselves. In order to accommodate both the wish to sleep and the wish to satisfy unconscious urges, the "psychic apparatus" creates dreams as a compromise. When the unconscious urges rise up they cannot be allowed to enter consciousness as they are, because their objectionable nature would disturb the sleeper and inhibit his or her rest. Thus the psychic apparatus transforms the unconscious urges by means of the four mechanisms of the dreamwork (condensation, displacement, regard for representability, and secondary elaboration). The unconscious urges are thus allowed a hallucinatory satisfaction that prevents their real, disturbing character from reaching conscious attention.

This account of dream formation provides the basis for Freud's famous claim that every dream "is (a disguised) fulfillment of a (suppressed or repressed) wish" ([1900] 1965, 194). The motive force of a dream is always an unconscious wish, and the dream itself represents the satisfaction, in a masked form, of this wish ([1917a] 1966, 129). Freud thus distinguishes between the dream's manifest content, that is, the distorted, masked dream narrative remembered by consciousness, and its latent content, that is, the original wishes, urges, and thoughts that the dream-work transforms ([1900] 1965, 311).

Interpreting a dream, in Freud's view, requires a reversal of the process by which dreams are formed. He says in the Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis,

And let me remind you once again that the work which transforms the latent dream into the manifest one is called the dream-work. The work which proceeds in the contrary direction, which endeavors to arrive at the latent dream from the manifest one, is our work of interpretation. This work of interpretation seeks to undo the dream-work. ([1917a] 1966, 170)

The dream-work has destroyed the coherence of the dream-thoughts, has condensed many different meanings into one image, has displaced mean-
ings from one image onto another, and has deliberately hidden the original, true content of the dream. Freud's interpretation tries to recover that original coherence, to unpack and sort out the condensed thoughts, to restore meanings to their proper states, and to reach back to that original content. Freud states that we must always disregard the structure and coherence of the manifest dream; after carefully gathering the dreamer’s personal associations, we must reestablish the broken connections, remove the disguises, and discover the original dream-thoughts. Once this is done, once the latent content emerges, the manifest dream itself is of no use and can be discarded.

Freud argues that dreams are a special kind of text, because they were never meant to be understood (1900) 1965, 377). A dream is a text that intentionally tries to deceive us, and thus unusual interpretive measures have to be taken. Sometimes an image must be taken in its positive meaning, sometimes in its negative. Sometimes its meaning refers to events in the dreamer's personal history, sometimes to universal symbols, and sometimes to plays on words. Freud admits that all this ambiguity gives dream interpretation an appearance of arbitrariness. However, he argues in his own defense that his dream interpretations reveal many surprising and impressive connections of meanings, that they offer nearly exhaustive accounts of the contents of given dreams, and that this procedure is the same as that followed in the successful psychoanalytic treatment of hysterical symptoms. The objection that the seeming ambiguity of his dream interpretations undermines Freud’s basic hypotheses "is invalidated by pointing out that on the contrary ambiguity or indefiniteness is a characteristic of dreams which was necessarily to be anticipated" (1917a) 1966, 229).

The great value of dreams for Freud, then, is their capacity to display to the cynic interpreter all the deepest conflicts of the individual unconscious. Dreams can be tremendously useful in therapy, as Freud demonstrates in his later case studies. Even more importantly, the study of dreams gives insights into the basic structures of the human psyche—hence Freud's grand assertion that "the interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind" (1900) 1966, 647). Dreams reveal the most archaic strata of the mind; Freud says that in dreams we discover "mental antiquities" that tell us about the very beginnings of human thought. Thus dreams bear not only on the study of individuals and their illnesses: the analysis of dreams also contributes significantly to our knowledge of human culture. Throughout The Interpretation of Dreams Freud points to the relevance of his discoveries about dreams for the understanding of art, mythology, morality, politics, and a host of other cultural phenomena. The study of dreams is in Freud's view one of the newest frontiers in the scientific study of culture.
SURREALISM: ANDRE BRETON

How can we even believe ourselves capable of seeing, of hearing, of touching anything if we take no account of these innumerable possibilities, which, for most people, cease to be available at the first sounds of the milkman. The general essence of subjectivity, this immense and richest of all terrains, is left uncultivated. ... The poet to come will surmount the depressing idea of the irreparable divorce between action and dream. He will hold out the magnificent fruit of the tree with those entwined roots and will know how to persuade those who taste of it that it has nothing bitter about it.

—Andre Breton, *Communicating Vessels*

I believe in the future resolution of these two states—outwardly so contradictory—which are dream and reality, into a sort of absolute reality, a *nureality*, so to speak.

—Andre Breton, *The First Surrealist Manifesto*

An intimate relationship between dreams and artistic expression can be found in cultures throughout history. Chapter 1 touched on this briefly, in the many reports of dreams inspiring the creation of religious songs, dances, masks, and charms. Artistic interest in dreams remains strong in modern Western culture as well. Many of the leading fiction writers of the twentieth century (such as Franz Kafka, James Joyce, Jorge Louis Borges, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Thomas Pynchon, and Salman Rushdie) weave together waking and dreaming realities in their works. Both film and television productions create, either directly or indirectly, a dream-like experience in their audiences. Countless modern writers, musicians, painters, sculptors, dancers, and actors draw on their dreams for the
images that they subsequently transform into artistic creations. The relationship between dreams and art, while generally neglected in surveys of modern dream research, is in fact a field of rich, distinct, and important insights regarding the nature and meaning of dreams. It is vital for our explorations that we recognize this field and try to integrate its insights with the findings of other fields of dream study.

The focus here will be on the surrealists movement, which began in Europe in the early 1920s and thrived for about two decades. Surrealism is a particularly good example of how artists have explored dreams, and a study of the surrealist movement (as opposed to any of the many other artistic approaches to dreams) has special advantages for our project. First, surrealism draws directly upon Freud's ideas about dreams and the unconscious, while at the same time using those ideas to explore radically different terrain than that covered by psychoanalysis. Surrealism will thus show how one path of dream study can suddenly split and lead off in two different directions. And second, surrealism is an excellent area to explore, given our specific interest in modern Western views of dreams and religious meaning. Surrealism is an avowedly "modern" movement, a direct artistic response to twentieth-century Western culture, and it explicitly connects its approach to dreams, creativity, and the unconscious to that particular cultural context.

We will concentrate specifically on the writings of Andre Breton, the early theorist and champion of the surrealist movement. We will look not so much at the artistic works of the surrealists as at the beliefs, ideals, and goals that surrealists artists tried to express and develop in their works. Breton gives an especially forceful and extensive account of the motivating principles of the surrealists, particularly in his two surrealist manifestos (1924 and 1929) and his philosophical essay Communicating Vessels (1932).

Surrealism arose out of the same cultural climate as did the other pioneering modern art movements, such as dadaism, primitivism, cubism, and fauvism. The surrealists shared with these movements a profound dissatisfaction with traditional Western culture. They rejected the strictures of conventional rationality, morality, Christianity, and bourgeois social behavior. Breton opens the First Surrealist Manifesto by stating, "The absolute rationalism which reigns in fashion allows for the consideration of only those facts narrowly relevant to our experience... Boundaries have been assigned even to experience. It revolves in a cage from which release is becoming increasingly difficult" (Breton [1924] 1965, 66). The various movements of modern art were joined in a quest for ways to challenge those boundaries, to escape their stifling effects, and to discover new possibilities of human perception, experience, and creativity.

Surrealism differed from the other movements in its turn to the unconscious as its primary resource for the fight against the oppressive limitations of Western civilization. As Breton immediately acknowledges, Freud is the one who brought the strange nature of the unconscious to the modern world's attention. "Credit for this must go to Freud. On the evidence of his discoveries a current of opinion is at last developing which will enable the explorer of the human mind to extend his investigations" (Breton [1924] 1965, 66). Freud's work reveals how the mental outlook of the modern Westerner is a woefully constructed one, and Breton took the surrealist mission to be the integration of this narrow perspective with the vast potentials of the unconscious mind—the "future resolution" of dreaming and waking realities into a "surreality."

As that mission suggests, Breton and the surrealists were particularly interested in dreams, those expressions of the unconscious regions of the mind so shunned by conventional Western culture. Indeed, to take any interest at all in dreams represents a departure from a rationalistic outlook, as Breton comments, "I have always been astonished by the extreme disproportion in the importance and seriousness assigned to events of the waking moments and to those of sleep by the ordinary observer... The dream finds itself relegated to a parenthesis, like the night. And in general it gives no more counsel than the night" (Breton [1924] 1965, 67). The surrealists turned this conventional attitude on its head by granting dreams as much authority as waking rationality in matters of perception, knowledge, and aesthetics.

Surrealists venerated dreams above all for the powerful sense of freedom they give. In stark contrast to the rigid limits imposed by bourgeois society, dreams open up to us a world of possibilities—the editorial of the first issue of The Surrealist Resolution states, "the dream alone entrusts to man all his rights to freedom" (Waldenber 1965, 47). The possibilities we discover in dreams often include images and experiences that are bizarre, fantastic, absurd, and disturbing, and the surrealists sought in their art to bring forth the power of the fantastic as a way of directly challenging what we take to be ordinary and normal. The surrealist poet Apollinaire took as his motto "I am nothing!" while Breton wrote in the "First Surrealist Manifesto" ("The Marvellous is always beautiful, everything marvellous is beautiful. Nothing but the Marvellous is beautiful," (Breton [1924] 1965, 70). Thus the review Litterature, an early surrealist publication, included many accounts of dreams and how poets and painters sought to express their dream experiences in their art (Waldenber 1965, 13-15).

In communicating vessels Breton presents a detailed analysis of one of his own dreams, and this analysis illuminates very well some key surrealist notions regarding dreams. Exactly as Freud does with his "specimen dream" in chapter 2 of The Interpretation of Dreams, Breton first gives the
test of his dream, then some comments on the "day residue," and then a line-by-line analysis of the images. His examination uses Freud’s psychoanalytic methods to identify instances of condensation and displacement and to connect particular dream images with intimate personal associations. Breton argues that his interpretation of the dream is complete and exhaustive; nothing remains unexplained. Furthermore, he claims that his interpretation proves that there is no transcendental, divine force at work in the production of dreams:

I insist emphatically on the fact that for me it [the interpretation] exhausts the dream's content and contradicts the diverse allegations that have been made about the “unknown” character of the dream, or its incoherence. No mystery in the final analysis, nothing that could provoke any belief in some transcendent intervention occurring in human thought during the night. I say nothing in the whole working of the creative function that does not bow clearly from the elements of lived life, provided one takes the trouble to examine it: nothing (I cannot state this strongly enough), except for those elements that the imagination uses poetically, that would contain any appreciable residue held to be irreducible. From the point of view of the poetic marvelous, something perhaps; from the point of view of the religious marvelous, absolutely nothing. (Breton [1929] 1990, 45)

This example enables Breton to argue that dreams are not unfathomable, mysterious utterances from transcendent beings that humans can never understand. Dreams can be understood, Breton claims, if we devote ourselves to a careful interpretation of them. His polemic against "the religious marvelous" is a polemic against the barriers erected by the mystifications of traditional religion, barriers that separate humans from the creative powers of their dreams.

What also interests Breton here is that this example shows "the need inherent in the dream to magnify and to dramatize" (47), and thus to challenge forcefully our ordinary concepts of space, time, and causality. It is precisely this kind of challenging power, so abundantly realized in dreams, that Breton and the surrealists want to bring to bear on the waking consciousness of conventional Western culture. Breton says his goal in Communicating Vessels is "to prosacut materialist knowledge by means of the dream" (55).

Despite their immersion in the world of dreams and the unconscious, the surrealists believed that their art served a practical, revolutionary purpose: their creations were aimed at transforming the waking world of bourgeois culture. Breton begins the "Second Surrealist Manifesto" with the statement, "in the end Surrealism's overall tendency will be readily admitted to have been nothing so much as the provocation, from an intellectual and moral point of view, of the most universal and serious kind of crisis of conscience" (Breton [1929] 1965, 76). On an aesthetic level, surrealism sought to create new views of artistic expression, initiating reforms in technique, style, and criteria of beauty. On an intellectual level, the surrealists tried to develop a new way of knowing the world, a way beyond the ordinary polarities that structure Western epistemology—as Breton says, "undertaking the investigation of the elements of reality and unreality, reason and unreason, reflection and impulse" (Breton [1929] 1965, 78). On a religious level, the surrealists rejected traditional Christianity and looked for spiritual inspiration in the occult, in primitive religions, in any form of spirituality condemned by Western society as heretical or demonic (Waldberg 1965, 17, 23). And on a political level, the surrealist's goal was nothing less than the overthrow of bourgeois society (indeed, some surrealists actively aligned themselves with anarchist and Marxist groups). These revolutionary impulses were never integrated very well with each other, and the lofty goals of surrealism remained largely unachieved. But the important point for us to note is that surrealism did not simply flee into the unconscious, there to surrender to the wonders of dreaming. On the contrary, the surrealists tried to relate their dream experiences to waking reality so as to transform the whole of life. Breton stated as the surrealist ideal, not the denial of waking reality, nor the establishment of a new tyranny of dreams, but rather a new and creative fusion of the two states:

There is every reason to believe that there exists a certain point in the mind at which life and death, real and imaginary, past and future, communicable and incommunicable, high and low, cease to be perceived in terms of contradiction. Surrealist activity would be searched in vain for a motive other than the hope to determine this point. (Breton [1929] 1965, 76)

It should be clear, then, that surrealism was more than an art movement, more than a particular way of painting or writing poetry. It was explicitly an entire philosophy of life that emerged in reaction against the conventional world view of the modern West. Surrealism sought to integrate waking and dreaming realities into a new means of knowing and experiencing life, a means that would have implications for aesthetics, epistemology, ethics, politics, and spirituality.
In dream-analysis we must never forget, even for a moment, that we move on treacherous ground where nothing is certain but uncertainty.

—Carl Jung, *The Practical Use of Dream-Analysis*

Most books on dreams offer, in addition to a routine outline of Freud's theory of dreams, a correspondingly ritualized summary of Jung's ideas. The argument tends to run: Freud said this about dreams, and Jung said that; now a new third kind of dream theory will be proposed. Again, I imagine that readers familiar with such books are accustomed to passing over the summaries in order to get to the (allegedly) new material. But I want to emphasize that this project will follow a very different course: not only will we devote equal attention to many other theories of dreams besides those of Freud and Jung, we will also develop an understanding of dreams and religious meaning directly out of our reflections on the approaches of Freud, Jung, and others. The following presentation of Jung's dream theory is thus not simply a rote exercise we must endure before we get to the real stuff. Rather, a careful and detailed examination of Jung's ideas (like the preceding examination of Freud’s ideas) is the indispensable starting point for all of our subsequent explorations. We cannot develop any understanding of the wilderness of dreams without first becoming intimately familiar with these major pathways.

Carl Jung was a Swiss doctor who in 1904 encountered some of Freud's early writings, among which was *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Jung initiated a correspondence with Freud that culminated in their meeting in 1906. They soon became close friends and colleagues, with Jung assuming a virtually official position as Freud's chief disciple and heir. Jung's interest in dreams began well before his meeting with Freud, as he had been deeply affected in childhood by a number of powerful and mystifying
dreams (as Jung describes in his autobiography Memories, Dreams, Reflections [1965]). But under Freud's tutelage, Jung directed this interest into the development of psychoanalytic theory. Among his first writings were two papers that gave spirited defenses of Freud's wish-fulfillment theory of dreams (1909, 1910-11).

Freud and Jung had a painful, bitter falling out in 1914, the reasons for which are to this day hotly debated. Jung claimed that Freud's theory had become overly rigid and dogmatic; Freud said Jung's ambition had become dangerously inflated. Whatever the reasons for their break, its effects on Jung were profound and lasting. The subsequent development of his thought is intimately related to Freud's theories, and a full understanding of Jung is possible only when set in this context of his relationship with Freud. This is particularly true of Jung's theory of dreams, so we will keep Freud's views in mind as we review the many writings in which Jung describes his approach.¹

Like Freud, Jung adapts the model of the natural sciences as his methodological guide in exploring dreams. Jung is tireless in reciting the principles of this method: we must set our theories and prejudices aside, focus on the empirical facts, describe the phenomena as they are, and offer only the most hypothetical interpretations of these facts. He says in "The Psychological Aspects of the Kore,"

In view of the enormous complexity of psychic phenomena, a purely phenomenological point of view is, and will be for a long time, the only possible one... Psychical phenomena occasioned by unconscious processes are so rich and so multifaceted that I prefer to describe my findings and observations and, where possible, to classify them—that is, to arrange them under certain definite types. That is the method of natural science. (Jung [1915b] 1969, 182-83)²

The chief disagreement between Freud and Jung lies in their understandings of how consciousness and the unconscious relate to each other. Whereas Freud (in Jung's view) puts too much emphasis on the development of consciousness, the ego, and rationality, Jung believes that psychological development and health involve a progressive balancing of these with the unconscious, the id, and irrationality. Jung argues that the compensatory relationship between consciousness and the unconscious is a definite feature of human psychology: "we can take the theory of compensation as a basic law of psychic behavior" (Jung [1934] 1974, 101). Ordinarily this balanced relationship between consciousness and the unconscious develops naturally, even automatically over the course of a person's life. Jung describes it as an essentially self-regulating process.³

Dreams reveal this process with particular clarity. Dreams are accurate, honest portrayals of the "actual situation in the psyche," showing how conscious and unconscious forces are interacting.⁴ Jung thus denies Freud's sharp distinction between a dream's manifest and latent contents. Dreams appear strange not due to the mechanisms of any deceitful censor, but because our conscious minds do not always understand the special symbolic language of the unconscious.⁵ In "Two Essays on Analytical Psychology," Jung states:

Mired by the so-called dream mechanisms of Freudian manufacture, such as displacement, inversion, etc., people have imagined they could make themselves independent of the "facade" of the dream by supposing that the true dream thoughts lay hidden behind it. As against this I have long maintained that we have no right to accuse the dream of, so to speak, a deliberate manoeuvre calculated to deceive. Nature is often obscure or impenetrable, but she is not, like man, deceitful. We must therefore take it that the dream is just what it pretends to be, neither more nor less... The dream itself wants nothing: it is a self-evident content, a plain natural fact like the sugar in the blood of a diabetic or the fever in a patient with typhus. It is only we who, if we are clever and can untangle the signs of nature, turn it into a warning. (Jung 1966, 100-1)

Among the many functions that dreams serve (and he acknowledges that there are a number of different ones⁶), there are two that Jung considers especially important. The first relates to that essential compensatory process of the psyche's development. Dreams have the function of balancing the psyche as a whole, bringing forth unconscious contents that consciousness has either ignored, not valued sufficiently, or actively repressed (Jung [1946a] 1974, 30-31, 36, 38). The second valuable function of dreams is to provide prescriptive visions of the future. Jung agrees with Freud that dreams may look backward to past experiences, but he argues that dreams also look forward to anticipate what the individual's future developments may be.⁷ Ultimately, dreams serve to promote the basic developmental process of bringing consciousness and the unconscious into wholeness, the process Jung calls "individuation." "The way of successive assimilations goes far beyond the curative results that specifically concern the doctor. It leads in the end to that distant goal which may perhaps have been the first urge to life: the complete actualization of the whole human being, that is, individuation." (Jung [1934] 1974, 108)⁸

All of this talk of natural courses, automatic processes, and self-regulation might suggest that Jung would not see any need ever to interpret dreams. To an extent, this is true; but at the same time, Jung does believe...
that interpreting dreams can be a very helpful way of assisting the natural process of individuation, especially when it has become obstructed. He says an analyst must start the interpretation of any dream with an admission of ignorance and with a willingness to find something new. At the same time, however, Jung also claims that a great deal of experience and knowledge about comparative religions, mythology, and folklore are all required to make an accurate interpretation of a dream. The first step in an interpretation is to seek the dreamer's associations, to establish the conscious context with as much care and detail as possible. Also, Jung prefers to work with series of dreams, for these provide a broader picture of the dreamer's psychic life than can be gained from a single dream. Using the associations as guides, Jung then asks if any meanings come "naturally," of their own accord; any interpretations he offers are tentative hypotheses. We should be suspicious, he says, if any meanings accord too easily with our expectations, "for as a rule the standpoint of the unconscious is complementary or compensatory to consciousness and thus unexpectedly different." Jung also believes that all dream symbols are related to the dreamer's conscious situation and that there are no fixed meanings to any symbols. Jung believes that dreams frequently express archetypal images, which are collective and transcend the individual's own consciousness. Archetypes, Jung says, are universal psychic structures that underlie all human thought. Thus his interpretations of dreams often have the realm of the individual's associations entirely when he believes the dream's symbols touch on these universal structures.

One important question Jung asks in interpreting a dream is whether the dream's images and symbols relate primarily to the objective level of meaning or the subjective level:

I call every interpretation which equates the dream images with real objects an interpretation on the objective level. In contrast to this is the interpretation which refers every part of the dream and all the actors in it back to the dreamer himself. This I call interpretation on the subjective level. (Jung 1966, 84)26

Ultimately, Jung says that the process of interpreting a dream, of determining whether the meaning is more objective or more subjective, whether the symbols are more personal or more archetypal, is a matter of "joint reflection," a "dialectical process" like the Socratic dialogues, in which both the analyst and the dreamer participate. The key criterion for a valid interpretation is its therapeutic value: if the interpretation brings forth meanings that help the dreamer, it is a valid interpretation. Jung says in "The Aims of Psychotherapy,"

It ought not to matter to us whether the result of my musings on the dream is scientifically verifiable or tenable, otherwise I am pursuing an ulterior—and therefore neurotic—aim. I must content myself wholly with the fact that the result means something to the patient and sets his life in motion again. I may allow myself only one criterion for the result of my labors. Does it work? (Jung 1911, 42-43)

The fact that dreams reveal so clearly and with such power the nature of the unconscious makes them of interest to the cultural critic as well as the psychotherapist. Jung believes, for the psychology of the individual exactly parallels the psychology of humanity. Thus the fact that the dreams of so many individuals involves a painful split between consciousness and the unconscious has significance beyond their personal lives. Jung says such dreams also represent a broadly human conflict manifesting itself in the individual, for unity with oneself is the hallmark of civilized man. The neurotic is only a special instance of the disoriented man who ought to harmonize nature and culture within himself. (Jung 1966, 19)

The exploration of the unconscious by such means as dream interpretation has a tremendous cultural value, Jung claims, because it can reveal to people the unconscious forces that they tend to deny or repress: "if people can be educated to see the shadow-side of their nature clearly, it may be hoped that they will also learn to understand and love their fellow men better." (Jung 1966, 26)

Religions have always served, Jung says, to effect the union between consciousness and the unconscious. The individuation process, i.e., the growth of the psyche towards balance and wholeness, is the core of all religious and spiritual traditions. But in the modern age, with so much skepticism about religion, the traditional faiths and rites no longer "work" for people. This is why depth psychology has become so important, in Jung's view, because it can offer a practical, effective means of promoting the individuation process without arousing the modern suspicion of religious illusions and superstition. In one of his case studies Jung engages in a lengthy analysis of the patient's dreams, drawing out voluminous parallels with graphic, alchemical, and mystical symbolism, in order to show how the unconscious of the modern individual is still connected to essen-
Initially religious yearnings and how the psychological approach to dreams can help modern people satisfy these yearnings: "the case before us proves that even if the conscious mind is miles away from the ancient conceptions of the rites of renewal, the unconscious still strives to bring them closer in dreams" (Jung [1952] 1974, 217).24

Indeed, Jung believes it is precisely because modern Westerners have such a rational, materialistic worldview that "religious compensations" come to play an especially significant role in our dreams in order to balance that one-sided conscious outlook (Jung [1948a] 1974, 36). While such dreams of "religious compensation" are not necessarily frequent, their power and influence is nevertheless tremendous: these "big" dreams...are often remembered for a lifetime, and not infrequently prove to be the richest jewel in the treasure-house of psychic experience" (Jung [1948b] 1974, 36).25

**CONTENT ANALYSIS: CALVIN HALL**

Dreams, in effect, provide us with maps of regions which are inaccessible in waking consciousness. With these maps we are better able to follow the course of man's behavior, to understand why he selects one road rather than another, to anticipate the difficulties and obstacles he will encounter, and to predict his destinations.

—Calvin Hall, _The Meaning of Dreams_

Calvin Hall was an American psychologist whose prolific dream research began in the 1940s and continued on until his death in 1985. Hall's work was initially motivated by a frustration with the theories of Freud and Jung, which appeared to him to be murky, subjective, and difficult to apply practically. He developed a means of studying dreams, the content analysis method, that soon became one of the most influential and widely practiced techniques for studying dreams. Hall's research methods and general views on the nature and meaning of dreams are to this day major forces guiding contemporary dream study. In the following brief survey we will focus on three of Hall's major works: _The Meaning of Dreams_, first published in 1953 and slightly revised in 1966; _The Content Analysis of Dreams_, coauthored with Robert L. Van de Castle in 1966; and _The Individual and his Dreams_, coauthored with Vernon J. Nordby in 1972. These three works give a good sense of both the method Hall used in studying dreams and the ideas he formed about what dreams mean.

Hall describes how the human fascination with dreams has led to many attempts to explain their mysterious messages. The origin of dreams has, for example, "been attributed to such diverse sources as the absence of bed covers or the presence of spirits" (Hall and Van de Castle 1966, 6). Hall believes that Freud's psychoanalytic dream theory went a long way
towards demystifying dreams, but since the time of Freud's work little real progress has been made: "it is true that others have advanced different theoretical interpretations of what constitutes the hidden message within dreams, but the methodology of investigating dreams has remained fixed and at a qualitative stage of development" (Hall and Van de Castle 1966, 18). This comment indicates the goal of Hall's approach to dreams, namely to provide a quantitative method of studying dreams in order to promote objective, empirical knowledge of dreams.

The method Hall develops is quantitative content analysis, which involves taking a written dream report and breaking its contents down into certain structural elements (the basic categories Hall uses are setting, characters, interactions, objects, and emotions), adding this data to a larger body of data collected from other dream analyses and using a variety of statistical equations with the data to obtain frequencies on the appearance of the different elements. Hall claims that the content analysis method has been applied with great success in many different areas, such as the study of literary material and personality tests. By converting "verbal or other symbolic material into numbers in order that statistical operations may be performed on such material," researchers may study the given material with a minimum of subjective bias and may establish conclusions that are sound, easily replicated, and clearly communicable (Hall and Van de Castle 1966, 1-2). Hall's conviction is that bringing the content analysis method to bear on dreams can yield equally valuable results for modern dream research.

Hall devotes the first chapter of _The Content Analysis of Dreams_ to a refutation of the various objections raised against this method. The problem of reductionism, that is, of forcing the material to fit the predetermined categories set by the researcher, can be avoided by a selective, flexible use of the material and by a deep familiarity with the material. The researcher, Hall says, should "be thoroughly conversant with the theory from which he is to derive his categories, for it is out of the dialogue between observation and hypothesis that a useful classificatory system will emerge" (Hall and Van de Castle 1966, 10-11). The application of objective, quantitative methods to such materials as dreams does not, Hall emphasizes, necessarily distort those materials; as long as the investigator remains "sensitive, intuitive, and empathic" and respects "the inherent properties of the material with which he is working," the rewards in precise, objective knowledge can be great (Hall and Van de Castle 1966, 26).

The primary data for the content analysis method of dream study are verbal dream reports. Hall distinguishes between these and the actual dream experience:

A dream is a private experience, and private experiences, until they are objectified, cannot be studied scientifically. Dreams have to be reported before they can be studied. Therefore, a dream may be operationally defined as that which a person reports when he is asked to relate a dream, excluding statements which are comments upon or interpretations of the dreams. (Hall and Van de Castle 1966, 18)

Hall acknowledges that this definition raises an important issue in the study of dreams, for Freud insists that it is not the reported or manifest dream but the latent dream-content that is of value. However, Hall insists that "the reported dream possesses great psychological significance and that the content analysis of reported dreams is an important tool in personality research" (Hall and Van de Castle 1966, 20). Hall goes on make an even stronger claim that challenges the very legitimacy of Freud's distinction between manifest and latent contents of dreams:

As a matter of fact, it could be said that there is no such thing as the latent content of a dream. A dream is a manifest experience, and what is latent lies outside the dream and in the verbal material that the dreamer reports when he is asked to free associate to features of the reported dream. How the psychoanalyst arrives at the "true meaning" or interpretation of the dream from the verbalized associations is more of an art than a technique. This art may be of the utmost value in the therapeutic situation, but being a private, subjective type of activity it is of no direct value for research. (Hall and Van de Castle 1966, 20)

Hall thus allows for the possible therapeutic use of psychoanalytic interpretation, but firmly sets it aside when the time comes for objective scientific research into the nature and meaning of dreams. Hall's main efforts are devoted to the study of dream series, a process which he likens both to reading the chapters of a book and to putting a puzzle together (Hall 1966, 2, 71, 82, 84; Hall and Nordby 1972, 188). He believes the method is eminently straightforward and requires no special theoretical knowledge or unique abilities. In any analysis of a dream series:

The dreams read like chapters in a book. When put together in order as we have done there is organization, unity, and coherence among the dreams. Each dream complements or supplements the other dreams of the series. There is very little left to guesswork since what may seem ambiguous or hidden in one dream is revealed in another dream. Dream interpretations based upon a series of dreams can be very precise and objective if one approaches the task in a scientific manner. (Hall 1966, 84-85)
The interpretation of dreams brings forward the question about the nature of dream symbols, and here again Hall disputes Freud's account. He rejects Freud's claim that symbols serve to hide distasteful or painful meanings. There are so many dreams in which such obvious meanings are plainly represented, and so many dreams in which we may "see right through" the symbol to the real meaning, that Freud's theory of dream censorship cannot be right. In Hall's view dream symbols are "a kind of mental shorthand... [that] convey in terse and concise language complex and abstruse conceptions" (Hall 1966, 96). Symbols in dreams "are there to express something, not to hide it"; and what the symbols express are our thoughts (Hall 1966, 95). Hall explains the process of symbol formation in dreams as follows:

Dreaming is a form of thinking and thinking consists of formulating conceptions or ideas. When one dreams, his conceptions are turned into pictures. The images of a dream are the concrete embodiments of the dreamer's thoughts; these images give visible expression to that which is intangible, namely, conceptions. Accordingly the true referent of any dream symbol is not an object or activity, it is always an idea in the mind of a dreamer. (Hall 1966, 95)

Symbols thus "clothe" our conceptions in those "garments" that make them economical and concise containers of meaning. The process of interpreting symbols, then, is a matter of translating one form of expression back into the other, turning the pictures back into ideas: "the goal of dream interpretation is to discover the meaning of a dream by translating images into ideas" (Hall 1966, 214). In fact, there is often little need to interpret a dream at all because the meaning is "transparent," requiring no free associations or lengthy exegetical efforts to make it clear.

We may turn now from the proper methods of studying dreams to the knowledge we thereby gain of what dreams mean. Hall states in The Meaning of Dreams that dreams are essentially "projections of the mind" representing not objective reality, but the subjective reality of the dreamer (Hall 1966, 7, 12-14, 86). Once again, Hall distinguishes his views from those of Freud: while Freud claims dreams reveal our unconscious, instinctual impulses, Hall believes the real significance of dreams consists in the way they reveal what we think of our impulses. He says,

Dreams tell us more about a person than that he is sexually and aggressively driven. They tell us what a person thinks about these basic impulses, what people they are directed against, and how they can best be satisfied. (Hall 1966, 70)

Furthermore, dreams reveal the general "conception of the world" a person holds, the worldview (Weltanschauung) by which a person understands the total nature of his or her surrounding environment (Hall 1966, 14, 220-21, 226). Dreams can show the many ways in which such a worldview influences waking behavior: in our interpersonal relationships, our work, our politics, our religious beliefs, "in every department of life man reacts selectively to his world in terms of his conceptual systems" (Hall 1966, 220-30).

In The Individual and his Dreams Hall says that content analysis has demonstrated a simple truth about dreams. There is a close correspondence between people's dreams and their acts and thoughts in waking life. He presents this as the "continuity hypothesis" of dreams.

These facts and many others obtained from the content analysis of many dream series have led us to formulate what we call the continuity hypothesis. This hypothesis states that dreams are continuous with waking life; the world of dreaming and the world of waking are one. The dream world is neither discontinuous nor inverse in its relationship to the conscious world. We remain the same person, the same personality with the same characteristics, and the same basic beliefs and convictions whether awake or asleep. The wishes and fears that determine our actions and thoughts in everyday life also determine what we will dream about. (Hall and Nordby 1972, 104)

By studying dreams, then, we gain a clear view of the fundamental fears, wishes, beliefs, and ideals that govern the individual in his or her waking life.

Hall argues that the content analysis of dreams has significance beyond the furthering of individual self-knowledge. A scientific approach to dream study, such as Hall provides, can also promote a better understanding of human society by revealing the various conflicts that afflict human beings. The more we know of those conflicts, Hall believes, the better able we will be to deal with them; "after all, man cannot solve his problems unless he recognizes them for what they are and then tries to think his way through to rational solutions." (Hall 1966, 233) "Too many of society's problems—war, crime, and mental disease, to name a few—are due in Hall's estimation to our "objection ignorance of the human mind" (Hall 1966, 220). Dreams are an outstanding means of relieving this ignorance, of learning why humans behave as they do, and of helping to solve the troubles that all our society.

In this sense, Hall sets his approach to dreams squarely within the broader context of the progress of modern Western science. He says,
Neuroscience: Hobson

that we should take what we know, what neuroscience can prove about the brain, and use that to make hypotheses about the workings of the mind. He thus turns to his biocognitive research and presents his model of the brain, which he terms "the reciprocal-interaction model of REM-sleep generation." According to this model, a constant competition between groups of neurons leads to the cycles of waking, sleeping, and dreaming. Hobson likens this process to a "continuous war". REM sleep and dreaming are the result of temporary domination of one neural population over another. Vicious is a group of reticular formation neurons concentrated mainly in the pontine portion of the brain stem, owing to their facilitating or inhibiting interactions with REM-sleep neurons. These pontine reticular neurons are likely to play the executive role in the generation of REM sleep and dreaming. Sharing the white flag of temporary surrender is a population of unisynaptic neurons located in the focus cerebellar, the raphé nuclei, and the peribrachial regions of the anterior pontine brain stem; hardly a shot is fired by this neuronal phalanx during REM sleep. (110)

The key conclusion that Hobson draws from this reciprocal-interaction model is that dreams are caused by neurobiological processes that are regular, random, involuntary, and rooted in our physiological nature. Dreams are thus generated by brain neurology (202). To account for how the activity of neuronal populations can lead to the psychological experience of a dream, Hobson offers the "activation-synthesis hypothesis of dreaming." This hypothesis suggests that after neuronal processes have activated REM sleep, higher brain functions work to synthesize the essentially random input as well as it can.

The activation-synthesis hypothesis assumes that dreams are meaningful as they can be understood under the adverse working conditions of the brain in REM sleep. The activated brain-mind does its best to attribute meaning to the internally generated signals. (214)

In the synthesis stage of dream formation, the brain-mind adds meaning to the neurological activity, omitting meanings where there were none before. Although Hobson admits that we still know far too little about how the synthetic processes work, he claims that his activation-synthesis hypothesis can account for the most important features of dreaming: for example, for its predominantly visual nature (because the neuronal processes stimulate visual systems in particular, the mind "uses its own eye movement data in dream scene elaboration") (211), for its distortion (despite the best

Researchers but also a "wise lay audience" of the validity of his views (Hobson 1988, 29). Given Hobson's tremendous influence on the modern study of dreams, it will be very important for us to understand his ideas and to consider carefully his arguments about dreams and religious meaning. We will focus on The Dreaming Brain as the major statement of his views, drawing on other articles by and about him when helpful.

It is clear from the opening pages of The Dreaming Brain that Hobson is writing directly against Freud—the book is a passionately argued polemic against the psychoanalytic account of dreams. But Hobson is not attacking Freud alone, for he sees psychoanalysis as the culmination of a long history of dream interpretation. The real enemy is "the prophetic tradition," generally appearing in a religious guise, in which dreams are seen as caused by external agencies (principally gods or spirits), as containing secret, coded messages, and as requiring elaborate interpretations by special authorities (10-11). In Hobson's view, psychoanalysis is but the latest carrier of this "time-honored" tradition:

The prophetic tradition of dream study can be seen in its modern as well as its antique form. The wise man, the priest, or the psychanalyst knows the dream code and can thus predict the future while deciphering both the past and the present... The most modern manifestation of this interpretive tradition is the theory of dreams advanced by psychoanalysis. (10, 11)

Rather than obeying this "prophetic tradition," stretching from the Bible to Freud, Hobson will follow the scientific tradition "in which experimental accomplishments or instrumentation have been used to make the study of dreams more systematic and more objective" (12). His purpose in The Dreaming Brain is to provide a solid psychophysiological account of how dreams are formed. With that account as a basis, he will show how we may better understand what dreams mean (13-15).

Hobson rejects the prophetic/psychoanalytic tradition for its arbitrariness, its speculative excesses, its irrationality, and its denial of human responsibility (in locating the origins of dreams outside human agency) (9-12). His approach to dreams will refuse that tradition on each of these points and will provide a firm, scientifically legitimate understanding of dreams. Indeed, in Hobson's view the greatest crime committed by Freud is that his theory succeeded for half a century in suppressing the scientific study of dreams. Hobson's book is "firmly dedicated to a scientific reenunciation of the "medical theory of dream life" which Freud disclaimed" (51).

Rather than speculating about the mind and then using those speculations to speculate further about the brain, as Freud did, Hobson argues
efforts of the synthetic processes, the neurologically generated data are so bizarre that most dream synthesis remain very distorted (212–13)\(^3\), and for its frequently strong emotional content (due, like the visual content, to the neurological activation of emotional systems in the brain (213)).

The role of synthesis in dream formation reflects, Hobson believes, an "essentially human" capacity to imagine and create:

Activation-synthesis thus includes creativity among its assumptions. This theory sees the brain as so inexorably bent upon the quest for meaning that it attributes and even creates meaning when there is little or none to be found in the data it is asked to process. (15)

Hobson says the brain labors, as sleeping as in waking, to create a meaningful integration of its experience, "even if it must resort to creative storytelling" (219). Indeed, the utterly chaotic and random data that bombard us in our sleep often confound all ordinary means of organizing our perceptions, leading to extraordinary attempts at synthesis:

It may be that their [dreams'] symbolic, prophetic character arises from the integrative strain of this synthetic effort. The brain-mind may need to call upon its deepest myths to find a narrative frame that can contain the data. (219)

Thus the neurologically generated data are so random and bizarre, and yet the human need for meaning is so profound, that we must resort to stories, symbols, and even myths in order to synthesize the intrinsically inchoate matter of REM sleep into meaningful dreams.

Hobson claims that neuroscientific research devastates Freud's psychoanalytic theories and, by implication, all prophetic or religious theories about dreams as well. He has shown that dreams are caused ("activated") by neuronal activity and not by unconscious wishes, spirits, or gods. He has also shown that the bizarre-ness of dreams is due to the brain's imperfect attempts at synthesizing intrinsically random data rather than to a censor mechanism or to scheming deities (215, 246). A crucial consequence is that the meaning of dreams is not hidden or coded, but rather "transparent," "clear," "unveiled," "unveiling" the "surface" of the dream: "for activation synthesis the dream as reported is the transparent and directly legible product of an unusual mode of information processing" (217). Whatever meaning there is to a dream, it comes during the process of synthesis, with no masks, subterfuges, or codings. Once we have proven that dreams have their origins in purely random neurological activity, Hobson believes we are liberated from the shackles of the

geophetic tradition's demand for complex interpretative procedures administered by authoritative specialists. We are then able to understand that dreams have meanings that are plain and transparent.

Hobson presents his own dreams and the dreams of "The Engine Man" (an individual who kept a detailed dream journal) as evidence of how the meanings of dreams are in fact clear, undistorted, and transparent. With his own dreams, Hobson finds that his feelings, wishes, perceptions, and thoughts are all easily recognized; "this all seems very transparent to me. Almost naked." (233). Activation-synthesis can account for many of the strange features of his dreams, and his own common sense explains the rest. Hence there is no need for authorities, experts, prophets, or analysts to interpret dreams, Hobson concludes. While he agrees with Freud that dreams are meaningful, he strongly disagrees with Freud that the meanings are disguised (on this, he allies himself with Jung)\(^4\).

I wish again to emphasize strongly that I am not asserting that dreams are either meaningless or unworthy of clinical attention. On the contrary... the meaning of dreams is for me transparent rather than concealed, since fundamentally inchoate cognitive elements are synthesized in a personally meaningful way. This "meaning-added" process is the exact opposite of that envisaged by psychoanalysis, which assumes that fully coherent and deeply meaningful ideas (the latent dream content) must be degraded and disguised (by the dream work), resulting in an incoherent product (the manifest dream content) acceptable to consciousness. For me, the manifest content is the dream: there is no other dream. (258)\(^5\)

As he makes clear in his first chapter, Hobson does see his research as bearing on the issue of the religious meaning of dreams in the modern West. He says:

The time-honored approach to understanding dreams is to regard them as communications from external agencies, gods, angels, or spirits. This fundamentally religious idea can never be either proved or disproved. The best that science can do is to examine the evidence for it and try to account for that evidence with propositions that may be capable of verification. (9)

Having examined the evidence, Hobson leaves us with little doubt that he believes this "fundamentally religious idea" about dreams is false: dreams are caused by the automatie neuronal activity of the brain in REM sleep, not by gods, and we don't need priests (or psychoanalysts) to interpret
them for us. The following quote is instructive in indicating how Hobson understands the import of his work for the debate about the religious meaning of dreams:

For the student of consciousness, the development of the polygraph [used to measure REM sleep cycles] is no less portentous than was the discovery of the telescope for the student of the heavens. Numerous myths that we hold about ourselves may come to seem as outlandish as the pre-Copernican idea that the sun moves around the earth. (139)23

Just as religious explanations had to retreat in the face of Copernicus’s research in astronomy, so Hobson believes that religious explanations are now driven to retreat in the face of advancing neuroscientific research in dreams.

8

LUCID DREAMING: STEPHEN LABERGE

It can be estimated that in the course of our lives, we enter our dream worlds half a million times. This state of affairs presents us all with a challenge: as we neglect or cultivate the world of our dreams, so will this realm become a wasteland or a garden. As we sow, so shall we reap our dreams. With the universe of experience thus open to you, if you must sleep through a third of your life, as it seems you must, are you willing to sleep through your dreams too?

—Stephen LaBerge, Lucid Dreaming

Stephen LaBerge’s work Lucid Dreaming is certainly one of the most influential books on modern dream research since Freud’s The Interpretation of Dreams, and while Freud had to wait years for his book to stimulate any sort of response, LaBerge’s work created an immediate sensation. His account of the nature and implications of lucid dreaming has generated a tremendous amount of further research as well as a great deal of controversy. Some researchers have argued that actively seeking lucidity in dreams is a violation of the integrity of the dreaming process; others have claimed that lucid dreaming actually represents a higher evolution of our potentials for consciousness; still others have questioned how the focus on lucid dreaming distracts researchers from exploring other important areas of dream study.

In a number of different ways, then, LaBerge’s work marks a major turning point in twentieth-century dream study. We will focus our explorations on the book Lucid Dreaming, for it is the clearest, most concise statement of what the discovery of lucid dreaming means for the modern study of dreams.

The phenomenon of lucid dreaming involves the achievement, within the dreaming state, of a degree of consciousness that one is dream-
Lucid Dreaming: LaBerge

One can see a parallel with electricity: the Greeks knew of it, but for thousands of years no one regarded it as more than a curiosity. The scientific study of electricity gave rise to remarkable technological developments and an astonishing variety of unexpected applications. (11)

In the same way, LaBerge quickly moves in Lucid Dreaming from the scientific discovery of lucid dreaming to a study of how to develop and apply it. He devotes a great deal of his book to describing how people can learn to dream lucidly, for lucid dreaming, like conscious thought, "is an ability that can be gained or improved by training" (139). LaBerge describes various techniques for inducing lucidity in dreams, and he frequently refers to Buddhist meditation exercises as helping in this regard (144–49). More recently, LaBerge has been developing a special set of goggles that can signal to a sleeping person when he or she has entered REM sleep.3

Continuing with the electricity analogy, LaBerge says lucid dreaming has the potential for many exciting applications: Though for the moment we can only speculate, our work at Stanford and the accounts of other lucid dreamers suggest that, like electricity, lucid dreaming could also be harnessed to aid us in performing a variety of tasks with far greater ease. (167)

For example, lucid dreaming can make major contributions to the scientific study of the nature and function of dreaming. LaBerge looks in particular at the implications of lucid dreaming for Hobson's activation-synthesis hypothesis of dreams. While many researchers have criticized Hobson for depreciating the role of higher mental processes in forming dreams, LaBerge claims that his lucid dreaming research offers solid proof on this point:

The phenomenon of lucid dreaming suggests even more strongly the influence of the cerebral cortex on the construction of dreams. For if your dreams were nothing more than the results of your forebrain producing "partially coherent dream imagery from the relatively noisy signals sent up to it," how would you be able to exercise volitional choice in a lucid dream? (207)

Lucid dreaming thus offers an excellent means of studying how higher cortical functions such as thinking and deliberate action influence the formation of dreams, showing that dream formation is a "two-way street" between brainstem and forebrain and not the one-directional process envisioned by Hobson (201–10).