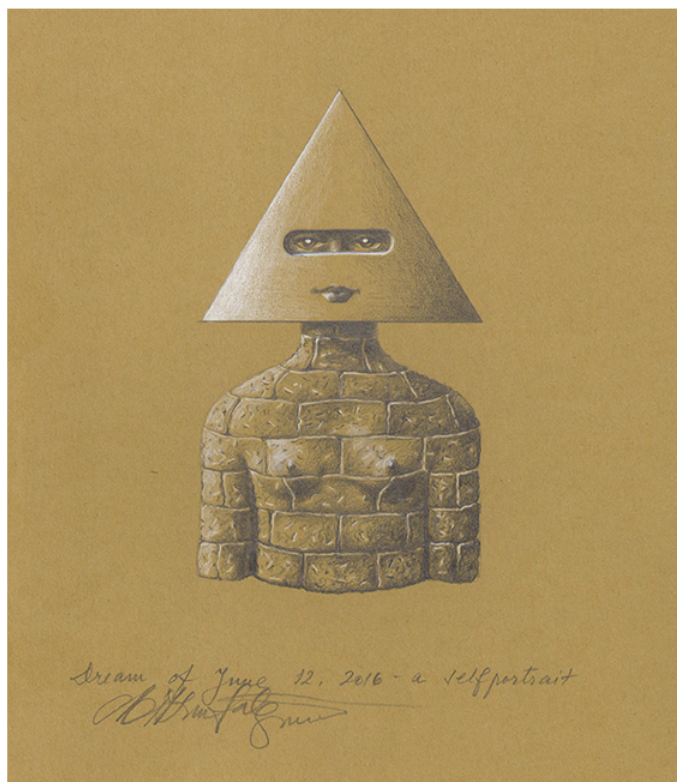


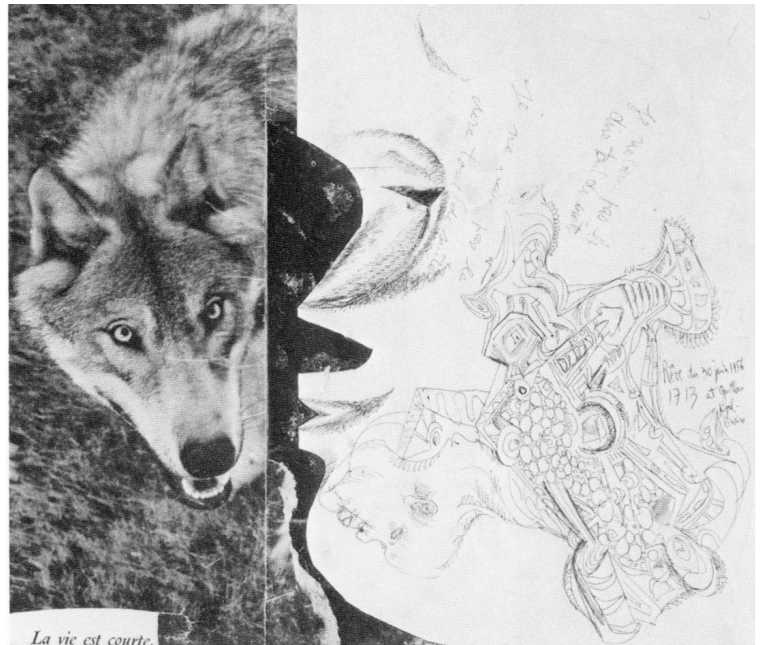
Joël Gayraud

## THE DREAMING "I"

Who in me is dreaming, on what condition can one say "I"? Judging from my own experience, I would reply that this singular host can say it on all the conditions he chooses, except for one, which escapes his abilities: that of being able to communicate to the rest of the world by telling what one dreams at the moment when one dreams of it (I deliberately set aside the words uttered by the sleeper, which are generally not remembered upon waking). If the *I* of the dream says "I" to make me believe that I have a well-defined self that would not steal every night a new costume from the sumptuous dressing room of desire, I agree, and will gladly allow him this concession to grammar. If one prolongs this "I" by some verb expressing the usual, even rational use of thought, I will also find nothing to object to. The capacities of abstraction, as we know, are in no way suspended in dreams, and in regard to those of Cardano and Kekulé, science is indebted, in the case of the former, for the imaginary numbers, and, in the case of the latter, for the molecular structure of benzene. Moreover, inasmuch as, according to Freud, dream is an accomplishment of desire, everything indicates that the desire for thought is one of the only ones to be accomplished *directly*, as opposed to, for example, drinking a glass of burgundy, which must necessarily pass through representation. However, it is not the "I think" that interests me, it is the "I dream," accompanied by the slight dizziness that this simple statement immediately gives us. Indeed, when the dream *I* says "I dream," it produces a statement of a very singular kind: an unutterable statement. No one can

Mitzura Salgjan, *Self-Portrait*, dream of June 12, 2016

## Two Oneiric Portraits

Jean-Jacques Lebel, *Portrait of André Breton and Guillaume Apollinaire* ("Life is short"), dream of June 30, 1956

say it and realize it simultaneously. If I say "I dream," it means that "I," *hic et nunc*, do not dream. In this case, the subject "I" is well awake and the verb "dream" does not have the full meaning that I would use if, for example, seeing the woman sleeping beside me beating her eyelids or whispering in her sleep, I realize with emotion that "she dreams." To conjugate the verb *to dream* in its proper sense in the first person, I must always attach to it the conditions of temporality that exclude it from the actual: I can say very legitimately "I dreamed," "I have dreamed," or "I dream from time to time," or "I dream very often," but never simply "I dream."

If I examine the status of this sentence more closely by applying the famous Austin distinction between performative and constative statements, I will not hesitate to include it in the second category: when I say "I dream" in my dreams, the one who dreams in me seems to realize that he is dreaming, as the one who says "I travel" finds that he is traveling. Yet everyone will admit that, unless traveling in one's head or in one's memories, travel is a form of activity quite distinct from the consciousness of the journey, whereas in the case of oneiric activity the situation is quite different: where and how a line of demarcation between the fact of dreaming and the consciousness of dreaming is to be drawn? To say then "I dream" is the same as to realize that one dreams that one is dreaming while dreaming, that is to say, one is quite simply dreaming; and if we follow the strict definition given by Benveniste of the performative statement: "The act is identified with the statement of the act. The signified is identical to the referent [...] A statement is performative in that it denominates the act performed," everything indicates that the statement "I dream" belongs to the latter category. It thus takes, in addition to its value of observation, that of a self-referential statement, which is sufficient to define it as an *act of speech*. However, a major objection immediately arises:

(continued on page 4)

# An Oneiric Library (II)

From the entrance, one sees a spacious hall, not unlike a reading room or a book depository in some municipal or national library. On shelves with uprights of greyish metal are arranged innumerable books, the age of which is attested by the rich and faded aspect of their bindings. On the one of these shelves which we see best halfway up the hall and crossing it from one end to the other thick iron sword, about ten meters long and certainly very heavy, is placed horizontally over a great part of the books which, sometimes standing, sometimes lying down, sometimes closed, sometimes open, seem to have not been touched for months or years, and to be there only as elements of a staging. On other shelves that we do not see, there are, crushing other books, other swords of the same size as the first one, which can be suspected of identical nature, with a strong guard of an archaic character. It means (and I know it in the dream) that here one takes no account of books. Predictions are made, not by science, but only by means of illumination, and it is the sessions of possession that constitute the main activity of this house. Among the books stored in the large hall on the ground floor (the only part of this place that we visit, for the dream stops there, as if the gigantic sword had cut short all possibility of any continuation), there are several books on magic, also denied, since the totality of printed knowledge—however irrational—is annulled by the weight of that sword.

Michel Leiris, dream of May 18-19, 1958,  
in *Nuits sans nuit et quelques jours sans jour*

I leaf through a beautiful magazine, that the mailman has just brought, and which reproduces, in appendix, *The Illustrated Dictionary of Orsgène (?)*, considered extremely rare. Each article of the dictionary is accompanied by a portrait of the author. Upon waking up, I remember three of them, which I write down at once:

1. The dictionary opens with a map, drawn on graph paper, showing Eastern France and its neighboring regions. Lake Geneva, which has lost its crescent shape, stretches towards the center of Switzerland and is named "Bugure Pond." Between Lake Geneva and the German border, there is another lake: "Trans-Bugure Pond."

"To confuse the issue," the caption superbly states. A scale is given at the bottom of the map, but it is marked "Fake on purpose."

2. The article "Old Man" represents a tribe of old primitive people gathered around a fire, where little white bodies are struggling, trying to escape. The illustration is accompanied by the following caption: "How nice it is to die by the fire, poking one's children with a cane, a smile on one's lips!"

3. A page without text is titled "HEART OF HAUNTED DIAMONDS" and reproduces a picture of magnificent luminosity, straight out of an adventure novel, but where the great adventures are all internal explorations. The mountain that occupies the center of the picture is actually a huge diamond being exploited. Alveoli are dug on all the visible side of the mountain, and the entrance of each gallery is illuminated by a candle that makes possible to distinguish, against the walls of the Diamond Mountain, the silhouettes of miners at work.

Jean-Pierre Guillon, dream of March 2-3, 1971,  
in *Les Nuits du veilleur de nuit*

I'm on a train and go to the house of Gellu Naum. He lives in Belgium now, in a house that is an hour away from where I live. I don't know how he ended up in Belgium, but he's been living there for more than a year, and during this time he even published a book. I am now looking at the book. It is of a larger format, with many photographs and illustrations in color. There are also some illustrations in black and white. Some of them are made by a woman painter, and from those I notice a series of drawings showing a man, whose outstretched tongue ends in a sort of fishing rod, at the end of which hangs a woman. The man is black and the woman is white. Gradually, as the series of drawings progresses, these two characters switch places. I think of how surprising is such a book, so freshly surrealist, authored by Gellu Naum.

Sasha Vlad, dream of January 30, 1997

I was dressed as a nun and carrying books while walking on a street of a strange town. I had a hard time holding all the books in my arms and when they started falling I crouched to pick them up. At that moment I could see

myself from a distance and, to my horror, I saw a swarm of bees instead of my face.

Kateřina Pinosová, dream from the 2000s

I found Peter the Great's war diary. In it he had made some metalwork and signed it. That's how I knew it was his. However, as I explained to M, the book was a *trashyl*—, or something — i.e. a book that changes its nature often. As such, when I went to sell it, thinking I'd be rich, suddenly it was something else. At one time, it was my own book. I had to keep it for my own, this incredible secret possession no-one else could see.

Josie Malinowska, dream of January 27, 2012

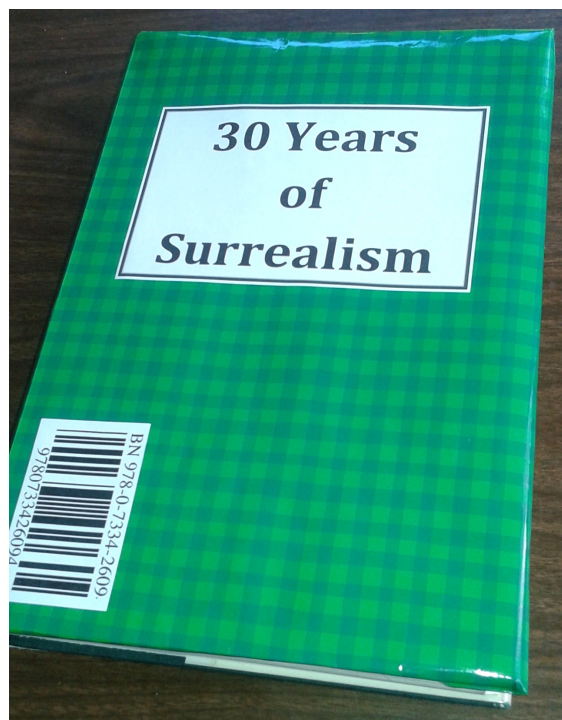
I am leafing through an old book, from the 19th century, illustrated with engravings. On the title page there is the address of the publisher: *The Green Friend St., no. 4.*

Dan Stanciu, dream of August 17, 2014

I am in what seems to be the attic of my parents' house, in the Cotentin. I am busy sorting out piles of books that I take out from cardboard boxes filled to the brim. Amongst a packet of bound volumes, with the appearance of falsely luxurious editions, I notice the *Society of the spectacle* by Guy Debord. Browsing through it, I realize with surprise that it is illustrated with many reproductions of woodcuts in the style of Dürer and maps of equally old cities. Then, skimming the text, I am surprised by the overflowing lyricism that enriches those pages, that I knew otherwise to be more austere.

Guy Girard, dream of January 20, 2015

I'm in an unknown city with a friend. We are in a kind of shopping center. We enter a library or bookstore through a side door. (It's a glass door, as are the walls of the library-bookstore.) On a shelf I see some books. One of them is titled *30 Years of Surrealism*. It's a book of larger format, with a green dust jacket, which looks like a library book because it has a barcode. I would like to buy it, but I imagine it should be very expensive, so I give up the idea. Now we are ready to get out of that shopping center, and have to go through the exit sensors. I know now that I have that book in my backpack. The alarm does not sound and I realize that I just stole the book.



Sasha Vlad, dream of January 10, 2016

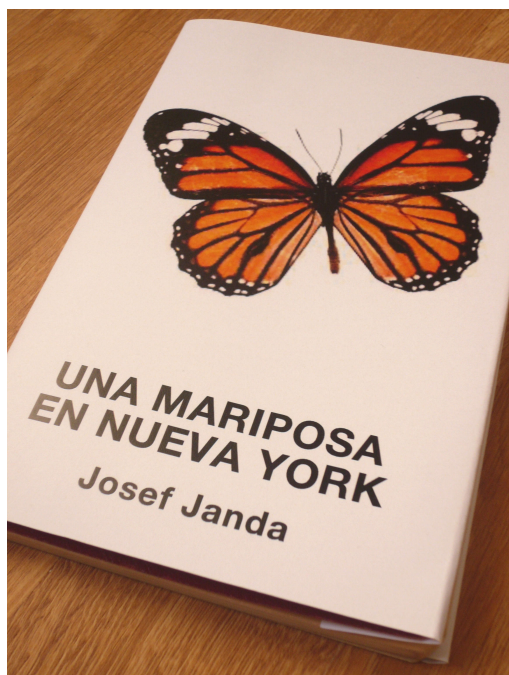
I see an issue of a lesser known, probably local, American religious paper — a daily I think it was —, in reality just one sheet, from 1945. It had grey print instead of black, a conventional old style layout, and quite fanciful headline fonts. I forgot its name, unfortunately. The main article was part of a series and a world premiere: the publication of a so far unknown biblical text: *The Harvest Book*.

Bruno Jacobs, dream of August 27, 2015

I enter a labyrinthine bookstore, where I go up and down the stairs looking for books. I find one, beautifully bound in purple velvet. It's called *Oosth Street*.

Jesús García Rodríguez, dream of February 2016

A book announced to be published in the spring of 2016: *Una mariposa en Nueva York* ("A Butterfly in New York"), the Spanish translation of a recent book by Josef Janda. It deals about the same phenomenon as the famous Butterfly effect, but in the field of poetry in general.



Bruno Jacobs, dream of April 10, 2016

I see a book by Karel Teige but forgot its title. The name of the author was printed in red capital letters and the book was of very light yellow color. A moment later, I see a page of a little Czech surrealist publication supposedly from the early 80s. It shows a quite confused collage made of photographs and with short sentences in it. The attentive reader can discover a small portrait of its author, Vratislav Effenberger, smiling between plants or leaves in the lower part of the collage.

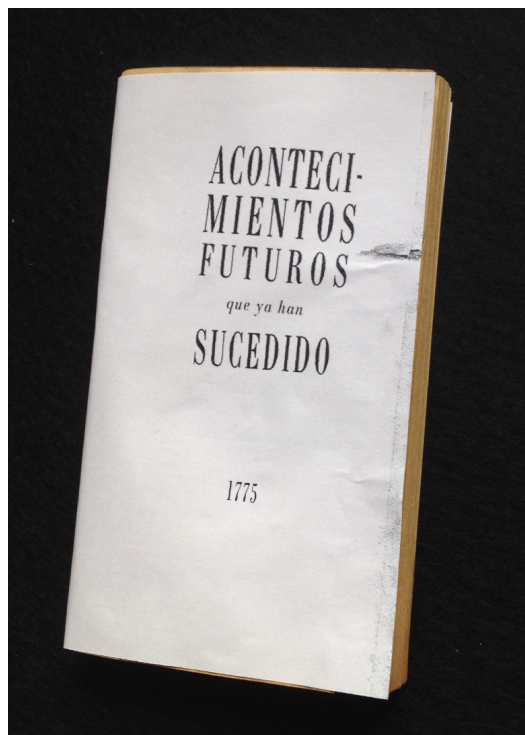
Bruno Jacobs, dream of 14 April 2016

I dream about a man who is not in control of his own life. He wrote a strange piece of performance poetry which his wife performs but she is suspected of cheating on him at the same time. He is berated by a surly man who tells him all this. The man prefers to remain on the yellow cliff of a mountain and listen to/watch the essays of a certain Thoreauvian author. The essay starts with the author declaiming how boring he finds most social media photos, in a haughty tone, and how they should be banished to the remote cliffs of the mountains. The man watches all this on a kind of book with bendable cardboard pages which plays a little film and sound for each of the pages. The music of Scott Joplin is playing.

Jason Abdelhadi, dream of June 11, 2016

We are a few friends having a coffee at a book fair. Arrives a very happy Jesús García Rodríguez who just bought a small but thick book from 1775 with the title *Acontecimientos futuros que ya han sucedido* ("Future Events That Have Already Occurred"). The cover had disappeared and was therefore replaced by a white paper with the title in facsimile.

Bruno Jacobs, dream of September 15, 2016



Roughly the center of the courtyard of my parents' house is occupied by a large black rock one meter high, on which is placed or is embedded a voluminous book, an imposing extremely old folio bound in leather. The way this book is placed on that rock reminds me of the Excalibur sword stuck in the Druidic stone. Then, going through the pages, I read that this mysterious volume is a collection of various writings by Bakunin, especially autobiographical ones, to which are added texts theorising Anarchism. The ensemble is illustrated with beautiful color engravings, with mainly floral motifs. I would like to take it, but cannot detach it from the stone and, besides, it is far too heavy. That's why I think of cutting out the pages with the most interesting texts, that I would later bind together in my own way.

Guy Girard, dream of November 29, 2016

I am in the yard of a monastery or mental hospital, at night. All around me there are huge pyres of burning books. The abbot (or head of the hospital) is standing next to me. I turn to him and say: "I know what books DO NOT have to be burned: ALL OF THEM!"

Sasha Vlad, dream of December 2, 2016

I was showing a marvelous book of Eugène Atget photos to an old man. One of the photos was of the Marx Brothers in Paris. The other was of a fabulous Parisian scene of a strange fruit seller and his customers, very overexposed and shot like a classical painting that had been run through a photocopier.

Jason Abdelhadi, dream of January 21, 2017

I received a white package in the mail from Mattias Forshage. It contained a strange metal object that was a combination of a large geometry compass and a microscope: one puts one's eye to a lense located where the pencil-holder would be in a compass. This device came with a collection of very very small books that could only be read via this object. The mini-books made up a kind of collage, and many were extracts or portions from old scientific and musical works. I remember observing the ornate grotesques and dates in the marvellously juxtaposed 18th century title pages. I then went on a book-hunting trip to try to procure materials to recreate one of these mini-books of my own, and focused on a series of books at a bookshop that were imaged from older editions (much like a Dover classic edition is) including an old German work on musical composition and the letters of an early scientist (possibly the letters of Van Leeuwenhoek on his "little animals", an old used book I really did buy).

Jason Abdelhadi, dream of January 31, 2017

(to be continued)

(continued from page 1)

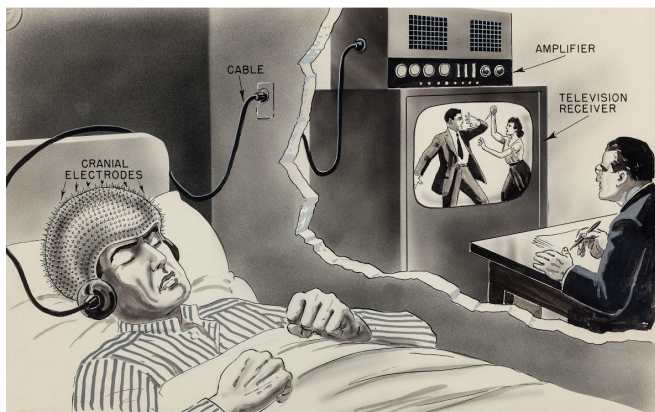
contrary to the performative statements such as “I promise,” which founds the promise, or “I swear,” which founds the oath, it is not the “I dream” that founds the dream: no dreamer needs to say “I dream” in order to dream, and no dream is limited to this single statement. Here is a performative statement that shows itself outrageously indifferent to its own performance!

Unutterable, resistant to categorization, the statement “I dream” avoids analysis, as it avoids speech, and this avoidance only reveals the essentially fleeting nature of the subject that seems to be part of it. Here, the *I* has little to do with the subject of an utterance that can be made in the waking state: it is evident that “I dream” could also be translated by a sentence of the type “It dreams,” where “it” would be impersonal as in “it thunders,” and “I” a sort of index of subjectivation affecting in a variable way the whole of the oneiric process. Novalis noted that “We are close to awakening when we dream that we dream.” Even if this too categorical assertion is often contradicted by experience, it has the merit of underlining the lability of the subject acceding to the consciousness of dreaming, and of which the awakening only marks the complete dissolution. (It may be said parenthetically that, while upholding this suspicion on the subject of our dreams, we would be well advised to extend it to all the other statements of the so-called waking state.) We could mute a little the *I*, this toneless discreet monosyllable that pretends to govern everything, and, since the acts of speech have been evoked, we should consider them less as acts of a speaking subject than as acts of a speech manifested through a subject. For when I say “I promise,” “I forgive,” or “I swear,” I base my promise, my forgiveness, or my oath, only provided the idea of promise, forgiveness, or oath is already implied, or at least conceived as possible or desirable, by the

person to whom I speak: it is always the extra-linguistic situation of the parties involved that requires one of the speakers to promise, forgive or swear. Contrary to the appearance offered by grammar, in which the subject is always implicitly affected by the illusion of free will, the act of speech is not at all a free act.

As the unconscious does not bother itself with the principle of contradiction, what dreamer, in order to regret or rejoice in the act of dreaming, has never told himself or herself during a dream: “I do not dream”? Apparently, such a sentence can only make sense in the waking state, when the situation in which the subject is suddenly plunged seems to him so unreal that one is forced to make sure that one is wide awake. But in a dream, it is the expression of a curious denial, albeit free from all bad faith, which has the effect of rooting the subject in the dream and, at the same time, since the one *is* the other, rooting the dream in the subject. “I do not dream” means this time “I do not want to, or cannot wake up.” Indeed, upon awakening, the dream thus denied has sometimes been so strong that some of its elements—people, places, situations—appear as real memories that continue to disturb us. Consequently, contrary to the previous positive statement, the negative statement brings with it, given the effect of reality with which it charges the oneiric experience, the affirmation of an intense subjective certainty. When the dreamer says “I do not dream,” he has the highest certainty of being himself or herself. One’s index of subjectivation is at its highest. Then, more firmly than by the *cogito* of Descartes, one feels sure of one’s existence. That’s when one can really dream. It is then that one is ready to live the parallel life of Peter Ibbetson, or to undergo the metamorphoses of Jack London’s stellar vagrant.

Excerpt from *La Peau de l'ombre*, Paris, José Corti Publishers, 2004



Anonymous, *Dream Viewer*, 1953

I have frequently wondered if the majority of mankind ever pause to reflect upon the occasionally titanic significance of dreams, and of the obscure world to which they belong. Whilst the greater number of our nocturnal visions are perhaps no more than faint and fantastic reflections of our waking experiences—Freud to the contrary with his puerile symbolism—there are still a certain remainder whose im-mundane and ethereal character permits of no ordinary interpretation, and whose vaguely exciting and disquieting effect suggests possible minute glimpses into a sphere of mental existence no less important than physical life, yet separated from that life by an all but impassable barrier. From my experience I cannot doubt but that man, when lost to terrestrial consciousness, is indeed sojourning in another and uncorporeal life of far different nature from the life we know; and of which only the slightest and most indistinct memories linger after waking.

H.P. Lovecraft, in *Dagon and Other Macabre Tales*, 1965

## ONEIRIC ECHOES

### Oneiric Laboratory at the Nosaltres Cooperative Center, Madrid

The Surrealist Group of Madrid organizes this Oneiric Laboratory, whose purpose is, through a cycle of five workshops, to investigate the dream world in a collective way and to promote sensitivity towards this always forgotten aspect of reality.

In the first session of April 22, an assembly of dreamers was formed who recounted their most frequent or latest dreams. That assembly—open to everybody—will be the basis for the realization of subsequent dream activities. There is the possibility of participating remotely through the email address [oniricolaboratorio@gmail.com](mailto:oniricolaboratorio@gmail.com).

Excerpt from the presentation text at <http://nosaltres.info/laboratorio-onirico/>:

Exactly 100 years ago, a dream traveled across Europe and all the world, even if it turned into a nightmare. And seven years later, it was a wave of dreams that submerged the world to reenchant it.

We now want, when the night seems forever banished, to return to questioning dreams in order to fan their fire and ignite the oneiric phenomena and experiences that spread their incandescence of closed eyelids and magnetized bodies: futile and irresponsible glare that neither respond to any law or master, nor generate more value or price, except changing the life of the dreamer.

We invite you to participate in the Oneiric Laboratory organized by the Surrealist Group of Madrid in the Nosaltres Cooperative center, Esperanza street 5, Madrid. The sessions will take place on Saturdays at 7:30 p.m.

#### Program:

- 1st day, April 22: Presentation of the Oneiric Laboratory.
- 2nd day, May 20: The object dreamed. Presentation of dream publications: *Drosera* and *Dreamdew*.
- 3rd day, June 3: Parallel dreams. Presentation of the book *Of the Matter of the Dream* by Julio Monteverde.
- 4th day, June 17: Dream interference in everyday life.
- 5th day, July 1: Oneiric urbanism.