

# The dream poet's pen: Archetypal psychology and collective dream groups

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*Summary.* Poet David Ray imagines, “The poem is the altar for the dream” (1998, p. 176). This research study used a phenomenological approach to amplify dreams with poetry from a collective perspective through the lens of archetypal psychology. The research was a collaborative effort of *psychopoesis* nested in a dream group used to explore the archetypal value of poetry created with dream images portraying the collective psyche and current cultural surround. This study reimagined the conversation between depth psychology, poetics, and dreaming beyond the personal or day-world ego's interpretations. The focus on collective dreamwork with a dream group attends to the dream poet's pen and, by doing so, revivifies the imaginal ego, rejuvenates the poetic basis of mind, and refreshes *psychopoesis* as a meaning-making agent in depth psychology. Through the lens of archetypal psychology, the current research examined the phenomenon of using dream images to create poetry and applied the process to a group setting in service of the *sensus communis*.

*Keywords:* Dreams, archetypal psychology, dream groups, phenomenology

*The poet's task is this, my friend,  
To read his dreams and comprehend.  
The truest human fancy seems  
To be revealed to us in dreams.  
All poems and versification  
Are but true dream's interpretation.  
—Hans Sachs, Meistersinger (1494-1576)*

## 1. Introduction

The current research examines dream work in a collective setting as a transformational process. It explores the experience between the doer (dream poet) and the deed (dream poem). It engages the reflective moment at the tip of the dream poet's pen. It studies the phenomenon of what manifests at the threshold in between the dream and the poem at that moment of time, space, and experience where they meet. It observes what tools the imaginal ego uses to turn the desiccated surface of occurrence into an experience and how it helps soul facilitate meaning making at the moment of the kiss between pen and paper. This work seeks to discover the dynamics that serve meaning making (soul-making) when the dream poet's pen engages dreams from a perspective of the tripartite life; a life where middle ground exists and space for meditation, mediation, and reflection. At the threshold between the dream and the poem, tripartite life is lived on the literal, psychological, and archetypal (or more-than-personal), levels.

Dreams and poems can provide soul with an adequate account of itself. Both can provide a place for the soul of the world (*anima mundi*) to hear psyche speaking. Both can promote the recovery of the world as a place of soul by honoring the collective voice heard through these unconscious and conscious creations of humanity.

As a researcher, I am immensely interested in the human relationship with images and the quality of depth and value they can bring to a life through engaging what James Hillman (1975) has termed the “imaginal ego” (p. 37), imaginal ways of knowing, and what Hillman has come to call a poetic basis of mind:

*Here I am working toward a psychology of soul that is based in a psychology of image. Here I am suggesting both a poetic basis of mind and a psychology that starts neither in the physiology of the brain, the structure of language, the organization of society, nor the analysis of behavior, but in the processes of imagination. (p. xvii)*

Further, the imaginal ego as it lives in the dream, or unconscious realm, has the ongoing task of “subjecting the [day-world] ego to the dream, dissolving it in the dream, by showing that everything done and felt and said by the ego reflects its situation in the image, i.e., that this ego is wholly imaginal” (Hillman, 1979, p. 102). This evolving soul partnership between the day-world ego and the night-time imaginal ego is “not an easy job, for the ego is archetypally an upperworld phenomenon, strong in its heroic attitudes until, by learning how to dream, it becomes an imaginal ego” (Hillman, 1979, p. 102). Engaged with the psyche through the poetic basis of mind, the imaginal ego fluidly dialogues with the various structures of psyche while laying tandem with the day-world ego. The presence of the imaginal ego dis-integrates and loosens the rigid day-world ego so it can surrender and relate more fluidly with the rest of the psyche. It is almost as if the imaginal ego sets an example of another way of being for the day-world ego, a way that can find value. Through this experience of the imaginal ego the day-world ego can learn to live within the tripartite of the literal, psychological,

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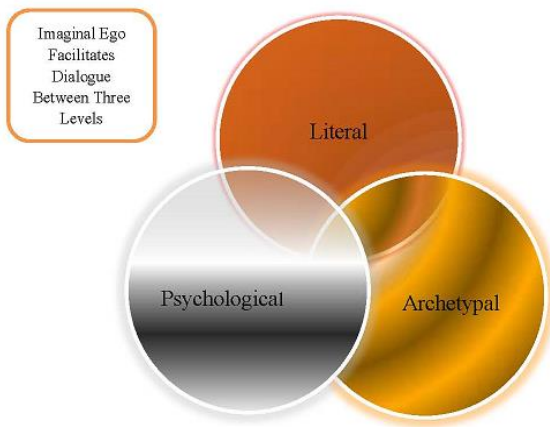


Figure 1. Venn Diagram of Three Levels of Life in Dialogue Facilitated by the Imaginal Ego.

and archetypal levels because they are now more available to it. When the imaginal ego engages the day-world ego in the fluid ouroboric dance, a circumambulation of light and dark, it learns to participate in an informative inner dialogue while living on the three levels of life (Figure 1).

Hillman's work on the poetic basis of mind and his notion of the imaginal ego incited me to study, from a depth psychological and archetypal perspective, the relationship between dreams and poems. I wanted to explore how dream poetry, engaging a poetic basis of mind, and supporting an imaginal ego, reveals the meaning making and value generating processes created when poetry is used to amplify or work with dreams. For me, the tip of the dream poet's pen has value on both a personal and collective level. In this context the term value "conforms with the soul value we wish to give to and find in our work" (Hillman, 1977, p. 85).

In this study, poetry was used to amplify or work with dreams and focused on how those dynamics work when engaged by a group aimed at collective meaning making at the archetypal level. This research moved the poetic toward the collective, social, and cultural realms through archetypal psychology and dream image. The qualitative data was a celebration and exploration of archetypal psychology as an adventure to the interior where dreams are the source of images for poetry. In turn, the poetry provided a platform for archetypal communication and poetic knowing that informed understanding and meaning making for the collective and the *sensus communis*.

## Literature Review

Benjamin Sells (2000) explains how the psychologist, through archetypal psychology, tends to psyche and recognizes the force and beauty in psyche's images.

*The psychologist's job, then, is simply to make whatever is there more psychological, more soulful, more attendant to the mystery inherent in "psyche" itself. To this end, archetypal psychology works to foster a psyche-logos worthy of the name, a psychology of imagination that senses soul in all things, thereby returning soul to culture and beauty to life. (Sells, 2000, pp. 7-8)*

Dream images are natural and their poetic force and beauty are natural as well. Hillman (2004) explains the "soul is constituted of images, that the soul is primarily an imagining

activity most natively and paradigmatically presented in the dream" (p. 18). Dreams and poems can provide soul with an adequate account of itself. Both can provide a place for the soul of the world to hear psyche speaking. They can promote the recovery of the world as a place of soul by honoring the collective voices in the *sensus communis*: "the place of natural law connecting all individuals with each other and with the order of the world" (Hillman, 1992, p. 76). Dreams and poems honor the "archetypal images [that] portray our human emotions, our all-too-human complexes, which produce the affliction of just being human, each human being living the experiment of human Being" (Hillman, 1960, p. 191).

If the nature of the mind is poetic as Hillman proposes, and the dream is psychic nature per se, we have a poetic basis of mind because we dream. *Poiesis* (Greek spelling), the word at the root of the modern word poetry, was originally a verb which meant to create or "to make" (Heidegger, 1971, p. 212). In his work *Healing Fiction*, James Hillman (1983) relates a move C.G. Jung made towards finding value in literary and dramatic works to gain understanding of human ontology. He explains how Jung saw psychological merit in the depthful aspects of poetry, literature, and drama where Jung stated that "*poiesis* is the *via regia* to the *via regia*" (p. 36) or the royal road to the royal road. Here, in a creative dynamic between Hillman and Jung, *poiesis* (poetry) is the royal road to the royal road (dreams) in the unconscious.

The place between the dream and the poem is a threshold. The creating of a dream poem is a threshold occasion. This is similar to what the Freudian psychoanalyst Lou Andreas Salome (1958/1987) noted when she said "poetry is something between the dream and its interpretation" (p. 50). The threshold is the in between. The tip of the poet's pen just prior to action is a threshold between unconscious and conscious, individual and collective.

## Archetypal Psychology

Jung (1955, 1956/1989) defines an archetype as "a living idea that constantly produces new interpretations through which that idea unfolds" (p. 253); "it is always perfect and numinous . . . for the archetype is autonomous and the only question is whether a man is gripped by it or not" (p. 524). Within Jung's definition is the supposition that archetypes are "always at work everywhere" and that an archetype is a "dynamic image" which can only be understood as "an autonomous entity" (p. 109).

In this sense, an archetypal dream is a vessel holding images that have archetypal value. The archetypal dream is in service to soul and is an agent whereby images can resonate with soul. The archetypal dream vessel is voluminous as it must hold the endlessly constellated images of the unconscious. An archetypal dream as the vessel of the image is wide, rich, and deep. It has the potential to contain a multiplicity of meanings or implications toward meaning. The archetypal dream is also polymorphous—containing many forms and stages; multivalent—charged with energy, both positive and negative; and it is unfathomable in its depths.

In depth psychology "psyche is the great repository of ideas, images, emotions, urges, and desires that appear in the world, whether its source is personal or collective, conscious or unconscious" (Coppin & Nelson, 2005, p. 5) Creating dream poetry follows both Jung's and Hillman's edict to turn our attention to psyche, which, in this case,

involved amplifying dream images with poetry. Through this process an archetypal sensibility engaged with an artistic sensibility to work with dreams as a depth psychological phenomenon.

Meaning making is necessary for the health of the group and the individual. As a matter of archetypal psychology, the definition of meaning making herein is based on an understanding that there can be a multiplicity of meanings and that there are endless possibilities for meaning making within dreams, images, poetry, and myth. While archetypal psychology continues to honor the dream in the consulting room it also asks us to honor the dream beyond the consulting room, by offering up the realm of dreams, once again, to the world at large where dreams have lived for thousands of years. Archetypal psychology finds value in culture, the arts, poetry, ideas, imagination, dreams, images, and ultimately soul.

Archetypal psychology, through the foundational tenet of the poetic basis of mind, supports living with poetic awareness and supports noticing the poetic in all aspects of psyche, soul, and life by promoting a way of being in the world that engages the imaginal realm. Poetry emanates from the image-making faculty of the unconscious, the poetic imagination. Perhaps the ideal circumstances for the creation of dream poetry is when the poet unwittingly allows the imaginal ego to pick up the dream poet's pen and engage with the image-making faculty (psyche) while free in its dream space and capable of producing poetry.

### Tripartite Nature of Dreams

I was asked by my therapist to consider living life on three levels: the literal, the psychological, and the archetypal (Tate, 2002). Through this work I was gifted a tripartite language of soul. The literal includes day-to-day relationships and concrete tasks such as paying bills and taking children to school. The psychological level taught me to have a relationship with psyche: the ego and its many characters, complexes and their energies, and the persona. The archetypal level includes identifying, amplifying, and finding value in the archetypal forces as they appear and erupt in dream and daily life. The weaving together of the three levels of existence—the literal, psychological, and archetypal—allowed me to make meaning and find value in my dreams and poems. Each level has its own language that can be expressed in dream images. I also found that working the dream with poetry enhanced a dialogue with the tripartite nature of life and gave me an opportunity to learn the languages these three very different and essential levels of life had to offer.

I felt safe with dream images and, for a time, the only thing I could trust in my life were the dreams psyche gifted to me each night. "The world is a place of living images, and our hearts are the organs that tell us so" (Hillman, 1992, p. 16). I came to know that the literal, psychological, and archetypal levels of life dialogue with each other through dreams, creating subsequent new waking-world awareness. The three levels, or tripartite existence, allows for the growth of a paradoxical attitude capable of holding the tension of the opposites. The tripartite also allows for the growth of an attitude that permits the space and time to more consciously stand at life's thresholds and embrace occasions of soul-making. Hillman (1975) writes in *Re-Visioning Psychology* that "all activities of the psyche, whatever psychic faculty they originate in or whatever academic faculty they are manifested in, become means of soul-making" (p. 152).

Throughout forty-five years in the consulting room, Tate noticed consistent patterns that emerged in dream content which led him to determine that there are four types, or levels, of dreams. The four types or styles of dreaming he notes are "recurring [repetitive] dreams that help us each understand our unique take on how we might feel inadequate [shame] and three tiers of dreams that have unique signatures. Let's call these different dreams Copper, Silver, and Gold, representing their functions, focus, and value" (Tate, 2010, p. 2). Tate's typology serves the dreamer in a learning process by distinguishing between the literal, psychological, and archetypal levels in any given dream image (Figure 2)

Copper dreams reflect back to us our literal day-life concerns. They process the day's manic and obsessive thoughts. These dreams are concerned with the day-world ego and what it wrestles with. Silver dreams are more dramatic in nature. These types of dreams relate readily to the psychological level of life. Dream images reveal themselves as part of a dramatic scheme that includes a theme, a cast of characters, a dramatic moment, and a task. Gold dreams are what myths are made of, symbolic and archetypal. Tate (2010) describes gold dreams as follows:

*Gold dreams are the deepest mysteries of psyche. They can be personal, collective, and mythic at once. They provide opportunities for great energetic beauty and have creative force. Their soul-making capacity is apparent as we wake. These highly metaphorical images carry their respective golden value rich with meaning and wonder which is often immediately felt. Whether it be about attaining better balance, or discovering jewels from the deep unknown within us, or contributing insight to our human evolution, dreams patiently broadcast their stories. (pp. 3-4)*

The fourth type, or style of dream, according to Tate, was the Repetitive dream, which contained a unique wound of inadequacy or shame, and could be resolved with therapy and psychological growth.

The psyche is a dynamic, organic, and energetic body that is fluid; it ebbs and flows through us and through the collective. It engages us psychologically and archetypally and reveals itself in our day-world moment by moment. We can learn to relate to psyche in a way that reveals value and meaning. Living life and engaging with dreams on the three

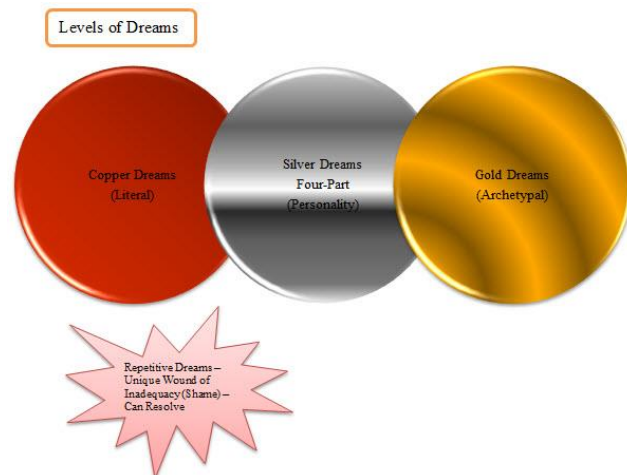


Figure 2. Typology of Dreams, (Tate, 2020).

levels (literal, psychological and archetypal) is a human attempt at having a relationship with psyche.

The more I strive to live with an awareness of the three levels of life the more I integrate their relationship to each other through a poetic basis of mind. The tripartite life now becomes a way of being in the world. This way of being facilitates an appreciation of the moments when the three realms fully intersect. Such moments include noticing synchronicities in the literal world, shifts in consciousness while working a dream, or simply finding value in a moment of being where I appreciate the three levels as they exist in that moment. These moments are poetic; they are the bringing forth as Heidegger (1971) put it. Finding value in this way helps me be poetic. It is in these poetic moments that I feel the energy of the imaginal ego coalescing with the three levels of life at the tip my dream poet's pen. I feel their soul-making capacity.

The imaginal ego facilitates a dialogue through images with the literal, psychological, and archetypal domains (Figure 1). Value can be found in the literal by its reflection in and through the psychological and archetypal realms, and value can be found in the psychological by reflections in and through the literal and archetypal realms. All three levels in relationship to each other, as a healthy psychic organ, attend to the unfurling of the unconscious and the integration of psychic material. These moments of value, of meaning making, are moments of integration (Figure 3).

Giving dreams corporeality, giving them body through poetry, allows the images to be shared within the context of the *sensus communis*. It gives the images a place to resonate beyond ourselves. Levertov (1981) suggests that the phenomenon of the interweaving in the very act of doing the poem breaks it through "to extend beyond the limits of the artist's own life" (p. 42). I believe the interweaving she discussed is related to the interweaving of the literal, psychological, and archetypal levels as one experience—the phenomenon of writing a poem.

Throughout my journey, I have written numerous poems from my dreams. The poems amplified the dream images so that I could better integrate the dream material and begin to have relationships with those parts of myself that wanted my attention. Living a tripartite life allowed me to engage dream poetry to revisit dream images from a profoundly archetypal perspective and it allowed me to depersonalize the

dream in order to see the stories of the archetypes in the images. The dream poems allowed me to make meaning in my life. The move toward depersonalizing the dream is supported by living the tripartite life, because in that life we understand that the archetypes are not merely us, and thus we do not have to take them personally.

While researching for this current study, I delved into the works of several poets including Rumi, William Stafford, Mary Oliver, Galway Kinnell, Robert Bly, David Whyte, and Sharon Olds. Through Rumi I began to recognize the numinous in poetry. By numinous I mean that I was struck by a transcendent quality in Rumi's poetry that seemed to incite meaning beyond my personal journey. Rumi became the bridge to seeing-through to the soul-making in my own poems. This experience allowed me to find a new love and compassion for my own journey as well as the journey of others. I found a new threshold of meaning making: the place in-between the dream and the poem. The transformation of dreams into poems intersected with the new way I was living my life on three levels. I began to see that a poetic basis of mind and poetic awareness supported soul-making in my personal transformation. The amplification of dreams with poems seemed a natural move towards self-discovery. Ultimately, finding my dream poet's pen has been a tremendous part of the soul work that has taken place on my journey.

Dreams, for the purposes of this research, not only consist of day residue (copper), but also have deeply psychological aspects (silver), archetypal value (gold), and quality across a wide variety of presentation from all facets of psyche. The dream is never exactly what we write down. We can only do our best with the language we have as we wake each morning taking pen in hand to scribe what we saw. In archetypal psychology all images have value regardless of how they present themselves, particularly in dreams, and all images from the gruesome to the beautiful have soul-making or creative potential. This is the type of dream poet archetypal psychology is promoting, one that dialogues with all levels of psyche including the literal day-world life, the psychological life, and the archetypally infused life.

## Dream Poetry

Many poets nourish their poems with nocturnal dream images, as well as day-dream images. The poets can teach us to dream and the dream can teach us to be poets. Image work, dream work, poetic imagination, and archetypal imagination are concerns of soul. Poetry and myth move us towards a life that has a tripartite sensibility based in the literal, psychological, and archetypal realms. In a sense poetic images teach us how to dream.

Archetypal psychology seeks to continue to honor and revivify poetic expression and the philosophical nature of poetics through its concentration on the images of psyche in art, poetry, myth, and dream. Gadamer (1992) makes the provocative proclamation that "the poet is the archetype of human being" (p. 77). This powerful statement depersonalizes the role of the poet so that the poem can reveal itself to the poet in all of us and engage us in experiences beyond ourselves. The imaginal ego leans out into the world with poetic images at the tip of its pen and leans back again showing itself ever so carefully in an ouroboric dance in and out of the unconscious, similar to the way it teaches the day-world ego how to dream.

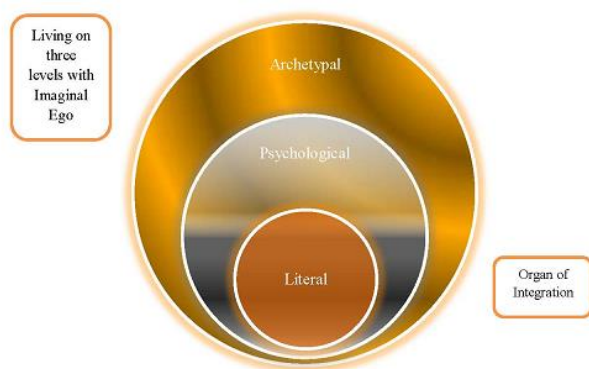


Figure 3. Living on Three Levels with the Imaginal Ego – Integration).

Poetry has the power and place in the living universe to engender soul. Even if we do not write poetry we read it, we soak in it, we dwell in reverie induced by its words. If the poet is the archetype of human being we are all subject to the creative instinct and the peculiar way it poetically helps each of us create a life in the world. We can relate to poetry as a form of soul-making that can bring value to human beings on all levels. Poetry has the power and place in the living universe to honor the freedom of the imagination, to allow for the freedom of multiple perspectives, to dialogue with the world soul, and to relate to the fully ensouled *sensus communis*.

*The poet is the true activist who dares to whisper that there is nothing to do, that there is nothing we should do. He or she is the true revolutionary, the true philosopher who inverts the relation of knowledge and being, of the mind's meaning and the soul's presence. In this respect, the poet is the one who awakens our aesthetic sensibilities, the one who teaches us to feel again. Aesthetic in its root sense means to sense, to feel, and particularly to sense in the sense of hearing. Hearing, in a destitute time we hear and obey the calls of Beauty and its Terrors, that at the abyss we feel again the depths of each moment, of each encounter, that we dare to love, even in the face of loss, all that appeals to us and makes its claim upon us. (Romanyshyn, 2002, pp. 70-71)*

We, as life-poets, are held in our unconscious living by the literal, psychological, and archetypal levels of life percolating in and through us. Their percolations result in the work of art that we are and this can manifest through the creative instinct to know ourselves through art and poetry.

Poetry, dreams, and psychology have been responding to each other since before psychology was considered a discourse of the mind. Poets across the centuries have hosted psyche's images and framed them in poetic language. In 1855, Charles G. Leland wrote in *The Poetry and Mystery of Dreams* that "the vagaries of the mind during slumber . . . is . . . a highly poetic faculty" (p. v). Miller (2008) states that Jung wrote:

*. . . they [the poets] are always the first to divine the darkly moving mysterious currents and to express them as best they can, in symbols that speak to us. They make known, like true prophets, the stirrings of the collective unconscious . . . which in the course of time must inevitably come to the surface as a collective phenomenon. . . We cannot therefore afford to be indifferent to the poets, since in their principle works and deepest inspirations they create from the very depths of the unconscious, voicing aloud what others only dream. (p. 247)*

When we involve all three levels of knowing (literal, psychological and archetypal) we are involving psyche or soul in the work of individuation and this allows us to see-through to imagining a new relationship with our "I" or ego, and also a new relationship to the human community. The ugly and the beautiful, and all shades of images in between, exist simultaneously and can emerge/merge that way in poetry, art, and dream. Jung, Hillman, and Eshelman find personal, collective, and archetypal value in art and poetry (Hillman, 1960; Jung, 1922/1966; Eshelman & Hillman, 1986).

*The task of the poet, and the depth psychologist, is to bring us into proximity with the sacred. The sacred is only knowable through experience and then made meaning-*

*ful and communicated by the agencies of metaphor and symbol. Sometimes the sacred is remarkable for its absence, sometimes for its anarchic quality, sometimes for its presence beneath the surface of ordinary experience. (Hollis, 2000, p. 54)*

## Objective of the Present Study

While many poets have used dream material in their poems, and psychology has long found kinship with poets, poetry, and poetics, there has been little exploration of the dynamics that serve meaning making elicited when dream images are amplified by poetry. Throughout the research on the topic of dream poetry, I found no literature explicitly seeking to understand the dynamics that serve meaning making when poetry is used to amplify or work with dreams. Further, I could find no literature discussing dream poetry as engaged by a dream group aimed at collective meaning making or examining the dynamics of meaning making when dreams are amplified by poetry.

The objective of this research was to bring the unconscious, expressed in dreams, together with the process of writing poetry via a dream group, in order to delineate a greater understanding of the dynamics that serve meaning making through the integrative process of writing dream poetry as a creative and collective experience. To facilitate these objectives two research questions were explored by this study:

1. What are the dynamics that serve meaning making, or transformation of meaning, when poetry is used to amplify or work with dreams?
2. How does this work develop further when engaged by a dream group aimed at collective meaning making at the archetypal level?

The tip of the dream poet's pen has value on both a personal and collective level. What creates that value? In this research the term value relates to the primary tenet of archetypal psychology, that archetypal psychology is a "psychology of value" (Hillman, 1977, p. 83). In this context the term value "conforms with the soul value we wish to give to and find in our work" (p. 85).

## 2. Methodology

I chose hermeneutic phenomenology as my research methodology. This study was first and foremost a depth psychological exploration through the theoretical lens of archetypal psychology, supported by poetic inquiry through engaging the poetic basis of mind. It was a depth psychological study because psyche is present in the work through dream images and through the tripartite levels of life: the literal, psychological, and archetypal. By exploring the dreams and poems from an archetypal perspective we acknowledged the images as emanating from psyche and we recognized that "underworld images are ontological statements about the soul, how it exists in and for itself beyond life" (Hillman, 1979, p. 47).

Through this research I asked my co-researchers in the dream group to be depth psychologists for a time and to embrace the notion, along with me, that psyche and its imaginal realm are real.

*All depth psychologists believe in the reality of the unconscious and take the whole psyche, which includes both consciousness and the unconscious, as their primary*

*datum. This distinguishes depth psychology from other approaches such as cognitive, behavioral, experimental, and social psychology. (Coppin & Nelson, 2005, p. 42)*

## Hermeneutic Phenomenology

According to Palmer (1969) "hermeneutics is the study of understanding" (p. 8). In turn, van Manen (1990) defines phenomenology as

*The study of the lifeworld—the world as we immediately experience it pre-reflectively rather than as we conceptualize, categorize, or reflect on it (Husserl, 1970b; Schutz and Luckmann, 1973). Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences. (p. 9)*

The study of understanding (hermeneutics) and the study of gaining a deeper understanding of the nature and meaning in the experience of our everyday or lived experiences (phenomenology), combine to form the research methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology.

Heidegger's (1962) combination of the hermeneutics of understanding with the phenomenology of human existence is an example of hermeneutic phenomenology. Heidegger's foundational modes of being human, his interpretation and understanding (meaning making), echo Mary E. Clark's (2002), definition of meaning making as a human need. This human need combined with the human experience results in hermeneutic phenomenology.

Van Manen (1990) notes that phenomenology describes how one orients to lived experience, hermeneutics describes how one interprets the "texts" of "life" (p. 4). In the case of this study the lived experience includes experiencing the acts of dialoguing with dream images and writing poetry. Dreaming is an involuntary experience; however, transcribing the dream upon waking and creating poetry from the dream images are voluntary experiences. The texts of life, in the case of this study, are the raw dream images, the dream poetry, and the answers to the questions regarding the lived experience of writing dream poetry that were posed to the participants.

The research involved three stages, which included dream group design and development, data collection, and data analysis. The participants were informed from the outset that this dream group was not aimed at analyzing personal dreams or engaging in personal psychological work. Instead, it was presented as a collective effort aimed at understanding the dynamics that serve meaning making when poetry is used to amplify dreams, and to better understand how these dynamics work in a dream group aimed at collective meaning making at the archetypal level.

During the data collection part of the study, the dream group met weekly for five weeks. Each week the group time encompassed three distinct sections for discussion and data collection: (a) The More Than-Personal; (b) Image Work; and (c) Dream Work. The following ideas were generally reviewed during group time: the personal and more-than personal (collective and archetypal); personal dream and more-than-personal dream (archetypal dream); and finally, the cultural dream. The Image Work included voluntary sharing of new dream poems created by the participants. In the final group meeting The More-Than-Personal section included a summary discussion of the cultural and collective themes in the dreams and subsequent dream poetry

that emerged throughout the five weeks of the dream group; the group discussed if and how the themes relate to the cultural surround. This section included a review of the dream poetry written by participants including a follow-up survey regarding what the participants found meaningful in the process of amplifying dreams with poetry.

It was the intention of this research to discover archetypal psychological meaning via the process of writing dream poetry. While analyzing the dream material, dream poetry, field notes, and the written survey responses of the dream group participants, I looked for themes that indicated meaning making or the transformation of meaning when poetry is used to amplify or work with dreams. I also looked for themes that expressed how the meaning making dynamics unfolded when engaged by the dream group aimed at collective meaning making at an archetypal level.

### 2.1. Participants

In adherence to the guidelines of phenomenological research, only those truly interested in dreaming and who were active dreamers were asked to participate in the study. The qualitative method of phenomenology required that the "research participant has experienced the phenomenon, is intensely interested in understanding its nature and meanings, and is willing to participate" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 107).

The age range of the co-researchers was 33 to 70 years old with five of the participants being 57-70 years old. There were five females and one male in the study. The personal backgrounds, ages and historical diversity of each person was quite diverse and added deep richness to the dream group container. Due to the geographical location and lower population numbers of southwestern Montana, specifically Bozeman and surrounding towns, the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the participants was not as diverse as it might have been in a larger metropolitan area.

Each participant was informed of the collective nature of the study and was encouraged to consider themselves a co-researcher in the study process. Each participant was encouraged to join with me as a seeker of knowledge and understanding with regard to the phenomenon and dynamics of meaning making, or the transformation of meaning, when poetry is used to amplify or work with dreams.

The dream work background of each co-researcher was quite varied and diverse. Each dreamer brought a rich history of life experience to the project. The commonality between them was their interest in dreams and dreaming, a desire for continued self-inquiry, a wish to relate within a community of like-minded individuals, and a desire to contribute to a cause they felt was worthwhile.

### 2.2. Research Design

Hermeneutic phenomenology addressed the two central research questions: What are the dynamics that serve meaning making, or the transformation of meaning, when poetry is used to amplify dreams? How does the work advanced when engaged by a dream group aimed at collective meaning making? Phenomenological analysis described the essence of the lived experience of the co-researchers' engagement with writing dream poetry, moving from raw dream text through archetypal amplifications and associations in the group setting, culminating in dream poetry. Hermeneutics examined the shifting horizons of imaginal awareness that

emerged from the intersubjective field of the dream group and how these horizons, infused with archetypal sensitivity, altered the co-researchers' subsequent relationship to the dream images when creating dream poetry.

This research study focused on a facilitated group based in hermeneutic phenomenology. Hermeneutic phenomenology is interpretive, experiential research that is focused towards lived experience, meaning making, and understanding. Within the dream group container there are three levels of understanding and co-creation that took place through intuition, compassion, meaning making, and moments of understanding. These levels are the literal, the psychological, and the archetypal and/or collective levels.

### Analyzing Hermeneutic Phenomenological Data

According to van Manen (1990) "a good phenomenological description is collected by lived experience and recollects lived experience—is validated by lived experience and it validates lived experience" (p. 27). This is also known as "the validating circle of inquiry" (p. 27). In discussing hermeneutic phenomenological data, van Manen prefers to

*Use the term "description" to include both the interpretive (hermeneutic) as well as the descriptive (phenomenological) element. And sometimes the term "phenomenology" is used when the descriptive function is emphasized, "hermeneutics" when the emphasis is on interpretation. Often the terms are employed interchangeably. (p. 26)*

Within the context of this analysis I attempted to employ the language of hermeneutic phenomenology in a similar fashion, with an awareness of experiential writing (logging the dream) and interpretive writing when understanding of a concept became apparent.

To analyze the data I used Moustakas' (1994) modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of analysis of phenomenological data (p. 121), supported by Creswell's (1998) recommendations for data analysis and representation (p. 139).

The following is a summary of the analytical steps in Moustakas' (1994) method for analyzing data:

1. Using a phenomenological approach, obtain a full description of the experience of the phenomenon.
2. From the verbatim data collected from the participants the researcher completes the following steps:
  - a. Consider each statement with respect to significance for description of the experience.
  - b. Records all relevant statements.
  - c. Lists each nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statement. These are the invariant horizons or meaning units of the experience.
  - d. Relate and cluster the invariant meaning units into themes.
  - e. Synthesizes the invariant meaning units and themes in a description of the textures of the experience. Including verbatim examples.
  - f. Reflect on textural description. Through imaginative variation, construct a description of the structures of the experience.
  - g. Construct a textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience.
3. From the verbatim transcripts of the experience of each of the other co-researchers (dream group participants) complete the same steps.

4. From the individual textural-descriptions of all co-researchers' experiences, construct a composite textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience, integrating all individual textural-structural descriptions into a universal description of the experience representing the group as a whole. (p. 122)

In analyzing the data from a hermeneutic phenomenological approach the phenomenological analysis comes first as noted above. The data is collected through phenomenological description, without critical analysis; then the underlying meaning is teased out of the data making a move towards the hermeneutical aspect of the research. Hermeneutic phenomenological analysis was applied to the data. This initiates the meaning-making process which moves towards answering the central objective questions of this research. Hermeneutic phenomenological reflection seeks to identify the essential meaning of the subject or experience under consideration

While working with the dream material, dream poetry, field notes, and the written responses of the dream group participants, I looked for themes that indicated the dynamics that serve meaning making or the transformation of meaning when poetry is used to amplify or work with dreams. I also looked for themes that express how the meaning making dynamics unfold when engaged by the dream group aimed at collective meaning making at an archetypal level.

### 2.3. Procedures

After initial phone contact or personal interview, participants deemed suitable for the research study were sent a packet including a participant information form, an informed consent form, instructions to participants, and an informational handout for the dream group. Selected co-researchers participated in four three-hour dream group sessions and one four-hour session over a six-week period with two weeks between the last two sessions for reflection and final development of dream poetry. At the end of the six-week period all data was collected, including the raw dream text and the written dream poetry. These steps resulted in a group of stable, articulate participants who engaged in the discussion of more-than-personal (archetypal) and cultural or collective dream material. The focus on the more-than personal level in dreaming allowed participants to see the value of their contribution of dream images and poetry to the community to bring meaning to collective cultural issues that arose.

The six co-researchers created sixteen dream poems over a six-week period. The dreams and poems, arrayed categorically in eight archetypal themes, were of various lengths and styles. The co-researchers ascertained the themes through weekly group discussions regarding the more-than-personal value in each dream and poem.

After the conclusion of the six-week group process, co-researchers were surveyed about their experiences during the study. Results were analyzed through the lenses of hermeneutics and phenomenology.

### Dream Group Design and Development

To design the dream group for the present research I modified dream group designs from my previous fieldwork on dreams and I also relied on my twenty years of experience with facilitating and participating in dream groups, as well as additional literature I reviewed regarding the dream group

process, including Jeremy Taylor (1983, 1992), and Montague Ullman (1973, 1996, 1999).

The dream group processes developed for this research were held in the spirit of community service and discovery through the research process. The dream group participants were encouraged to move within a mode of discovery together. They were encouraged to be conversational, yet respectful of time and of the other participants. This created a dialogue among the co-researchers regarding the "topic of mutual interest."

The dream group meetings were three hours each with the exception of the final meeting which was four hours. In my experience three hours allows time for introduction of concepts, questions and answers, and for working for approximately fifteen minutes with each participant's dream material in the form of raw dream text or the completed dream poem. It also allows for additional discussion between dreams or poems.

At this juncture I would like to note that while I used theoretical and conceptual language to describe the research, group procedures, and discussion ideas, I made every effort to move away from theoretical and conceptual language with the group participants, focusing more on experiential language, lived examples, and scenarios from real-world situations.

Each meeting was opened and closed with a dream poem to set the tone and the ritual of the meeting. Each week the group time encompassed three distinct sections: 1. The More-Than-Personal; 2. Image Work; and 3. Dream Work. The weekly dream group meetings and their content are outlined in Appendix A.

As facilitator I continually invited the dream work to shift away from the personal level towards the collective and archetypal levels as necessary. The dreamers worked on and wrote their dream poetry during the week between sessions at home. The participants were asked to reflect on their process at home as it related to the concepts presented, keeping in mind the experiential questions asked of them. Questions and answers were encouraged throughout each session when the need for additional information or comment arose.

## Dream Group Materials

The materials used for the dream group included the group handout arranged in a three-ring binder with an agenda for each meeting. They were also provided with a lined pad of paper and a pen in this packet. Additionally, the dreamers were given a copy of Dunning and Stafford's (1992) *Getting the Knack: 20 Poetry Writing Exercises*, which includes the four Dream Write exercises used in the dream group weekly meetings.

## Data Collection

The data collected for analysis included:

1. Description of raw dream images written upon waking, or raw dream text. The co-researchers were also given the option of withholding written versions of the raw dream text if it was too difficult to share for publication. However, none of co-researchers withheld the raw data.
2. Dream poetry. The co-researchers were asked to submit a minimum of two dream poems over the course of the project. All dreams used to write the dream poetry

submitted for the project were worked within the context of one of the dream group meetings.

3. As lead researcher I generated field notes during and after each group meeting based on my observations during the group process.
4. Participant responses to five interview questions regarding the lived experience of amplifying dreams with poetry were collected and analyzed for image and poetry-based themes and ideas, as well as for their contributions toward answering the central questions posed in this research.

To invite the voices of the co-researchers into the hermeneutic circle of interpretation and meaning making, the written responses to the following phenomenological questions were collected:

1. Reflecting on the metaphor of the dream poet's pen, describe the experience of writing dream poetry from your inner perspective, almost like a dream: the feelings, moods, the emotions, noticing the sense-scape of the body.
2. While engaging the idea of the dream images as co-author of the dream poems what was your experience of allowing the images to freely participate in developing the poem? How did this relational experience with the image engage your imagination?
3. Was there a particular moment in the dream poetry writing experience that stood out vividly for you as meaningful or transformative? Please elaborate.
4. Having worked your dream(s) in the group from a more-than-personal perspective did you recognize any instances in the dream images that reflected themes that are common to all of our histories or stories? If yes, please relate an example. Did these instances affect your experience of writing dream poetry?
5. Was it meaningful to you to experience sharing your dreams as poetry with the dream group? Please elaborate on your experience.

The research participants each received the written research questions in their packet distributed at the first meeting. The questions were subsequently reviewed during the first and fourth meetings allowing them time to reflect on the questions throughout the six week period.

## Post Experiment Interview

The five phenomenological interview questions (written), and the final group discussion, were the exit interview for the co-researchers. I requested that co-researchers call or e-mail me should they need to discuss any outcomes that were not shared in either the final group process or the written interview questions.

## Dream Group Ethics

The hermeneutic phenomenology of dream group work can lend itself to research about dreams that has integrity and meaning. An environment can be created that is safe and filled with respect. This environment can support many levels of work including the literal as it appears in the dream group dynamic and the dreams themselves, the psychological as it weaves new understanding with old psychological patterns, and the archetypal and collective realms as they inform from the deepest dimensions of the collective psyche. Ethics are of the utmost importance in creating a



safe space for dreamers to be vulnerable and to facilitate new ways of understanding.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Phenomenological Analysis

This section begins the explanation and culmination of the phenomenological analysis regarding the essence of the experience of amplifying dreams with poetry. To remind the reader, the phenomenological analysis method being used is based on Moustakas' (1994) modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method of analysis of phenomenological data (p. 121), supported by Creswell's (1998) recommendations for data analysis and representation (p. 139). Below, an example of the participant's material and how it was analyzed in each procedure is explained.

##### 3.1.1 *Phenomenological Analysis of Co-Researcher Data*

In this section, I tenderly examine the marrow in the answers to the survey questions offered by the participants in this process. Dream images created these valuable offerings through the "message-bearing experience of the image—and the feeling of blessing that an image can bring" (Hillman, 1975b, p. 25). In the context of this research the words carry soul as the written offerings of the co-researchers. My task entailed mindfully locating the essence of the experience of writing dream poetry within the ashes of their offerings, stirring them round with the bone of imagination, waiting for their words to reveal the value of this experience.

In the description of Research Methodology and Procedures section above, I included a summary of the steps of Moustakas' Modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method. In this section, I summarize the seven procedures therefore I have not repeated the summary here.

For each participant the seven analytical procedures for the data was performed. I will summarize each procedure and give a brief example of it as the full analysis is beyond the scope of this present article. The final step in the process is to develop a composite textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience for the entire group, "integrating all individual textural-structural descriptions into a universal description of the experience representing the group as a whole" (p. 122). Because of the voluminous nature of the phenomenological descriptions, only one example of the seven procedures used to analyze each participants data is included in this article (See Appendix D). However, it should be noted that the seven procedures were thoroughly completed for each co-researcher's data.

##### 3.1.2 *Phenomenological Dynamics of Meaning Making - Group Composite Textural-Structural Description*

The six co-researchers began the research study from different horizons of knowing regarding dream images and dream group work. The group dialogue and working the dreams within the group aided the participants in re-entering the image from both a personal and more-than-personal perspective. This resulted in a varied but essential relationship with the image that helped relativize the day-world ego or inner critic, in order to facilitate the act of the image co-authoring the poetry.

The six collective themes or dynamics of meaning making when dreams are amplified by poetry are:

1. Relationship with the image.
2. Relativizing the day-world ego.
3. Writing dream poetry as a process.
4. Transformation.
5. Archetypal/collective work.
6. Group Intersubjectivity.

The intimate process of writing dream poetry, including relativizing the ego, resulted in what the co-researchers described as transformative moments. These transformative moments were supported by and reciprocally cultivated transformative moments within the intersubjective field of the group process.

**Relationship with the image.** The essence of the experience of building and maintaining a relationship with the image began by each co-researcher fully accepting that the image is animated and is willing to participate in co-authoring the dream poetry. This notion was facilitated by the image-based work of Patricia Berry (1982), James Hillman (2007), Robert Sardello (1995), and Timothy Tate (2010) supported by the "Dream Writes" exercises of Dunning and Stafford (1992). In developing a relationship to the dream images the co-researchers learned to take good care with the image while listening deeply into the image's desires beyond their own personal implications.

Allowing the image into the poetry writing process took different forms for the co-researchers, however, each co-researcher succeeded in the effort all the while holding the metaphor of the dream poet's pen. When this was accomplished they generally experienced an expansion in the arc of intimacy with the image that resulted in experiences described as, "the poem comes so easily, as if by another hand," (Adams, survey) or "the words flowed effortlessly, feelings and thoughts merged with words" (Blessing, survey). They could feel how the "mystery of the dream poet's pen writes" (Morris, survey) and "the image took on a life—clearly co-authoring—writings simply began to flow," (Rose, survey) or "the rest of the poem flowed easily and quickly" (Snowman, survey) and "my poet's brush leapt into my hand, painting away unedited" (Wallace, survey).

These peak experiences with the image were developed by re-entering the dream and engaging the image in deep dialogue that began as a glimpse of the image, having moments of focus, and moving toward a feeling of being one with the image. In these close moments with the image the poets felt both empathy with the image and empathy from the image, some feeling as though the image stood by them and took their hand to help them write the poetry. They could feel the emotions embedded in the images that revealed deeper and deeper emotions exciting their imaginations in the process.

Some of the co-researchers stayed extremely close to the image and their poetry revealed its collective or cultural nature subtly through imaginal metaphor, while others extended the metaphor into personal meaning that further opened to collective meaning during the group process. In these moments the personal "I" in the dream poetry became the collective "I." The writing process became a collaborative creative design between the dreamer and the images where there was intense freedom of expression. This new-found freedom and the experiences of the more-than-personal work in the group cleared the way for imagination to move the image toward the more-than-personal realm. The dialogue in the group opened the archetypal theme in the images also allowing the archetypal realm into the process.

Co-authoring the poem was often both a loving task and a struggle as the words to express the image would shift and change depending on the day-world ego involvement. It is a loving task to stave off the day-world ego and instead rely on the image to direct and engage the imagination to reveal the words and their poetic placement. The image became the guide opening each dream and poem into its own character. This union of dreamer, the poet's pen, and the image allowed for the dynamic expression of the dream images in many forms of dream poetry throughout the six weeks. Within this union the dreamer and the poem are contained by the image in an imaginal boat, flowing down the river of creativity toward the estuary of psyche and the confluence of the personal and collective realms.

**Relativizing the day-world ego.** The day-world ego had to be asked to “step aside” in order for the image to have the freedom to excite the imagination and work with the dreamer from a creative perspective. Through re-entering the dream the poet is putting the day-world ego on notice that it cannot participate beyond certain levels with the process. It must take an inferior position. This is not to say that we do not need our day-world ego. It is our friend “but has been burdened with surviving in this collective and cultural design” (Tate, personal communication, 2013), therefore, it often does not contribute to the imaginal process constructively but instead creates frustration, judgment, guilt and doubt—techniques it has used to survive. The day-world ego also materialized in seeking insight and the need for meaning. Shifting from the day-world ego to the imaginal ego stance was key for the co-researchers and in some cases was the peak transformational moment.

The essence of relativizing the ego for the dream group researchers generally felt like a psychic “release into a place where previously held vantage points are freed to juxtapose with whatever they bump into, without a preconceived stance” (Wallace, survey). The natural flow of the poetry out of the relationship to the image overcame the intimidation of the day-world ego's judgments, wants, and needs. Giving up ego-based afflictions, such as always seeing things from a positive or negative viewpoint, opened the ink well and allowed the co-researchers to write with the ink that was summoned by a deeper process. The ink in the pen became anger, fear, love, frustration, wonder, grief, duty, wisdom, comedy, and Trickster energy. The relationship to the image, sometimes with “love and struggle,” (Adams, survey) allowed the inner critic to step aside and create space for the poetic words to flow effortlessly.

**Writing dream poetry as a process.** Developing a relationship to the image and relativizing the ego are on-going processes, but once noticed and engaged the two moves support the process of writing dream poetry. The visual, sensual, and emotional parts of the process all become part of the relationship with the image.

The essence of the process includes developing patience with the images and waiting for insights before placing pen to paper. With day-world ego relativized the dream poet gains confidence and overcomes doubt, enhancing the ability to observe personal emotions and the emotions in the image. A mutual empathy occurs. The ink in the pen becomes feelings, moods, and emotions that emerge onto the page through imaginative engagement and collaborative creative design. The poem is created from cultivating patience with the process, developing a relationship with the dream images, flowing with the imagination, and gaining

confidence, all with the help of the imaginal ego in the form of the dream poet's pen.

Giving up the need to know or the need for meaning, and being patient with the process, can result in an eventual outcome or insight after the relationship to the image is built and the poem is written. The poet can return to the poetry and dialogue with it allowing a multiplicity of meanings to arise rather than a hard-and-fast interpretation. In this sense the personal and collective histories and stories interact with the poetry to produce meaning making and understanding. In essence, the dreamers accept that they are not fully qualified to interpret the image and must engage the image in a process of imaginal amplification and association. The image takes its own time revealing its poetic nature and cooperates when honored as co-author in the process.

The co-researchers articulated that writing dream poetry was a healing and enlightening process that had therapeutic characteristics. Through contrasting the literal world with the psychological and more-than-personal realms perspectives were changed on many levels.

**Transformation.** In addition to providing contrasting perspectives, the process of amplifying dreams with poetry contained the essence of liberation on several fronts. Writing dream poetry liberates the imagination from the day-world ego, including liberation from the internal judge or inner critic, feelings of self-doubt, and day-world ego-afflictions such as always being positive. Liberation felt like a reorientation that cultivated an awareness of more of life. The essence of liberation also occurred through archetypal dialogue in the group which supported the co-researchers' imaginal process through commonality of archetypes in the shared dreams. Liberation through seeing through the archetypal lens released the co-researchers into a more-than-personal perspective which created empathy in the group toward both the dream images and each other. Ultimately, these liberatory moves created an atmosphere where the co-researchers could entertain the idea of “future potential for personal awareness and growth without the heavy reliance on ego alone” (Snowman, survey).

Transformation in this circumstance was also characterized by the capacities of the co-researchers to surrender to the process and to the image and accept the poetic results as they arrived. Through this process they discovered freedom of expression and a capacity to flow with the images and dreams which felt transformative to them.

Overcoming doubt and accepting that they could write dream poetry was transformative in that it was courageous to ask the day-world ego to step aside, leaving them fully in the hands of the image. Each discovered their inner poet and gained confidence on many levels through this process. This resulted in being free to make mistakes—freed from the pain of self-inflicted limitations on their creativity.

Witnessing and being witnessed in the group was transformative for the co-researchers. It allowed the “sacred [into] the light of day” (Wallace, survey) to show itself and created a “safety net” (Wallace, survey) that enhanced understanding of dream images. Witnessing also enhanced dialogue and further exploration of dreams from both a personal and collective level.

The momentum of the poetry transformed horizons of knowing about personal complexes into “compassion for all humanities' complexes” (Morris, survey). The dream poetry writing experience, combined with the dream group experience, created new perspectives that transformed co-re-

searchers' relationships to both self and other. In essence, the process of amplifying dreams with poetry allowed contrasting perspectives that energized and shifted petrified horizons of knowing through reflecting on the contrasting images and themes that arose. Thus, through the courage and empathy to engage the dream poetry process the co-researchers gained a broader view of life that shined a light on the joys and pains that we, and our culture, experience.

**Archetypal/Collective work.** The dream group work on the more-than-personal perspective of life and dream images, served the community service aspect of the group to the extent that it broadened the co-researchers' horizons and views of the world. The *sensus communis* was fed by their contributions. Community was built through dialogue about more-than-personal or archetypal images and cycles. The value in this is that it brought a cultural awareness of the milieu of the world. This awareness was supported and punctuated by the way the group's dreams.

The co-researchers discovered that when they felt deep empathy for another, or for a circumstance their poem or dream described, there was likely an archetypal theme emerging. Thus, empathy helped the co-researchers to identify archetypal and collective themes in the dream images and poems. The more-than-personal viewpoint can also be *ouroboric*. While it takes personal awareness and empathy to see the archetypal value in an image or poem, an archetypal or collective sensitivity also aided the co-researchers in identifying personal elements in their images and poems. In essence, archetypal dialogue broadens the view of life. The co-researchers gained a "360-degree view" (field notes) and began to develop or reignite an archetypal or metaphorical sensibility in their lives.

Through commonality of the archetypal images and archetypal dialogues, including the archetypal dialogue between dream images, the imaginations of the co-researchers were liberated. Creativity was excited and cultivated, resulting in dream poetry reflective of the courageous and hard work taken on by the dreamers.

**Group intersubjectivity.** The essence of the research group, which honored dream images and the more-than-personal realm, was cultivated through listening and speaking with heart and compassion and through engaging a respectful and honorable council practice that held an intention that the community of dream poets contributed to the *sensus communis*, "the place of natural law connecting all individuals with each other and with the order of the world" (Hillman, 1992, p. 76), through "sympathetic resonance" (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 73). The dreamers were asked to consider an expanded state of awareness, which could transcend our separateness and allow us to work as a group that would be compassionately listening for more-than-personal or cultural themes asking to be recognized in the dreams and poetic material flowing in the group. The dreamers were encouraged to believe that what is offered by the dream images fits into the circle of scientific insight at the level of the personal, the political, and the universal levels of culture within which we exist and that the "personal is universal" (Braud & Anderson, 1998, p. 75) and vice-versa. The dream group then incorporated new learning, or shifting horizons regarding these levels, from each co-researcher as they emerged.

Respectful sharing encouraged an open-hearted, engaged witnessing of the co-researchers' dream images and poems. The co-researchers felt deeply listened to in an en-

vironment where the researchers could "tumble another's notions and images around with their own" (Wallace, survey). This gave them the strength to hold the "bombardment of our enculturated environment" (Wallace, survey) with care and truth that helped them step onto "the path less traveled" (Wallace, survey) in the world of the imaginal and the more-than-personal archetypal realm.

The essence of the group created an environment where the dreams were honored in a longer and deeper process than what is offered in other dream groups where the material is worked during the group time only. Creating dream poetry during the week at home allowed the dreams to have extra attention and, when shared as poetry in the group the next week, continue to create a bonding, fun, learning experience that encouraged a broader view of life. The contrast between the dream images heard one week and then the resulting poetry heard the next illuminated the process and allowed the co-researchers to share in the mysteries of the dream poet's pen.

This experience created empathy among the group members for each other, for the dream images, and for the more-than-personal dilemmas presented in the dream poetry. The arc of intimacy and vulnerability became truly apparent in the fourth week when the group members began to admit their individual struggles and victories with relativizing the ego that resulted in transformative shifts in perspectives and new horizons of knowing. With this shift the group container became an even safer place to explore broader levels of awareness.

Many of the group members expressed that the experience was meaningful and transformative. By witnessing each other with empathy and support their work was validated by the "feedback from other dreamers" (Adams, survey) based in empathy that revealed more-than-personal concerns. The co-researchers' experiences were also confirmed by "seeing how the poetry flowed from the dreams of others" (Adams, survey). The co-researchers learned to become "conscious of the archetypal nature of the dreams of the other dreamers" (Adams, survey), which added a degree of objectivity making it easier to identify collective elements by the empathy they felt for each other.

The dream group was a "depth full" (Morris, survey) experience that was filled with profound creative energy. The group was introduced to a new way of interacting with other dreamers and the dream material, whether as poetry or dreams. As the arc of intimacy and vulnerability grew the more-than-personal perspective was appreciated by the group in that they began to notice that when the dream is shared as poetry it becomes "shared community property" (Snowman, survey) whereas the dream itself can seem more personal. The essence of working dreams and poetry from a more-than-personal level supported respect and propriety regarding the personal level of the dream or poem.

"The dream group was an opportunity to experience personal growth by being accountable to a likeminded community" (Snowman, survey). The arc of intimacy and vulnerability encouraged "accountability and growth in the individual [co-researchers] while at the same time working to bring about a greater dialogue and understanding" (Snowman, survey) between the co-researchers, the dream images, and the collective and cultural surround as it presented itself during the dream poetry group process. It encouraged the co-researchers to listen to each other with empathy and understanding, to love their creativity and the process, and

to ask the question: “Do we have the courage to create the collective dream poem” (Blessing, survey)?

### 3.2. Hermeneutic Analysis

Thus far, this research has phenomenologically attended to the dream poet's pen and, by doing so, has phenomenologically attended to the imaginal ego, the poetic basis of mind, and psychopoesis. The research revealed the importance of a tripartite approach to dream work that is aware of the literal, psychological, and archetypal dynamics of meaning making. This final section returns to the hermeneutic and attends to the two central questions/objectives of this research:

1. What are the dynamics that serve meaning making, or transformation of meaning, when poetry is used to amplify or work with dreams?
2. How does this work develop further when engaged by a dream group aimed at collective meaning making at the archetypal level?

To answer the two central questions I reflected on the literature review, relied upon the phenomenological data from the dream poetry group, and explored additional literature to support the phenomenological findings. Because the tripartite of the literal, psychological, and archetypal levels of life has been the touchstone throughout this research it will remain so here. As I explored each dynamic that serves meaning making or the transformation of meaning, I noted how it relates to the two central questions/objectives.

**Literal dynamics.** Three literal dynamics of note that supported meaning making or the transformation of meaning emerged from this work. Two dynamics focus on the second question based on group process and one dynamic focused on the literal poetry itself.

**Meeting place as safe container.** The literal container for creating ritual within the dream group became a sacred physical meeting place. The place itself then became an image of community that the group could take home with them after each meeting. The co-researchers also now had an image of a safe and welcoming place to come back to each week to share their dreams, their poems, and their innermost selves.

**The co-researchers.** The second literal dynamic was the people who literally answered the call to the group, who were key and of the utmost importance. They literally had to be available to participate in the dream group meetings at the specified time and place each week. This particular group of dreamers was wholly dedicated to the commitment and ever so diligent about attending and being present to the work at hand. The meeting place and the people coalesced to form the communal environment where safe and meaningful relationships to each other, to the dream images, and to the poetry developed during the dream group experience.

**Conservation of the dream image view shed.** The third and final literal dynamic that served meaning making or transformation of meaning is the actual physical poetry that resulted from the dream poetry work. At the end of the group process the dream poets literally had poetry they could touch, read, share, and carry home with them. Each piece of paper with a poem written on it and the attendant font, shape, and style of the poem was a literal act of conservation of the dream image.

Through dream poetry the co-researchers began to experience the value of an oneiric conservation effort that pre-

serves the aesthetic value of the dream. This conservation effort is the result of building a relationship with the dream image. Hillman (2013) suggests that the images “are your teachers, they are your motivators, and they are your landscapes. That's what the habitations of your depths are” (p. 114). The poet conserves the view shed of the imaginal landscape of the dream. Through the literal experience of writing dream poetry and the manifestation of it in physical form, on paper, the conserved open space of the depths can be returned to time and again.

**Psychological dynamics.** The phenomenological research revealed that the psychological dynamics that serve meaning making or transformation of meaning when poetry is used to amplify or work with dreams result in various layers of psychological involvement. Instead of imagining one dynamic after another, the dynamics are simultaneously generative, where dynamics merge into each other and/or combine to create another dynamic eventually resulting in the meaningful soul-making experience of creating a dream poem. The psychological dynamics identified that will be expanded upon hermeneutically in this section are:

1. Building a relationship with the image.
2. Relationship with the image and emotion.
3. Liberation of the imaginal ego.
4. Relativizing the day-world ego—or is it liberation too?
5. Empathy.

Miller (2008), states that Hillman promotes the theory that “poetry shows the logic of the way to soul-making. A poetic logic allows a depth—as opposed to ego—to psychological understanding” (p. 250). A central criterion of soul-making, according to archetypal psychology, is met when the move is made to turn the event of creating a poem into an experience. Amplifying or working dreams with poetry creates a meaningful soul-making experience.

The psychological dynamics that serve meaning making or the transformation of meaning as they apply to the group are also varied and generative. Here the group dialogue, including sharing and witnessing, promotes and encourages empathy which reveals the archetypal and collective events in the images. The more-than-personal themes allow the dreamers to see the personal in the collective and the collective in the personal. The experience is one of broadening and deepening the view shed of life. These experiences are created through of an ever-evolving relationship to the image. The generative psychological processes begin with this dynamic.

#### Building a Relationship With the Image.

Similar to any budding relationship, the relationship with the dream image begins with expressed interest. Showing interest in the image commences the generative dynamics that serve meaning making or transformation of meaning when poetry is used to amplify dreams.

The relationship with the image is like a slow burning fire. It can continue over a lifetime if we chose. The value of tending a slow relationship to the image is that we learn about ourselves in relation to it and we learn about the more-than-personal aspects of the image, allowing it to have an autonomous life of its own. Hillman (1989) explains, “the image's movement arrests mine. Its ceaseless activity, its instigation of anecdotal tellings about itself, is as potentially endless as the soul's own depth. Hence, image is psyche, as Jung said” (p. 264). Hence, a slow burning fire, a slow burning love of the image.

Interest in the image can relieve tension in the dream group work. It aids in creating an intersubjective field of vulnerability that is both personal and more-than-personal at once. Like the dream poetry itself, the relationships each become a collaborative creative design that “flow like a river, each molecule part of the whole . . . following the momentum, whether it rushes around stones like rapids, or spirals quietly like an eddy” (Wallace, survey).

For the dream group co-researchers the interest in the image begins at home. The co-researcher starts the relationship by acknowledging an interest in dreams and psyche in the day-world. This day-world interest notifies psyche that the co-researcher is interested in dream images. After the dream images arrive during the night they are attended to with interest by transcription into the literal written dream text.

As with any interest or attraction, eros or libidinal energy manifests in the field of interest between dreamer and image (See Figure 4 in Appendix C). Regarding eros and psyche Hillman (1960) reveals that, “wherever eros goes, something psychological is happening, and that wherever psyche lives, eros will inevitably constellate” (p. 90). In the developing relationship to the image psyche is present at all times. Because of this eros attends to and holds our interest in the image. As the interest in the image or psyche builds, the arc of intimacy and vulnerability in the relationship with the image blooms through erotic involvement—quite different from egoic involvement.

As shown in Figure 5 in Appendix C, the group dialogue regarding the image deepens and broadens the interest in the image through more-than-personal amplifications and associations as well as through noticing personal associations and emotions. The group often noticed commonality in the personal moment, or dilemma, eventually leading to an archetypal, collective, or cultural level of examination. As noted in the phenomenological research the relationship between the personal and the collective is reciprocal

As interest in the image is nurtured in the group through discussion and amplification, and at home by re-engaging the dream image through active imagination, the arc of intimacy and vulnerability with the image begins to expand to the point where the image reveals emotions, moods, and feelings held in its imaginal body. These emotions, moods, or feelings then become the ink in the dream poet's pen. (See Figure 6 in Appendix C)

With enlivening sensuality, texture, and emotion the dream group is promoting animation of the image, allowing images to have a life of their own. Value in the image is revealed by animating it, amplifying it, or developing associations with the image at the archetypal or more-than-personal level; this adds depth and inspiration to both the image and the emerging emotions, moods, and feelings (see Figure 7 in Appendix C).

The relationship with the image builds with group participation. Because this research is a matter of archetypal psychology the group focused on and was facilitated toward building a relationship with the dream images whereby the image then points to something in the work that has value that informs the person, the group, and the *sensus communis*.

Through the interest shown toward the image on both a personal and group level, and the subsequent relationship built with the image, the dream image was considered to

have potential as co-author in the collaborative creative design of dream poetry.

### Relationship With the Image and Emotion.

When amplifying dreams with poetry the image became not only a co-author but with the help of the imaginal ego it became a guide through the emotions that arose from within it and within the co-researcher. As with any relationship or task where there are perceived expectations, psychological complexes and the emotions at the center of them became activated in the task of writing dream poetry. However, continued interest in the image, along with relativizing the day-world ego, created an arena of liberation from the inner critic and freedom of expression that allowed the co-researchers to flow with their emotions rather than fight them. In fact, the co-researchers indicated that many of their most transformative moments while writing dream poetry occurred when emotions were freed from the grips of the day-world ego's judgments or criticism.

Each co-researcher mentioned an aspect of personal emotion in their work and several mentioned the emotions of the image. Chris said, “the visual, sensual, emotional all become a part of the image, both from the experience of the dream ego as well as the experience of other dream figures” (survey). Ann expressed that writing dream poetry was “a roller coaster of emotions.” (survey).

Moving to a more-than-personal, or archetypal level, with emotions aids the poet with the defenses that arrive when the work “feels SO personal and SO intimate that it's not easy to see outside those seemingly private emotions” (Adams, survey). Amplifying the dream images in the group with archetypal or more-than-personal images, myth, and dialogue allowed the dream poets to glean the collective condition held by the strong emotions in the dream images. “Emotion signifies something. . . . Where there is emotion there is meaning” (Hillman, 1960/1972, p. 199).

Through building a relationship with the image the dream poet helps the emotion in the given image find its form and fantasy and elaborates it further in the dream poem. Here, emotions are alive as images and can be engaged as autonomous, similar to the autonomous dream image.

In the group examples we find the image and poet working as a team with emotions in two ways:

1. A relationship with the image allows the psyche to release the emotion held by the image as the ink in the pen. The image acts like a boat to hold the dreamer and the emotion together in the creative process of scribing the poem.
2. The relationship with the image (as guide or co-author) gifts the dream poet the strength to move through self-doubt and relativize the inner critic or day-world ego so their imagination can engage the image directly, and write the poem.

Working with emotions and the affects they create through a relationship with the image supports meaning making and transformation of meaning. Emotion reveals the “whatness” in the image. The “whatness” is what emotion is animating it, giving it form, shape, and attitude. Meaning arises when the sensate event of the emotion is turned into experience. This is soul-making or meaning making revealed. This is the moment where the image “acts as an *opus contra naturum*” (Hillman, 1989, p. 264), where meaning making or transformation occurs.

Supported by the dream group, the liberated imaginal ego, and their relationship to the image the co-researchers were able to work with their emotions and either enlist them as ink in the pen or become liberated from them to move forward with the creative process. In this case the expression of the emotion either created a poem or liberated the co-researcher from the inner critic, judgment, or doubt. At these moments the co-researchers felt a rush of freedom of expression that was described in various ways as the mystery of the dream poet's pen.

### Liberation of the Imaginal Ego.

A dynamic that serves meaning making, or the transformation of meaning, that is generated through showing interest in and developing a relationship with the image, is the liberation of the imaginal ego. Through the dream group and dream poetry writing process the liberation of the imaginal ego into the light of day takes place on both a personal level and group level. The imaginal ego has the ongoing task of "subjecting the ego to the dream, dissolving it in the dream, by showing that everything done and felt and said by the ego reflects its situation in the image, i.e., that this ego is wholly imaginal" (Hillman, 1979, p. 102).

Jung discovered through the imaginal process described in the *Red Book: Liber Novus* (2009) what Hillman was indicating in *The Dream and the Underworld* (1979), that the ego "too is an image." Hillman (1960, 1970, 1975b, 1979) was sensing, possibly through Jung's published theory and his own work, what Jung had quietly kept to himself of the *Red Book* process—that the imaginal ego realizes that the images are not its own and that it exists in relationship with them.

Perpetually spilt in two by the western mind, beginning with Copernicus and then Descartes, the ego lies divided on either side of consciousness: the day-world ego unawares, the imaginal ego working nightly for a full relationship to the rest of itself that it only sees in the night. I felt the imaginal ego's compassionate and empathetic heart reaching out, guiding the day-world ego as escort through the night like Virgil guiding Dante. From the depths the imaginal ego says, "see my world, see my life, I am here too, so bright and shining, full of love of for you and the other images. Please, please, take my hand, I'll care for you, I'll help you see those parts of us that only I have known and that you fear. I am here for you."

Like Jung's (2009) creative work in the *Red Book*, writing dream poetry in a group aimed at collective meaning making at an archetypal level "provides a technique for encouraging and learning from imagination. It gives imagination a much more concrete life than just the romantic notion of imagination" (Hillman & Shamdasani, 2013, p. 161). This research liberates the imaginal ego into the everyday beyond artistic modalities, beyond consulting rooms, beyond the isolated personal-centered dream group. People read poetry all the time and this work contributes to that effort by gifting poetry with collective and archetypal implications to the *sensus communis*.

We know from Hillman that the imaginal ego teaches the day-world ego how to dream. It differentiates the imaginal realm by introducing the day-world ego to the metaphorical and imaginal language of dream images and their form, body, emotions, moods, and feelings. The imaginal ego is at home with the figures and persons of the underworld realm of dream.

The boundary between the personal unconscious and the personal conscious is permeable, allowing the imaginal ego access to the day-world and alternately allowing the day-world ego access to the nocturnal world of dream. Because the imaginal ego is exposed to all manner of scenarios in the dream it seems to have less fear about emerging into the day-world, whereas, the day-world ego is defended toward the dream and its unpredictable images. It has fear about being in the underworld realm. The defenses come from dealing with the fantasy of the day-world catastrophe of life, from trying to live as if the individual singular ego is the only thing that counts. If the day-world ego is happy then what matter the rest of the world—quite the affliction.

But then, psychic rupture—liminal space—and the requirement for a new more flexible structure arrives. Liminal space is where the imaginal ego lives. Weekly, on a minor level, the dream group created liminal space for the imaginal ego of each dreamer and the imaginal ego of the group to emerge and insight poetic work—to illuminate the poetic basis of mind. In the group setting, the group imaginal ego taught the participants how to tolerate the dream images presented by others, as well as tolerate more deeply the images of their own dreams. The imaginal ego teaches the day-world ego that the underworld is real and survivable, and that the imagination is trustworthy.

The imaginal ego is the bridge between the conscious and unconscious realms. Hillman (1960) implies what this current work suggests: that the liberation of the imaginal ego is paramount to forming this bridge because "we have had no ego of the imagination to serve as familiar in the imaginal realm. Our concept of the ego has placed that which would heal us beyond the threshold" (p. 188). The image itself can give the day-world ego a new viewpoint from the threshold between the conscious and unconscious realms that it lacked previously and, if we have a way of being with the dream image that invites the dream's own intelligence into the dialogue, the dream and our relationship to it can create value for the dreamer and the day-world ego. In this way we ask the dreamer's liberated imaginal ego to participate in making value or meaning in life because as psychic bridge it coagulates the imagination with emotion and image; through this process soul-making acts of empathy and meaning are formed. The challenge here is for the day-world ego to learn to be patient with the image and the imaginal process.

How does the dynamic of the liberation of the imaginal ego occur? How does this liberating dynamic transpire in the dream group process? The answer is in the dreamer's relationship to the image. Liberation of the imaginal ego is a product of the relational "pot of soup" that contains the image, interest in the image and its emotions, and eros (See Figure 8 Appendix C). When these three energies are present the imaginal ego becomes excited and interested in the dialogue between the dream poet and the image. It also becomes excited and interested in the group dialogue about the image on both the personal and more-than-personal levels.

If the personal psyche emulates the collective psyche and vice versa, as is indicated through research such as (Singer & Kimbles, 2004) in *The Cultural Complex: Contemporary Jungian Perspectives on Psyche and Society*, two levels of activation or liberation of the imaginal ego are possible, the personal and the collective. As depicted in Figure 9 in Appendix C, the liberation of the imaginal ego, on both the

personal and group level, is an ouroboric dance of interest in the image combined with erotic or libidinal energy liberating the imaginal ego that, in turn, creates an even deeper interest in the image. It is a threshold occasion that restores the person to imaginal realities, cultivates the imagination, and further develops a sense of soul. These types of deeper soulful experiences with the image cultivate the capacity to live a tripartite life.

### Relativizing the Day-World Ego—or is it Liberation Too?

With the imaginal ego liberated at both the personal and group level the day-world ego can step “aside and allow feelings and thoughts to merge with words” (Blessing, survey). With the imaginal ego activated the co-researchers can re-enter the dream moving from day-world “ego consciousness to dream consciousness” (Snowman, survey). That part of the ego that is the “inner critic” can become the observer and surrender to the process of writing dream poetry or dialoguing about images in the dream group.

As the day-world ego becomes relativized it moves into the position of pupil of the imaginal ego. As a student of the imaginal ego the day-world ego learns about psyche’s poetic language through being exposed to images over time, free of supposition. In a sense, the day-world ego is liberated rather than relativized, in that it is freed by the imaginal ego from its burdens and concerns. Liberation of the day-world ego, allows interest in the image to blossom and works hand-in-hand with the imaginal ego toward living deeply with imaginal phenomenon. From its new position as student the day-world ego can watch the imaginal ego and the various levels of imagination at work in the developing relationship to the image.

What this research also found was that focusing on the more-than-personal or archetypal themes of the images in the dream group aided in relativizing or liberating the day-world ego. The dream group members embraced the idea of the dynamic of letting the day-world ego or inner critic step aside while at home writing dream poetry. This helped them re-enter the dream and write poetry. This is not to say that there were no struggles with the day-world ego because there were. Amber overcame doubt that she could write poetry, Ann overcame her inner critic to let the words flow, Chris had a love and struggle with the day-world ego and its designs on the images, Calvin battled his ego’s desire for immediate insight and need for meaning, Leslie overcame her fear of allowing the deeply personal into the light of day, and Jane overcame her Pollyanna personality to feel true anger. A transformative or meaning-making event comes only after we give up the egoic need for meaning, or need to know, for a slow and steady transformative relationship to the image.

The archetypal dialogue in the group relativized or liberated the day-world ego through commonality of the more-than-personal theme or dilemma. De-personalizing the image through more-than-personal or archetypal dynamics helps the day-world ego see images from a different perspective. The imaginal ego and the “imagination can move the image toward the more-than-personal” (Adams, survey) level through dream poetry. This move toward poetic language infused with a more-than-personal perspective allows for contrast—literal versus psychological, psychological versus archetypal, personal versus collective. With the

day-world ego relativized or liberated from its burdens, the imaginal ego, that part of psyche which is the archetypal poet, can maintain a relationship with the “creative instinct” (Hillman, 1960) and eros. Dream poetry aimed at collective meaning making at the archetypal level fosters empathy and a teleological inquisitiveness about our culture. This imaginal poetic love and beauty heralds the dream poet toward a meaning-filled, empathic, and imaginal way of life.

**Empathy.** The theme of empathy appeared repeatedly in the co-researcher’s data validating it as a dynamic that serves meaning making or the transformation of meaning when poetry is used to amplify or work with dreams. Additionally, empathy extended in and through the group process as a collective dynamic that served meaning making at the archetypal level.

The co-researchers expressed that while at home writing poetry empathy arrived in the process in various forms. For Calvin empathy expressed itself as “a feeling of liberation of the self and sense of future potential for personal awareness and growth without the heavy reliance on ego alone” (survey). For Jane it arrived as her “compassion for all humanities’ complexes” (survey). Leslie experienced empathy from the image as a safe container. Chris felt empathy for the dream images themselves. She explains:

*I know how the belly-up tiny elephant feels . . . and the hungry spider, and the juvenile fish so proud of making contacts . . . and my aggravated mother who wants to kill the bee. I know the innocence of the baby sprouts clueless of winter’s cutting edge. Of the angst of making clothes for the boy who has no soul. (survey)*

Chris is describing an empathic move in the group which supported the more-than-personal level of awareness regarding seemingly personal dream material. This type of empathic move often shifted the perspective of the dreamer and the other co-researchers toward the collective or archetypal meaning in the image, teaching us all more about that certain image, for instance the trickster, the snake, or the soldier. In this move empathy becomes an act of soul-making. Group dialogue elicits empathy, broadens the personal into the more-than-personal, and deepens the experience of and relationship to the image. Empathy encourages us to take good care with the image and with each other. Empathy as a soul-making act seems to be that part of soul-making that is communicated in love and has religious concern.

While this research was being performed, one of the world’s best-known primatologists, Frans De Waal, came to Bozeman, Montana, to accept the Edward O. Wilson Biodiversity Technology Pioneer Award from Montana State University. De Waal gave a lecture on his latest book *The Bonobo and the Atheist: In Search of Humanism Among the Primates* (De Waal, 2013) which I attended. This lecture led me back to his book *The Age of Empathy: Nature’s Lessons for a Kinder Society*. De Waal’s findings on empathy from his decades-long work with primates are synchronistic. De Waal (2009) writes:

*Empathy is part of a heritage as ancient as the mammalian line. Empathy engages brain areas that are more than a hundred million years old. The capacity arose long ago with motor mimicry and emotional contagion, after which evolution added layer after layer, until our ancestors not only felt what others felt, but understood what others might want or need. (pp. 208)*

Linking De Waal's research to this research based in archetypal psychology, Hillman (2004) writes, "by traditional definition, archetypes are the primary forms that govern the psyche. But they cannot be contained only by the psyche, since they manifest as well in physical, social, linguistic, aesthetic, and spiritual modes" (p. 13). De Waal states that empathy is primal, it is as ancient as the mammalian line—more than a hundred million years old. If this is true and we take Hillman at his word, then empathy, as a primal force, is archetypal. Empathy is an archetype. If empathy is archetypal then it stands to reason that working with images from an archetypal perspective would be valuable for promoting empathy in our communities and in the world.

The dream group that was the subject of this research worked with images from an archetypal perspective, wrote poetry from this perspective, and they found that empathy announced the arrival of archetypal or more-than-personal energy within the group dialogue. Empathy is a dynamic that serves meaning making or the transformation of meaning when poetry is used to amplify or work with dreams and it is a meaning making dynamic for a dream group aimed at collective meaning making at the archetypal level.

Ancient empathy emerges in the dream poetry process as the group and individual poets engage with primal and archetypal images. This imaginal engagement elicits empathy from the image and for the image, from the other dreamers and for the other dreamers, for the *sensus communis* and from the *sensus communis*. Empathy is archetypally poetic because it is pre-linguistic, pre-dialectic, and prelogical. "The old remains in the new" writes De Wall, "This is relevant to the story of empathy since it means that even our most thoughtful reactions to others share core processes with the reactions of young children, other primates, elephants, dogs, and rodents" (2009, p. 209).

This dissertation research revealed that from the perspective of archetypal psychology, empathy is stimulated by interest in the dream images of psyche or soul. Empathy is subsequently liberated into the person or group by interest in the images and the emotions carried by the images. This research on dream poetry indicates that the "portal" for empathy is both the dreamer of the image and the image itself. Within the context of the dream group, the empathic portal of the dream image was honored and cultivated by those in the "inner circle," under the developing arc of intimacy and vulnerability between the co-researchers and the images.

The courageous community service aspect of this group is that the co-researchers allowed themselves to be the image portals of empathy for the collective and cultural dilemmas that emerged through the dream images and subsequent dream poetry. Transformation occurs with empathy, engaged witnessing, and support for each other. Empathy and support also allows for a simultaneous strength and vulnerability to grow in the group. This vulnerable strength holds the archetypal images and themes that arrive to inform the group's collective effort. The dream group cultivated an environment of equality and solidarity through its work with the image as an empathic circle of co-researchers. It modeled a method for this type of close and imaginative work.

The arrival of the image (archetypal or personal), the subsequent interest in the image, including its emotions (felt in the sense-scape of the body), and *eros*, combine to liberate empathy. When these three energies are present, empathy becomes excited and interested in the dialogue in the group, and it is interested in the dream poet and the image.

Thus, exactly the same pot of soup that liberates the imaginal ego (see Figure 10 in Appenix C).

Could it be that the imaginal ego is the empathic body in the psyche? This research points toward empathy and the imaginal ego both emanating from the same combination of psychological factors: the presence of an image, interest in the image and its emotions, and *eros*. From the personal perspective could a person just as easily be the image? Then both empathy and the imaginal ego emanate from the presence of another person, interest in the person and their emotions, and *eros*. If empathy is based in the imaginal realm—imagination, image—then when there is a failure of the imagination there could also potentially be a failure of empathy.

When belief systems are challenged on any level, culturally, collectively, or personally, stress arises and we are likely to suffer from a failure of imagination, then become defensive, which results in a loss of capacity for empathy. The question is how do we get back to the deeper levels of imagination in times of strife or stress so that imagination and empathy can emerge? Perhaps dream images and dream poetry are one way.

Liberation of empathy is an ouroboric move similar to the liberation of the imaginal ego. Figure 11 in Appenix C depicts the ouroboric liberation cycle of empathy. Because empathy is archetypal, when it emerges it naturally moves the dreamer beyond the day-world ego. This empathy is at the level of interest of the imaginal ego. This deeper interest has to do with soul and is expressed as the open-hearted dimension of empathy both at the personal level and the collective group level. Like the imaginal ego, empathy teaches us value in a circumstance, value in an image, value in collective and cultural issues at hand.

If the imaginal ego teaches the day-world ego how to dream would it not stand to reason that it also teaches the day-world ego about empathy through this process? Teaching the day-world ego how to dream, how to tolerate the images of soul, is possibly the most empathic and courageous task performed by the imaginal ego.

Dream poetry work engages both the imaginal ego and empathy, which teaches the day-world ego how to dream in the waking world as well. Empathy in the day-world is the imaginal ego slipping through the permeable boundary between the conscious and unconscious realms to teach us how to tolerate the images of the dreams of others. Ultimately, in its ouroboric course, the imaginal ego is educating the day-world ego about empathy. Empathy is the imaginal ego as underworld guide, as upperworld tutor. This instruction in the individual results in a blooming awareness of the psychological and archetypal levels of life. Psychological and archetypal sensitivity are developed through dream poetry work centered in interest in the image, guided by the empathic imaginal ego, supported by active imagination and archetypal imagination.

As the archetypal poet, or the imaginal ego, was ignited through group discussion, amplification of the image, and associations with the dream image, the collective and archetypal themes of the images emerged as promoted by empathy with the image. Figure 12 in Appendix C illustrates the "pot of soup" that generates the disclosure of the archetypal or collective theme in the co-researcher's dreams.

With the dream's archetypal or collective theme revealed through the discussion in the dream group, the co-researchers returned home each week with more-than-personal



knowledge about the images. They took this knowledge with them into their writing process by re-entering the dream and, with guidance from the imaginal ego, worked with the images, eros, emotions, words, active imagination, and an archetypal sensitivity to create dream poetry. Lastly, Figure 13 in Appendix C depicts the psychological dynamics that coalesce when creating a dream poem.

**Archetypal dynamics.** This section focuses on the archetypal dynamics that serve meaning making or the transformation of meaning from the more-than-personal or archetypal and collective levels of life that emerged through the group research process. Archetypal cycles play out in all our lives on a daily basis. Throughout the Psychological Dynamics section above valuable archetypal dynamics surfaced that were deeply entwined with the psychological level. Those dynamics were covered in depth in that section and they will not be revisited here. The archetypal or more-than-personal dynamics of meaning making or transformation of meaning addressed in this section are as follows:

1. The archetypal or more-than-personal image shifts personal perspective.
2. Archetypal dialogue elicits awareness about our histories and stories through commonality of archetypal theme (broader life view).
3. Cultural awareness is encouraged through dialogic examination of archetypal images and collective dream themes.
4. Community is built through dialogue about archetypal themes and cycles.
5. More-than-personal or archetypal themes are condensed in dream poetry.

**The Archetypal or More-Than-Personal Image Shifts Personal Perspective.** This dynamic begins the journey of de-personalizing the dream, which is what Hillman (1975b) defines as de-humanizing. De-humanizing asks us to practice the ultimate moves of acceptance and surrender. In these moves, we accept that the Gods and archetypes are not us, that they are flowing through us and the *sensus communis*. With an archetypal awareness supported by the dream group dialogue the group members began to surrender to the notion that “our lives are on loan to the psyche for a while. During this time we are its caretakers who try to do for it what we can” (Hillman, 1975b, p. 180). They began to shift their perspectives, surrendering from a strictly personal stance or day-world ego stance to acceptance of the idea that “I do not own them, [the Gods] and so I do not own their feelings and actions either” (p. 180). With this shift, a relationship to the archetypal image emerges. Just as images in dreams provide a way to act metaphorically rather than literally, the Gods are there, archetypally, in the same manner to help us see-through from a more-than-personal metaphorical perspective.

Shifting our perspective through exploring the de-humanizing move of archetypal psychology supports acceptance and surrender to a new position in the world. From the psychological perspective discussed above, for the group this became the move of accepting emotions, trusting in the images, and relativizing or liberating the day-world ego.

The dream group survey data indicated that acceptance and surrender was one of the main themes involved with the transformation of meaning. The archetypal or more-than-personal sensitivity in the group spurred on this process by shifting the perspective toward the dream from the personal level to the more-than-personal or collective arena.

At its basal level for Chris this was her love and struggle in collaborating with the images to write a poem. For Ann it was accepting that her poem “Uncle” was not upbeat but finding the courage to share it anyway. Jane accepted and overcame her Pollyanna attitude to surrender to the deeper emotion of anger. Calvin’s struggle with his drive for insight and meaning became patience with the process. Amber overcame doubt to take the hand of the image and create, and Leslie surrendered to the image to experience freedom of expression.

While some personal material did arise in the dream images, group discussions, and poetry, the group, through amplification and archetypal association was also able to see the collective “I” in the personal by taking on an archetypal or more-than-personal perspective. Sometimes the shift in awareness was ever-so-subtle regarding a certain dream image and sometimes it was a much larger shift felt as deeply emotional with reverberations in the sense-scape of the body.

**Archetypal Dialogue Elicits Awareness About Our Histories and Stories Through Commonality of Archetypal Theme.** By noticing common archetypal themes in the group discussions, the co-researchers were seeing-through to a deeper level of the psyche where all our histories and stories live. The psyche is multiple and relational, and psychologizing or seeing-through common themes allowed the co-researchers to work with different aspects of a given archetypal or more-than-personal theme that arrived. Psychologizing is a move in archetypal psychology where we “come to know the psyche as a living being” (Coppin & Nelson, 2005, p. 70). Within the research it was “the task of the psychological individual . . . to welcome . . . diversity [of the psyche] without prejudice or repression, much in the same way that a skilled host creates a comfortable setting for guests” (p. 71). In this way the group acknowledged interest in and relationships to the images that support meaning making and understanding of psychological material.

Seeing-through to the more-than-personal value in the living images of psyche aided the co-researchers in writing the dream poetry, taking into consideration the collective or more-than-personal aspects of the images. The intent of this move is to recognize that it is important to build a relationship with psyche as it is quite alive and encourages us through the relationship to make rich connections resulting in soul-making.

The rich connection made through common archetypal themes was exciting to the co-researchers. One of the most profound common archetypal themes throughout the six-week period was the theme of the Trickster. In this move, commonality of archetypal theme combined with group dialogue broadens the personal view of life and supports development of a tripartite awareness. These types of experiences enrich the poetry writing process and support archetypal sensibility, nourishing the awareness of the tripartite life.

**Cultural Awareness is Encouraged Through Dialogic Examination of Archetypal Images and Collective Dream Themes.** In the *Lament of the Dead: Psychology after Jung’s Red Book*, Hillman (2013) recognizes that Jung’s work in the *Red Book: Liber Novus* (2009) is more-than-personal. Hillman states, “It’s a question of understanding the rainmaker. What the rainmaker does is connect with the cosmos. And that means the dead. The buried dead, the lost history, as well as the cosmos as the beauty of the world” (p. 147).

Within the context of the research data submitted for this study Ann's poem "Uncle", Calvin's poem "The Doctor Is In", Jane's poems "Miss Just" and "Eskimo Doll", and Chris' poem "The Goddess and the Shrimp or vigil to unfinished business" all had some element of honoring the dead, including dead relatives, dead icons, dead teachers, and the dead and composting humus of the earth. Each poem had its own character presented as a dilemma or problem to work out—problems that extended from the personal to the collective, including PTSD, death and resurrection, justice or lack thereof, the patriarchy, and Gaia's daily busyness. This is the confluence where an awareness of the interconnectedness of life begins, where the rainmaker connects with the rain, between the personal and the collective culture.

Writing dream poetry infused with archetypal sensibility and an awareness of the more-than-personal or collective themes in the dream images connected the co-researchers to the rain, to the culture, to the collective psyche. It connected them to the *sensus communis*. The co-researchers are the rainmakers connecting to the rain through archetypal and collective dialogues in the group process. Through their dreams and dream poetry they reflect what Jung found in his work which is that "what animates [the] depths is the weight of human history" (Hillman & Shamdasani, 2013, p. 80).

Through their images they were connected to the collective cosmos of the American culture during oppressive cultural times. Through this collective group experience, which promoted the ideas that the image is autonomous and has pertinent perspectives, combined with additional amplifications and associations with the images, the co-researchers' cultural awareness broadened to an expanded awareness of the other rainmakers in their culture and how they affect the collective at large.

**Community is Built Through Dialogue About Archetypal Themes and Cycles.** As noted earlier, Chris Adams wrote, "sometimes it takes the collective to see the personal" (survey) and sometimes it takes the profoundly personal to see the collective or archetypal essence in the image. The archetypal dialogue in the group broadened and deepened concern and interest for the dream images and the more-than-personal dimension of both the personal and collective psyche. It propagated respect amongst the individual group members allowing heart-centered sharing on both the personal and more-than-personal levels. Because of the archetypal and collective dialogue the co-researchers began to relate to the dream images as images that had more than personal information to contribute to the community service aspect of the group. It became a depthful and meaningful experience that Chris Adams called an "initiation ritual" (survey).

The mutual initiation into writing dream poetry allowed the co-researchers to experience the "mystery of the dream poet's pen" (Morris, survey) as well as the mystery of seven individuals, myself included, who could hold meaningful conversations about the dilemmas of our time. It allowed us to experience the mystery of developing a community focused on collective meaning making at the archetypal level through awakening the poetic basis of mind. That Leslie's "Snake Dance" poem could offer an antidote for a current cultural dilemma by, "moving effortlessly over the poison without fear" (field notes), that Ann's poem "Family Reunion" could offer up a review of the "process of maturation into late life" (field notes), and that Amber's dream and poem "Nearing

Home" could remind us that we need a 360-degree view to see our way home, did indeed feel mysterious and meaningful. The poems and dream images allowed the group to consider and discuss creative restoration for our stricken culture and the heavily burdened collective psyche.

The archetypal level of discussion deepened the awareness of the group which created an environment to discuss deep and concerning topics and a springboard from which to leap into imaginal creativity. The group honored engaged witnessing and through this the community became a safe place to share through mutual, mindful, and heart-centered witnessing. Through the dream poetry community the participants broadened their horizons and their awareness of how to live more consciously in the world.

**More-Than-Personal or Archetypal Themes Are Condensed in Dream Poetry.** Hillman (1999) states that

*Poetry depends on compression for its impact. The word for poet in German is Dichter, one who makes things dicht (thick, dense, compact). A poetic image compresses into a snapshot a particular moment characteristic of a larger whole, capturing its depth, complexity, and importance. (pp. 30-31)*

Dreams also compress and make things thick. Dream poetry is a soul-thickening act. "Poetizing gives soul, makes soul, poetizing gives body: melan-cholia, 'the bile that blackens.' It makes dense, gives thickness. Metaphor nuances, shades, shadows, like the dark pigments in chiaroscuro painting" (D. L. Miller, 1989, p. 39). This thickening is one of the dynamics that serve meaning making or the transformation of meaning when writing dream poetry. Collective and personal meaning arises by condensing personal histories and stories with archetypal or more-than-personal aspects of the dream images into a dream poem.

Each week during the group meetings, the co-researchers and I took notes regarding the emerging archetypal or more-than-personal themes in the dreams and poems. During the fifth and final session, we reviewed the various themes and grouped the poems into those themes. The archetypal themes will be named here but not elaborated on due to the scope of this article. The eight archetypal or more-than-personal themes that emerged from the dream poetry are noted below. **1) Character Calls; 2) Trickster; 3) Responsibility; 4) Wounded Warrior; 5) Testament to Life; 6) Tending Soul: Either/Or-Being/Doing; 7) Gaia's Wisdom. 8) The Antidote.**

We have now arrived at the other side of the alchemical process of thickening images with amplifications, associations, and poetry with the dream poet's pen. Condensation of the images with the archetypal value coagulated by the group discussion assisted the poets in creating the dream poetry.

This six-week journey culminated in sixteen dream poems honoring eight more-than-personal or archetypal themes. Figure 14 in Appendix C arrays the dream poetry by depth of frequency and archetypal theme. This graph indicates that the most prevalent archetypal theme in the collective psyche of this group was that of the Trickster—an agent of transformation and change

While this present research work is qualitative not quantitative, Figure 14 is intriguing because it represents the type of information that could be assembled from dream poetry groups to indicate what genre of more-than-personal themes are working within the collective psyche. The po-

tential to track collective archetypal themes through dream poetry from the broader imaginal diaspora, during a given timeframe or over the course of several years, is interesting and exciting.

In this research dreams—psyche's images—were met with the dream poet's pen and its inherent dynamics that serve meaning making or the transformation of meaning to create dream poetry. Through the group process more-than-personal or collective dynamics were explored with the attitude of serving the *sensus communis*. This community service project ultimately served psyche on both a personal and a collective level. In this research the mystery of soul—as accessed through dreams—was met with its own native language—poetics, metaphor, myth, and lore.

Below is an example of a dream poem created by co-researcher Jane Morris during the dream group process:

*Ninety to Lightning*

*Greased lightning  
What kind of time is that?*

*Time to run.  
Where?*

*To the porch.*

*Whew I made it.*

*There it is running down the valley.  
Thunder rolling along behind.  
Explosive.  
Too much for the air*

*The time is going like lightning, greased lightning.  
Fast.*

*Count down to whatever comes after.  
Count down to zero.  
What's that about?  
When will this be?  
How did I know the time?*

#### 4. Discussion

From these experiences in the dream group process I learned several things. I discovered the value of building a slow relationship with the image to learn about ourselves, each other, and the archetypal and collective aspects of dreams and poems. I realized that interest in the image could relieve embodied tension and create an intersubjective field of vulnerability with the image that is both personal and more-than-personal at once. I learned that transformation occurs with engaged witnessing, empathy, and support, and that images can aid in that growth process. Additionally, empathy and support derived from imaginal dialogue allows for a simultaneous strength and vulnerability to grow in the group container. Lastly, I learned that dream poetry allows us to see the depth of the complexes in our culture, and that the contrasting poetic images can aid in the development of an imaginal view which supports the development of a perspective that encompasses a multiplicity of possibilities rather than a black-and white dichotomy of choice.

#### Implications and Limitations

The six-week timeframe of this study was a condensed time period in which co-researchers explored the dynamics of writing dream poetry, image work, and paying attention to more-than-personal themes found in the collective and cultural surround. Even though it was a brief timeframe in the teleological course of psyche, it was filled with learning, empathy, and beauty for all involved. It's important to note, that while dream poetry work supports living a tripartite life based in the literal, psychological, and archetypal realms, learning this way of being in the world is a carefully cultivated process that takes time and trust.

Research involves a judicious review of the study's own contextual limitations and consideration of its circumstantial horizons. There were several limitations regarding this study centered in the geographical location of the study, which did not allow for ethnic and cultural diversity and varying ages and genders of the participants. Creating more diversity in the group process regarding culture, race, age, and gender to see if building empathy through imaginal work might occur across the groups could be beneficial. Additionally, to enhance and expand the understanding of the dynamics of meaning making when dreams are amplified with poetry from a collective perspective, holding dream groups in various other communities would validate whether or not the experience of writing dream poetry could be replicated across the communal spectrum. Another limitation is the group size, which must be small in order for the arch of intimacy to form and to give everyone time to work the dream material fully.

The study might be hard to replicate without an experienced facilitator who has worked in the area of archetypal dream work on both the personal and collective level. The lens through which the facilitator approaches dream work might yield different results, for instance, a more traditionally psychoanalytic lens versus the stance of archetypal psychology. Often emerging limitations may actually be horizons or invitations to change established positions so that new insight can be gained or the work could be viewed from a different perspective.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

Before forming a dream poetry group, it is imperative to interview the potential participants to make certain they are good candidates for just such an artistic and imaginal endeavor. An interested and supportive group is a requirement for meeting the challenge of engaging dream images on a regular basis. The participants must be allies in the work and must be willing to follow group protocol, remaining respectful at all times. In addition, facilitating this type of group takes the same type of respect-oriented commitment to working with dream images required of the group participants.

As facilitator, know and admit your own shortcomings and work towards continuing to learn and work your own images with a support person or therapist if necessary. Maintain healthy margins with the group participants and encourage them to do the same with each other. Soul images are both precious and precarious, and while interest in the image, the imaginal ego, and empathy provide immediate support we are entering imaginal realms—which we know little about—in the presence of others. The “safety net” must be in place so the “trampoline” can work.

Based on these findings, I strongly recommend further depth psychological exploration through the approach of the imagist-erudite, including the following:

- Continued research with dream poetry groups or groups centered in any imaginal arts-based concept that reflects the more-than-personal, collective, or archetypal aspects of dream images.
- Continued imaginal erudition engaging the theories of archetypal psychology including the poetic basis of mind, *imaginalia*, and *psychopoesis* as they relate to the social and cultural surround, and the soul-voice of the *anima mundi*.

In addition to these two avenues of further inquiry I would recommend future research expanding on the idea of living a tripartite life including: further research on dream poetry as a valid and valuable way of knowing, expanding on the idea of archetypal empathy—especially expanding on the idea of the imaginal ego as the archetypal empathic organ in the psyche, and continuing to work in the collective and cultural surround honoring the *sensus communis* through dream-group processes.

## 5. Conclusion

With each dip into the well of the imaginal depths, the ink in the poet's pen fills with value from the literal, psychological, and archetypal levels of life. Until the mention of it by Hillman in 1975 the imaginal ego psychologically remained hidden in the dream. In our culture, it steals out in the light of day in poetry, dance, art, and theater or in the quiet of the consulting room. Writing dream poetry releases the imaginal ego into the light of day where it can take up the dream poet's pen and collaborate to create a poem. Like Jung's (2009) creative work in *The Red Book, Liber Novus*, writing dream poetry in a group aimed at collective meaning making at an archetypal level "provides a technique for encouraging and learning from the imagination. It gives imagination a much more concrete life than just the romantic notion of imagination" (Hillman & Shamdasani, 2013, p. 161). However, what if the real task is to imagine beyond this work to a place where we actually live poetically as a soul-making collective—with poetic dialogue, in poetic communities, creating poetic cultures or a poetic world?

The patterned way of being in which we remain living at the surface is the constant and manic literal level of life, the doing. The archetype of tending soul brings contrast and choice to this. Being in our daily literal life with an awareness of the psychological and archetypal levels teaches us how to live beyond patterned ways of the day-world ego and its coping skills of neurosis and mania. The literal level of life can be infused with the psychological level and the archetypal level if we are aware of them. We learn to do this through an awakened or liberated dialogue between these three levels of life facilitated by the imaginal ego. This is a soul-tending move that allows being, rather than manic doing. This move brings a kind of poetic radical presence to tending to the moment in a soul-filled way.

Writing dream poetry is *psychopoesis*—a soul-making act. It engages the imaginative capabilities of the psyche, namely the liberated imaginal ego and its relationship to the three levels of life. Writing dream poetry not only relativizes the day-world ego but it liberates it from its day-world burdens and places ego into the role of student of the image as psyche. Dream poetry in service to the archetypal or collective image, what was termed the more-than-personal realm

in the dream poetry group, guides the poet to an awareness of a multiplicity of value in the image.

Dream poetry aimed at collective meaning making at the archetypal level fosters empathy and a teleological inquisitiveness about our culture. "By being touched, moved, and opened by the experiences of soul, one discovers that what goes on in the soul is not only interesting and meaningful, necessary and acceptable, but that it is attractive, lovable, and beautiful" (Hillman, 1960, p. 101). This imaginal poetic love and beauty heralds the dream poet toward a meaning-filled, empathic, and imaginal way of life.

By noticing common archetypal themes in the group discussions, the co-researchers were seeing-through to a deeper level of the psyche where all our histories and stories live. The psyche is multiple and relational, and psychologizing or seeing-through common themes allowed the co-researchers to work with different aspects of a given archetypal or more-than-personal theme that arrived.

The archetypal dialogue in the group broadened and deepened concern and interest for the dream images and the more-than-personal dimension of both the personal and collective psyche. It propagated respect amongst the individual group members allowing heart-centered sharing on both the personal and more-than-personal levels. Because of the archetypal and collective dialogue the co-researchers began to relate to the dream images as images that had collective information to contribute to the community service aspect of the group. It allowed the co-researchers to experience the mystery of developing a community focused on collective meaning making at the archetypal level through awakening the poetic basis of mind. Through the dream poetry community, the participants broadened their horizons and their awareness of how to live more consciously in the world. One co-researcher wrote in her final survey that this dream-poetry-collective group process caused her to see that "Our world and country are in a real mess right now. It seems we are stuck without a way out of this mess. Have we as a collective stopped dreaming? Can restoration happen without the collective dream, collective rebellion, collective creativity?"

Maybe we can if we liberate the collective imaginal ego of our culture—that part of the collective psyche that supports, empathizes, understands, and loves creativity with heart. Through engaged witnessing and sharing in this deeply soulful group container held by the imaginal ego the dreamers felt safe and experienced deep and meaningful connections that shifted perspectives and brought a deeper awareness of life.

This seems particularly relevant in our current culture and time in history. When belief systems are challenged on any level, culturally, collectively, or personally, stress arises and we are likely to suffer from a failure of imagination and become defensive, which results in a loss of capacity for empathy. The question is how do we get back to the deeper levels of imagination in times of strife or stress so that imagination and empathy can emerge? Perhaps dream images and dream poetry are one way.

## Author Note

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# Appendix A

## Weekly Dream Group Meeting Content

**Week 1.** The metaphor of the dream poet's pen was introduced. At the close of the first meeting participants each chose a feather quill in blown glass to take home for inspiration.

For the section on The More-Than-Personal this week the notion that this work is a collaborative effort and a community service endeavor was addressed. Dream group protocol was reviewed including council practice from Zimmerman and Coyle's (1996) *The Way of Council* (discussion etiquette) and Rosemarie Anderson's (1998) group-focused aspects of Intuitive Inquiry.

In the Image Work section James Hillman's (2007) "Practical Counsel on Dreams" was introduced, along with Robert Sardello's (1995) dream image work from *Love and the Soul*. From these two introductions a discussion on finding value through a relationship, or way of being, with dream images versus interpreting them took place. The notion of allowing the dream image to co-author and fully participate in writing the dream poem without the inner critic (ego) overly participating in the process was discussed.

A dream poetry example based on the work of Philip Levine (1998) was offered to the group. Levine's narrative of his experience of writing *They Feed They Lion* was read aloud along with the resulting poem.

The group was directed to Stafford and Dunning's (1992) first two "Dream Writes" to encourage their poetic explorations during the week between meetings. These exercises were offered as optional and the work from these exercises was not required to be submitted as data for analysis. The individual uses of the "Dream Writes" are discussed in Chapter 5.

For the Dream Work section, Jeremy Taylor's Dream Group Etiquette was introduced. The group then worked dreams together until closing.

**Week 2.** This week the section on The More-Than-Personal included Tate's (2010) typology of dreaming. The notion of copper, silver, and gold dreams was introduced to bring a grounding image to the different styles of dreams that appeared and to relate the styles of dreams to the more-than-personal level. The diagram of the typology of dreaming was modified for the group participants to include less explanation of the particular levels. Awareness of the value of each level of dream was encouraged throughout the remaining sessions.

The following ideas were generally reviewed: the personal and more-than personal (archetypal); personal dream and more-than-personal dream (archetypal dream); and finally the cultural dream.

For the Image Work section in Week 2 Patricia Berry's (1982) adapted *Image Advice* was introduced to further the relationship with the images. From this material the group was presented with the notion of befriending the image and inviting it into the process versus interpreting the image. They were reminded that building a relationship with the image was a primary focus of our group dream work and the subsequent dream poetry writing process.

A dream poetry example from my own dream poetry work was offered. The raw dream text was read aloud along with the resulting dream poem.

A short group exercise was introduced based on Robert Sardello's (1995) dream work from *Love and the Soul*. Each

participant worked through the dream they brought for the session, first writing it down as stated sequence upon waking, secondly, describing the dream image as close to one unified present tense image as possible, and then the group focused on describing in writing the felt-sense of the image in the final version of the dream. This was a 15-minute exercise to give the dreamers another avenue to build a relationship with the image. The results of this exercise were not required to be submitted as data for analysis. In most cases the same dream was shared during the Dream Work section of the session.

The group was then directed to Stafford and Dunning's (1992) final two "Dream Writes" to work with at home during the week between meetings. Again, these exercises were offered as optional and the work from these exercises was not considered as data for analysis.

The Dream Work section followed until closing. If poems were written from the first session they were shared. In some cases a dream had occurred between the meetings and a poem had also been written. When this occurred the dream and subsequent poem were both shared and worked by the group, looking for archetypal themes and images.

**Week 3.** The More-Than-Personal section for this week included a discussion of Helene Lorenz's (2005) diagram of structure rupture, liminal space (uncertainties, world of the in-between, or threshold moment), and restoration to aid in understanding depersonalizing the dream and to bring additional awareness to how the personal realm and the more-than-personal realm can emulate each other. The diagram was drawn out by me on a large piece of poster board in a step-by-step manner and examples that relate lived experiences with each aspect of the diagram were used. A discussion of the cultural surround at the time this diagram was introduced will follow in Chapter 5.

The Image Work section this week included voluntary sharing of the results of the *Dream Write* experiences and new dream poems created by the participants. Dream Work followed until closing, with both dreams and poems peppered throughout depending on the progress of the dream poetry writing process of each participant.

**Week 4.** This week The More-Than-Personal section included a review of the community service aspect of the group work and a review of the co-researcher survey questions. There were two weeks between the fourth and fifth meeting where the participants finalized their dream poems. Initially I had scheduled this time to also include the answers to the five questions; however, at the fifth meeting the co-researchers asked for an additional week so they could include their experiences from the fifth and final session in the answers to their questions.

The Image Work section for this week included sharing dream poetry written at home. The final dream poetry example was read aloud. This was based on the example of the "Shamaness" poem and dream text as presented above in this dissertation's autobiographical section.

Dream Work for this session included the option of working both dreams and/or dream poetry.

**Week 5.** In this final group meeting The More-Than-Personal section included a summary discussion of the cultural and collective themes in the dreams and subsequent dream poetry that emerged throughout the five weeks of the dream group; we discussed if and how the themes relate to the cultural surround.

This section included a review of the styles of dream poetry written by participants including a discussion regarding what the participants found meaningful in the process of amplifying dreams with poetry. A question and answer period followed this section.

Image Work this week included the writing of a group dream poem. During this process participants added a favorite or profound line from one of their dream poems to a group dream poem written on a large piece of bulletin board paper on the wall. Writing in a different color each participant took turns until the poem was complete. The poem was read aloud by me, then it was read aloud again as a group.

The Dream Work section for this week included both dreams and dream poetry as in Week 4. A closing circle took place.

## Appendix B

### Participant and Group Themes

#### Chris Adams

##### *Personal Themes*

1. Glimpsing the image—moments of focus.
2. One with the image—empathy/anxiety.
3. Emotions embedded in the images.
4. Collaborative creative design.
5. Imagination moves image toward more-than-personal.
6. Freedom of expression—flowing with images/dreams is transformative.
7. Creative love and struggle with the image.

##### *Group Themes*

- A. Dialogue in group opens the archetypal theme in images.
- B. Archetypal or collective themes identified through empathy.
- C. Community built through dialogue about archetypal images/cycles.
- D. Witness/witnessing.
- E. It takes the collective to see the personal.
- F. Safe to share.
- G. Dream poetry group as initiation ritual.

#### Ann Blessing

##### *Personal Themes*

1. Emotional experience.
2. Each dream/poem has its own character.
3. Empathy for past through creativity/poetics.
4. Image as guide.
5. Relativizing the day-world ego—relationship to ego/inner critic.

##### *Group Themes*

- A. Transformation through courage and empathy.
- B. Cultural awareness/milieu of world—more-than-personal.
- C. Creative restoration.
- D. Group was meaningful.

#### Jane Morris

##### *Personal Themes*

1. Patience with the process—waiting for insights.
2. Images or psyche as guide.
3. Reflection through image—contrast changes perspective.
4. Image reveals deeper emotion—goes below the surface.
5. More-than-personal.
6. Experience of the “mystery” of the dream poet's pen.

##### *Group Themes*

- A. Sharing as depth full experience.
- B. Contrast between dream image and resulting dream poem illuminates the process.

#### Amber Rose

##### *Personal Themes*

1. Discovering the inner poet (as transformative move).
2. Gaining confidence/overcoming doubt.
3. Observing emotions.
4. Image as co-author.

*Group Themes*

- A. A general broader life view.
- B. Group work was meaningful.
- C. Archetypal dialogue elicits awareness about our histories and stories through commonality of archetypal theme.

**Calvin Snowman***Personal Themes*

1. Seeking insight—need for meaning.
2. The ink in the pen—feelings, moods, emotions.
3. Dynamic expression of dream images.
4. Acceptance—surrender to the process (ego consciousness surrendered to dream consciousness, relativize the ego).
5. Eventual outcome/insight after relationship with images is built.
6. Recurring themes in dreams.
7. Dream poetry as therapeutic process.
8. Relationship with the image.
9. Liberation as transformation—reorientation through process (awareness of more of life).
10. Archetypal image shifts personal perspective. (for example Trickster)

*Group Themes*

- A. Archetypal dialogue brings liberation of imagination/creativity through commonality of archetype.
- B. Witnessing and respectful sharing.
- C. Dream group as accountable community.

**Leslie Wallace***Personal Themes*

1. Freedom of expression—flowing with images/dreams.
2. Allows contrasting perspectives.
3. Containment by the relationship to the image.

*Group Themes*

- A. More-than-personal is important.
- B. Safe to explore.
- C. Meaningful experience of sharing.
- D. Witness/witnessing.

## 2) Individual Meaning Units Pointing to Group/Collective Themes:

*Relationship with the Image*

1. Glimpsing the image—moments of focus.
2. One with the image—empathy/anxiety.
3. Emotions embedded in the image—image reveals deeper emotion.
4. Collaborative creative design.
5. Imagination moves image toward the more-than-personal realm.
6. Freedom of expression.
7. Creative love and struggle with the image.
8. Dialogue in group opens the archetypal theme in images.
9. Images or psyche as guide.
10. Each dream/poem has its own character.
11. Image as co-author.
12. Dynamic expression of dream images.
13. Containment by the relationship to the image.
14. Recurring themes in dreams.

*Relativizing the Day-World Ego*

1. Relationship to ego/inner critic through creative or imaginal process.
2. Seeking insight—need for meaning.
3. Acceptance—surrender to the process (Ego consciousness surrenders to dream consciousness or day-world ego surrenders to imaginal ego).

*Writing Dream Poetry as a Process*

1. Emotional experience.
2. Patience with the process—waiting for insights.
3. Gaining confidence/overcoming doubt.
4. Observing emotions.
5. The ink in the pen—feelings, moods, emotions.
6. Eventual outcome/insight after relationship with images is built.
7. Dream poetry as therapeutic process.

*Transformation*

1. Freedom of expression—flowing with images/dreams is transformative.
2. Empathy for past through creativity/poetics.
3. Reflection through contrasting images changes perspective.
4. Transformation through courage and empathy.
5. Discovering the inner poet (as transformative move).
6. Liberation as transformation—reorientation through process (awareness of more of life).

*Archetypal/Collective Work*

1. Archetypal or collective themes identified through empathy.
2. Community built through dialogue about archetypal images/cycles.
3. Cultural awareness/milieu of the world.
4. More-than-personal viewpoint.
5. It takes the collective to see the personal.
6. A general broader life view.
7. Archetypal image shifts personal perspective.
8. Archetypal dialogue elicits liberation of imagination/creativity through commonality of archetype.
9. Archetypal dialogue elicits awareness about individual histories and stories through commonality of archetypal theme.

*Group Intersubjectivity*

1. Witness/witnessing.
2. Safe to share.
3. Dream poetry group as initiation ritual.
4. Creative restoration.
5. Experience of the “mystery” of the dream poet’s pen (contrast between dream image and resulting dream poem illuminates the process).
6. Sharing as depthful experience.
7. Group work was meaningful.
8. Safe to explore.
9. Meaningful experience of sharing.
10. Respectful sharing.
11. Dream group as accountable community.



# Appendix C

## Figures for Hermeneutic Analysis

### Psychological Dynamics

#### 1) Building a Relationship with the Image

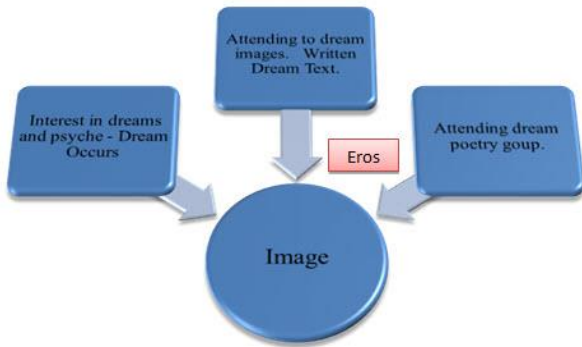


Figure 4. Initial interest in the image, eros created with interest.

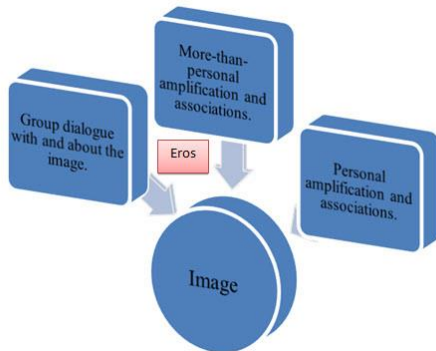


Figure 5. Deepening relationship with the image through group participation.

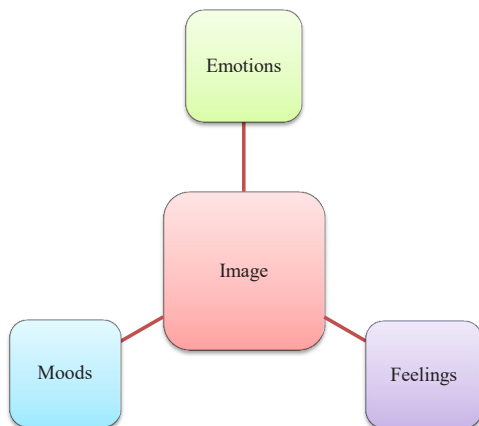


Figure 6. Image autonomously emanates emotions, moods, and feelings.

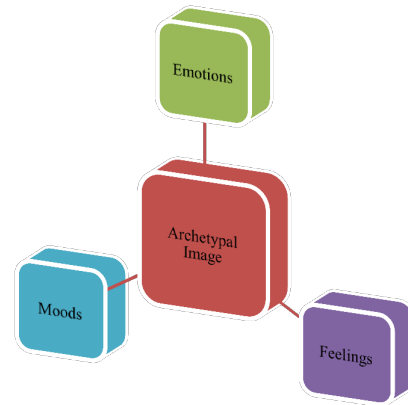


Figure 7. Emotions, moods, and feelings deepened and animated by archetypal or more-than-personal amplification.

#### 2) Liberation of the Imaginal Ego

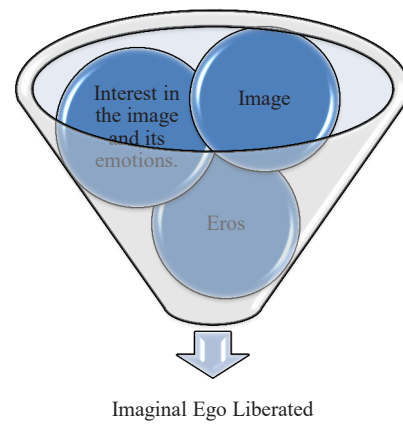


Figure 8. Liberation of imaginal ego in the dream poetry writing process and in the dream poetry group dialogue process.

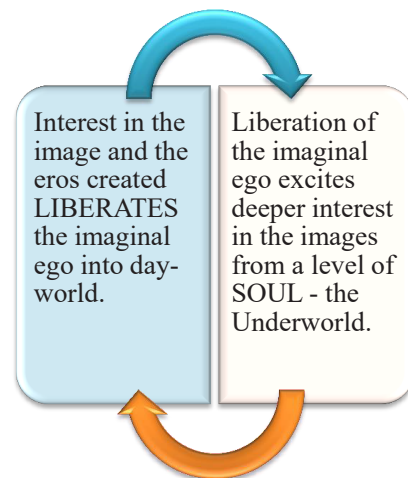


Figure 9. Ouroboric liberation of the imaginal ego and soulful interest in the image.

3) Empathy

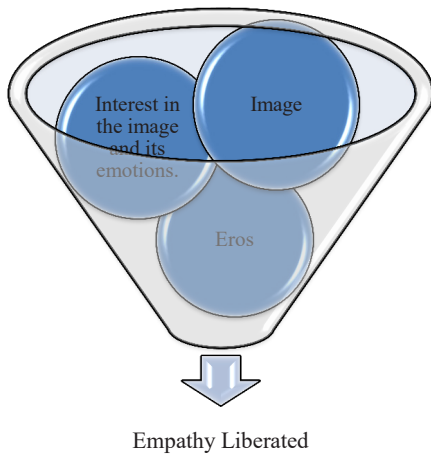


Figure 10. Liberation of empathy.

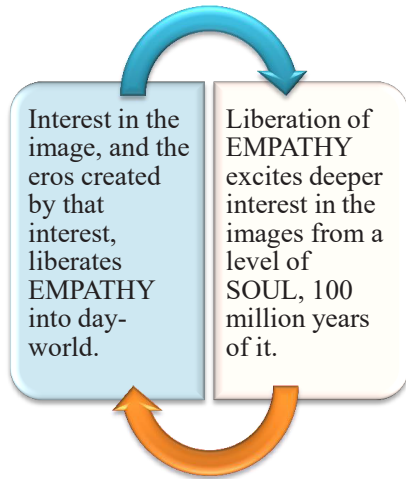


Figure 11. Ouroboric liberation of empathy and deeper empathic interest in the image.

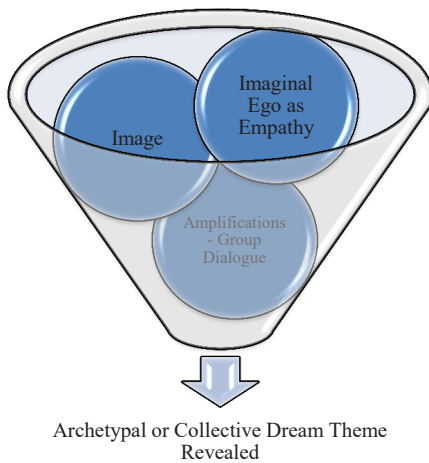


Figure 12. Image, imaginal ego as empathy, and group dialogue reveal the archetypal theme in the dream images.

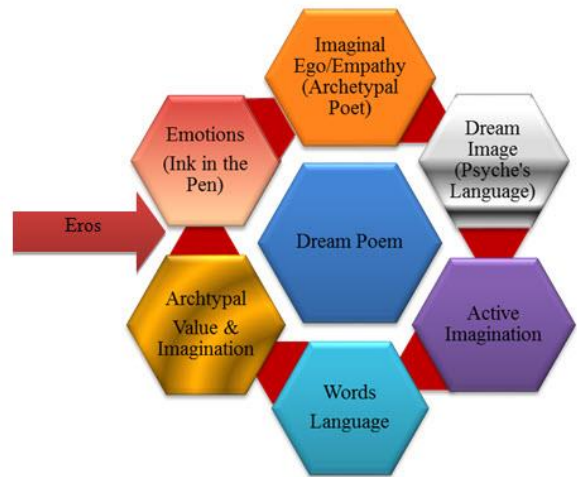


Figure 13. The dream poem constellated, eros as creative instinct between the other dynamics.

4) Archetypal Dynamics

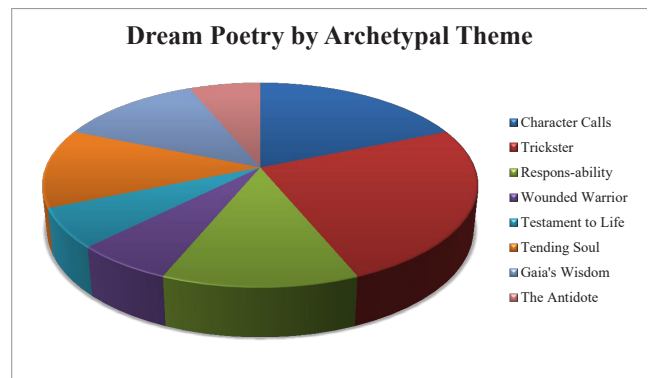


Figure 14. Pie chart graph indicating volume and type of archetypal themes emerging through co-researcher's dream images.

## Appendix D

### Example of Phenomenological Data Analysis for One Participant in Study

I chose the work of Leslie Wallace to illustrate the seven procedures. Leslie is a 60-year-old professional gardener, floral designer, and part-time artist from Livingston, Montana.

In the first procedure of Moustakas' (1994) method, the researcher "considers each statement with respect to the significance for description of the experience" (p. 90). In this step, I separated each statement as directly answered under each survey question. This is the beginning of the phenomenological reduction of the material. "The qualities of the experience become the focus" (p. 90). In this first step of the process the researcher performs a "listing and preliminary grouping of statements" (p. 120). The verbatim text of this step for Leslie is as follows:

1. Reflecting on the metaphor of the dream poet's pen, describe the experience of writing dream poetry from your inner perspective, almost like a dream: the feelings, moods, the emotions, noticing the sense-scape of the body.

*The dreams themselves create a boundariless arena, by which the very nature of its imaginal perspective, provides a path leading through a portal of paradox, by-passing, while at the same time acknowledging, ego-persona thinking.*

*It feels like a release into a place where previously held vantage points are freed to juxtapose with whatever they bump into, without a preconceived stance.*

*Feelings, moods, & emotions flow like a river, each molecule part of the whole . . . following the momentum, whether it rushes around stones like rapids, or spirals quietly like an eddy. (survey)*

2. While engaging the idea of the dream images as co-author of the dream poems what was your experience of allowing the images to freely participate in developing the poem? How did this relational experience with the image engage your imagination?

*The abounding expansively untethered pallet of dream-time is SO engaging, SO come hithering that my poets brush leapt into my hand, painting away, unedited.*

*Experience . . . once more the river . . . letting go into the fullness of an existing flow, held by a boat, offering an orientation from which to focus.*

*Or . . . inside a spaceship, careening through galaxy after galaxy. Safely contained, yet privy to infinite combinations of color, images, and possibilities yet to unfold.*

*In a sense, I didn't feel that this experience "engaged" my imagination, but simply invited me to step a few degrees to the side, where the light was just right for me to see the on-gong co-existing Universe of Imagination in the fullness of its expression. (survey)*

3. Was there a particular moment in the dream poetry writing experience that stood out vividly for you as meaningful or transformative? Please elaborate.

*There wasn't one particular moment but many moments, each time we gathered.*

*These moments wove together into a fabric, equally a safety net and a trampoline.*

*Being witnessed and witnessing others, provided a gentle and powerful place from which to tiptoe, walk, run, or skip, in an authentic way, from deep within interior space. (survey)*

4. Having worked your dream(s) in the group from a more-than-personal perspective did you recognize any instances in the dream images that reflected themes that are common to all of our histories or stories? If yes, please relate an example. Did these instances affect your experience of writing dream poetry?

*Yes, each of the dream images we worked unfolded commonalities within each of our histories and stories.*

*Unworthiness, fear of failure, the urge to "go for it", seeking knowledge, encountering dark energy, filled with wonder, given a task we don't know if we can handle, celebration, trusting without clarity of outcome, asking for help . . . to name just a few.*

*One example was a dream that involved running from danger to safety, only to find a deceased icon of the past, who represented transformational wisdom.*

*The main character brought the wisdom back to life and continued on in the present.*

*How could working dreams together NOT affect my experience of writing dream poetry!*

*Safety net and trampoline! (survey)*

5. Was it meaningful to you to experience sharing your dreams as poetry with the dream group? Please elaborate on your experience.

*It was profoundly meaningful.*

*To sit in a circle, where the intention held, is to deeply listen, reflect with wide awake awareness, to tumble another's notions and images around with our own, to respond from where we sit . . .*

*yet incorporated within the particular space where we have parked our particular butt . . .*

*is the Mystery, as well as, the inevitable bombardment of our enculturated environment.*

*A lot to hold with such care, and in such truth.*

*To be given the gift of this circle of 7 beings, for whom I have the opportunity to share my dreams, my poetry, my Self . . . is indeed meaningful.*

*A witnessing of the Sacred in the light of day, encouragement to step onto the path less traveled. (survey)*

During this first step of the process I meditated on each statement that Leslie made in her answers and considered the expression of essences in each sentence. After this meditation I proceeded to the second procedure in the process which is to "record all relevant statements" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122). This step includes "further reduction and elimination" (p. 120).

As I appraised Leslie's answers, I came to the conclusion that with three exceptions most of her statements were relevant to describing the essence of this experience.

With Leslie's work the second procedure, which is to "record all relevant statements" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122), and the third procedure resulted in the same statements, verbatim, therefore, I did not repeat the data twice. The task of the third procedure is to "list each nonrepetitive, non-overlapping statement" (p. 122) to discover "the invariant horizons or meaning units of the experience" (p. 122) from the recorded relevant statements in the second procedure. This procedure is known as "horizontalization; delimiting to invariant horizons" (p. 122). In my horizontalization process I listed each nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping statement and labeled them so they could be "treated as having equal value" (p. 97) and considered for "the textural meanings and invariant constituents of the phenomenon" (p. 97) of writing dream poetry.

To perform the tasks of recording all relevant statements and horizontalization, I separated Leslie's data (and all of the participant's data) into two categories as they related to the two central research questions of this research project. The first set of data, which focuses on the personal experience of writing dream poetry, relates to the first central question of the dissertation: What are the dynamics that serve meaning making, or transformation of meaning, when poetry is used to amplify or work with dreams? These data were labeled with numbers.

The second set of data, which focuses on the group or collective experience, relates to the second central question: How does this work develop further when engaged by a dream group aimed at collective meaning making at the archetypal level? These data were labeled with capital letters. Leslie's survey answers were horizontalized and labeled as follows: (my notes are in brackets where I added a word and parenthesis for reflections on the data)

Data related to first central question/objective: (personal or individual experience)

1. The dreams themselves create a boundariless arena.
2. The very nature of its [the dream's] imaginal perspective, provides a path leading through a portal of paradox.
3. By-passing, while at the same time acknowledging, ego-persona thinking.
4. It feels like a [psychic] release into a place where previously held vantage points [viewpoints] are freed to juxtapose with whatever they bump into, without a preconceived stance.
5. Feelings, moods & emotions flow like a river, each molecule part of the whole . . . following the momentum, whether it rushes around stones like rapids, or spirals quietly like an eddy.
6. The abounding expansively untethered pallet of dreamtime is SO engaging, SO come hithering.
7. My poet's brush leapt into my hand, painting away, unedited. (with words)
8. Experience . . . once more the river . . . letting go into the fullness of an existing flow, held by a boat [image], offering an orientation from which to focus. (image helps focus)
9. Or . . . inside a spaceship, careening through galaxy after galaxy. Safely contained, yet privy to infinite combinations of color, images, and possibilities yet to unfold.

10. In a sense, I didn't feel that this experience [with the images] "engaged" my imagination, but simply invited me to step a few degrees to the side, where the light was just right for me to see the on-going co-existing Universe of Imagination in the fullness of its expression. (Description of the Mundis Imaginalis – observer mode)

Data related to second central question/objective (group or collective experience):

- A. Yes, each of the dream images we worked unfolded commonalities within each of our histories and stories.
- B. Unworthiness, fear of failure, the urge to "go for it", seeking knowledge, encountering dark energy, filled with wonder, given a task we don't know if we can handle, celebration, trusting without clarity of outcome, asking for help . . . to name just a few.
- C. There wasn't one particular moment [that was meaningful or transformative], but many moments, each time we gathered.
- D. These [meaningful or transformative] moments wove together into a fabric, equally a safety net and a trampoline.
- E. Being witnessed and witnessing others, provided a gentle and powerful place from which to tiptoe, walk, run, or skip, in an authentic way, from deep within interior space.
- F. How could working dreams together NOT affect my experience of writing dream poetry! (Working dream affected experience of writing)
- G. Safety net and trampoline! (very concerned about safety and feeling supported, knowing others were supportive helps with process, acceptance, respect).
- H. It was profoundly meaningful.
- I. To sit in a circle, where (a) intention held, is to (b) deeply listen, (c) reflect with wide awake awareness, (d) to tumble another's notions and images around with our own, (e) to respond from where we sit, (f) is the Mystery.
- J. As well as, the inevitable bombardment of our enculturated environment.
- K. A lot to hold with such care, and in such truth.
- L. To be given the gift of this circle of 7 beings, for whom I have the opportunity to (a) share my dreams, (b) my poetry, (c) my Self . . . is indeed meaningful.
- M. A (a) witnessing of the Sacred in the light of day, (b) encouragement to step onto the path less traveled. (survey)

During the horizontalization process I spent time living with Leslie's data and reflected on the group experience and the literature review. I reflected on the central questions/objectives of this research. Based on the reflections I began the fourth procedure in Moustakas' (1994) method which is to "relate and cluster the invariant meaning units into themes" (p. 122). The themes grew out of the horizons of meaning in Leslie's data. To arrange the horizons by theme I carefully hand-coded each invariant meaning unit to a corresponding theme by using my own system of abbreviations relating to each theme that was arising. In this manner the task remains free of supposition or judgment. Leslie's invariant meaning units or themes that emerged from the invariant horizon statements are summarized as follows:

- 1) Freedom of Expression—Flowing with Images/Dreams
- 2) Allows Contrasting Perspectives
- 3) Containment By the Relationship to the Image

- 4) More-than-personal (archetypal)
- 5) Safe to Explore
- 6) Meaningful Experience of Sharing
- 7) Witness/Witnessing

After this procedure, one can begin to feel the description of the essence of the experience beginning to form. The themes are ultimately the basis of the textural and structural descriptions. So that the reader will be able to better follow the individual composite structural descriptions of each of the six co-researchers I developed a list of themes, or meaning units, for each co-researcher from the phenomenological analysis of their data. See Appendix B for a summary of each of co-researcher's summary of themes or invariant meaning units.

After identifying and meditating on the individual themes of each co-researcher I became curious regarding the overall themes of the essence of the experience of the group; therefore, I regrouped the individual co-researcher themes into a composite set of themes directed by the meaning units and horizons indicated by the six individual's meaning units or horizons. In developing these meaning units I eliminated repetitive or overlapping meaning units found in the individual thematic portrayals to further pinpoint the essence of the experience of the group. Please see Appendix B for the co-researcher meaning units as overall group or collective themes. I developed the group/collective themes in support of the group composite textural-structural description, which is below.

I return now to Leslie's data. In the fifth procedure, the researcher "synthesizes the invariant meaning units and themes in a description of the textures of the experience. Including verbatim examples" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122). In this procedure, the horizons of the direct experience are approached through continued phenomenological description. This process results in "organizing the horizons and themes into a coherent textural description of the phenomenon" (p. 97). The following is the textural description I created from Leslie's themes and horizontal units based on her survey answers, dreams, poetry, group experience, and my field notes:

#### Example Textural Description - Leslie Wallace

Leslie's experience of using poetry to amplify dreams was one of flowing with the dreams and images. "The dreams themselves create a boundariless arena" an arena where "feelings, moods and emotions flow like a river, each molecule a part of the whole." This allowed a momentum to develop which took Leslie on an imaginal ride that felt like water in a river that "rushes around stones like rapids, or spirals quietly like an eddy." She experienced dream-time as "So engaging, SO come hithering" that it felt like an expansive and "untethered palette" from which the "poet's brush leapt into my hand, painting away, unedited."

Leslie's description of the experience included positions of contrasting perspectives. She experienced the nature of the dream from its "imaginal perspective," which provided a path through a "portal of paradox" where Leslie felt able to bypass "ego-persona thinking" while writing poetry yet, at the same time, acknowledge that it was there. This bypassing move felt like a "release into a place where previously held vantage points are freed to juxtapose with whatever they bump into" in the dream or image-scape "without a preconceived stance." During the dream group she stated

that this helped her stave off her "boney finger committee."

Leslie states, "I didn't feel that this experience" of writing dream poetry with images "engaged" my imagination, but simply invited me to step a few degrees to the side, where the light was just right for me to see the on-going co-existing Universe of Imagination in the fullness of its expression." Leslie was an observer of imagination in action during the writing process.

At the same time that Leslie felt free and flowing she also felt contained by the image when in relationship to it. While experiencing the feeling of being in the river of images she also experienced a "letting go into the fullness of an existing flow," while at the same time she felt "held by a boat," in the form of the images, which offered "an orientation from which to focus."

When working the dreams in the group from a more-than-personal level, Leslie saw that through "each of the dream images we worked" there "unfolded commonalities within each of our histories and stories." Some of the more-than-personal themes Leslie experienced from her own dreams, as well as from the dreams of others during the dream work portion of the group, included "unworthiness, fear of failure, the urge to 'go for it', seeking knowledge, encountering dark energy, filled with wonder, given a task we don't know if we can handle, celebration, trusting without clarity of outcome, asking for help" and many more. During the dream group experience Leslie also felt the "inevitable bombardment of our enculturated environment" as she leaned into the more-than-personal side of dreaming to discover with the group the archetypal nature of this bombardment.

Leslie felt safe to explore in the group and indicated that the meaningful and transformative moments in the group "wove together into a fabric, equally a safety net and a trampoline." This in itself affected Leslie's experience of writing dream poetry. Leslie mentioned the "safety net and trampoline" two times in her answers indicating that she experienced the group as a safety net that gave her a secure place to simultaneously jump into the image and dream work and a secure place to return afterwards.

Leslie stated that working in the group "was profoundly meaningful." She felt that she was given a "gift of this circle of 7 beings, for whom I have the opportunity to share my dreams, my poetry, my Self." Feeling safe enough to share her dreams, poetry, and Self was experienced as meaningful to Leslie.

In the dream group process Leslie found that she felt witnessed and that she was witnessing for others. She indicated that there "wasn't one particular moment" that was meaningful or transformative" in her group experience but that there were "many moments, each time we gathered." Leslie felt that "being witnessed and witnessing others, provided a gentle and powerful place from which to tiptoe, walk, run, or skip, in an authentic way, from deep within interior" spaces. Leslie witnessed with intention and she felt witnessed with great care by the dream group. In the group circle Leslie experienced the intention of the group was to "deeply listen, reflect with wide awake awareness, to tumble another's notions and images around with our own, to respond from where we sit." She experienced all of this as the "Mystery." Leslie notes that this experience is "a lot to hold with such care, and in such truth" as a group. Within the group Leslie experienced a "witnessing of the Sacred in the light of day" and "encouragement to step onto the path less traveled."

From this textural description of Leslie's experience we can feel her experience of group process and her present and strong relationship to the image. She built this relationship through her own artistic and shamanic endeavors over many years. We can feel the interweavings of Leslie's creativity, her experience with the images as she developed her poetry, and the phenomenon of the group that buoyed her in her process. The textural description of the bones of Leslie's survey answers are laid out in such a way that the essence of the experience of writing dream poetry for Leslie is formed.

The sixth procedure in the Modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method includes reflection on the textural description by the researcher and the initiation of the process of "Imaginative Variation" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 97), resulting in "a description of the structures" of the experience.

In this move, "Imaginative Variation is targeted toward meanings and depends on intuition as a way of integrating structures into essences. . . . The uncovering of the essences, the focusing on pure possibilities, is central in the Imaginative Variation process" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 98). According to Moustakas, "Through Imaginative Variation the researcher understands that there is not a single inroad to truth, but that countless possibilities emerge that are intimately connected with the essences and meanings of an experience" (p. 99).

After reflecting on the textural descriptions of all six co-researches I developed a list of the structures of the experience of amplifying dreams with poetry, and the experience of participating in a dream group aimed at collective meaning making at the archetypal level. When writing the structural descriptions I continually referred back to this list for consistency. The underlying structural themes in the data, including applicable universal themes, are as follows:

1. Emotional responses.
2. The dream poet's pen as metaphor.
3. Co-researcher's relationship to the image.
4. Co-researcher's relationship to the day-world ego or inner critic.
5. The archetypal or more-than-personal realm.
6. Transformative moments.
7. Community service.
8. Group dialogue—witness, witnessing, sharing.
9. Relationship to the self.
10. Relationship to others.
11. Causality.

With these thematic structural bones gathered, I proceeded to write the structural descriptions of the essence of the co-researchers experiences. I also kept these structural bones in the foreground as I wrote their subsequent composite textural-structural descriptions.

The seventh and final procedure in Moustakas' Modified Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method is to "construct a textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 122). As I approached writing the composite textural-structural description of both the individuals and the group, I realized I had to be aware of the following:

*The essences of any experience are never totally exhausted. The fundamental textural-structural synthesis represents the essence at a particular time and place from the vantage point of an individual researcher following an exhaustive imaginative and reflective study of the phenomenon. (p. 100)*

In other words, the expressive value of the essence of the experience is established as of a specified analytical timeframe. The researcher never totally exhausts all of the potential essences of a given experience because it is limited to the data available at the particular time and place of the research analysis. Due to the constraints of the timeframe of the study process I will only include here the Composite Textural-Structural Description of the entire group which is developed below.