

Dream Baby Dream: Sleep and Dream Experts' Voices

Interview Transcript English

NOMASMETAFORAS

NOMASMETAFORAS is a collective working in the field of contemporary art and experimental thought between France and Colombia. Philosopher Clara Melniczuk and artist Julian Dupont combine pedagogy, philosophy, art, and Indigenous knowledge around the theme of dreaming. Their work is shaped by long-term collaboration with communities in the Cauca region of Colombia, as well as by vulnerability, lived experience, and traditional medicine.

Clara: We are the collective NOMASMETAFORAS. I'm Clara Melniczuk. I'm a pedagogue and a philosopher. And Julian (Dupont), he's an artist. And we've been working together for six or seven years, bridging our practices, which now are tentacular in a sense, where it's not about pedagogy, philosophy, or arts, but it kind of became this in-between space for all our practices. And currently, we're also working with the Autonomous Intercultural Indigenous University, UAIIN CRIC, that's in the Cauca region. That gathers between 10 and 12 different communities of the Cauca region in Colombia. And together we've been working on dreaming practices. I would say ever since we started working - maybe even before we started working with communities and with ancestral medicine and practices because our work is very much connected to the work we do with traditional doctors from the region, and how basically dream is understood as landscapes of knowledges. From there we need to become attentive to the signs that are not just a mere representation or distortion of our awakened life, but they're actually spaces that we haven't really known how to explore properly. And all these communities have been walking the path of dreaming since ancestral times. So, we're collaborating on a lot of these practices.

Julian: Also to contextualize a bit how we are concentrated in dreaming as the matrix of our practice today. I think it's important to voice that probably 16 or 17 years ago that I had my first encounter with the Mayor Luis Yonda from the Nasa community in the context of a huge psychiatric crisis that I had. And that's something very relevant for us: today, all these paradigms that today are gifts and ways of understanding in relation to the space of dreams and the conversation with what we could call the non-human. This before, for me, was something that I could not understand.

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And from the perspective of Western education and with a family, that had lot of effect on my experience, it was somehow not a constellation that could be understood. So, that context led my family to treat me with psychiatric and psychological treatments that, in fact, my body didn't receive well. And it's in that crisis, the psychiatric pill not working, that I arrived to meet traditional medicine practice. And it's very interesting because for me there was something about meeting El Mayor Luis, related to the fact that everything before was treated as a sickness or a mental condition that was incapacitating, from that perspective for the tradition of millenary knowledge, Indigenous practices, were possibilities of understanding. I think with the years, this has become like a quotidian-based practice that started through, as Clara was saying, the work in the Autonomous Intercultural Indigenous University. When we started to do these seminars, where we used to invite artists and traditional doctors to gather, the Council of Elders gave us a coca plant. That was the first plant of a sacred tradition that we received. And we started to relate to the plant was like: in the day the plant was in the backyard of our house, and at night, we used to bring the plant to sleep with us. After the days passed, we understood that it was different if we were placing the plants to the right, to the bottom, left. So, we started to create this conversation where dreams were affected by the spatiality of the position of the plant in relation to where we were sleeping.

And that has grown into a materiality of creating masks to dream with plants. At the beginning, only we were using the masks, Clara and myself. We had two masks. And with time, that has become like an exercise of 50, 70 people collectively dreaming together with the specificities of certain plants that grow in the conversation with traditional doctors and different communities around dreaming. There's a spectrum of different plants and different practices that now we put in relation to the context of these workshops.

C: I think it's important that Julian was talking about the fact that he started relating to traditional medicine through a kind of psychiatric crisis. And I think that has been important to our work in terms of starting from a space of vulnerability towards working with communities and the work we do. It's not been so much a relation that started through work projects, academic or artistic projects, as it's been, I would say, an intimate and spiritual questioning. I was finishing my PhD in philosophy in France. At the time, Julian had his artistic practice. We haven't been born and raised in communities. And I think we both felt that a lot of experience of space in a non-binary, non-dualist way was not fitting in the fields that we were being brought up in. And I would say it's through that vulnerable space of, even failing a little bit at the world we were in, that we started relating to

different worlds. I think that really marks our process, that it has a lot to do with quotidianity, vulnerability, and affects, also because we work as a collective.

J: I think when we think in sound, it's a good starting point to think about time. There's like another temporality when the space of dreaming starts to dictate how to inhabit experience. And something that, since the beginning of our experience of dreaming, started to appear as a constant was this sort of expansive, slow temporality, to connect with what Adam was saying, in terms of the landscapes of the images that were arriving as, let's say, power dreams. There's something about periodicity. To use the plants or take the plants that make that, I would say that in the year, there are usually four to six dreams of deep strength. And those dreams are the ones in which we usually bring those strong images, strong sounds or strong times to grasp and to bring them into our daily basis. That's also a connection that we like to establish. And I will go probably a bit deeper into sound after mentioning this: there's something happening in the realm of what you dream in relation to how you bring that to a materiality, how you bring that to an experience with others. It becomes this sort of a portal or conversation in between fractals or realities that afterwards start to nurture, a different sense of this dichotomy or this separation between what's dreamt and when you're awake. Here around us, we have a few of the sculptures that are all like portals, guardians, images that arrive at our space of dreaming. Thinking about how to articulate the relation of, the awake in space, and the experiences created with others around the possibility of them becoming connectors for others to start to dream. It's something that we are constantly thinking.

C: I wanted to mention something, especially because it's been, most recent in terms of the dreaming space. I've been dreaming a lot in terms of sound with water, with dripping water and with underwater frequencies. And recently I was telling Julian that I have a lot of whales appearing in my dream spaces, a lot of water, a lot of flow. Like vibrational spaces that have to do with being in that submarine underwater of environment.

I feel sometimes that in some of the collective dreaming workshops that we do, that it has a little bit to do with, not maybe for everyone, but for me at least: I was trying to recover a kind of in utero memory in a way, where things are not associated and where, I liked what you said, Adam, in the sense of like, are we waking up from the dream or from the real life? I know that there's this Zen philosophy haiku that says that we imagine this life, this awakened life as the real one and the other dream one. But I wonder if it's not really the opposite and if we're just not capable and we don't know how to sustain that dream sense into our days. Kind of a non-dissociative plane of consciousness. I experience it and

for me, it has a lot to do with water, with the sound of water. I don't really know where that comes from and it's what I'm telling you. Sometimes I feel that it has to do with this kind of umbilical uterine memory, I don't know. I was just thinking about that because that's inhabiting me a lot these days.

J: In our practice we're constantly thinking about how to accompany the experience of collective dreaming with what sound. I think there is a connector between the two different spatialities that we usually use for the collective during workshops. One of them it's when we, for instance, go to a cascade or a lake or a volcano, then we have the experiences in those spaces in relation to the cosmologies that we work with in relation with the traditional doctors. If you go to dream in a lake, you will not have the same dream as if you are dreaming in your bed and your TV. There's something about the challenge of doing these experiences in an enclosed space, for instance. We always try to bring an amplification of frequencies, a resonance from a translation involving the artificial. Could we arrive to not reproduce the strength of the dream experience? But how could we envision an artificiality that will embody the possibility of resonating with those frequencies that challenge extractivism and challenge the usual way of this objectified pattern. In that sense: what we're trying to always think about is how could we bring that experience to the city, the museum or in an enclosed space? How to disarticulate these modern paradigms of the artificial and amplify this temporality? Somehow it's always very expansive, like slow fire, there's something about sound in relation to very, very, very slow sounds, slow frequencies. That is what we always try to bring.

I think that it has also changed progressively. When we started to think how to create these experiences, when the space is not inherently a sound, like the cascade or the volcano. What we used to think, was because of this sort of architectures in which we were working, that we're in theaters, thinking about spatial impositions. At the beginning, we used to play with science fiction soundtracks to do like a hack, let's say on the modern, like an imposition. So, in fact, with these science fiction soundtracks, we were challenging precisely those imperatives of Western spaces. But of course, that was probably the beginning of how we used to play that experience.

I will say that more recently, there's something about using the sound of the contact that we have with the plants in the spaces, it also came in a very organic way. Since we started to do these activations, and we were counting the plants in the spaces, there's this repetitive omen that we started to articulate in a body-spatial-performative way where we have chords that connect our hands to the

plants and we move them. And this creates this sort of performative experience. That is one of the ways that has taken shape.

C: I think also when, because usually I don't know if we had mentioned that before, when the...The dreaming workshops are always accompanied by a traditional doctor or traditional healer. So, it's us two and a dreamlike form because the masks that we wear that are for the ceremonies are figures that we've dreamt.

It's interesting because it's a whole loop. We go to these sacred spaces with traditional healers, then the sacred spaces start speaking to us in our dreams and showing us forms. And then Julian draws them and we talk about our visions. The community and the healers said that these forms were not just whatever form. They were in fact the guardians of the spaces that we were visiting, coming to speak to us and visit us in our dreams. So, then they become the presences that we wear in the dream encounters.

We've done it with the healer, the Nasa healer that we work with. He usually speaks in Nasa Yuwe, his language. There's also something for people that are coming that don't really have access to this language that they're recuperating, revitalizing at the moment. There's something about the mystery of these voices that I think are important to the practice of dreaming. You know, sometimes the languages that are spoken, you don't necessarily understand them on some spectrum of your understanding, but they communicate with you on a different layer...you know?

I would say the secrecy and the protectiveness of the mystery of these languages also permeate the sound space when we do the dreaming spaces. Julian and I sometimes write a poetical, political mantra to accompany it. I think there's something about repetition, repetition and sound. And repetition is like as you probably know, like repetitions of sound, drummings are also techniques that are used to induce a kind of trance-like dream space. When you're in that kind of repetition loop, there's a moment where it can break and you can have an experience of, even if you're not sleeping, non-dualist landscape. I think that's also present in the poetry and in the philosophical mantras that accompany our workshops, because there's words that just come back. They are words, but also something else.

J: I think that in the end, also depending on the context, we decide which of these elements to incorporate in each one of the collective dreaming experiences when they're on Indigenous territory, or when they're next to a cascade, of course, the strength is there. When we are in the museum a space of academia, that's where

we use somehow these dispositives of science fiction or the pre-recorded political, poetical reflection, you know, to...

C: ...be a tool for those spaces because in the end, you inhabit those spaces, they end up inhabiting you. So, when you're in spaces that are more enclosed and not give in to the the elements, I think we try to carry that with us, and become these kinds of antennas of those spaces that we do work in.

Julian and I said that you have appeared in our dream space, so it's interesting to think that, physicality is one thing, but there's resonances that expand, you know?

Kite aka Dr. Suzanne Kite

Kite aka Dr. Suzanne Kite is an Oglála Lakǰóta artist, composer, and scholar. Kite describes a fluid relationship to sleep and dreaming shaped by unknowability, where dreams are constantly changing through narration, recall, and waking imagination. Rather than prioritizing recall, Kite treats dreams as generative material for artistic practice, transforming them into films, dances, and sculptures.

I relate to sleep and dreams through thinking about what is unknowable and especially what I can't know or won't ever know. I especially relate through my dreams to the changeable story where because of how much unknowability is built into dreams, the storyline is continually reinterpreted, reunderstood, retold. I can feel my dream as it's coming out of my mouth changing and becoming something new where I'm dreaming because I'm talking about my dream.

What I hear in my dreams is not like sound or like orality, it is the understanding of hearing without actually hearing. But listening to my dreams is something else. I listen, I understand, I experience listening to speech, listening to thoughts, listening to other beings, but I never notice anything strange about their communication.

If I had a space for my dreaming, it would definitely be warm and sunny like a late evening in summer in California on a concrete floor where the sun's warmed the concrete and I've just fallen asleep for a bit.

I dream a lot while awake. I can sort of make myself go into a dreaming space very easily these days just from practicing daydreaming constantly. I can get myself to fall asleep very quickly by daydreaming about interior decorating or something that I enjoy thinking about like cooking, something that involves step-by-step adding things, kind of like playing The Sims. So, I dream while awake, while falling asleep, and I definitely am dreaming all night. I can definitely feel it, but I'm being very lazy these days about recall. While I'm awake, if I wake up in the morning and I put pen to paper quickly and try to write a dream within maybe the first ten minutes of waking up - probably every single time I do that - I catch myself with the pen stopped on the page and fully beginning to dream again and perhaps even falling asleep with my eyes open for a moment. It feels like...

Kite aka Dr. Suzanne Kite

I'd say my dreams are for making art. I make a lot of art from my dreams. If they're important enough dreams, I will write them down. If they're extremely important dreams, I will do things like make an entire film or make a dance or turn it into sculptures, many sculptures from one dream, one sculpture from many dreams. I think collectively our dreams are for accessing the other world and moving knowledge from the other world to this one.

Dr. Martin Glos

Dr. Martin Glos is a research fellow and project manager at the Interdisciplinary Center for Sleep Medicine at Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin. He is a medical physicist and a certified sleep researcher with the German Society for Sleep Research and Sleep Medicine (DGSM). He earned his Ph.D. in medical sciences at Charité with a dissertation on novel methods for assessing cardiovascular function in patients with sleep disorders. His research primarily focuses on developing new diagnostic approaches to sleep measurement.

From a professional standpoint, working in a sleep lab in a hospital, I mostly focus on dreams with respect that dreams or the dream sleep or the so-called Rapid Eye Movement sleep is part of the night. And we do record those periods during the night containing non-REM sleep, REM sleep, light sleep, deep sleep, and of course also wake states. And for my work and also most of the work of my colleagues. We take a look at the amount of REM sleep, Rapid Eye Movement sleep, during night. When does this REM sleep occur? How much of the sleep occurs during the night? Or does REM sleep occur even at daytime when you have a daytime nap? Because it's quite important information for us for certain types of sleep disorders.

We do not focus much on dream contents, but more on if we measure physiological correlations of sleep, which occurs mostly in this so-called Rapid Eye Movement sleep. Therefore, we measure eye movements during the night with separate electrodes. But of course, we know that dreaming is not present just in this rapid eye movement periods of the night but also in other sleep states. But from what we know the most and deepest dream contents occur during those Rapid Eye Movements.

There is a special disease called narcolepsy and a typical sign of subjects affected by this disease is that if they fall asleep, they immediately start with this REM sleep. And not only during the night, but also during daytime. So, we apply a special test battery at daytime to those patients where we put them in bed at daytime. In the morning, at noon, in the afternoon, so three or four times a day. And we switch off the lights and of course they are wired by all these electrodes in order to measure the brain function and the eye movements and so on. And in those patients, we see that they immediately start with this Rapid Eye Movement

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sleep, which is not the regular case. The regular case for healthy people is that if they fall asleep, they start with light sleep. We call it N1 sleep stage. This is a transition stage where, of course, you can see a different EEG, but if you go to a subject's bed and just push him a little bit you know touch him or say something then he's immediately awake and he does not have the feeling of already being asleep but he was sleeping. And then for the next step is the sleep stage N2 which is a little bit already more deep sleep stage. It's not the total deep sleep. It's a part of sleep consolidation. And in this sleep stage N2, a quite prominent feature are those K-complexes. That's a typical pattern in EEG, a short pattern. And this K comes from knocking. They are knocking complexes. If you go into the patient room and knock on the table like this. Then you will see this in the EEG, but the patient will typically not wake up from this. Then it's followed by the deep sleep stage where we have this low frequency EEG and where a patient is quite hard to awaken. And then, of course, the first time REM sleep occurs. But in patients with narcolepsy, this is quite the opposite. They start with REM sleep.

In order to have a quite restorative function of sleep, one should have all the sleep stages with a different proportion of the night. We expect a subject to have roughly a quarter or 20% up to a quarter of the night: REM sleep. And the same amount 20% up to a quarter: deep sleep. And roughly 40-45%: light sleep and also 5%: being awake. Being awake sometimes during the night, it's quite normal physiologically. This is part of the sleep regulation. And if one of those stages of sleep completely disappears or has a quite low amount, this is one of the indicators that sleep is not restorative in this case and some functions of the sleep could not work. As for instance this metabolic function, meaning the regulation of hormones, of the sugar, blood sugar or memory functions, the ability to learn during sleep, and other functions like emotional regulation and so on. Therefore, it's important to have all of the sleep stages. Certain people thought maybe we could skip this light sleep because you are so easily awakened during the sleep stages and therefore it's maybe not important for this sort of function, but it was found that that's not true. Even these light sleep stages are mandatory to have a good sleep and in order to feel well during the next day.

Especially for instance, for this we call it memory consolidation, all these processes: you have learned something, you had impressions at daytime and during night. These new memories are sorted in a way. That's how we think about this. These impressions and short-term memories are sorted. The decision is made about what should be kept and put into the long-lasting memory and what could be put into waste. It's also assumed that especially the REM sleep is important for this so-called procedural memory function, which means to have a certain type of skills or to learn a certain type of skills. For instance, a typical

example is cycling. This is a nice example of a procedural skill. And deep sleep is important for the declarative memory. This is maybe to learn foreign languages or mathematics.

There must be a connection from audio signals or sounds to the brain. Of course, one can expect this, at least from these K-knocking-complexes. That's true. I would say there is a natural barrier to not getting too much of this from external sources, because our sensory input is suppressed, not totally, depending on the sleep stage, I would say. But to a certain degree, sensory input is suppressed. This is one aspect of sleep or of some of the sleep stages, at least. It would be interesting to see whether blind people, for instance, are more sensitive to audio signals, audio stimulation, sound signals, because they do not have the visual sensory information at all in the life at daytime. And therefore, they are maybe more sensitive to audio and signals or auditory inputs.

One would say that's an easy question, but it's not an easy answer, I would say. Because sleep is quite an individual thing. Therefore, there are no normative values on the sleep duration. Of course, you can do studies on the general population. We call them epidemiological studies. And then it was found, for instance, for the general German population that they sleep 7.1 hours (on average). That's a Gaussian distribution, meaning that we have most people sleep around seven, eight hours. But there are people who need less sleep. And there are also people who need more sleep, let's say nine to 10 hours to feel restorative the next day. And the same is true for the optimal space to sleep, to quite easily fall asleep, to feel good during the night and during sleep and to just have a restorative function or to feel restorative the next day. This is also quite individual. Of course, we tell people, make it optimal, in terms of temperature, this is a quite important thing for instance. Because temperature is also regulated during the night. The body, the core body temperature is held down by one degree Celsius, this is part of the body regulation.

I want to mention also sound and noise aspects. In terms of feeling comfortable during night and to have a nice room and space for optimal sleep, it's also important on the one hand to keep external noise pollution away to a certain extent. We do research on that as well. For instance, on people who live and have to sleep near airports or who live and have to sleep near big roads in cities or near train lines. And we found that if the noise pollution extends to a certain degree, this negatively impacts the sleep quality and people awake more than normal. But on the other hand, we did studies together with the ENT department where they do this hearing test. We put people in a sound testing cabin with complete sound isolation and compared this with a regular sleeping room.

And we found that sleeping in this complete sound isolation condition harms your sleep. That means a certain degree of sound might be mandatory or helps you to keep your sleep in a stable condition.

In particular, we compared three different conditions. We compared sleeping in the sound isolation room with the sleep lab condition and the condition at home. By doing that, by complete sound isolation, from my point of view, by complete sound isolation and by complete light isolation, so putting someone in the complete dark room, it's expected that he or she also loses a certain degree of security. But this is also quite individual. Some people need quite complete dark curtains on the window, even in wintertime. And some people like to sleep without curtains. They expect to have sunrise in the morning. And that helps them to being awake or to waking up in the morning. Then this is also quite individual. But from my point of view, having a certain degree of auditory or sound input, and light input helps me, as a reference to feel secure or to feel cozy. I'm not sure.

Dr. Karen Konkoly

Dr. Karen Konkoly, a cognitive neuroscientist and dream researcher who focuses on lucid dreaming. With a background in psychology and neuroscience, she has dedicated her career to exploring the boundaries of consciousness through the study of dreams.

I think that dreams are really important. They have always been really special to me. And one thing I was concerned with when I started studying dreaming is that I feel like dreams are an important connection to the mysteries of the universe. And I was concerned that if scientists came up with definitive theories about why we dream, that it would rob the spiritual nature of dreams. And if we really discovered that dreams are for memory consolidation or something, then when somebody had a spiritual dream, we would kind of explain it away and taking away the beauty and the importance of it. One thing that really helped me to both appreciate the mysteries of dreams and doing dream science was this fictional book called "The Kin of Ata Are Waiting for You". The book is based on a society where everybody follows their dreams as well as the guidance from their dreams. And I think first of all it is so beautiful to think of a society where everyone is trusted to follow their own guidance. And I think our dreams are a rich source of that and a source that is so much more definitive than our waking intuitions because it's a concrete memory, concrete perception. It's not an abstraction or something that we're not sure about which voices inside of ourselves are good ones or bad ones. So, in this book, everyone follows their dreams and there are different layers to the dream. If you're too hungry all the time, you might dream about food. The solution is to eat the right amount of food, so that you don't get stuck dreaming about food. And if you're too jealous all the time, you might dream about anger and jealousy amongst your friends. Work on your jealousy and process it during the day so that you don't have that complex leftover at night so that you can move towards clearer dreams, where spiritual information can flow through more freely. By the end of the book, you can have enlightened dreams, these dreams with rich sources of information about mystical or spiritual things. And that helped me so much to continue with my science of dreaming and realizing some of the dreams I'm studying are biologically driven. Some dreams can be about physiological senses. Some dreams can be about memory consolidation, but underlying it, there's still a place for true spiritual dreams.

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And that's something that has enabled me to feel great about studying dreams and what science can learn from them and what science might not be able to learn from them.

It's a risk that it's becoming reductive. And I think it's because science is so materialist and dreams have the potential to be so profound. And if you take a materialist viewpoint onto something profound, then it reduces it. At first, I felt threatened, especially because I hang out in some circles where people really take their dreams as sacred. I feel some people do see science as reductive or threatening in a way. Am I the one who is going to tell them that their dream wasn't as profound as it seemed like it was? I feel like many scientists could easily say that's wish fulfillment or that's your body processing grief. It's not really the genuine experience that you thought it was. And so that's something that I've been strictly avoiding, but I feel that sometimes it's not always obvious how to do that if you're studying the function of dreams.

I don't analyze my day-to-day dreams that much unless I'm doing a dream group or something like that, but I have had some very special dreams that have definitely taught me lessons. I've learned a lot of lessons in my dreams, not necessarily because of straightforward listening, but because of the experience that unfolded, some lucid and some non-lucid. And some of those, I do feel like they are totally spiritual experiences or spiritual messages that I feel are not touchable with the science that I'm doing.

I think that paying attention to your dreams is one part of a bigger focus of paying attention to who you are, what's going on in your mind, what's going on around you. I think it's part of being present and being mindful and being introspective and getting to know yourself. I think that paying attention to your dreams is a rich source of information about yourself that could help people be better. It's not the only one, but it's a good one.

Quiet, dark, comfortable, a lot of time to sleep in, room to sleep in. On one hand, setting alarm clocks can help you remember your dreams if they go off a lot. But on the other hand, having the opportunity to sleep in really deeply and long can help you remember more vivid dreams. I feel like a space that allows you to be really internal and maybe even internal before you go to sleep, allowing your focus to be internal would be a helpful dreaming space. But there's also lots of fun spaces that could be provocative for your dreams as well. I did a Vipassana retreat in my room one time because I couldn't go because I got exposed to COVID. And when I was following the instructions for setting up the retreat, they were like, don't have spiritual objects around and don't have pictures and stuff. And I was like, oh my God, my room is full of decorations and pictures and things

that I never noticed how when I looked at it, it triggered this subconscious tiny thought. And so, I took it all down. And then I was like, wow, like my mind has nowhere to go but in. And it was painful in a way. But then afterwards, I didn't want to put my decorations back up. It was pulling me out. And I didn't even realize.

I always think that boredom is the gateway to higher consciousness. If you really want to move to the next level of being present or being mindful, the feeling of doing that is boredom. I like looking around at my environment and thinking this could be a dream. I like doing that dream yoga practice and just looking at everything and being like, wow, what if this was a dream? I was on a Zoom call before this and we were talking about lucid dreaming. And the guy was like, "I like to count my fingers in a dream". And in the Zoom call, it cut off his two fingers and then brought them back on. They became part of the background. And I was like, dang, that was it. That was a dream sign. So, whenever I can, especially if I've had a lucid dream or a recent dream, I like to remain in that dreamy space as I go into my next thing. Like this morning, I had a dream where I was in Chicago with my friend and there was this whole dream that I remembered. And then I woke up and I immediately was on a meeting with him. And he didn't know about the dream, but I was like, wow, I'm here with him now. I was just dreaming. And it's like, I it's like the dream is the dreamy feeling on the inside is continuing. I also think it's important to give my mind space to rest in between activities. So that's something that is akin to dreaming, instead of being on my phone in between each thing, just taking a moment to breathe and think, that's something that's really important to me. To have these intervals where I'm not distracting myself fully and letting my mind loose and free. And I think that dreaming is the biggest part of that but being awake and taking these moments to pause instead of filling it up with scrolling is a big priority.

For myself, it's never been a problem. I had one funny instance of dream reality confusion in high school where I jumped that my friend's parents gave me \$200 for graduation. And then I wrote them a very nice thank you note and they were like, Karen, we never gave you any money, but it's not a huge problem for me feel like even if I look at the world and think that it's dreamlike, I feel like that's accurate. It is dreamlike, my brain is creating it. There are more possibilities than I think. Even if that sounds psychotic, I think that it's more accurate, but I'm also able to function well, for me, it doesn't cause me to want to make dreamlike decisions while I'm awake. Also reality checking: I plug my nose and I can't breathe when I'm awake. So, I feel like I am able to stay grounded in this reality. I think that's why that practice is okay for me, but I have had other times, like after meditation retreat, where I was more wishy-washy and then, I feel that if you

start getting really ungrounded about what's real, then you have to stop doing those practices.

There's this amazing Ted talk called "Psychosis or spiritual awakening". And it was about how in psychotic-ish episodes often onset in adolescence and in many ancient cultures. If that happened to somebody and they had an out of this world experience, they would go to the local elder and they would get trained and they would be able to use their skills and give advice to people and hone that skill. And then critically, they would remain super functional in society. They would be able to provide for themselves and care for themselves and they would be able to use this special gift. But now if you have an episode like that, you're told don't trust it. You need help. You need medication. You're going crazy. You're psychotic. You have schizophrenia. And then there's so much fear and there's no honing at all. And there's no outlet for it. It's just, stop it, stop it, become normal. And I feel like there is a relationship between those two things, but our society doesn't have a good structure for people with those kinds of mental health disorders. And at the same time, I do feel like, if I'm training somebody to lucid dream, I like to put in some softer ideas about if you feel like you are prone to psychosis or it's hard for you to stay grounded in this reality, just don't do it. There's plenty of other things that you can do. And if that's a struggle for you, then I would ask your doctor or something like that. I don't want to be responsible for that.

Well, I guess one funny sound dream I had is that when I went to Claire Johnson's first lucid dreaming retreat, she said that she had these amazing dreams where she would sing in her dream and she would sing in her lucid dreams. And the song would reverberate through the whole dream and she would see elements of it appear in the environment. And it would sound so beautiful. And to her sound reverberating through her subconscious was just the most beautiful thing. And she loved to sing in her lucid dreams. And so, I tried to sing in my lucid dream. And oh, my God, I was like, aaaaahhhhhh, I couldn't make any sound. And I was just scratching it out. And I was in like a bathroom stall or something. It was so anticlimactic. And that's been a recurring theme for me is that when lucid dreaming teachers give me instructions based on things that have produced profound lucid dreams for them, , I went to Charlie Morley's retreat, and he was, hug your dream characters. Hugging is so amazing in dreams. And so, I tried to hug my dream character. And it was so awkward. I felt weird about it. I just remembered when I was in kindergarten, we had to do the hugging song, we had to go around and hug everybody. I thought that this was weird, and I didn't want to do it. And then the teacher called my mom, and was like, she's not hugging. And I was like, maybe everyone's subconscious is

different. And the things are profound for you and lucid dreams aren't going to work for me the same way. But one thing that I have also enjoyed is sound and hypnagogic imagery, like people that I know, talking in my hypnagogic imagery. In particular, when I was in the lab, I had this one beautiful dream. And I can't even remember what they were saying. But I heard the talking in my hypnagogic imagery. And I dreamt that I was in the lab. And then I dreamt that I was hearing this beautiful voice. And it felt like the voice of a spirit, but it also was the voice of my colleague, Gabriella, who happens to have a lovely voice. And she was talking and it was her voice, but it was also this beautiful, spiritual advice and something about hearing voices in a lucid dream when I know that they're not coming from a dream character is very mysterious and beautiful to me, how these voices really sound so real. And I really have no idea what they're going to say. I can hear them and still be so lucid. So that's been an interesting listening experience I've had in dreams.

I like the idea that dreams are for like fine tuning and updating your generative model of reality. That's probably my favorite scientific-ish theory. I think it encompasses a lot of the other ones. But I also think that there's a spiritual aspect beneath that where you're going to another dimension, so you don't get too stuck in this one. I'm not sure.

Thea Herold

Thea Herold works as a lecturer, author, and coach. In 2011, she founded the Schlafakademie Berlin, a network of experts dedicated to promoting preventive education on healthy sleep and effective rest. Her lectures and seminars focus on the latest findings in sleep medicine, highlighting the crucial role of sleep and rest in maintaining and restoring overall health.

Well, it is an occasion, but it is funny because my long relationship to dreams and sleep starts precisely on the 12th of February in 1996. That means today, 30 years ago. This was my first interview concerning sleep: I had an appointment in Charité with Dr. Ingo Fietze, the leader of the sleep lab. It was a very small sleep lab because 30 years ago, they started to work. Now it is a big international, well-known, well-reputed sleep lab. But there at the beginning, there were two beds. That's all. And after that night, with all these cables and EEG connections on my head. I wrote the text, I had the interview answers and then I was gone. The story was published in Cosmopolitan, and I thought I can do the next one. That was interesting because from year to year the relationship to the topic of sleep was stronger and that I didn't know, I didn't expect. Nobody exactly believed it because I was a journalist, an author and mostly I'm doing something bizarre.

From this year on, I have moved into a very interesting, for my life, field of work. It is more than a topic I write or I talk about. It was a decision to make something clear because I realized that the knowledge about sleep and dreams is so big and so developed, but its accessibility is confined to a row of specialists, of professional associations (Fachgesellschaften). But all the people are connected with that, everybody has to dream. Everybody must sleep. And the knowledge was in these days, enclosed like in a bottle. And there was no possibility of having benefits from there. The people only thought about sleep at that moment when there was a problem with it. And to build a bridge, this was more or less, from year to year to year, more important. And at a certain point in my life, I quit my first profession, and I jumped into my second profession, did the examinations and what you have to do. And so I conducted, for example, a writing study in the Charité when I had the possibility to ask 60 people "Who are you at night?". This study was the next step for being a writer in residence in Cork, in Ireland. And there I created an exhibition only from questions on how people place sleep in their everyday life. Is it good? Is it not so good? Do they have no need? Do they have more need? All these things.

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Today I'm currently closely involved with the German Sleep Foundation and especially for the Berlin Sleep Academy, which I founded 10 years ago, together with Sandra. And we have now a team of 10 specialists. We are working together and doing this work, this bridge, this connection.

When I established my LinkedIn account, you have to do some slogans, some funny thing or not so. I didn't do that, I'm not so a social person, but: "Trust in your dreams", this was my slogan. But really, you have to learn a little bit to make this balance. To make it good, it's a little bit like dancing. Steps to make it good.

What can I hear while dreaming? As far as I remember... First, the scientific members of our round of interviews will describe very precisely, what will happen when you go from the deep sleep to the REM sleep wave. This is at all another thing. And actually, we have the possibility, of course, to say that we are hearing while dreaming because the ears are never shut. In a certain way, they are non-stop working. It is the only sense non-stop working. Yes, there are other senses. There are eyes you can shut. You must shut. The taste, all these things are a little bit sleepy. Not at all, but a little bit sleepy. But we are able to hear, that's right. And our hearing is a sensitive organ that really remains kind of active while you are sleeping. It's your... what is a Wächter? It's the person who is always awake. You have this kind of security. The hearing is a kind of security. It is a switch from the wake consciousness into the sleepy consciousness, and it brings our trust. If something happens, you will hear it. Of course, when you are very deep sleeper then you can hear this sound, but you cannot realize it when you are very deep into it.

The first scientific studies are a very easy beginnings of the questions "How to deal with what sleep is? How we can research what is sleep?". They started with that, this was Mr. Kohlschütter from Leipzig. He had a man sleeping and then he recognized when this sleeping man will wake up. For example, when I let a ball or a glass drop from that high down or from another height. How much sound, how much noise was possible to bring him back to waking consciousness? Indeed, the sound was the first topic of studying, what is sleep doing? How to bring us back? How much sound is necessary to disturb us? ...etc. This was around 1880. It described precisely how much sound was necessary to bring this person back to awakening consciousness. And it is possible because we have connections, electrical signals, and synapses between our brain parts. They are connected to hearing. That's why you have this big insurance, "I will hear while I'm sleeping". And I think it's a very good idea of: "You can trust your sleep". Because you can sleep and can give into the storyboard of the night.

Do what you want. I will sleep. You will take care and do all the things, which have to be done by night.

We had these Kohlschütter experiments in the book. That means, for us it was to make sure that the scientific experiments regarding sleep are not long ago in our history. We have a sleep science as a very young field in the scientific world and the development of the sleep science is bound to the sixties. The start of scientific measurements is around the sixties, because before we have descriptions. We have Freud in 1900, the "Traumdeutung". We have a lot of pieces from older times where people describe their dreams, but there is no scientific approach to this topic. It was possible first with the EEG beginnings and in 1966, when they realized that while a certain stage of sleep, the eyes are running from left to right, from right to left. These are Rapid Eye Movements. That's why REM is the short version in scientific literature for dreams. The dream phases were discovered by these REM movements and the person, it was a physiologist from Harvard University, J. Allen Hobson, wonderful scientist, he discovered the connection: when REM is starting, so REM "On", until REM "Off", those are different activities in our brain. REM is different from stage one, slowly down stage two, deep sleep phases, middle deep phases. It is a difference to all these other sleep phases. REM is our creative workshop during night.

I had a big pleasure to have J.A. Hobson in interview two times and you see he was an elderly man when we met in Berlin. While the interview he told me, "I must say I'm now very convinced that our dreams are not only doing things which we already had experienced awake". We have our everyday life and then during the night these activities remain in the REM sleep phases. The neural corners of memory consolidation are only possible through sleep. And up to that moment everyone thought that these consolidations were only working with the day life from the past. And he said, "At the end of my life, I started to be convinced that we have both. We work with the past, with the recent life, of course, but we are probing like a rehearsal for the coming." This is important. We have this German saying, "Der Morgen ist klüger als der Abend". - "You know more in the morning than in the evening the day before." This is a very old saying. And this, this was what Hobson was convinced of at the end of his life as a scientist. I think that completes the story.

Where do you want to be while dreaming? This is a question I really love to ask people. And during this time of being a writer in residency in Cork, as you hear, I'm not perfect in English, I encouraged them, and then I gave them a book and asked, please answer. So, the people themselves wrote the answers. I collected

their answers in their own words. And it was so different. From men to women, from old to young, from a person I interrupted while working. The answers were different from a person I interrupted while sitting on a bench in the park. Every person, every artist who makes such kind of fluent ongoing researchers knows these effects. But at the end of the day, every time I had new writings and the people were really interesting. After a while, they started really to create their place wherein to be while dreaming.

So what is my place where to be while dreaming? For me it would be at the beach. Not far away from the sea, when I can see the waves coming and going. And the sound of the waves and then I would lift off a little bit. So, I like to be in that place in-between. I'm not sleepy and I'm not at all awake. So, I'm between waking and sleeping. The conscious and the unconsciousness are doing this kind of balance. And up to now I think in the science of sleep it is a great mystery, how to describe the sleep when you start. It's much easier to make a "sleep on" and "sleep off" picture in the somnographic structures, which you have in the sleep lab. Then you can say here is the beginning, there it is starting. The precise second when you are to say "Now she, he, it is sleeping.", that moment is up to now unknown. We have something in-between. Believe me, while my test night here in '96 it was very short because I was that tired and I slept immediately.

I think people often describe places where they can be very relaxed and when they are in a very good mood. So, then they are ready to go to sleep in a public surrounding. Because this is tricky. You do not have the possibility every time to trust so much that you sit on a bench in a main station and say, okay. This is not always possible. But you can create such places. You can create such places in your flat, when you have a chair or a sofa or something, when you have created this as your place for a power nap. Even there, you may have a solid kind of "Okay, I can interrupt my work now for half an hour or 20 minutes or quarter of an hour. I can. I have the right. I have the pleasure. I give this to me."

What are my dreams for? I'm dreaming for, this is more or less a wish. In our crazy world, we have to make decisions for the future, for a life in a more or less hopefully better world. Every happy person counts. Jeder glückliche Mensch zählt, weil das ist das Gewicht auf der Seite und das soll wachsen. (Every happy person counts, because that's the weight on the page, and that should grow.) We need this kind of hope. We need this kind of being assured about the things we are doing. And we need trust. Last but not least, we need trust not only in our awake consciousness, in our awake every day's life. I think we need this trust in the same power and intensity while night. So that a lot of people who are now

suffering from sleep problems and all these things coming out of health problems. And a part, not all, but some of these people, they could be helped when they are ready to learn to trust in themselves. Not only in the day, so when we have all these: "Be better and greater and richer", but at the other side: trust in your nighttime. It is so wonderful and important when you are not awake, not designed, when you are able to interrupt, to stop and to come down in order to go ahead to the next day.

Prof. Dr. Björn Rasch

Björn Rasch is Professor of Cognitive Biopsychology and Methods at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland). His research focuses on the relationship between memory and sleep, as well as the influence of mental imagery, thoughts, and hypnotic suggestions on sleep quality and architecture.

I'm Björn Rasch, professor of psychology at the University of Fribourg in Switzerland. I'm doing sleep research since 25 years. Sleep is basically at the core of my research. I think dreams have not been entering research so much. So it was more about memory, reactivation, and consolidation. But we did some dream studies now and I think I get more and more interested in dreams as a readout for emotional processing during sleep and so forth.

I think in the beginning when I started sleep research, I had the feeling that when you do sleep research, you should rather not look at dreams because then your career would just stop. But I think that has changed. And I think a lot of people really get more interested in dreams. I have to say, I probably just followed that interest a little bit. On the other hand, I think also in general, I had this switch. I was first looking at memory and then I switched to sleep itself. So then, of course, dreams get more in your focus. I got more interested in this question: what makes sleep restorative? And I think this big difference or this big discrepancy between having actually objectively a good night's sleep but subjectively having not a restorative sleep. I think this is very intriguing for me. We have developed this idea that the mental activity that you have during the sleeping state is actually a crucial factor whether you think or feel that your sleep is restorative. So maybe people that overestimate their wake time, they actually think differently during their sleep or think, they are more awake or have more disturbing thoughts. And of course, then maybe more disturbing dreams. I think that is the question: how is that related? Is there really a causal influence or is that different from each other? I think this idea of what makes your sleep restorative, I think that involves the question what is mental activity doing in sleep and then dreams come in your focus.

Actually, in the moment it's not at all far from my research because I just got a new grant examining the effects of music presentation during sleep and sound presentation. And we have a new doctoral network on the effects of sound and

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music processing and sleep. Together with sound designers and so forth is really interesting. So, these questions are around and we just wrote a chapter on music dreams.

That's why I asked myself: what do I hear? So, I don't think that is a weird question at all. I think I hear things in sleep. At least I remember talking. There's conversation in my dreams and there's definitely sounds. But for me when I remember my dreams they are not that prominent. It's just the sound that is there. When I'm in a car, it's just the car sound basically. It's like common sounds that are just there. I don't remember really having sounds that are in itself meaningful or for example music that some people report that they actually hear music or even hear new music and use them to create their own pieces. For example, that I cannot really remember. I have to say although I play music myself. Those sounds for me in my dreams are more the background like in the movie that the sound is just there to support the story that is unfolding. That's how I remember sounds in my dreams. And conversation of course.

I'm not so deep into dream research I must admit. I would think of it rather from a kind of processing perspective. I would think that many processes are just continuing during the sleeping state. So basically, if you play a sound, it will be processed in probably quite similar ways like from the basic properties. And then I think the question is more who's then as you frame it listening in a way. What higher cognitive process is then involved in analyzing what has been processed. A lot of these rational evaluative processes are not active in sleep. It's more like a direct association that is activated by the processed sound. But I think this basic process of activation or like when you give a sound and it will just spread the activation to some associated things that run deeply. For example, that's what we just did in a new study. Our question was: Can the sleeping brain process major versus minor chords? Right? Very basic question. So can you differentiate between these emotionally relevant chords that are acoustically actually quite similar but emotionally or the associated emotion is of course different. Our basic question was: Is there any difference in brain response? And actually, there is. People can differentiate. The brain has a different brain response when you do major versus minor single chords. And it's depending on musical experience. People who play an instrument, they experience a bigger difference than people who don't play. So, it's really something learned not totally acoustically basic. And I think that's a good example.

I think these basic processes are functioning maybe also activating associated emotions and further processing. It's not only detecting that there is a sound but also that there is some meaning or some association and of course we know that

from the memory research. I mean we use words and sounds to reactivate memories. I think these basic processes are working. Of course, if they are consciously processed probably not or maybe just to a smaller extent. And how they are incorporated in dreams which is another question. We know that they are or that they can be at least. But whether they always have to be incorporated - probably not. I think there's also possibilities that you just process the sound. You have the reaction of the brain but maybe there is just no dream content or no memory at least of the dream content.

Honestly, I don't know what dreams are for. I think it's also very difficult to answer. I honestly have the suspicion that there must be a reason why we forget dreams so easily. For me that is a very curious process. Having such a big involvement, a big activity, story-like activity. Why can't we remember these dreams better? I think there must be an active mechanism to make these dreams so easy to forget. And I think there must be some purpose for it. Otherwise, I cannot imagine why the brain has evolved such a complicated mechanism to forget these dreams. That's my suspicion. I think the conscious memory of the dreams is not totally straightforward. Because I don't know if we are intended to memorize all our dreams. I think we are not. I think it's better if we don't know all our dreams. Of course it doesn't hurt to know more about your own dreams. But if you know more about your dreams, I think you should take it more as an inspiration. When I talk to people about that question, I usually say take it like a visit to a modern art museum. If you like a painting, then take from it what is inspiring. And if you don't like it, just leave it. I think that's what we should do with dreams. Of course there's a lot of us in dreams. I think that's for sure. There can be a source of inspiration, what is relevant for you and things like that. I think that is an important source.

That is the question, what are the memories of dreams for? Then there's the second question, what is dreaming activity itself for? Even regardless of the memory of our dreams. And then your question comes into play, why are we having a third person dream perspective and all these things. And I think then you can speculate more. Maybe that has a function and maybe there is this idea of simulating experiences or trying to cope with new ways of dealing with a situation to be better prepared for it in the future. Intuitively that makes some sense. I think this idea of just having some chaotic component in it which has no function. I think that is also intriguing in a way. Again, adaptation, simulation, maybe some emotional regulation. I think these are probably the best guesses. But it's of course very hard to prove.

We made a whole, so it's like a hypnotherapy way of doing clinical hypnosis. It's basically embedded into a kind of guided imagery. We have a whole story about a fish that you follow in the sea and you swim. And you have all these descriptions of how beautiful and safe it is. And then this fish goes deeper and deeper and you follow it and you feel safe. You feel tired, you feel relaxed, you can let go. So, there's a lot to it. A lot of things that are mentioned that we believe should have an effect on deep sleep. Of course, we don't know which one of all these things actually made the effect. But in total we could really measure objectively more deep sleep. I think this adds to this idea that our mental state while we sleep if we feel safe, if we feel relaxed, if we feel good with ourselves allows us to go deeper into our sleep objectively. Which if you think about it makes a lot of sense. I mean if you feel threatened, for example. And I mean evolutionary you could feel really threatened, from some dangerous animal running around your sleeping place. I think it would make a lot of sense to not sleep as deep as usual. It's because you want to wake up more easily. You have to sleep. You feel tired but you have to kind of monitor the environment and don't allow yourself to go so deep into your sleep. I think that this process exists makes a lot of sense. I think it works better in a negative way. If we feel stressed and threatened, this will impair our sleep. And we all know that This is the main cause of sleep disturbances. But I think when you acknowledge that this basic mechanism exists. That you can regulate the depth of your sleep. Depending on the external or internal demands. Then it should go in a positive way. It's probably more difficult. And it doesn't work just wanting to sleep deeper. But I think if you can access it in a more unconscious, subconscious, preconscious way. Like hypnotic suggestions for those who like that. Or maybe sounds and music. In hypnosis work, what we see is that it only works for people who are prone to hypnosis. So that are highly suggestible. It doesn't work for people that don't like hypnosis and don't want to be controlled by this voice and all that.

Interestingly in one paper we found that if you play music before a nap. People that are low suggestible, they react more to these non-verbal musical stimuli. Which is actually very interesting. People that don't like to be controlled, they can let go more with these sounds and music. And relax a little bit more. And improve their sleep. But that's only one finding. We don't know whether this is true for the general population. But I think it is an interesting point: that different people can have different ways to feel safe and create an environment for a good night of sleep.

In one condition we had exactly the same voice, doing all this relaxation, all this hypnosis. And then there was this story of a fish going deeper. Then we had exactly the same voice, saying exactly the same thing. Only they didn't talk about

a fish going deeper, but they suggested a boat resting on the surface of the sea. People who listened to that. Even though they were highly suggestible, they did not increase their deep sleep. And that is a really important finding: to say no it's actually the content. But on the hypnosis side, this is known. I mean hypnosis can be used for pain reduction. It can be used for stress reduction. It can be used for headache. It can be used to stop smoking and all these things. But it works only if you do a very specific hypnosis. So, it's not the general relaxation that also happens, but for the specific purposes, you need very specific metaphors and suggestions. And that seems to be the case for sleep as well.

That's my main interest. The idea would be that the meaning matters. It matters what is activated in your brain. And that will have an effect on sleep for example. It has some associations for some people. And it would probably be different if you go in another culture or something like that.

Precious Okoyomon

Precious Okoyomon is an artist and poet. Their work moves between art, poetry, and performance, engaging with identity, colonial history, spirituality, and the relationship between humans, objects, and the living environment.

I'm reading Anne Carson's "Decreation" right now and that's all about dreams. The whole book is just about unmaking the self and dreaming and making the self through dreaming. I feel like my dreams lately are going back into a place of present future and somehow like present. I've been finding myself in places that I go to in the waking world. Lately it's been like music, a mixture of music and poetry. Things arrive in these poems and then I wake up with a message that can't leave my head for the whole day. Everything is like rhythms of poetry.

...It depends. I feel like it depends who's talking to me in the dream. For a moment I was having this reoccurring dream of like this place I would go to where the ground would speak to me. That was a place I would go to for almost information. This dream came to me over the course of three months. I would go back to this place in the ground and listen. It's very interesting.

I'm an avid daydreamer, which is something that gets me into a lot of trouble. Because I think half of my life is in sleep-waking. I mean, I do think it's that weird in-between sometimes where a lot of my day is spent in glazing, like daydreaming. Like today I did this thing after my nap where I woke up and I was still in dreamland a bit and I just daydreamed. I was just thinking about things, the last bits of my dream, colors. I think there's an importance to like elongating the dream.

I spend a lot of time in waking fantasy. I don't know.

It's nonsensical usefulness, you know? I think it's your brain's way of making the unconscious conscious and it's also visions and it's desires, manifestations. It's all the stuff wrapped up and then it's your body brain processing it and giving you the miracle of what you can't understand.

Every dream is a poem. Every dream is a poem on the way to freedom. The dream is the poem. I also think about, I think maybe it's because I like endless analysis. And I just read this Maggie Nelson book, it's called "Pathemata", which

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is "the story of my mouth". It's very beautiful because she says that in analysis, her analyst tells her she starts everything going. She thinks through everything she says as if she would say, I dreamt this. That's how she hears everything that she's saying in therapy. She forms it, but it's all coming together in the space of a dream, which made me think about things very differently.

I feel like to me, dreaming is some form of singing of the real world. Like it somehow is manifested. It's like another reality we just get to live in that then just gives us little fragments.

Kant says that dreaming is like involuntary poetry that the body makes. And that's always stuck with me. Not a huge Kantian, but I'll take that.

Dr. Adam Haar Horowitz

Dr. Adam Haar Horowitz is a dream researcher with a background in brain and cognitive sciences. His research explores how dreams shape memory, creativity, emotion, and wellbeing, and how emerging technology can safely and meaningfully interface with the sleeping mind. Horowitz holds a PhD from MIT, where he co-created the first targeted dream-incubation devices at the Media Lab's Fluid Interfaces Group. His work bridges neuroscience, mental health, and culture.

My name's Adam Haar, and I'm a dream researcher with a background particularly in the brain and cognitive sciences. I relate to dreams first as a kind of fact of perception, as an immersive story, we tell ourselves that makes us who we are. And I think of that story as generated in the brain, but not by the brain alone, generated by the body, generated by the world, generated by the kinds of dialogues that make our monologue always intertwined with action and environment and others. And I'm really curious in particular about dreams. Because I think they've been ignored as a subject of study, and because we ignored them as a subject of study, we ignored them as a fact of a lived experience, and they've been denigrated and made small, and I think that if we make them small, we make ourselves small, we lose a part of ourselves. My relationship to dreams has been to make them more palpable and legible and present for people by producing science on dreams so that people can see them.

What do I hear when I dream? I hear wind, and I hear water. I hear big voices that fill the room and shake the ground. I hear my own voice, a voice I know is my own, even when I don't recognize the tone or the accent. I hear meaning delivered directly to me without words that carry it. I hear chases, engines, whirring, bullets, whizzing. I hear animals so often, growling, buzzing, talking. And I hear my past, and I hear my future. I hear memories and reverberations, and I hear possibilities. And one of the most beautiful things for me about dreams is their synesthesia. I hear what I feel, and I feel what I see. I see what I touch, I touch what I taste, and if outside there's a thunderclap and my sleeping body hears it, then my dreaming mind will make two hands coming together in the sky above me. And if above me, two hands touch me, press down on my chest, my dream will make a tornado swirling wind that sucks me up. Sight and sound and touch, all intertwined, is what I hear when I dream.

Dr. Adam Haar Horowitz

What would a space for dreaming look like?

So much of human history has meant dreaming in holy places, sacred spaces. And the first sacred space that people slept on was the ground. God was in the forest, God was in the river, God was in the stones. And so, you slept, head on the stone, like Jacob's pillow, for direct communion with God, direct listening to footsteps on the earth, and direct entry from stone through your ear, into your head, into your heart. For me, a space for dreaming, so much of what I've tried to do in making them, seems like it would be done so much more easily by just sleeping outside. I'm thinking about moving beds and how much easier it is to just sleep on the water and let the water move you.

All the meaningful sounds, all the music, how much easier it would be to sleep outside and hear wolves and loons and wind and let that music move you. And so many of the dreams that we study, they're found in profane places, maybe the most profane place, the lab, where nothing is holy. And so of course, so many of the dreams that we see are meaningless, because we have them in meaningless places, in places that are meant to be scrubbed free of meaning.

How do you dream when awake?

I was just thinking about this, I need to spend more time being bored. Boredom is a doorway you can walk through to so much mental freedom. Boredom is a kind of attending. Boredom is a slippery slope to inner work, and it's so easy to fill our eyes and fill our time and fill our heads. Don't be bored, never be bored. Always be acting, always be learning in the world, of the world.

Yeah, I think I dream when awake, when I let myself walk long ways, or I'm on a boat and it's so windy that you can't talk for an hour, and all you can do is dream.

What are our dreams for? Our dreams are to show us the real secret of the world, which is that we made it, and could just as easily make it any other way. That's a David Graeber idea, that so much of societal control, especially from the powers that be, is about closing off windows of possibility so people don't hope for more, hope for a more humane world, collaborate more, come together more, fight powers and impositions and policies which are unjust. And I think dreams, sleeping dreams and waking dreams, are the kind of unconstrained cognition that lets you believe in a new and different world because you can feel it. You don't just think it, you're in it, and you wake up from it so moved that you can move towards it. I think of dreams, and I'm saying it in a kind of political sense, political possibility, but all of these worlds that you imagine that might be the personal, the emotional, the romantic, the professional, it's the same idea. How could you

move towards that thing that you want desperately but don't believe you could have? Well, here's a dream where you have it, where you've had it, where you are it. How do you feel? And you wake up with that feeling in your chest. And that feeling isn't a matter of belief. It's already happened. It's felt. And so now you just need to make it manifest, make it real, concretize it.

I think dreams are for letting us step fully into the impossible. Not about believing but about being.

I listen in my dreams. I first listen by looking carefully. I listen by trying to remember. I listen by sharing my dreams. I listen by listening to other people's dreams.

I listen by thinking so much about what's coming and what has been. I listen by reading poems and by seeing art, and I listen by being quiet out in the world and nature. And when I'm asleep, I think I listen most in my in-between moments when I'm awake and snoozing the alarm and half awake and I'm paying attention to how a glimpse of sunlight, a flash of eyelashes turns into bars and a window, a hand running across them, the sound of fingernails on metal. That sound takes me to a metal shavings factory quickly. It's turned upside down, and it's snowing silver. I think I listen to those transformations, and I'm amazed at my mind, and I think everyone's an artist, and that's, for me, the main message from the many dream reports I've read. Everyone's a world builder and has so much music in them, and the world is full of meaning.