**The Dream of the Black Planet: An Experimental Test of Meaning**

**Maxson J. McDowell, Joenine E. Roberts and Alexandra Roth**

**Online audio record of complete class:** <https://youtu.be/TKT7-bsont0>

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**Abstract**

In an online, participatory [class](https://jungny.com/jungian-dream-interpretation-online/), we interpreted *The Dream of the Black Planet* knowing nothing of the dreamer beyond age and gender, and having none of the dreamer’s associations.

Our interpretation included a series of predictions about the dreamer. When it was complete, we asked the bringer of the dream (who had until then been silent and had her video camera turned off) to give us more information about the dreamer. Our predictions were mostly confirmed. The dreamer is in a car with his dad. It is not clear who is driving.

This record is another iteration of an experiment that will be described more fully in the paper *The Dream of the Six-Legged Dog*: *An Experimental System that Tests Symbolic Meaning* which is soon to be published. This iteration repeats and confirms the evidence given in that paper.

**Results 1:**

**Dream**

(At age 30 the dreamer gave the bringer this ‘repeating dream.’ After we had interpreted it, the dreamer clarified that he had this dream when he was 23 or 24.)

 I’m driving in a car with Dad. We are crossing a really, really long bridge over a body of water. A vast planet rears up before us, dwarfing the rest of the scene. I know it isn’t real, that it’s created by a particular atmospheric phenomenon that brings a planet that exists in the sky elsewhere, but full scale. Although I know it isn’t real, the scale of it is so immense it terrifies me so I clench every muscle in my body. My father is not alarmed. Once we pass the edge of the image and are inside the illusion, no light from outside enters it so the inside is completely black so there is no light from any direction. After we drive through the blackness a while we arrive at a kind of tollhouse or rest stop halfway along the bridge. We park in the little lot and go inside. There are a few other people inside and there are windows, but they look out on the blackness, so the only light is artificial light.

[You may prefer now to scroll down to Results 2 to listen read the compete transcript of the class: an easier way to absorb the material. Or you could listen to the audio of the whole interpretation and discussion.]

**Falsifiable Predictions that were Confirmed or Falsified.**

[The bringer does not speak till paragraph 150. Only then does she begin to tell us what she knows about the dreamer. A review of the videotape shows that, during the interpretation phase, she had very few non-verbal reactions.]

**Prediction 1 and evidence that we made it:**

 *The dreamer is not sufficiently separated from his dad. He is gripped by an overwhelming father complex (a tangle of attitudes and ideas related to his father) of which he is unconscious. He needs to take responsibility for his own individual journey through life.*

He is in a “father complex-related issue in a car which is sort of a vehicle that you move in your life. Very protected environment (3). Dad’s doing something that he also does and he may even have learned how to drive from his dad (4). An interesting ambiguity ... it's not at all clear who’s driving the car (6). So this is a journey ... the development of individual personality. If this dream were in the middle ages he might be riding a horse with his dad. Same idea (19). Parental complex [is] very convincing … It takes a lot of work to be able to not be emotionally possessed by them (70). This planet is brought to the dreamer’s vision by spirit, by thoughts, by ideas (87) ... complexes are created out of attitudes and ideas, fears that we have. So that’s an example of repetition (88).”

“I’m guessing it’s a complex, because it [the planet] is so alarming, and it creates such terror, and yet we are specifically told it is not actually a physical threat, because it is far far away. It's just an image, it's just an idea. It’s not a reality. That’s what makes me think it’s a complex (93).”

Class member: “It reminds me of a black hole. There is so much darkness that even the light cannot get through (107) … it’s some sort of depression (109) You are blind to reality (111).”

Lead author: “You are blind to reality. When it’s really got you, it’s got you and you can’t see that it’s just a complex (112). We are inside a house, and there’s no light coming in the windows, so we are right in the heart of a complex (113). ‘My father is not alarmed’ is ... another repetition (98). I’m the one who has to deal with this complex and it's invisible to him apparently (117) It's a collective place, so this is a collective kind of complex (118).”

 “Whose driving? We don’t know whose driving. Maybe the dreamer doesn’t know who is driving the car. I think that’s a repetition of what you were saying [CM,] that this is time for him to be driving the car. You’ve got to put dad in the passenger seat, maybe in the back seat. At least he’s got to be in the passenger seat. The young man has to drive the car. That’s the way it should be. If the dad is driving the car and the 30-year-old man, boy is sitting in the passenger seat, that’s probably a bit of an issue (130).”

**Evidence that confirms prediction 1:**

Bringer: “A couple of people mentioned that maybe this was a traumatic kind of dad or he had difficult relations. A less involved kind of dad. Does that make sense? Not a scary dad, more like maybe an uncertain dad or a dad who was not really hands on with the kid (152).”

He “has a kind of attitude, suffers from a pessimism that is so pervasive that it's a kind of joke with his friends. ‘So much complaining! So much pessimism!’ [He] struggles to feel competent, struggles to feel like ‘I can do it, I have what it takes.’ And that might have something to do with his relationship with his dad, who is a very nice man, but maybe ... not such a great model, always (156). He thinks his parents are really great, like really perfect. Like it's weird in people who are 30 (158). [He says] ‘Oh nothing happened to me and I have no explanation for how I am (159).’”

He “went to art school and works in a bookstore now. Kind of likes being a book seller (160). An ongoing issue around efficacy. Around feeling like ‘I can make up my mind what needs to happen for me and I can do it.’ He tends to flop over into a ‘Oh everything, I can’t … it's too hard.’ Not it’s too hard, it’s like ‘Life is so sad (161).’”

“Decided he’s never having kids. Oh, and he’s a vegan. So, concerned about harm minimization, right? So being a vegan is about minimizing your harm to people. Not having kids is like minimizing the people who are going to suffer in the planet. But it lacks a kind of spirited moving toward (162).”

Dad is “a very accomplished guy without a lot of confidence. His dad is a guy who has done a lot of really cool things in life, but always a little feeling ... not empowered. I think that is where it comes from. It’s maybe a family trait. Like ‘Oh it’s weird I’ve done so well and people know about me and I’m an expert… and I still feel like a can’t do …I don’t know how this happened, I don’t fully inhabit that (164).”

 “I think he was ... a timid father, like ‘I’m afraid to hold the baby,’ or when he’s crying, ‘you take him back’, or ‘I don’t know what to do to help this situation (169)‘. Not a super deep relationship, I think (171).”

“Yes I’ve sometimes thought that about really nice families, that they are very nice, they are very warm and then the kids really have trouble kicking the fence down. The parents are like ‘I’m really very sad that you came home drunk. You are not legally old enough to drink, and I hope you will think about that,’ and it would be better if they raged, and the kids could scream and defy them, you know a little more conflict would be better 173).”

“Yes. It has often struck me that more of a tempest in your adolescence is sometimes…these people who are like ‘Ahh, I hate my mother, she is so intrusive, and my father is such a gormless jerk-off’ and then the people themselves are really really strong, and really living their lives. Whereas people who feel like ‘My parents are the nicest people in the world and yet somehow I am unable to fully grow up and I eat dinner at my house three times a week with my mom and dad.’ Jeez a little bit more anger would maybe be good, or maybe a little bit more conflict (176).”

 “I thought about the toll house, being halfway along the bridge, and it really reminds me of that very first line of Dante’s *Inferno,* where he says ‘In the middle of my life I found myself lost in a wood.’ It’s unusual because the dreamer is 30, that’s not the middle of your life. But I think it implies a certain kind of, you’ve stopped at a vantage point, but there is no light, you are inside but you can’t look out of the window (177). So where I live the Chesapeake Bay Bridge is a really, really long bridge and it has a restaurant in the middle of it, and it's got a great view! This restaurant. But this little toll house is like sad and kind of a little twilight zone-y. You know, you go in and everything is dark outside. So it's not a vantage point. You are halfway but it doesn’t do you any good (179).”

 Class member: The toll house is “the place where you have to pay the price for the journey. You have to give some money (180). And that is part of maturation as well. The cost. Paying for things psychologically, or just being engaged in that way (183).”

Bringer: “Right, so that conflict is you have a little fight with your parents, or you do what they don’t want you to do, or you are displeasing to them, and it's the price you pay for being yourself (184).”

 [In retrospect, if the dreamer travels in his father’s car then he may not have to pay anything because he may be ‘just along for the ride’. Furthermore the ambiguity over whether this dream represents his 23 or 24-year-old self or his 30-year-old self (see Dream) repeats the idea that the dreamer is resisting maturation.]

**Prediction 2 and evidence that we made it:**

 *Behaving like his father, the dreamer is not struggling enough to deal with his unconscious predicament. He stays above it, in a too heady a psychological space, avoids engaging with his emotions, and avoids his life’s demands.*

“Body of water to me is the unconscious and all the content inside (21). [Water] also often represents emotions ... particularly in [educated] western society where we tend to live a lot in our intellect and we are often not so in touch with our emotions. That’s not true for everybody. Some people are much more in touch with their emotions. But mostly in western society people can tell you what they are thinking but will have to do more work to tell you what they are feeling (24).”

Water also suggests emotions because emotions have different temperatures and seem to flow though our bodies over time, like fluids.

 “It's a big body of water. A really long bridge, over a bay or something. So this tells us more, what kind of unconscious? It's not a bathtub, or a swimming pool. So, personal unconscious? (25). Well it looks like the threshold between personal in a car and a huge body of water, so collective unconscious, but some sort of threshold feeling (26).”

“A certain kind of wildness. Can’t be contained because of it's size? (29). You could drown in it. A storm could swamp your boat, or potentially even wash away your bridge (30). It includes danger right? It's not necessarily safe. It's certainly outside the control of the ego. Nobody can control a huge body of water. A huge body of water does what it wants (32).”

 “We could have dreamt we were floating in the water. That’s not the case. We are on a bridge (33). Every single detail is significant. Every detail is telling the story (34). A safe way to traverse this large powerful force (35). Do you feel entirely safe on that bridge? (36). Not at all, it's terrifying (37). I don’t think the image is one of safety, I think it is the image of something else (38). It’s obvious. You have to look at the image and say ‘exactly what is the image showing us?’ This is a visual language (39). The dreamer has a perspective. It’s looking from above (40). You are above it. It gives you perspective. Although that is interesting, because when you are above water, you don’t really see the water better ... It actually separates you from the water. It’s a way of staying above the unconscious (41).”

So the image is not of safety, but of avoidance, of staying up in air rather dealing with the unconscious by journeying through it as you would in a boat. It suggests that the dreamer is going along while avoiding life, not dealing with the deeper issues that a full life includes.

“It’s the intellect looking at the emotions from above, or consciousness looking at the unconscious from the outside (42). You could get that kind of perspective by standing on the edge of a cliff overlooking the sea. But you are on a bridge. So what does that tell you? Who makes cliffs and who makes bridges? (43). It’s a point of view or an attitude towards the unconscious which has been constructed by the collective. A human viewpoint. A cultural viewpoint above [avoiding] the unconscious, of looking at the unconscious from the outside of it (42, 45). There is some idea of where they are going and suddenly they are presented with this crazy big planet and the dreamer then begins to try and rationalize why it's there through this scientific explanation (60).” His scientific rationalization is an intellectual defense that seeks to avoid the psychological meaning of what is happening.

“When I go on a psychological journey with my dad. We travel above a huge amount of collective unconscious material. We are not sailing in it, we are above it, looking at it from the outside. It's big. There is a lot of unconscious stuff that maybe me and my dad [both] have to deal with. Or I have to deal with, with regard to my dad (115).”

“‘My father is not alarmed.’ I love that sentence. What does that tell you? (97). If we go with the ‘complex’ [idea], then even ‘my father is not alarmed’ is another repetition (98). And the father doesn’t notice the alarm. Which is alarming (100). Yes, we are back to … dealing with a father complex here (99). My father is fine about it. He doesn’t see it or he doesn’t care. It’s not his problem as far as he’s concerned. It seems to be entirely my problem. So maybe I’m more conscious than he, maybe I’m the one who has to deal with this complex and it's invisible to him apparently, or at least so familiar that he doesn’t think about it. It completely blinds us [both] (117).”

**Evidence that confirms prediction 2:**

The dreamer is “somebody who struggles to feel competent, struggles to feel like ‘I can do it, I have what it takes.’ And that might have something to do with his relationship with his dad, who is a very nice man, but maybe not such a great model (156).”

The dreamer says: “It's kind of weird that I am always drawn to these people who have a lot of difficulties and have these traumatic childhoods. And then they tell me that ‘Oh this happened to me and then that happened to me’ and I’m like ‘Oh nothing happened to me and I have no explanation for how I am.’ Which is kind of a funny insightful kind of way for someone to be. He’s very psychologically minded. (159)”

“Yes, went to art school and works in a bookstore now. Kind of likes being a book seller (160). I think this person has an ongoing issue around efficacy. Around feeling like ‘I can make up my mind what needs to happen for me and I can do it.’ He tends to flop over into a ‘Oh everything, I can’t … it's too hard.’ Not it’s too hard, it’s like ‘Life is so sad ‘(161). This is a guy who has decided he’s never having kids and he’s a vegan. So, concerned about harm minimization, right? So being a vegan is about minimizing your harm to people. Not having kids is like minimizing the people who are going to suffer in the planet. But it lacks a kind of spirited moving toward (162).”

“Yes, very accomplished guy [dad] without a lot of confidence. His dad is a guy who has done a lot of really cool things in life, but always a little feeling like, I don’t know, not empowered. I think that is where it comes from. It’s maybe a family trait. Like ‘Oh it’s weird I’ve done so well and people know about me and I’m an expert… and I still feel like a can’t do …I don’t know how this happened, I don’t fully inhabit that (164).’”

“I think he was like a timid father, like ‘I’m afraid to hold the baby,’ or when he’s crying, ‘you take him back,’ or ‘I don’t know what to do to help this situation (169)’ The parents are like ‘I’m really very sad that you came home drunk. You are not legally old enough to drink, and I hope you will think about that,’ and it would be better if they raged, and the kids could scream and defy them, you know a little more conflict would be better (173). There is too much protection of dad so that he [dreamer] can’t be fully real, because then what would happen if he were to be angry with this very kind, with the perfect parents (175).”

**Prediction 3 and evidence that we made it:**

 *He defends against his feelings and his predicament by somatizing, by “clenching all his muscles”. This is not a productive defense: it does not facilitate working things through and resolving his impasse.*

 “‘It’s so immense [the black planet], it terrifies me, I clench every muscle in my body’ The dream didn’t have to say that. What is the dream telling you now? (94). Even though it has rationalized the image, the body does not believe it (95). Yes, so the body, when our body clenches up like that, what do we call that psychologically? If you have a patient whose body is all frozen up because all the muscles are clenched, that’s somatization isn’t it? This complex is severe enough that the person feels it in their body. People’s spinal muscles clench up and they get sciatica if they’re angry and they’re not in touch with their anger, so they can somatize it. Here’s this guy somatizing his feelings about this complex (96). And indeed a huge reality rears up at me and is terrifying, seems totally convincing, even though it is an optical illusion that it is so close. My whole body tenses up, I have powerful somatic reactions to this complex (116).”

 “Clenching muscles is a protective thing, a way of keeping out, trying to keep something out, trying to push something out. So I wondered about the way in which this [black planet] is being dealt with. One way is to just try to back off or self protect and not engage with the terrifying aspect of it (132). Yes and it's a very unproductive way right? Maybe it works but it's not processing it, clenching up is not dealing with the situation. And somatizing does that for you. If the muscles in your back clench up and you have back ache, or sciatica, worse yet, maybe you get a herniated disk, that’s a way of trying to control your stress, but it’s not a productive way. Better you should see a shrink, or get a massage, or do body work. Start to process this somatized stuff (133).”

**Evidence that confirms prediction 3:**

“He has asthma. Which is an interesting image of clenching, you know when your lungs clench and you can’t get a deep breath (155).”

 “And I would say has a kind of attitude, suffers from a pessimism that is so pervasive that it's a kind of joke with his friends. ‘So much complaining! So much pessimism!’ You know. So I think it is somebody who struggles to feel competent, struggles to feel like ‘I can do it, I have what it takes (156).’ I think this person [dreamer] has an ongoing issue around efficacy. Around feeling like ‘I can make up my mind what needs to happen for me and I can do it.’ He tends to flop over into ‘Oh everything, I can’t … it's too hard.’ Not it’s too hard, it’s like ‘Life is so sad (161).’ And that might have something to do with his relationship with his dad, who is a very nice man, but maybe not such a great model (156).”

**Prediction 4 and evidence that we made it:**

*His clenched muscle, his somatized defense (a lived reality in the dreamer’s body) may have been transmitted to him psychologically (through emotions, attitudes, and ideas) from his father’s early lived reality in his father’s own body.*

“It's big but it is a planet. If you really wanted to go big you could just look at the whole galaxy, or the whole universe. So that would be big too, but this is as big as a planet, which is interesting, because where do we live? On a planet and this is another planet, a planet we don’t live on. That’s what we are looking at. There is a suggestion of an alternate reality. It’s a parallel planet. What does that suggest, psychologically? I don’t know the answers to these questions as I ask them, I’m exploring it with you. What does a parallel planet suggest? (52). When you travel to another country you are confronted with another culture, and it gives you a whole interesting perspective on the culture you come from. This would be another perspective with a vengeance (54).”

“And that’s interesting because you didn’t have to travel very far to find this perspective, it was brought to the dreamer by an atmospheric trick. Which tells you a lot. Look at how this planet arrived here. How did it arrive? Is it really there? Are you in danger of being sucked up by it's gravity and lifted off of this planet and drawn into the other planet by it's gravity? Yes? No? The dream answers that question. What does it tell you? (55).”

“The dream specifically explains that this vision is created by a particular atmospheric phenomenon that brings a planet that exists elsewhere, but you get to see it full scale. This is long-distance seeing. Some freak of the atmosphere, it’s like a mirage, you get to see this planet as though it’s up close but really it’s far, far away. The dream is making that point. You feel as though this thing is going to swallow you up, but actually it’s a mirage, it’s a long way away. So what does that tell you? Psychologically? (61).”

“It may scare you, in fact terrify you, but you can reassure yourself that it's not actually true. Well we do this all the time. When do we do this to ourselves? (63). People like horror stories, movies, books, theater. It's a clue that this may be very alarming and may scare you greatly but it is something you could learn from. It doesn’t actually have to destroy your life. I think that’s what the dream is hinting, but it's also playing with that idea, because it’s alarming even to read. Even as you read it you feel like the planet is real, you have to pay attention to realize that it is not actually there. It is a real planet, but it’s not actually in front of [the dreamer] even though you feel like it is. So it is a[n] effective illusion (65).”

“Jungians are always talking about complexes. Complexes are very convincing. It takes a lot work to not be emotionally possessed by them. So you see why I am drawing that parallel (70). And there is more evidence for what I just said. There is a repetition in there that helps to confirm what I just said about complexes. What’s the repetition? How was it [the illusion] created? (73). The atmospheric phenomenon? (74). What is atmosphere? (75) Air (76). What is air psychologically? (79). Some sort of spirit… It almost feels like spirit creates [an] illusion of some sort of creation myth. Like in the bible where you have the light and planets and water (83).”

“Yes, air is related to spirit. And by ‘spirit,’ if we interpret the idea rather than think of it in a mythological sense, spirit is what moves us, the thoughts, the ideas, the attitudes, the beliefs that move us. Just as the air, the wind moves us. Spirit is the stuff off thought that approaches us and changes our minds (86). So this planet is brought to the dreamer’s vision by spirit, by thoughts, by ideas. The reason you have a complex is because you have certain thoughts, and memories, ideas, which possess you (87).”

“So I said [in paragraph 70] this planet probably represents a complex, because of the fearsome and all-encompassing nature of it. And then I realized that this phenomenon [mirage] is created out of ideas [spirit]. Complexes are created out of attitudes and ideas, fears. So that’s an example of repetition (88).”

Class member: “The somatization is another repetition. [And] if we go with the ‘complex’ thought, then even ‘my father is not alarmed’ is potentially another repetition (98). And I see another addition. The fact that this big planet, this big spiritual content is somehow connected with the body, with the physical body, there is some kind of connection, some bridging between the spirit and the muscle in my body (102).”

Lead author: “To take that a little bit further, the planet is not a spiritual content. This planet is solid, earthy. It’s not earth but it’s made of rock. The vision of it is the psychological perception [spirit] of it. But what he’s looking at is something every bit as dense and clenched as clenched muscles. The other planet is like one big clenched muscle. And when he sees it his muscles clench up. So it [the planet] is affecting the body, the earth, and it is itself something of [planetary rock], of matter. But it’s effect [the means by which it is transmitted] is psychological (103).”

 “So you might say it’s ... the lived reality of the father which is having this fierce effect on the lived reality of the dreamer, by means of his complex. That’s just a guess. But it might be [saying] something like that (104).”

**Evidence that confirms prediction 4:**

 “The dad had a very difficult time as a child medically. He had great parents but he was in a hospital all the time. That’s like the other kind of really difficult childhood that people don’t talk about. Not just were your parents difficult for you, but also, were you sick all the time? Because he was. And I think that may have created that personality somewhat (165). “

Lead author: “The dad was sick all the time? (166).”

Bringer: “Yes. I would say that causes a lot of anxiety, if you are chronically ill, because you never know when you are going to be sick, and you are afraid of investing too much energy into anything because then you might get sick. And then I think that just was part of this dreamer’s growing up, a kind of cautiousness about (167).” Thus the bringer confirmed that the bodily, lived reality of the father - his childhood illness - is the source of the dreamer’s somatization.

Class member: “If you say that the dad is somewhat timid and the [dad’s] medical history, [then] perhaps there is too much protection of dad so that he [the dreamer] can’t be fully real, because then what would happen if he were to be angry with this very kind, with perfect parents? (175).”

**Prediction 5 and evidence that it was made:**

*The ending of the dream suggests a major depression.*

Class member: “Windows is something that you look on a wall, they are a point of view. And there is glass usually so there is not much emotions involved and then you look outside through the glass and there is nothing there (143).”

 Lead author: “He’s just trying to look through window, is that what you are saying, it's passive? (144).”

 Class member: “Yes, it is very passive. And sometimes bridges are connected with suicide. Sometimes, you know, old times, bridges were places where people used to commit suicide. I wonder if there is some sort of depression, like really a major one, that bring him to very dark place (145).”

**Evidence that falsifies prediction 5:**

 “Here’s something about this guy. He thinks his parents are really great, like really perfect. Like it's weird in people who are 30, right? (158). He’s just started to date a new woman … He’s very psychologically minded (159). Went to art school and works in a bookstore now. Kind of likes being a book seller. Very story oriented, and obviously for an artist, image oriented (160).” These words do not suggest major depression.

**Discussion:**

Predictions 1 through 4 were confirmed. Prediction 5 was falsified. In retrospect, there was little evidence to make prediction 5 in the first place. It may have been a projection onto the dream.

Three other predictions were rejected immediately because the details of the dream contradicted them: paragraphs: 47-8; 51-2; 56-9.

A review of the transcript shows that there were no other predictions. The above proves I was not cherry-picking predictions that I already knew would be confirmed.

**Conclusion**

The dreamer is psychologically overwhelmed by the black planet, as though devoured by Saturn as in the Roman (Greek) myth in which Saturn (Kronos) devoured his sons. From the bringer’s information it seems likely that the father’s devouring influence is linked to the father’s own childhood trauma which the father suffered somatically when (often) he was in hospital.

The reference to the myth of Saturn is unmistakable because Saturn is a larger-than-Earth planetary neighbor of ours and because the dream’s black planet is devouring the dreamer’s light and life. The dream used the most dramatic image it could, trying to penetrate the dreamer’s defenses. Clearly, a major purpose of this dream is to help the dreamer become conscious that his father complex prevents his personality from developing.

 This procedure yields *experimental evidence* that the underlying purpose of the myth of Saturn (Kronos) is to warn of the danger of a psychologically devouring father. That interpretation may seem intuitively obvious but this is the first time it has been confirmed empirically, by experiment. This procedure might provide experimental evidence for the meaning of any mythical or religious symbol.

**Results 2: Transcript of the Complete Class**

**Dream**

1. I’m driving in a car with Dad. We are crossing a really, really long bridge over a body of water. A vast planet rears up before us, dwarfing the rest of the scene. I know it isn’t real, that it’s created by a particular atmospheric phenomenon that brings a planet that exists in the sky elsewhere, but full scale. Although I know it isn’t real, the scale of it is so immense it terrifies me so I clench every muscle in my body. My father is not alarmed. Once we pass the edge of the image and are inside the illusion, no light from outside enters it so the inside is completely black so there is no light from any direction. After we drive through the blackness a while we arrive at a kind of tollhouse or rest stop halfway along the bridge. We park in the little lot and go inside. There are a few other people inside and there are windows, but they look out on the blackness, so the only light is artificial light.

**Our Interpretation**

2. Lead author LA. So now, I have no idea what this dream means. I haven’t thought about it until now. I chose it only because I thought it looked interesting. First thing we want to do, what’s the setting? Not a trick question, somebody tell me what the setting is.

3. Class Member, CM. I think the setting is the car with the dad, so there is some sort of family, father complex-related issue in a car which is sort of a vehicle that you move in your life. Very protected environment.

4. LA. Yes, we don’t know what the psychology is but it's going to have something to do with him and his dad, right? Because dad’s doing something that he also does and he may even have learned how to drive from his dad. But right now, dad’s in the driving seat. I think. Or is that not true? Actually it doesn’t say who is driving does it. Just assumed … that doesn’t tell you who’s driving does it? Ok, dad could be in the passenger seat. Interesting.

5. CM. Actually it says ‘I’m driving…’ Oh, you’re right, it says ‘I’m driving in a car in a car …’ excuse me.

6. LA. Yes, it does say I am driving in a car, but he could have said I am driving a car with dad. Then he would be the driver, probably. So there’s an ambiguity; an interesting ambiguity because there’s lots of ways to say that sentence that makes it clear who’s driving. Right? It's not at all clear who’s driving the car. Maybe that’s interesting, psychologically. Anyway, there’s the setting and it seems pretty informative. Now we are going to put that aside, and once we have formulated an interpretation, we have to remember to come back and look at the setting and and make sure that we are interpreting the dream in light of that setting.

7. One more question, what about a car? Every detail has meaning, what about a car?

8. CM. A car can represent the body?

9. LA. Well, he could have dreamed of the body. It’s not flesh and blood. It’s a car.

10. CM. Does it represent a journey perhaps?

11. LA. Yes, it does. You go on journeys in cars. What else can we say besides that idea? Because it's a car we can say more than just a journey.

12. CM. I was going to say a car is moving.

13. LA. It moves yes, things are in motion. What else about a car?

14. CM. A vehicle that transports you from one location to another.

15. LA. Yes, but what kind of vehicle?

16. CM. Mechanical vehicle.

17. LA. Yes, but those things could also be said of train right?

18. CM. Autonomy. Traveling not communally but solo or with a smaller group. A little bit more self-determined.

19. LA. Yes, so there is something about individuality here. Because if you are in a train or a bus it is specifically about a bunch of people. So this is a journey, but it's about individual, so we could say already we suspect this is about the development of individual personality. A bicycle would mean the same thing. A horse would mean the same thing. If this dream were in the middle ages he might be riding a horse with his dad. Same idea.

20. We are crossing a really, really, long bridge over a body of water. What could you deduce from that? (Silence)

Well, let’s break it down, we’ve got two things, we’ve got a bridge, and we’ve got a body of water. Bridges are not necessarily over water, they could be over a valley. This is a bridge over water. So what about water?

21. CM. Symbol of energy. Life energy. Body of water to me is the unconscious and all the content inside.

22. LA. Yes, I think of it as the unconscious, and certainly it is alive. But it has another very common meaning besides the unconscious.

23. CM. The emotions.

24. LA. Right. It also often represents emotions. That may be particularly in western society where we tend to live a lot in our intellect and we are often not so in touch with our emotions. That’s not true for everybody. Some people are much more in touch with their emotions. But mostly in western society people can tell you what they are thinking but will have to do more work to tell you what they are feeling.

25. It's a big body of water. A really long bridge, over a bay or something. So this tells us more, what kind of unconscious? It's not a bathtub, or a swimming pool. So, personal unconscious?

26. CM. Well it looks like the threshold between personal in a car and a huge body of water, so collective unconscious, but some sort of threshold feeling of the setting.

27. LA. Yes I don’t think the bridge crossing the water is the setting any more, I think that’s the unfolding of the dream. Maybe I’m just splitting hairs. I’m thinking of this as part of the peripeteia.

28. Yes. It's a very large body of water, therefore it represents the collective unconscious, which is very large.

29. CM. Doesn’t it also imply a certain kind of wildness. Can’t be contained because of It's size?

30. LA. Absolutely, yes, a jungle would have the same implication. You could drown in it. A storm could swamp your boat, or potentially even wash away your bridge. It's not contained, by definition if it's a huge body of water.

31. CM. So can we imply it's dangerous?

32. LA. Yes it includes danger right? It's not necessarily safe. That’s true of everything right, cars are not necessarily safe. But it's certainly outside the control of the ego, whereas a car can be controlled by one personality, if they are awake, they can control a car fairly carefully, if they chose to drive carefully, nobody can control a huge body of water. A huge body of water does what it wants.

33. And we are not in the water. We could have dreamt we were floating in the water. That’s not the case. We are on a bridge so, what does that tell you?

34. Every single detail is significant. Every detail is telling the story. If we pay attention to the details we can learn the story.

35. CM. So the driver has found a safe way to traverse this large powerful force.

36. LA. Well, when you are on a bridge, a very long bridge, driving across a bay, do you feel entirely safe on that bridge?

37. CM. No not at all, it's terrifying.

38. LA. yes, because you know a storm could come up. You don’t really feel safe till you get to the other side. So I don’t know about safe. I don’t think the image is one of safety, I think it is the image of something else.

39. It’s obvious, you have to look at the image and say “exactly what is the image showing us?’ This is a visual language.

40. CM. The dreamer has a perspective. It’s looking from above.

41. LA. Yes, exactly. You are above it. It gives you perspective. Although that is interesting, because when you are above water, you don’t really see the water better, it is just everywhere around you even though you are above it. So it’s not like it gives you more information about the water; it actually separates you from the water. It’s a way of staying above, let’s say the unconscious. And you can survey the extent of the water but you can’t actually see what’s in there.

42. But it certainly is a position from above. It sounds like the intellect looking at the emotions from above, or consciousness looking at the unconscious from the outside of it.

43. And something else about that perspective, if you stay with the image you can get more detail. Because you could get that kind of perspective by standing on the edge of a cliff overlooking the sea. But that’s not what you are doing, you are not standing on the edge of cliff, you are on a bridge. So what does that tell you? Well, who makes cliffs and who makes bridges?

44. CM. It’s a man-made suspension.

45. LA. yes, it’s a man-made bridge, or human-made bridge. So the position above the unconscious has been constructed by humans. It’s a point of view or an attitude towards the unconscious which has been constructed by the collective. It's a collective viewpoint, but it's a human viewpoint; it's not given to you by nature. So we are talking about culture now, this is a cultural viewpoint above the unconscious. Alright so we’ve already got quite a lot. Then what happens?

46. A vast planet rears up before us, dwarfing the rest of the scene.

47. CM. The collective unconscious again, by the vastness of the planet, same as the vastness of the … this is a repetition, the vastness of the water.

48. LA. Ah, ok. The only thing about that is this planet is not of this earth right? So I don’t know whether it’s the collective of earthlings, or the collective of the aliens that live on this other planet. I don’t know. There is repetition of the vastness but I’m not sure whether we can jump to the collective unconscious. Because normally, when we talk about the collective unconscious we are talking about human, earthbound collective unconscious. And this is apparently not the earth. Pointedly not the earth. So what does it mean that another planet? It doesn’t even tell you that it’s a planet of this solar system, maybe but not necessarily. Nothing is without meaning. That’s pregnant with meaning.

49. CM. Unknown danger? Another danger, again, it's the unknown.

50. LA. It's definitely the unknown, possibly dangerous.

51. CM. Something cosmic, something impersonal, something bigger than humans can conceptualize.

52. LA. yes, it's certainly big. But it's big but it is a planet, right, I mean if you really wanted to go big you could just look at the whole galaxy, or the whole universe, right. So that would be big too, but this is a planet, it’s as big as a planet, which is interesting, because where do we live? Where do we all live? On a planet? Right? We live on a planet, and this is another planet, a planet we don’t live on. That’s what we are looking at. What I’m getting at there is I think there is a suggestion of an alternate reality. It’s a parallel planet, right? Which … what does that suggest, psychologically? A parallel planet. I don’t know the answers to these questions. I don’t know the answers to these questions as I ask them, I’m exploring it with you, but what does a parallel planet suggest?

53. CM. Other lives, or other ways of being, like call into question that this is it?

54. LA. Yes, I think so. Other ways of being, other realities. I mean when you travel to another country, like this summer you went to Italy for a vacation, you are confronted with another country, another culture, and it gives you a whole interesting perspective on the culture you come from, so you come back, hopefully refreshed from that exposure to wherever you went. Well this would be another perspective with a vengeance.

55. And that’s interesting because you didn’t have to travel very far to find this perspective, it was brought to the dreamer by an atmospheric trick. Which tells you a lot right? Look at how this planet arrived here. How did it arrive? Is it really there? Are you in danger of being sucked up by its gravity and lifted off of this planet and drawn into the other planet by its gravity? Yes? No? The dream answers that question. What does it tell you?

56. CM. I think because it's dwarfing the rest of the scene, it sounds like it’s very powerful.

57. LA. Very powerful.

58. CM. yes, the way it’s dwarfing the scene like nothing else is there.

59. LA. yes, but it’s more subtle than that, What the dream is saying is more subtle than that. It would feel extremely powerful.

60. CM. I’m struck by the thought that, the dreamer is in the car going along the bridge, and there is some idea of where they are going and suddenly they are presented with this crazy big planet and the dreamer then begins to try and rationalize why it's there through this scientific explanation, and so the unexpectedness strikes me.

61. LA. Yes, But I just want to go back to the question I asked because I think it is significant. I agree with what you are both saying, but the dream specifically explains that this vision is created by a particular atmospheric phenomenon that brings a planet that exists elsewhere, but you get to see it full scale. There is a phenomenon that sometimes when you are in a certain place you can hear sound that’s from somewhere else and it's being transported from a distance, and you can overhear things that you normally wouldn’t be able to hear, because a freak of the atmosphere bounces the sound waves so you get long-distance hearing sometimes, that’s rare but it happens. This is like long-distance seeing. Some freak of the atmosphere, it’s like a mirage, you get to see this planet as though it’s up close but really it’s far, far away. See the dream is making that point. You feel as though this thing is going to swallow you up, but actually it’s a mirage, it’s a long way away. So what does that tell you? Psychologically?

62. CM. Is it telling the dreamer, they can look at the planet but it's not going to hurt them. Telling them, you can look at this but don’t worry, it’s not going to get you. Or what you see isn’t going to hurt you.

63. LA. Yes, it may scare you, in fact terrify you, but you can reassure yourself that it's not actually true. Well we do this all the time. When do we do this to ourselves?

64. CM. With movies.

65. LA. Yes. People like to watch slasher movies, god knows why, I don’t, I could never do it, but people do. People like horror stories. Books, Theater. So yes, it's a clue I think, that this may be very alarming and may scare you greatly but it is something you could learn from. It doesn’t actually have to destroy your life. I think that’s what the dream is hinting, but it's also playing with that idea, because it’s alarming even to read, even as you read it you feel like the planet is real, you have to pay attention to realize that it is not actually there. It is a real planet, but it’s not actually in front of you even though you feel like it is. So it is a pretty effective illusion.

66. So does that remind you of anything psychological that you know about, those of you who have been in therapy and talked about psychology. What are Jungians always talking about.

67. CM. A dream.

68. LA. I’m talking about this planet, this experience of something that is absolutely terrifying you, but it is not really real.

69. CM. Irrational fears?

70. LA. Yes, right, that’s another way… Jungians are always talking about complexes. If you have a parental complex, and you project it onto somebody, then that person is going to bug you the way your parents bug you. Even though they are not your parents. And you’ll have a hard job distinguishing it. You’ll think it is really them and you won’t realize that it is a projection of how you feel about your parents or somebody else, on this other person. Complexes are very convincing. It takes a lot work to be able to not be emotionally possessed by them. Right? So you see why I am drawing that parallel. It's a guess, but I suspect.

71. And there is more evidence for that. There is evidence for what I just said. There is a repetition in there that helps to confirm what I just said about complexes. What’s the repetition? How was it created?

72. CM. Is it the fact that it says I’m driving with my father, and my father is not alarmed?

73. LA. Maybe, yes, that could be a repetition, something about parents, yes a parental complex. But there is an even more direct repetition that explains, with another image, what I just said. There is another image in there. It's right there on the page. How was it created?

74. CM. The atmospheric phenomenon?

75. LA. Yes, an atmospheric phenomenon. What does atmosphere mean?

76. CM. A clear mirage.

77. LA. Like a mirage. But what is atmosphere?

78. CM. Air.

79. LA. What is air psychologically?

80. CM. Some sort of spirit.

81. CM. Illusion.

82. LA. Yes, it could be illusion. More … let’s stay with that for a minute. What did you say [other CM]?

83. CM. It almost feels like spirit almost creates some sort of illusion of some sort of creation myth. Like in the bible where you have this in form, in the air, the dark, where you have the light and planets and water …

84. LA. Yes, did you use the word spirit?

85. CM. Yes.

86. LA. Yes, so air is kind of related to spirit. Yes, and by spirit, if we look at that idea logically, interpret the idea of spirit rather than think of it in a mythological sense, spirit is what moves us, the thoughts, the ideas, the attitudes, the beliefs that move us. Just as the air, the wind moves us. Spirit is the stuff off thought [gesturing above my head] that approaches us and changes our minds.

87. So this planet is brought to the dreamer’s vision by spirit, by thoughts, by ideas, which is what a complex ... The reason you have a complex is because you have certain thoughts, and memories, ideas, which possess you.

88. So I said, this planet probably represents a complex, because of the fearsome nature of it and the all-encompassing nature of it. And then I realized that this phenomenon is created out of ideas. So complexes are created out of attitudes and ideas, fears that we have. So that’s an example of repetition.

89. CM. Well, I have a question at this point. So when you say that it is a complex, in the center of every complex there is some sort of archetype of energy. Is in this case, maybe father is the core of this complex?

90. LA. Well, that’s a possibility, right. I think it is a little too soon to try to… I don’t want to limit our idea about this complex, It's little too soon to assume that, but that’s a very plausible suggestion, right, because we already have evidence for that.

91. CM. Are you saying that the repetition lies in the atmospheric mirage and then the air spirit? That those are the two different things that created the repetition?

92. LA. Yes, the air spirit is the atmospheric phenomenon and air represent thoughts. The earth represents the body, our physical self, the air is all we can think. Birds represent ideas because they fly though the air. Our body is located on the ground.

93. And I’m only guessing that it is a complex, I’m guessing it’s a complex, because it is so alarming, and it creates such terror, and yet we are specifically told it is not actually a physical threat, because it is far, far away. It's just an image, it's just an idea. It’s not a reality. That’s what makes me think it’s a complex, and then the repetition makes me even more think that.

94. ‘It’s so immense, it terrifies me, I clench every muscle in my body’… everything has meaning. The dream didn’t have to say that. What is the dream telling you now?

95. CM. Well even though it has rationalized the image, the body does not believe it. So somehow they don’t believe it even though there is a scientific reason for it.

96. LA. Yes, so the body, when our body clenches up like that, what do we call that psychologically. If you have a patient whose body is all frozen up because all the muscles are clenched, that’s somatization isn’t it? This complex is severe enough that the person feels it in their body. People’s spinal muscles clench up and they get sciatica if they’re angry and they’re not in touch with their anger, so they can somatize it. Here’s this guy somatizing his feelings about this complex.

97. ‘My father is not alarmed.’ I love that sentence. My father is not alarmed. What does that tell you?

98. CM. I was going to say that the somatization is another repetition. If we go with the complex thought, then even ‘my father is not alarmed’ is potentially another repetition.

99. LA. I think so, yes. And we are back to [CM’s] idea that we might be dealing with a father complex here.

100. CM. And the father doesn’t notice the alarm. Which is alarming.

101. LA. Yes, yes.

102. CM. And I see another addition. The fact that this big planet, this big spiritual content is somehow connected with the body, with the physical body, there is some kind of connection, some bridging between the spirit and the muscle in my body.

103. LA. To take that a little bit further, the planet is not a spiritual content. This planet is solid, earthy. It’s not earth but it’s made of rock. The vision of it is the psychological perception of it. But what he’s looking at is something every bit as dense and clenched as clenched muscles, right? The other planet is like one big clenched muscle. And when he sees it his muscles clench up. So it’s affecting the body, the earth, and it is itself something of earth, of matter. But its effect is psychological.

104. So you might say it’s the … maybe it's the psychology of the father, or I should say the lived reality of the father which is having this fierce effect on the lived reality of the dreamer, by means of his complex. But that’s just a guess. But it might be something like that.

105. It’s one thing, if your father has very extreme political views … it’s one thing to have a father who discusses politics with you and shares literature about politics and it’s another thing to have a father who is dead set on an extreme political position and is living it in his own life, in some way and then that’s what you have to deal with. And when you go to his house you’re going to see his politics on the front lawn, and in his contents of his basement. You know, it’s like solid, dense, if it’s actually happening.

106. So what do we find out as the dream progresses. Once we are inside the illusion, no light enters. So we are in total darkness now. Does that remind you of anything that happens to you when you are investigating your own psychology? What happens to you when you get really caught up in a complex?

107. CM. It reminds me of a black hole. There is so much darkness that even the light cannot get through.

108. LA. Yes, what’s it like when you are possessed by a complex?

109. CM. It’s some sort of depression or some sort of …

110. LA. And when you are in that depression, or terror, or whatever it is, can you see out? Do you have perspective?

111. CM. You are blind to reality.

112. LA. You are blind to reality. When it’s really got you, it’s got you and you can’t see that it’s just a complex, you can’t relax. All your muscles tighten up. So I think that might be the darkness. Once we are inside the illusion, there is no light. Once we are inside the complex, no light.

113. Then we stop at a rest stop halfway along the bridge. So we are only halfway in our journey, we are still in this dangerously precarious relationship with the unconscious, on a bridge. And we go inside and there are windows but they look out on blackness, so there is no light being cast on the situation. So we are inside the shadow of the planet. There is no light. We are in the middle of the bridge. We are inside a house, and there’s no light coming in the windows, so we are right in the heart of a complex.

114. So now, I want to press on because we want to hear from the bringer of the dream. So let’s formulate this dream, let’s try to state what the dream is telling us. Let’s put all these images together and tell a story.

115. Ok. I’m going to do it this time. When I go on a psychological journey, in the presence of my dad. Or with my dad. We travel above a huge amount of collective unconscious material. We are not sailing in it, we are above it, looking at it from the outside. It's big. There is a lot of unconscious stuff that maybe me and my dad have to deal with. Or I have to deal with, with regard to my dad.

116. And indeed a huge reality rears up at me and is terrifying, seems totally convincing, even though it is an optical illusion that it is so close. My whole body tenses up, I have powerful somatic reactions to this complex, let’s say.

117. My father is fine about it. He’s not alarmed in any way, he doesn’t see it or he doesn’t care. It’s not his problem as far as he’s concerned. It seems to be entirely my problem. So maybe I’m more conscious than he, maybe I’m the one who has to deal with this complex and it's invisible to him apparently, or at least so familiar that he doesn’t think about it. It completely blinds us

118. and even when we stop traveling we are still stuck in the middle of it, and it’s kind of a collective situation because there are other people there and they are also stuck in the middle of it. It's on a highway, so everybody who’s on the highway has the same experience. And everybody who stops at this hotel, tollhouse, or whatever it is, rest stop. It's a collective place, so this is a collective kind of complex. [Perhaps the dream is emphasizing the fact that when you are caught in a complex your behavior becomes collective, you lose autonomy.]

119. Ok, so that’s the dream. First of all does that correspond with the setting? Yes it does, right.

120. And then the question is, why is this dreamer having this dream now? Well, why would this dreamer be having this dream right now?

121. CM. I think he is 30 years old, so it is the time, so it is the time when his ego is already, should be established. He should have his own life. He is 30 years old so there is kind of this transition from 30s to 40s, probably it is appropriate stage when people move completely out from parents’ influence.

122. LA. So what are you saying, push it a little further.

123. CM. Well he is trying to find his own individual way, and maybe bring some father complex to consciousness to be conscious about the trauma that he probably experienced as child or influence that he had from his personal father.

124. LA. Yes, I would agree with that. And I think there is a repetition right in the beginning of the dream that confirms what you just said, that confirms what you just said, or supports it. We actually talked about it, right in the beginning.

125. CM. That It's a repeating dream.

126. LA. That, yes, but right in the dream itself. Right in the very beginning of the dream, what did I say about the beginning of the dream?

127. CM. A car is individuality, so he is becoming his own self.

128. LA. Maybe, but what’s happening in this dream?

129. CM. Who’s driving.

130. LA. Who’s driving. We don’t know whose driving. Maybe the dreamer doesn’t know who’s driving the car. Right? I think that’s a repetition of what you were saying [CM,] that this is time for him to be driving the car, right? You’ve got to put dad in the passenger seat, maybe in the back seat. At least he’s got to be in the passenger seat. The young man has to drive the car. That’s the way it should be. If the dad is driving the car and the 30-year-old man, boy is sitting in the passenger seat, that’s probably a bit of an issue. I mean obviously psychologically if you go for a long drive you’re going to alternate, but the dream is … everything has meaning, so the dream chooses to tell us that we don’t know who’s driving the car. That’s got meaning.

131. So any more that we can say from this dream? What about all the muscles clenched?

132. CM. I was thinking about that as a way of … clenching muscles is a protective thing, a way of keeping out, trying to keep something out, trying to push something out. So I wondered about the way in which this is being dealt with. One way is to just try to back off or self-protect and not engage with the terrifying aspect of it.

133. LA. Yes and it's a very unproductive way right? Maybe it works but it's not processing it, clenching up is not dealing with the situation. I agree. And somatizing does that for you. If the muscles in your back clench up and you have back ache, or sciatica, worse yet, maybe you get a herniated disk, that’s a way of trying to control your stress, but it’s not a productive way. Better you should see a shrink, or get a massage, or do body work. Start to process this somatized stuff.

134. CM. Let’s say the patient experienced some trauma in childhood that caused some clenching. Whenever people are exposed to certain situations they can clench. Some sort of defense or adaptation or something like that.

135. LA. Yes, so it's a defense that maybe represents some kind of trauma. All defenses have usefulness but if we are stuck in them too long then they’re counter-productive.

136. CM: I wondered if there is more to say about that toll house or the rest stop. Something about maybe where he is in the journey. Are there clues in that about what can happen next. The rest stop idea to me, that he is stopping for a rest. It’s not really giving anything new to him, necessarily but I wonder if there is anything more to that aspect of it.

137. LA. That’s an interesting question, but when he gets to the rest stop what does he find?

138. CM. Yes, nothing. The same, it's windows but they don’t let any light, they don’t let anything new in.

139. LA. So it’s like you go to your collective resources for help with this and they don’t shed any light on the situation. Right?

140. CM. And the only light is artificial so it’s not helpful.

141. LA. Not helpful. Yes, it’s like you go to your pastor at your church or your rabbi and the rabbi gives you some cliché or platitude or “remember you must always respect your parents’ or something like that, or ‘he doesn’t mean it, you just have to forgive him.’ Whatever you get it doesn’t help you, it’s not enough. There are windows so there should be light, but there is no light. You look for help and you don’t get it. That’s my guess [CM] but maybe there is something else.

142. CM. Yes, no that makes sense.

143. CM. And windows is something that you look on a wall, they are a point of view. And there is glass usually so there is not much emotions involved and then you look outside through the glass and there is nothing there.

144. LA. He’s just trying to look through window, is that what you are saying, it's passive?

145. CM. Yes, it is very passive. And sometimes bridges are connected with suicide. Sometimes, you know, old times, bridges were places where people used to commit suicide. I wonder if there is some sort of depression, like really a major one, that bring him to very dark place.

146. LA. Yes, and that reminds me of another thing in this dream. He is on a bridge, so he is above the water. So it suggests something about not getting his feet wet in the water, not being down close to the unconscious issue. Somewhat above it in a defensive position I think.

147. CM. Yes, not in touch with it.

148. LA. Not in touch, yes. So you might have to get in touch by jumping into the water and drowning, you know, which is what you are saying.

149. LA. Let’s go now to the bringer of the dream, and can you tell us about what you know about the dreamer?

**The Bringer’s Knowledge and the Ensuing Discussion**

150. Bringer. B. Tell me what kinds of things you would like to know?

151. LA. Well, whatever you know that seems relevant to this dream. Or relevant to what we said. You may know things that contradict what we’ve said, or you may know things that coincide with what we’ve said. Whatever you know.

152. B. A couple of people mentioned that maybe this was a traumatic kind of dad or he had difficult relations. I think more like a less involved kind of dad. Does that make sense? Not a scary dad, more like maybe an uncertain dad or a dad who was not really hands on with the kid.

153. LA. Ok.

154. B. He’s a comics artist, this guy. He draws comics and graphic novels. Has always been pretty sensitive, insightful. Is actually really interested in Jungian psychology, has been in Jungian analysis too. That’ll make you have dreams be like this.

155. Also couple of things that came to mind while we were .. He has athsma. Which is an interesting image of clenching, you know when your lungs clench and you can’t get a deep breath.

156. And I would say has a kind of attitude, suffers from a pessimism that is so pervasive that it's a kind of joke with his friends. “So much complaining! So much pessimism!’ You know. So I think it is somebody who struggles to feel competent, struggles to feel like “I can do it, I have what it takes.’ And that might have something to do with his relationship with his dad, who is a very nice man, but maybe not so, not such a great model, always. Is that useful stuff?

157. LA. Absolutely. I have a feeling that if we ask you questions, you could say more. Could you say more about his relationship with his dad, maybe?

158. B. Yes, it is not a conflictual relationship. But maybe there should be more. Ok here’s something about this guy. He thinks his parents are really great, like really perfect. Like it's weird in people who are 30, right.

159. Actually this is somebody I’ve known for a long time. The last time we talked about what was going on in his life, he said … he’s just started to date a new woman and he was like “Well, but they are really … they have a lot of difficulties and it's kind of weird that I am always drawn to these people who have a lot of difficulties and have these traumatic childhoods. And then they tell me that “Oh this happened to me and then that happened to me’ and I’m like “Oh nothing happened to me and I have no explanation for how I am.’ Which is kind of a funny insightful kind of way for someone to be. He’s very psychologically minded.

160. Yes, went to art school and works in a bookstore now. Kind of likes being a book seller. Very story oriented, and obviously for an artist, image oriented.

161. I think this person has an ongoing issue around efficacy. Around feeling like “I can make up my mind what needs to happen for me and I can do it.’ He tends to flop over into a “Oh everything, I can’t … it's too hard.’ Not it’s too hard, it’s like “Life is so sad. Things are …’

162. Oh, here’s another interesting thing about… This is a guy who has decided he’s never having kids. Oh, and he’s a vegan. So, concerned about harm minimization, right? So being a vegan is about minimizing your harm to people. Not having kids is like minimizing the people who are going to suffer in the planet. But it lacks a kind of spirited moving toward.

163. LA. Do you … and do you know much about the personality of the dad?

164. B. Yes, very accomplished guy [dad] without a lot of confidence. His dad is a guy who has done a lot of really cool things in life, but always a little feeling like, I don’t know, not empowered. I think that is where it comes from. It’s maybe a family trait. Like “Oh it’s weird I’ve done so well and people know about me and I’m an expert… and I still feel like a can’t do …I don’t know how this happened, I don’t fully inhabit that.’

165. And also the dad had a very difficult time as a child medically. Not… he had great parents but he was in a hospital all the time. That’s like the other kind of really difficult childhood that people don’t talk about. Not just were your parents difficult for you, but also, were you sick all the time? Because he was. And I think that may have created that personality somewhat.

166. LA. The dad was sick all the time?

167. B. Yes. So I would say, that causes a lot of anxiety, if you are chronically ill, because you never know when you are going to be sick, and you are afraid of investing too much energy into anything because then you might get sick. And then I think that just was part of this dreamer’s growing up, a kind of cautiousness about…

168. LA. And you said that maybe the dad was not strongly involved. Maybe there was not a lot of hands … not a lot of real engagement … Maybe there could have been more engagement between father and son.

169. B. Yes, I think he was like a timid father, like ‘I’m afraid to hold the baby, or when he’s crying, you take him back, or I don’t know what to do to help this situation …’

170. LA. So there was not a strong connection between them, engagement or rough and tumble that could have helped develop strength in the son and confidence.

171. B. Yes, not a super deep relationship, I think.

172. LA. Yes, so it seems to me, other people may want to comment on this, but it seems to me that the complex, that doesn’t suck all the air out of the room, but sucks all the light out of the room, is, has to do with maybe his relationship with his father that hasn’t been resolved. There wasn’t enough combat and engagement and struggle between them for him to fight his way out of the complex. It just persists in the atmosphere, towering over everything and blotting out the light and hasn’t been wrestled with. It might have been easier for him if they’d had big fights and a lot of defiance, you know, the kid pissing the dad off and a lot of ruckus between them, it might have helped the son distinguish himself from the father’s attitudes more.

173. B. Yes I’ve sometimes thought that about really nice families, that they are very nice, they are very warm and then the kids really have trouble kicking the fence down. The parents are like “I’m really very sad that you came home drunk. You are not legally old enough to drink, and I hope you will think about that,’ and it would be better if they raged, and the kids could scream and defy them, you know a little more conflict would be better.

174. LA. Yes, exactly, I think so, yes.

175. CM. Well, if you say that the dad is somewhat timid and the medical history that perhaps the son is … there is too much protection of dad so that he can’t be fully real, because then what would happen if he were to be angry with this very kind, with the perfect parents or whatever.

176. B. Yes, I think the is accurate, yes. It has often struck me that more of a tempest in your adolescence is sometimes…these people who are like “Ahh, I hate my mother, she is so intrusive, and my father is such a gormless jerk-off’ and then the people themselves are really really strong, and really living their lives. Whereas people who feel like “My parents are the nicest people in the world and yet somehow I am unable to fully grow up and I eat dinner at my house three times a week with my mom and dad.’ Jeez a little bit more anger would maybe be good, or maybe a little bit more conflict.

177. Ah, that’s really cool. I thought about the toll house, being halfway along the bridge, and it really reminds me of that very first line of Dante’s *Inferno,* where he says ‘In the middle of my life I found myself lost in a wood.’ It’s unusual because the dreamer is 30, that’s not the middle of your life. But I think it implies a certain kind of, you’ve stopped at a vantage point, but there is no light, you are inside but you can’t look out of the window.

178. LA. There is no vantage, right?

179. B. Right. So where I live the Chesapeake Bay Bridge is a really, really long bridge and it has a restaurant in the middle of it, and it's got a great view! This restaurant. But this little toll house is like sad and kind of a little twilight zone-y. You know, you go in and everything is dark outside. So it's not a vantage point. You are halfway but it doesn’t do you any good.

180. CM. It’s also the place where you have to pay the price for the journey. You have to give some money for, pay for this kind of life in some way, in one way.

181. LA. Yes there is a cost, yes.

182. CM. There is cost.

183. CM. And that is part of maturation as well. The cost. Paying for things, psychologically, or just being engaged in that way.

184. B. Right so that conflict is you have a little fight with your parents, or you do what they don’t want you to do, or you are displeasing to them, and it's, you know, the price you pay, for being yourself.

185. LA. Yes. Or if you don’t, then there is a price you pay for that. If you don’t, if you travel in this above-the-surface way, maybe there’s a cost to that.

186. [On subsequent reflection, if you travel in your father’s car then you may not have to pay for anything, because you are ‘just going along for the ride’.]

187. CM. He was able to see the tollhouse, they are in the blackness, but then they see the tollhouse. And the sentence that I keep laughing about, I don’t know why, when he says “we park in the little lot, and we go inside.’ So somehow or other he’s seeing the little lot, even though he was all conflicted, and had somatization and being afraid, he goes into the toll house. So there is something that maybe is about moving forward or going on. There was also something that kept coming to me about birth, I don’t know why.

188. LA. Birth.

189. CM. Yes. You mention there is repetition. In the end there are two walls inside. So maybe that’s what they call the …[?] of the dream is that there is just pointing inside. Maybe if you go inside and you find some hope or solution or help or some sort of a guidance for this dream if you go inside. Maybe.

190. LA. But if you look at what the dream is saying, it’s not offering any help. The lot is little, and when you go inside there is still no light. I think maybe you want there to be light here, so maybe you are projecting a wish onto the dream, but the dream is actually not very favorable or friendly to this situation.

192. And that doesn’t mean … the dream is not telling you your future, it’s not telling this young man his future, this 30-year-old his future, but it is challenging his attitude. So maybe it’s putting the screws on him a little bit and saying ‘Look, buddy, nothing much has happened so far, and you are not in a very good place here now, there is not much light now, so maybe it’s time for you to get alarmed.’ It’s not being kind about it.

193. CM. Being born in the US usually means, unfortunately, that you are born into artificial light, in the hospital.

194. CM. May I say something? I came late, I’m really sorry, for that, so I don’t know if what I’m going to say is something that has already been said. But just reading the dream I feel like it is somebody who has a fight between his reason ands his emotions and his feelings. When he says he sees things, he knows those things are not real so I think it is somebody who maybe feels very threatened that his emotions might overwhelm him. The reference to the father, you know his father is not alarmed, is I think he sees his father as an anchor. What can help him keep a grasp on reality. And I think all the water, being on the bridge, the bridge over the water, could signal his fear of being completely submerged by the water. He says we go ..

195. LA. I’m sorry, I have to interrupt now, we have to close for the day, times up. Thank you very much for your contribution, I think you made an important point.

196. So thank you very much, next week, another dream.