



CHAPTER SIX

The Sundance Experiment: Dreams and The Myth of Community

In previous chapters, I've described how dreams can help the individual. Yet dreams reach out beyond the individual, as we've seen in the "Dream Helper Ceremony." Much of our lives are spent in interaction with others. Although it may be well understood that we can study our interpersonal relations in dreams, what is not readily recognized is that dreaming itself is not entirely a solitary activity. Other people may be involved in our dreams, and our dreams may have implications for people beyond ourselves. In this chapter I tell the story of my research exploring a mythological dimension to the sharing of dreams and the creation of community through dream sharing. It is a dream story that is part of the history of the creation of *Sundance: The Community Dream Journal*. It explains how that innovative publication—the one that people later claimed to have helped spawn the dreamwork movement—got its name, "Sundance." The publication was revolutionary in its time, as it demonstrated that there was an active interest in dreams among the

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lay population, and that there was credible dreamwork activity among such folks. The *Sundance* journal published their work, and professionals took note. The journal rescued dreams from the sole province of psychotherapy and firmly established dreams as a human resource in the learning community at large.

The *Sundance* journals provided more than proof that laypeople could use their dreams effectively. The journal also explored some of the ramifications of having a public forum for dreams. What if we were better informed, as a nation, as to what other people were dreaming about? What would be the result? As the universal roots of the Sundance motif are uncovered, there emerges the hypothesis that contemporary dreams may lead us to a modern experimental version of an ancient mystery. It may lead us toward the new myth we so anxiously await, involving community, transpersonal consciousness and a new source of life energy. In today's 21st century environment, with so many concerns over maintaining security amidst so many changes in the global environment, the dreams people had in response to the "Sundance Experiment," almost thirty years ago, seem prophetic today of the tough choices facing us. It is especially surprising that people's dreams would respond to the rather abstract proposition concerning the potential role of dream sharing in society. As we'll see, the response of dreams to this opportunity demonstrates the importance of this experiment and its implications.

This story begins many years ago. As a new student in psychology, I imagined bringing the experimental method to spiritual questions. I had secretly entertained a fantasy of an imaginary experiment in revelation. A universal spiritual motif is that behind the multiplicity of things, there is a unity, behind the "many" things of creation, there is actually a singular reality. The purpose of this experiment was to allow a group of very different people to experience their essential unity and connectedness with all life while at the same time providing each individual with a realization of his unique identity within that Unitive Whole. I supposed the experiment to be unscientific as we usually think of it. The fantasy does seem grandiose. Still, I found it hard to resist the temptation to imagine it. Finally, when I had joined the research team at A.R.E. in Virginia Beach, the idealism of that group inspired my dream of the "research dance." I'm going to tell the dream once again, as it has been the paradigm of my research and thinking about the role of dreams and intuition in the public community:

We are gathered together for research and enlightenment. But we haven't yet found the appropriate method for our research and we are standing around in the dark. Suddenly, we begin dancing together in a circle, each of displaying his own symbolic emblem. We realize that

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the method of research we are seeking is contained and expressed in our dancing. As we greet and celebrate one another in turn, our dance generates a fountain of sparks that fly off from the center to illuminate our space.

I found personal meaning in this dream, as it provided a way of resolving the internal struggles encountered in efforts to know myself better. At this personal level, for example, I found that if I allowed the various parts of myself to recognize and respect one another, that resulted in an internal harmony that was very creative.

I wondered if the dream might also yield an external, social application. At first, I used the dream merely as a symbolic portrayal of a general, idealized approach to cooperative research, as explained in the earlier chapter on the A.R.E. Dream Research Project. While that project materialized to confirm that interpretation, other dreams and events occurred to suggest furthermore that the dream of the “research dance” might point toward the fantasied experiment in revelation. I couldn’t help but explore the possibility.

I had been conducting experiments in dream incubation, as described in an earlier chapter. In these experiments, a person with a problem or a question would seek a helpful dream by first undergoing a preparatory ritual and then by sleeping in a specially erected dream tent. As part of the philosophy of the

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dream incubation procedure, the person was encouraged to share in some way with the rest of the community the benefits of the dream quest. On one particular occasion, such sharing led to an important discovery.

I'll always be grateful to Kenneth Klein for his gift to us. It was "family night" and we were using our dreams to make up skits. Ken presented to us a dream he thought we might enjoy enacting:

We are a circle of children. We each have a special, unique topping for making an ice cream sundae. We share and pass around these toppings so that we may each make our own exciting concoction.

In a fun, roving pantomime, we began enacting this dream. By extending ourselves as enrichments for one another, we came to experience, through the mystery of improvised movement and drama, a special quality of togetherness. A form of communion occurred, more tangible and direct than the most intense of our group meditation experiences.

Was this happening a fluke? To find out, at the community session that following summer I asked that we be on the lookout for dreams about the session itself which we might enjoy enacting. Two such dreams occurred. Being somewhat more mindful of the process, we allowed ample time for the dream enactments to unfold. We dressed up for each occasion. We had music to accompany our drama. We approached the enactments as we might a sacred ceremony or celebration. Again these enactments proved to be powerful communion experiences for the community. They also provided us with a "mythology," a shared symbolic story that gave meaning to the sometimes painful process of working together on a common ideal.

I am reminded of the story in *Black Elk Speaks*, where the tribe enacts the young Black Elk's visionary experience. Not that our community dream enactments were as momentous. Our enactments were not of sacred visions, but of rather simple dreams about the community. Yet the magical quality of the enactment experience was reminiscent of what Black Elk described. What the two situations may have in common is the process of a community giving life to a symbolic program revealed by the unconscious in an attempt to experience in practice a possibly creative pattern of energy.

Our community dream ceremonies led me to believe that just as a single individual can seek to incubate a dream that will resolve a personal conflict, so can a community prepare itself to have a dream that will move the community as a whole closer to its ideals. What might be an appropriate community method for incubating such a dream? Quite appropriately, the search itself for such a method has been furthered by the contribution of many individuals.

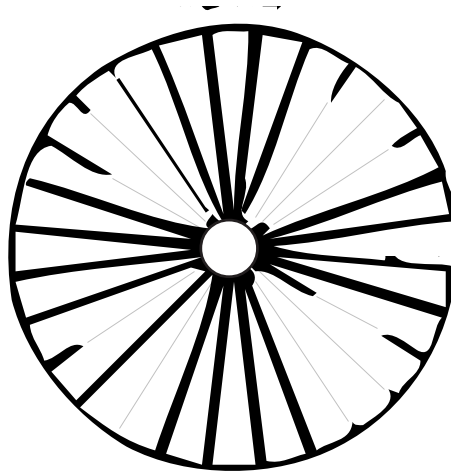
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I once presented a lecture on my observations and developing notions about a communal dream quest, and a member of the audience provided a crucial clue. William Lord kindly asked me if I had ever heard of the American Indian ceremony that was designed as a community vision quest, called the Sun Dance. The question startled me. I recalled that shortly after my dream of the “research dance,” I dreamed I received a letter in my Princeton University faculty mailbox, but addressed to me c/o “Sundance College.” It was a dream letter that apparently I had never opened and I am grateful to Bill for suggesting that I do.

Doing some reading, I learned that the Sun Dance is a seasonal ceremony of rejuvenation. The purpose of the ceremony is to receive visions that will benefit both the individual dancers and the community as well. It is often because of a dream encouraging participation that a person decides to dance in the ceremony. According to some traditions, the Sun Dance came from a dream; and thus the ceremony is itself a communal enactment of a dream.

Central to the Sun Dance is a pole, hewn in a sacred manner from a tree. Around this pole the dancers are attached to it by means of long leather strips fastened to the chest. Sometimes the dancers are ornamented with symbols from their prior individual dream quest. Each person dances in pace until overcome by a vision. At the conclusion of the 2-3 day ceremony, members of the audience who are sick may be healed by touching the center pole.

The Sun Dance ceremony is much more complex than I describe, and it is but the visible portion of a comprehensive, religious world view. What I want to convey in my brief account is that there is some



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similarity, in both form and purpose, between the Sun Dance and my dream of the “research dance.” In form, both are dances around a central focus of life energy, with the dancers displaying personal symbols. In purpose, both attempt to encourage revelation for individual and community.

When I read about the Sun Dance, I was surprised to discover these similarities. What especially amazed me was the realization that my dream of the “Sundance letter” had been cluing me to this connection, if only I had thought to track it down. It is interesting how a dream can ferret out such potentials in a research program. I continue to believe that such events point to the archetypal significance of what I was exploring.

Since I had overlooked one dream clue, I wondered if I had overlooked others. I searched back through my dream journals and found that during the period of those community dream enactments described earlier, I had experienced several dreams involving a group of people surrounding a tree. In one dream, *we are running around a tree, wrapping it with ribbons*. This dream image seemed similar in form to the Sun Dance. It also reminded me of the May Pole celebration. These resemblances suggested that there existed an archetypal or Universal Idea that is common to the Sun Dance, the May Pole celebration, my dream of the “research dance” and my imaginary experiment in revelation.

Meanwhile, the A.R.E. Dream Research Project was being prepared. Could it be that within this cooperative experiment, there might occur dreams that would reflect upon the project itself? People in an intimate, long-term residen-



tial workshop might dream about their community experience, but could people working together through the mail also have dreams about their shared venture.

Since in my dream I am contacted at Sundance by *letter*, cooperative dreaming through the mail seemed less unlikely. And so I asked the research participants to question their dreams about our project. As shown in my report on that project, some participants did have dreams about our cooperative experiment. And as an unexpected bonus, some of these dreams also hinted at their being a Universal Idea underlying the Sundance theme.

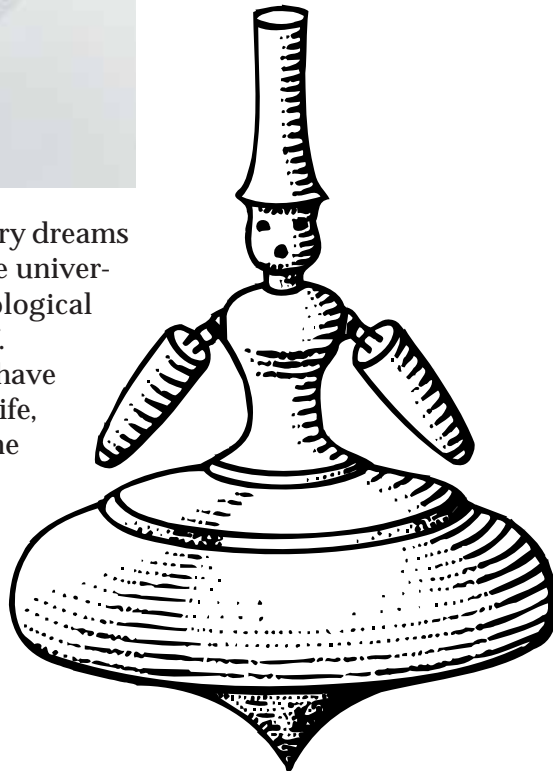
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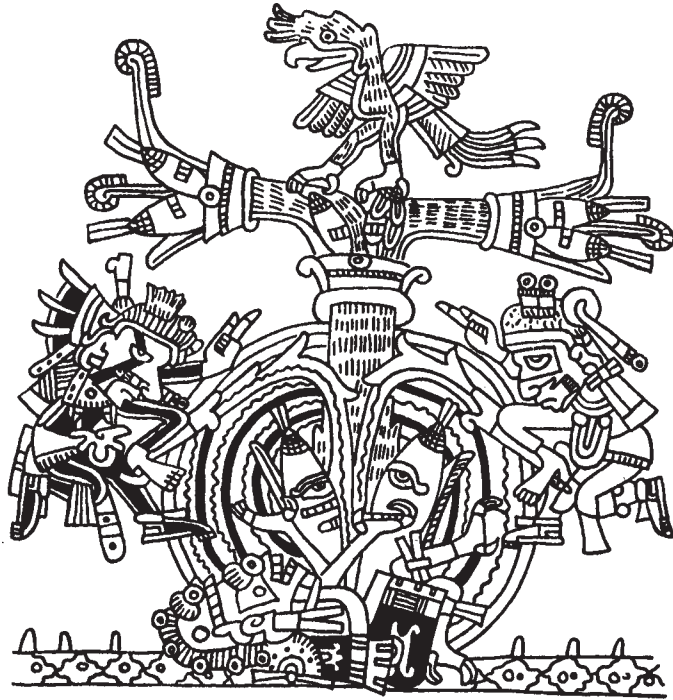
What is the nature of this Universal Idea? The image of a gyroscope (or a top) is a convenient device to portray the dynamic structure of the symbolic process we are dealing with. The gyroscope has three main components: the central axis, the circular motion around the axis, and the balance of forces between the two. The system as a whole has an important property, a certain type of self-generated creative stability. Using the components of the gyroscope as an outline, and with the aid of a

few pictures and some contemporary dreams I'll present a brief synopsis of some universal symbols related to the mythological background of the Sundance motif.

Beginning with the axis, we have the universal symbol of the Tree of Life, which may symbolize creation, the human psyche as a growth process, or the line of communication between Heaven and Earth. From earliest times, the Tree of Life has been pictorially portrayed with people standing around it, perhaps tending to its need. Often in these pictures, there is above the tree either the sun, a winged figure, or a winged figure within the



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sun, symbolizing perhaps the source and goal of the fertile inspiration that gives rise to the tree.

By the time of ancient Greece, if not sooner, the people around the tree are dancing. There have been numerous rites and celebrations involving trees and dancing. A community theme has typically been a part of the tree festivities as they sought a blessing of fertility for the King and his people. The "Dithyramb" was a Greek spring song and dance festival concerned with the summoning of

spring. A ceremonially erected tree was the focus of the festivity. The celebration featured dancing maidens as representatives of latent fertility. Regeneration was also a theme of the tree festivity, involving the rebirth of Dionysos, who, like the later Risen Christ of Easter, was seen as a twice-born young man. Another spring festival is the May Pole celebration of the British Isles, also enjoyed in this country, with its flowers and the dancing with ribbons around a pole prepared from a tree. It is almost as if by decorating a barren tree with flowers and dancing around it, the people are trying to coax the tree to imitate the spring in their dance and sprout forth its own flowers.

But there are also summer festivals involving trees and dancing. There is the Scandinavian Midsummer's Festival, celebrated with a specially prepared tree. And there is the Sun Dance. With the Sun Dance it is easiest to discern what is actually present in all these festivities: a concern not merely for physical fertility but also for the regeneration of the imagination and spirit of the people, both individually and as a whole through the seeking of visions.

Here is a dream sent in by a participant in the A.R.E. Dream Research Project. The dream reflects the imagery of the tree rites and a concern for the creativity of ideas:

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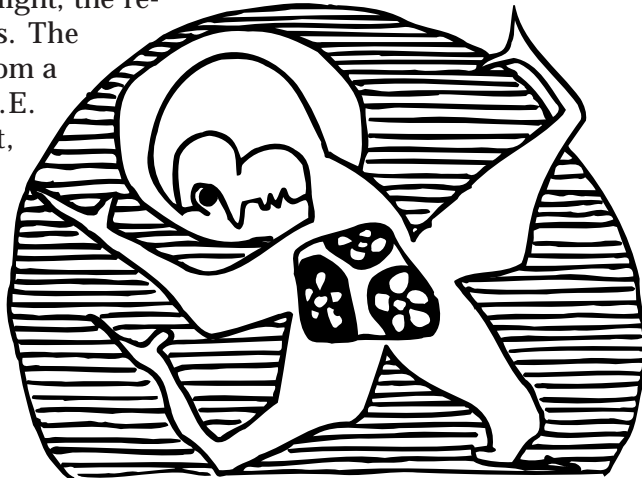
I am in a class. I can participate at various levels. I am at the creative writing level. I write a song for a tree. It is raining cosmic rain, in seed for God's planted ideas. The ideas are dissolved in water, and growth is the result.

The Tree of Life has also functioned as the world axis, the “center still point” around which the phases of creation revolve. As a symbol, dancing around the center may reflect the “dance of life,” the constantly transforming movement and change over time that is paradoxically the eternally present and unchanging One. Or the dance may very well be an actual attunement to the vibration of the creative forces. Here is a dream, also from a participant in the A.R.E. Dream Research Project, portraying this process in modern imagery:

There is a bright, stainless steel tubular cylinder, resting upon a round, stainless steel track much larger in diameter. A scientist in a white coat helps a man strap himself into a cylinder. The scientist's theory is that an ill person can regain his health by being whirled by centrifugal force for a period of time. This causes the vibrations of various parts of the body to become synchronized.

Like vibration, movement around a circle is pure movement; it actually goes nowhere. The mystery of manifestation may perhaps be experienced in vibratory activity, such as in ritual trance dance. The body is in motion yet in the middle of it all there opens an experience of the stillness and then the light, the re-creation of consciousness. The following dream, again from a participant in the A.R.E. Dream Research Project, suggests the mystical significance of dance:

I am in a courtyard. It is dark and I am alone. I am aware of being judged and condemned. Suddenly, I see a glow



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coming toward me. As it grows brighter, I see that it is Jesus. He stands before me, and I fall to my knees in tears. I kiss His feet, then His hands, and He raises me up. We both smile and embrace like long lost friends. He takes me by the hand and leads me out of the courtyard. We come to a stairway up a hill and ascend, while the light becomes stronger. We climb to the top and find ourselves on a very green hill in broad daylight. There are many young people circling the hill, dressed in long, white robes embroidered with bright colors, and with flowers entwined in their hair. We join the circle and dance the Jewish Hora.

Jesus dancing? Sure enough, in the Acts of John recorded in *The Apocryphal New Testament* there is a description of a round dance led by Jesus to initiate His apostles into the mystery:

“He bade us therefore make as it were a ring, holding one another’s hands, and himself standing in the midst he said: Answer Amen unto me.” (Verse 94)

As the apostles dance around Jesus, He sings a song and they chant Amen after every line:

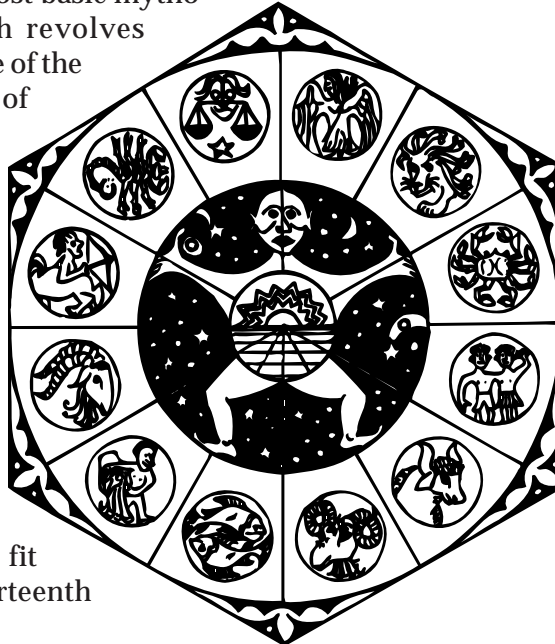
“Grace danceth. I would pipe; dance ye all. Amen

The number Twelve danceth on high. Amen.

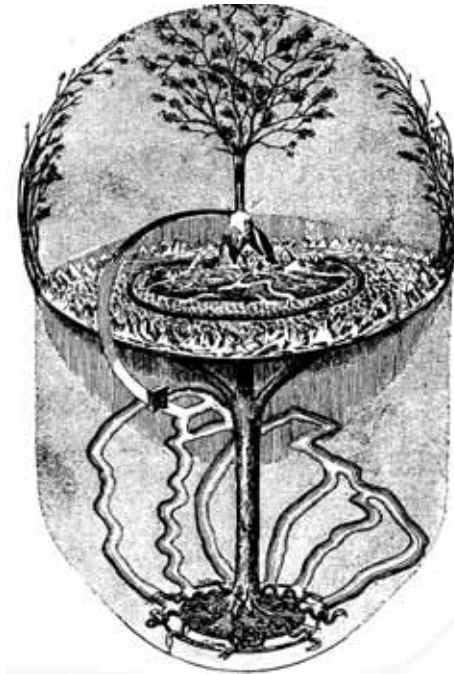
The Whole on high hath part in our dancing. Amen.” (Verse 95)

What is the significance of the twelve dancing

around the One? Perhaps the most basic mythological symbol for that which revolves around our axial tree is the image of the Wheel of Life, again a reflection of the endless cycle of created manifestation. One of the most common representatives of the Wheel of Life is the zodiac, with its twelve constellations. Again, twelve evolve around one. There are the twelve Knights of the Round Table and several other similar examples. Perhaps the meaning of twelve around one is related to sacred geometry, as twelve is the number of equal-sized spheres that fit perfectly around a central, thirteenth sphere, forming a stable solid.



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World Tree

The relationship between the Twelve and the One, between the Many and the One, brings us to the third component of our gyroscope, the balance of forces between the axis and the whirling circle. Note what Jesus says to John about the round dance:

“Thou that dancest, perceive what I do, for thine is this passion of the manhood, which I am about to suffer... Learn thou to suffer; and thou shalt be able not to suffer... that suffering which also I showed unto thee and the rest in the dance, I will that it be called a mystery.” (Verse 96 and 101)

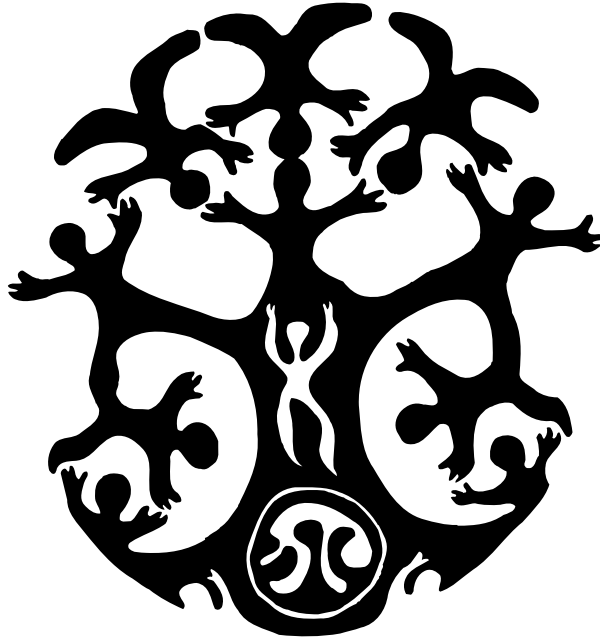
The image of Jesus suffering on the Cross is a familiar one. What is the mystery of this suffering? There are some mythological parallels, described in Campbell's *The Masks of God*. There is the Norse god, Wotan, for example, who hangs from a tree, speared in sacrifice to himself, in order to learn the secret of the Runes. There is also Ixion, forever bound to the Wheel of Life by his passion; yet it is his passion that also creates the wheel and sustains it.

The Sun Dance also has something to teach about suffering. The leather strap from the central pole is gouged into the dancer's chest. As the dancer leans back, pulling on the strap, he enters into suffering. If he moves too close to the center, the strap becomes slack and there is no suffering. If he pulls back too hard, his skin tears and he separates himself from the dance. Maintaining

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the maximum amount of tension that the flesh will allow, the dancer sustains the suffering. At a certain point, the body ceases to distinguish suffering from non-suffering, and at that moment the dancer is initiated into the mystery by a vision.

It is the transcendence of duality that is central to the mystery. The central pole of the Sun Dance lodge is forked, as an expression of this principle, and is thus reminiscent of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The One is separated out of itself so that it may become consciously aware that it is One. That is perhaps the mystery.



We can go around and around this point. There are many mythological spinoffs of this central, Universal Idea.

The lesson for community is that the tension between the Many and the One can be of a creative tension. But when operating from a dualistic frame of reference, the choices are seen only as being either to “surrender the ego” and be one with the group, the community, the Whole, or to separate oneself as an “individualist,” but the initiation into the mystery comes when the tension is sustained until the time arrives that it is possible to transcend dualistic consciousness. Then we experience ourselves neither as merely individuals nor as merely one with the community or Whole, but somehow as both.

As a result of the dream story I’ve told here, I would now call my imaginary experiment in revelation the “Sundance Experiment.” The basic hypothesis of this experiment is that a community of people *can obtain from their dreams* the necessary symbolic patterns to create their own appropriate method with which to experience the secret of the universal mystery central to the mythology of the Sundance motif. Most generally, that motif concerns the mystery of how we can be both individuals and yet one with All. It is an exciting idea, that there awaits a contemporary methodology, one that we can discover in our

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dreams, that will enable us to reexperience, in modern times and in modern terms, this ancient mystical truth.

Evidence of this possibility has been found in the dream incubations and community dream enactments conducted at Atlantic University. The A.R.E. Dream Research Project showed that it is possible for contemporary dreams to provide further clues to the nature of mythological Sundance motif. Inasmuch as *Sundance: The Community Dream Journal* provides a focus for dreams about the concept of community, it too may elicit dreams that will contribute to the Sundance Experiment. In fact, subscribers dreams (see the dreams posted on the grey pages in this chapter) quickly reflected aspects of Sundance imagery as well as concern for the tension between individual needs and group unity. It does seem possible that, given the proper conditions, we can dream up our experiments in revelations.

I suspect that there is a certain timeliness to the mythology of the Sundance motif that would make such symbology relevant to contemporary dreaming. The pressures on our planet are making it so important that we learn to cooperate; hence community has become an important goal for many. The origin of the Sundance theme in mythology can be traced to the period when community states of diverse citizens were being performed, and the motif has often been applied to the problem of how people might cooperate to meet their individual needs. With its emphasis on fertility and rejuvenation, the Sundance motif is also relevant to our ecological concerns for our World Tree. Particularly important is the capability of the Sundance principle to help give birth to a contemporary mythology.

We are becoming increasingly aware of the value of dreams and mythology as a bridge to the transformation of consciousness that is the New Age. We are becoming at least subliminally aware that the human race is in the process of incubating a new dream to enact. What is it to be? What rumors have you heard? Here's a dream sent in by one of our participating subscribers:

People are massing together restlessly, unaware of the impending doom. Something is beginning to happen concerning nature and the weather that is making people uncomfortable. I see hundreds of people all dressed in brown gathered in a closed building. They are all standing on each other's shoulders, stacked up and balancing from 6 to 10 people at once. Apparently they are trying to go somewhere, but there is no escape.

I see to my left a picture flash, like a vision, of ocean water or some sort of rushing water coming from a distance. A deluge? Earth-

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Subscribers' Dreams
Responding to the Creation of
Sundance: The Community Dream Journal

In the subscription notice for our journal, there was the following suggestion:

"Invite your dreams to reflect upon your subscription. One method of doing so, tested in the A.R.E. Dream Research Project, is as follows: Write a letter to your dreams, expressing your interest in knowing them better. Ask your dreams how your participation in *Sundance* might affect you and your dream life. Wrap your dream letter with the subscription notice, and place under your pillow for a night or two. Send any resulting dreams along with your subscription, stating whether we have permission to publish the dream in *Sundance*."

Below are some of the dreams received. These dreams were dreamed prior to the publication of the first issue of *Sundance*.

I am standing waiting in the hallway of a large hotel when the doors to a convention or ballroom are opened. I walk in with many other people and take a seat at one of the many large, long tables that are arranged in vertical rows toward a center dais. A man stands behind the dais. It is understood that this gathering is for *Sundance: The Community Dream Journal*. The man asks us to identify ourselves. With that, everyone jumps up, thrusting both hands into the air. We shout, "Who are we?" answering a question with a question. I write out a check to *Sundance*, saying that this is all I have. (R.R.R., Chicago, Illinois)

I am in front of my house telling a neighbor about *Sundance: The Community Dream Journal*. As I am doing so, both the screen door and my regular door suddenly swing wide open. (J.H., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

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I walk into a cave with a small group of people. The entrance is a tunnel with a line of Indians on each side. The lines remind me of a receiving line except that no one speaks to us. We reach the end of the tunnel which opens into a cave with a large fire in the middle of the floor. The cave isn't large but neither does it seem crowded by the number of people. A curved downgrade to the right leads to the cave floor. There are Indians all along the wall of the cave and a few dancing around the fire. The dancers are in pairs. My companions all go down to the cave floor. I step back into the tunnel where I can not see the cave because I am not sure that the Indians would want us watching such an important ceremony. While I am standing back in the tunnel, a young Indian woman comes up to me. She puts her arm around my waist and walks with me into the cave, down the path and out among the dancers. She dances with me briefly and then leaves me with another partner. [The fire gives off plenty of light but no heat. As a consequence, it is not unduly warm.] While dancing, I suddenly realize that my steps are exactly the opposite of all the other dancers'. I am momentarily uncertain about what to do. Then the woman who had brought me into the cave is back at my side and tells me that I am doing just fine. She begins to dance with me, matching her steps to mine. The dance works just as well with my backward steps as it does with the regular steps. (C.K.S., San Angelo, Texas)

A ballroom full of couples who are dancing to the song, "Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Old Oak Tree." (C.G.S., St. Petersburg, Florida)

I am alone in the middle of the desert at twilight. I am sitting on the driver's seat of an old-fashioned buckboard. I hold the reins but there are no horses to pull the wagon. I have a long white beard and long white hair. Encircling my head is a cardboard ring painted gold. Suddenly a young girl appears out of the ground with a horse. Silently she hitches the horse to the wagon, then goes around back and climbs aboard. Suddenly there is a shiny, pointed gem sticking up out of the front of the cardboard ring around my head. Then, appearing from nowhere, others come, each with his own horse. As each silently hitches his horse to the wagon and climbs on board, another gem-point appears on the cardboard ring. Finally there are seven people on board and there are three pairs of horses with a single lead horse. The sky has been growing lighter and the people

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are murmuring about the strangeness that as the hour grows later the sky grows brighter. Finally it becomes like broad daylight, although there is no sun in the sky. I start to drive and as soon as the wheels start rolling, we are no longer in the desert. There are woods and meadows all around us and babbling brooks with flowers at the edge. As we drive, the wagon becomes larger and larger. Suddenly it is a barn filled with hay. Everybody is square-dancing and having a good time. Each person takes a turn calling the turns. I wake up laughing so hard and loud I have to look around to make sure I am home. (C.N.E., Mount Laurel, New Jersey)

I dreamed about circles, and sang "Let the Circle Be Unbroken." (D.R., Independence, Kansas)

I am starting on an ocean liner trip. The ship is not a first-class ship, but perhaps a second-class one. I have paid for the trip but don't know what to expect in the way of financial extras. Everything takes place in a circle. All the chairs are arranged in a circle on the main deck and, with brief exceptions, everybody always comes back to this circle for the whole of the trip. There is one chair with an arm-desk attached [as in school] where one can work on a potter's wheel. I think this is nice, except for the fact that people will be standing around watching you. I don't like that, nor do I much like the idea of being constantly brought together with no more time for the individual than is allowed for. There are plenty of stewards and stewardesses on board to attend to the guests. We [there are several people in my care] have a steward meeting our needs as well as a number of other passengers. The steward is seemingly sincere in his attention to us, but I feel it may be for extra tips. He brings a large bouquet of lilacs to me. I take them to my kitchen cabinet [on board ship] to look for an appropriate container. I have four large containers, like pitchers. Three are clear crystal and one a clear amber color, but all are slightly larger than is needed. They are all I have and I think that one of them will do. Then I notice that the bouquet is really two bouquets and I think it presumptuous of me to assume that both are for me, although the steward did not say otherwise. Is it all for me or part for someone else? If only half is for me then my containers are too large. (B.D., Berkeley, California)

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I am in a room with some people. My own room opens off it. In a spirit of independence, as if to say I don't need them and I can manage by myself, I go into my room and close the door. It is cold in my room as the source of heat is in the room with the people. I try to start my own makeshift fire, but it is still cold. I am worried that children might be burned when I am not there to watch; so I unplug the thing in which I have built the fire [it looked like a bathinette with no cover or top] and push it behind the other furniture so that no one will trip on the cord. I tell someone that it is there so they might watch if children are near it. This one room now becomes a succession of rooms, with a draft which I think might blow on the fire, so I go to shut the window in the front room. But a pair of tanned hands are just letting go of the window, as if they had just opened it, so I dare not close it. The window in the back room is closed. It is a kitchen-sized window set high in the wall and full of plants. One plant is a vine and it is climbing around the other plants to get to the light. (W.M., Eliot, Maine)

I leave my Cadillac to be washed at an old car wash that looks like an abandoned machine or auto shop. There is no asphalt or cement, only open ground. There is a shed with unfinished wooden shelves and some old equipment lying around. There is no one there so I leave a \$5 bill with the car. I call my husband to pick me up and later he drives me back to get the car. The proprietor has left change attached to a block of wood. Someone else's change is attached to



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another block of wood. Then I notice on the top shelf several old wallets where people have left money for car washes. I decide these people really trust the proprietor. They've left the whole wallet and valuable identification papers instead of just cash. (S.S., Chatsworth, California)

I'm at a seashore resort looking for something, as if for a place I've been to before. Finally I [or we, as all the time I feel that someone else is with me] enter this one place and recognize something about it. It is a pool that can be reached through sliding glass doors. There is also a dance area that seems familiar to me. I then find myself in a dressing room. A woman is getting dressed. I look at her and wish that she would not undress with me in there. As her clothes drop to the floor, she sees me and falls back in surprise. I feel slightly embarrassed. Now I am walking along, looking toward the ocean. I notice a water spout, a twister in the water, that is developing. I mention this and someone says, "There are three of them." I become aware of two behind the one I had noticed and also one off to my right that had dissipated into a stream of water. Now I'm watching someone painting. He is painting several large squares connected together with several smaller squares. It reminds me of a square wave formation, of "pulse modulated frequency," as seen on an oscilloscope. Someone wants to help this man but he won't let him. (C.G., Melbourne, Florida)

I am sharing a bed with an individual who never seems to come out from under the covers. The side of the bed nearer the wall is "my" side, the side I always enter and exit from. That wall has a window, but apparently the shades are always drawn, as the light in the room is always dim. I had gone to bed, and upon awakening in the morning I find that my bed-partner is dead. The cause of death is strangulation. Without delay I summon assistance. Crowds of learned men, doctors and professors determine that he is dead. Then they leave. I talk with my husband about all this. Then my household duties carry me past the bedroom door; and my glance is drawn fearfully into the room where I see the blanket-covered body. Then I notice something different. It looks as if the corpse, which had been lying on its back, has now turned on its side, facing away from the door. As I had feared, I am now compelled to step into the room, and find out if the person is really dead. Although I'm afraid I'll find him dead after all, I look at him and discover that he has always been alive. He has

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been only dormant all this time. I go to the window and adjust the blinds. Then I sit on my side of the bed. He reaches out and encircles my waist with his arm. Succumbing to gentle pressure, I lay back resting against him, seeming to almost melt, my fear dissipating at last. (A.S.H., Waterbury, Connecticut)

I am holding one of my plants, a Kalanchoe in a white plastic pot. I decide to propagate it by taking a leaf cutting and starting a new plant. (L.S., Myrtle Beach, South Carolina)

How strange, your subscription notice arrived the very day that I remembered a dream for the first time in over six years. What I remembered of the dream is that it was about a fair-haired young boy. (T.L., Hampton, Georgia)

When I read your subscription notice, including your invitation to participate in dream research, I thought, "What a come-on." I planned to subscribe, but of course did not write a dream letter as proposed. But sure enough, early this morning I awoke from a dream in which the activities I am involved with at my place of work were pointed up in a dream journal. I recall the journal being open to the pages on which were the most recent entries. (P.V.D., Providence, Rhode Island)

I am looking through a beautiful magazine, with glossy paper. Everything is in color. The paper is of such high gloss that light reflects off of it. It reminds me of the National Geographic. A voice speaks to me and says, "Check this, it is Sundance." (J.S., Lancaster, California)

I am on the sidewalk on my way to the mailbox to mail a group of important letters, my Sundance subscription being one of them. Standing at the mailbox holding open the lid is a mailman. All around him and the mailbox are open sacks of mail filled to capacity. I do not understand why the mailman holds the lid open for the other people besides myself coming to mail letters. The understanding given is that there are a few minutes left before all the mail is to be collected at the ten o'clock collection and the mailman is waiting for the "rest of us" to get our letters in before he takes them all. Of all the people going to the mailbox I recognize only two—one is a friend and the other is a master in the physical with whom I work. (E.S., Connellsville, Pennsylvania)

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Two days before the subscription flyer for Sundance arrived I had the following dream:

I am dancing a circle dance. The other dancers are members of the A.R.E. Study Groups and of a group that meets weekly but has no name. The dance symbolizes to us unity and oneness with God. The feeling is one of joy and love enjoyed by all present. I am conscious of all of this and also of the oneness of spiritual purpose among the dancers. (P.L.J., Walla Walla, Washington)

I go to the source of *Sundance: The Community Dream Journal* in person, traveling in the dark. I arrive at a large white house similar to the A.R.E. Headquarters on top of a hill in Virginia Beach. It is very dark but light enough for me to see that surrounding the entire house is hooked wool carpeting. It covers the whole ground from the walls of the house out into the surrounding roadway and even the gutters of the road. It has a hooked-in repeating pattern of a black donkey with the Virgin Mary riding it. Then someone in the house turns on a light and the scene is lit with a soft violet hue like that of a stage spotlight. Then it goes out and everything is black again. I can hear some person in the house moving around, and things clinking, but no one comes out. It gives me an eerie feeling not to see who it is. The colors of black and violet are vaguely disturbing. Finally I realize it is not safe outside the house and that if I remain I will have to stand with my back to the wall and face whatever clunked in the darkness. I decide to go inside instead. Inside I flick on a light and find that I am on a lower floor and that the person I can hear is upstairs still clinking things as if in preparation for something. The feeling is that the unseen person is fixing things for some kind of welcome feast but that this person does not want to be revealed to me yet. Downstairs is a huge dining room with a huge table and next to it an equally huge kitchen. There was absolutely no living room or sitting area of any type. The idea comes to me that in this way the occupant of the dwelling can signify that it is wished to offer maximum hospitality and that the social living could be worked in around it. For instance, I reason, you could play a game like chess in a corner of the huge dining room. The main emphasis in that house is always to be on maximum hospitality by an unseen host. (M.M., Alexandria, Virginia)

(Dream 1) I get out of a car and approach a dance floor. The dance floor is well lighted while everything else is dark. There are no walls

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or roof. The floor is of highly polished wood, and square. A very tall woman, dressed in a bright red, robe-like dress with Aztec decorations at the neck, follows me and I wait for her to join me. When she draws near, we dance on the floor, close but not touching. We do a strange dance, with a lot of knee bending and bowing and with a skip and a hop. I say we are doing a Philippine dance.

(Dream 2, same night) I am walking in a parking lot of an apartment project. The parking lot is of a blacktop material, well lighted and very large. I have a lot of keys in my hand. I am looking through them. I have to choose one but do not know which car is mine or where it is. A woman comes and gets into a car. Instead of sitting in a seat, she stands up to drive, and she is very tall. I am wondering how she can do that, then notice that she is in a van. She says to someone, "Look, there is a woman who works and she doesn't even know which key to use!" I laugh and say, "Not only do I not know which key to use, I don't know which car is mine or where it is." (E .B. Houston, Texas)

A small group is outside playing in the bright moonlight, under the shade of a huge tree, dancing around, feeling free. I hold a baby and hope it's dressed warmly enough. Next, it's daytime. It seems like the dancing and playing is over. I am in my car driving in a line of other cars leaving. A man cuts in front of me at an intersection. He is driving a large blue car, heavy and expensive looking. He seems to be blindfolded. I feel no wonder he cut in front of me; he didn't see me. I can see ahead up on the side of a hill or mountain the main road we are heading for, with a stream of traffic on it all going in one direction. I wonder how we'll get onto the road, how we'll be able to break through the line of cars. I follow the line I'm in up the hill. Then I see I am leading the way. I've come a different way. It isn't really a road but I get up on the main road a little ahead of the other line and I see some people are following my way. I hope they make it all right. By the time they all get up on the main road there will be more of a road this way that we have made. (L.B., Modesto, California)

(Dream 1) I am talking aloud to myself in a room full of people.

(Dream 2) I am sitting beside a muddy, placid pond with a woman friend. Men bring a tree trunk (it has a divided trunk) to the pond. I move aside and they slide the tree into the water. The trunk displaces the water and it washes up to my friend and me. We float towards the middle of the pond, and then we feel suction, as in a whirlpool.

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Suddenly we are swept along. There is a thunderous roar in my ears as we approach the brink of a fall. I reach out to grab some branches, like willow stems. As my hands slip on them, I shout to my friend to grab something, but I feel she is too far away and is swept over the brink. (B.S., Vancouver, British Columbia)

I enter a room where an old man sleeps. I make love with him. It seems to mean a lot to him, although I am revolted because of his condition and the dingy state of the room. I feel a certain fascination and a commitment to return. The old man is not there. The shades are up and the room is transformed by yellow sunlight. A stern woman tells me to remove the painting on the wall which I have painted and hung there. She tells me that I can bring something else to put in its place if I wish. I tell her I like the way things look without any replacement. I then walk through a marshland. By the yellow, tan and brown tones of the rushes and weeds, as well as by their texture, I know it is autumn. Many variety and sizes and shapes of birds are feeding there. I am aware of how many different hues my eyes can now discern in what used to seem a monotone landscape. There is a mood of happy tension. I am joined by others. (M.L.C., Mt. Kisco, New York)

I am looking down on a long dock with a long net pulled up along the near side. It is full of various sea life. There is a long fish, which I know is a bluefish, about six feet long and six to eight inches wide. I am looking down on its back. I pick up a stick, which is gray like a piece of driftwood and about a foot long, and place it along the fish. I count six measurements and say, "It is six feet long," meaning that it is at least that long. On the other side of the dock, which is about thirty feet wide, is another long net full of shell fish and fish, or a stack of clams and shellfish. I think it is a clambake and think I will go over and get something to eat. (L.J.M., Chevy Chase, Maryland)

I am standing in front of a mirror brushing my hair. I come closer to the mirror and hold back my hair with my hand. I notice that all along the hair line there is new hair starting to grow. I am surprised but pleased. (S.L.B., Jackson, New Jersey)

I am out in a crowd. All my caps (12 in all) fall off my teeth. Bit by bit little pieces keep falling out of my mouth. I hold the pieces in my hand. They get very warm and pliable. I end up with a gloppy looking thick paste. (A.T., North Palm Beach, Florida)

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I am with a group of religious zealots. Suddenly we are surrounded by a rival group who start putting our eyes out for not having "true beliefs." Time passes and my group becomes powerful. We then do the same thing to the other group. Suddenly I realize the horrors of what I am doing. I begin to weep. I walk up to three of my victims, put my arms around them, and ask for their forgiveness. (D.B., Washington, D.C.)

Here are the first few dreams that follow were dreamed by subscribers who had received and read the first issue.

I am attending a lecture with a huge stadium-size crowd about a new movement—the Sundance movement. Movies are shown about its philosophy and philanthropy. There is a strong sense of power and creative energy. The emphasis is placed on mass unity and "love," with generation and exploitation of sexual energies, and with physical "free love" encouraged. Everyone is becoming enthusiastic and joining the movement. I ask a friend what he thinks about it, stating that I think it is frightening how everyone is caught up in it. He looks directly at me and says, "Oh, but it's true!" I have a sickening feeling and realize there will be persecution of those who do not join in, considering them anti-progressive. (G.A.B., Virginia Beach, Virginia)

I'm going to a school or academy. I see what's happening to the others there. Some are being seduced, others brainwashed. Then there is a large dark area. There is a floodlight at the back making everything appear in silhouette. I see a girl running, then a great spindly legged spider chasing her. The spider is me. I catch her, we roll over several times struggling. The school seems to be for executives and heads of companies. Then it's time to go home. There have been subtle changes worked on the students. One has a great limousine. His driver asks about the driving. He says, "No, let someone else drive." I'm thinking that this signifies some sort of sinister conspiracy. I'm at my own company at the board of directors meeting. I present the plan that has been given me. There is a great book placed on the table. It's connected together and folds out in such a way that each board member has before him a picture of his portion of the company and a blank page. The pages are gray or very pale brown. I tell them I've learned to have everything, all the records and accounts, in one book. I ask for a vote. Some applaud and some

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say no. I say, "This is the way it's going to be." (D.G., Lititz, Pennsylvania)

(Dream 1) I am observing a mother or a teacher with a six-year-old child. The adult is showing the child how to turn a wheel: "In this first space, you say ... and then turn to the second space and say..." and so on, all the way around. I thought to myself that there is no way a child can do that alone and know what and when to say it. Then I look closer and see the words on the wheel and realize that after the adult gets the child started, if the child does one step at a time, the child could make the whole circle alone. Then I see children and leaders outside playing, dancing and singing every game I had ever known that forms a circle.

(Dream 2) I am shown how to place objects in my bedroom before going to bed. When I awaken they have formed a round mold or stamp. This is my dream record. Then I take this mold to a man and he wires it up to a machine and the EKG needle puts it on tape. Then it is put on video tape for people to drop in and see when they wish. When I leave I take my personal mold but leave behind other information on file for others. The three recordings are different and may not be important except to certain ones. They are neither positive or negative—just are! (B.P., Charlotte, North Carolina)

Commentary on the Dreams

The dreams intimate the potential (both good and bad) of our experimental publication. They reveal the inner questioning that seems prompted by the invitation of the *Sundance* experiment; the invitation to share, to cooperate, to recognize Oneness; the invitation to know Self. The dreams seem to know what we can only guess.

We can note some of the themes that are common to several of the dreams. There is the theme of group activity: the convention, the ceremony and the ocean liner cruise, for example, which may reflect the community aspect of the journal. There is also the theme of dancing: The ballroom, the dance around the fire, and the square dance, for example, remind us of the word, Sundance. There is the theme of the circle: around the fire, around the tree, the cardboard ring,

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the circle of chairs and the song, "Let the Circle Be Unbroken." This again reflects among other possibilities, the nature of Sundance.

There are some other themes that might prove interesting as more dreams are received, such as the theme of the "other" (the dancing partner, the bouquet for someone else, the "someone else" with the dreamer, and the mysterious bed-partner), and the theme of "new life" (the child, the plant cutting and the fair-haired young boy).

Perhaps the one most dominant theme in the dreams is the contrast between the individual and the group, sometimes involving a conflict. On one hand the group may have the advantage of higher energy: *I am alone...in the driver's seat ... no horses . . . seven people on board and there are ... horses ...* or *It is cold in my room as the source of heat is in the room with the people.* On the other hand, the individual is important: *. . . nor do I like the idea of being constantly brought together with no more time for the individual . . .* One of the needs of the individual is for individuality: *While dancing, I suddenly realize that my steps are exactly the opposite of all the other dancers.* There is a need for privacy: *There is one chair . . . where one can work on a potter's wheel. I think this is nice, except for the fact that people will be standing around watching you.* There is also a concern for maintaining one's identity: *They've left the whole wallet and valuable identification papers instead of just cash.* We find more than one mention of persecution of "outsiders."

This general theme of the individual and the group may reflect, on one level, a concern that a journal published for a large group of people might have difficulty meeting the special needs of the individual reader. On a deeper level, the theme points to the heart of the creative tension inherent in the very notion of community- how to reap the benefits of cooperation and at the same time encourage and provide for the vital uniqueness of the individual. It is exciting to find subscribers' dreams raising this question right from the start; for it is also the question posed by the Sundance Experiment itself. One

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dream does suggest that the contrast between the individual and the group is not necessarily a problem: The dance works just as well with my backward steps as it does with the regular steps. Perhaps future dreams will provide us with further inspiration. At this early stage of our experimental journal, it might be helpful to attend first to the question posed by one of the dreams: "Who are we?"

Dreams are mysterious. And so, a journal that is alive to dreams will also be somewhat mysterious. This is partly because we are still attempting to articulate the nature of the Journal; but more so because it is not completely a product of our conscious intelligence. The other day a woman came to say that the subscription brochure for *Sundance* was unclear to her and that she didn't understand what we were trying to do with the Journal. She then proceeded to relate several of her dreams in which she was spoken to in a variety of foreign languages she didn't understand, but how in several instances she had later learned that they contained important messages. Thus, although the woman did not consciously understand the purpose of the Journal, at some other level she did.

Some of the dreams demonstrate the archetypal patterns associated with the Sundance experiment. The image of "men carrying a tree with a forked branch" is a common theme in the tree rite ceremonies, such as in the Sun Dance. Another dream detects the orgiastic, sexual roots of the Sundance motif, its ancestry in fertility rites. The quest for power is also portrayed.

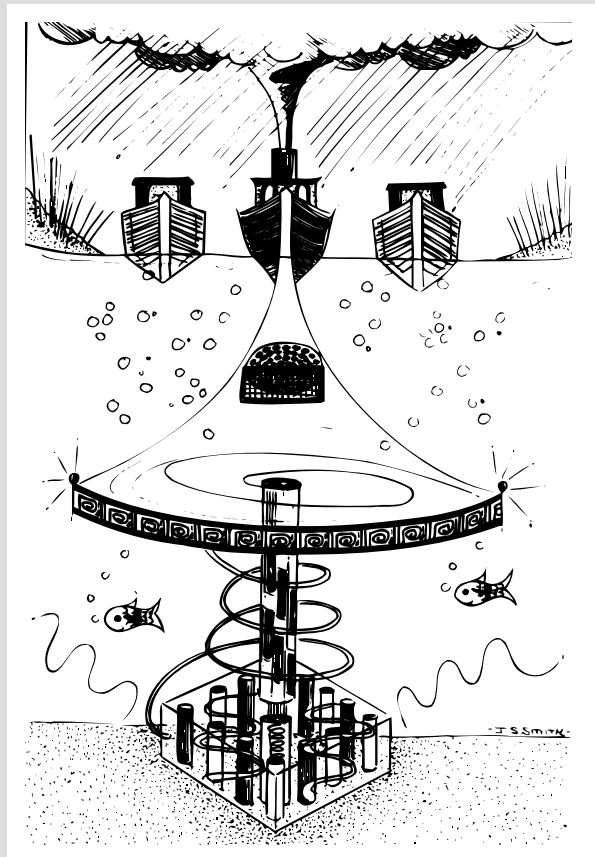
The inner/outer aspects of the community dimension of the archetype are expressed in the dream of the "school for executives." Even when the dreamer is in his "own company," the question arises concerning who is in "control."

The dreams that anticipate the Journal seem more innocent in tone than the dreams that were dreamed after reading the Journal. One dream hints at part of the difficulty of translating a good idea into practice: By "moonlight" while we dream, we can dance together in a carefree spirit. But with the light of day, there is a tendency to become regimented, all traveling

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on the same, crowded road. The solution given is personal initiative. Leadership is paradoxically provided by the person who struggles to find his "own way" home. As another dream expresses it, we have to "account to ourselves."

There is a concern for the welfare of the "children." Will they find the "game" too difficult to play? One dreamer is concerned that the "wheel game" might be too difficult for children, but then sees that it might not be if they proceed "one step at a time." This dreamer then seems to point to the process of developing analogies of the Sundance motif: seeing "children singing, playing and dancing every game ever known that forms a circle."



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quake? Terrible storms? All I know is that some natural calamity of terrible magnitude is coming and will wipe out the people. It is coming much sooner than anticipated and is almost upon us. Many people will die and they don't even realize what is coming.

I know I have to get to higher ground. Something compels me to go to the right of this multitude, out onto a concrete-type platform. What lies beyond this large platform I don't know, maybe pure space.

I see a group which I join. It is the "group of 12." I am the last to join or arrive, yet I am number 9. We all join hands and begin dancing counterclockwise in a circle. "Dancing" means "walking in various ways." In order to attune myself, I have to shut my eyes and take bold, long and dragging steps forward. My rainbow-colored afghan trails behind me and is held onto by the person next to me. We are all dancing in order to keep the winds calm in our area for just a little longer. We are a powerful group...

As this dream suggests, the transition into the New Age may involve a flooding from the collective unconscious. We may find ourselves bombarded by one another's hopes and fears, dreams and nightmares. Psychic sensitivity could be a handicap, adding to a person's confusion. In such a situation, we would become quite susceptible to autocratic rulership. (In fact, as will be discussed later, there is a "shadow" side to the Sundance principle itself, involving power, and expressed symbolically in the direction of rotation of the dance.)

As Jesus exclaimed during the round dance,

"Whoso danceth not, knoweth not what cometh to pass. Amen." (Verse 95)

A spinning gyroscope has a creative stability and can maintain its balance and its orientation while being buffeted by outside forces. Thus cooperation in a manner suggested by the general principle of the Sundance motif may provide a creative form of adaptation to the influx from the collective unconscious and enable us to discern, in a democratic manner, what is coming pass, and to know what is not.

It may be that the evolution of human consciousness will involve supra-individual consciousness, the ability of a group of people to interlock consciousness in a synergistic fashion in order to create a higher level of intelligence. Such a possibility is suggested in one of my dreams related to the Sundance motif:

We are doing the dream dance. As we begin to spin faster and faster, it is as if we turn into a flying saucer and whirl into outer space. We

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come into contact with an awesome source of intelligence. Then we realize that we have never left the ground. What is really happening is that dancing together we are ourselves the higher intelligence, with a power of consciousness that none of us individually can withstand. When we stop dancing, we are left with only a vague nostalgia for a being greater than ourselves.

Be that as it may, community consciousness is no substitute for self-knowledge. The mystery of the community dance can only be revealed when each individual is attuned to his or her personal source of identity. If the forces of unification aren't properly balanced by the forces of individuation, we might simply storm together to make a mob. One of my dreams expresses the problem more constructively.

We are getting ready to go to the dream dance. Some of us have our dream shields, others of us don't. Since the dance can't start until all of the dancers have made their shields, the shielded dancers are cheering on the others.

The meaning is clear. Those of us who wish to play the dream game will have to learn for ourselves the personal meaning of our own dream symbols. But we can certainly help one another learn. We can learn to cooperate with one another and with our dreams to create genuinely helpful community projects, whether they be research or educational endeavors, publications, towns, or even the global village. It will be interesting to see what we will dream up.

Images of the Motif

I told you the dream story of the origins of *Sundance: The Community Dream Journal*, and how it got its birthname, Sundance. Now I'll present further imagery of the Sundance motif, including a description of interesting findings that some of the early participating subscribers contributed.

We begin with the existence of a *Universal Idea*, or archetype, concerning the mystery of creation. The idea can be expressed as,

Out of the One came the Many. The Many are One.

The idea can be expressed more personally: We are each a unique individual, yet at the same time we are One Being. It is a crucial idea, for during this age of "narcissism" we recognize the need to learn to be ourselves, yet we also need to learn to experience our inter-connectedness with others. The *Uni-*

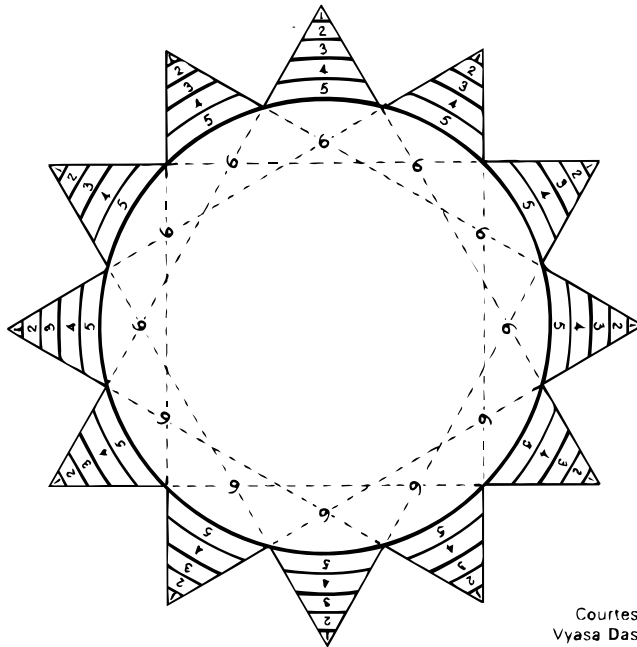
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versal Idea, therefore, is critical to blending these apparent opposites.

This perennial notion has been portrayed for us by one of our participating dreamers, Vyasa Dass, in his diagram of the World Mandala.

This Universal Idea has associated with it a collection of images having a common or general form that I've called the *Sundance* motif. Earlier, I presented

A WORLD MANDALA Symbolic Representation of the *Whole* Human SELF— The World SELF



Courtesy
Vyasa Dass

SEVEN MAJOR LEVELS OF EVOLUTIONARY CONSCIOUSNESS

Man 1. Object & Instinct centered—develops rapport with the physical and material

Man 2. People, tradition and feeling centered—social-emotional

Man 3. Idea centered in phenomena. The Western & Communist specialist. Has no world view

Man 4. Moving between the rational foundations of the cultural extremes of East and West

Man 5. Idea centered in phenomena & noumena. The world generalist. Has a genuine world view

Man 6. Centered in mystic vision—the distinction between subject and object still persists

Man 7. Completely centered in Oneness—"all sense of duality is obliterated."

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a number of these images, such as the May Pole and the Sun Dance, and proposed as their general form the model of the gyroscope.

Aspects of the gyroscope suggest analogies to different aspects of the Universal Idea. First is the central axis—Oneness. The axis is related to the symbol of the Tree of Life and to the symbol of the “center still point of creation.” Second is the circular motion around the axis—the Many. This motion is related to the various symbols concerning the theme of “twelve around one” and to the symbol of the Dance. Then there is the dynamic tension between the axis and the rotary motion, which contains the secret of the gyroscope’s ability to balance itself. I related this dynamic tension to the symbolic meaning of suffering and the transcendence of duality, and to the fact that the Many and the One are complementary aspects of the same reality.

Our idealization of community, as Joseph Campbell points out in his *Masks of God*, is patterned after our image of creation. In my first essay, I outlined the relationship between the community theme in the Sundance motif and the workings of the gyroscope.

Another illustration of this relationship is provided by two insignias from a contemporary organization, the International Cooperation Council. The I.C.C. describes itself as “an association of organizations researching universal principles, developing new states of awareness, facilitating evolvement of universal persons, and implementing new civilizations based on unity and diversity.” Similar to our gyroscope analogy, the vertical component of their insignia is labelled “unity” and the circumferential component is labelled “diversity,” suggesting balance.

An older insignia, now unused, portrays cooperation in the form of a round clasp of hands. This image is reminiscent of a game where children run and spin around together in a circle, achieving dizzying speed and thrills limited only by each child’s ability to maintain a balanced posture.

As a physical analogy to the abstract Sundance motif, one that people can directly experience, this children’s game is an instructive and delightful exercise. In experiments with this type of activity, I’ve been encouraged to discover that a group of dancers can cooperate to support each individual’s attempt to maintain the necessary balance, as well as to bring an energetic swirl to a graceful landing. (“Sufi dancing,” a more sublime recreation, is also highly recommended.)

The proposition then arises that there exist methods, perhaps originating in something as spontaneous and primitive as a children’s game, by which people can experience a revelation of the mystery of creation. As an example of this proposition, I described in my first essay a dream of a “research dance,”

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Dream America

In celebration of the Bicentennial, in 1976, The Sundance Experiment was Applied to Our National Mythology

"The republic is a dream.

Nothing happens unless first a dream."

(Carl Sandburg, "Washington Monument by Night")

"The American Dream can not, and must not, be reduced to the proposition that every American has a right to a mortgage. Instead, the American Dream is, and should always remain, that in America, you can make your dreams come true."

Unknown

What is your dream of America? During this Bicentennial Era, it seems natural to attend to our American Dream. The Sundance Ideal supports such a national dream quest. In fact, Sundance and Dream America are of one symbolic blood. For example, important symbols from both mythic traditions were present in the vision of that revered native American prophet, Dekanawidah, who visioned the people as many roots and branches of the One Tree; and atop this tree was the protective and far-sighted Eagle. With this vision, and with the eloquence of Hiawatha, the Iroquois nation was formed. Our Founding Fathers incorporated aspects of the Iroquois government into their design for the tripartite government of our republic of sovereign states. And we have as national symbols the Liberty Tree and, of course, the Eagle. Even more significant, our national motto is "*E Pluribus Unum*" ("Out of many, One"), an ideal which is at the heart of the Sundance tradition, and which may be an archetypal idea for spiritual community. (To learn more about the symbolism and mythology associated with the spiritual tradition of America and the role of Native Americans in that tradition, I highly recommend that you read *America's Secret Destiny: Spiritual Vision and the Founding of a Nation*, by Robert Hieronimus.)

Dream America is an experiment that asks: Is it possible that during this Bicentennial Era there is spontaneously arising within the collective unconscious of our people a search for renewed dreams

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for America? Whether individual citizens purposefully quest for dreams that will guide them to self-realization through a more creative participation in the American experience, or whether such dreams occur spontaneously as a response to the national dilemmas that touch us all, the seed hypothesis of Dream America is that creative dreams for the renewal of America are being born. If we can become aware of this process, perhaps we can nurture it and foster its growth into some visible and practical consequence.

Here are some of the dreams that have been reported. Most portray a sense of a possible awakening. There is so far only a dim suggestion in these dreams concerning what might actually be done to apply such a renewal of spirit to the concrete problems we face. You can participate in this experiment by being alert for dreams which present inspiring images or reconciling symbols for meeting the challenge of a New Age in America.

I'm in a large area like a college campus; it is very early in the morning—dawn. It's the beginning of Holy Week. A large crowd of people are waiting with sleeping bags to go on an expedition. I learn that the people are going to Washington, D.C., and that plans are being made for a tea party to be given in their honor and for a visit with some important government body. (L.B., Modesto, California)

We are in the midst of a flood. The water is not quite up to our knees, yet we are moving as if on a given route. We realize that we are nearing the edge of the flood, and we start to meet people just entering the water. They are very apprehensive. We reassure them that we've been through it safely and that they should have courage. As we reach dry ground, we can see a troop moving in the direction of the flood. The leader is pleased by our report of the trip through the flood waters and he says he will lead the troop through. But he asks us to see to the needs of the young herd. He points to the right of his route, saying that the newborns can be herded into shelter at the edge of the field. I am counting the young herd, and while the leader says there are 50 altogether, I can see only 48 in the group. In looking further, I see two more drinking from the stream that borders the pasture. I realize that I am looking at a map of the United States. (E.B., South River, New Jersey)

I am on the mighty ship, the U.S.S. "Constitution," sailing upon a vast, unending ocean. Suddenly I find myself swimming for my life

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in the midst of a terrible tempest, trying to get back to the "Constitution," which is sailing sturdily onward. (F.H., Brookline, Massachusetts)

I see the many spiritual seekers, young and old, in our country. We are all turned towards Washington, like the rays of a star turned towards its center. We have bright and hopeful expressions on our faces, and I have the sense of untapped potential. (K.V.B., Spencer, West Virginia)

It is night and unusually dark. Church bells begin to ring and people start pouring out of the churches into the streets. They are carrying torches. Soon masses of people are thronging down the streets, but somehow walking in a very orderly fashion. The faces are illuminated from the flickering torches and everyone is singing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." There is an air of expectancy and hope. This event is simultaneously taking place in towns and cities all over the country. (J.C., Atlanta, Georgia)

I am standing at a lectern in Friends' Meeting House. I am giving a patriotic July 4th speech. I am very enthusiastic about my subject and deliver the speech with great joy. As I speak, I keep levitating into the air and have to grasp the lectern to pull myself down. As I finish my speech, the next phase of the program begins. A movie projector is turned on and a cartoon of the Chinese dragon flashes on the screen. (R.W.K., Virginia Beach, Virginia)

Three women are asking the President and three cabinet officials about solar energy. The men give no straight answer in reply. We take a break, and I tell the women about a book just out, and about the now-existent technology. When the President and the three officials return, I mention the book to them and say that the data for solar energy and its storage are available for various sizes of farms, for example, using a combination of windmills, solar panels and batteries. If they are really interested, I say they should contact a man named Alva Hill. They mutter a lifeless response, and I realize they don't want to hear about it. My throat is dry and I go out for a drink of water. (J.F.Y., Virginia Beach, Virginia)

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On what seems to be a Holy Saturday, a cloudy, gray day—I am walking in the vicinity of our church. Several other people seem to be on their way to church, too. Suddenly, someone notices a circular object floating horizontally in the overcast sky— it’s hovering directly above the very center of the town’s business district. The person exclaims, “Look, there’s an olive branch in the sky!” We run towards this phenomenon, and it also moves closer to us, stopping right above the trees. Now it takes on the appearance of a stained glass window, but the soft colors are animated, constantly shifting. As we watch, the upper half of a male figure clad in a robe appears in the center. He is gesturing with arms outstretched towards us, in a kind of blessing. A soft, lovely voice is heard by all. It seems to be associated with this figure, yet the sound fills all the space around us, coming from no particular point. The voice says, “If you will apply what you have just seen and heard for the next 63 years, there will be peace and security for all of America until the end of the world.” Now I begin to exclaim to the others, “Oh, do you see?” This awakens me, for I had been talking out loud. I feel bathed in warmth and love, which sweeps up and down me for a long time. (F.S., Fulton, Missouri)

(First dream): High above the earth an eagle is sitting on a Bible. A storm develops with much lightning all about. Finally, the lightning hits the eagle and it falls over onto the Bible. It is still perfectly supported by the Bible, hurt quite badly, but not dead.

(Next dream): A huge eagle is just poised in space, high above the earth. It seems as if a giant wheel of color is revolving in the sky, throwing beautiful rays of colored light onto the eagle. Each color seems more beautiful than the previous one, and finally they are all on the eagle at the same time, forming a rainbow of deep, intense, luminous colors.

(Third dream): A row of eagles is lined up in a straight line. They are suspended high above the earth. Above each one is a lighted white candle. (J.H.D., St. Joseph, Missouri)

I am with my religious study group, sitting in a circle, each of us holding a baby on our lap. The babies are the reincarnations of famous American leaders. Our group leader has Patrick Henry on her lap. He says, “Give me liberty, or give me death.” A friend holds Nathan Hale, who says, “I regret that I have but one life to give to my

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country." Also present are Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Hancock. I hold John Kennedy. He says, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." We are all planning the New Age, and our babies will contribute to the foundation of the millennium. (V.F., El Paso, Texas)

I hear a voice saying, "My child, what can be done for one can be done for all." I then see a map of the United States, appearing as a large pelvic skeleton. Florida is the penis. A beam of light moves up through the penis and into the skeleton, growing until the entire nation is light. I know that the nation has been lifted. (N.C., Miami, Florida)



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where people come together to conduct an experiment in enlightenment and then discover that dancing is to be the method of the experiment. I also presented a description of Jesus' "Round Dance," from the Apocryphal Acts of St. John, which may have been an initiation ceremony for the Apostles. Another example discussed was the Native American ceremony for the communal quest for vision, the Sun Dance.

If methods do exist for experiencing in community the mystery of the Oneness of Creation, the question arises, how can we find a method that will be effective for us in our contemporary situation? Shall we adopt from the past an archetypal dance? The effectiveness of the Sun Dance, for example, comes only partly from the ceremony's archetypal form. A significant aspect of the Sun Dance's integrity comes from the process by which this ceremony came into being. The ceremony originated as if from a dream within the native community. Thus it is conceived in terms of symbols that are specially suited as "triggering stimuli" to the Native Americans. We would require our own, original variation on the universal theme. The hypothesis of the Sundance Experiment is that we can pool our dreams and our applied knowledge to discover a contemporary invention of revelation.

A Dream Wheel

In a past issue of the feminist magazine *Womanspirit*, there is an article by Hallie Mountain Wing describing an overnight wilderness event attended by twelve women. The purpose of the venture was to share dreams, become deeper friends and explore the meaning to each of them of being women. To prepare for dreaming together, the twelve women arranged their sleeping bags into a "wheel" surrounding a central pole. In addition, each woman had two strands of rib-

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bon attached to her sleeping bag which were then attached to the pole, making a “dream net.” The arrangement is quite similar to the May Pole and Sun Dance ceremonies; except, in this case, the people are lying down, asleep and dreaming. As an approximation to a contemporary experiment in revelation, a twelve-person “dream wheel” inspires continued exploration.

I’ve heard rumors that such a dream party can lead to a mutually experienced, common dream—a provocative possibility [*Ed.’s note: Sundance* subscriber Linda Magallon went on to explore this domain and published her results in the book *Mutual Dreaming*]. The preliminary group dream experiments I have conducted yielded either a collection of distinct dreams that fitted together like a jigsaw puzzle when interpreted or that provided a basis for a shared experience of Oneness when the dreams were enacted in a psychodramatic medley.

May Day: Synchronicity and Photosynthesis

While beginning to write my essay on the Sundance Experiment, I indulged in some side play to express the Sundance motif in a different manner. The result was the painting, “May Day,” and the following story:

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Once upon a long time ago, there was a magical merry-go-round. Twelve people who knew its secret would gather around it, each grasping a handle, and begin to run as fast as they could. At the right moment, they would jump onto the whirling gig and allow the rush of the centrifugal force to spin each of them into their own vision of how they might live life more abundantly. As the merry-go-round twirled, its center shaft drilled deep into the earth, striking oil. Out of the top of the center shaft there then burst forth a bouquet of twelve different flowers. When the merry-go-round stopped, the people awoke from their dreams. Each person recognized one of the flowers, swallowed its crystalline seed, and left to spread its fruit around the world.

Since I had “made up” the story, I couldn’t help but feel that it must be somewhat contrived. I’m sharing it with you now because of a coincidental dream that came to my attention after I had imagined this story. The dream was sent to me by a subscriber to *Sundance* who was a member of a dream study group. It was dreamed by another member on the day our subscriber brought the first issue of *Sundance* to the attention of the group. Here is the dream.



I am sitting on top of a very tall flagpole, calling out to people surrounding the pole the correct botanical names of the flowers each is carrying and telling them exactly where to plant them.

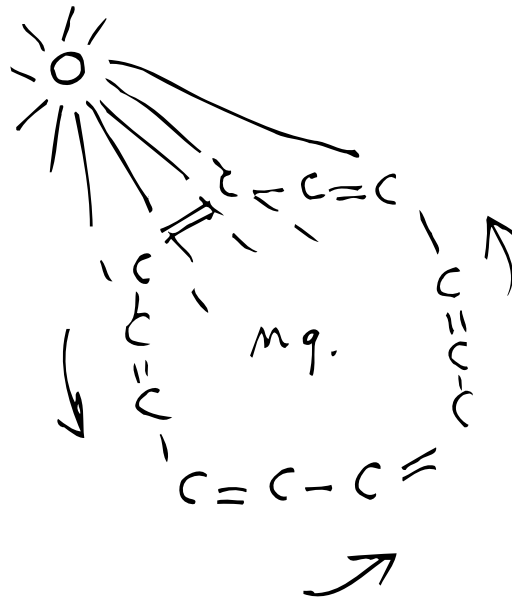
The group recognized the imagery of the Sundance motif in the dream but had no way of suspecting its close parallel to my fantasy story. The timing of the dream and its content form a double-level, meaningful coincidence. Such synchronistic events characterize the pursuit of the Sundance Experiment.

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In explaining the Sundance motif earlier, I mentioned that an important dimension to the motif is a concern for the regeneration of plant life, a concern for the Earth in Her life-giving capacity. It was with some surprise and pleasure that I received the following letter, with diagram, from one of our participating subscribers:

Dear Journal:

While reading the article on the Sundance Experiment, I could not help but notice the remarkable resemblance of the Sundance theme to the carbon ring in the chlorophyll molecule, which is the basis of all physical life on earth. This ring traps sunlight, raises electrons to higher energy levels, and does the work of plant photosynthesis - food production. This is a literal Sundance phenomenon. While the diagram given is greatly oversimplified, there are twelve key carbon atoms, roughly approximating a circle, with one magnesium atom in the center. Electrons, excited by sunlight and raised to a higher energy level, rotate through the ring. Some higher energy electrons rise free and perform the work of photosynthesis. (Robert L. Stives, Brea, California)



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What a correspondence! On the basis of the principle, “as above, so below,” we should expect to find as productive a process as photosynthesis within the human psyche and within the human community. Perhaps some kind of meditation-induced dream state involving many highly energetic persons? Some kind of special “brainstorming” process that generates energy that others can use?

The Swastika and the Shadow

I’ll conclude this exploration with a dream that points to further ramifications on the Sundance motif:

One of my young relatives who has psychokinetic ability is revising his ideas about how his “powers” work. He makes a paper model of the concept for me by taking hold of a piece of paper in the middle and twisting it.

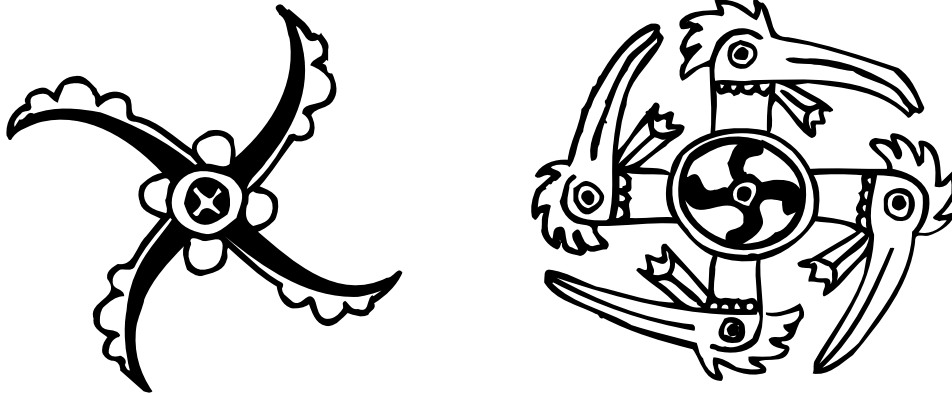
The dreamer, Peggy Specht of Toronto, Canada, sent a paper sculpture based on her dream, called “The Four Powers.” You can get an intuitive “feel” for the concept of the dream by imagining giving the paper a twist with a snap of your fingers.

Something that can be easily accomplished is a “snap.” The image points to the myth of creation by psychokinesis - God creating the world out of His mind! Joseph Campbell, in his *Mask of God*, discusses the Apache myth of the world creator, Black Hactcin, who created the world by first forming a bird, then whirling it around so fast that the bird got dizzy and began hallucinating the images that became the world. Campbell gives many examples of the “whirling bird” motif and relates to it to the more general image of the swastika.

The swastika, according to Campbell, was the first geometrical symbol to

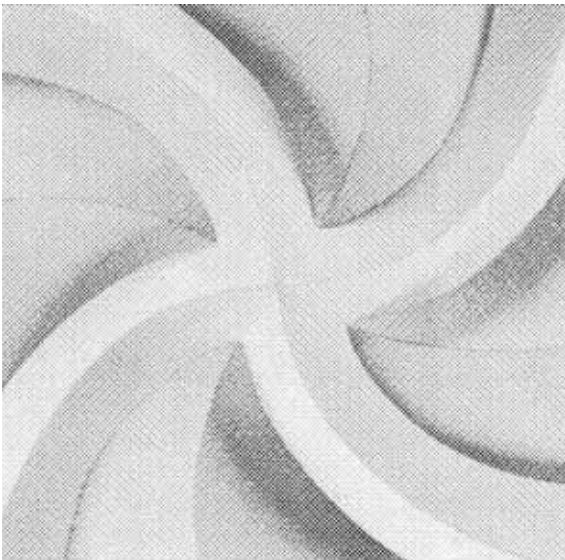


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appear in the history of humanity. Its appearance was associated with a number of evolutionary events, including the first organized, stable cities, and the discovery of writing and of the wheel. The swastika has somewhat ambivalent connotations for us today, as it is associated both with the Hopi's reverence for harmony and the Nazi's quest for power.

Mixed feelings about the swastika can also be related to the more general pattern of the several pairs of opposite and complementary meanings associated with the opposed directions of rotation of the archetypal spiral. For example, Campbell points out that Hactin, the world creator, spun the bird in a clockwise rotation to spin consciousness out into forms. The spiraling swastika image associated with the meditating Buddha, however, is one of counter-clockwise rotation; symbolizing



according to Campbell, the withdrawal of consciousness from the forms of the world. The complementarity of the opposed interpretations becomes paradoxical because the apparent direction of rotation of a spiral is relative to the position of the observer.

But the ambivalence is reason enough to pause and consider our own standpoint - our Ideal. The potential of the Sundance experiment, whether for weal or woe, depends upon that determination. *

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[Note: In the almost three decades since this essay was first written, history has demonstrated the importance of the issues the Sundance Experiment raised. Several historical developments (the world economy, electronic information, computer viruses, AIDS, terrorism, to name a few) have witnessed the dissolving of most boundaries within the planetary community. The result has been an unfortunate rise in fundamentalism of all sorts, as well as unprecedented avenues of personal expression for the individual. It is becoming clear that there exists no rational solution to these crises.

*Instead, we await a non-rational event of major proportions. The Sundance Experiment pointed the way toward one possibility of actively embracing these changes and bringing forth a new vision for collaboration in our global village. One follow-up to this experiment, conducted at a lay Christian community, resulted in the book, *The Community Dream: Awakening the Christian Tribal Consciousness*, by Pat C. Brockman, O.S.U., Ph.D.. In the meantime, my own research has taken me from the nighttime phenomena of dreaming to the daytime use of the imagination and intuition (as discussed in my book, *The Intuitive Heart*) where I have been exploring the psychological processes involved in how a person can have the simultaneous experience of unique individuality and oneness with all life—a fundamental issue involved in the ultimate quest of the Sundance Experiment.]*

