

## **Observing Psi Dreams from the Shoulders of a Giant**

Applying Montague Ullman's reflections in his paper  
"On the Relevance of Quantum Concepts to Dreaming Consciousness"  
to a 15 year review of dream journal synchronicities

by

Cynthia Pearson

**Presented at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the  
International Association for the Study of Dreams  
June 8, 2015**

In 1996, I participated on the first IASD panel on "Long Term Journaling: The Naturalist's Contribution to Dream Study," stressing the importance of individual dreamers' observations and records to the study of dreams. The next year, I undertook a review of 600 dreams and reflected on many incidences of synchronicity. In my personal taxonomy, "synchronicity" has served as an umbrella category for all types of psi -- precognition, mutual dreams, déjà vu, clairvoyance and related phenomena, for all can be characterized as "meaningful coincidence."

Over time, I became increasingly intrigued with the psi phenomena that accompanied the practice of recording dreams. The next year, I reported on uncanny interrelationships experienced among members of a dream sharing group, triggered by discussion of a new book claiming that "**...quantum mechanics... must be taken...as an explanation for how the world really works.**"

From that time to the present, I have sought to understand quantum mechanics, hoping to discover whether psi dreaming might be a manifestation of natural (if challenging) science.



I have read many books and articles on the subject, and when television shows about it are broadcast, I record them and watch them over and over. My hope is that with enough exposure, I will understand these mysterious principles and be able to apply them to dreaming.

I was fortunate to discover that in this endeavor, I could stand on the shoulders of a giant.

## About Montague Ullman

1916-2008



Psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, parapsychologist

Founded the Dream Laboratory at the Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn

Author and co-author of four books, including the influential *Dream Telepathy* and *Working with Dreams*

Developed and promoted a model for peer group dream work, an innovative alternative to clinical & authoritarian models of dream analysis

In his paper, "[On the Relevance of Quantum Concepts to Dreaming Consciousness](#)<sup>ii</sup>," Montague Ullman provides a valuable blueprint for any dream journalist, but especially those with an interest in psi. He begins by pointing out that "the dreaming agenda" is set by the biological, psychological, social and "cosmic" or spiritual dimensions of our lives:

### The dreaming agenda according to Montague Ullman:

"The feeling residues that set the dreaming agenda are drawn from any of the four dimensions of our existence

- the biological
- the psychological
- the social
- the cosmic, transpersonal or spiritual."

Although he was discussing dreams in general, I wondered if these same parameters apply to psi dreams.

I have reviewed fifteen years of dream records for this presentation, concentrating on the 16.8% dreams in which I noted “synchronicities,” that is, 195 incidents of psi. (You will be happy to know that I don’t plan on recounting them all to you now; I will cover only 2.) And I have discovered psi dreams that fit each of Ullman’s categories. This may be surprising to those who expect psi to appear only in the “cosmic” or spiritual category. But in my dream records, psi occurs commonly, sometimes in strong dreams but also often in dreams that seem unremarkable. Psi dreaming, I find, seems not necessarily special, and certainly not unusual.

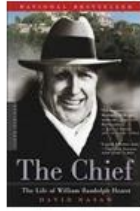
Here’s an example that I would categorize as biological, because it concerns physical safety. But eventually it became much more.

**November 30, 2000:**

**I see trucks pulling up across the street in the dark. Then I see that there are floodlights and other trucks parked on the grass of the park. I remark that this must be an emergency—and guess that they are going to have to dig up and/or replace underground pipes. I see a blade penetrate the pavement of the street and feel this confirms my speculation.**

**SYNCH! 12/1/2000— Have been reading the William Randolph Hearst biography, *The Chief*, at bedtime. Last night it described Hearst’s trust-busting activities in New York City in the 1890s, and cited his exposing a “franchise to tear up the streets of the city and lay new and unneeded gas mains.” (p. 121)**

Here’s the book with that quote <sup>iii</sup>.



For those who may not know who Hearst was, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, he became a titan of the publishing industry in the U.S.

Below this journal entry is a note written 14 years later—to the day. At 10 PM on November 30, 2014, I called the gas company because of a strong odor of gas in front of our house. “Another gas leak was found by the park” I wrote -- despite extensive repairs made 6 months earlier – and trucks and workmen gathered in the park in darkness, as in my dream.

Then this spring, as I was reviewing past dreams for this paper, the gas company spent weeks replacing the gas line along my entire street. As they came by my house, I saw how they did it – using a blade, as in my dream, to cut two lines in the pavement, then digging a narrow trench between them with a back hoe.

Now, having a dream about something that I will read soon after is a phenomenon I noticed almost as soon as I started writing down my dreams. But this example offers a wonderful illustration of what I have come to call an arabesque. **An arabesque is a complex pattern of intertwined lines, and it seemed an apt designation for the curious, intricate synchronicities I've discovered when a dream from the past has surprising pertinence to my waking experiences at the time I happen to revisit it, often years later.**



**An arabesque is a complex pattern of intertwined lines**  
which seems an apt designation for the curious, intricate synchronicities I've  
discovered when a dream from the past has surprising pertinence to my  
waking experiences at the time I happen to revisit it, often years later.

Now, I cannot say why arabesques happen—or, for that matter, why dream psi happens. But as I reflected on this incidence, I saw that it met with ALL of Ullman's criteria. There was the biological/physical safety issue of having a gas leak literally 10 feet from my front door. And, when I read my reflections, I saw that there were psychological and social implications as well. I was reading the

biography of William Randolph Hearst because my grandfather had worked for him, in fact rose to become General Manager of the Hearst Corporation.



In my dream notes, I recall my mother's telling me that when she was in college, she was aware that her father's success -- which allowed her to attend college in the depths of the depression—was based on sensationalistic “yellow journalism.” And when I came of age and saw the classic film “Citizen Kane,” I had to reckon with the fact that the odious main character was based on the man who had compensated my grandfather so lavishly. So I was glad when I read in his biography that in his early days, Hearst had been a “good guy,” campaigning against private utility companies that charged outrageous prices for gas and other necessities.

As I speculated that this dream would be a great example for this presentation, because it demonstrated so many facets of Ullman's “dreaming agenda,” I wondered, “What about the cosmic?” Was there anything about this dream, and the arabesque, that pertained to my current challenges?

Indeed it did. The biggest challenge of writing this paper has been the discovery of another example of psi dreaming that would be most instructive, but also fraught with difficulties, concerning the exposure of a shameful crime. It was upon rereading Ullman's paper, with its emphasis on the honesty of dreams, that I grasped how the gas lines, in my dream and real life, represented my present dilemma – that something that had been buried could, upon exposure, prove explosive. This issue of exposure is a challenge for anyone discussing their own dreams. For my friends George and Martha, exposure of something hidden in George's life would prove to be explosive and to change their lives forever.

Here's another dream that turned out to be precognitive, I'm sorry to say. I've changed the names of my friends.

**March 14, 2000**

**There is a scandal being uncovered ... George Blair, it turns out, has been up to something illegal or morally corrupt or both. My main concern is that Martha is unaware of this, i.e., on the side of right in spite of George.**

In waking physical reality, Martha and I are old friends — my husband and I have known her and her husband George since high school. Our children—and now our grandchildren—are close in age. At the time of the dream, George was a practicing attorney who did a lot of pro bono work. Martha was a working artist, and I respected them both for their social activism, especially in campaigns to



promote peace and nuclear disarmament. As couples, we'd see each other once or twice a year but Martha and I got together more often, sharing interests in art, writing, dreams and psi. Martha is one of the most psychically talented people I know.

I discovered this dream last year as I began my 15-year review, and read in amazement, because George had just been released on parole. Ten years after this dream, he was prosecuted and spent nearly four years in federal prison.

George's crime was purchasing and possessing child pornography. This was a terrific shock to all of George's family, friends and colleagues. We experienced a sequence of denial, anger and disgust. Many friends and acquaintances abandoned the family entirely. For me, the question became, "What about Martha?" She had committed no crime, but she and her children were suffering. They really needed their friends, and wasn't I one of them?

So George's arrest and Martha's predicament would become for me a moral, social, and psychological challenge that has persisted for years. I have asked myself whether my dreams gave me this heads-up for a reason, but I can't think how or why. However, if I apply those quantum concepts to dreaming consciousness, as Ullman suggests, I find more insight.

Key concepts of quantum mechanics that Ullman suggests can offer new perspectives on “the mysterious nature of dreaming”

- Complementarity
- Interconnectedness
- Observer and the Observed
- Non-Locality

Let’s start with Complementarity, the concept that two contrasted theories, such as the wave and particle theories of light, may be able to explain a set of phenomena, although each separately only accounts for some aspects. And as I sought to find a simple way to explain this concept, I was amazed to discover yet another synchronicity:

## Complementarity

- Neils Bohr coined this term to describe particle v. wave phenomena
- Crease & Goldhaber: We "have inherited a picture of the world which assumes things are either waves or particles . . . Bohr . . . would explain that quantum mechanics reveals the existence of another kind of phenomenon that could be either a wave or a particle depending on the experiment we set up to study it and that all attempts to reduce quantum phenomena to one or the other fail. In just that way, based on new and unexpected information, **we sometimes have to modify our views of close friends and intimates whom we thought we understood well -- in ways that we feel ourselves resisting due to our long acquaintance** – we now have to do the same about nature."
- Ullman's analogy: "Awake we are in the particle mode facing a world of discrete objects. Asleep and dreaming we are coping with resonant wave-like feelings..."

The synchronicity of the example the authors provide<sup>iv</sup> underlines my point dramatically. In my dream, George, a good guy, had done something both "illegal and immoral." This fit the very definition of complementarity: the concept that two contrasted theories . . . may be able to explain a set of phenomena, although each separately only accounts for some aspects.

## Interconnectedness

Einstein called this “spooky action from a distance.” As physicist John Stewart Bell described it to an interviewer, “That means that what you do here” — pointing to the desk in front of him — “has immediate consequences in remote places” — pointing out the window. “And that is *extremely* odd.”

Ullman suggests that “dreaming is an unconscious effort at healing, biologically enforced and spontaneously set in motion. The result is a deeper sense of connectivity to our past and to others.”

I can apply this to my dream about George and Martha — friends I’d known for many years, and with Martha in particular, felt a special connection. Ullman writes, “When the capacity [to love] is impaired, efforts at healing are set in motion,” much as our physical bodies repair themselves when damage occurs. Apparently, my dreaming mind set out on a healing mission years before the need presented itself.

## Observer and the Observed

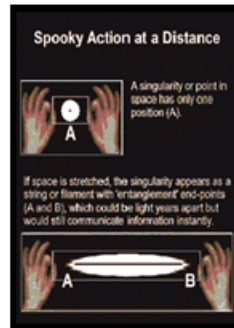
- Heisenberg: “The very act of observing disturbs the system.”
- Ullman: “Quantum mechanics has brought to the fore the interrelatedness of the observer to the phenomena under observation. This is . . . still a very mysterious aspect of quantum theory.”
- Bohm: “Coming events cast their shadows in the present.”

Ullman applies these ideas to dreaming, in which we observe “a scenario not of our own conscious making. There is, in effect, an actual merging of the observer and the observed as the dream context unfolds. Freed of temporal and spatial constraints, having a causality of its own, the feeling residues of the waking context come into full view in a metaphorical narrative.”

I think about this in relation to my dream about George and Martha – in which I am the observer of a dilemma they (and we) meet in waking physical reality years later. Like Ullman, I can appreciate the model suggested by David Bohm of an implicate order, a “seamless whole out of which the explicate arises.” And I can imagine that my precognitive glance at the future was due to the capacity of dreaming consciousness to access the implicate as well as the explicate.

## Non-Locality

The instantaneous transfer of a signal from one place to another through no known physical means



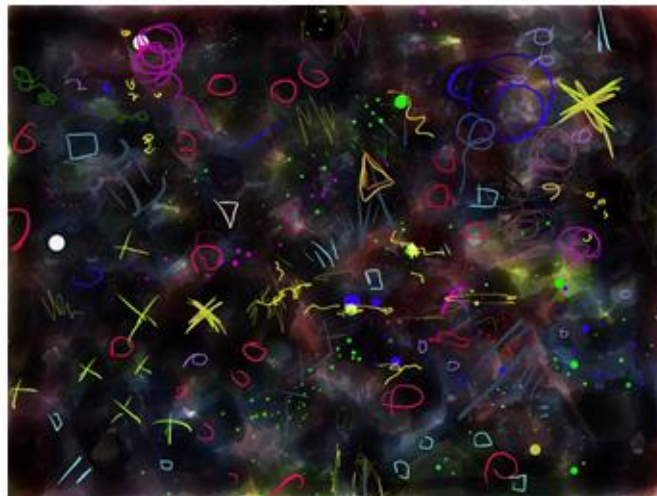
“The paranormal dream suggests the possibility of an objective non-locality by spanning across space in the telepathic dream and across time in the precognitive dream.”

Ullman wrote, “The term non-locality refers to the instantaneous transfer of a signal from one place to another through no known physical means. Non-locality at the quantum level has been subject to experimental proof but still remains a baffling mystery. Non-locality at the macro-level as cited in dreams has been supported by the experimental work in parapsychology and also remains a quite mysterious happening.”

Ullman’s interest in telepathy began when one of his psychotherapy patients would report dreams containing events that matched what was happening in his own life. Eventually this led to experimentally controlled studies and statistically significant findings regarding both telepathic and precognitive dreaming (Ullman, Krippner, Vaughan, 2001).

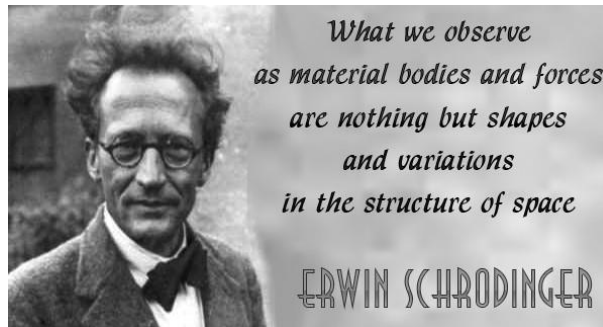
“The paranormal dream . . . suggests the possibility of an objective non-locality by spanning across space in the telepathic dream and across time in the precognitive dream.”

Finally, in yet another synchronicity that occurred as I worked on this review, my sister, artist Priscilla Pearson, sent this work she had made in a new app she had just discovered.



I clicked on this e-mail as I was struggling with these quantum concepts, and immediately thought, “Wow, this looks just like what I’m thinking!”

Sure enough, I found this quote from one of the fathers of quantum physics:



What a long, strange trip we embark on when we venture into studying our dream journals. I will continue to try to improve my grasp of these boggling principles, but Monte's paper has helped enormously to advance my understanding of how to apply quantum mechanics to dreaming. And I feel grateful that this paper has been placed out there on the web where I and any dream journal keeper can study it.

---

<sup>i</sup> "David Deutsch, author of *The Fabric of Reality: The Science of Parallel Universes and Its Implications*, thinks...quantum mechanics... must be taken...as an explanation for how the world really works." *New York Times Book Review*, October 5, 1997.

<sup>ii</sup> Ullman, Montague. (between 2001-2005). *On the Relevance of Quantum Concepts to Dreaming Consciousness*. Retrieved from [http://siivola.org/monte/papers\\_grouped/uncopyrighted/Dreams/on\\_the\\_relevance\\_of\\_quantum\\_concepts\\_to\\_dreaming\\_consciousness.htm](http://siivola.org/monte/papers_grouped/uncopyrighted/Dreams/on_the_relevance_of_quantum_concepts_to_dreaming_consciousness.htm)



<sup>iii</sup> David Nasaw, *The Chief: The Life of William Randolph Hearst* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2000)

<sup>iv</sup> Robert P. Crease and Alfred Scharff Goldhaber, *The Quantum Moment: How Planck, Bohr, Einstein and Heisenberg Taught Us to Love Uncertainty* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2014), 180-181.