

Vita Somnium Breve (Is Life but a Dream?)

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Summary. In view of my finding that dreams are the precursors of waking life, its blueprint in fact, (IJoDR, Vol. 7, No 2, October 2014, entitled, "To Test or not to Test, that is the Question") dreaming and waking must be seen as an interdependent unit. Both are equivalent occurrences with the dream being the primary aspect. This interdependent relationship can best be compared with Einstein's famous formula of $E=mc^2$ where E stands for the dream and mc^2 for waking life. For mystics, both states are solipsistic projections. The world is not an objective reality. To argue that it is a permanent and shared experience is based on a double premise. We can't have the sleeper's point of view and that of the waking individual at one and the same time. In other words, just as dreams come and go, the waking world disappears as we go to sleep and resurfaces as we wake. Clearly, the world, like our dreams is a cerebral projection. Karl Pribram agrees when he sees the brain as a holographic machine that projects the universe as we wake, in the same way as a holographic plate projects its images in 3D outwards when a laser light strikes it. He states: "The rules of quantum mechanics apply all the way through to our psychological processes, to what's going on in the nervous system – then we have an explanation perhaps, certainly we have a parallel to the kind of experiences that people have called spiritual experiences". The precursor of the holographic plate 'containing the world' may be found in a poem by the mystic Shabistari who writes: "Know that the world is a mirror from head to foot, in every atom are a hundred blazing suns" And as in quantum mechanics, this projection is characterised by 'omnipresence' much as it is described in Hindu mysticism: "In the Heaven of Indra, there is said to be a network of pearls so arranged that if you look at one, you see all others reflected in it. In the same way, each object in the world is not merely itself, but involves every other object, and in fact, is every other object". All this is only possible because we are 'suspended' in an all-pervasive medium: CONSCIOUSNESS. Indeed consciousness is the sine qua non of existence. It is therefore the prime factor in any theory of existence. It is in fact that which lends reality to all there is. This is in perfect agreement with quantum mechanics, which states that 'energy', typified by an interactive dualism, only 'coalesces' to matter as we focus on it. In short, the world cannot exist as such, but only unfolds in a living medium, the mind - in consciousness. In turn, the necessity of a living matrix for the 'creation' of the universe underpins the argument that the world only exists while we are awake. It also demonstrates how right Chuang Tzu was when he said: "I and the universe are one", and such oneness is not just a theoretical unit, but a living whole. In a theory where the world is an objective reality, consciousness emerges from complex computations among neurons. (Hameroff) But the medically induced NDE of Pam Reynolds that was observed by twenty staff assigned to Dr. Spetzler's operation on Pam and is recorded in detail, demonstrates in incontrovertible terms that consciousness exists outside the brain, and is in fact the fundament of existence. It also demonstrates that consciousness is non-intermittent and hence the only entity that can claim reality status. In fact as E, the creative energy that in quantum mechanics is typified by an interactive dualism, where photons and particles are an 'hermaphroditic emulsion' of potentialities, where unitive E is better described as 'not two' than as 'one', we understand at once that mc^2 , the material expression of E, is never pure matter, but also energy, and ultimately a form of consciousness. Such toppling of our antiquated western perceptions is rocking the foundations of our science. Clearly, a massive paradigm shift is under foot. East and West are moving closer together, paving the way for a new worldview and a new kind of spirituality. In that climate the dream and its function as a messenger will gradually be saved from confusion and underestimation. Indeed, like Hermes, it will eventually be recognised as the messenger of life's most fundamental information. Instead of being dismissed as Prospero's vacuous wisps of smoke, it will be recognised, once again, as the DNA of life on earth.

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This Latin quote gives us an indication that in antiquity some philosophers, at least, thought of life as nothing more substantial than a dream. I venture to say that such questioning goes back much further than that since it is one of the mus-

ings that defines what it is to be human. It not only casts doubt on the substance of waking life, but it also implies that dreams may be nothing more than vacuous experiences, which is quite a common perception in western culture. But are they? If they truly lacked a sense of reality, would we run from a lion in our dreams? Or would we dismiss a horrifying nightmare as something trite? Indeed, in many cases such disturbing night terrors will carry over into the light of day and haunt the dreamer for days, and at times even longer.

The fact, that their memory in many cases will gravely affect the mental disposition of the dreamer points to a perception that dreams in themselves must give us a sense of

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their reality. Their impact on waking life sets them almost on a par with it. This was certainly the case with so-called primitive man, some of whom not only saw dreams as almost equal to waking reality, but completely so, as was the case with the Gran Chaco Indians. They “*relate the most incredible stories as things which they themselves have seen and heard; hence strangers who do not know them intimately say in their haste that these Indians are liars. In point of fact the Indians are firmly convinced of the truth of what they relate; for these wonderful adventures are simply their dreams, which they do not distinguish from waking realities*”. (Frazer)

But there are also cases where the sense of reality in a dream can be more intense than what it is in everyday life. I have had such a dream. “It took me into a green field. In the middle of it stood, buried up to the buttocks, a black statue of what I later found to be a representation of Persephone. As I looked over to the dark Goddess I was suddenly whisked away into her womb, which felt like a pitch-black cellar. There I floated about in frozen angst. Suddenly, a green fluorescent swastika and a luminous disk of the same colour began to spin before my eyes. A few moments later a TV screen lit up below me. On it appeared a cartoon-like figure on a throne. It reminded me of a painting of Daruma by an old Zen master. His fierce eyes protruded from their sockets like a couple of tennis balls. In his raised hand he held a sceptre made from the wheel and axle of a railway car. There, the dream broke off. I woke in a sweat gasping for air. The dream had been more real than waking. In fact, as I slowly woke from this terrible vision, I thought I was going to sleep”. (Forrer)

The repercussions of this dream were immense. It unlocked the mysteries of the dream for me that had eluded me during twenty years of intense questing. Ultimately, it not only handed me the key to their interpretation, but also showed me a way of verifying their meaning, which I have described in my essay for IJoDR, Vol. 7, No 2, October 2014, entitled, “To Test or not to Test, that is the Question”. In other words, it showed me that dreams don’t just occasionally affect our waking life, but that they are its precursors and ultimately its blueprint.

In view of such interdependence of dream and waking life, which is akin to the progression of *infinite iteration as occurs in the fractal world of the Mandelbrot set*, dreaming and waking become an equivalent and decidedly indivisible process. This becomes tangibly evident when we remember that every dream has a residual component, material from yesterday and the extended past that regularly feeds into a new dream scenario. And just as Benoit Mandelbrot observed that the electrical impulses in his IBM computers often evidenced *cluster formations* (Clarke) I have discovered that in a day of dream manifestations there would be precisely such clusters of manifestations of a particular dream motif. It is not unlike the rush hours of a city, for example, or the cluster of shoppers appearing in a business at certain intervals. This cluster pulse, as it were, shows how interwoven all the facets of waking life are, but it also reveals the intimate connection between dream and waking life.

Indeed, if dreams are the *blueprint of waking*, then they are, despite their *ethereal nature*, the primary factor in the relationship with waking and not something insubstantial and ineffectual as assumed by those who have no interest in their dreams. Thus, in Einstein’s famous formula, $E=mc^2$, our dreams stand in the place of *E*, the energy that ultimately

‘*coalesces*’ into one condition or other of mind and matter. Consequently, they also represent ethereal ideas that come to the mind of an artist - ideas, which he subsequently fashions into forms of tangible substance. Likewise, they also stand for *metaphysics*, while their materialisations cover the domain of *physics*.

With regard to their allocation of time it is of interest to note that dreaming time is considerably shorter than its corresponding waking time. We see this in the fact that we only dream at ninety-minute intervals for short periods that admittedly extend in time in the course of the night. Yet this is still considerably less in terms of conscious experiences that occur in the corresponding waking time. As well as that, a dream scene will expand substantially as it *manifests* in terms of waking time. This the more so since a single *dream motif* is able to recur in waking several times during the day and even recur on the second day and in some instances over extended periods.

This time ratio highlights once again the dream’s function as the *motivator and inspirer* that parallels the creative process, which as an initial idea is subtle, concise, compact and instantaneous, but as its manifestation takes on the appearance of a drawn-out development and materialisation that seems coarse and crude in comparison with its mental conception. This is yet another reminder of how easy it is to take the ethereal substance of the dream as the shadow of the material world, when in fact the reverse is true.

Clearly, dreaming is no less real than waking, for without dreams, there are no waking experiences. But what is not so certain is whether or not the *sense of reality* that characterises both dreaming and waking really deserves this designation? Indeed, can we justly assign *reality status* to something that is *constantly changing*? So let us look at this facet of our enquiry.

At a casual glance, we have no trouble with declaring our dreams to be ethereal and fluid shadows rather than firm realities since they won’t give us the same foothold, as do our waking experiences. In waking, we generally are anchored in our home, and when we go out we are confident that it will still be there for us when we want to return to it. Not so in our dream life. There we only seldom return to the same place, and when we do, it is more often than not just a vague notion that we have been there before, instead of getting the definite feeling of being face to face with a physical house and home.

For this reason we tend to consider our dreams to be little more than *virtual reality*, meaning that although they feel real while dreaming, they vanish into thin air when we wake up from them. As well as that, we often declare them to be absurd or bizarre, which is something quite unlike the steady and consistent states and occurrences of the waking world. This leads us to hold our dreams for nothing more substantial than phantoms.

Since we have seen that our *dreams are the primary component of the dream-waking unit*, that they provide the energy, ideas and motivation for our waking experiences, it must follow that if dreams are but phantoms, waking experiences could fare no better. Clearly, if *E* is a phantom, then mc^2 could be no more real.

So, does this actually match our waking experience? Could we regard it as equally tenuous and fluid as our dreams? Not at a casual glance, but once we embark on a thorough investigation of such a premise, we are in for some real surprises. First of all, we find that waking comes and

goes much like dreaming. It is not nearly as rock-solid as we generally believe. Apart from the fact that our world, on the level of gross manifestation, is subject to changing seasons and that our bodies grow steadily old and deteriorate in health, which alone changes our perception of the world, we are also told by our physicists that the substance of waking matter on the atomic and subatomic level is subject to the vicissitudes of unimaginably rapid vibrations. This makes the substance of our waking world equally as fluid and tenuous as 'the stuff as dreams are made on'. Astonishingly, Shakespeare's magician, Prospero, knows this: "*These actors, as I foretold you, were all spirits, and are melted into air, into thin air...and like this insubstantial pageant faded, leave not a rack behind. We are stuff as dreams are made on; and our little life is rounded with a sleep*". (Shakespeare)

For Prospero, the world is just a dream without substance. He agrees with the Roman philosophers' dictum: 'Vita Somnium Breve'. But more than that, this tenuous world that disappeared like a dream was created by himself. It reminds us of the way our own dream world arises and then vanishes as we wake or dive into deep sleep. It seems almost as if we were creating it ourselves much as a magician would. While this is not quite the case, we certainly can't deny that our dreams are a world like no other, individually crafted, a private universe.

While we have no difficulty in relating to this coming and going of the dream world with its unique and private character, we balk at the thought that this same characteristic might also apply to our waking world. *Yet, like a dream, it disappears as we fall asleep and resurfaces again as we wake.* But, so we protest, surely the waking world does not actually disappear like a dream as we are overwhelmed by sleep. It surely must remain in existence. The fact that other people who are still awake will nevertheless experience the world is surely enough evidence that the universe, unlike the world of our dreams, does not vanish and must therefore remain a shared experience and unbreakable continuum.

But alas, the thought that other people who are not asleep would guarantee the permanence of our world is untenable since they are not in our dreams to be called upon in order to verify our conjecture. *Indeed, in this quest we are faced with a double premise: one cannot have two points of view at one and the same time, which makes the world-experience no more objective than the dream world. We are compelled to concede that the world, like the dream, is a solipsistic fact.*

So, what is it then that makes the dream and waking experiences from two isolated and independent experiences into one *interdependent unit*? Is it memory? Most certainly so, but memory cannot exist in a vacuum: it has to be sustained by something that is an *unbreakable continuum*. This continuum is provided by consciousness. It carries the memory of the dream experience over to the waking experience and vice versa. It is the glue that holds the two processes together. In fact, it is the *sine qua non* of existence. Without it, there would be no world for us, neither one of waking nor one of dreams. Indeed, there would be absolutely nothing, no thing, no *think*. Clearly, *consciousness is the life and light of every living creature*. It is Prospero's *magic ingredient* that imbues our dreams and waking world with that *sense of reality* that we have found to be of varying degrees. But such variation only occurs as consciousness floods the brain. As such it is like the sun, always strong and constant and only

impeded when clouds obstruct its light; as when it pervades the brain.

What I am saying here presupposes, of course, that there is such a thing as '*consciousness as such*'. I am aware that Hameroff, for instance, maintains that 'the general assumption in modern science and philosophy is that consciousness *emerges from complex computations among neurons*'. (Hameroff) In other words this assumption presupposes that consciousness arises from biology where the world is an objective reality, where matter was created first and consciousness later. This goes against the idea that *the world is a solipsistic fact* and may therefore be discounted.

Another scenario, an even stronger case showing that consciousness exists independently from our brain, will be addressed later on.

In order to visualise the interaction of consciousness in a solipsistic world it is best to imagine consciousness, absolute consciousness, as an infinite primal sea of 'energy' from which emerges all there is. In such a scenario we must imagine ourselves as 'floating' in an ocean much like fish. As our brain is being pervaded by this consciousness the universe arises, yet the 'full light of consciousness' would be excluded. A good illustration of this is to picture us wearing *virtual reality headgear. While this would conjure up a virtual universe when switched on, it would at the same time isolate us from the 'full light of consciousness' surrounding us; isolating us, in other words, from absolute consciousness.*

Putting on such headgear not only illustrates the creation of our waking world, but also that of our dreams. To regard our brain as such headgear is actually far closer to the mark than we might assume at first thought. When we learn that there are *more potential synapse connections in the brain than atoms in the universe, it makes this quite feasible.* (Sethi) In such a scenario the universe becomes a projection produced by the individual brain rather than being perceived by it as an *objective reality from 'out there'*. *In short, both the dream and waking are seen in this scenario as individual projections rather than receptions from some external source. The only difference between the two is merely one of direction: while one peers inwards, the other looks outwards.*

Seeing the world as a *projection* is as old as mankind. I am saying this because mysticism is an integral part of humanity, and although it has largely been ignored by western science, ironically since the so-called Age of Enlightenment, it nevertheless has wielded enormous influence, albeit a 'subterranean' one. But since the birth of quantum mechanics this has been changing gradually. Schrödinger, for instance, talked about the Upanishads, as did Bohr and Heisenberg. In fact in Jeffrey Mishlove's interview with Karl Pribram, for instance, we read, "*the rules of quantum mechanics apply all the way through to our psychological processes, to what's going on in the nervous system – then we have an explanation perhaps, certainly we have a parallel to the kind of experiences that people have called spiritual experiences. Because the descriptions you get with spiritual experiences seem to parallel the descriptions of quantum physics*". (Mishlove)

One such spiritual experience is that of the Sufi mystic Mahmud Shabistari, exemplified in his poem "The Garden of Mystery".

*“Know that the world is a mirror from head to foot,
In every atom are a hundred blazing suns.
If you cleave the heart of one drop of water,
A hundred pure oceans emerge from it ...
In the pupil of the eye is a Heaven,
What though the corn grain of the Heart be small
It is a station of the Lord of both worlds to dwell therein”*

The ‘corn grain of the Heart’ is a reference to the seat of consciousness in the human body. Sri Ramana Maharshi of Tiruvannamalai describes this corn as a lotus bud turned upside down or a plantain bud. (Ramana) It is on the right side of the chest and has nothing to do with the pumping heart on the left side. In Sanskrit literature it is called the *Hrit*, the same word, in fact, as the English ‘heart’ with the typical inversion of two consonants, which is so common in all languages. (Just recall the old ‘aks’ which now is ‘ask’) From there it rises to the brain on subtle nerve paths called *nadis*, ultimately pervading the entire body, so giving life to it. (Op. cit. 547-8)

At first sight this scenario of consciousness seems to negate the one I have painted earlier. Yet it does not really since we still can float in the ocean of consciousness and imagine it penetrating the *Hrit* ‘osmotically’, taking up residence there and moving on to the head and body in the described manner, consequently isolating us from absolute consciousness due to our constraining headgear, the brain.

A special point of interest is that Shabistari speaks of the world as a ‘*mirror from head to foot*’. It is as if in this likeness he had anticipated what later would become Karl Pribram’s idea to compare the universe to the projection of a *holographic* brain. He came to this notion in the course of studying brain functions during which he came to compare what is happening in our grey matter to the operation of a *holographic* machine that stores all its information on a *holographic plate*. The marvellous thing about such a plate is that when a *laser beam* lights it up, images that have been imprinted on the plate, project outwards from it in three-dimensional form. And, what is even more fascinating, as we change our point of view, we see the images from different perspectives. So we will not only see the image from the front, but also from the side or any other angle we wish to inspect. Not only that, it also is endowed with the characteristic of ‘*omnipresence*’. By this is meant that when such a plate shatters to pieces, every single fragment, no matter how small or how large it may be, is able to reproduce *all* the information that was originally embedded in the unbroken plate.

This very same notion has been part of Hindu lore for millennia. This is evident from a Sutra quoted by Marilyn Ferguson when writing about ‘Karl Pribram’s Changing Reality’:

*“In the Heaven of Indra,
there is said to be a network of pearls
so arranged that if you look at one,
you see all others reflected in it.
In the same way,
each object in the world
is not merely itself,
but involves every other object,
and in fact,
is every other object”.* (Ferguson)

This parallels the quality of ‘*omnipresence*’ in the holographic plate. It can store such an enormous amount of information because it is *non-spatial*, having the quality

of eternity so to speak. This is to say that hologram upon hologram can be superimposed on the same plate *without taking up any space at all*. If the brain functions like such a plate, then it is more than plausible that it can produce and store all the data necessary to create the entire universe and its countless objects and events.

This collapses our traditional conception of an objective world like a house of cards. Thus, in ‘*hologrammatic*’ thinking, there is no longer any need for actual space and time, it’s now an *apparent thing only*, a *projection of information stored non-spatially*. The world, the infinite universe, is not really out there, for *what appears to be out there is clearly a projection of what is stored in the holographic matter of the brain*. So let’s remember: things that are apparently light-years apart reside very cozily together in that small lump of grey matter. And, since all things are contained in each part, ‘*all the pearls in one pearl*’, they are even closer together. *The ‘Big Bang’ theory with its tedious teasing out of time and matter disintegrates in the blink of an eyelid, and in its place Chuang Tzu looms large when he says: “Heaven, earth and I were produced together, and all things and I are one”.* (Chuang Tzu)

Such toppling of our antiquated western perceptions is rocking the foundations of our science. Clearly, a massive paradigm shift is under foot. East and West are moving closer together, paving the way for a new worldview and a new kind of spirituality.

We might pause at this point for a moment and reflect on the mystery of consciousness. First, let me repeat here that a consensus of biologists argues that consciousness arises from biological processes. This means that they must believe that matter was created first, which then somehow *emanates consciousness*. From this follows that these theorists contend that the waking world is an objective reality. In view of the fact that such thinking is based on a *double premise*, their theory must be abandoned. The creative sequence is the other way round. Consciousness gives birth to matter. *The very fact that consciousness is the sine qua non of existence places it in the primary position in any hypothesis of creation*. There can be no other way without perverting the hierarchical order, without deposing the king and instigating anarchy.

But, let’s not forget at the same time that in truth there is no sequence at all since the universe comes into being at once and in totality the moment we become aware of our waking state. *This not only concurs with Prospero’s magic, but it is also in perfect agreement with quantum mechanics, which states that ‘energy’ only ‘coalesces’ to matter as we focus on it. In short, the world cannot exist as such, but only unfolds in a living medium, the mind; in other words, in consciousness. In turn, the necessity of a living matrix for the ‘creation’ of the universe underpins the argument that the world only exists while we are awake. It also demonstrates how right Chuang Tzu was when he said: “I and the universe are one”, and such oneness is not just a theoretical unit, but a living whole.*

Here again, quantum mechanics is able to bring this curious symbiosis of man and the universe to life for all those who have not had the corresponding mystical experience: *Once we learn that E, the creative energy, is typified by an interactive dualism, where photons and particles are an ‘hermaphroditic’ ingredient of potentialities, where unitive E is better described as ‘not two’ than as ‘one’, we understand at once that mc², the material expression of E, is never pure*

matter, but also energy, and ultimately a form of consciousness. Indeed it could hardly be any other way since manifestation utterly depends on the sea of consciousness for its existence.

This same principle is also reflected in the *interdependency of dreaming and waking*. In other words, dreams are never purely dreams; they borrow an enormous amount of waking imagery, while waking is never without the shadow of our dreams, particularly since they anticipate the waking world. As well as this, the same duality principle also raises the biblical dictum *'let there be light'* from myth to physics, for the first apprehension of light is nothing other than what happens at the moment of birth, as we are thrust from the womb's darkness into the light of the waking world.

I have said that it was consciousness that *engenders a sense of reality* and that it provides the glue between the two states of dreaming and waking. What else has to be mentioned in this context is that anything intermittent like the alternating coming and going of dreams and waking cannot be regarded as true reality. Only what remains unalterably the same can be seen as *absolutely real*. It is for this reason that *the waking process is to be seen as no more real than the dream, as something just as ephemeral and thus of relative or even illusive reality*.

The notion *illusive reality* might need a little explanation, especially since it might well be understood as something ineffectual, which it is not. We might regard our dreams, for instance, as illusive reality and declare that they leave not even a 'rack' behind, as Prospero said of his magic revelry. But, as we have seen, they are more than a wisp of smoke, especially when they come in the form of a nightmare.

A good illustration of *illusive reality is the mirror picture*. Its reflections are a kind of shadow of substantial objects. If we place a bowl of fruit in front of it, for example, we recognise at once what the reflection portrays, but we would also be aware that we couldn't eat it. In short, *while reflections are real, the substance of the reflected is not* since it can't nourish us, since in fact it is false. So what the mirror image signals is that there is something in existence that might be edible like the fruit in the bowl, or more generally, that *something exists that would sustain, or indeed, enhance our life*. This means that what the world offers, the successes, the pleasures and so on, have no more substance than the mirrored fruit in the bowl. Although such fruit might be *pleasurable* to look at, it is in fact no more than a *promise*.

In life, a rather telling example of this would be sex, for instance. Although pleasurable while we are in its thrall, the sensations it causes will not last and in the end engender addiction, disappointment, frustration and even violence, ending up in breakups and in murder in extreme cases. In that realm we ultimately bump endlessly against the glass of the mirror that holds up so much promise.

Yet paradoxically, in the mystical marriage sexual love stands for transcendental euphoria. What the mirror upholds here is particularly bewildering. An example of this is the vision and ecstasy of St. Teresa of Avila in which she *"saw in the hands of the highest types of angels a long, golden spear and at the end of the iron tip I seemed to see a point of fire. With this he seemed to pierce my heart several times so that it penetrated to my entrails. When he drew it out, I thought he was drawing them out with it and he left me completely afire with a great love for God. The pain was so sharp that it made me utter several moans; and so excessive was the sweetness caused me by the intense pain that one*

can never wish to lose it, nor will one's soul be content with anything less than God". (Canterburyatheists)

Not surprisingly, atheistic commentaries in response to this vision run something like this: "Her sexual desires unable to find a physical outlet, she finds 'pleasure' and 'release' in her visions...In her autobiography she wrote, *"During ecstasy the body stops moving, breathing becomes slower and weaker, you only sigh and pleasure comes in waves"*... For all intents and purposes, she is describing an orgasm. Many interpret her most famous vision as having strong sexual connotations, and the angel's golden spear to be phallic symbolism". (Op. cit.)

Thankfully, misunderstandings such as these among those who have not taken the trouble to delve into mysticism to greater depth, are deftly countered by comments like this: *"Imagine that the "Spiritual Marriage" of St. Catherine or St. Teresa veils a perverted sexuality, that the visions of the Sacred Heart involved an incredible anatomical experience, or that the divine inebriation of the Sufis is the apotheosis of drunkenness"*. (Underhill)

Clearly, what 'analysts' of the atheistic temperament fail to understand is that the word LOVE is a JANUS head with one face looking towards things *venereal*, while the other is fixed on affection devoid of eroticism, towards veneration. Both terms are derivatives of VENUS, the Goddess of love. These critics, or indeed amateur analysts, are blind to the fact that in the mystical context Eros can stand in for Agape. It does not occur to them that sex is capable of the *most passionate expression of all love, including that of transcendental passion*. In this connection it is quite revealing to find that many teenage girls will dream that they had sex with their father. Naturally, this invariably disturbs them and indeed disgusts and frightens them.

I have examined many such cases and found that dreams of this nature, more often than not, indicate a particularly strong bond between daughter and father. I generally explain scenarios of this kind in the following manner: 'Dreams are chiefly pantomime. For them to *mime* affection there are various options such as a kiss, a hug, an embrace, stroking the hair and so on. But when affection is particularly intense between daughter and father, such gestures are inadequate and only representations of sexual intercourse will do justice to such deep affection'.

Surely, it is quite facile to insist that Teresa's most famous vision was initiated by thwarted sex, and that her vision was 'for all intents and purposes describing an orgasm'. (Canterburyathesists) In fact, Teresa's ecstasy is nothing like an orgasm, which comes to light when we take a closer look at what she actually wrote in her autobiography: *"During ecstasy the body stops moving, breathing becomes slower and weaker, you only sigh and pleasure comes in waves"*. (Op. cit.)

Anyone who has physically experienced an orgasm will know that it is a violent event. At such times Teresa's sighs, as she is carried along in waves of pleasure, are replaced by roars and screams while her 'slower and weaker breathing' is transformed to the desperate huffing and puffing of a marathon runner. Indeed, the whole act is not for nothing alluded to as 'heavy breathing'.

But such misdiagnoses by her atheistic detractors do not end there. So when she says: *"This prayer is a glorious foolishness, a heavenly madness where 'true wisdom' is learned; and it is for the soul a most delightful way of enjoying"*, (Op. cit.) her critics readily see *clinical madness*.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In point of fact, it would be a sad world if psychiatric illness was no different from 'true wisdom'. Obviously, Teresa resorted to speaking of 'madness' because in this physical world there are no comparative terms for ecstatic experiences. To be sure, the word 'ecstasy' makes this quite clear, for being made up of 'ex' (out) and 'histanai' (stand), it shows that mystical experiences are, like quantum mechanics, 'out of this world'.

Clearly, Teresa's visions are of a *different reality* to what we enjoy in everyday life. For true ecstasy does not just slow the breath, *but stops breathing altogether*. And when the breath stops, the stream of thoughts stops; in other words, *it is not the brain that produces ecstasy, but the shutting down of the brain and its functions. It is then that illusive reality is replaced by a transcendental reality*.

So when we say that the world is an *illusive reality* we must understand that its images signal that they in themselves are nothing but reflections of a '*fuller reality*' behind them. A reality, or indeed an energy, that is not diminished by providing life with the imagery and configurations of waking and dreaming. For just as the reality of the sun is not affected as it creates the play of light in the sunsets and sunrises on earth, so *transcendental consciousness* is never touched as it brings us and our virtual reality headgear into existence.

In other words, while the brain, the headgear for our virtual reality world is only *relatively real*, the source of consciousness that brings it into existence, is *absolutely real*. It is at this point where we must add the proviso that this can only be the case if that source consciousness is *non-intermittent*, steady as the sun in the sky.

On the surface, consciousness seems to have *intermittent qualities*. We say of the man, for instance, who suffered a blow to his head and lies motionless that he is *unconscious*. Yet when he comes to himself again, we realise that he was only unresponsive to the outside world. In other words, *his consciousness remained uninterrupted*. His case is little different from the man who has fallen asleep and is able to recount a dream when he wakes up. His ability to relate what he saw in that state is sufficient evidence that his consciousness remained intact all the while he was unaware of his surroundings. But what about the case of a man or a woman who is considered to be dead? Has their consciousness atrophied?

Before addressing this question in detail, it is instructive to see what occurs in *complete and utter mystical ecstasy*. Here, Teresa's raptures serve again as an informative example: "*Sometimes the person is at once deprived of all the senses, the hands and body become as cold as if the soul had fled; occasionally no breathing can be detected...When this profound suspension diminishes, the body seems to come to itself and gain strength to return again to this death which gives more vigorous life to the soul*". (Underhill)

'*To this death*', is a phrase that describes this state of suspended animation quite dramatically, but also accurately. For the body of a mystic whose breath is arrested and becomes '*cold as if the soul had fled*' can only be described as being in a state equal to what today goes under the name of 'Near Death Experience' or NDE. It parallels in many ways the yogic experience of Samadhi, which outwardly displays precisely the same physical symptoms and inwardly transcends all of virtual reality. If we examine this situation thoroughly, we find that 'near death' is somewhat of a misnomer, for the patient reaches a state where his or her body is

truly dead. But since the patients, like Lazarus, return to life again, it is considered to be a *near death* experience.

Among countless records of NDEs, one of them stands out as the most extraordinary, one that from the point of view of scientific integrity can only be hailed as the best-attested case. It is, as I see it, the equivalent of the 'Rosetta Stone' that unravelled ancient Egypt's innermost secrets. We are faced here with the proceedings of Pam Reynolds' *artificially induced death* for the purpose of operating on a basilar artery aneurism that could not be accessed by the usual pathways of operational procedures.

It was doctor Spetzler whose idea it was to *suspend all animation* of his patient *totally* in order to forestall any fatal injury during the operation. The attending doctors, nurses and medical technicians, *twenty in all*, quite aptly nicknamed this daring hypothermic arrest 'stand still'. It is because there were so many professionals present who witnessed this necessary preparation for the operation that makes it so completely unique and scientifically incontrovertible. In brief, the temperature of the patient's body was reduced to a mere 60 degrees Fahrenheit or 15.55 Celsius. Her blood was drained from her body. *In this state the heartbeat was flat-lined, the lungs drew no breaths and the EEG registered no brainwaves at all. In short, as Sabom writes: "In everyday terms she would be dead"*. Dead not just for minutes, but for over an hour. Yet, miraculously, she returned to the living unharmed. (Sabom, chapter 3)

Even more amazingly, like so many near-death patients, she was transported to the Elysian Fields along a route made familiar by Dr. Moody's book on NDEs, "Life after Life". But, of course, the same route was also well known in medieval times as its illustration by the Dutch artist Hieronymus Bosch so palpably shows. "It was like a tunnel but it wasn't a tunnel", Pam recounted... "It's a dark shaft I went through, and at the very end there was this very little tiny pinpoint of light that kept getting bigger and bigger and bigger. The light was incredibly bright, like sitting in the middle of a light bulb". (Op. cit. P. 44) It was there where Pam heard her grandmother calling her. Soon she began to discern different figures in the light, "and they were all covered with light, they were *light* and had light permeating all around them". (Ibid.)

A *crucial observation*, which Pam made during her crossing of the River Styx is that she heard the sound of the natural D. As she listened to it, she felt it was pulling her out of the *top of the head*. And amazingly, the further out she got, the clearer this tone became. Here, we must note two important factors. The top of the head is in Hindu lore the location of the seventh and highest chakra. This is a magenta coloured 'wheel of energy' and a portal through which the soul or etheric escapes at death. It goes under the name of Sahasrara, the *lotus with a thousand petals*. Pam's description of her departure not only verifies this age-old Hindu wisdom, but also affirms that the Hindu's chakra lore is no mere fancy. (Mookerjee and Khanna)

But it also attests to the fact that not only do we have an '*etheric double*', a subtle entity that slips out of the body of flesh and blood at point of death, but that *consciousness is not interrupted when the body dies; that on the contrary, general perception is intensified, thus demonstrating that perceiving the world by means of the physical senses is a lesser and with it a secondary means of apprehending it*.

Indeed, once Pam had slipped out of her body, her etheric allowed her to enjoy the ordinary waking world from above

with greater intensity. "I remember", so she reported, "seeing several things in the operating room when I was looking down. It was not like normal vision. It was brighter and more focused and clearer than normal visions". (Op. cit. P. 41)

Some sceptics attribute the cause of such transcendental experiences to a 'demented and drugged brain'. (Carroll) Clearly, a brain in such deteriorating state could not achieve the kind of clarity of vision and enhanced focus as Pam reported. Besides, all the medical records indicate indubitably that at the time of leaving her body and looking down into the operating room she must have been *totally brain-dead*. After all, there could not have been a heartbeat with blood pulsating through the brain since *all her blood had been drained before the operation began*, nor was there any pulmonary activity. So those who will approach Pam's discarnate adventure with an open mind will no doubt concede that Dr. Moody's reports on NDEs were clearly trustworthy. This means that it is on indisputable and multiple records that when the body dies, the soul is not destroyed, but is rather liberated so that it can enjoy the freedom and joy of the transcendental realm.

It also verifies the belief that we rejoin our relations in a world of light and bliss, which makes it hard to leave it and return to earth. This becomes evident, as Pam is to depart from the realm of light: "My grandmother didn't take me back or asked me to go... My uncle said he would do it. He's the one who took me back through the end of the tunnel. Everything was fine...*But then I got to the end of it and saw the thing, my body, I didn't want to get into it...It looked terrible, like a train wreck. It looked like what it was: DEAD*". (Op. cit. 46)

Some critics of Pam's transcendental adventure claim that her experiences took place before she was clinically dead. This scene of her return shows clearly that such a view is untenable. It becomes the more apparent as we read on: "*It was communicated to me that it was like diving into ... a pool of ice water...it hurt*". When we remember that her blood had been cooled to 60 degrees Fahrenheit and learn in addition that the doctors had started to pump the blood back into her body before she had returned to normal waking, it becomes more than evident that Pam could only have had her transcendental experience after she was clinically dead. It makes Pam Reynolds' medically induced NDE into the classic and scientifically recorded 'mysterium coniunctionis'.

In that state the relative reality we experience with our 'earthly headgear' is raised to incomparable heights. *Not, of course, to the ultimate level*, but well above that which waking and dreaming afford us. A good example from western tradition is Jung's experience described in his "Memories, Dreams, Reflections". (Jung)

It was part of the period of visions that was triggered off by a heart attack that struck him down after he broke his foot in 1944. As the period of convalescence set in, a series of visions followed, which enveloped him in a "*magical atmosphere*". (Op. cit. 326) He understood then what the mystics meant when they spoke of "*the odour of sanctity, the sweet smell of the Holy Ghost*". (Op. cit. 326) Describing the level of reality at such an occurrence he writes: "*We shy away from the word 'eternal', but I can describe the experience only as a non-temporal state in which present, past, and the future are one. Everything that happens in time had been brought together into a concrete whole. Nothing was distributed over time; nothing could be measured by tem-*

poral concepts. The experience might best be defined as a state of feeling, but one that can't be produced by imagination. How can I imagine that I exist simultaneously the day before yesterday, today, and the day after tomorrow? There would be things which would not yet have begun, other things which would be indubitably present, and others again which would already be finished and yet all this would be one". (Op. cit. 326-7)

Mystical encounters such as this bear out the illusion of time and space. They highlight the deception of our earthly headgear with its holographic trickery. But above all, they underpin the 'density' of a higher reality, Indra's network of pearls, Shabistari's 'heart of one drop of water from which a hundred oceans emerge'. And, of course, it underpins, once again, the 'hermaphroditic' state of E, the creative 'NOT TWO', which then 'disintegrates' into the world of duality, of contrast and contradiction. It further illustrates the working of the holographic brain that stores its information NON-SPATIALLY, yet projects it by means of the '*laser light of waking consciousness*' as a world of space and time.

It is perhaps worth noting at this juncture the fact that the illusion of time and space can be uncovered without the help of holographic experimentation. *Indeed, logic alone will accomplish this*. All we need to do is to ask ourselves how long is twelve noon precisely, for instance. Is it an hour, a minute, a second, a nanosecond or an infinitesimal fraction thereof? The short answer is: none of these applies. It is none of these because all propositions produce the end result of twelve noon *plus*. *Noon plus is not noon precisely*. The true answer is zero, 0. This seems at once absurd because it would mean that all clocks had no purpose in our life, that they all should forever rest their hands on midday and spare their energy of running round the clock face.

So what is wrong with this answer, or is it right and we misunderstand what zero implies? The latter, I am sure, and some mathematicians, at least, must know this. Zero, 0, is very much related to the word 'nothing', which is not nothing, but no thing. In other words it is something that is utterly real, yet unmanifest. In fact, zero represents the womb containing everything. It is what the mystics call the VOID.

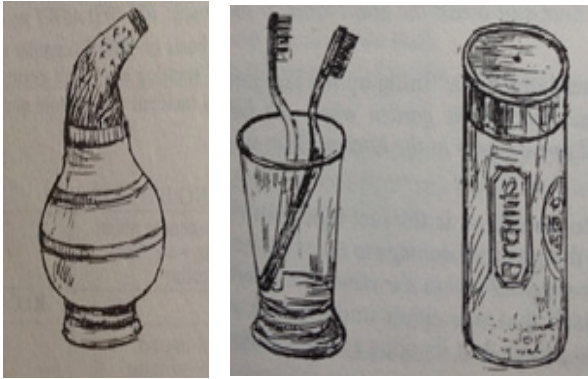
Indeed, from zero spring all the other numbers, both positive and negative. Clearly, zero is the mother of all numbers giving birth to infinity. *It is the sign for eternity, which contrasts with the prostrate eight, the sign for ad infinitum*. Eternity distinguishes itself from infinity, which is an endless *flow* of numbers and ultimately of all that is to become manifest, while eternity, the VOID, does not flow, was not born or created, has no extension, yet contains all there is, was and will be. (Forrer)

And since time and space are an 'hermaphroditic' entity, space too is a figment produced by our 'headgear'. A quick glance at Euclid's definition of the straight line will unravel this for us. While the straight line in the abstract, in our head, is the shortest connection between two imaginary points, this changes the moment we materialise this theorem by means of pencil and paper. No matter how fine the tip of our tools may be, the line will become an extended ribbon and the points will end up as circular areas. In other words, while our world in the realm of *eternity* Jung described via his mysterium coniunctionis is devoid of both space and time, it becomes falsified the moment it projects itself onto the plain of waking manifestation.

Yet another illustration comes from the world of dreams. I have already said that the dream imagery is very much

condensed. However it loses its compactness as it projects onto the waking field. In other words, the density of the dream imagery disintegrates and draws out into an imaginary field of space and time. The two images illustrated here exemplify this. The dream image is to the left while its corresponding waking manifestation is to the right. (Forrer)

Figure 1: Drawings by the author



From such manifestational ‘disintegration’ or rather unfolding of the dream construct it transpires that the dream is accordingly closer to the imagery of Jung’s *mysterium coniunctionis*. Put another way, the dream is closer to the realm of Heaven than waking. It is, in other words, an intermediate state between absolute and earthly consciousness. No doubt, it is for this reason that sacred scriptures declare that the dream is a message sent from God or the Absolute. But more than that, as is evident from what Job said about dreams: “For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumbering upon the bed: Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction”. (Job 33: 14/15/16) This, like no other ancient dream lore makes it quite clear that dreams are transmitters and transformers of the contents of the creative and ‘hermaphroditic’ E. But the phrase, ‘yet man perceiveth it not’, also draws attention to mankind’s ignorance of this fact.

Interestingly, such lack of perception seems to be a deliberate attribute of the dream’s character and its function in the life of ordinary men and women. Freed of such ignorance, life, the dream’s manifestations, would have fewer secrets. Its ‘hide and seek principle’ that adds so much spice and mystery would be lost. It would be like watching a drama on stage of which we know the whole plot in detail. While this would still retain a certain amount of tension, it would certainly be drastically undermined.

There is yet another and most important point that Job’s dream wisdom makes. It is contained in the last sentence: “Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction”. Clearly, it declares that the dream’s instructions are not just warnings, but prophecies. Dreams seal our fate, and all there is to do for us is to surrender to what is in store for us. As Aesop’s fable has it, in which a dream came true despite all the efforts of the dreamer to forestall it: “A man should resign himself to his fate with patience and courage, for no artifice can deliver him from it”. (Aesop)

We have seen how quantum mechanics is hauling the mystic out of his subterranean realm into the light of day. A major effect this has is that much of what was considered to be *ancestral superstition is being re-evaluated and returned*

to its rightful station. The soul, for instance, is no longer our forebear’s superstition, but a scientifically attested reality. *On the other hand, the body is being downgraded to a kind of space suit with virtual reality headgear that conjures up a realm of reflective illusions*.

In view of this, the dream too, and its function as a messenger, will gradually be saved from confusion and derision. As in biblical lore, where it was portrayed as an angel, meaning messenger, it will regain its standing as a vital link between absolute consciousness and our world of relative values. *Indeed, like Hermes, it will eventually be recognised as the messenger of life’s most fundamental information. Instead of being dismissed as Prospero’s vacuous wisps of smoke, it will be recognised, once again, as the DNA of life on earth*.

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