

Dreams and Globalization: Far Away and Deep Within

James L. Peacock, ???

A century ago Freud's *Traumdeutung* launched the psychoanalysis of dreams. The setting was turn-of-the-century Vienna, the capital of an empire that was cosmopolitan, to be sure, but cozily provincial too in its European – Eastern or Western – background.

At the turn of this century, the twenty-first, our world is global. One result is new waves of immigration to the West from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. What does this global context imply for dreams and their interpretation?

My answer is preliminary, just a start, but hopefully sufficient to prompt analysts and others to deepen the inquiry. I begin with three periods and places as touch points. First is Freud and the opening of psychoanalysis in turn-of-the-century Vienna, along with important counterpoints such as Jung in Zurich. The second is social science, with names like Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, and Bronislaw Malinowski. Locations include Heidelberg, though with connection to Mt. Airy, North Carolina, (where Max Weber's first cousin settled and he visited in 1904, inspiring his work on the Protestant Ethic and the founding of sociology); Cambridge, Massachusetts (where Talcott Parsons, translator of Weber, helped found the Department of Social Relations at

Harvard); London (where Malinowski taught functionalism, inspiring Parsons); and the Trobriand islands (where Malinowski did fieldwork). All of this came together in the structural-functional school of the mid-twentieth century. The third touchpoint is globalism, the world now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

These three periods correspond to my three terms: psyche, symbol, and globalism, summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Psyche, Symbol, Globalism

PHENOMENON	TIME	PLACE	PROPONENTS	DESCRIPTION
Psyche	1900	Vienna, Zurich	Sigmund Freud Carl Jung Charles Darwin	Emphasis on past: origins Totem & Taboo, Psyche→Symbol
Symbol	1950	Heidelberg; Mt. Airy, North Carolina; Cambridge, Massachuset	Max Weber Talcott Parsons Bronislaw Malinowski Emile	Emphasis on present: functions Social Action Symbol→Psyche

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Globalism	2000	Chapel Hill, North Carolina and the world	James L. Peacock and many others	Emphasis on future:Planning /preservation, sustainable development, Bioethics, human rights, capitalism, power, gender, diversity Symbol IS psyche
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Freud saw symbols as expressions of the psyche, and social science emphasized the psyche as buttressed by symbols, as in Emile Durkheim's argument about ritual, later extended by Malinowski to myth: that symbols inspire sentiments of loyalty and belief which reinforce society. Globalism merges symbol and psyche through electronic communications, which create "virtual reality," a kind of collective consciousness.

These three periods also correspond to certain foci and contexts, past, present, and future. Freud in 1900 focuses on the past. Neurosis comes from repressed memory of traumas, past experiences.

Therapy involves recovering that past, making the unconscious conscious. Psychoanalysis is part of a search for origins in the individual life, just as Darwin sought for origins of the species. Freud himself in his book *Totem and Taboo* seeks the origins of culture. Social science in 1950 focuses rather on the present, on its function and structure, structural functionalism. It asks how society works, here and now. In contrast, globalism, after 2000, seems to focus on the future. The new millennium thinks in terms of economics, of investment and strategic planning, but also worries about impacts on the future, thinks also of ecology, preservation – and about radical change: the human genome and 9/11.

We should also consider historico-political contexts. Freud in 1900 lived in the peak of an age of colonialism, of England, France, and the Netherlands, and (less so but still important) of America in the Philippines. The Austro-Hungarian empire colonized neighbors: Freud himself was Czech, a migrant from a colony to the capital, which still had the glitter of royalty (Kaiserlich and Königlich), exemplified by Empress and Emperor Sissy and Franz Joseph. In 1950 an era of colonialism had just ended, with World War II as the watershed. Indonesia, for example, got its independence in 1950 with help from Frank Porter Graham, then ambassador to the United Nations.

By 2000 a half century of emerging nations and the end of the Cold War – one way of arraying new nations and old nations into the third and first worlds – had yielded to globalism and, according to some, a decline of nations. Our current era is characterized by confusion, by

a collapse of clear dualism globally, and by confusion and potential at other levels; the human genome, gene therapy, and genetic engineering pose possibilities for radical change of identity. HMOs and a new psychiatry interested in medication and genetics seem to render psychoanalysis obsolete. Give up on that path to finding identity. Mainline religion, Protestantism, gave way New Age spiritualism and greater diversity; there are now more Muslims than Episcopalians in the United States. Old anchors have been swept away. Western nations, western civilization are now a minority in the world, and we look toward 2050, by which time whites will be a minority in the United States.

All of this is context. Now to content. I will try to apply and extend Freud, to trace these contextual changes as reflected in dreams. I will start with the first dream Freud gives in the *Traumdeutung*, his own, a dream about Irma. Freud dreamt that Irma, a patient who had renounced his care, had a throat problem. He examines her. Then his colleague Otto gives her an injection with a dirty needle. Freud interpreted this dream as about intimate personal relationships, his inner circle – Otto and others. He saw the dream as expressing a desire – to get back at Otto, who gave him a bad bottle of liqueur.

A second dream is Jung's anecdote about a physicist who was terrified by an image in his dreams. Jung's response was to open a book and show him a similar image in a medieval woodcut. The physicist felt

reassured that his terror was not personal only but was shared by a historical tradition. Jung interpreted the physicist's dream more impersonally, more cosmically than Freud interpreted his dream about Irma. Jung sees a collective symbol, an archetype; he interpreted the dream and the symbol as bestowing meaning, as saying: you are part of a collective tradition. Parsons might term it a culture, but for Jung it is cosmic, panhuman.

For my third set of dreams, I leave Freud and Jung in Europe and go to South Africa. Lee Zahner-Roloff elicited dreams from Jungian South Africans and other South Africans in the late 1980s as they made a transition from apartheid to the integrated society of Nelson Mandela (Dreams in black and white, in Graham S. Saayman, Ed., *Modern South Africa in Search of a Soul*. Boston: Sigo Press, 1990, p. 19-45).

These dreams occur as white South Africans anticipate change to black rule, and as blacks grapple with mixed heritage. In the first dream Zahner-Roloff reports (p. 24), a white English male analyst inside a cement bunker that is a projection booth projects films in black and white which he cannot see. Outside is veld, "rich and lush with color", and a "black woman in a tribal gown" beckoning him to learn to dance. He keeps looking at the screen. Zahner-Roloff labels this dream structurally perfect: the white attitude is "safe" in a cement bunker, or so it thinks, dealing with its white and black projections and separations only to discover, within the bunker, that the walls are meaningless. The choice is to learn to dance or live with projections. In the second dream, the speaker describes: "I am

standing at a 'whites only' beach. A black wave comes and threatens to swamp me" (p. 25). The black wave appears as a threat of engulfment – not only by the black majority but by a collective unconsciousness overcoming individual consciousness.

The next two dreams, each told by a white, female, politically liberal psychotherapist, involve snakes. One woman reports: "I am lying on my back, and above me I see a floating snake, hovering in the air" (p. 26). The black snake is then replaced by a blue light that moves toward uniting with her. In the second woman's dream, a woman dances with a snake, the two procreate, and the woman in the dream gives birth to a snake child. Zahner-Roloff concludes: "To overcome the fear of the dance, to unite with the serpent power in order to make a new child, is . . . nothing short of a call to a new birth. This is not a political statement, it is a psychological one" (p. 26).

Here are two further dreams by white women. In the first of these, "We had given our house to black women who were delivering or birthing their babies . . . I was appalled and said, 'This is too much, this cannot go on'" (p. 27). In the second dream a black servant quits work at a bad time for the dreamer. She says "I am frantic and very angry. The servant's daughter and a friend agree to step in and help me" (p. 27). The friend brings to the dreamer's house a black baby – beautiful but dead. These dreams more are complicated. Zahner-Roloff analyzes:

The dream of the black babies being "birthed" in the house was a

more specific manifestation of the "black tide" associated with fear. . . . [T]hese babies were being birthed "in the white house" - that is not the house of black Africa. The unconscious fear that this can't go on is made manifest. . . . And then the truthful rage of the next dream - in which arise all the issues of white dependency on blacks to clean, to wait upon, and to serve - is matched by the truthfulness of the anger, fear, and confrontation of where these attitudes lead: the dead black baby.

(p. 28)

Zahner-Roloff's analysis, then, reveals white fears of black forces, representing the collective unconsciousness. He thinks that in their awareness of white oppression and black tragedy but also hope for reunion and rebirth the dreams reflect richer social experience in a time of radical change.

I will conclude the examples of South Africans' dreams with two dreams by a black South African woman. In the first dream the dreamer finds herself acting in a play, in a scene set in an all-white church. The minister offers her money. She accepts it, then throws it on a path, which becomes a river, washing the money away. She lets money and water struggle, and she returns to her family. In her second dream, an army of black men threaten her. She seeks a white or "civilized" settlement, approaches "modern-looking houses," and there finds blacks "with a more healing possibility (of) spirit" (p. 40). The black South African dreamer's education had been paid by donations from

whites. The question was what she owed her benefactors versus what she owed herself. In her second dream, the healing power is from black rituals; this is also true of some white dreams, says Zahner-Roloff. My former student Guma, a healer in the Truth and Reconciliation rituals of South Africa invokes ancestors of both blacks and whites. The black dreamer, like the white dreamer, experiences tensions about the colonial hierarchy and its racial base but also experiences a healing ritual – perhaps foreshadowing the Truth and Reconciliation efforts that have spread from South Africa to Guatemala and elsewhere.

I will move now from South Africa to the Southeast United States and Southeast Asia, two other globalizing South's, and to further dreams, as well as visions and fears. As with the South African dreams, the emphasis will be on social forces and relations among cultures as part of globalization. For lack of other examples, I'll start with my own, with three fairly recent dreams. As does Roloff in interpreting the South Africans' dreams, I will interpret my own dreams not at an intimately personal, nor at a cosmic, level, but in between – as about globalism, changes in our lives, society, culture.

In one dream, as I am walking down a street in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. I encounter a panhandler who is a third-world person, perhaps an Indonesian or a Mexican (I had spent several years in Indonesia). I wish to give him something, but I don't have change, so I decide to take what he has collected so far for change. My bill gets mixed up with the money he has in his tin cup. Then he says, "I'm

afraid my money will be stolen. I wish I had American Express travelers' cheques." I tell him to just go inside the bank he is sitting in front of and exchange his money. He replies that they would not admit a beggar and suggests I do it. I go in the bank and exchange his money for travelers' cheques, but when I return to him I realize the checks for his money are in my name. When I point that out, he says, "Well, I've always wanted to travel." The dream ends with me involved with him, as we set off to travel together

In a second dream, I am in a phone booth somewhere in another country. I move out to see Arabs fighting each other, then an Arab fighting a European and beating him, in fact, spanking him. As I proceed, I am asked to fight as well; I refuse and proceed further. I come to an old black man, like Uncle Remus, who is sheltering my wife. I feel secure. In my last dream, my dog Sophie runs away, and I chase her. She goes into the house of some Latinos, and I enter too.

Here's a brief attempt at interpretation: in my first dream, I get involved with a third-world figure; here the world comes home to me, invading my life in the figure of a panhandler on a familiar street who wants international financial credit and security; he is not a businessman or academic or someone else we would imagine as a world traveler but instead an impoverished beggar. In the second dream, I am in a foreign place, and I see conflict between inhabitants of different areas of the world, one an Arab and the other similar to me, a European (actually he reminds me of a British man I once saw in Singapore who was being defeated in a badminton match by a more agile

Chinese opponent). I find solace by returning to a familiar, stereotyped traditional figure, an Uncle Remus, which, in fact, I do remember from childhood in the South, sheltering my wife. This scene returns us from a foreign and cultural conflict situation with threatening Arab figures to an old fashioned black/white paternalism, with the paternal figure being the elderly black man. In the third dream, I again encounter an immigrant culture here at home, as in the first dream, but this time I enter the home of the immigrant, and the fact that this immigrant has a home and that this home is inhabited by a family suggests they are here to stay, not just on the street, as in the first dream. The dog is our beloved Sophie, dead at the time of the dream, who "stole our hearts" and, this dream implies, took me inside this immigrant domain.

What about dreams by persons from elsewhere, for example, Southeast Asia, where I have done fieldwork over the years?

Previously, in Indonesia, I was told dreams. Sanyoto, my close friend, recounted a dream in which he is riding a tram. His father gets on and rides awhile, then gets off and disappears, leaving him sad at the loss. This was during my first fieldwork in Indonesia, in the Sukarno era. After that I returned during the Suharto era and worked for eight months with fundamentalist Muslims, from whom I heard not dreams, but jokes, mainly about erections. One was about the snake charmer who could not only make snakes rise but also penises, another about Sukarno, a noted womanizer, who displayed his own erect

penis to the world, calling it the "new emerging force," a political slogan of the time. Last summer, in Singapore, I inquired about dreams from a Jungian analyst, then a transactional analyst, but I was told none. I was told visions such as Sri's vision of Christ. The woman I call Sri was born a Brahmin and lives in Singapore. One day she had a vision of Christ entering the room and came to the conclusion that while Christ gave himself to humanity, Brahmins separate themselves from the rest of humanity, so she converted to Christianity. Living in Singapore, Sri the Hindu Brahmin became a member of a Chinese Christian church, projecting a bridge between cultures.

For some the bridge is broken. Let us return to the United States. An Egyptian Muslim friend living in America did not give me a dream but expressed a strong fear. Before 9/11, she said, a Muslim in America could be a person. Now you are a Muslim, a category, and a feared one. You have no choice but to stand up and represent your faith. This categorization reminds one of the stages leading toward genocide in Germany and elsewhere. The early stage for Jews in Germany was categorization: first, they were singled out and named as different. Persecution and extermination came later. Are Muslims at this early stage here now with the so-called Patriot Act?

This takes the discussion past dreams and into fears and cultural reactions to them. Where does this leave us? To sum up, Freud and psychoanalysis are still relevant, as is the social science begun in

the 1950s, but now we must apply them in a global context. What does this entail? First, we must actively broaden our scope to the global. Second, we should be aware of a shifting aspect; psyche and symbol become unified, part of a global consciousness a bit like the Jungian but mediated through electronic communication, computers, and media. The world is knowledge. The subjective and objective are fused. Think of virtual reality. Third, this global consciousness is becoming grounded, part of our experience. Globalization is now being "grounded." We are grappling with it in our own experience, at community, cultural, and individual levels – in dreams and with explicit statements of fears – of terrorism and of being persecuted as a potential terrorist, but hopefully also by reflection, including psychoanalysis, and by rituals of reconciliation and purification.

My sub-title suggests a psychological process: "Far Away and Deep Within." I suggest, simply, that experience of the far away – whether it be through immigration or travel, taking one far from one's homeland or birthplace, or through encounter with difference, with persons from far away – resonates "deep within," in the depths of the psyche. Those resonances are expressed in dreams, fears, and other materials of the unconscious. I do not hazard here much probing into these depths, what Freud might have termed the latent meanings underlying manifest content, the personal beneath the collective and public themes, though some hints are given in some examples. My objective is to illustrate how the "far away" does impact the "deep within" and to suggest opening up these global themes in analysis.

Therefore, I invite analysts to treat such material as part of understanding and counseling or through other contributions to coping with globalization and its groundings in our lives.

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