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# Social dreaming as sustained thinking

*Gordon Lawrence*

**ABSTRACT** This article begins by describing Freud's work on dreams, and the importance this had for dream theory. Bion's perspective follows, with his questioning of Freud's theory that dreams exist to disguise the wishes and conceal the needs of the dreamer. The article then goes on to consider what happens if dreaming is regarded as a normal human activity, and the working through of thinking and creativity while the dreamer is asleep. From this point, it moves on to look at the emergent theory of social dreaming, which takes place in a matrix – where the matrix is the name given to the collection of people meeting to share their dreams. Finally, seven working hypotheses of the developing theory of social dreaming are described.

**KEYWORDS** free association ■ Oedipal ■ social dreaming ■ social dreaming matrix ■ Sphinx ■ transference

## Background

Freud used the analysis of dreams in his project of identifying and understanding the functioning of the psyche. Making use of transference feelings, which he learned from his patients, he was able to disentangle the dynamics of the paired relationships that everyone encounters in the course of their life experiences. These feelings are generated in our relationships with significant others and authority figures. They are the Oedipal situations on which dreams and dreaming offer unrivalled evidence. It was to Freud that the 20th century owed recognition of the importance of dreaming, with its surreal images in the visual arts, literature and scientific thinking.

Bion took a different perspective from the Oedipal by concentrating on how human beings arrive at knowledge and understanding from dreaming. This epistemic viewpoint celebrates the creative process of dreaming whose outcomes are embodied in the culture of society. Culture is brought into existence as human beings transact between the known and the unknown, the finite and the infinite. Bion's achievement was to see the dream as synthesizing fragmented elements of emotional experience into a whole, no matter how bizarre the content of the dream. This questioned Freud's theory that dreams exist to disguise wishes and conceal needs on the part of the individual dreamer. By focusing on the development of thinking and knowledge, Bion broadened the base for understanding dreaming and dreams by freeing them from being bound by the individual psyche. He named this vertex the Sphinx. Social dreaming takes this vertex of knowledge on understanding dreams, because it has as its concern the solution of the riddle of knowledge. This opens new routes to understanding the importance of dreaming and dreams. By concentrating on the dream and not on the person who dreams it, the cultural context of dreaming is addressed.

Social dreaming takes place in a matrix – which is the name given to the collection of people meeting to share dreams. 'Matrix' refers to the web of mental processes, thinking and emotions that underpin all social relationships and mirror the infinite/unconscious processes that produce dreaming in the first instance. The purpose of the social dreaming matrix is freely to associate to the dreams that are made available, so as to make links and find connections in thinking. Dreaming thinking and thought are the currency of the matrix, and not the face-to-face relationships of its participants. By concentrating on dreaming and thinking the matrix becomes the creative pool of new knowledge for each participant as they associate to the dreams to make links and find connections. The idea of free association is central to the work of the matrix. Each dream sparks off associations among the participants that lead to the matrix becoming a multi-verse of meaning. Individuals can use their authority to pursue or reject new thinking that emerges from this multi-verse – hence the claim of social dreaming as being sustained thinking. The supplementary method is amplification that Jung used to understand the dream in terms of the collective unconscious. Amplification confirms the status of the dream by examining its social context and the symbolism it evokes.

There is, as yet, only an emergent theory of social dreaming that can be expressed as working hypotheses. The theory is always in the process of becoming. First, the matrix is a different container for receiving and processing dreams from any other in existence. Consequently the content of the dreaming alters to take account of its context and becomes social in orientation. This has led to the social dreaming matrix becoming a new

conjunction of thought that can be applied to dreaming. The wish is to interpret dreaming using old models – to revert to the known – whereas the social dreaming matrix is opening new ways of understanding dreaming that demand new models, tools and perspectives.

Dreaming is the material the mind uses to grow as it processes the events of the day and anticipates the issues it has to face in the future. As part of this, the social dreaming matrix inducts participants into the tension between the finite and the infinite, the limits of the known and the unknown. What we know culturally has been won from the void and formless infinite. Ultimate reality can be thought of as a pool of thoughts awaiting a thinker. From these thoughts the human mind culls elements that form a pattern the human binds together by a name or a number so that they become filled with meaning. Once this happens they become part of the culture of society, part of finite knowledge. The social dreaming matrix allows participants to have the experience of being in the unknown, or being in doubts, mysteries and uncertainties. Social dreaming facilitates the mental disposition of 'negative capability' (Keats, 1970), which allows participants to work at the limits of their comprehension and, as a result, to be available for the apprehension of patterns in the dreaming that lead to new ideas and knowledge. This apprehension of new patterns of facts becomes useful when the social dreaming matrix is used as a tool of action research. Dreaming surfaces the issues that are buried in every organization. These issues are known but rarely thought of. Once they are voiced, however, they make a difference because they cannot readily be denied. It has been discovered in social dreaming that transference feelings are evoked by the dream and not by any person present in the room. If these are addressed in the 'here and now', dreaming is robbed of the experience and denied the opportunity for exploration of the issue.

Finally, the social dreaming matrix is a unique transitional space, which allows for the conversion into objective reality of the subjective experience of the dream. It allows it to be regarded as part of ordinary experience, to be seen as a form of thinking that can have far-reaching consequences for what human beings regard as knowledge. Other transitions and transformations are made possible in the matrix as a result.

## Dreaming

Dreams are,

regular events in the life of a normal person, however much their characteristics may differ from the productions of our waking life.

Dreams, as everyone knows, may be confused, unintelligible or positively nonsensical, what they say may contradict all that we know of reality, and we behave in them like insane people, since, so long as we are dreaming, we attribute objective reality to the content of the dream.

(Freud, 2001 edn, Vol. 23: 165)

Dreaming and dreams are an awesome and mysterious human ability and are the essential elements of creativity. It is to be affirmed in this article that dreaming is integral to thinking and is essential for generating knowledge derived from experience. The epistemological aspect of dreaming, dreams and dream-work is the concern, which questions the traditional ways of interpreting dreaming that have been in existence for a century.

Freud alerted the 20th century to the importance of dreaming. He saw the interpretation of dreams as being an essential tool in his life project of identifying the human psyche and curing the psychological problems of individuals. The dream, for Freud, was devious and he postulated that there was always resistance present in dreaming because he saw the dream as an expression of disguised wish fulfilment.

Freud also discovered transference – which is the emotional connection first established between the baby and its mother that is gradually extended to include all significant others encountered in life. These emotional experiences are held in the inner world of the individual as patterns of feelings about authority figures. Starting from the transference feelings between the analyst and the patient, which symbolized these pair relationships, Freud could interpret the pattern of transference and cause a questioning of how significant figures are perceived by the patient.

Freud started from the premise that his patients were mentally ill and his task was to bring them to a state of mental health. While this perspective has initiated an enormous growth in knowledge of the psyche and psychoanalysis it has curtailed understanding of dreaming and dreams ever since.

Without denying the achievement of Freud, who made the unconscious acceptable, his method has come to define not only how dreaming and dreams are construed and perceived but also how they are interpreted, which is always in terms of the personality of the dreamer.

What happens if dreaming is regarded as a normal human activity and understood as the working through of thinking and creativity during sleep? What happens if adults are seen as being more aware of their own authority and capable of making their own interpretations of their dreaming because they know more from their experience than they think, and are more mature than they believe?

While having a dream, the dreamer believes it to be a real experience

because it generates feelings and emotions. No matter how nonsensical it may seem, the dream is comprehensible because it is telling a story in which events follow events, albeit bizarrely. The dreaming is registered in the inner world of the mind, even if it can be the victim of amnesia.

### Dreaming as thinking

Meltzer (1984), following on the work of Wilfred Bion, argues 'that dreaming *is* thinking' because while engaged in dreaming we are not only attending to our inner world but also are thinking/dreaming of how we relate to the external world.

The creative process of dreaming generates the meaning that can then be deployed to life and relationships in the outside world. This means, in a sense, that all our external relationships have a certain transference quality, that they derive meaning from what exists in our inner world.

(Meltzer, 1984: 46)

Since Freud's pioneering work there have been developments in the theory of dreaming and dreams. Building on the work of Freud and Melanie Klein, Bion advanced a view of mental functioning that gave emotions a central position – linking them to dreaming and thinking as he explored learning from experience to attain knowledge.

As human beings we want to know our external world of physical reality as mediated by our psychic reality. The growth, acquisition and retention of knowledge are embodied in the culture that we learn from infancy. The existence of culture is a major differentiating feature between human beings and animals.

Because of the human mind, the whole of technology, science, literature and the arts have been brought into being just as good and evil, death and the mystery of existence have become lodged in the culture (de Duve, 1995: 245).

Culture comes into existence through dreaming and thinking and relies on the experiencing human mind in the first instance. The human mind grows from being aware of what is 'not-known'. The mind grows from exposure to truth that is located in the space between knowing and not-knowing, which, at one and the same time, can be exciting because it results in learning, but can also provoke anxiety because of the uncertainty and the sense of loss of competency.

Human beings find that the learned patterns of their culture are redundant when they no longer fit their experience of reality. The not-known is the 'void and formless infinite', that John Milton (1667) gave expression to in *Paradise lost, Book III*, line 11. The not-known as the infinite is all that ever will be thought by human beings, so is full of potential. Mind, mathematics, the laws of science have always existed and what the mathematician discovers (for example, Mandelbrot Sets) has always been present in the cosmos, which can be viewed as a gigantic mind (Greenstein, 1988; Penrose, 1989). This echoes A.N. Whitehead's observation that the universe is pure mind.

To transact between the known and the unknown requires thinking of our experience of the world as an object that is capable of being known. These experiences evoke emotions that generate thinking. The not-known, the infinite, or O (for origin) was named Beta-elements by Bion (1962, 1963). Bion used this term, together with others, to denote what is not-known, and even may not exist, but to make it possible to discuss or think about things before knowing what they are (Bion, 1997: 10). The term O has no categories, no number and its only meaning is that it contains Ultimate Truth or Absolute Reality. The truth of O can never be known, but it can be intuited, and given substance, through the different media of science, art and religion, for example.

Bion's theory of thought proposed that thoughts exist and that human beings develop an apparatus for managing them called thinking. Thought exists genetically and epistemologically before thinking. Thinking is a procedure for managing the amount of stimuli the psyche receives. Thoughts are sense impressions and primitive emotional experiences evoked by the experience of reality. This reality is O and the processes of thinking that evolve result in 'K' (for knowledge).

The mental functioning involved in bringing O or the infinite into the finite world means experiencing the emotional sense data of O. From this proto-mental system knowledge can be wrought through the action of thinking. In this process Alpha functions, which are needed for conscious thinking and reasoning, are deployed to transform Beta-elements into Alpha-elements. Alpha-elements are an essential part of dream thoughts. If the Alpha function cannot operate, the emotions remain as Beta-elements, which are 'not amenable to use in dream thoughts' (Bion, 1962: 6-7), remain as undigested facts and can only be used for acting-out. Alpha functions and Alpha-elements are critical for use in thinking and dreaming. These were Bion's hypotheses on the relationship between emotions and knowledge.

The achievement of Bion was to advocate that the function of the dream was to synthesize fragmented elements of emotional experience into a

whole. This reversed Freud's dream theory, which was that the function of the dream was to conceal wishes and, therefore, had to be analysed.

Bion stated his epistemological position when introducing his *Experiences in groups*. He distinguished between a vertex, or a perspective, that focused on the pair relationships of the participants in the group. Using the transference feelings in the group between the participants and the taker of the group, it was possible to discern the interpersonal relations of the participants. This is the vertex of Oedipus.

A complementary perspective is to focus on how the group arrives at knowledge through experiencing both the inner and the outer world of the group. Leadership of a group can be seen as keeping the group in touch with reality by transacting the external, contextual reality with the inner group reality. Through working hypotheses, leadership tests the changing systemic reality in which the group is located. The framing of working hypotheses is a non-psychotic action. Leadership, by using working hypotheses, is following scientific method to gain knowledge of the environmental context. This is the vertex of Sphinx (Bion, 1961: 7–8).

As such, the vertex of Sphinx goes against many of the accepted tenets and assumptions of dreaming as forged by Freud and his followers. Dreaming, when pursued as a personal project in the Freudian tradition, cannot fully embrace this idea of dreaming as the pursuit of knowledge, except in the narrow sense of seeing dreams as products of the personal unconscious to be interpreted from that individualistic perspective.

## Social dreaming

The alternative to personal therapeutic dreaming is the complementary method of social dreaming. Sphinx is the figure in social dreaming while Oedipus is the ground; whereas this is reversed in personal, therapeutic dream work. Whereas Freudian dreaming is egocentric in orientation, social dreaming is socio-centric because it is concerned with individuals relating to their social world, with all the complications of political and economic realities.

The idea of Sphinx was central to the discovery of social dreaming because the focus was on dreaming as thinking. This was derived from the Bion–Tavistock tradition of group relations training. There were other influences, such as anthropology, with its highlighting of the link between dreaming and culture (Lawrence, 1991). Sphinx, which Oedipus was the only one to solve, symbolizes the enigma – the yet to be solved riddle of knowledge. Here it is being used to symbolize the quest for knowledge.



The most important influence, however, was Charlotte Beradt's (1968) *Third Reich of dreams*. She was a journalist living in Germany just before World War II who invited medical practitioner friends to collect the dreams of their patients during their medical examination. She published these dreams after the war and, overall, they portray what lies below the easily exposed reality of everyday life. The dictatorial regime controlled the thinking of the German population. All the dreams show a tropism, or direction (Bion, 1992: 35) towards the object of persecution and annihilation.

The dreams derived from what she called 'man's paradoxical existence under a twentieth-century totalitarian regime' (Beradt, 1968: 15). The dreams she recounts were not produced by conflicts that were rooted either in the private realm of the dreamer or in a psychological trauma. Instead, they arose from the public realm and the disturbed human relations that the context engendered. The political milieu was the cause of the dreams. She writes, 'There is no façade to conceal associations, and no outside person need provide the link between dream image and reality – this the dreamer himself does' (Beradt, 1968: 15). The dreaming can be seen as a nightly, running commentary on the psychosocial reality of Nazi Germany.

The commentary is also an example of dreamers thinking how to relate their inner world experiences of the dream to the external reality of the Third Reich. These dreams fall into the realm of Sphinx because they describe how the dreamers are thinking of reality by processing their chaotic experiences of their social environment and rehearsing, through their dreaming, how they are to survive it.

Social dreaming was discovered in 1982 at the Tavistock Institute in London (Lawrence & Daniel, 1982; Lawrence, 1989, 1991). It starts from the premise that dreaming and dreams cannot be explained exclusively in terms of the individual as a self-contained entity, but have to take account of the social and cultural milieux in which the experiences that fuel dreaming have their roots.

### **Social dreaming matrix**

Social dreaming takes place with a number of people (anything from six to 40) in a 'matrix' convened for the purposes of processing the dreaming by making use of free association to the dreams and amplifying the dreams presented to the matrix. What then happens is that the dreams interact with other dreams and new thinking emerges as a result. The purpose of the social dreaming matrix is to associate, as freely as possible, to the dreams of the matrix so as to make links and find connections.

The matrix meets in a face-to-face grouping but, increasingly, with the development of the Internet, matrices can meet on-line. This means that at any one time there are dreams floating around in cyberspace to which people can free associate and amplify. Usually, what happens is that a matrix meets and works together. Then, after the event, they agree to work on-line and will run for months, even years, afterwards. Some matrices have never met physically but operate on the Internet exclusively.

The proposition that social dreaming be conducted in a matrix and not a group became critical for its subsequent development. Patricia Daniel, who was the first co-worker on social dreaming with the author, arrived at this intuitively. The obvious move was to have a social dreaming group, but it was felt that the dynamics of groups – basic assumptions (Bion, 1961), and the like – would interfere with the process of dreaming.

The idea of a matrix was borrowed from Foulkes (Foulkes & Anthony, 1957; Foulkes, 1964, 1973). The matrix, which embodies the principle of connectedness, is the web of mental processes of proto-mental thinking that exist in any social configuration (see Capra, 2002). The matrix is that substratum of feelings, thoughts and emotions that is integral to every social configuration and allows primordial images to appear from the social unconscious. In this way the matrix mirrors the very processes that produce dreaming and dreams.

Thinking and thought are integral to the social dreaming matrix. Following Bion (1970), it can be said that the pre-thought elements of the mind (Beta-elements), embodied in the social dreams, are projected on to the matrix which contains them, to be transformed into primitive elements of thought (Alpha-elements). The matrix is the parallel of the breast of the mother experienced in early infancy and, as such, is central to any evolutionary change in thinking. These elements are picked up by participants in the matrix to be used in the construction of their own thinking as they freely associate to and amplify the dreams in the matrix. The emphasis is not on face-to-face relationships between participants but on the dreaming and the dreams. Dreaming is the currency of the matrix.

### Free association and amplification

Thinking and thought on the dreams begins from free association to and amplification of the dreams. Freud learned free association from his patients (Bollas, 2002). In a dream, recounted in a social dreaming matrix, there will be ideas. Other participants in the matrix will associate to these aspects of the dream. Taking an idea and freely associating to it furthers the intuitive,

creative use of dreams and allows participants to 'play', in the sense that Winnicott (1971) used the term, with the potential meanings of the dreams. To any particular dream there will be as many potential associations as there are members of the matrix. The danger is that members of the matrix may be led away from the dream by being seduced by the freedom of free association by just saying what passes through their minds.

Amplification, which was Jung's concept, is designed to hold to the content of the dream. It understands the dream as not only arising from the personal life of the dreamer but also from 'the collective storehouse of mankind, from the mythological layer' (Whitmont, 1969: 38). This recognizes the dream as saying what it says and is not seen as a disguise for latent material in the classic Freudian sense. Amplification confirms the status of the dream by examining its social context and the symbolism it evokes. In a social dreaming matrix both free association and amplification are used.

These associations and amplifications are projected into the matrix to be transformed into primitive elements of thought. From these elements worked-through thinking and thoughts are made possible.

From the first programme, 'Social Dreaming and Creativity', in 1982, it was found that people can dream socially in that their dreaming illuminates daily living in the society. The working hypothesis on which the programme rested was substantiated.

### **The social unconscious**

Each individual has a unique, personal unconscious wrought from his or her personal experiences. It is embedded, however, in the unconscious that is shared by the society and culture in which biographical life is situated. The 'social unconscious', according to Hopper (in press), can be understood as three categories of social phenomena, which are derived from the cultural elements that are associated with a society and all its social institutions. The first is that which people are unaware of, but of which they were previously aware, for instance the Oedipus complex. The second is that of which they are unaware, but of which they are partly aware. The fantasy life that existed before the acquisition of language is an example. Third, there is that of which people are unaware and of which they were never aware. This is information that is barely accessible to knowing and cannot be known directly. This knowledge might be 'archaic' or belong to the 'dynamic non-conscious' (Hopper, in press: 134). Again, the social unconscious by its nature has Beta-elements, as Bion postulated, that are available for transformation into Alpha-elements through the containment function of the matrix.

## Working hypotheses on social dreaming

The emergent theory of social dreaming can only be expressed in terms of working hypotheses as yet. A working hypothesis is a sketch of the reality. Because reality is always emergent in its nature, a working hypothesis can be replaced by another, which better fits the reality as it is being experienced. Theory is always in a process of becoming.

The first hypothesis is that *the matrix is a different container for receiving dreams from any other in existence. Consequently, the contained of the dream alters*. For the therapeutic setting the dreams will be personal and properly regarded as possessions of the dreamer. They will be such that they foster the therapeutic process. In social dreaming, by way of contrast, the dreams are always expressing social concerns and anticipating social issues. Dreams that are covertly demanding treatment are ignored, if they are ever offered, because it would take the dreaming along the Oedipal trail. The participants intuit which of their dreams to offer to the matrix. In the days preceding a matrix they will have dreams that anticipate it, particularly if it has never been experienced before.

The second hypothesis is that the social dreaming matrix is developing *a new conjunction of thought on dreaming*, through working hypotheses that are derived initially from psychoanalysis, but are taking account of other forms of knowledge. This requires that social dreaming be seen in its own right and requires that practitioners be 'blind' to accepted theories so that they can 'see' social dreaming. A corollary is that the matrix exists to discover what only a matrix can discover.

The metaphor of a Faraday Cage comes to mind. In order to protect his experiments from external, electrostatic interference, Faraday surrounded them with an earthed metal screen. The social dreaming matrix has had to do much the same, although in the mind, in order that its unique phenomena can be discovered without explaining them away by taking premature refuge in psychoanalysis with its constant conjunction of thinking and thought, and thus closing off discovery of what is not-known.

The third hypothesis is that *the experience of the social dreaming matrix inducts participants into the tension between the finite and the infinite, between the known and the not-known, the conscious and the unconscious*. All finite knowledge is embedded in the culture, but it is paralleled by the social unconscious in which the infinite is located. There is a case for differentiating the personal unconscious as the 'unconscious' and the social unconscious, in Hopper's terms, as the 'infinite'.

What we know culturally and finitely is 'won from the void and formless infinite' (Milton, 1667). This can be summarized:

Ultimate reality can be thought of as a vast reservoir of infinite possibilities, of thoughts awaiting a thinker, from the derivatives of which, the transformations, we cull from time to time elements that seem to belong together, that form a pattern or constant conjunction. These elements we bind together by a name or number so that they become available to be filled with meaning, so that we come to understand the emotional significance for us of this particular bit of reality. This understanding can then join up with another constant conjunction to accrue further meaning and so on indefinitely.

(Symington & Symington, 1996: 123)

Dreaming is the material the mind uses to grow because it processes the events of the day and anticipates the issues and problems of the next. The space of the possible is being explored through the dreaming.

The fourth working hypothesis is that the *social dreaming matrix allows participants to have the experience of being in the unknown, to be in doubts, mysteries and uncertainties*. This is a variation on the second hypothesis.

Keats, in a now famous letter, wrote of the characteristic of Shakespeare, saying that he could be in mysteries, doubts and uncertainties, without any irritability reaching after fact or reason. Keats called this 'negative capability' (Keats, 1970: 43; quoted in Bion, 1978: 8, 1984: 125).

The social dreaming matrix encourages this mental disposition of 'negative capability' on the part of participants by accepting the working on the boundary between knowing and not-knowing, or the finite and the infinite. In the not-knowing everything depends on seeing patterns that form to become known.

This apprehension of patterns is to access the truth-in-the-moment, which comes about through the suspension of 'memory and desire' (Bion, 1980: 11), in order that space can be left for the new pattern of ideas, the new conjunction of facts, to emerge. Leaving space for the new idea has been an achievement of the social dreaming matrix.

The fifth working hypothesis is that *social dreaming, because it accesses the infinite, mobilizes the thinking capacities of participants in the matrix, and leads to the apprehension of new patterns of facts, is being used as a tool of action research*.

Action research is based on the idea that every participant in a system has perceptions of their experience of fulfilling a role and of the system itself from their role perspective. The social dreaming matrix makes the unconscious, the infinite, of a system that much more available for inspection.

Maltz and Walker used a social dreaming matrix in a major manufacturer

of entertainment in the US. They found that what was voiced in the social dreaming confirms the role of the unconscious in systems. They found in the dreaming the disowned aspects of the organization – for example, feminine authority and violence. The matrix reflected the issues of the organization that were important, though not known at first because there had been no opportunity to think them (Maltz & Walker, 1998: 141–67).

In Italy Franca Fubini did a consultation with a small manufacturing company where there were difficulties between the management and the operatives and people were being made redundant. The conclusion was that the social dreaming matrix had enabled them to clear the log-jams that were impeding them. Subsequently, they went on to take critical decisions about the ownership of shares and to reorganize the company (Fubini, in press).

Social dreaming is a direct and uncomplicated way of accessing the social unconscious of a system. Followers of the Tavistock tradition have always believed in the existence of the unconscious in social systems (Obholzer & Roberts, 1994); nevertheless it comes across as negative and joyless. Practitioners become preoccupied with identifying the unconscious factors and interpreting the resultant social systems of defence against anxiety (Menzies Lyth, 1988, 1989). Practitioners can become blind to the positive aspects of the unconscious, which is the source of thinking and creativity.

By having a social dreaming matrix as a tool of action research, the beneficent aspects of the unconscious/infinite become apparent and participants are able to use them in the development of the organization of their system (Biran, 1999; Lawrence, 2001). One emergent insight in these studies is that the 'unthought known', which Bollas (1987) identified, has become a very useful tool in discerning what is present but unacknowledged in organizational life. Once it is thought it becomes part of the reality of the organization and can be made public. Once acknowledged, it makes a difference to the system.

Transference, which Freud discovered, is the displacement on to the analyst of all the previous feelings about authority experienced in the patient's life. Freud came to see it as essential to the therapeutic project. This is the stuff of the Oedipal situation. The sixth hypothesis is that *in the social dreaming matrix the transference is to the dream*. John Byng-Hall, who was a pioneer of family therapy at the Tavistock Clinic, made the important insight that in such therapy the transference was not to the therapist but to other members of the family. This freed up family therapists to concentrate on the family interaction.

In much the same way, though far more intuitively, the author and Daniel decided before the first social dreaming matrix in 1982, that transference issues would not be addressed by them as hosts of the matrix. As it happened, it was discovered such issues appeared in the dreams. If they were

addressed in the here and now before they occurred, the dreaming would be robbed of the transference material.

The seventh, and final, working hypothesis is that *the social dreaming matrix is a transitional phenomenon, which facilitates the conversion of the dream experienced subjectively into objective reality.*

Grotstein (1979) makes a useful distinction between the dreamer-who-dreams the dream and the dreamer-who-understands the dream. The former is the internal communication derived from primary process that creates the dream, while the latter is the creator of symbolic meanings. He is writing of the analytic pair. In a social dreaming matrix all participants can take on the two roles, because of the free association and amplification. There are also no experts in the social dreaming matrix, except possibly those with more experience of being in social dreaming matrices.

As in the process of moving from the infinite to the finite, from the unconscious to the conscious, Sphinx is being pursued while Oedipus is held in mind. The thinking will be surprising and subversive as each participant takes part in the multi-verse of meaning that is a matrix. Whereas in a group the focus is on developing a universe of meaning to which the majority can subscribe and from which they can derive their authority, this is not an issue in a matrix. There can never be one, and only one, meaning for a dream because each participant will create her or his own meaning. What is important is the free association and amplification, which enlarge the dream by discerning its implicit meanings.

The matrix is conducive to attaining the state of reverie, which has its foundations in the original, emotional contact of the mother and her baby. In the space between them ideas grow as the baby distinguishes between illusion and reality. In this intermediate space the baby puts its feelings and the mother hers. They create a cultural space between the two in which reality and illusion are differentiated. The mother senses the truth in her baby's feelings and returns them in a tolerable fashion. The comprehension of truth is essential for mental growth. In psychoanalysis the analyst symbolizes the mother, carrying out much the same thinking function. In a social dreaming matrix the dreams of the other participants perform this function. Individual participants relate their own dreams to the collective reality as it is being constructed by all the dreams as reflections of reality.

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