

Dreams and Marine Sciences

Anders Omstedt speaking from Sweden on July 4 2020

I have two strong interests which I would like to speak about today. First how the ocean and its coastal seas work. Secondly how the internal ocean within us all works, and here I mean how our subconscious part communicates with our conscious part through dreams, intuition, and feelings. As you know the ocean is the prerequisite for all life on earth. At the same time, the ocean is a beautiful symbol for our human internal potential and intelligence. But before starting I would like to thank Bill Stimson for inviting me to this YouTube meeting. As most of you know Bill has been able to establish courses on dreaming at the university level in Taiwan.

In 1980 Kerstin Andersson invited Montague Ullman to Växjö, Sweden. Kerstin was working as a psychotherapist at St Sigfrid's hospital and Ullman was invited to give training courses for the staff. This was a start for Ullman's many travels back and forth from the USA to Sweden and many people in Sweden were introduced into what later was known as the Ullman's dream group method. In 1990 the Swedish Dream Group Forum was organized aiming to act as a non-profit nationwide association whose purpose is basically to:

- preserve and develop Montague Ullman's method for dream work in groups
- promote the education and training of dream group leaders.

How did I as a marine scientist become involved with dreams? In the middle of the 1980's, I made my Ph.D. in oceanography. The topic of the thesis was cooling and ice formation in the ocean. Here I had collected data, developed

different kinds of numerical models, and written some scientific articles. At the same time I felt the need for another language, science was not enough. I needed to find a language to express my feelings and what was going on in my internal sea. I observed a strong interaction between my studies of the external ocean and what was happening inside me that surprised me. For example, I was studying ice formation in the ocean which occurs when small ice crystals in large amounts mix in the ocean surface layer. This is called Frazil ice formation and worked also as a metaphor for me; I was not frozen solid in my soul, instead my internal sea was wild, fascinating, and dynamic.

In my hunting for a new language I took part in summer schools oriented to dreams, literature, and mythology. During the first summer school and the first night, I dreamt that I was standing outside a department store, and inside I could see lots of interesting boxes. When I went to the main entrance, the door was locked. The night after this dream I dreamt that I was bitten by a scorpion on my Achilles tendon. My interest in dreams was awakened, and I realized that the key to my dreams was my vulnerability and feelings. That first summer course was held at Biskops-Arnö, a beautiful place on Lake Mälaren outside Stockholm, organized by Stina Hammar, who has written several books about literature and dreams. From that time on, attending summer and working in dream groups gave me training in dream interpretation and a deeper understanding of the strength of the Ullman method. In Sweden, the Ullman method was used in different groups. First I was involved in the

Pedagogic Forum in Stockholm which was led by Marianne Blom, a Jungian influenced minister and psychotherapist. Several members in this organization were able to connect with Montague Ullman during his stays in Sweden. Summer schools were organized at beautiful places where dreams, literature and dancing were some of the instruments used during the courses. I was much inspired by these courses so dreams and literature became a complement to my science language.

Later I trained to become a dream group leader starting at a summer course organized by Dream group forum at Ljungskile. Today the Dream group forum organizes courses every spring, summer, and autumn, except this year when the Corona virus has made it impossible. As a dream group leader, I have been involved in several organizations to promote dream group work as e.g. Dream retreats organized at Wettershus close to the Lake Vättern shore. These dream retreats where we use the Ullman method but do not speak outside the dream work has an extra quality, as the silence strengthens the dream work in an interesting way.

Parallel with my work with dreams my science work became oriented towards understanding systems and modeling physical ocean processes fed into biochemical modeling of the carbon system. This work opened the possibility of addressing problems related to climate change and eutrophication (addition of too much nutrients to the water) and of modeling multiple stressors of the ocean. The human effects on the ocean were obvious. These effects were modelled by considering past and present climatic conditions and extending them into the future by prescribing different emission pathways. Anthropogenic pressures (resulting from human activity) on the ocean are strong in various ways, raising new questions about how to model human impacts.

The human threats to the ocean and its coastal seas are severe.

The year 2050 it is estimated that:

- Human population can be about 10 billion people
- About 70% will be living in urban areas and megacities
- Increased exploration of coastal areas
- Further reduction in fish
- More plastic contamination than fish
- Global warming and marine acidification (decrease of pH)
- Eutrophication and increasing anoxic (free of oxygen) zones
- Increased pollution from toxic substance and medicine
- Exploration of deep ocean
- Increasingly alienated from the marine environment
- etc.

To address the great challenges for the ocean the United Nations has launched a decade of oceans Sustainable development (2021-2030). Natural science cannot solve these problems alone. Instead, there is a need for connecting natural and human science better to increase the awareness of the threats to the ocean and humans. What determines human behaviour and what pathway humanity will take in the future are questions that cannot be answered with certainty. It became obvious to me that natural science must improve its understanding of human behaviour, so I wrote a book about how analytical thinking and intuition could be better and more productively connected (Omstedt, 2016). From long experience in dream

groups, I realized that dream analysis provides an excellent background for studying how we think. The title of the book was: Connecting analytical thinking and intuition: and the nights abound with inspiration. As you may understand the subtitle indicates that I illustrate intuition with dreams and here I presented and applied the Ullman method as a tool. The book outlines important aspects of the Ullman method such as: How to catch a dream, finding words for feelings, the meaning of symbols, triggers, etc. Also how to give open questions through respectful dialogs with the dream in the centre. Many aspects that most natural scientists are not trained in. The conclusion is that natural science education needs to become broader and involve also the arts.

Later I expanded on the ideas by investigating the connection between science and the arts, starting from marine science and our conscious and unconscious perceptions of the ocean. The aim of this new book (Omstedt, 2020), A philosophical view of the ocean and humanity, is to illustrate the central importance of the ocean to mankind. Here part of the dream group method is used in dialogues between a concerned marine scientist and the ocean. In both

books, Hillevi Nagel contributed with several photos for reflections.

Finally, I will end this by inviting Bill into a discussion about how dreams and our dream work can be used to increase the awareness of nature and the ocean and to promote behavioural change?

References:

Omstedt, A. (2020). A Philosophic View of the Ocean and Humanity. Springer Nature, ISBN 978-3-030-36679-7, <https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783030366797>
 Omstedt, A. (2016). Connecting Analytical Thinking and Intuition: And the Nights Abound with Inspiration. Springer Briefs in Earth Sciences. ISBN: 978-3-319-27533-8 (Print) 978-3-319-27534-5 (Online). DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-27534-5. Springer International Publishing

Link to YouTube presentation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1Hszt_8X0&t=2s

