

Joël Gayraud

NEW DREAM SURVEY

IN FEBRUARY 2017, I PROPOSED a new investigation on the dream to the attention of the members of the surrealist group of Paris, then extended it a few months later to members of foreign groups as well as to close friends. In November of 2019, our comrades Bruno Jacobs and Sasha Vlad published it in English translation in the 19th issue of their fascinating observatory of international dream activity, the journal *Dreamdew*. As I currently have, including my own, nineteen responses in three languages (French, English, Italian)*, it seems to me that the time has come to outline a summary reflecting as much as possible the major trends which emerge from it. But such an exercise fatally fails to account for the significant insights, nuanced considerations and real-life details that did not fail to appear in the responses, often developed with precision and finesse and enriched with stories of dreams, even illustrations, which I received. They are therefore added hereto. [...]

Unsurprisingly, the survey results show that as one gets older, even if not dreaming less, it almost always becomes increasingly difficult to remember one's dreams. If it is certain that recording dreams regularly in a notebook upon waking helps to maintain the ability to remember them, this simple action does not only depend on the interest that one has in them, but on the free use of one's time. It is clear that we are all the more able to write down our dreams when we are not subject to the obligations of paid work, which is encroaching on our hours of sleep and restricting the availability of our minds. That probably explains why three of us stopped recording their dreams after their youthful years. Five dreamers have been recording them systematically for years, eight write them down occasionally, three have never written them down, but one of those willingly tells them to friends (MT).

We most often dream in color, often in faded colors, or limited to one or two with a mix of black and white. It is quite rare to dream in bright and well-defined colors. In three cases, there is no memory to dream in color, in another, to dream in black and white. Sometimes the question is confusing, because we had never asked it before, and for one of us its evocation caused the following night a dream in which a colored object clearly appeared, namely a red scarf (ML). Three dreamers, including two painters, evoke paintings seen in dreams, one of which is even reproduced and attributed to André Breton (BM)!

It is only for a minority of us that the experience of the day before appears frequently in our dreams; for the most part it mixes with older events, sometimes in a small proportion. Five dreamers even note that the content of their dreams often has no connection with their recent or old experiences.

To nearly one in two dreamers there appear sometimes or frequently completely unknown faces, and one in three note proven composites of known faces; the others are not certain. Half of us have dreamed of landscapes, cities or totally imaginary objects. Some, on the other hand, create cities made

up of elements borrowed from several existing cities (BS). In general, dreamlike representations combine the three modes of appearance mentioned: assembly of pre-existing elements, deformations of images or pure invention, but in different proportions according to each dreamer.

Only five of us have had a telepathic dream experience, attested by circumstantial examples. In one instance, the dream was felt in its entirety as being taken over by an outer personality (MT). Eleven participants in the survey indicate that they have had a premonitory dream at least once, but sometimes, as three of them report, for unimportant events; one of them points out that it was probably one's unconscious that made one realize what one had dreamed of (ML). Cosmological dreams are also reported by eleven of us. Many date back to the years of childhood or adolescence and have left, sometimes as a nightmare due to fever, indelible traces in our memory. If everyone recognizes having erotic representations in their dreams, for half of the dreamers their adequacy to conscious fantasy preferences is not self-evident, and these differences can even arouse the astonishment of the subject in the dream itself. It should be noted that the predominance of characters of the opposite sex to the dreamer occurs in a third of cases, and parity in another third, and that only three participants primarily dream of people of their own gender.

Finally, for seven of us, a dream, sometimes recurring, exercised a decisive importance in their lives, either as a traumatic nightmare resolved only by psychoanalytic work (GR), or as a utopian anchor point allowing them to access a feeling of plenitude and comfort (AC), either as a starting point for the realization of a pictorial work, or finally as a trigger for an awareness of the richness of the inner world and the vital necessity of poetry (JA; GG).

From reading all the answers, the clear impression emerges that the dream does not only operate on the diurnal remnants of the day before or of the preceding days, but can pick up, by a work of anamnesis, whose channels and modalities remain to be specified, elements deeply buried in the memory of the subject. It is not satisfied with recycling perceptual elements drawn from external life by adjusting them differently, but it produces them by itself. Or rather, it seems that in the essentially unstable space-time of the dream, all the prerogatives of the creative imagination are deployed more easily than in the waking state, and are capable of inventing synthetically, and not simply in a combinatorial way, original forms, without referent or correspondent in the real world. As far as premonitory and telepathic dreams are concerned, they must be considered and studied in a materialistic way, first by the systematic collection of reliable testimonies, like those included in the responses to the present survey, and not dismissed as mere expressions of fortuitous coincidences, as does scientific positivism, or abandoned to the spiritualistic ramblings of too many scrutinizers of the paranormal. The most current scientific position, which holds the dream for a simple cerebral functionality allowing the good behavior adapted from the subject to the diurnal life, even if justified from the point of view of the economy of the evolution, does not interest us: what fascinates us in the oneiric life and encourages us to explore it relentlessly are,

MERET OPPENHEIM

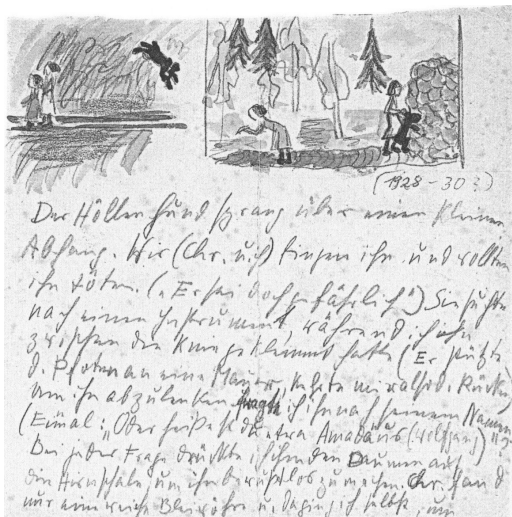
DREAM ACCOUNTS (I)

Circa 1928

I am running through a forest, terribly afraid. The trees are low and leafless. The crowns of the trees, their branches, are made of snakes. The forest sits on a gently sloping plain. All is bright, but there is no sun.

1928-30?

A hellhound jumped over a small descending slope. We (Christin and I) caught him and wanted to kill him. She was looking for some tool while I was keeping him clamped between my knees and pushed him against a wall (he stood tall, turning away from me). In order to distract him I asked him for his name. (Once: "Or is your name then Amadeus?") With every question I pressed my thumb into his skull to make him unconscious. All Christin could find was a soft lead pipe, so I went myself to look for something more suitable. Meanwhile she kept interrogating the dog. Finally I came across a small nail file, which I drilled into his head.



1928

A staircase on a high brick wall, where steps are missing here and there. I should go down these stairs with little children. As the gaps that had to be skipped were getting bigger, I brought the kids back and went down alone.

1929 (Königsfeld)

A cemetery at an ascending hillside (similar to the cemetery of Steinen i/W*). An old woman is entering through the gate at the entrance below. On one shoulder she's carrying a coffin, on the other two. Slowly she walks up the path until she reaches the small (chapel?). (This room reminds me of our small kitchen in the little weekend cottage Hägelberg above Steinen i/W). It's a longish room. There's a bench in front of the narrow wall. Opposite it, a chair. (Sketch) She lifts her three dead daughters out of the coffins and places one next to the other onto the bench. She sits down on the chair and contemplates, scraping her foot across the floor (the floor is crushed dirt). Suddenly an oval opening is forming. In it lies a snake, coiled around a rod. The snake leaps out, transforms into a kind of wild cat or cheetah, and tries to leap at the woman's throat. She kicks the animal, hurling it at the wall. There it sits still and says: Take a bite out of the apple—take a bite out of the apple—
 — In the wall, there's an indentation behind each dead daughter, and in each lies an apple.

*im Wiesental

1929 (Königsfeld)

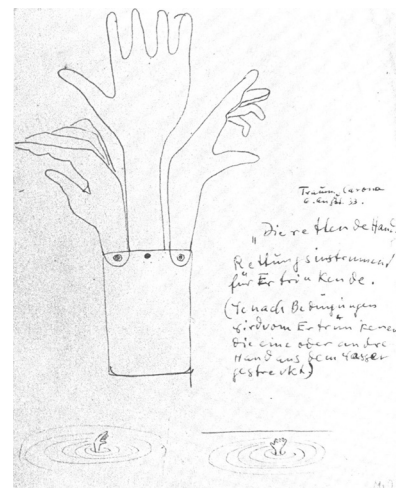
I hold a big blue gentian against the setting sun. The flower turns into a glass of red wine and radiates wonderfully.



Dreamed in Carona, on August 6, 1933

"The Saving Hand"

Rescue device for drowning people. (Depending on the situation, one of the hands is stretched out of the water by the drowning person.)



Basel, December 25, 1935

I have sideburns.

Then: I am in my studio (at 13 Klingenthal). Someone is asking what time it is. I say (or he says): One can't see the clock from here! I say (or he says): One can see it, after all! I lean out of the window and see a green scenery far and wide. (In reality one only sees a courtyard.) I stick my little gold watch out the window. I am in the meadow within the scenery now. 10-20 ravens are approaching from the dark edge of the forest. One comes flying for my shiny little watch and starts pecking at it. The glass cover and the back cover have opened (they are also quite loose in reality). I step back, still holding on to the little watch, and lure the raven

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

into my studio. Then I slam the window shut. The raven transforms into a girl. I kick her under the knees, so that that she has to fall onto me.

(After I wake up, the last situation reminds me of the story of a brutal rape during the war, as I have once read it.)

September 1935, dreamed in Barcelona

I am with a man, in a bed at the far end of a great hall. A Greek relief reminiscent of the Parthenon covers the walls. Through a small door at the end of the great hall something like a paranoiac sculpture [it resembles a figure by Dali] enters, stretching to gigantic proportions once it has fully entered the room. It is filling the great hall all the way to the ceiling. An amorphous creation, turning into a lady's shoe at one end, walking on the tip of something that looks like a long nose. I say to the man lying next to me that I do not love him anymore. He says: Then go get yourself on of those Greeks! I get up, walk to the wall and pull the leg of one of the lads made of marble. He descends. Together we walk away, we are strolling through a landscape. The man walking next to me is suddenly my father. We are walking next to each other on a high plain. Further down, the hills are lined with fir trees of which only the tops are visible. My father points to a group of one of those treetops (on the southern slope), which are swaying heavily, and says: "Over there is my murderer!" I walk down the slope, now the northern one, I think, to the foot of the fir trees. There, leaning against a tree trunk, sits an elderly man wearing sporty clothes, a rust-brown tweed jacket, his hair short and gray. He points a knife at me. I touch the tip of the knife with the tip of one of my index fingers, with the other I touch the end of the handle, turn the knife around and just as I am about to stab the man, my father appears next to me and says: "One doesn't do that." At which I push the man, causing him to roll downhill. He's rolling by touching his forehead with his index finger, and looks like the serpent (Ouroborus) biting its own tail.

(circa '35?)

I am in the auditorium of a small theater, alone. It is dark, only the stage is lit. There, on a small chair, sits a skeleton who is playing cello on its own leg. The skeleton draws the bow over the leg while squawking: "Bella gamba—bella gamba".

The effect is very comical.

January 1, 1936

I am living on the rooftop terrace of a very tall, new building. All around are bars. I am asking myself: Why does everyone says that I live dangerously, even though there are bars all around me? I want to sow grass, but it is forbidden to bring dirt up here. Thus, I sow on top of thick layers of damp newspapers.

January 9, 1936

Someone is trying to light a fire in a tub half filled with water. However, it does not work. I continue to throw in more and more wood and kindling until it is burning and forms a bubbling mass. At the end, it is a large boiling swamp.

I don't know any longer when I had this dream. I estimate that it was between 1935 and 1937.

I am in a human slaughterhouse. Skinned, bloody bodies lie and hang everywhere as in a large butcher shop. Along the walls reaching up to the ceiling are racks on which bodies are lying, one on top of the other. A ladder leans against one of the racks. I am naked. I climb up and lie down on the uppermost body (a male body) and "make love" to him. Suddenly, he raises up, issues a horrible "hoooh" and I feel that he is raking a saw over my back.

I had this dream during a time when I was living a rather "wild" life. I interpreted it for me to mean "that it was enough now".

The dream that followed soon seems to confirm that this interpretation was correct and that I had followed the warning.

(1935-1937)

I am at a gynecologist, laying on the examination table. The doctor brings in a live, skinned goat. However, I reject this "love object".

August 10, 1936

I am setting up a little house. Very simple. A little girl sells me a basket of nasturtiums.

August 10

A small machine to write sentences for writers.

(Drawing with these explanations:

An arrow pointing to the word "Wire"; and

an arrow pointing to a bottle: "Movable small bottle with cognac (Alcoholic Spirits).")

The machine writes the following sentence:

"The word is a trump

The trump is a word."

10. August 1936

Ich zeichne mir ein Hauschen ein. Sehr einfach. Eine kleine Mädchen verkauft mir einen Korb mit Kapuzinern.



10. August.

Eine kleine Maschine, zum Schreiben für Schriftsteller.

← Draht



← verschiebbare kleine Flasche mit Cognac (Alkohol-Geist)

Die Maschine schreibt folgenden Satz:

Das Wort ist ein Trumpf
Der Trumpf ist ein Wort.

11. August.

Ich sehe ein Bild, von Salvador Dali, das sich aber wie ein Film bewegt: Eine kleine Kiste auf einer Hochebene. Rechts ein Bach, der aber gestaut ist. Das Wasser hat zum Herausfließen nur eine kleine Öffnung, so dass sich ein kleiner See entstanden ist, mit einer starken Strömung, von links nach rechts. Darin schwimmen eine Kette Würste und zwei herrliche Schinken. Meine Mutter sagt es sei ja ein gutes Bild, aber es sei doch eine Sünde, die Schinken und Würste

August 11

I am seeing a painting from Salvador Dali but it moves like a film: A grey desert on a high plateau. To the right is a creek but it is dammed. There is only a small opening for the water to flow out and a small lake has formed with a strong current from left to right. In it float a chain of sausages and two gorgeous hams. My mother says that it is a good painting but it would be a sin to leave the hams and the sausages in the water that way. I kind of disagree but take them out of the water and hang them in the pantry. I suggest eating them now, too. My mother says no: they do not belong to us. I say: Well, the painter is not coming back anyway, and they would have spoiled in the water as well.

August 12, 1936

I pick up something from the department store and leave, but go back to pay for it. In return I receive an altered hat and two new ones. One of them is streamlined and made from green lacquered cardboard.

(Translated from the German by Tatjana Greiner.)
(to be continued)

on the contrary, all the values of maladjustment that it exalts, the surprises that it never ceases to erect on the paths of the dreamer, the gratuity of the situations encountered, the subversion of the rules of formal logic and moral imperatives, the profusion of possibilities which contrasts so vividly with their rarefaction in daytime life. The more a dream deviates from the ways of being proper to the so-called real world, the more it defeats the best-established evidences, the more it is apt to arouse our wonder. In the field of knowledge of the unconscious, surrealism, through its constant attention to psychic phenomena coupled with poetic or practical creation, has still not said its last word.

(*) **Participants:** Jason Abdelhadi, Michèle Bachelet, Massimo Borghese, Anithe de Carvalho, Krzysztof Fijalkowsky, Joël Gayraud, Régis Gayraud, Guy Girard, Rik Lina, Michael Löwy, Paul McRandle, Bruno Montpied, Penelope Rosemont, Pierre-André Sauvageot, Natan Schäfer, Bertrand Schmitt, Maude Trottier, Charlotte Vinsonneau, Michel Zimbacca.

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SOME DREAMS FEATURED IN THE RESPONSES OF THE SURVEY

Dream of Bruno Montpied in which appears a painting attributed to André Breton (question #1)



André Breton's painting found in a dream (the number is part of the dream).

In general, my dream memories do not retain the color component, it seems to me. This is perhaps due to the fact that my dreams are made as much of language, as of image. That said, the exception is a previously unknown painting by André Breton discovered by me during one of my recent nights, where the flamboyant orange and red colors were truly its characteristic, barely broken however by a few black lines, similar to grains of black rice.

§

Telepathic dream (or rather of mental possession) of Maude Trottier (question #8)

I'm not sure I understand what telepathy encompasses here, as I haven't read Freud on this subject, but somewhere around 2006 I dreamed that I was a person during the second world war in Poland or in a neighboring to it country. I was a young provincial teacher and I had to react, with others, against the imminent arrival of the enemy. The school was located on a steep slope near a water bank (I don't know what water). It was during the day, it was gray, the apparent calm of things was permeated with anguish. We knew we had to hide the children, or run away, go in a boat, but without knowing where to go exactly, without really knowing what action to take either. The whole contextual framework of the dream

was so precise and so distant from me that I had the impression, upon waking up, that the spirit of another had occupied mine, or that I had come into contact with the reminiscences of a previous life. For a few days, I was in fact convinced that I had been this young Polish teacher.

§

Jason Abdelhadi's Apocalyptic Dreams (question #10)

Yes I had this kind of apocalyptic dream several times in my life:

- A dream of the apocalypse announced on a crackling radio, followed by dragons destroying the world with fire;
- A dream of a blazing red eyeball-like meteor descending and destroying the entire world, while turning society into a chaotic and violent orgy;
- A dream from my childhood in which everyone including heretics and religious converts are strangled to death on a fiery field by serpents with abstract triangular heads.

§

Natan Schäfer's apocalyptic dream (question #10)

Yes, I had apocalyptic nightmares. As for the last one I can remember, I was in my home town (Ibirama), near the house of Vanessa Petry, a friend from school that my friends and I found very beautiful and friendly. I was with my childhood friend João Manoel Zink. It was dark and I was looking at the sky when I saw lights, looking like stars, moving very quickly. So I understood that it was a UFO invasion and that they were attacking us. I think I hugged my friend goodbye and then said something like "they/the hour has come" and closed my eyes to await the destruction.

§

Dream having a determining importance on the life of the dreamer (here Jason Abdelhadi) (question #12)

There was such a dream that I had in the summer of 2010 while attending college. I read a lot of Chinese poetry back then. The dream was of a Chinese Taoist sage, possibly Lao Tzu or Chuang Tzu. In the dream, the sage appears to me in a shining cloud, smiling broadly and waving a horsehair whip. He assures me in very authoritative tones that following a life of poetry is the good life, in keeping with "The Dao." I remember feeling deep happiness and joy from this dream. It was at this point in my life, as a result of this dream, that I lost a lot of anxiety about poetry; maybe when I started thinking of it as a state of mind, and not as a product. So I feel comfortable saying that this dream opened up or corresponded to a new cycle of life for me.

ONEIRIC ECHOES



From the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Missouri, August 5, 1908.

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