

Dream Symbolism

Based on our Body Structure and Sensory Perception



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1 Dreams and their Origin

"I see a lime-green cactus without any thorns. It has this characteristic rosette shape out of which smaller and smaller leafs grow. On top of the plant is a beautiful pink flower. While I am looking at it bewildered, I hear a voice that says: "Whoever sees the basic material of dreams can read them like story-books." I wake up and am happy about this friendly message." (Ch.)

Before we start thinking about dream symbols, we should first think about the nature of the dream language. Our verbal language is based on tonal vibrations which follow a linear flow. Our words are formed by sound modulations which build our language. Sometimes this tonal language also occurs in our dreams. Primarily, however, **dreams are a metaphorical and visual language.**

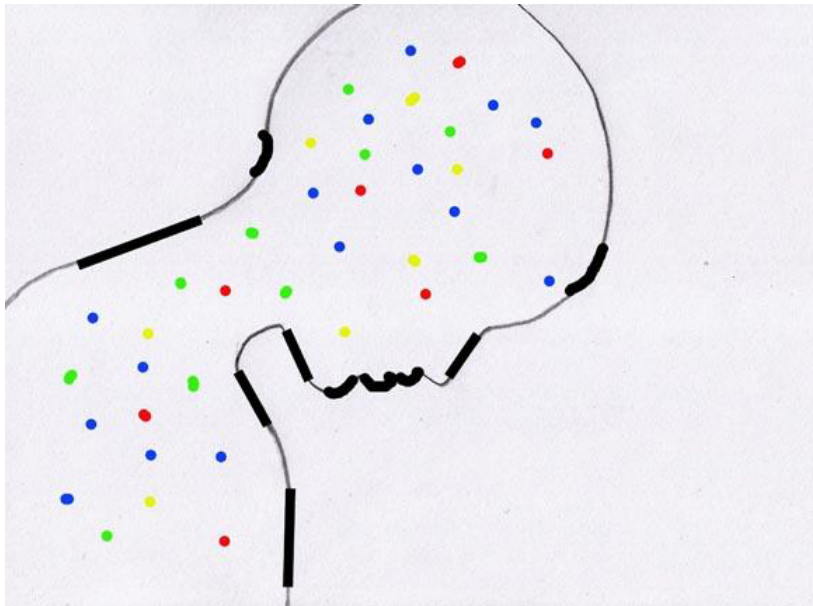


Imagine you were deaf and mute but had something like a computer monitor on which you could create pictures without having much effort. Now think of a situation where you want to say something like: "I'm hungry." How would you illustrate that message? Or "I'm scared." How would you express that without using tonal language? You could only speak in an image sequence. How would you choose this sequence? It is highly interesting to think the other way around. Not as the interpreter but as the speaker. The human race is using this language since millions of years

and even today people who try to interpret dreams pay too little attention to the fact that dreams mainly use this pictorial language. The many peculiarities of the dream content are caused by this special kind of language.

2 Sensory Perception and Processing

The center of our organic grown consciousness is the brain. This organ is located in a bone shell and has to paint a picture of our surroundings by using only a few sensors. The amount of sensory input must be kept low. All the dots, curves and color patches that are registered by the eye represent a huge amount of information. The bigger the amount of information the longer it takes to process it. Because of the large quantity of input, **the brain presumably forms a number of layouts**. The information flow into these layouts, which are not only form elements, but also filled with emotions and put into a relation grid. We find them in our dreams as symbols. If we think of dreaming as a neurological process these layouts are probably being related to other layouts.



The seen image is built from many signals like lines, curves and color dots.

3 The Hierarchy of Dream Symbols

In the opening paragraph, I tried to portray the dream imagery as a product of a cerebral process. If this is the case then one can assume that there has to be a hierarchy in the meaning of the symbols. It is essential for the brain to decide quickly what is important and what is not. This decision is made really fast. Only after an object came into main focus, it gets analyzed more closely. That means only after something seems to be important one takes a closer look or listens more carefully. Furthermore, the symbolic contents are structural elements and have to form according to **rules which are the same for all human beings**. The options by which symbolic elements form, have been established by evolution. With the help of simple questioning we come to a scheme that shows us which elements are essential for the surviving of an organism (here mankind). We can conclude that **the human himself is the most essential element**. He stands in the center of his own interest and therefore also in the center of all symbol forming. This focal point, which is the human himself, is not only a philosophical abstraction but a physical structure with options for actions and perceptions. The organs that are making action and perception possible, are the interface between environment and human. The human being assesses the environment with these organs. For that reason the top elements of the hierarchy of symbols, consists of contents that contain our anatomy and sensory organs. The actual environment is being judged from this point of view.

An **example**: At first glance, the four cardinal points seem to be logical and natural. There are two directions where the sun rises respectively sets. The other two directions indicate where the sun stands in zenith and of course the opposite direction. Due to this, no one doubts that this classification is a cosmic natural fact. Indeed, the sun is moving on circular arc and appears and sets at different places around the year. Actually, there are no real four cardinal points. Mankind is “freezing” the dynamic movement of the sun and forms it into a cross of which he himself is the centerpiece. From this viewpoint, he is splitting up the world in four directions and zones. Here we have a symbolism that results from the human anatomy and therefore belongs to the

top elements of the hierarchy of symbols. It is a structure-forming orientation element that is being projected upon the environment.



Tibetan Mandala

When going into further detail, the general symbols more and more become individual symbols. In the following, a classification of a symbol hierarchy is introduced, beginning with the generic human experiences. This category is followed by the civilizing and individual experiences resp. symbol qualities:

- Body based Symbols (e.g. orientation in environment)
- Symbols formed by General Environmental Structures (e.g. heaven, earth)
- Symbols from our Civilized Everyday World (e.g. car, smartphone)
- Symbols from our Individual Life Experience (e.g. granny's garden)

The first two categories will be outlined in the ebook on hand. The following two will be discussed in only a few words in this chapter.

Symbols from our Civilized Everyday World

These symbols are standing lower in the hierarchy than the “cosmic” symbols. An example for the dominance of a “cosmic” symbol over a everyday world symbol: We are in a room, maybe a basement or a living room. The most important thing for the classification (conscious or unconscious) are the lighting conditions. Light belongs to the second hierarchy level. The light, however, is only a “cosmic” aid and subordinated to the eyesight and its resulting recognition.

- Habitats (streets, houses etc.)
- Transportation (by foot, car, train etc.)
- Obstacles and Aids for Pathfinding
- Communication Elements (like radio, telephone etc.)
- Thresholds (doors, windows, bridges etc.)
- People and Animals

Symbols from our Individual Life Experience

These are not only single symbols that everyone has to discover on his own. Rather more, they also show nuances of symbols of higher hierarchies. We must not forget that symbols are built from our individual experience and therefore always have a personal touch.

Why are only the first two symbol hierarchies being described?

The number of symbols increases with the increasing differentiation, so that the discussion of the last two categories would go beyond the constraints of this e-book. Here, a basic understanding for the analysis of dreams, based on a biological logic, should be given as an alternative to the large amount of dream books in dictionary format. It is easier to develop an understanding of our dreams based on a logic than memorizing numerous disordered symbol explanations.

4 Moving and Non-Moving Objects

Some features of the landscape are important to the survival and development of our species for millions of years (rivers, mountains, sea, ...).

These features have been imprinted in our instinctive behavior and even played an important role for the evolution of our physical body. They were a decisive drive towards biological diversity.

The program of our brain that is responsible for decision making has to assign priorities in matters of perception and action. For this reason, it also has to decide up to what extend the elements of our surroundings are of importance. What is relevant in our environment is decided by our biology. The important factors are the ones that are essential to our survival.

Moving Things

Something that is moving attracts our attention more than something that is not moving. For instance, the fact that a dog is running towards us requires a quick reaction, in contrast to us seeing a motionless stone or a fence. Also the velocity is a notable factor. A car moving directly at us immediately raises a red flag.

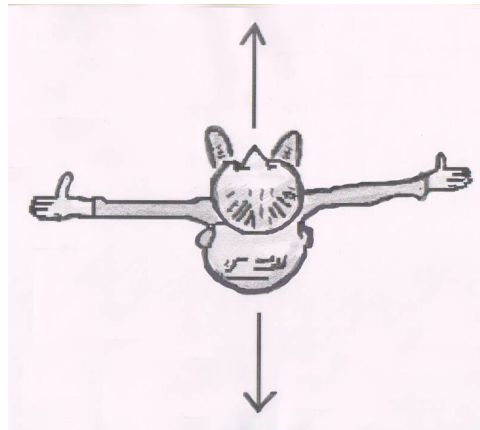
Static Structures

The topographic basic structures on the contrary are more crucial in matters of orientation. They are more fundamental and more elemental than moving objects. The basic structures in our dreams give us hints about the kind of psychic content we are confronted with. Whether it is hidden from our consciousness or integrated or if the content is concerning the past or the present. When interpreting the dream, at first these questions have to be resolved. Only afterwards, the story line which complies with the motion, should be interpreted. Therefore, here the topographic basic structures are prioritized.

5 The Four Cardinal Points

Action and Perception in the Horizontal Direction

The source of our orientation and evaluation of the world around us is our stature. The two main directions of action and (visual) perception are derived from our bisymmetrical shape. Forward and backward are the main directions of our primarily two-dimensional field of action. Between these two main regions are the intermediate regions left and right. In these intermediate regions we can only act and perceive in a severely limited way.



Forward, Backward:

Action and Motion

- Forward: We usually move forward and use our hands preferably in this direction.
- Backward: Here the exact opposite is the case. We can barely move backwards and also are barely able to act in backward direction.

Perception

- Forward: Our forward oriented capability of action is amplified by one of our most essential organs of perception namely the eyes. We see in forward direction

and therefore we recognize. This is why the forward direction is assigned to the day.

- Backward: In backward direction we cannot see and thus tend to feel threat and insecurity from there. Because we cannot see in this direction it is assigned to the unconscious.

Space-Interpreted Time Symbolism

In front of us lies the path we want to pursue (future). Behind us is the space we already paced (past). Forward and backward direction not only occur as paths in dream symbolism but also in graphology. There, for instance the slope of the letters provides insights about the introversion resp. the extroversion of a person.

Intermediate Directions:

The laterally directions are intermediate regions, for our actions as well as for our optical perception.

- Right: Due to the fact that most of us are right handed, right is assigned to **movement and acting**. This region is assigned to the dusk.
- Left: This intermediate region is assigned to the **feelings**. An intermediate region of the perception is a region of conjecture.

Summary of the four Action and Recognition Directions:

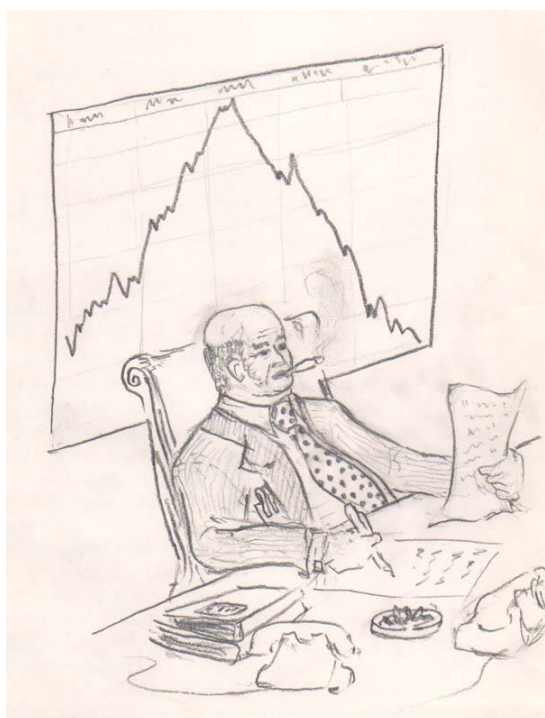
forward	seeing/recognizing	bright	day	awakeness	the spiritual
right	acting	dusky	dusk	intellect	father
left	feeling	dusky	dawn	feeling	mother
backward	instinctively	dark	night	subconscious	netherworld/death

6 Direction of Movement from Left to Right

(applies to right handed people)

As intellectual as some of these abstract symbols may seem, they are often based on experienced psychic content. For complement the following chapter provides information about some of these abstract symbols. The introduction to their understanding is done with the aim to open our (“symbol-recognizing”) eyes to the everyday life. This will show us the omnipresence of the psyche and its language.

The Geometric Symbols (Slash and Backslash)



Slash (striving upward) and backslash (striving downward) are known as scribe and scratch symbols since ancient times. These symbols resulted from the topography of the hand and from the hand motion. Right handed people move their hands from left to right while writing. Thus left is the past and right is the future. As the vertical direction is being involved the motion goes either up or downhill. The upward motion is assigned to a positive and desirable quality, while the downward motion is labeled negatively. These feels are ingrained within us.

Common Dream Variants of this Elemental Symbolism:

stairs upwards and downwards

hillside upwards and downwards

street upwards and downwards

The Times Sign



The times sign combines slash and backslash. It is an ancient prechristian symbol (witches cross) which represents the growth (slash) and the dieback (backslash), the perennality of birth and death, summer and winter, youth and age, sowing and harvest. It represents the law of our world and forms the spokes of the sun wheel. There it marks the turn of the year as well as the equinox.

7 Meaning of the Vertical Axis

Top-Middle-Bottom Symbolism as Vertical Aspect of our Habitat

The top-middle-bottom symbolism not only corresponds to the order of space but also to inner qualities which can be logically derived from this order.

- Top: On top is the unequalled bright and spiritual (sun, moon, stars), which is the source of light that enables us to see.
- Middle: The middle represents our sphere of action and movement which is the visible area (conscious).
- Bottom: On the bottom (earth) lies the invisible area (unconscious).



Qualities assigned to the Vertical Aspects of our Habitat

- Top: breezy, formless, bright, knowing, celestial, spiritual
- Middle: surface, formed, colored
This is our field of action that we are conscious of. This sphere of action splits

up in two main components:

1. The emotional area represents all the living things like plants and animals.
2. The mental area represents everything constructive like buildings or technical stuff.

- Bottom: solid, amorphous, dark, ignorant, source of life

Top-Middle-Bottom-Symbolism of the Human Body

Top: head, the intellectual, the recognition

Middle: hands, chest, left=feeling, right=thinking

Bottom: abdomen, feet, animal, instinctively, unconscious



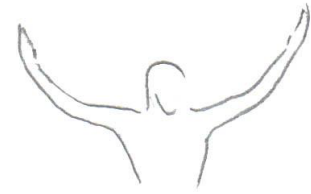
Religious and Authoritarian Aspects of the Top-Symbolism

One of the most important impressions of the childhood are the encounters with adults. The small being stares upward to the overbearing adult especially the mother and the father. They are tall so that the child has to look up. They know, do and determine everything. From this perspective a religious view of an omniscient, omnipotent and all determinative god comes into being.



Bowl - Receiving from Above

The main symbols "bowl" and "death ship" not only manifest in our dreams but also in our everyday life. They are being expressed through our gestures or as articles of daily use which are integrated in our symbol language due to their properties. The "bowl" symbolizes a receiving principal just like a bowl takes the liquid we pour in it. In our gesture we will find the bowl in a receiving opening of our arms. In this form the bowl is a popular symbol in the religious milieu: the receiving of divine blessing.



"Death Ship"

We connect the drying of a persons vitality with a stooped posture, just like a bowl that spills its content when being knocked over. The gaze is directed to the floor and the earth. As gesture we recognize this symbol as a sad hanging of the head. The term "death ship" (= decrescent moon) comes from the reversed bowl (outpouring) that is being connected with decay. As such it is also the symbol for the personalized death. The grim reaper wears the symbol of the "death ship" on his scepter (= scythe). His floppy hat also refers to this symbolism.



Summary of the Top-Middle-Bottom Space Symbolism:

top	superconscious	god	heaven	sunlike	caring
middle	conscious	human	surface	bright as day	surrounding
bottom	unconscious	demon	earth	dark	threatening

8 Bright-Dark Symbolism

One of the first impression of life is the experience of the day-night rhythm which depends on bright and dark. At daytime, the baby gets a lot attention. The baby is being fed and is being carried around. At nighttime, it lies alone in its cradle and is exposed to the darkness. As a result of this the day is associated with the positive, while the night is perceived as appalling. In the following years of the childhood these attributes are being corroborated. The day is associated with life and with being cared for and the night is connected to loneliness and darkness. Bright becomes good and dark becomes bad.



When the young human starts using his eyes for orientation and for learning and understanding, dark and bright attain an additional meaning. Dark and bright that had an emotional meaning to the toddler get an additional intellectual meaning in the sense of recognizing and understanding.

In a bright environment it is easy to orient (= “good”). In the darkness, in turn, one is surrounded by the indefinable (= “evil”).

In context of symbolism, things that are recognizable and conscious are assigned to the light. The darkness is coupled with qualities which are contrary to the light aspects. Certainly, everything that cannot be seen and that operates in the shadows is

a potential threat. Our language, which is an expression of our perceptions, contains a lot of language elements that are dedicated to the bright-dark symbolism. “Shed light on something”, “dark deeds”, “his face brightens up”, “helping someone out of the darkness” and so on. The emotional aspect is obvious in these phrases. Also in mythology the night is associated with the uncanny.



In dream symbolism the following scheme is applicable:

bright	conscious	top	forward	familiar
dark	unconscious	bottom	backward	threatening

The elements fit, because of their properties, perfectly in the top-bottom and bright-dark symbolism. They will be discussed in detail in another chapter. They are being combined with the already discussed symbols in the overview.

fire/light	enlightening	weightless
air	transparent	lightweight
water	muddy to transparent	lighter than earth
earth	dark and nontransparent	heavy

The meaning of color in a colorless surrounding is similar to the bright in the darkness.

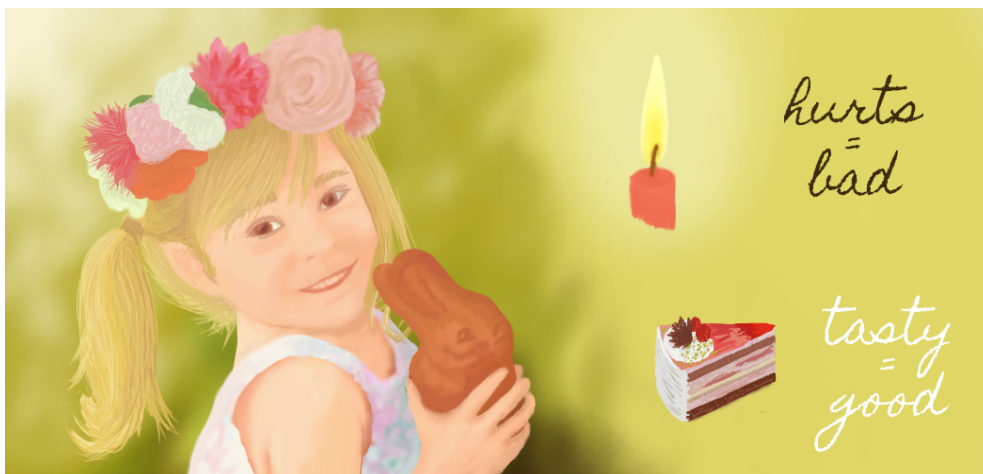
9 Good-Evil Polarity

After experiencing pleasurable (good) and painful (evil) the toddler divides its environment into two categories - good and bad.

Desire of the good and rejection of the evil.

The learning process of a baby begins with an emotional coupling of experienced contents. Even in our adulthood there is no pure intellectual learning. Everything that is learned is coupled with emotions because otherwise we would not remember it. The more emotion an information we want to learn contains, the better it will be kept in our mind. (Interestingly, that is a late finding of the human medicine.)

The learning process follows a simple scheme that has proven itself in terms of animal learning behavior for eons. This scheme consists of a polar classification of the world into “good” and “evil”. Later this classification schema shows finer and finer differentiation and more complex combinations. The process begins in the early childhood with a spectrum from pleasant to unpleasant. Learning contents are labeled with emotions which are again coupled with sensory life impressions. A quality like “good” or “evil” is allocated to the learning content.



With growing experience the network gets more complex and more graded. Contrasts fade and estimations like “much good” and “a little bad” occur. Despite this gradations

the basic polarity of good and evil remains. This is the root of a religious worldview and also the origin of coming contradictions of a matured, complex philosophical and social system. To sum up one can say that symbols are psychic quality labels of learned contents.

Thus the symbol language of the subconscious is not referring to a mysterious, collective resource of mankind. Much more it is a simple, congenital structure. The collective character is more a result of this innateness. The inner symbol language is not a mysterious psychic transformation of the objects of our world but the judging labeling. These labels are being attached to every object and every event.

The intensity of the good-evil judgment is given by the attached emotion. Objects and events which are free of emotions are often just formative accessories.

Demonic Aspects in Dreams

Psychic aspects – inclinations and desires that are not accepted in a moral, social or religious way become repressed. This repression expresses itself through the aggression one has against those things. In our dreams these contents are therefore of a demonic or bestial aggressive nature and put the dreamer in fear. In this case flight does not help. Only tolerance, understanding and love and eventually acceptance of this part of our nature brings cure. We have to face the fact that we are not the “intellectual super beings” we may want see ourselves as.

"When I was a child I often had the same dream. It was a gray and rainy day and I was playing in kindergarten. I had this nightmarish feeling and I knew that something really bad was going to happen. I looked around and saw a shadowy figure that was slowly creeping towards me. I wanted to run but I moved very slow. It felt like walking through deep mud. When the nebulous figure reached me I always felt pain and horror. Sometimes I tried really hard to wake up. Other times I looked back at my persecutor and saw that he was consisting of pure shadow. He had these bright, red-glowing eyes." (Seth)

10 Rising and Development

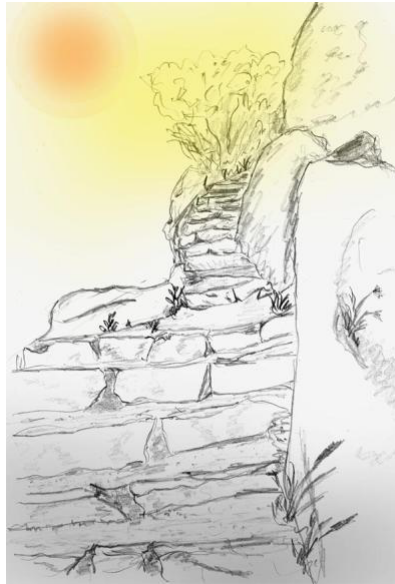
Symbolism of Evolution

The only relevant development opportunities in dream symbolism are the ones that happen in us as a person. In the following overview this development is portrayed. Based on the top-bottom symbolism the final goal stands on top in the first, the starting point on the bottom in the last row.

The stages of development are:

- The **maturation** – wisdom combines with love. This is often seen as spiritual/religious development.
- The development of the **recognition** resp. the spiritualization towards wisdom
- The development of our **feelings** from compulsively aggressive to ethical lovingly. This includes the social development from egocentric to sympathetic.
- The development of the **vitality** from numb to vital.

The inner development proceeds from unconscious to conscious to super conscious (intuitive, fertile, creative). Here the human can be understood as a unit that is composed of many partial aspects (archetypes). Every aspect develops partly separated but is also interacting with the other personality aspects. Developed and undeveloped aspects yield a complex and unique personality structure.



It is interesting to imagine the development of a plant that fits well with the top-bottom symbolism. The plant germinates in the darkness of the earth. Bit by bit, it is growing towards the light.

11 Symbolism of Colors

The brightness level contains the symbolism of the vertical axis. Bright is above us where there is the sky. Darkness is underneath our feet where there is the earth. On this scale all the colors are somewhere in between dark and bright. Here too, our essential experiences shaped the symbolism. For instance, green for plants and red for blood.

The colors are roughly assigned to the realms of psyche portrayed in the following overview. Surely, the meanings of the colors are more diverse in their nuances and their messages but for a first introduction this simple mapping is convenient.

light	spirituality, inner awakens	sun, moon, stars, light
white, yellow	understood/integrated content	white animals, flowers
blue	mental	air
red	compulsive, emotional	animals
green	vegetative	plants
black	unconscious	earth, basement, night

green: Onto many advertising posters we find a green accentuation with the purpose to connect the vital nature with the advertised object. In the field of interior design green is said to have a calming effect. Partly, it is tried to use foliage plants to create this calm atmosphere in the living space.

orange: Orange is being assigned to vitality and warmth. Additionally, a bright orange is connected to sunshine.

red: Depending on its intensity red has an invigorating or stimulant effect. It is also connected to energy or sensuality.

blue: A light blue (as well as **white**) appears cold.

In greater simplification colors are used as language elements just like red as a symbol for “attention”.

12 The Four Elements

The meaning of the four elements comes from their close vicinity to us. Their transparency is connected to the amount of insight on a matter. Their stability is a symbol for their malleability. The huge amount of occurrences of the elements offer the possibility of a differentiated usage of their symbol qualities.

12.1 Earth

The earth is the area of the subconscious as well as the origin of all corporeal. Here lies the source of all that's visible surrounding us, regardless of whether it is alive or physical.

The deeper we dig our way down into the earth the deeper we dig down into our subconscious. Everything what lies in the earth (subconscious) is stiff and immutable. This also applies to psychic contents which firstly have to be brought up to the "daylight". Then these contents have to be formed and afterwards they can be integrated. This means that only the conscious is able to transform and remodel. With the help of the conscious the ancient, invariable instinct can be purified and ennobled (socialized). In the depth of the earth we also find everything of our past that is solidified.

"The surroundings are very primeval. We walk northeast alongside a river towards its spring. On the left I see a dark stone sculpture standing in between weather-beaten mossy rocky masses. It reminds me of those sculptures from the Easter Island. Its facial features are frozen but noble. The shape of the statue is more round and natural than the form of the ones from the Easter Island. Then we get to know about an tool that can detect the past that is lying in the earth. We get the tool and set it on a range of 9 meters. In 4 to 6 meter depth we find a hieroglyphic text that is embedded in clay." (T.)

Single Symbol Elements of the “Earth”

crystals (illuminated earth): The crystal is the completion of the earth like. It is neither nontransparent nor amorphous, but insightful and formed by inherent laws. The quality of a treasure is, not in vain, connected to crystals in our dreams. The crystal gives us the impression that it is build out of pure earth energy. Some shamanic groups literally believe that.

rock: a rigid resp. petrified area, the very basis

stone: the most firm and lasting form of appearance of the earth

humus: top layer of the subconscious and already being transitioned to the conscious; animals which are assigned to the earth (snakes etc.) typify the dynamic (feel) aspects

earthwork: subconscious contents are brought up to the surface (conscious awareness)

archaeological dig: dealing with past formative experiences

treasure uplift: cognitive process; old experiences are being integrated and enrich us as life experience

grave discovery: almost forgotten experiences or feelings are being remembered and get revived

burying something: an emotional content is repressed; It is also possible that a dispute is put to an end. This is no solution but reconciles differences (acute becomes latent).

cave: When the earth relinquishes its grip a cavity is being formed. It is still dark but accessible. The unconscious content is in the state of becoming conscious. Caves and grottoes are constructions of the nature and symbolize instinctive aspects. These are being integrated in the process of becoming conscious. The return to the earth strengthens the vitality of the human being. Thus a natural cave is the connection with the very basis. For that reason caves always played a big role in various religions and cultures.

basement, tomb, crypt: cavities made by mankind. Here we find symbols for experiences of the past which are not processed and somehow cast-off. These contents need integration and clarification.

petrification: emotional elements which are resting in the subconscious, currently they look towards their integration

12.2 Water

Water is shimmering in its symbolic character and has different basic meanings (which are not contradictory):

- On the bright-dark scale (unconscious-conscious-super conscious) water stands between earth and air.
- Water is less stiff than earth. (contents are less rigid)
- As an element water is assigned to the **emotions**.
- Energetically, water is assigned to yin (acupuncture). It is water flowing through pipes, drains and eventually rivers.

On the path of spiritualization of the nature of the inner human, water is already less solid than earth. Therefore water is a substrate which conceals less than earth but more than air.

Its degree of purity can reach from very muddy to crystal clear. This makes water an indicator for the distance to the conscious awareness (**symbolism: transparency = understanding**). Through the depth of the water one can infer how deep the content lies. In the process of becoming consciously aware, diving expeditions or swimming into the depth are common dream symbols.

Single Symbol Elements of the “Water”

ocean depths: area of the unconscious

"I was on a beach with some of my friends and wanted to take a bath in the sea. I went into the water and when I looked down I saw that the water was really muddy. I wanted to see the seabed below me so I stared into the water. As I watched closer and more carefully, the water began clearing up. I saw little fish, colorful corals and various other sea creatures. A child came up to me and wanted me to help her searching for pearls. We both dived to the ground and looked for clams. I could breath under water and recognized everything easily. As we found clams we opened them carefully and collected the shimmering pearls." (Seth)

waves: sign of motion (revival)

high waves: troubled feelings

flash flood: feelings are overwhelming

muddiness:

- nontransparent = mostly unconscious
- unclear = feelings are in conflict with morals

river:

- as **time component:** flow of life; review resp. extrapolation of the future as a possible perspective from the current starting position. Characteristic for these dreams is that the water is not in the center of attention, more important is the passing world.

“I am on a plane and see a river below me. I see hills, mountains, valleys and many tributaries from which some flow through the river. The imprint of the silver blue water is obvious and I know that the river symbolizes my life which gets richer with every encounter. Every crossing with another river is an encounter. I can clearly see that sometimes a branch stream leaves the river.” (E.)

(In the evening I felt asleep depressed. I thought my life would take an unclear path, without sense and goal. I get pushed and have no power to direct my life. As I woke up I knew that the river is striving towards its goal relentlessly. The image of the river was beautiful and made its way into my heart. The dream ended a month of constant crisis and I still feel energy streaming from the memory into myself.)

- as **dynamic motion component:** water as yin or primary energy (water of life) in its (reviving) flow through the body
- also: **flow of feelings** (important here are the amount (much or little) and dynamics (slowly or raging)) In both last cases the water is in the center of attention and an element that effects its environment decisively – flood, water, wither etc.

head: water of life (invigorating) coming from the very basis (subconscious)

fountain: very dynamic (emotional) process of an invigoration from the depths of the subconscious

rain: falls from the sky = water of life (emotions) is being invigorated by the spirit (air, height) and falls down again to bring fertility to the earth. In dream life it symbolizes a form of transition and renewal.

thunderstorm: The thunderstorm unites rain, storm and lighting. The rainwater is assigned to the emotional sphere while the storm represents a strong intellectual motion. The lightning is the incoming of the intuitive sphere, a recognition and enlighten, which destroys the ancient order with its dangerous aspect. Thus the thunderstorm is an expression of an intense emotional or a mental riot.

fog: symbol of concealment, veiling, obscuring. Firstly, fog can represent the case in which the conscious cannot recognize things due to a veiling. Also the fog can be a threshold symbol. In this case the other sphere (sphere of consciousness like unconscious, conscious, netherworld, the beyond) is not recognizable but can be entered if one dares to.

snow, ice: Bright white snow and ice are symbols for an intellectualized yin energy (ajna light). If ice and snow occur without this bright characteristics they indicate an frigidity or an emotional freezing. This is either our own frigidity or an aspect of another person. It is hard to distinguish a lack of emotion from repressed feelings which can both be symbolized by snow. Snow is not only cold but also able to cover up. The covering up (repression) can be the result of strong emotional distress and the result of a way of life that forbids any kind of self-actualization. Typically for me are snow dreams in which I am in a camp or in the company of my father (he was acting despotic). In the meantime I walk toilsome through the snow and barely move forward (symbol for the handicapped inner development in these days). Of course ice and snow in dreams can also be a result of the experiences of the past day. This applies to all symbols.

desert: The aridity can point to lack of emotion. The desert can also be a symbol for a all drying heat which is assigned to a surplus of yang energy (refer to acupuncture).

dried up river: (resp. pond) A dry river points to water shortage due to a lack of inflow. This means there is a lack of energy (not a surplus of heat like discussed for the desert). This energy shortage can point to a lack of sexual energy or insufficient vitality.

treasure uplift: (from the sea) This symbol often occurs in psychoanalysis when a problem is about to be solved. (cf. "ocean depths")

"I went to Spain with my brother. We went diving and discovered at a depth

of 3000 m an important locality. We found books that came from the library of Alexandria. They were all sintered by magnesium or mangan which led them to being unharmed.

Now we try to salvage them. We light up the locality with a bright headlight. With the help of a deep sea hoover we bring the books to the surface. Due to the air and the bright sunlight, the seaweed already begins to grow and will eventually damage the treasure. We have to do something about it.” (T.)

12.3 Air

At the first glance, one might say that the sphere of air is a rarity in dreams. In reality our whole everyday life is assigned to the air. Even if we cannot fly like birds, we are surrounded by the air and breath it. Thus, the air matches our normal area of life and our common consciousness.

Air as an element represents the thinking and the intellect.

Single Symbol Elements of the “Air”

wind: The wind shows a certain dynamic and is a symbol for a current, intensive mental motion. Old things are being questioned and new contents become important. It is beneficial to keep the inner balance in these days. The capsizing of a boat (on which we are) is a warning of losing the inner balance. A lose of balance is expressed through highly emotional, chaotic and threatening dreams.

airplane:

- airplanes as **technical products** stand for ideas and wishes (= mental constructs). These wishes may not be very realistic (down-to-earth). Often also plane crashes occur which point to the disappointment of these imaginings. Dreams become dashed.
- airplanes as **own vehicle**. This represents the fast mental motion from one point to another (space of consciousness). The plane can also be a threshold symbol and mark the transition of states. (f.e. before waking up – transition from sleep to awakeness)
- **hostile airplane attack** (with bombardment): This symbolizes a mental attack. (f.e. being discredited, insulted)

rainbow: A rainbow connects heaven (light) and earth, as much as air and water. In its harmonic combining of all four elements, the rainbow symbolizes union and perfection. This can also apply to a single aspect or content.

bird: Birds are animals that can lift off the surface and are capable of mediating between cosmic spheres and our area of life. They can be compared to angels (= human with wings) f.e. who are representatives of the heavenly spheres.

feather: Part of the bird symbolism.

12.4 Fire

In the field of alchemy the fire is the fourth element. It was used to inflame and capable of initiating different transformation processes. But even in alchemy the cosmic principle was symbolized by sun, moon and stars.

In common dreams the high cosmic principles manifest as bright sun and moon dreams seldomly. Sometimes, as a result of light meditation or light visualization, these rare dreams occur. Sun dreams often go hand in hand with an euphoric emotionalism and are mostly lucid.

If fire does not occur as a threatening heat symbol, it can be assigned to the light symbolism. Fire transforms old burden into light and air. This means the contents become conscious and can be integrated into the personality as precious experiences.

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