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Shamans, Visions and Ghosts: Exploring spiritual and Religious Experiences

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Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



www.uwtsd.ac.uk

Top 10 most spiritual places (according to a travel guide)

- La Mezquita, Cordoba, Spain
- Kyoto, Japan
- S'Gang Gwaay, British Columbia, Canada
- Cape Reinga, New Zealand
- Lake Titicaca, Peru and Bolivia
- Avebury, Wiltshire, UK
- Adam's Peak, Sri Lanka
- Mount Kailash, Tibet Autonomous Region, China
- Wittenberg, Germany
- Crater Lake, Oregon, USA

Ten spiritual places (based on energy)

- 1 Rila – Bulgaria. 2 Machu Picchu in Peru. 3 Socotra. 4 The plateau Uluru in Australia. 5 The Easter Island. 6 The Sanctuary Belintash. 7 Berat- Albania. 8 Stonehenge. 9 The Bosnian Pyramids. 10 Peak Kailash in Tibet.
 - (<https://gostica.com/spiritual-lifestyle/top-10-spiritual-centers-with-strong-energy/>)

- ***There are places in the world, where you can feel the connection with the divine – one of them Rila's Lakes, known for strong energy field. Where sensitive people dream strange things, after spending the night there. Such type of places could give you answers to a long asked questions and make you feel the energy concentrated on a more spiritual level.***

Machu Picchu



- William James described his experience during a walk in the mountains
- Rudolf Otto mentioned religious ceremonies but also private encounter with God

Tracy Lind



- The Very Rev. Tracy Lind, former Dean of Cleveland's Trinity Episcopal Cathedral
- Encounter with God in McDonalds (in her TED lecture recorded at Cleveland State University)

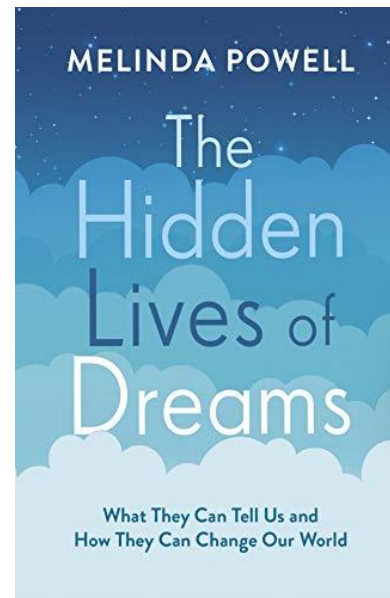
Experience during dreams

- No place but a different state of consciousness
 - Question of memory (not everyone remembers their dreams)

Melinda Powell



- psychotherapist
- Co-founder of the Dream Research Institute, London
- Published book on dreams
- The Hidden Lives of Dreams (2020)



Alister Hardy on Dreams

- in the first three thousand submissions sent to the archive between 1969 – 1970 dreams appeared on average 88 times per thousand
- Dreams as one of the 12 main categories of experience in the archive
- However he did not look into them further

Hardy on dreams

- 'Clearly a proper study of this material will require a critical follow-up which will be made with many more examples. Of the importance of dreams to many individuals concerned as a channel for religious experience, there seems to be no doubt.'
(1979: 79)

Melinda Powell's research

- Stage 1: on the material in the Alister Hardy archive
 - a pilot study of the first 1000 personal accounts in the RERC archive, focusing on those containing the word 'dream'
 - > 51 different dream narratives

1. Auditory phenomena: 8 %
2. Concrete phenomena having extraordinary properties: 12%
3. Ideal personifications of human spiritual potential: 12%
4. Abstract phenomena: 30%
5. Human personifications of a Transcendent Reality: 33%

Auditory phenomena (8%)

- dreamers reported hearing an unforgettable voice with little or no reference to a dream setting or context.
- For instance:
 - 'Whilst asleep one night, I heard a solemn, drone like voice which said, "Come with me"

Concrete phenomena having extraordinary properties (12%)

- concrete phenomena having extraordinary properties such as a rope, book or flowers, in an unusual context and with unusual properties.
 - One respondent, who had suffered a recent bereavement, described a dream account in which she was swept down a river to the sea. Fearing she would drown, she cried out for help and a rope appeared hanging from the sky, accompanied by a reassuring voice that told her to take hold of it.

Ideal personifications of human spiritual potential (12%)

- personifications of human spiritual potential through an Ideal Being.
- This may take the form of a famous person or a Divine Being – religious or non-religious – with powerful cognitive and/or affective qualities.
- Example:
 - I saw in my dream a famous poet - Ghalib. He is an Indian poet of great fame and his poetry in Urdu has great depth and beauty.... He came and recited a poem of his.... I am writing them down with their general translation in English. Translated [from Urdu] literally it means: The string or reed that has not played the music for a very long time . . . Let us bring it to life and by its music, let the whole world be brightened and as if, brought to life.

Abstract phenomena (30%)

- features abstract representations such as light, space, a vortex or void that communicate powerful and memorable qualities or powers
- Example:
 - I was one with eternally pulsing light.... Nor was I by any means alone: I was communicating with infinite wisdom, not as an individual but as an entity; this wisdom was in me and flowed through me and yet was also outside me.... I seemed to be part of some mighty essence, some ultimate, unknowable reality.

Human personifications of a Transcendent Reality (33%)

- involves a close friend or relative who is deceased or who, shortly after the dream, becomes injured or dies. In such dreams, the sense of 'presence' develops from the dreamer's recognition – either in the dream or after waking – of a dislocation in ordinary space-time, attributed to a non-temporal, Transcendent dimension.
- Examples:
 - one respondent reported that his dream presaged his cousin's tragic suicide
 - A woman who dreamt of her deceased husband wrote: 'it is always with the same wonderful feeling of love and security that he generated in life. I always awaken with an awareness that I have actually been with him.'

Melinda Powell's conclusion

- “These preliminary investigations suggest that no matter whether the manifestation of presence in a dream appears in an ordinary or extraordinary way, or in a religious or non-religious context, such dreams provide deeply felt spiritual values and generally prove to be positive, life-changing experiences. ”

Back to place of experience

- Secular / religious
- Any time / any place

