SOCIAL DREAMING AND ORGANISATIONS:
THE POTENTIAL

Alastair Bain

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INTRODUCTION

There are very few examples of the use of Social Dreaming within organisations either in Australia or overseas. The first instance I know of was a project carried out at the William Alanson White Institute in March last year in New York. The consultancy was with the Faculty and Students of the Program in Organisational Development and Consultancy. There were some 30 participants. The consultancy combined a Social Dreaming Matrix with Action Research and took place over four days. The aim of the consultancy was: 'To interpret the state of this Institution using the information derived from the Social Dreaming Matrix and your own experiences of being in the Institution'. Gordon Lawrence, the architect of Social Dreaming, directed the Project and Susan Long and I worked as Consultants. The consultancy intervention using Social Dreaming was very powerful, and it was this experience which convinced me of the value in reality, rather than simply the potential, of Social Dreaming within organisations.

The only other experience I have had of using Social Dreaming with an organisation occurred a couple of months ago during an ongoing consultancy project. The very positive experience for this organisation in freeing up blockages to development, and members seeing themselves in a different and linked way, convinced me further about the value of Social Dreaming within organisations.

As we are exploring potential I would like to start with Social Dreaming, on the one hand, and then make some observations and hypotheses about organisational life today. What is the

potential between the two? I would like to set this as a task for us for the seminar. I am thinking of 'potential' in the sense that it is used in Physics, of a possible energy flow. If we have time I will talk about the consultancy project and the use of Social Dreaming within it.

SOCIAL DREAMING IN AUSTRALIA

While there are very few examples of Social Dreaming being used in consultancy either in Australia or elsewhere, there is now considerable experience, particularly in Australia, of Social Dreaming.

The first Social Dreaming Conference was held in Israel in 1988 and directed by Gordon Lawrence. Similar Conferences have been run in Germany, Sweden, U.K., Australia, U.S., and Belgium, and a Conference has just been held in India.

In Australia, AISA sponsored the first Social Dreaming Conference in 1989, and subsequently Social Dreaming formed part of AISA's Advanced Consultancy Programme in 1990 and 1991.

Between 1991 and 1993 Suzanne Ross and I worked as Consultants to an ongoing weekly Social Dreaming Matrix sponsored by AISA. It didn't start out with three years in mind but that is the way it evolved. I am now working as a Consultant to the 1994 Matrix (Suzanne Ross is in Sydney) which currently has six members, including three members who started in 1991.

There have been two other experiences in Australia where Social Dreaming formed part of a Conference. The first was the International Group Relations and Scientific Conference which AISA. sponsored in August 1993 for people working in the Bion / Tavistock tradition. The theme of the Conference was 'Exploring Global Social Dynamics'. In this Conference there were 72 participants from 12 countries and we worked first thing each morning in four Social Dreaming Matrices, with two Consultants in each Matrix. The second experience was the recent 1994 'Lorne' Conference where a Social Dreaming Matrix was included for the first time in a traditional AISA Group Relations Conference.

While there is little experience of the use of Social Dreaming within organisations my belief is that this is likely to change quite rapidly, partly as a result of the International Conference, and partly as a result of the deepening experience of Social Dreaming particularly in Australia. The process will begin to accelerate once some far sighted, and less traditional culture bound CEOs begin to realize the enormous value of Social Dreaming for carrying out the primary task of their organisations, and the benefits of making manifest and allowing a 'connectedness' to be formed among members of the organisation. One of the potentials of Social Dreaming is the opportunity to create a new meaning for being a member of an organisation.

WHAT IS SOCIAL DREAMING?

I would like to approach the question 'What is Social Dreaming?' through the meaning of the word 'Matrix' and through metaphor.

The word Matrix means 'a place out of which something grows', and as Gordon Lawrence indicates 'it is derived from the Latin for uterus'. Lawrence, and Patricia Daniel, chose the term 'Matrix' to describe the first Social Dreaming activity at the Tavistock in the early 1980's. The word 'Matrix' was chosen in order to temporarily suspend the notion of a 'group', and beliefs about what happens when people meet in a group i.e. basic assumption behaviour, and other hypotheses that people have about group behaviour.

Given the meaning of 'Matrix' as 'a place out of which something grows', Social Dreaming then is a method of exploring and developing 'connectedness' within the Matrix and the world we live in through sharing and associating to the social and collective aspects of our dreams. The vertex of Social Dreaming is different and yet complementary to approaches to dreams in individual therapy or dream groups.

The Primary Task of the Social Dreaming Matrix is:

To associate to one's own and other members' dreams and to make connections.

There are one or more Consultants to a Matrix. The Consultant role is to keep the task in mind, hold the boundaries, and to observe, make connections, and hypotheses.

A metaphor emerged during the weekly Australian Social Dreaming Matrix at one time which I sometimes find helpful in describing the process. The metaphor was of growing a crystal. A crystal needs the right environment in which to grow, it is multi faceted with a shared core, and like the Matrix one can look at it or look through it. Members of the Matrix are analogous to the facets of the crystal and what is grown occurs through the interaction, metabolism, and sharing of dreams, associations, and connections which are made.

The crystal metaphor however is a bit too chemical to convey the humanness of the endeavour: surprise, anxiety, presence, intimations of the ordinary and extraordinary, folly and futility, and humour. Occasionally one has the idea, possibly misguided, that one is participating in an endeavour which is to do with the evolution of consciousness and human identity. Basically Social Dreaming is about discovery and being open to new perceptions. It is not analytical in approach, rather it is generative of shared subjective meaning, which combines with discovery in 'growing' something or 'making something'.

Please don't ask me what we are 'growing' or 'making' in the Australian Matrix because I don't know. We may not be making anything but unearthing a 'connectedness' which is there to be unearthed. However I don't feel that is quite so as over the course of the Matrix there have been evolutions in its functioning, which have been described by Suzanne Ross in her paper: 'The Science, Spirit, Chaos and Order of Social Dreaming'[1] .

One of the early evolutions in the Matrix was away from the notion of the dream as simply the 'property' of the dreamer. 'Property' is the right word as it conveys the meaning of' 'ownership'. At the beginning of the Matrix it was a struggle for many people, particularly therapists or people who were in therapy, to give up this notion. In an extreme form the notion put crudely is: 'This dream is mine and it is private. If it is to be talked about it will only be talked about by me with my therapist'. A dynamic associated with this phenomenon is for members of the Matrix to

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[1] Published in **Experiences in Social Dreaming**, Ed. W. Gordon Lawrence, Karnac, London, 2003.

attempt to pin the dream to the dreamer i.e. 'it's your dream and has little or nothing to do with me'.

In these postures of the 'dream is mine', or the 'dream is yours', one can sense the boundaries being drawn between the individual and other members of the Matrix, or between other members of the Matrix and the person who has reported a dream. While this is partly a reflection of our current culture, and its emphasis on the individual as the arbiter of value and on the consequent notion of 'ownership' - this is mine not yours, or, that is yours, not mine - I would hypothesize that it is evidence of something deeper - that there is a strong unconscious anxiety about the feared potentialities of Social Dreaming to change the boundaries of what one regards as Self and Other, and that the process of Social Dreaming, associations, and connections may 'make' something that disturbs the identity I know of as 'I'[2]. The anxiety I would suggest is about the phantasied dangers of' 'connectedness', and it has on different occasions, both at the start of the Matrix and after new members join been expressed in terms of 'catching something' symbolically like the flu, from another person's dream or associations to one's own dream. On the one side there is the potentiality for Matrix creation, on the other side of 'catching something', being poisoned, or giving birth to a deformity. In a Matrix at this stage of evolution both possibilities have to be held.

The vertex of the Social Dreaming Matrix then is not the 'I' of the dreamer and the personal meaning of the dream. Dreams do have personal meanings but that is not the focus of the Matrix. The currency of the Matrix are the dreams that can be shared, and the associations and connections that can be made. 'I' is very much there, but in a different relationship to creativity. What is created is not so much the product of a narcissistic 'I', but a product of the work of the Matrix. There is a Zen Buddhist saying that sums up what I want to say about this. The saying is 'Not Two, and Not One'[3]. I want to return briefly to the question of the boundaries between self and other, and that Social Dreaming is unconsciously feared to have the potential to disturb the identity 'I' know of as 'I'. It is my hypothesis that Social Dreaming threatens the fabric of our common sense awareness of Space and Time and separate identity. Thus it has happened to

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[2] See Bain A. *Not Two and Not One* in **Experiences in Social Dreaming**, op.cit., for a discussion of these ideas.
[3] See Shunryu Suzuki, **Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind** Weatherhill. New York and Tokyo. 1970, p.25.

Consultants and Members of the Matrix that a member of the Matrix will dream your reality. A striking example of this occurred during the follow up to the first Social Dreaming Conference in Australia in 1989. A member of the Conference dreamed he was in a house he had not been in, and he took us through the house, describing each room in detail, including the cornices, and the different colours that had been used for decoration. It emerged in a later session that what he had been describing in detail was the house of another member of the Conference which had been recently renovated. The dreamer had not been in this person's house.

People in the Matrix also sometimes report having had the same dream the previous week not in a general sense but in explicit detail. In one such example two members of the Matrix dreamt they, the dreamer, were trying to find their way across Indonesia's countryside using an old map. They were trying to cover the types of terrain found away from main roads and cities.

ORGANISATIONAL LIFE TODAY

I want to make some observations, generalisations, and hypotheses about organisational life today in Australia. What I am saying may also apply to other English speaking Western cultures, in particular the U.S. and the U.K. In giving these five hypotheses and generalisations I am aware that they are unlikely to fit everyone's experience of organisational life here today. But whether they are 'a good enough fit' for most organisations, or need to be modified in certain ways, I would like to check out with you.

The generalisations are about larger organisations rather than smaller, though they may apply to smaller organisations in part. By larger organisations I mean private sector corporations - banks, industrial companies, telecommunications etc., - public sector departments, universities, and hospitals.

The generalisations and hypotheses derive from different sources of my work: organisational consultancy, AISA experiential Working Conferences, AISA Training Programmes in consultancy in which members discuss their own .organisations, dreams in the Social Dreaming Matrix which have to do with organisational experiences, the supervision of two Ph.D. candidates

who are writing dissertations about organisational behaviour, and from discussions with colleagues.

BASIC ASSUMPTION ME[4]

Before going on to state these generalisations and hypotheses I first need to sketch out for you Basic Assumption Me, as part of the analysis uses this concept. Basic Assumption Me was coined by Gordon Lawrence and me after the 'Perth' AISA Conference in 1991, to give meaning to phenomena which were inexplicable according to the three Basic Assumptions of Bion: Basic Assumption Dependency, Basic Assumption Fight/Flight, and Basic Assumption Pairing[5], or Basic Assumption Oneness[6] which was discovered by Pierre Turquet.

Basic Assumption Me - BaM - we hypothesized is operating when members of a group are behaving as though there is not a group present.

In Basic Assumption Me there is a retreat from an 'I' state, which is potentially able to interact with other 'I's, to a passive 'Me' state. Within the passive 'Me' state in a Conference one splits oneself from being a person with thoughts and feelings to spectating and speculating what these might be if one had them. Thus in the 'Perth' Conference it was noticeable that members had great difficulty in talking about their feelings in small and large group settings, and this led on a number of occasions to members saying things such as : 'If I was to feel angry I would say x.'

In BaM 'like links with like'. Thus in the Institutional Event where Members are free to form groups of their own choice, the groups that formed were all formed on the basis of sociometric chains, i.e. like linking with like. In BaM it is not possible to explore issues about authority, as differences of role for task are submerged in a pseudo-democratic egalitarianism. There is a lack

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[4] See Lawrence W.G., Bain A., and Gould L. *The Fifth Basic Assumption*, **Free Associations**, 1996, 6/1, No 37, pp. 28 – 55.

[5] Bion, W.R. **Experiences in Groups***, Tavistock Publications, London, 1961.

[6] Turquet, Pierre M. *Leadership: the Individual and the Group.* In Gibbard, G.S. et.al., eds. **The Large Group: Therapy and Dynamics**. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, London, 1974.

of capacity to link with others for learning, and what learning may take place is a secretive process that must be kept to oneself There is a premium on comfort and safety.

Consultants are made to feel they must work harder and harder at giving interpretations and that each interpretation has to be better than the last. The interpretations, which are often about Flight, usually have no effect except a further withdrawal by members of the group into apathy and passive aggression. As a Consultant one is made to feel one is not making contact with members of the group. 'You' (i.e. as a Consultant) are not there for members in BaM.

The difficulty of 'taking in' interpretations is linked to some of the interpretations being 'off beam', e.g. wrongly interpreting Flight, but I would suggest that they are also probably experienced as persecutory due to the Consultants failure to acknowledge the 'plumage' of the Members, i.e. their 'marvelous me-ness'. The link of Basic Assumption Me at the level of the group to narcissism at the level of the individual is probably evident.

FIVE HYPOTHESES ABOUT ORGANISATIONAL LIFE TODAY[7]

1. 'Uncontained Change'

The first hypothesis about organisational life is that many large organisations are experiencing the turbulence of what I have termed 'uncontained change'.

Uncontained change is the result of organisations attempting to manage the impact of technological, financial, market and political forces on the organisation. Frequently organisations will embark on numerous change projects including restructuring and downsizing in an attempt to manage this environmental turbulence. The change projects in and of themselves may be worthwhile, but what often happens is 'bumping', one project bumping another project, resulting

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[7] On reading these 'Five Hypotheses about Organisational Life Today' in 2004, ten years after this paper was written, I am struck by the pertinence of these observations for organisational life now. If anything the tendencies, and mechanisms, described in the first four hypotheses have strengthened, and the need for "Reflective Space" (Hypothesis Five) is even greater.

in changes that were not intended, and the changes that are occurring not being managed and held in mind. This is what I mean by uncontained change.

Uncontained change may go unnoticed in organisations either because of the excitement of a new project, or because it has become a part of the culture of the organisation. To be able to adapt almost instantaneously to the 'new' is regarded as a mark of flexibility and good management in organisations which lack the capacity for reflection (see the fifth hypothesis). The costs of uncontained change are projects that 'fall over', a sense *of* disequilibrium among Staff, stress, being at the mercy of impersonal forces that are not under control, and the dissatisfaction which arises from not being able to see a project through to a successful conclusion.

2. Basic Assumption Me as a Survival Mechanism

My second hypothesis is that Basic Assumption Me is playing an increasingly important part as a survival mechanism for individuals in these organisations.

Within a group Basic Assumption Me is marked by members of a group behaving as though the group is not present, within an organisation Basic Assumption Me is marked by members of the organisation behaving as though the organisation is not there. In other words individuals dissociate themselves from an emotional investment in the organisation, and for protection retreat into Basic Assumption Me behaviour. This is reinforced by the wider culture where the concept of 'my' satisfaction takes precedence over other values.

The links staff form with other staff are likely to be brittle in a BaM culture, and quite possibly manipulative, or there are links through 'liking'. Personal power for the ends of the individual become more important than personal power used through the authority of a role to carry out an organisational task.

While the reasons for the growing ascendance of Basic Assumption Me within organisations is not wholly to do with the behaviour of organisations, nevertheless the corporate disregard for individuals has accelerated the operation of BaM. It is a truism to observe that many people no

longer trust the organisations they are employed by, nor give loyalty to these organisations. But why should they when a common experience these days for many executives is to be told: 'Have your desk cleared within the hour and don't come back'.

Organisations have usually shown little *or* no trust in employees during restructuring or downsizing programs. The received 'wisdom' seems to be: do it in a secretive, decisive, and brutal way, without the involvement of the staff in the organisation. I happen to believe that if people are put in charge of their working lives, and are given the freedom, the authority and the information to decide on the right course of action for the organisation given the circumstances, they will usually do it, even if it means possibly losing their job. Restructuring and downsizing in the way it has been done infantilises employees, absolves senior executives from responsibility through the use of Consultants (whom the responsibility is projected into), and the long term economic gains are very doubtful. The cost is the increasing alienation, cynicism and Basic Assumption Me behaviour as a survival mechanism within organisations, and within the workforce generally.

3. *Loss of Primary Task*

My third hypothesis is that many organisations have lost sight of their Primary Task.

This is despite the numerous mission and vision statements which have been generated over the last ten years. Primary Task is defined, quite succinctly, as that Task the organisation has to carry out in order to survive[8]. It doesn't mean the organisation is in a survival mode, rather what is the essential thing it does, and has to continue to do, in order to survive. It should be possible to describe a primary task in one sentence, like: 'The primary task of XYZ motor car company is to research, develop, manufacture and sell motor cars at a certain rate of return'.

Primary Task analysis, if one perseveres with it, can be quite liberating for an organisation. One often finds there is a gap between what an organisation says it is doing, and what it is actually

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[8] See Miller, E.J. and Rice, A.K. **Systems of Organisation,**. Tavistock Publications, London, 1967.

doing. Reducing the gap between the two and introducing a down to earth clarity and reality can free members to commonly identify with the primary task, and the part they play in it.

A few years ago I and another consultant were working with the CEO and Senior Executive Group of a large billion dollar turnover corporation on primary task analysis. This group in defining the primary task of the organisation talked about it exclusively in terms of making money, or to be precise return on equity. They had completely lost sight of what they were doing, and what most members of the group were directly accountable for, which was to research, develop, manufacture and sell in Australia and overseas, one of the most widely used and basic products in our society. Not surprisingly they were losing money. After considerable work they introduced what they were doing into the primary task. They are now making quite a large profit. There is no direct relationship between the consultancy and the company making a large profit, as there have been a number of significant changes in the organisation and its operating environment. However the consultancy contributed to a clarity within the Senior Executive Group of what they were actually doing.

In my view the only organisation in our society that has a primary task 'to make money' is the Mint! I am not arguing that making money is not important for private sector organisations, of course it is, what I am arguing is that it is an *outcome* of successfully carrying out the primary task. To put 'making money' or 'saving money' (see the next example) as the primary task is to put the cart before the horse. It also does not distinguish one organisation from another. The *activity* is the engine.

To give another example of the loss of primary task, this time in the public sector. While the example is from four or five years ago- I doubt if much has changed. I was working with the CEO and senior managers of a large Melbourne teaching hospital, and it seemed for this group the primary task of the hospital was to 'save money'. To think of the treatment and care of patients as being important was to be regarded as naïve - that was the job of Doctors and Nurses. This is a good example of the primary task being split within an organisation: Doctors treatment, the more high tech the better, the nurses care of the patient, and the senior executive group the money. No one part of the organisation holds the organisation in mind as a whole.

A third and final example of difficulties in the definition of primary task is drawn from work with Catholic School Principals. During work on primary task analysis it emerged that the primary task of education was being overlaid and to some extent subverted by a welfare task which the schools were tacitly increasingly taking on because of pressures arising from the breakdown of students' families.

4 . A Pervasive Provider/Customer Relationship

My fourth hypothesis is that the loss of sight of Primary Task, its replacement in many cases by the emphasis on making money or saving money, and the emergence of BaM behaviour within organisations has resulted in the conversion of specific role relationships derived from Primary Task into a pervasive provider/customer relationship. .

Thus organisations like Universities and Hospitals are now selling products, and the students and the patients are the customers and consumers of these products. What is significant in terms of a role relationship e.g. Doctor and Patient, Teacher and Student, is in danger of being lost and homogenised into a provider/customer relationship.

Within a hospital patients may also be regarded as quasi products of the hospital, where efficiency is measured by patient throughput, bed turnover and so on i.e. 'casemix'. The current experience of hospitals is reminiscent of the old production lines in industry, where there was little attention given to the workers who operated the system, efficiency was measured by unit throughput, and quality was for the most part disregarded.

I am told by the way that even the Australian Tax Office is considering, or may even be using, the word 'customer' for 'taxpayer'!

Another example of the 'provider/customer' mentality which many of you will probably be familiar with are the assessments of training programmes carried out within organisations. As a consumer of the training one ticks a box as to whether the training was 'entertaining', or whether one 'enjoyed' the presentation, and whether the presenter had a pleasant personality. The

emphasis is rarely on exactly what did you learn, how did you apply what you learned within your work, and what were

the results. The 'making pleasant' of an experience as a priority is again a reflection of Basic Assumption Me within organisations: keep the comfort levels high, ensure people are having a good time, don't rock the boat.

5. *The need for 'Reflective Space'*

My fifth hypothesis is that there is an absence of 'reflective space' in most organisations which is harmful to the organisation in carrying out its primary task except in a mechanical way.

By 'reflective space' I mean time being spent by a group, or groups, within an organisation on exploring what they are doing, how might things be done in new and more effective ways, exploring and strengthening relationships between people linked by task, exploring group and organisational dynamics which might be unconsciously subverting the stated task, becoming more aware of the link between the individual, the group, and the organisation etc.

Most organisations are what one might call 'calculative', 'action oriented', and 'repetitive' in their behaviour. They do not contain space for reflection which might modify the calculation, the action, and the repetition so as to make the organisation more reflective, open to innovation and flexible.

'Reflection' for the calculative mind generally translates into navel gazing, time wasting or a wank. 'Where is the bottom line and what are the measurable outcomes?'

It is actually more than simply an absence of reflection within organisations, as that implies that once the benefits are known it could be easily introduced, and I don't think this is so, as the benefits have been known for a long time. My view is that there are strong defences within organisations which are mobilized on hearing the word 'reflection'. What is being guarded

against are fantasied dangers of uncertainty, fears of loss of control, and fears of true innovation which arises not just from one person, but is the outcome of a process of using the wisdom of the group. Nevertheless I am still surprised that organisations generally have not cottoned on to the value of reflection as a necessary part of organisational life, as necessary as calculation and action, as there are many examples of the value of reflection in enhancing organisational performance, management capacities, effectiveness and the bottom line.

Suzanne Ross and I have just completed a major one year Change Management Programme at Pentridge, the maximum security prison located here in Melbourne. Part of the process of what was an lGO Action Learning Programme involved a group of 13 Governors and Staff reflecting every two weeks on their action learning projects, the difficulties that were being encountered, the culture of the prison, the functioning of the group, and what action to take as a result of the reflection. A new way of managing has resulted from combining reflection and action which is transforming Pentridge and changing its culture from a traditional authoritarian prison culture, where a 'crim' is a 'crim' and a 'screw' is a 'screw', to a culture which while still retaining the calculation and decisiveness appropriate to working in a prison, is, at the same time more open, reflective and innovative. The culture is based on a greater sense of the interdependency between Individual, Group and Organisation, and the value of all three. For those familiar with the Myers Briggs Type Indicator there has been a marked change in the profile of the group we worked with over the one year programme. The shift has been from an almost exclusive Sensing, Thinking, Judging ('STJ') profile to the development of Intuition ('N') and Perceiving ('P') within the group, while the strengths of' 'STJ' are still held.

My argument is that if this change to more reflection with obvious benefit to Staff, Prisoners and Correctional Services Victoria, can occur within an operating environment which requires calculation, sensing, and quick and decisive action in large measure, then it should be possible anywhere.

To sum up, the five hypotheses I am making about organisational life are:

1. **Many organisations are experiencing the turbulence of 'uncontained change'.**
2. **Basic Assumption Me is playing an increasingly important part as a survival mechanism for individuals in these organisations.**
3. **Many organisations have lost sight of their Primary Task.**
4. **The loss of sight of Primary Task, its replacement in many cases by the emphasis on making money or saving money, and the emergence of BaM behaviour within organisations, has resulted in the conversion of specific role relationships derived from Primary Task into a pervasive provider/customer relationship.**
5. **There is an absence of reflective space in most organisations which is harmful to an organisation carrying out its Primary Task except in a mechanical way.**

A further generalisation which is based on the above hypotheses is that people within organisations are deprived of a 'connectedness' to task and with each other. There is a need to discover another method of developing 'connectedness' within organisations, which will help resolve the problems that have been mentioned, including the power of Basic Assumption Me.

SOCIAL DREAMING AND ORGANISATIONS

While my experience of using Social Dreaming within consultancy is limited to two organisations, my view is that Social Dreaming offers a way of developing 'connectedness' to task and to other people in the organisation which will promote enhanced performance (including the bottom line), and the health and well being of the Individual, the Group, and the Organisation.

I want to put forward the idea that dreams and their content are partly a function of the 'container' in which they are dreamt, and the task if any of the 'container'. By 'container' I mean, for example:

        - a dream group

        - a psycho-analysis, which involves two people

- an individual who may or may not pay much attention to dreams

- a family which shares dreams

- a society which shares dreams, like the Senoi in Malaysia

- a Social Dreaming Matrix

These are all examples of what I want to call the 'container' for dreams[9]. And the idea is that the nature of this container, and its task, will stimulate dreams, associations, and connections which are relevant to the functioning and growth of the container. This may take time to develop, but it becomes very evident.

For example towards the end of the four day consultancy with the William Alanson White Institute almost all the dreams were either set in the Institute, or connected in obvious or fairly obvious ways. A dream symbol of a white van, for the White Institute, occurred in a number of dreams. To my amazement, on the last day of the consultancy, a white van was drawn up outside the Institute. On the side of the van was a panel which read: 'You dream it, We build it'!

To give another example of the container and the task shaping the content of dreams. Three members of AISA's 1994 'Lorne' Conference reported having much the same dream the night after the Conference ended. All three dreams were set in a Doctor's waiting room, and in all three dreams the Doctor either refused to see the dreamer as 'patient', or the dreamer didn't get to see the Doctor. In two of the dreams, four chairs were lined up along a wall. This was the same configuration as for the Institutional Event during the Conference. I should add that the three members who had the dreams were in the same group in the Institutional Event. In two of the dreams, I am not sure about the third, there were a very skilled group of performers, possibly mime artists at work in the Doctor's waiting room, which the dreamer was watching in an observing way. Without going into the dynamics of the Conference the links were very evident to the Conference, particularly the observing relationship members had with staff as the management group during the Institutional Event.

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[9] See Bion W.R., **Attention and Interpretation,** Tavistock, London, 1970, for a discussion of the concept of 'Container and Contained'.

These examples will I hope begin to convince you, if you need convincing, of the fact that dreams are shaped by the task and the container. Because of the 'individual' based nature of our culture, which can become dominated by Basic Assumption Me, it is sometimes difficult for us to step beyond the locus and raison d'etre of the dream being the individual dreamer. However I believe a step of this kind is necessary. In some ways it is akin to the step Bion took in working with groups, where the focus becomes the 'group' not the 'individual'. Similarly as a Consultant working with a Social Dreaming Matrix, there is a focus on what may be being illuminated within the Matrix, or beyond the Matrix, rather than the personal meaning of a dream.

CONCLUSION: THE POTENTIAL OF SOCIAL DREAMING

Social Dreaming offers a powerful methodology of 'reflection' to organisations. It needs to be linked to an organisational task, such as the consultancy tasks with the William Alanson White Institute. I envisage that the contributions of Social Dreaming to organisations could be of various kinds:

First, in assisting organisations develop a more real vision; paradoxically, perhaps, one that is influenced by the dreams of members of the organisation.

Secondly, Social Dreaming allows one to realize the 'connectedness' of experience which would otherwise go unnoticed, and the Matrix provides a container for shaping dreams and making connectedness. It allows one to step beyond narcissism and Basic Assumption Me. Through making links the 'I' 'Other' relationship can be transformed - the notion of a 'web' or a network come to mind.

Thirdly, it provides another way of bringing to consciousness dynamics which either can't be talked about within a group, or are unconscious.

Fourthly, Social Dreaming can release creativity and innovation.

I believe that to introduce Social Dreaming within organisations requires consultancy, and that the Consultant should have considerable experience of a Social Dreaming Matrix before trying it out. There is a belief around that having had a brief experience of Social Dreaming equips one to be a Consultant, and I don't believe that is so. It's not all plain sailing and there are many pitfalls and dangers. Experience of working with unconscious dynamics in groups and organisations is also a pre-requisite, in my opinion, for Consultants wanting to use Social Dreaming with organisations.

At another level the introduction of Social Dreaming into organisations is only likely to come about through the CEO, or equivalent, of an organisation wanting to try it out, and having the support of relevant members of the organisation. Preferably, but I don't think it is essential, the CEO would have had some prior experience of a Matrix.

The rewards are waiting.

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