

# Importance of Sleep and Dreams for Subjective Reality

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Thomas A. Burns PhD.

Klamath Falls, Oregon

If we are paying attention, what do we learn as humans from our universal experience of sleeping and dreaming?

First, we are aware in sleeping itself that we are equipped with different states of mind. How we view and evaluate these different states is one indication of what we emphasize in our different societal worldviews. Some worldviews put considerable value on the importance of the state of mind associated with sleep and dreams while others regard this state of mind as mostly irrelevant.

Second, we become aware that sleep gives rise to the subjective state of consciousness in which dreams occur. And, clearly this subjective, receptive, “alternative” state of consciousness reveals a reality very different from that associated with our objective, focused, “everyday” state of mind.

Third, we learn that dreams during sleep can be of value by revealing insights in the subjective mode which can play an essential role in answering our focal needs or questions in the objective domain. Dreaming offers us an alternative path for exploring our thoughts and feelings, and it can suggest options that evade us in our “everyday” mental state. Probably more often than we realize, we wake from sleep and dream with an adjusted and improved state of awareness. Rooted in the same subjective source, both Creativity and Inspiration provide this same valuable function.

Fourth, in the dream state, the fixed condition associated with reality in the objective becomes fluid. With remarkable ease, the set “things” of our “everyday” world transform into other “things.” In dream, anything can become anything else. Identity is fluid. Rocks can become orcas, and orcas can become orchids.

Fifth, we can recognize that all of the Arts in our objective world share the infinite potential for reality transformation that we discover in dreams. Art relies on metaphor which amounts to the claim of shared identity across entities that are entirely separate in objective reality. Example: “Louis is a floating carousel of rubber cement.” In art, “As is” and “As if” exist at the level a) of form – in drama “as if” the characters and actions are objectively real, b) of statement – in the poetic language of simile and metaphor, and c) in the transformative visual reality generated through the technologies of animation and special “effects.” In a sense, Art is dream systematized and expressed through various genres in our objective reality.

Sixth, we become aware that in dream the underlying principle is that there are no constants, everything is variable, and the only constant is change. In the science of the objective domain, our theories all revolve around constants upon which the claimed “laws” of the relationships of variables depend. But these theories keep “changing,” often because the constants upon which they are built are eventually discovered to be variables. Newton’s force of gravity constant varies at scales beyond Earth, and there is considerable debate in physics as to whether Einstein’s speed of light constant is in fact variable. So, in spite of science’s great expansion of our knowledge of the material domain and its technological importance affecting the quality of life for humans, it becomes highly questionable whether objective science will ever prove sufficient to reveal the “complete” nature of reality. The principle of universal variability evidenced in dreams is likely to continue to be a continuing underlying challenge for our science of the objective. To address this limitation, the option exists to develop what qualifies as a science within and not just of the subjective. If this could be achieved, then the results of the two sciences could be combined to better illuminate the nature of reality as a whole.

Seventh, we realize that everything in the dream state is connected, and that time is irrelevant. All kinds of phenomena and events that are regarded as materially separate and fixed in objective time become fluid and subject to being chronologically remixed in dreams. The linear time of objective reality that separates events flowing from past to present to future is irrelevant in dreams. Everything just IS.

Eighth, and in line with the observations in the preceding entry, we can observe that dreams sometimes contain accurate information about the unknown past or reveal what become future events [lucid dreams]. Dream is also a state where the dreamer can be simultaneously aware of the thoughts or activities of distant others – violating objective reality rules both of space as necessarily separating phenomena and of communication having to depend upon some aural, visual, or movement medium. Telepathy, clairvoyance and retro and precognition, which violate the restrictive “rules” of awareness in objective reality, occur with some regularity in the dreams of humans worldwide. These paranormal events occur most often when intuitive mental states are dominant, and their appearance is not by any means restricted to the dream state.

### Conclusion

We see that in the eight entries above, dream during sleep evidences all of the characteristics of the subjective view of reality and violates many of the “laws” of objective reality. Moreover, Dream shares its primary subjective view and most

of its “violations” of the “rules” of objective reality with Art, Spirituality, Creativity, Inspiration, and the Paranormal. Since I have included spirituality in the preceding list, I will comment here on how I use the term “spiritual.” I regard the subjective perspective on reality as identical with the spiritual perspective. It is unfortunate that for some critics “the spiritual” is either considered the same as “the religious” or demeaned by its association – in name only – with the problems of “Spiritualism” in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The spiritual, like the subjective view of reality, lies at the core of all religions, but Spirituality has no need for the elaborate systems of belief, ritual, and “priests” that are associated with religions which most often qualify as full blown social institutions [eg. all of the Great Religions].

Dream, Art, Spirituality, Creativity, Inspiration, and the Paranormal are all universal and fundamental experiences in the lives of humans, and all give witness to the importance of the subjective perspective on reality. It is revealing that all of these phenomena are poorly understood and even less well accounted for within the scientific perspective of objective reality. As I have suggested, a science of the subjective from within the subjective could address this problem. But short of this eventuality, just as humans have learned how to develop their rational skills in pursuit of understanding objective reality, so also some human cultures have learned how to promote the development of human intuitive skills in pursuit of understanding subjective reality. When properly conceived, both the objective and subjective perspectives and the rational and intuitive modes that are associated with them are important in fully understanding reality. In addition, balancing the input from these two modes of awareness is essential if humans are to operate successfully and responsibly in both the social and ecological realms. Until science can truly illuminate the subjective, all human societies and cultures can at least respect the equal value of both perspectives and promote a high degree of competence in both rational and intuitive mental capabilities in their citizenries.