

Yoruba Spirituality & the Unconscious Mind

The Intersection of Dreams, Divination and Mythology



Alexandra came to me for **Ifá** divination because of a dream she had had a couple of days before. It was not a nightmare. But she knew it was charged with deep spiritual significance. She dreamt of herself, asleep in her actual bed. And in the dream she was awakened by a presence. Without speaking, this presence wanted Alexandra to look at it. When she looked over her shoulder, Alexandra saw an ancient Black woman, with a very soft looking face, who radiated bluish-lavender light. The intensity of her power was matched only by her gentleness. So when the ancient mother demanded that she come to her, Alexandra understood the urgency but was not at all afraid.

As she recounted the dream to me, her eyes glistened with awe. Finally, she asked the million dollar question, “Who was she, baba?” And of course, I was tempted to fill in the blanks with my own impressions, based on the dream symbolism. But, in keeping with best practices of the Jungian approach, I deferred to her personal wisdom and asked a few more penetrating questions, probing for more and more details that would allow her to connect the dots herself. Once we had exhausted her memory and she had reached a

deeper connection to what the dream meant to her, I knew we were ready to ask Ifá. Thanks to **Olódùmarè**, the message affirmed her own assessment, and we were made privy to the ancestral context for what the dream meant and why she had experienced it at that particular point in her life.

How Does it Work?

The Yoruba say “*ala ko ni eri*” which means that “dreams have no witness.” They themselves out in the dreamscape, where the individual is at one with raw consciousness. So, how is it possible that the myths of Ifá divination can speak directly to a person’s condition to the point of even seeing into her dreams? Part of answer is found in the relationship between the **personal unconscious** and the **collective unconscious**. The personal unconscious is the medium of unique individual experience. It is limited and defined by what you touch, taste, smell, see, feel (emotionally) and think. Meanwhile, the collective unconscious can be understood as a two-part pool of all human experience. In part one, we have the collection of cultural experiences, which explains why African people across the

Continent and around the world enjoy a shared worldview and cultural expression. This is what Robert Farris Thompson is alluding to when he says that one might conclude that much of the world’s music has been influenced by the flash of the spirit of a certain people specially armed with improvisatory drive and brilliance. That’s a result of the African collective unconscious. In part two, there is the aggregate of all cultural experiences, which explains why it’s so easy to discover identical psychic motifs in the mythologies of peoples who have never made contact with one another. The hero and the witch, show up in the myths and folklore of practically all peoples. Similarly, falling and flying are equally universal motifs in the dreams of all peoples. That’s the result of the universal collective unconscious.

Jung says that the collective unconscious is a “psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the **archetypes**, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents.” What Jung calls archetypes the babláwo calls the **Holy Odù**. The Holy Odù speak to the origins, of the natural world and the human expression of it. Our laws, arts and customs are thus rooted in metaphysical principles that can only be known through the unconscious mind (i.e., the human soul).



Yoruba Spirituality & the Unconscious Mind
The intersection of Dreams, Divination & Mythology
ObafemiO.com

play
the
hear,