

Dream Appreciation

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A dreamer sharing a dream is undressing psychically and is there to be seen in his or her emotional nudity.

SCENES FROM A (PSYCHIC) NUDIST COLONY

By Montague Ullman, M.D.

Someone I know is an ardent member of a nudist colony. He seems perfectly normal in every other way. I have often wondered what it might be like to wander about in the company of others au naturel. The closest I have come to it is by analogy to what happens in a dream group. Here a dreamer sharing a dream is undressing psychically and is there to be seen in his or her emotional nudity.

The analogy almost ends there as the others in the group are fully dressed. The analogy picks up again, albeit in a slightly different way. In a true nudist colony everyone undresses at the same time. In a weekly dream

group they take turns undressing, one each week.

There is, however, one stage of the process where, after hearing the dreamer's dream, group members make the dream their own and make their own projections available to the dreamer for whatever they may be worth. In sharing their feelings in response to the dream and their metaphorical translations of the imagery, each member of the group psychically undresses to some extent exposing a bit of his or her own psyche to the dreamer and to each other.

Both physical and emotional nudist colonies are something out of the ordinary and are not easily carried over into daily life. There are laws against physical nudity in public and, in a society where dreams have a very low priority, there are no legal constraints, but not much room is made for sharing them in any serious manner. Newcomers to both "colonies" have to learn how to feel at home in their new surroundings.

Some tune into it more easily and naturally than others. Once the adaptation is made, a special sense of solidarity evolves. Once you feel safe there is the freedom of being known and accepted for what you are, physically for the nudist and emotionally for the dreamer. In both instances you end up with a better view of what may need some adjustment. There is a naturalness to the experience that only occurs, if at all, under very special circumstances in ordinary discourse.

Never having had first-hand knowledge of what goes on in a nudist colony, I cannot speak for whatever benefits may accrue. I do know what life is like in a dream group and I suspect they have certain things in common. In both instances it takes some daring and a bit of getting used to, but once the plunge is taken a deep commitment soon follows and both activities become integrated into everyday life. I can vouch for the

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Editor's note: Space and language considerations necessitated extensive editing of Dr. Hansson's and Dr. Suryani's contributions. I hope my changes remain true to the authors' original intent.

SCENES FROM A (PSYCHIC) NUDIST COLONY

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addictive nature of group dream work. Even though participants contract for only four weeks at a time, there are some who have been in my groups for five

years or more. I suspect that in both instances there evolves an "in-group" feeling and that others are missing out on something important in their lives. As far as dreams are con-

cerned, they are.

Those features of life in a dream group that could with much benefit find a much wider audience than now exists include the following:

1. The dreams we produce have evolved out of a natural healing system (the REM or Rapid Eye Movement stages of sleep) and are analogous to other physiological healing systems of our body. Each of us possesses this built-in emotional radar on the ready to call attention to areas of our life that need attention. The veracity of our dreams provide us with our own emotional antibiotic system in the form of metaphorical imagery to help in dealing with any situation that arises. Discovering that can be very consoling.

2. With practice, the skills needed to provide the dreamer with the help needed to be in touch with a dream can be learned and mastered. Everyone in the group, regardless of their background, learns what is involved by way of sensitivity and judgment in the healing process. They each have learned how to function as healers to the dreamer. That is another uplifting discovery.

3. The experience of being with others in the totally nonviolent context of a dream group allows us to not only emerge from our

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Leadership Training Program For Experiential Dream Groups

A Leadership Training Workshop in group dream work will take place at Monte's home Nov. 6-8. This is an intensive three-day workshop which will cover the underlying premises and key principles on which Monte's group dream work is based. It will explore in depth the kinds of problems that occur at each stage of the process as well as the technique of leading a group.

Even if you have attended one of Monte's Leadership Workshops before, this can be a helpful way to "fine tune" the process.

DATE: November 6, 7 and 8
PLACE: 55 Orlando Ave.
Ardsey, New York 10502

For more information call Monte Ullman
(914)693-0156

The intensive three-day workshop will cover:

- ⇒ A presentation of the structure and rationale of the Experiential Dream Group. This will consider in detail the roles of the dreamer, the group and the leader at each stage of the process.
- ⇒ The principles, guidelines and necessary precautions for effective and serious dream work will be emphasized.
- ⇒ The kinds of problems that arise at each stage of the process will be discussed.
- ⇒ If they choose, participants will have the opportunity to lead the group and benefit from a critique by the dreamer, the group and the leader.
- ⇒ A final session will be devoted to some of the practical problems involved in carrying out Experiential Dream Group Work. These include the size of the group, the make-up of the group, the length and number of sessions, issues that arise with participants who are in therapy, etc.

BALI — AN ISLAND FOR DREAM WORK ADVENTURES

By Ingegerd Hansson, M.D.

Editor's note:

Ingegerd Hansson is a Swedish psychiatrist and a founding member of the Drömgruppsforum. She first visited Bali in spring, 1994 with a group led by Swedish architect Sigvard Leoson who designed and built the Palm Garden Hotel in Sanur. Her experiences led her to plan a dream seminar there. The culture she describes was an integral part of our dream group experience.

Balancing good and evil

What I find most appealing in this culture is the acceptance of both light and dark sides in human beings. The Balinese accept the need to have both positive and negative forces and the continuous struggle to achieve balance between them — rather than the extinguishing of one by the other — as part of life itself. You are reminded of this by many things from the black and white cloths decorating holy sculptures to the black and white shopping bags.

Spirituality as part of daily life

Although Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim nation, Bali is predominantly Hindu. The religion is a kind of Shiva-Hinduism mixed with aspects

from ancient nature religions, Buddhism and other forms of worship. Other religions among Bali's three million inhabitant all

The planning begins

When I returned to Bali in the autumn of 1994, I gave a talk on dreams and Monte's dream work

ing dreams gave the participants a very deep, warm feeling of being connected, which added to the whole Bali experience.

I returned to Bali in October, 1996 and began planning for the seminar which was originally scheduled for March, 1997. The Palm Garden Hotel had everything we needed for a small seminar. Wanting the participants to experience Bali fully, I also arranged for

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At our initial session we addressed questions like the exact definition of a dream, whether meditation affects dream life and whether a dream can be a religious experience.

co-exist without apparent conflict. Most people are very religious and one might also say superstitious. Beautiful small flower baskets are made every morning and put in the doorways of shops and on family altars as offerings, to show gratitude and to guard against evil.

I found the people beautiful and friendly, with a dignity and natural awareness of the importance of art and spiritual values in daily life, without the fussiness that is so common to our Western world. Modest, soft and moving with grace, they seem to live with the gods with the same love and humor they show their family members.

It seemed to me that Bali had a quality of being a "right-brain" kind of country that could offer an exceptionally fertile soil for dream work!

method for the Swedish hotel guests and then led a small dream group. Shar-

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own darkness but also sensitizes us to the social and institutional pressures that perpetrate the darkness. There is room for much change in this world of ours and any deeper insights into what needs changing is a good thing. By their allegiance to the truth, our dreams bring us closer to a more moral vision of what life could be like.

Finally, there evolves a subtle but quite palpable sense of cohesiveness that earlier I referred to as a sense of solidarity. It goes deeper than that. As we get to know each other through the mutual sharing

of dreams, there occurs something more akin to a feeling of communion. Regardless of any particular religious orientation, the notion of the brotherhood of man takes on a new meaning. Under ordinary circumstances, it is always potentially available, but is more apt to be felt in fits and spurts or else when dire circumstances bring people together. In my weekly groups it simply surfaces as soon as a dreamer begins to tell a dream. As it does, there is an extraordinary feeling of confidence and competence that no matter how difficult the piece may be, the orchestra will be in tune. □

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excursions and tours.

Monte made suggestions for an alternate if he were unable to make the trip. This led to a very creative and fruitful cooperation with Wendy Pannier. After much consideration, we decided to postpone the seminar until April, 1998. However, in early 1998 we faced new obstacles due to the threatening political events in Indonesia and Asia. Although several participants cancelled, we decided to go ahead with the seminar anyway.

Positive Balinese experience, dream group

The dangers proved to be negligible for us. We had no trouble in Yogyakarta, the old cultural city in Java where we Swedes stopped for sight-seeing, or in Bali.

The group that arrived in Bali had diminished to eight persons. But the efficient hotel director, Santos, had worked with us to put announcements in the Bali newspapers about our seminar, and even sent personal invitations to faculty at the university, with material about Dr. Montague Ullman and his group approach to dreams.

(One thought: In Sweden we have an association, "Drömgruppsforum," to train dream group leaders in Ullman's

method and spread his ideas. Shouldn't we Ullman followers create an International Dream Group Forum, too?)

We had three days to make final preparations and adjust to the time dif-

The Balinese seemed open-minded and interested in aspects of other cultures. We all learned during the course of the workshop how different the Eastern way of thinking is from the Western, especially in attitudes toward spiritual matters.

ference before starting the seminar. During this time we experienced the most sacred Balinese feast of the year, Galungan Day, which comes every 210 days and celebrates the triumph of good over evil. We watched colorful processions and saw the temple ceremonies — all of which had an impact on our dream life!

We included hotel guests in the introductory session, which was held in the ornate "Presidential Suite." Santos gave the opening welcome, and Wendy and I gave short talks. We showed excerpts from a videotape of Monte after which Måns Linde, Karin Roos, Wendy and I formed a panel, trying to answer and discuss the questions that arose. These included:

- What is the exact defi-

inition of a dream?

- Does meditation affect dream life?
- Can a dream be a religious experience?

A blend of cultures

Our ongoing dream

Dreams were initially shared in English, and then translated into Swedish and Indonesian. In spite of the difficulties with spoken language, dream work, as usual, was a universal language, leading to a deeper contact among group members and a connection with the deeper layers of our inner selves.

The wonder of new life to be born . . . feelings of love, anger and pain . . . wishes to fight against evil spirits . . . the struggle for power of one's own inner kingdom . . . the feeling of pain and joy to be looked up to as always strong and a courageous support for other people . . . the need to belong . . . feelings of separation . . . All of these themes appeared in the contents of our dreams in what proved to be a very profound dream group seminar.

Sharing with Balinese colleagues

Meeting with the Balinese psychiatrist colleagues was especially inspiring for me and I wish we could have had more opportunities to exchange views. We gave them an article by Monte entitled, "The Experiential Dream Group: It's Application in the Training of Therapists." The doctors said this kind of dream work was something new for

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DREAM WORK AMID THE ART AND CULTURE OF BALI

By LUH KETUT SURYANI, M.D., Ph.D.

Editor's Note: Dr. Suryani shared much interesting information about dreaming in Bali, including out-of-body experiences and shared dreaming, which would be worthy of whole articles by themselves. However, some of this material has been cut because it is beyond the scope and space constraints of this newsletter.

I was interested in participating in the "Dream work amid the art and culture of Bali" seminar held this spring because I wanted the opportunity to discuss my ideas which are being developed at the Psychiatry Department at Udayana University, Bali.

This past year I have been observing the sleep and dream states of patients as a technique for diagnosing patients and evaluating their response to medications.

Formerly in Indonesia, psychiatrists diagnosed based only on the symptoms of the patient. There was never any discussion of dreams. In fact, some scientists even looked down on people who asked about dreams. The only people who discuss dreams are the traditional healers, spiritual leaders and people who are learning about the spiritual.

Predominant cultural view of dreaming

For people in Bali who mostly practice the Hindu religion, a dream is regarded as the flower of sleeping. It may also have many meanings depending on how the dreamer received the dream and when the dream occurred — whether it was morning, afternoon or evening sleep. The Balinese consider a midnight dream to have special meaning that needs to be analyzed. It could be the result of communica-

tion between the dreamer's spirit with another person's spirit. It could be a pre-cognitive dream, predicting what will happen in the future. It could be the result of a direct communication from God, where the human assistant is given information or knowledge which must then be further developed.

Editor's note: Dr. Suryani also included comments on sleep quality with regard to herself and her patients. She

has found that meditation enhances the quality of sleep and may also affect the nature of dreaming.

New approach to dreams

"Dream work amid the art and culture of Bali," led by Dr. Hansson and Wendy Pannier, was attended by three different cultures with three languages. It gave us a new method of accepting and working with the meaning of dreams.

Participants from Bali
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Continued from page 4 them and they wished we would come again for a follow-up.

All the medical doctors belonged to the staff at Udayana University Department of Psychiatry, of which one of our participants, Professor Luh Ketut Suryani is in charge. She appeared to be a strong personality and is well known in Bali, respected for her ideas in circles that work for the preservation of the old Balinese culture. She teaches her own meditation method on the island and also uses it in psychotherapy. To portray her in a few short sentences is not easy — she deserves a whole article herself!

We were pleased to

be invited to visit the psychiatric clinic, where our Balinese colleagues gave us an extensive tour.

Time to explore Bali

We had numerous excursions and tours, arranged by our wonderful Balinese guide, Ngurah. This included a visit to one of the quite numerous orphanages in Bali where we left a little donation. This is a sad side of Bali, but the children we saw in this home looked well.

One very special event we were privileged to attend was a special village ceremony known as the "little girl trance dance." Because this was not for tourists, we all dressed in Balinese attire and made a special offer-

ing to the temple priests. For many in our group, this was the most powerful event of the whole trip. A few paragraphs cannot do this ceremony justice. While the version commonly done for tourists lasts a few minutes, the real ceremony takes hours and left a lasting impression on all of us.

While I wish I could have stayed longer to digest the experiences and enjoy the wonderful climate, I had to return to work, with only the dream of staying longer. I pray that Bali may remain peaceful and retain its respect for art and culture. And may I have the opportunity to return there many times. □

Dream Appreciation
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claimed they rarely dreamed, despite our reading about REM cycles. Many other people and I, who are doing meditation, report very few dreams. The dreams we do recall have a very important meaning which could not be noticed if we were awake, such as the communication and prediction dreams I mentioned earlier. Lately I have experienced disturbed meditation and a lack of concentration, and have also noticed an increase in dreams.

New ideas I gained from the workshop are:

□ How understanding cultural differences is important in working

with dreams.

- How dreaming of symbols from a new culture (i.e. visitors to Bali) still reflects what is going on in the dreamer's life.
- How a group process with group members' input is a holistic way to help an individual dreamer understand a dream.
- How dream work can transcend cultural differences, helping members of the group unite as one.

In this workshop I learned new realizations about dreams. However, in my view, working on dreams from the personal viewpoint of the dreamer

is only part of dream work. From my perspective, part of the dream can be spiritual in nature. The group process does not discuss dreams as a result of communication between spirits which, according to the Balinese culture, is necessary for understanding and analysis.

A cross-cultural workshop is necessary to

have a better understanding of other cultures and backgrounds, to improve the knowledge so that the dreams can be analyzed in all aspects, i.e. mind, body and spirit. This will enable dream groups to have a combined view of East and West and, if possible, to unite into a new meaning of dreams. □

Dream Appreciation is published quarterly for people interested in working with dreams and the group process developed by Dr. Montague Ullman.

Comments, suggestions, questions and letters are welcome. Contact the Editor, Wendy Pannier, by phone at (610) 925-0758, by fax at (610) 925-0759, or by writing 105 Taylor Lane, Kennett Square, PA 19348. Our e-mail address is <dreams@kennett.net>.

We encourage you to share this information with others, as long as proper credit is given.
