

The Disowned Instinctual Energies and the Dream Process

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There are many different kinds of energy that can be disowned but one of the more powerful groupings in western culture are the ones we refer to as instinctual energies. The blocking of selves that are related to these energies causes no end of difficulty in our lives because we don't have a connection to our natural aggression, to the expression of our emotions and feelings and to a natural survival energy that understands the need to take care of ourselves in the world. Instead, the selves that develop often have to do with being nice, overly responsible, overly sensitive, identified with the mind and also with spirituality. How the unconscious as expressed in the dream process reacts to these disowned instinctual energies is what this article is about.

A young woman who is identified with new age spirituality has the following dream: "I am going down some stairs that lead from my kitchen to the basement. In the basement, much to my surprise, I discover many cages and inside the cages are lions all of whom are sound asleep while new age music plays in the background."

There is a profound intelligence that lives within us that is constantly trying to help us balance things out in our psyche. The "you" in the dream is most often the primary self and generally gives us a good picture of how the primary self behaves in the world. Less often the "you" is the disowned self and then we are doing something totally counter to our usual way of doing things. For example, a very controlled man dreams that he is driving a car very fast and very out of control. This would be an example of

the disowned self breaking through in a dream, something that happens infrequently in dreams but typically in daydreams.

The image of lions being lulled to sleep with the aid of new age music is both profound and humorous as the same time. The dream makes its point with great clarity and speaks to the awareness level of the dreamer to help wake her up from her own unconscious sleep state. Whenever we do not have access to awareness and to some level of the Aware Ego process we are living in some kind of sleep state, just like the dreamer's lions. How different life would be if these lions woke up and their energies became available to her as they were thoughtfully and carefully let out of their cages and allowed their freedom. The dream paints a portrait of her relationship to new age spirituality that is very clear and precise and gives her clear direction on what she needs to work with – her separation from those selves that are connected to her new age spiritual identification as well as her need to learn how to use in a conscious way the new lion energy that would be available to her.

On a similar note, a deeply spiritual woman whose connection was to her church had the following dream: "I dream of angels. There were many, all surrounded with light. Some of them are carrying lilies, some palm branches. Their faces are radiant. They were all straining upwards. Suddenly there is a long table. Seated around it are all kinds of evil looking creatures masked and in black. The scene is like the Last Supper and the one in the center of the table says—Don't

forget us! We're here too."

People often think of their communication as a framing process. The unconscious at times is the master framer. It does not make her spirituality wrong. It simply re-frames it in relationship to the dark side, to the disowned instinctual energies. It puts these energies at the table of the last supper to make sure that she understands that both the angels on the one side and the dark and evil looking creatures on the other side are both part of her spiritual nature.

Our last example is that of a man who attended one of our European conferences. He had been working with a spiritual teacher for many years but he was feeling a good deal of discontent because his own male power/instinctual energy was emerging and creating conflict in the spiritual community of which he was a part. He had the following dream about his teacher: "I'm exploring the compound of my teacher. I see that in this compound children are being trained to kill animals."

This was a remarkable dream to us, to the group and especially to the dreamer. It does not say that his training was bad. What it points out so clearly is that in this training, his feelings (children) are being trained to kill the animals, his instinctual nature. The dream had a very strong impact on the dreamer and he discontinued his studies with the teacher within a very short period of time.

Sometimes the emphasis on spiritual training and the concomitant denial of instinctual energies that governs so much of the consciousness community seems—to us—unbalanced. We prefer to speak about psycho-spiritual development. The name itself makes clear that transformational work requires that we move on the path of the snake, a path that is forever interweaving between psychological, emotional and physical reality on the one side

and our spiritual nature on the other. From our study of the dream process it is clear that the higher mind that directs this process wants us to be in balance and requires that we embrace all of our selves.

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